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On Dit
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**Next Edition: God,
divinity and all things spiritual**

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Front: Astrolobe in 3D
Back: Subliminal Advertising

Wanna Write?

Not much time left! There are only two editions to go. Sob. Come down to our friendly little office down in the basement of the George Murray building or contact us via email at ondit@adelaide.edu.au or call us on 83035404. Don't fret though - *On Dit* will be back next year under the steady and sexy guidance of Svedberg, Mountzouris & Young.

Schmanks to:

Kim Thackrey from Roadshow, Alexis, the inventor of card games, Lucy for the ace poker night, Barbecue Palace, Ricky Gervais for creating *The Office*, Mikey B. in all his dimensions, Victorb for his patience, Stan for teaching us the value of patience, Hélène, summer weather finally being here and all things novel.

No cardboard cut outs to:

The Missy Higgins/Ben Lee concert for forcing us out of our office on Saturday night, whoever sings that crap song 'You're Beautiful' and clothes that still smell musty after four runs in the washer. Peee-yooooo.

Media Watch

with Audrey Hefferness

The case of the disappearing reproductive rights...

While my column's predictions last week may not have entirely come to pass, speculations about abortion laws in America have seeped over into reality in this bonny land of ours. Not one but *two* major abortion issues have come to the fore this week. And here I was thinking we were living in the modern age. Silly me.

For those who may not be aware, the Victorian government has just passed a law decreeing that all women seeking a late term abortion must receive mandatory counselling. The decision came after it was revealed late term abortions for psychosocial reasons (meaning basically that the pregnancy is placing the woman's physical or mental health in jeopardy) had almost doubled in the Garden State. Steve Bracks and Bronwyn Pike (Vic's Premier and Health Minister respectively) seem to be under the misguided impression that reasonably pregnant women are deciding to abort on a whim. Despite what some ardent pro-lifers might believe, the decision to abort a pregnancy is rarely taken with the same abandon as say, drinking yourself into a stupor and acquiring an unfortunate tattoo. Having never needed an abortion myself, I realise I'm speculating – however, I don't imagine it's too impolitic to suggest that a woman seeking a late term abortion may already have spent a whopping great amount of time weighing up the pros and the cons. Any suggestion that she would require further counselling not only invalidates the no doubt agonising decision already made, but assumes that the decision is in itself immoral and incorrect. After all, women aren't required to undertake mandatory counselling when they decide to *have* a baby – why should the decision not to be any different?

Of course, the Bracks government has been accused of trying to play both sides in this issue. While not actually criticising the act of abortion itself, it sends a clear message to powerful pro-lifer lobby groups out there that the government does consider the problem serious and in need of action. Strip back the rhetoric and false concern and you're left with this hard nut – that once again, a group of predominantly male government leaders are taking it upon themselves to extend the law to women's bodies.

To add insult to bloody injury, a mandatory 48 hour 'cooling off' period following said counselling has also been introduced. The suggestion that, even after the patronising occasioning of counselling, a woman may need to consider her decision for a further two days is not only grossly insulting but also cruel. The ruling sends a clear message to women – abortion is wrong. Late term abortion is even more so. If you decide to do it, you are selfish and cruel. Here's two days to feel guilty about it.

Oh but wait – if your foetus is a bit abnormal, well, we'll book you in quicker than you can say 'hypocritical, much?'. Yes, there's the clincher. Apparently all foetuses are equal, but some are more equal than others. Naturally, if a woman found out her baby was going to be born with some abnormalities it's entirely reasonable for

her to want to shed her body of the offending object quick smart, and rationalise it later with claims 'it would have had a difficult life!' Far be it from the government to intervene in such an emotionally distressing issue.

Normality, it would seem, makes a big difference in the abortion stakes.

What I'm getting at here is the implication this has for women's perceived ability, nay, *right*, to control their own bodies. The Victorian government's decision suggests that a woman only becomes more important than the unborn foetus when said foetus presents some problematic difficulties. Bracks and Pike are saying that the right to have an abortion exists on a scale from 'acceptable reasoning' to 'unacceptable selfishness'. Consider one of the following varied scenarios. A woman has:

- found herself in a financially unstable predicament that is further complicated by the prospect of a baby
- left a partnership and doesn't want to keep the baby
- been involved in a domestic violence situation and decides not to involve a child in it
- fallen pregnant at the age of 14 and been too scared to tell her parents (incidentally, teenage girls make up the majority of late term abortion recipients – does this say something about sex ed in Australia perhaps?)
- just damn well decided she doesn't want it anymore

Look, either abortion is legal or it isn't. We can't have reproductive freedom, and then place a scale on it. Personally, I consider reproductive rights to be one of the most important issues of our generation and I would go the distance to defend them. Abortion has for too long been considered a morality issue – it isn't. Look at the cold, bare facts of it. A foetus is in essence an entity that relies on the bodily functions of its host to sustain it – a parasite if you will. That foetus only becomes a self sustaining human being once it leaves the host and makes it way out into the big bad world. Pro-lifers that bang on and on about the rights of the child always seem to overlook the far more pressing issue of the rights of the mother. As the battery charger for the little critter, and as a being that is already able to communicate with the world and experience life as a living, breathing organism, her rights are far more recognisable. And if we, as a society, give her the right to choose to abort a foetus based on medical or psychological reasons, we must also grant her the right to abort the same foetus because she decides, in her role as its host, that she simply doesn't want it anymore – that her life, and the incontrovertible changes it will undergo following birth, matters more than the *possibility* of a life.

Of course, this would all be so much simpler if the government would just overturn the ban on mifepristone, more commonly referred to as RU 486. The supposedly controversial abortion drug (which, when taken, induces miscarriage) is legal in France, the United



States and the UK. Given as we are to always copying our whitebread neighbours, the drug's Australian ban is a little perplexing. Of course, it could have something to do with former Senator (and renowned right winger) Brian Harradine's 1996 deal with the Howard government that they inform him of any potential new Bills addressing the issue. Health Minister Tony Abbott has agreed in the past few days to at least consider the issue should someone present a bill on it – but old reliable Barnaby Joyce has vowed to fight it on every level, believing as he does that birth begins at conception. Given the large number of fertilised eggs that simply flush out of the system, I'd say we've got a lot of baby driven suicides going on here.

Mifepristone has been ruled to be safe by numerous medical bodies around the world. It has been trialled in Australia, with participants (who'd also experienced surgical abortions) claiming they preferred the drug as it was less invasive, more personal and allowed them time to grieve in their own ways. Contrary to the much touted scare campaign that such a drug would dramatically increase abortions the nation over (as if hundreds of women are just *dying* to be able to speak from experience), in countries where the drug is legal there has been no marked change to abortion statistics. A strong argument for the drug's legalisation in Australia is that it would provide rural women with scarce medical facilities the option of not having to travel for hours to see a trained practitioner – while also allowing small towners the privacy that generally doesn't come with living in a population zone of 300.

I've said it before and I'll no doubt be saying it for years – I can't believe that a supposedly civilised, modern, thinking, intelligent society such as ours is still batting this issue back and forth. I may not choose to have an abortion if faced with an unwanted pregnancy – but I'll defend to the bitter last my right to.

Editorial

Hey tiger, it's been a big week for university events. Aside from the noise pollution emanating from the Missy Higgins/Ben Lee concert, the OSA and Clubs Association both had significant events recently. The Clubs Awards night was held on Thursday to congratulate 'high achieving' clubs this year. The Mexican Stereotype Club, a newcomer in 2005, was clearly and stereotypically the life of the party. Refused alcohol service later in the night for consuming too much of the good life, their table had an ole or Mexican wave for each nomination they received (they had self nominated for every award). They were controversially pipped for Best New Club by the Islamic Students Society,

who put on the Islamic Awareness Week earlier in the year. A few people mumbled that they hadn't been aware that the week was on, while the Clubs Association President maintained that the week was important for showing that Islamic students are "not just terrorists". The Mexican Stereotype Club had inflamed rivalry with several nominated for Best Event by claiming their Guinness World Record tequila shot was the most attended event of the year. The AVCON club was the first in a string of geeks to take themselves too seriously, claiming that their Anime event had a higher turn out, to which a pseudo-Mexican gave the unsterotypically astute reply, "over how many days? At any rate, the the Film Society, despite playing few quality films won Best Club 2005. The president used the opportunity to promote their upcoming feature - *Inside Deep Throat* as an opportunity to see

porno for anyone who looked 18, despite Linda Lovelace's story being one of manipulation and abuse by the porn industry and her husband.

The OSA Cup, a round robin soccer tournament was also run very successfully on Saturday with a high quality turn out of teams. Unfortunately the horrific pitch conditions made most of the games more like arial ping pong than genuine games but the enthusiasm of the participants and tight organisation bodes well for next year.

And in case you didn't notice the red/blue smeared cover is actually in 3D! We believe it to be the first 3D cover ever for *On Dit* and possibly for any Australian university paper. 3D glasses should be attached to the main *On Dit* outlets (unless some asshole steals them). For an opportunity to win a pair of 3D glasses check out page 17 so you can actually experience our *On Dit* 'scientist' in all of his dimensions.

An Open Letter to the PM of My Country: John Howard

Sir,

With God as my witness, I pray this letter is not too late, nor too little. But it is, at least, some start in making amends for my silence. We stand in Australia today facing a destruction of our law, our heritage that you claim to represent. But you do not represent that heritage and you are not protecting the rights given to the Commonwealth via that heritage.

The laws proposed in order to defend this country are an assault on the 'fair go' attitude and free spirit of Australia. It is proposed that 'suspect' people be liable to 'detention' for two weeks without charge and without remand by a judge. Further, that individuals may be electronically 'tagged' and monitored for a year without

any proven guilt. We are informed that those 'detained' will have 'access to a lawyer'. When this is put up for clarification, you, Mr. Howard say that this is so, "...unless that lawyer is in some way connected potentially to terrorist activity." This will be decided by whom? Those who have already 'detained' the 'suspect'? This imaginary lawyer is connected, I presume to the 'detained' person and may be, under these proposed laws, detained themselves! And why the word 'detention' anyway and not 'imprisonment'? Could it be that Aussies have memories? Might they not remember the phrase, 'lawful imprisonment'? So, let Downer call it 'detention'.

Are we so frightened of terrorism? Or have we gone mad? I know that you are not a coward and was proud to see you, as our Prime Minister, honouring our fellow Australians who lost their lives in Bali. I therefore genuinely wonder if you have gone mad, for it is certain that this is madness. Further, it is madness not to oppose this perversion of our system, a system built on the presumption of innocence.

In Rousseau's famed work, *The Social Contract*, it is written that, "...the humblest citizen

is as sacred and inviolable as that of the highest magistrate...". If, Mr Howard you have forgotten those words then remember these: "Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains." Your law may catch one or two, but will chain us all.

You, sir, are becoming a despot. "It will be said that a despot gives his subjects the assurance of civil tranquility" but at what cost? And who is standing against your tyrannical and immoral proposals? To date, I count not many. Not the ACTU - they are busy fighting a work place reform that they think threatens job security. Not the Greenies - they have been distracted by thoughts of nuclear power. Not the university students - for they are busy fighting the destruction of the Student Unions by the Howard government.

And to date, not I. For I have been silent, genuinely scared more of your 'reforms' than of terrorists. I ask my fellow Australians to forgive my cowardice. I hope this letter doesn't earn me arrest and detention without warrant, but I have been silent too long.

Sean Dillon.



Sub-editors & Contributors for 2006:

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- Music
- Local Music
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- Literature
- Sports
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On Dit Volume 73.20: Elle Dit

“Don’t Fuck Your Friend’s Boyfriend”

Dear Clem, Anna and Steph,

Elle-Dit was great! however I just want to add that: girls should not fight over guys after high-school. Ever. After high-school a certain level of maturity should be reached whereby a sister-hood mentality amongst chicks is adopted. If boys get to have their fraternities than we should have our sororities. Guys should never get in the way of a friendship or a sister-hood. Even if we love them. Sister-hood love lasts longer. The biggest don'ts of all time: Don't fuck your friend's boyfriend. Don't have sex with dudes that are friends. Ever.

I think that gender conflict is fascinating. I think it is an eternal struggle. I think it is important to analyse gender conflict because we come to understand ourselves better - as women - and can accept boys and men more freely in the process. But sadly, feminists are still ostracised by our society. They are often viewed as crazy, schizoid, unattractive, emotionally unintelligent and coarse. I personally think that this is because gender-conflict is inextricably linked to class-conflict. And more specifically - different behaviours and manners according to social class.

For example: I am completely working-class. My parents are, my grand-parents were - and I was brought up in Port-Adelaide: Labour city. I'm a little bit rough, very egalitarian - very Aussie. But because I am an educated person, most of my friends are from middle-class, white-collar backgrounds and have middle-class sensibilities. And have alot more \$\$\$\$. Yet I fit in perfectly. No problem: Just like Mike Skinner says: "I like to get deep sometimes; talk about Carl Jung and Einstein". There is no class-divide when the beer flows. I don't suffer from prejudice because most people are very nice, very warm, and are not shallow conservatives.

However, when it comes to males who are prospective partners, social issues which

seem clear-cut and easily resolved - start to become less easy to settle. There is a lack of understanding - and this lack of understanding pertains particularly to my experience, as a female, growing up in "the hood," and how these experiences shape my present behaviour.

When it comes to having sex with dudes I find it quite interesting. What I find interesting is their reaction to me. I can speak without swearing, I can quote Homer and Shakespeare and enjoy a perceptive understanding of pop-culture. I can present myself as if I were some savvy chick just out of Wilderness-high, climbing the ladder of opportunity. Hot. And I find it quite easy and nice shagging Saint's boys who want to be lawyers or Sacred Heart baseball players. These boys are great fun. (and not bad in bed). But too often when I present my opinions I come across as "over-opinionated." In other words: "unfeminine". Not so hot. And I think that's fair enough - if that's the way people percieve me.

Everyone is entitled to think whatever thay like about the next person. My point is -is that I've witnessed young, well-meaning & sincere guys turn away from me out of revulsion and fear stemming from some of the things I've said and some of the things I've done. That's fine - no worries, seeya later. But I'm not your archetypal damned whore and I'm not one of your God's police - I fit somewhere in the middle and I think most of us (women) do.

Working class people and communities simply have different codes for expressing their passion. These codes are different from the codes of conduct drilled into people from middle and upper-class; elite and priveliged backgrounds. Simple. Giving the silent treatment and walking away with dignity is of course the most civilised way of dealing with someone you don't care for, than raising your voice for fighting. Sure. Manners gets the guys.

Everyday we tread a fine line as girls - in terms of what is acceptable behaviour from the point of view of men. Where I went to school it was acceptable to go and beat the shit out of a skanky-ho if she was cracking onto your boyfriend. And then the guys at school would think you were hot because you were tough. The boys would step aside to watch girls scrap. Don't get me wrong - I don't condone it - but getting rough with the person that steals your boy is the most fun you will ever have (without nudity or illicit drugs). But not after high-school, as I said before.

My advice to chicks and dudes is to listen more and talk more about your background. Often the more you divulge about where you have been and how that shapes who you are - the easier it is to communicate. Communication is key! And boys please please don't be scared. If you are scared say something before you run-away. At least say good-bye.

Claire Jensen

“Think Harder, Stupid”

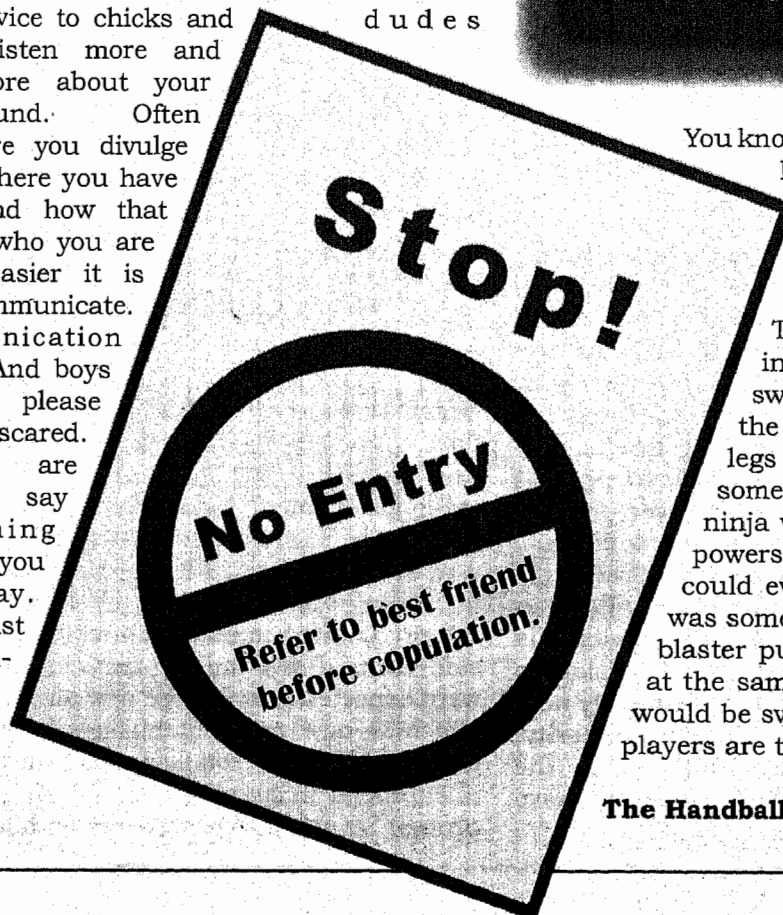
The reason peaceful anarchy can never work in practice is because people will never let it, they will never let go of themselves. There will always be at least one paranoid or cynical motherfucker around to send the hive-mind spiralling forward into subjective catastrophe. But the nature of society is completely mental; it's all mass-perception. So change if you've got the nerve. Everyone should be striving to make all those beautiful ideals real now. Because there is no tomorrow. And one day we'll just have to get up and do it. So change now. Show some guts, pluck up the courage and let's all lay eyes together on the fact that the way our society is headed is completely environmentally and culturally unsustainable and that it'll all be okay if we just start undoing all the damage yesterday. The future's not that hard to predict with the right eyes. Bookies make a living. Are we just shitting where our children have to eat? Isn't that just fucking fucked up? Every subjective point of view for itself, huh? Ha ha, I think that's bullshit. Yes, we're responsible for futures we don't get the privilege to experience. No, we don't have the right to act like irritating, selfish, adolescent brats while we're here. Get over it. Yeah some ideals might be *hard work*, and yeah our minds might be at slight risk of breaking a sweat in trying to achieve them but if we don't try and we coast along and then we die then we're just a bunch of slackjawed apathetic dickheads now, aren't we? What will society evolve into if we continue down the path we're on? Realistically. Yeah, scary huh? Let's tighten the slack in our minds (i.e. Think harder, stupid) and accept that change is in the very nature of the universe. So let's roll with the universe, it's bigger than we are.

Michael Elijah

Remember the Days in the Old School Yard

You know what's totally awesome? Handball. It's like the sweetest, most totally rad thing in the universe and anyone who doesn't get it is super lame. Today I was completely in the zone and it was so sweet when I was pulling all the moves like through the legs and behind the back, like some kind of amazing super ninja with concentrated mental powers. Yeah, the only thing that could ever be sweeter is if there was some dude with a crazy ghetto blaster pumping out radical tunes at the same time as handball. That would be sweeeeeet! Yeah! Handball players are totally the best at sex too.

The Handball Ninja





NEWS in BRIEF

Community Will 'Come Around' to IR Reform

The Treasurer, Peter Costello, says the community will come around to the Government's labour market reforms once they are put in place, just as it did with the GST. The introduction of the GST in July 2000 sparked outrage about possible rises in the cost of essentials, such as food and housing, based on criticism by opposition parties, unions and consumer groups. The Government's proposed industrial changes have attracted a similar attack. But Mr. Costello said the negative campaign against the changes would only be countered by getting the labour reforms enacted. The only way you could defeat that campaign was to get into a situation where the GST applied and show them the benefits and show them that the fears were overstated. Mr. Costello told ABC TV. "My view is that we've got to move through this period, get the legislation enacted, get it operative and show people the benefits that you can get from labour market reform". While he would not comment on whether the minimum wage would be eroded in real terms under the new system, Mr. Costello said he would guarantee more jobs and increased wages. "Here's the guarantee - that improved industrial relations, which lead to a stronger economy, will produce more jobs and higher wages," he said. He said the current awards-based system made it harder for low-skilled people to get jobs by being overly prescriptive. "All of that prescriptive thing is just a barrier to them getting a job," he said. The Workplace Relations Minister, Kevin Andrews, says the performance of the economy would be the key indicator of how the Government's industrial reforms work. The Government plans to introduce to Parliament a package of wide-ranging labour market reforms later this month. Mr Andrews said he would not be setting specific targets for unemployment or productivity.

Constitution Firming in Iraq

Iraqi voting ended Saturday on a constitution that will establish a permanent government, a step the Bush administration says will help quell insurgent attacks and lead to the withdrawal of some U.S. troops. As many as 15.6 million adults were registered to vote in Iraq's 18 provinces, according to electoral officials. Overall turnout was about 61 percent and was more than 66 percent in seven of Iraq's 18 provinces, according to initial estimates, election officials told the Associated Press. At stake is the legitimacy of the government in the face of attacks that have killed thousands of civilians and soldiers, and a U.S. plan to withdraw some of its 140,000 troops early next year. Members of the Sunni Muslim minority, whose political dominance ended with the 2003 overthrow of Saddam Hussein, have vowed to defeat the charter.

Farrakhan Condemns Bush at Million Man March Anniversary

Railing against the delayed relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan said Saturday that the federal government should be charged with "criminal neglect of the people of New Orleans." Farrakhan stated "for five days, the government did not act. Lives were lost," Farrakhan said at the 10th anniversary of the Million Man March. "We charge America with criminal neglect." Pointing to the broad spectrum of participants, Farrakhan said the march included an "unprecedented" array of black leaders of organizations "coming together to speak to America and the world with one voice". "This tells us that a new day is dawning in America" he said. Ten years ago, Farrakhan urged black men to improve their families and communities - women, whites and other minorities had not been invited. On Saturday, all were welcome at the Millions More Movement, which organizers said would build on the principles of 1995 and push people to build a movement for change locally and nationally.

Arise Future King of Denmark

Bonfires were lit across Denmark and royal gun salutes echoed through the capital Copenhagen to mark the birth of a healthy baby prince to Crown Princess Mary and Crown Prince Frederik. Australian-born Mary gave birth to her first child at the Copenhagen University Hospital yesterday, with Frederik at her side. The newborn prince is second in line to the throne in Europe's oldest reigning monarchy, after Frederik, 37, the oldest son of Queen Margrethe. In a tradition dating back to the Bronze Age, more than 200 bonfires were lit one by one yesterday evening in a chain of light that illuminated the skies from Copenhagen to every corner of the small kingdom. Earlier in the day, gun batteries in the capital and at Kronborg Castle in Helsingoer, site of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, fired 21-shot salutes to herald the birth of the heir to the throne.

Airport Terminal "A New Era" For SA

The upgraded Adelaide Airport ushers in a new economic era for South Australia, the state government says. Premier Mike Rann said the \$260 million airport upgrade signalled a new gateway into SA and was an excellent marketing opportunity for the state. Adelaide Airport Limited managing director Phil Baker said around five million passengers a year were expected to enjoy the new airport facility, which is now open for business. Containing aero-bridges and retail outlets, the terminal is equipped to handle up to 27 aircrafts and process up to 3000 passengers an hour.

"Police State" says Australian Law Council

Australia is moving towards a police state with harsh anti-terrorism laws that could be pushed through parliament too quickly, the Law Council of Australia has said.

Copies of the sweeping new laws were leaked on Friday by the ACT government and have sparked concerns among legal experts. The Government last week said it would introduce the laws to parliament on October 31, but only allow the Senate one week to investigate them and report by November 8. The Law Council of Australia said passing the proposed laws would push the nation closer to becoming a police state. "We're moving down that path," council president John North told the Ten Network. "The fact that the Government wanted to move these laws through parliament with indecent haste and without letting us as a Law Council or other interested people have wide community consultation means that we're very concerned about them."

Prime Minister John Howard says he does not see the terrorism threat diminishing in the near future and that this is clear justification for the proposed changes. He has told Channel Nine it is important the Government does what it can to prevent an attack, and he does not see the threat diminishing in the near future - "I wish I could say it will be over in three years or two years or five years, I wish I could... I suspect it will go on with varying degrees of intensity for a number of years into the future" he said. Howard also claims that there are appropriate safeguards built into the plan to appease the civil liberties lobby.

Rebel Without a Pause

Queensland Nationals senator Barnaby Joyce says he has no intention of bowing to government plans to introduce a user pays system for student services at universities. Senator Joyce insists an alternative funding option must be found to protect services such as sports clubs and childcare on regional campuses if he is to vote for the introduction of Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU). The senator proved last night he is ready to follow through on threats to cross the floor of Federal Parliament when he voted twice with Labor, and would not rule out doing the same again on industrial relations and VSU. Education Minister Brendan Nelson has conceded he might have to postpone the controversial changes because the legislation might not be passed in time for the 2006 academic year. This would mean university students had at least another year of paying mandatory fees to student unions while the Government tries to win Senate backing for the proposal.



Profiting from disaster



On August 29th, Hurricane Katrina ripped across the southern states of America. Hardest hit of all was the city of New Orleans, which, due to a fragile and out-dated levee system, was completely destroyed by the overflowing banks of the Mississippi River. Thousands are thought to have perished from the floods, hundreds of thousands are homeless, and the once lively city of New Orleans is now nothing more than a submerged ghost town.

But not for long. In the face of tragedy comes great determination, and the reconstruction process for New Orleans is already well underway. The US Congress has budgeted a fund of over US\$60 billion for the supply of aid and reconstruction to those states affected by Katrina's destructive path, and, assumedly, most of this will eventually fall into the flooded streets of New Orleans.

However, all is not good news for the rebuilding process. It recently came to light that there are a number of serious questions dogging the reconstruction effort; questions that some would argue are calling the transparency and efficiency of the US government into disrepute.

Concerns were first raised a couple of weeks ago with the publication of an investigation by *The New York Times*. The paper found that the largest contract yet given out for the reconstructive process, a US\$568 million contract for waste removal in New Orleans, had been provided to a company with close links to the Bush Administration. The company in question, AshBritt Co., had been a former client of the Republican Governor of Mississippi's old lobbying firm.

Furthermore, the newspaper also revealed that the contract had been landed through a controversial process of pre-bidding and limited bidding. This was supposedly done as a means of speeding up the bidding process, however, it also had the added side-effect of ensuring that there was minimal competition for the contract. The final price arrived at for AshBritt's waste removal services has also been roundly criticised for being far too expensive; recently another Mississippi community negotiated a similar contract with a competitor for about 30% less.

It is questionable dealings such as this that have spurred many activist watchdogs into action. The website Corpwatch (www.corpwatch.org) has since taken up the task of monitoring all emergency contracts being made in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

And they, too, have made some alarming discoveries. For starters, it has been confirmed

that three major corporate beneficiaries of Katrina contracts thus far, namely Halliburton, Bechtel, and Fluor, are also the same major corporate players in the Iraqi reconstruction process. Halliburton is estimated to have over US\$20 billion worth of reconstruction contracts in Iraq, and Bechtel's Iraqi takings are slowly eclipsing the multiple billion-dollar mark as well.

What's even more interesting is that, once again, these companies exhibit strong ties to the Bush administration. For instance, Vice President Dick Cheney was the head of Halliburton from 1995 to 2000, and the current CEO of Bechtel, Riley Bechtel, was also the man in control of Bush's Export Council from 2003 to 2004.

And the tantalisingly-conspiratorial facts don't end there, either. It has also been revealed that each of these corporate bodies has also benefited greatly from the so-called 'no bid' and 'limited bid' contracts that have been provided in Katrina's wake. Indeed, it has now been revealed that over 80% of contracts given out by the Federal Emergency Management Agency thus far have fallen into such a dubious, anti-competitive category (some have allegedly even been given out via a handshake, with no formal documentation whatsoever to back them up).

Unsurprisingly, politicians and activists alike are becoming increasingly worried about the level of monetary waste, or worse, perhaps even corruption, that might be accompanying this massive reconstruction effort.

One outspoken member of the US House of Representatives, Bennie Thompson, even went as far as to decry the bidding process as "just more of the good-old-boy system, taking care of political allies... FEMA and the others have put out these contracts in such a haphazard manner, I don't know how they can come up with anything that is accountable to the taxpayers."

In fact, the situation gets even more frightening when one begins to look at the questionable record that these companies hold with their operations in Iraq. Take Halliburton as a case in point; the corporation is currently under investigation from three different US agencies, including the FBI and the US Department of Justice. This is principally in regards to allegations that the company overestimated its costs in Iraq to

the tune of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, and then attempted to cover up this mistake through overcharging in other areas (including the now infamous 'US\$100-per-bag' laundry service they supposedly had going on). Indeed, the US Embassy in Iraq allegedly got so infuriated by the company's inefficiency and mounting problems that at one point they even threatened to terminate Halliburton's lucrative oil field repair contract.

And this is merely the problems that plague Halliburton's activities in Iraq. The company is also under investigation for allegations of political bribery in Nigeria, and illegal corporate activity in Iran.

As Charlie Cray, director of the Center for Corporate Policy, recently stated, "Halliburton/KBR has an unrivalled record of waste, fraud, bribery and other violations in Iraq and elsewhere... As happened with Enron, the federal government should suspend KBR from any new contracts until all ongoing criminal investigations are finished."

Indeed, all this damning evidence does raise an interesting question; why, if these corporations have such serious deficiencies in providing effective, accountable reconstructive efforts in the past, have they been entrusted with the reconstruction of New Orleans? Or, at the very least, why have they been given contracts without free and proper bidding, or even basic cost analysis?

It is questions such as these that Richard Skinner, the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general, is currently trying to work out. He has over 60 staffers examining the mountain of emergency contracts that have been piling up since Katrina struck. "When you do [implement emergency contracts], you do increase the vulnerability for fraud, plain waste, abuse and mismanagement," Mr. Skinner says. And while he stresses the urgent, emergency nature of many of the contracts, he still cautiously admits that "we are very apprehensive about what we are seeing."

At the end of the day, it is likely that while some of these Katrina contracts may be dubious at best, most of them, if not all, will still be perfectly legal. As one media commentator mused, this is merely the way politics works in times of disaster; if a Democrat government had been in power when Katrina hit, we'd be seeing exactly the same contract frenzy from Democrat-friendly companies.

Which sure raises a slew of interesting questions, not least the morality of the whole thing, but, then again, such is America (and probably Australia, too...).

Nick Parkin

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Bring a friend and purchase a **Bowl of seasoned Fries**
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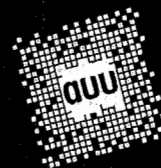
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A service from the Adelaide University Union Food & Beverage Service



New Orleans, Here We Come!

As the new summer approaches with warmer and lazier days, familiar feelings start creeping back into our minds. Thoughts of sunbathing, skin cancer and global warming are immediate suspects, but it does pay to take some time and acknowledge the light that we have been basking in ever since the "scientific revolution" dawned upon us. Indeed, the enlightening ideas are quite old now and it is not surprising that we often find them asleep; resting peacefully, for their work has been long done. It is time for new ideas, new revolutions to take us into the future, or for now, maybe just plant a new seed to dawn the next day. But, before taking upon our somewhat laborious job of creating the future, let us wake up the present and give our sleeping ideas a little nudge. Actually, we might as well give them a kick, since it seems that their sleep is deep.

Where do you go to find sleeping ideas? At uni? I hope not. The local pub seems to be a more realistic environment. In fact, the gaming room turns out to be most abundant with them, along with the pokies zombies. Certainly, this is a place that needs to wake up.

So, as I entered the pokies room, I paused to select my machine. The gleaming piece of equipment directly in front of me seemed like a good choice, especially since an elderly lady had spent the last hour rubbing it for good luck. Hopefully, her effort was going to be more profitable for me, than for her. After a brief sensation of pride for sitting in front of the most polished game in the house, the snoring of an idea slapped me back into reality.

Next to me a man was feeding his machine, which seemed to be very hungry. He was celebrating his forty ninth birthday with his girl friend, who was apparently nineteen, but seemed sixteen to me. She was very nice to him, and seemed not to mind his physical appearance, from which you could tell that it was a special day, since he didn't stink. He gave her a hundred dollars, told her to go get him a meal from Hungry Jacks, picked his snot with his finger, and ate it while chanting some strange prayer and watching her walk away. The rest of the room watched after her with him, since her beauty was obviously not often encountered in this place.

Soon, the people started praising him, congratulating, for such an accomplishment. Of course, for each word of praise he received, the girl got an equally opposite word of grief and shame. I asked him if he thought there was anything wrong with what he was doing, which seemed to be a bad move, since automatically half the room looked at me from an awful angle. His reply was that she was costing him too much and that he often had to visit prostitutes because she wasn't good

enough. At that time she came back, and everyone continued talking about her as before. She gave him his meal, ignoring all of the comments around her and kept the change. I guess that was the price of her dignity.

As I left the room, the last thing I heard was the man spitting in his burger before eating it. Not long after my walking out, he followed, since the staff asked him to finish his meal outside of the gaming room. He called after me, and I came back to see what he had to say. His explanation was brief, and his words were juicy with the grease of the burger as he attempted to speak and eat at the same time. Maybe for that reason alone I still can not wash the grease out of my ears. In brief, his words were: "If I wasn't doing this, somebody else would".

Not having heard many other words that day, my mind was hot to digest some new information. This is why, as the sentences entered, it quickly dried them of the saliva, grease and other slimy junk that came out of his mouth, finally exposing the words, shiny and vibrant in their natural beauty. I spat, removed the collected junk from my mouth, and at that moment an idea sprouted in my head.

As time went by, that idea grew, feeding on the same words that planted it, but coming from many different people. Finally, it flowered into a question, which I have not heard before (probably because I spent too much of my time in the same pub instead of listening to questions). "Where does someone learn this awful logic?" It seems to be everywhere, but where is the source? And more importantly, how do we get rid of it?

Actually, it is not rare to come across this method of reasoning. In fact, we are swimming in it. Idioms, such as "the devil takes the hindmost" and "eat, drink and be merry", have similar meanings, and all contribute to the same disillusioned attitude and "so what?" philosophy. The philosophy, accepted by the rich, poor, male and female.

It seems as if some people have not completely grown out of their adolescence. The ideas and methods of reasoning developed in the last three hundred years are completely tranquil in them, and are dying to wake up. Really, you could almost call their reasoning

a weak attempt at empiricism, rationalism or mechanism. Therefore, the last few centuries are just a bit hazy and forgotten, and are not really dead. This is good news because it means that it is natural for all of our minds to adapt to the discovered ways of thinking, and the enlightenment is not just reserved for people with higher education.

Looking back into recent history, many mistakes could have been prevented if people were taught to look beyond the "help your self" logic. Ten years ago, I escaped the war in former Yugoslavia. Over there, I was disgusted by the slaughter carried out on my people by my people. During my growing up there, I grew tired of hearing "somebody has to do the killing", as a logical explanation for our actions. None the less, at the time that very same sentence made sense to me too. Coming to Australia, I was faced with the judgement of the international world. Understandably, the whole world (and by that I mean America) looked at my people as a bunch of stupid idiots. After the experience with my people I naturally jumped on this same wagon and embraced the idea. However, the recent images of New Orleans with its explosion of crime brought back wartime memories of Yugoslavia, and I was once again faced with the same "something for nothing" reasoning at its worse.

And, as half the world watched America in horror and the other half with a "not so perfect now?" smile across their face, I was sitting behind a pokies machine wondering what would happen to Australia if it was struck with a national disaster. Maybe philosophy should not just be reserved for our leaders, but also taught in all our schools, because the future of our nation needs to grow up before it destroys our past.

Milan Vojin





'WORKCHOICES' ©

Australian Government

Russell Marks

As George Orwell was writing *Nineteen Eighty Four* (during the late 1940s), he probably wasn't using the Australian government of the early 20th Century as his reference – though with its use of Newspeak, Doublethink (and their conflation, 'Doublespeak', a word which was *not* Orwell's invention), we could be forgiven for thinking John Howard is using Orwell's story as a guide for governance.

'WorkChoices' is the label the government has given to its long-awaited package of industrial relations reforms. While it still hasn't finalised the wording of the legislation it hopes to rush through Parliament now that it controls (if tenuously) the Senate (our so-called 'house of review'). If you've turned on the TV or if you've opened a mainstream newspaper in the past week or two chances are you've been hit by a fuzzy, sloganistic campaign that is

short on detail but big on comforting fonts and soothing pastels.

'Industrial relations' is a term used to broadly describe the relations between workers and their employers. These relations are complex, and legislation, regulations and other practices have evolved over the past couple of centuries in Australia that reflects this complexity. At its most simplistic level, industrial

relations can be described in market terms thus: if A wants to produce goods or services to trade, and cannot do so herself, she will want to employ Z to help her do so. More specifically, she employs Z's labour – Z can 'sell' her labour (including knowledge, expertise and experience) to A for a price. What that price will be, in our simplistic market example, depends upon a host of factors including Z's level of knowledge, expertise and experience, the number of other people with Z's skills, the general demand for Z's skills in the wider economy, etc, etc.

Some jobs require a high level of specialisation, and individuals who have acquired this level can effectively 'name their price' (assuming more than one employer needs that specialisation). But most jobs merely require general knowledge and a minimal level of training: almost everyone can do them. Given the extraordinarily large pool of potential workers for such jobs, and assuming that employers will always want to minimise their operating costs (of which employees' wages is a component), the temptation is always for employers to pay their employees the wage of the 'lowest common denominator'. Individuals need food and shelter, and food and shelter in Australia costs money; given that money can only be acquired legitimately by selling one's labour, most individuals will suffer appalling working conditions if that is the only way to earn enough to feed and house themselves (and their families, if applicable).

In Australia, and most other 'western'-style democracies, that is where the government steps in. The government, which in the theory of Westminster is broadly 'representative' of the population, makes a public policy judgement that individuals should *not* suffer working conditions below a certain level. In Australia, it is generally agreed that all individuals should

at the very least be able to live in a house or a flat, eat regularly and healthily, move around via mechanical transport, have access to treatment when they fall ill, be educated sufficiently to be employable, communicate, and have

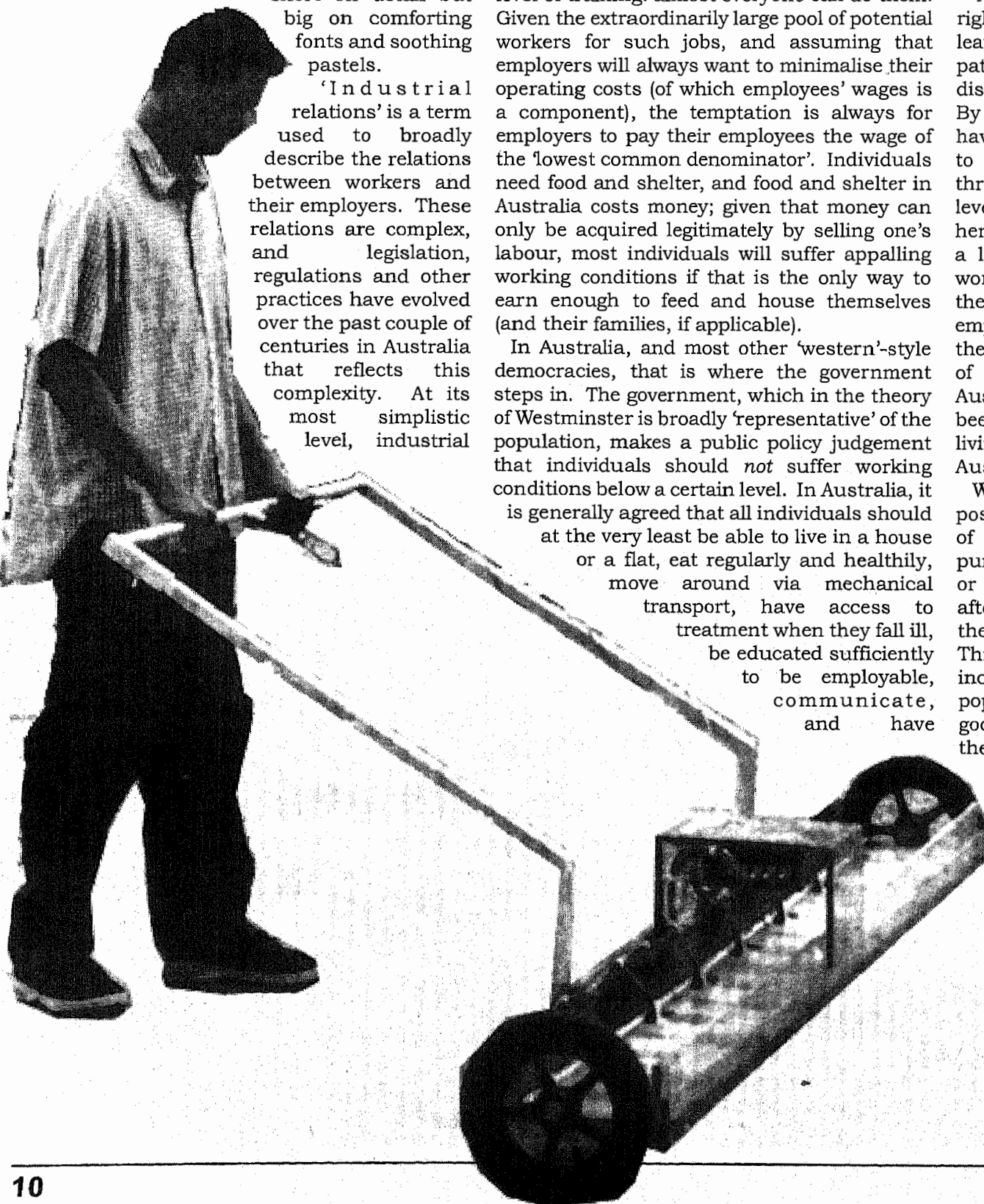
some money left over for 'non-essential' purchases.

Historically, employees ('workers') fought for and won the rights to be paid a so-called 'fair' wage and to not be subjected to cruel, inhumane or unfair working conditions, in the face of powerful employers and often, particularly in the nineteenth century, governments. Perhaps the single most significant reform that came from the Eureka Stockade miners' rebellion of 1854 was the overhaul of Victoria's Constitution, which until 1856 provided that one-third of the colony's 'representatives' were chosen by its Lieutenant Governor, Charles La Trobe. It's thought that by having representatives of 'workers' in Parliament involving themselves in writing and debating legislation, workers' rights are more adequately 'protected'.

The *means* by which workers have won such rights as a 37½-hour week, a lunch-hour, sick leave, 4 weeks' annual leave, maternity and paternity leave, and protection against being dismissed unfairly has been *collective action*. By themselves, relatively unskilled individuals have virtually no bargaining power in relation to employers: an individual employee can threaten not to 'sell' her labour below a certain level, but her employer is then likely to sack her and employ someone who *will* work for a lesser wage. But if an employer's entire workforce *collectively* refuses to work unless they receive better wages and/or conditions, employers must at least listen to and consider the employees' demands. The organisation of 'workers' into 'Unions' and then the Australian Labor Party during the 1890s has been instrumental in the raising of general living standards and the democratisation of Australian politics.

While many employers have recognised the positive value of 'Unionism' (the organisation of workers into collectives for bargaining purposes), traditionally it is tolerated at best, or despised at worst, by most employers: after all, it prevents employers from paying the lowest possible amount for their labour. This view is short-sighted; without disposable income, workers (i.e. almost the entire population) would be unable to purchase the goods and services of the employers, who are the manufacturers and suppliers.

Another group that traditionally has despised Unionism, perhaps even more so than employers, is so-called 'Tory' politicians. John Howard, whose father was a small-business owner, and whose Methodist upbringing led to his joining the Young Liberals at the tender age of 18, has always hated Unionism. As Treasurer in Malcolm Fraser's government between 1977-1983, Howard had already adopted many of Milton Friedman's ideas of *laissez-faire* economics that would provide the theoretical basis for the governments of Margaret Thatcher (in Britain, famous for her slogan 'TINA – There Is No Alternative' and her avowal that 'there is no such thing



as society') and Ronald Reagan (in the United States). Laissez-faire economics became for many people a reaction to the ideas of John Maynard Keynes, which had shaped economic thought since the aftermath of the Great Depression of the 1930s and had been adopted by Franklin Roosevelt in his 'New Deal' before they suffered a widespread loss of popular confidence after the 1976 OPEC oil crisis. Whereas Keynes had advocated an interventionist role for government, which for him had the means and the responsibility to prevent market failure and to ease the effects of recessions, depressions and booms, Friedman's ideal was a market-based system completely free of external (including governmental) interference. 'Freedom' and individual 'choice' were central to Friedman's philosophy; he even wrote a book and presented a TV series called *Free to Choose*.

It is hardly surprising, then, that Howard's Liberal government has continually harped on about 'choice' and 'freedom' in relation to everything from education (parents should be able to *choose* whether to send their children to a public or private school) and student services fees (students should be able to *choose* whether or not to pay for particular services), to 'anti-terror' laws and compulsory voting. We are witnessing a government whose front bench has adopted a blind, ideological faith in the inherent benefits of *choice*, despite plenty of research that suggests that increased *choice* is not necessarily always beneficial to an individual (start with *The Paradox of Choice* by Barry Schwartz, published 2004).

I call it a 'blind, ideological faith' because that's what it's become for the federal Executive. Brendan Nelson (Minister for Education) talks about 'voluntary student unionism' as being an 'article of faith' for the Liberal Party, simply because of its 'voluntariness' (as opposed to the present situation of compulsion). But exactly *why* they favour 'choice' over 'compulsion' is no longer clear, to us or to them, which is not surprising given these guys have held the same, unwavering conviction for over thirty years. There is no intellectual substance to their arguments; in fact, they *have* no arguments. They have slogans, based on ideology, supported by editorials in *The Australian* which are themselves little more than a wild collection of similar slogans.

Equally as arbitrary is what the Liberal Party's ideologues decree should be *outside* the bounds of the individual's 'choice', such as abortion for women, when to register to vote, *who* should vote, actions of the Executive such as the signing of treaties including free trade agreements and the declaration of war, the 'mandatory' detention of 'unauthorised non-citizens', etc. Why should there be no 'choice' over these matters, when 'choice' is a self-evident good in relation to others? 'Tradition' is not a good enough reason; if it was, this government wouldn't be overhauling a working, complex system of award determination so that it can install its highly political 'Fair Pay Commission'.

One explanation is that the government is simply using the *language* of 'choice' to sell its more and more extreme and ideologically-driven reforms, including the submission of bush telecommunications to the vagaries of the market, the centralisation of high school curriculum and its return to an irrelevant syllabus-based model, the deregulation of media ownership to give even more control to Packer and Murdoch, and 'WorkChoices', to 'smash' (to quote *The Australian's* headline) Unions once and for all and to hand more power to corporations.

Without any legislation to examine, it's

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NEW VACANCIES

difficult to properly assess the efficacy of the proposed new system. But we do have a multi-million dollar advertising campaign (just how much is anyone's guess; it's our money, but we're not allowed to know – though the Federal Budget hasn't been independently audited since 1998 so why should we be surprised?), which makes available on its website (www.workchoices.gov.au) a 68-page downloadable PDF file. Admittedly it contains no argument, just slogans – but then it is an advertisement, and it *isn't* 'information'.¹

The idea is that the job of determining award rates will fall to the new 'Fair Pay Commission', to be headed by Professor Ian Harper, a *financial market* economist who has no labour market expertise. Currently, awards are determined by the state-based industrial relations 'courts' and by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. Howard and other right-wing institutions like the Institute of Public Affairs and *The Australian* newspaper call this the 'industrial relations club': they perceive that it's controlled by Unions to the point where the Australian labour market is inherently biased in favour of employees. The irony is that the government is increasingly listening (and talking) exclusively to business groups, like the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

The government's 'argument' is that because it's a 'workers' market', award levels are higher than what they ought to be: its Ministers are fond of publicly quoting the 'fact' that real wages (wages relative to inflation) have risen 14% over the 9 years of the Howard government, and that this makes the government the 'best friend' of Australian workers, but nevertheless that such a magnificent increase has led to two economy-wide problems: (1) structural unemployment of about 5%, and (2) an impediment to global competitiveness, as businesses, constrained by unfair dismissal laws and high wage costs, are not as efficient as they could be. (Doublethink in action?) The ALP is equally fond of pointing out that had the government's submissions to the AIRC been adopted, real wages would have actually *fallen* over the past decade. It's a flawed response, based on an unnatural accumulation of submissions at an extreme level, but it serves its purpose by making clear that the government certainly does not want the minimum wage to rise.

A sounder argument is put forth by Sydney University's Centre for Industrial Relations

Research, which has analysed ABS data to discover that real wages have indeed increased by about 14% since 1998 – but only for the top 10% of paid workers. For the vast majority of non-managerial workers, wages have increased at only a slightly faster pace than inflation over the past decade: in other words, for 90% of employers and workers, the present industrial relations system is doing its job.

The other point worth making is that 'efficiency' has almost nothing to do with the cost of labour. Howard's (flawed) 'argument' is that if real wages go down, and thus do not impose such a cost on businesses, then productivity (and efficiency) will increase. Unfortunately, it's only profits that will increase, and even then only in the short term: New Zealand's government made the same error, of mistaking short-term company profits for efficiency, during the early 1990s and suffered the consequences. Productivity and efficiency has much more to do with technological improvements and with research, training and other development – and of course this government has continually sucked money out of R&D and education over the course of its term in office (the only OECD government to do so).

From page 8 of the 68-page PDF document, it appears (although it's not clear) that public holidays, rest breaks, penalty rates and overtime loadings will all be up for negotiation under the new mantra of individual 'choice'. Does Howard really expect us to believe that employers will sit down with each individual unskilled employee and negotiate a complex set of individual working conditions? It's not going to happen! Potential employees will be told to 'sign on the dotted line...or there's plenty of others who'll take the job'. **WorkChoices** has very little to do with 'choice' – and Orwell couldn't have put it better himself.

(Endnotes)

¹ The judgements in the High Court case of *Combet & anor v Cth of Australia & ors* [2005] HCA were reserved and had not been published at the time of writing, but from the Orders we know that the Court declined to make a judgement on whether the government had breached ss.81 and 83 of the Constitution.

How Adelaide university contributes to forest destruction



The magnificent forests of the Central Highlands stretch out from the north eastern suburbs of Melbourne along the Great Dividing Range. These forests provide homes to an array of wildlife, many of which are rare and/or endangered. The forests also provide drinking water for over 3 million Victorians while inputting important tourism dollars into the State and regional economy.

Despite the incredible importance of these forests, 30,000 ha are logged and destroyed every year in the Central Highlands, much of which is clearfell logged. Clearfelling is a process where all trees, shrubs and understorey within a logging area are chainsawed and bulldozed, the usable logs removed and the remains left as waste on the forest floor. The coupe is then subject to high intensity burns, releasing large amounts of CO₂ into the atmosphere.

Despite tight water restrictions in Melbourne, five of Victoria's catchments, which supply up to 60% of Melbourne's drinking water, are open to logging.

These forests are also home to many endangered and rare species, including the Leadbeater Possum, Yellow-Bellied Glider, Spotted Tree Frog, Sooty Owl and Smoky Mouse. It is estimated that less than 500 Leadbeater Possums remain in the wild, the entire population of which is located in Central Highland forests.

Research has found that a no-logging policy in the Thomson Water Catchment, Melbourne's largest water supply catchment, would have a financial benefit of over \$147 million to the Victorian economy. As much as 30,000 megalitres of water are lost every year from logging in the Thomson and Yarra Tributaries, and it can take up to 150 years for water levels in logged areas to recover. In addition road construction for logging can add up to 90 tonnes of sediment per hectare every year into catchments and rivers through topsoil runoff, erosion and landslides.

Despite these facts, logging continues with the support of the Bracks Labor government, and Liberal opposition.

Who is profiting from our forests?

The majority of forests destroyed in the Central Highlands are converted into woodchips to produce low quality products such as paper. Paperlinx, and subsidiary company Australian Paper, buy most of the woodchips from this area. Paperlinx has a 30 year contract with the Victorian Government to buy 450,000m³ of native forest every year, a figure eventually reducing to 350,000m³ per year by 2030. However, Paperlinx is presently proposing to expand their mill in Victoria, which would require increased volumes of wood in the immediate future.

Paperlinx products also contain a percentage of pulp from international forests. The international pulp content comes from a variety of forests including those in South East Asia, where irresponsible and illegal activities by the logging industry are widespread. Paperlinx has in the past disclosed that it cannot guarantee that a percentage of its products do not come from illegal logging in international forests.

In addition Paperlinx also produces paper using environmentally harmful chlorine in its bleaching process. Several European countries have now banned the use of chlorine by pulp mills due the effects of effluent on the environment in favour of environmentally friendly options such as oxygen bleaching, however Paperlinx continues to use chlorine processes in their Maryvale Mill.

Paperlinx's flagship product Reflex copy paper, which represents over 40% of the domestic copy paper market, is composed largely of native forest. In order to preserve and protect our wildlife and water catchments Australian businesses and institutions need to support sustainable products such as 100% recycled copy paper with a high post consumer content which does not contain pulp from our native forests.

How are Australian Universities contributing?

Australian universities are supporting and contributing to the destruction of our precious native forests by purchasing paper products which contain native forest pulp.

The three South Australian universities use in excess of 150 million sheets of office paper every year. In environmental resources this equates to more than 13,600 trees, 25.5 million litres of water, 3,000 tonnes of CO₂, 3,000m³ of landfill and 2,000 barrels of oil which could be saved **EVERY YEAR** in Australia simply by South Australian universities using 100% recycled paper!

By using their consumer power Australian universities can encourage companies such as Paperlinx and other paper manufacturers to produce a high quality paper made from plantation fibre and recycled materials, rather than pulp from our native forests.

The National Paper Campaign

For the next semester the three SA Universities' environment departments, the Flinders Environment Action Group and the Eco-Students Collective of Adelaide Uni, will be working in collaboration with The National Union of Students and the Australian Student Environment Network with assistance from The Wilderness Society in a nation-wide campaign across Australian universities to highlight the destruction of Australia's forests for paper manufacture - and how Australian

Copy paper which contains native forests
Office paper brands such as Reflex, Copyright, Crown, Optix, Oz Copy, Precision, Contact Lasercopy, A4 Post Office Paper and Corporate Express EXP Products all contain native forest. Presently any product manufactured by Australian Paper/Paperlinx contains native forest pulp, including Reflex 35% Recycled and Australian Paper 10% recycled.

Environmentally Friendly Alternatives
There are many products on the market which do not contain any native forest pulp. Some of them include: Evolve Office, Canon 100, Steinbeis Vision, Fuji Xerox Recycled Supreme. All these products are 100% Post Consumer recycled and bleached using oxygen. Think about purchasing these products next time you're purchasing office paper!

Universities contribute to these practices by purchasing paper from native forests.

The campaign will focus on lobbying our university administrations to adopt university-wide ethical procurement policies for purchasing office paper, and encouraging individual faculties and libraries within our universities to promote this strategy by purchasing 100% recycled paper for staff and student use.

If you would like to be involved in this campaign please contact Matthew Allen, Assistant Paper Campaign Co-ordinator and member of the Eco-students collective. Phone 0432 538 827 or email matthew.allen@student.adelaide.edu.au.

For information about the National Consumer Campaign contact Katherine Negrin, at The Wilderness Society on (08) 8231 6586 or katherine.negrin@wilderness.org.au or alternatively National Environment Officer Anna Rose at 0410 375 755 info@asen.org.au

How to Protect Australia's Old Growth Forests at Adelaide Uni

- Paper is precious! Reduce your paper use at home and Uni and encourage your friends to do the same. Photocopy double sided or re-use old office paper, avoid printing drafts, and use spell checks and print previews before printing. Recycle office paper as a last resort – only 5% of Australia's office paper is recycled back into copy paper!

- Contact your academic department, faculty and Library and encourage them to purchase environmentally friendly copy paper.

- Contact Adelaide University Vice Chancellor James McWha on [ph] 8303 5201 or [email] vice-chancellor@adelaide.edu.au and encourage him to purchase environmentally friendly copy paper on a University-wide scale.

With the availability of plantation and recycled material and with all that we know about our dependence on our magnificent forests to provide clean air, water and biodiversity, there is no longer any reason why our forests should continue to be destroyed for our consumption. By choosing sustainable

copy paper, Australian universities will provide a practical contribution to the long-term survival of our precious native forests for the future.

Katherine Negrin
Paper Campaign Coordinator
The Wilderness Society (SA)
katherine.negrin@wilderness.org.au

Matthew Allen
Assistant Paper Campaign Coordinator
matthew.allen@student.adelaide.edu.au



Make a difference on top of the world...

If you or someone you know is interested in having a life altering experience and of changing the world in a small, beautiful and meaningful way, visit our website at www.sikkimhimalayanacademy.org for more information about how to volunteer as a teacher.

Location

A school in a small village in the shadow of the world's third highest mountain, Kanchenzunga, at the end of the Himalayas in Sikkim, India. Bordered by Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan.

Duties

- teach tribal kids aged 5 – 13 in the subjects of English, Art, Maths, Science, Social Studies, General Knowledge, PE.
- recite Buddhist, Hindu and English prayers before bed and receive a goodnight hug from 32 different kids every evening.
- play cricket, draw picture, organise games, run art and craft activities, go on walks to the river and look at the stars with the students on weekend and afternoons.

Person Specification

Energetic, enthusiastic, easygoing person with a sense of humour. Able to teach a class of up to 10 using the provided curriculum and text books.

Prepared to put up with a few hardships

(hard bed, basic food, no tv, isolation) in return for a life changing experience.

Must like children!

Experience

Experience of teaching or working with children preferred, not essential.

Pay

You will receive the satisfaction of making a difference to the lives of some wonderful kids. Bonus: the unconditional love of 32 little nuggets.

Costs

Make your own way there. Make your own way back. Rent is \$8 per month for your own hut. Free meals. Unlike other voluntary opportunities, basically free.

Duration

Anything up to 2 months from February to November each year (maximum visa stay in this part of India).

Organisation

Sikkim Himalayan Academy is a non profit, multi faith school for the most disadvantaged students in the state. The students are a mix of Sherpas, indigenous Lepchas, Nepaalis and Tibetans. The live and study at the school and receive an excellent education they could never expect in their own village.



Hey All,

You may have heard the latest on the VSU front. Last week Brendan Nelson admitted that it may be difficult to implement VSU for next year. That came the day after *The Australian* tired to get hold of secret documents (through a Freedom of Information Request) that the Department of Education, Science and Training had prepared for Nelson outlining backup plans in case he can't get his preferred option of VSU through.

Added to the antics was Barnaby Joyce who stated he would vote to see these documents made public, then didn't. (But crossed the floor for the first time over changes to the Trade Practices Act, after being tricked by Labor and the minor parties.) He's again stated his intention to vote against the current legislation. However Nelson's been out saying the government intends to pass the legislation this year. It looks increasingly unlikely that it will be able to be implemented in time for the start of next year. A number of Vice-Chancellors (not ours) have flat out stated to the government that there is no way it can be implemented for next year. Howard and a number of other Liberals have since been out stating that University Administrations have known about the governments plans since before the last election.

So there's plenty of uncertainty in the air, and we're not off the hook yet. But there's definitely been some good news, and it's been a while coming. Look out in next week's edition of *On Dit* for a more comprehensive roundup on where the legislation's sitting at the moment.

For all the latest, e-mail: saua@adelaide.edu.au and ask to sign up to the SAUA E-Newsletter.

Equity and Welfare Officer Nominations

The Students' Association Council recently decided to create the position of Equity and Welfare officer. With VSU coming in, it is unlikely that any of the office bearers will be paid, thus we are looking at ways to spread the workload around. As such, we've created yet another position, and we are calling for nominations for people who may be interested in running for it. Nominations need to be sent in writing to me at: david.pearson@adelaide.edu.au by Friday the 21st of October, by 5pm.

General Secretary Applications

The Students' Association Council recently decided to create the position of General Secretary, whose responsibilities would include compiling the SAUA e-newsletter, taking the minutes of SAUA Council, and putting the packs for Council together. If you are interested in this position, please e-mail me at david.pearson@adelaide.edu.au, Nominations are currently open and close on the 21st of October at 5pm. They have been extended because of some confusion regarding the exact time nominations were to close last time.

NUS Observer Applications

Anyone interested in attending the NUS national conference, as an observer for the Students' Association needs to submit a letter of interest to me at david.pearson@adelaide.edu.au.

edu.au, Nominations are currently open and close again on the 21st of October at 5pm. Again nominations have been extended due to confusion as to when nominations were due.

Save Student Media Pub-Crawl and BBQ:

Student Media will be as much under threat under VSU as every other area of the AUU. As such the Media Club, Student Radio and *On Dit*, have bound together to bring you the Media Pub Crawl which will be on the 21st of October Starting at 6pm in the UniBar. It costs only \$5 for AUMA (Adelaide University Media Club) members, or \$8 for non Members. Or for \$10 you can join the club and come on the pub-crawl.

See you all there, as usual please free to contact me with any concerns, ideas, etc.

Cheers

David Pearson - SAUA President
david.pearson@adelaide.edu.au



Some things to do this week:

-join the SAUA women's collective. Good times and fun meetings. Yea.

- down a shot-glass of salty water before you go to bed after a night of drinking. Ironically, salt stops dehydration of the cells.

-Another Feminism 101? Yes! Come along to the YWCA Young Women's Forum Tuesday October 18th, led by Chilla Bulbeck from the Adelaide University Gender studies department. 5.30 - 7.30pm, YWCA, 17 Hutt street.

-read Nietzsche. Great insight into the human will to power AND funny moustache.

-Splash out at the YWCA Lilith Magazine Launch on Saturday November 19th, 8 till late @ FAD Bar, 130 Waymouth Street. FREE

-Take a loved one to the new movie based on the backpackers' murders, *Wolf Creek*. You'll never want to touch another human being again.

-read *Elle Dit*, the fabulous women's edition of *On Dit* from last week, if you haven't already - you silly goose.

-Who thought fried cheese would work? Try Haloumi. Delicious.

-Do you support the proposed changes to Victorian abortion laws? Register your vote with the Age Poll at <http://www.theage.com.au/>

-Student Apathy getting you down? Approach a student politician and ask them to tell you about VSU. Watch the muscles in their face contort and their mouth twitch with mixed joy, confusion and apprehension that you're going to reject them. I've often wondered what I looked like.

-Come to the Seventy 7 Pairs of Shoes Exhibition, which tackles the issues of domestic violence through the international language of shoes! True Quote. 77 prominent Australians including Andrew Denton, Cathy Freeman, and Missy Higgins have donated their shoes. Miss Gladys Sym Choon & Emporium 233/235A Rundle Street, Adelaide on Friday 21 October 2005.

If you are interested in being involved with the SAUA women's department or the new women's collective, please email me at: melissa.purcell@adelaide.edu.au

Cheerio!

Mel



What is a Counter Calendar?

Each year the University of Adelaide produces a subject guide that has details about subjects that students may undertake. Bizarrely they title this as the University Calendar, but don't let the name confuse you - it has nothing to do with dates.

So, the **Counter Calendar** is an alternative subject guide to that provided by the University. It is compiled by the Education Department of the Students' Association for the start of each academic year. Unlike the official University calendar the Counter Calendar only has details about elective subjects (the one you are allowed to choose yourself).

What's the point of a Counter Calendar?

Its aim is to provide up-to-date and honest information on courses for the following year. The Counter Calendar gives a student perspective on subjects that will assist in making the best-suited choice for you. It should be used in conjunction with the official university calendar for maximum benefit. The official university calendar gives you all the 'surface' information, and then Counter Calendar will reveal the harsh realities...

Without you guys Calendar Counter can't exist!

It is your contribution that makes the Counter Calendar possible. Without your responses, other students following in your footsteps will be none the wiser, blindly entering uni life without any wise words of advice from their elders. So please take the time to complete these questionnaires about elective subjects that you have completed.

If you would like to fill out a survey please email jessica.cronin@adelaide.edu.au or you can pick one up at the Student Media BBQ/Live Broadcast on the **Barr Smith Lawns this Wednesday from 12pm**. You can complete a form for each elective you have taken.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT COLLECTIVE

There will be an SAUA Education Department Collective on the **20th October @ 12pm**. Please meet in the Students' Association for this meeting.

This is the first ever Education Department Collective. We will be brainstorming ideas for campaigns for the end of this year and the beginning of next. We will also be coming up with a list of issues to do with University Quality of Learning and Teaching. This information will then be discussed with the Vice-Chancellor at a student forum.

If you would like to sign up to the Ed Collective yahoogroup please email edcollective_aduni-subscribe@yahoogleroups.com.au

Cheers,
Jess Cronin
Education Vice President

NOVEL OPINIONS

Well my novelty gadget is already invented, but for a few minor adjustments. I need an IT or engineering student to implement these in order to get a working model, but firstly here is the deal. Have you ever heard of jitter bugs? Well, if not, they are these little things that look like oversized silver tic-tacs that dance about all by themselves. Ask somebody who grew up in a post-war household, their entertainment was simpler in those times. True! Anyhow, even in these times of uni student affluenza (it's spring now, almost time to get out your Hamilton sunscreen) or what's that I hear Kimoe, 'effluence' you say? Well, as I was saying in these modern times, I am in dire need of something (i.e. an extra useless gadget) to keep me focused as opposed to sleepy or distracted. So, to fill this gaping design void, I present, the jitterbug extraordinaire. Think large moving jellybean designed to keep you awake and on the job. Unlike the traditional jitterbug, it jitters with spontaneity and according to a complicated matrix coordinated to work with the natural span of your attention. It is about the size of the first segment of your little finger, and simply sits on your page (handy paperweight too) and jitters about every now and then. For those of you who study with phone handy, you can attach it to that, so if you have just been reawakened by the phone, the jitterbug will consider itself replaced and avoid jittering at that interval. The range of jitterbug options will be diversified, one for your computer screen too-kind of like that inane paperclip character, but carefully crafted (and able to be customized) to be a lot less offensive! You can set it to different rates of jittering, specially designed for your attention span, so that as soon as you begin to drift off, it begins to jitter once more and refocus your attention on the page you were reading or writing. And for those of you wanting to know, no it does not talk, so if that snooze really was the only viable option for your tired mind and body at that moment, your drooping eyelids will render it invisible and ineffective. The perfectly healthy study aid....

Edith Pedler

My novelty item would be a heater-jacket. Don't laugh like all my friends did, it's a really good idea! Anyway, I'm always cold, I hate winter, so I thought it would be great if I could invent a jacket/coat that had an element in it that could be heated in some way (some scientific person told me this wouldn't work, but we're talking a dream novelty item, right?) and it would be like walking around with a portable electric blanket. And somehow it adjusts to your body heat and the surrounding temperatures. you could wear NOTHING underneath it and still be warm. To top it off, it would come in male and female designs, look fantastic, and come in a variety of colours, lengths and styles. I think if I could make it work, it would definitely make me my millions.

Esha Thaper

The world needs far more useless inventions. They would provide valuable time wastage and may preoccupy the masses enough to ignore the erosion of their civil and legal liberties by the Lernean hydra of political correctness, Feminazis and international communism (oh and those pesky cliquist politicians and captains of industry too). To mangle a quotation, no one has ever lost any money by underestimating the intelligence or rapaciousness of the average consumer. And at such an excellent time too! The fall of the old Soviet bloc has opened up vast new vistas of capital exploitation along the former Iron and bamboo curtains, yea, into the very heart of the beasts themselves. Imagine it: millions of newly emancipated commies, snared within the tentacles of the 'free' market (as in "we are free to exploit your foreign arses") and leeches of their filthy lucre! MWAHAHAHAHAHA!!! ah, you were asking about an invention I would make? Well, that's simple: a machine to streamline the process of copulation, without all the negative side effects such as economic loss due to gifts, the burden of raising your horrible, toothless spawn, and love, that syphilis of the emotions. There would no longer be a need for the time wasting experience of dating, which is really nothing more than a process of elimination. Just BAM! Instant visual and tactile stimulation, orgasm guaranteed within 5 minutes or your money back. I would call it the internet.

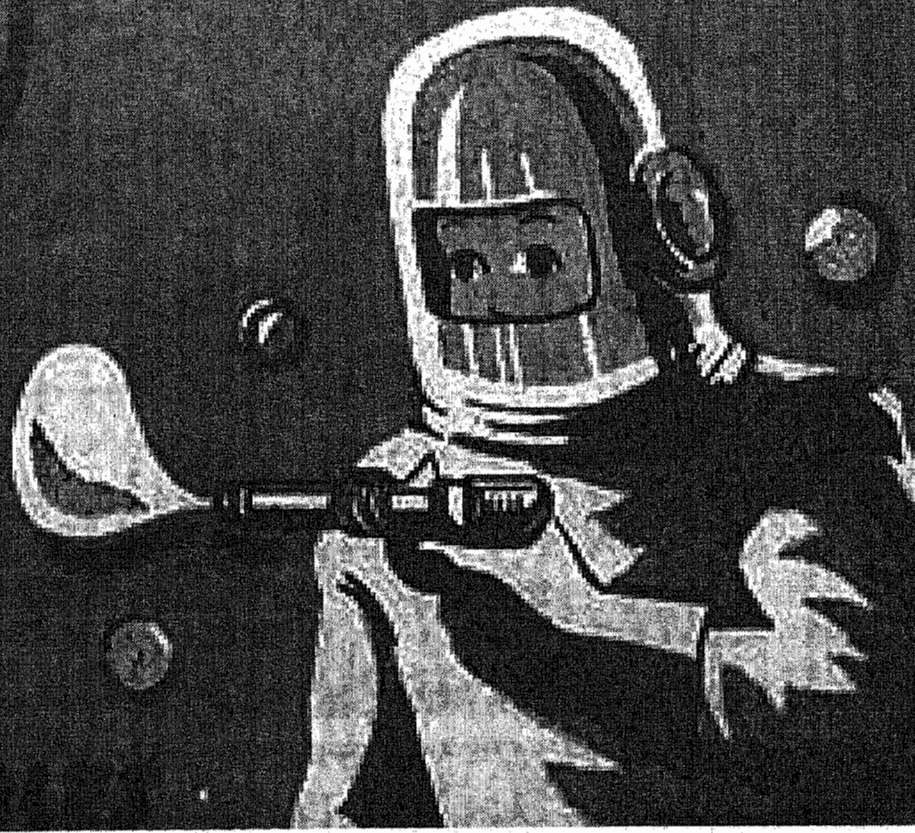
El Pollo Diablo

How in the world could one make millions from a novelty item? How would one be able to invent something that would appeal to everyone? In trying to please the world, I would try to give them a world: in less ambiguous terms, a mini, scale, working world. For the budding dictators, power-hungry, or just plain sadistic little children (or adults) of the world, they could have their very own community to control. Perhaps it would be tiny, contained in a glass sphere and you could somehow physically and mentally control the little people, carrying it in your pocket in case you had a sudden urge to ruin someone's life. Perhaps it would be some sort of virtual, computer world over which you had total control - less real, and less fun than manipulating real little people, but at the same time, slightly more possible, and a tad more ethical. But the point, however it is done, to be able to carry around, and control one's own miniature world, society, etc, would definitely be a novelty item that I would buy.

Emma Stewart

GUN

BIG



VOX

In this week's Vox Pop we decided to ask students about their marriage aspirations (or lack of). Work your way through On Dit's demented maze to match each person with their answer but also with their perfect match! If you can be the first to tell On Dit who is a perfect match for who, you'll win a romantic prize!

Georgina & Angeline



Wearing white on their wedding day?

1. Him first, so then I can slut around afterwards. Otherwise you'd be dying younger.
2. It depends on whether I have a good job, about 8 years.
3. Yes, but I don't think that they exist, let's hope they do. I would be nice if it's a fireman, but I hate Blake.
4. I musn't do the Ally McBeal thing and adopt a kid, so I don't plan on letting it get too late.

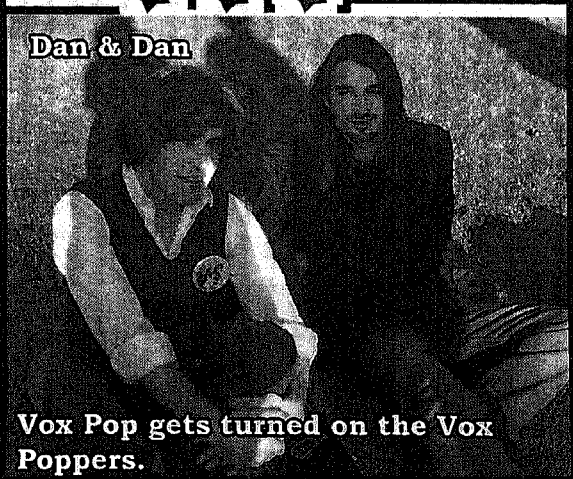
Kelly



Prowling the campus at night.

1. If I've been married to them for more than half my life, yes. Otherwise, I'd choose life.
2. When I find someone who's both sexy and spontaneous.
3. No. I don't think there's any single ideal person, but I'd happily marry someone who's just cool.
4. No. Marriage isn't a necessity, and marrying someone doesn't make them right for you. I'd prefer not to be forever attached to someone out of fear of loneliness.

Dan & Dan



Vox Pop gets turned on the Vox Poppers.

1. a) I hate missing out on what others are still enjoying.
b) There was a time when I would have liked to die first but now I just want to live as long as possible.
2. a) Quickly, as long as it is with someone I don't know. The ceremony is very spectacular but I think marriage is a bit insulting for someone that you really care about.
b) As soon as I found someone incredible, so it could be soon or never.
3. a) I have a very intangible ideal, so it's pretty unlikely a real person could be formed out of it.
b) At the moment I know of no person.
4. a) If I settled I'd be going back on all the vows that I'd made to myself before I was senile.
b) I could see myself calling up an old flame.

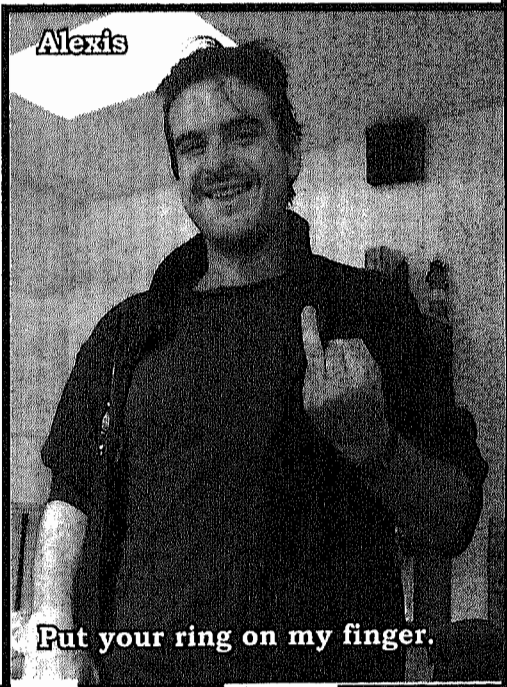
POP

1. Would you prefer to die before your spouse or vice versa?
2. When do you plan on getting married?
3. Do you have someone in mind? Do you have an ideal and do you think the ideal person for you exists?
4. Let's say you haven't met him/her by 40 will you think about settling for someone else?



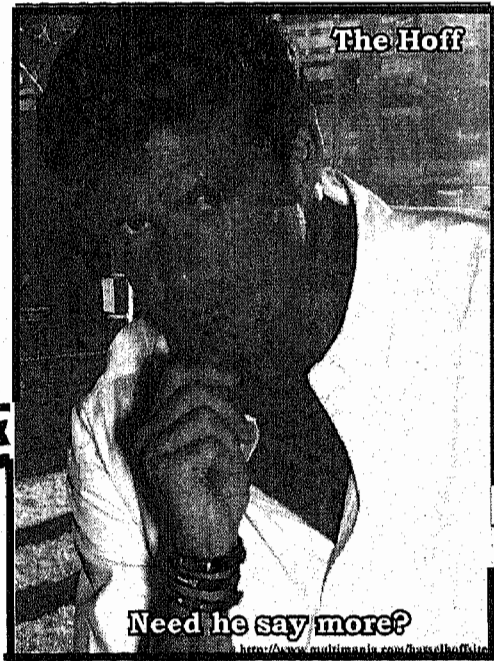
1. My spouse, then I can go to old peoples homes and pick up cute old people.
2. At least six years, and then reassess.
3. Hmm, not that i can admit to, only if they let me swing.
4. I'd be one of those old spinsters with lots of cats.

1. a) If you didn't love them, second. But then I wouldn't be married to anyone I didn't love.
b) First, so they can mourn me.
2. a) I could surprise myself.
b) Yes, but not for ten years.
3. a) I have an ideal but I haven't met them yet.
b) Ditto.
4. a) What's the point if you spend you're life pining for 'the one'. You're better off settling than dying alone. By then you'll have had your heart broken so many times it won't matter anymore.
b) I will never settle.



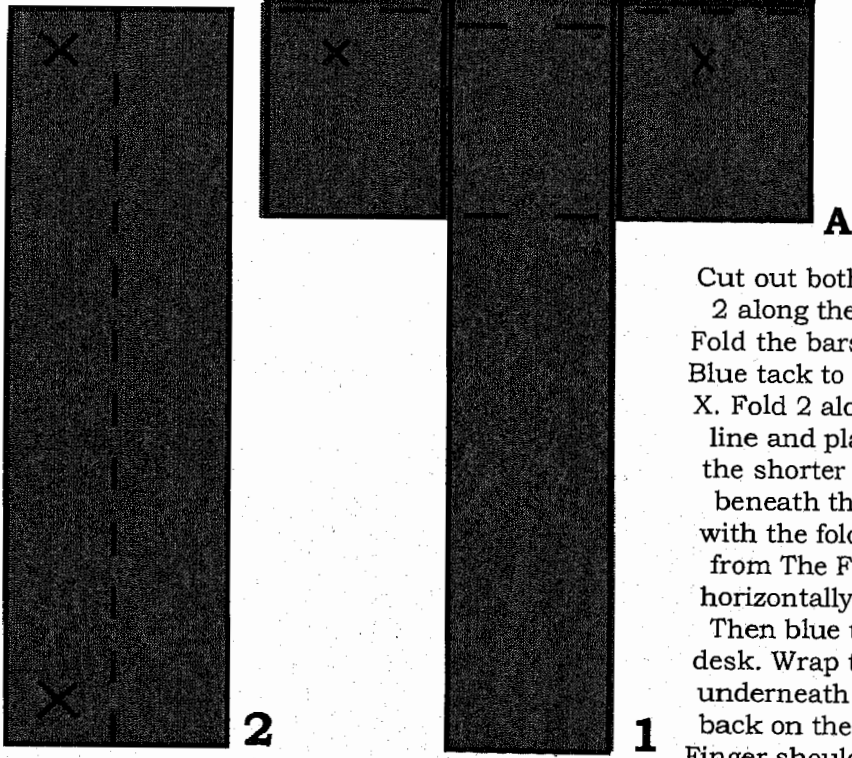
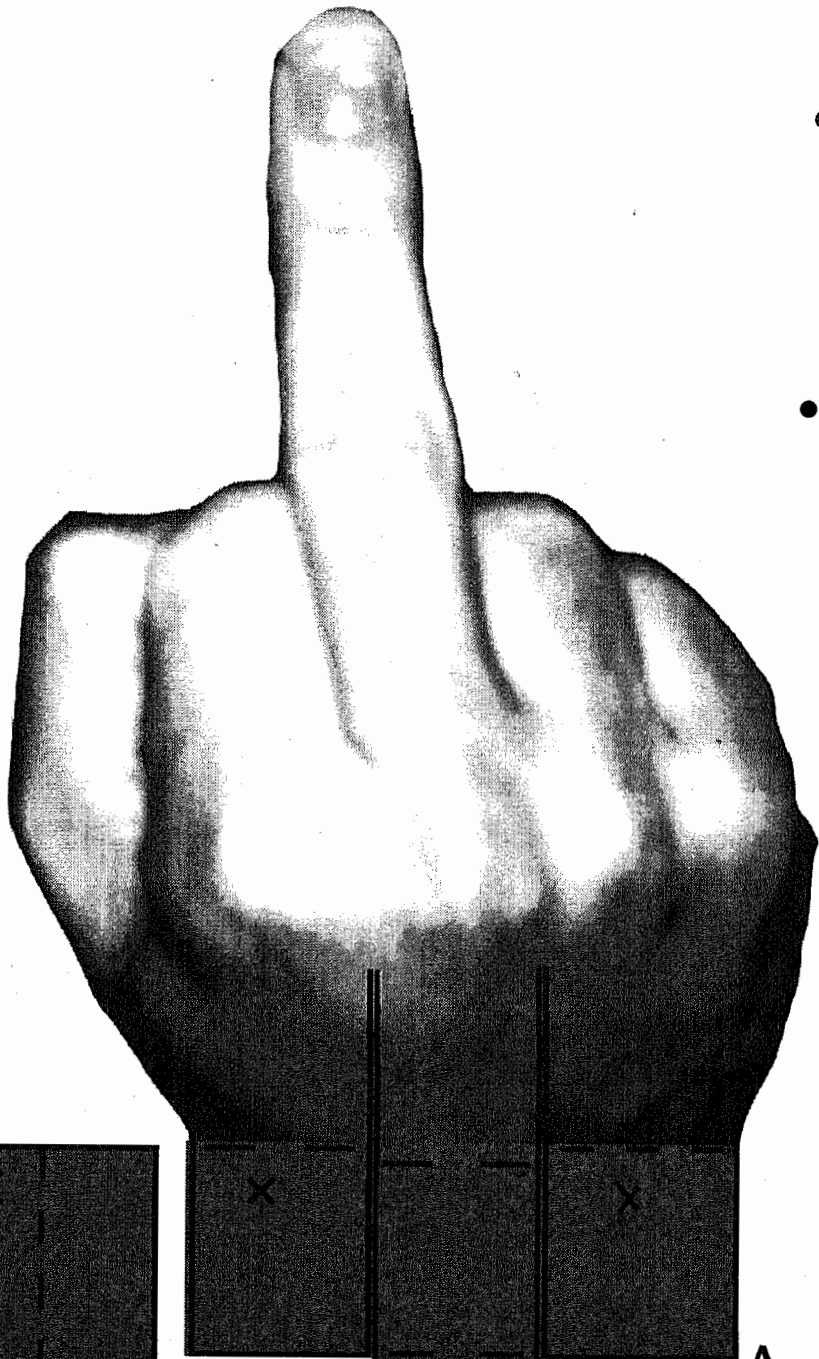
1. Them, I have to think of my fans.
2. Only in Utah.
3. You're always chasing that dream you know.
4. To me marriage is like a relationship.

Come down to the On Dit office at 3pm Thursday to collect your free pair of 3D glasses!



Anti-Social Things To Make & Do

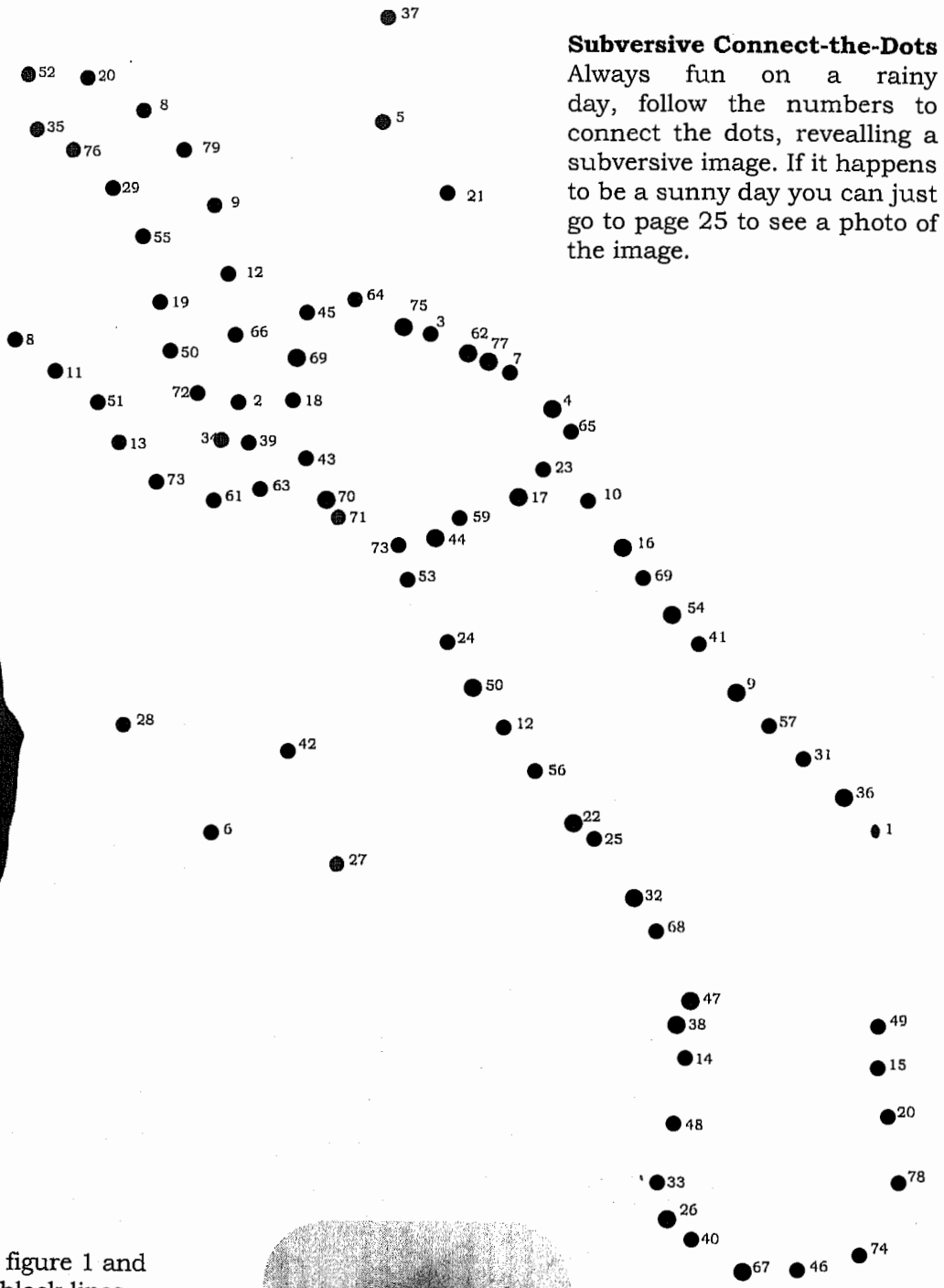
with Dan



The 'Excuse Me?' Finger

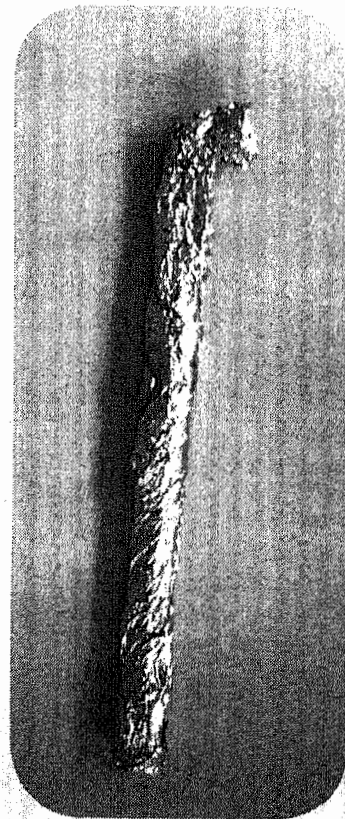
Because this device only needs to be blue tacked it can really be transported to any appropriate surface. Let's say you're eating at a uni bench and are about to be approached by a Red Bull promo girl or Greenpeace fundraiser, slap down The Finger, pull back and relax. Also useful in both home and work environments.

Cut out both figure 1 and 2 along the black lines. Fold the bars of 1 forward. Blue tack to desk at points X. Fold 2 along the dotted line and place on top of the shorter bars of 1 but beneath the longer bar with the fold facing away from The Finger, laying horizontally along line A. Then blue tack 2 to the desk. Wrap the longer bar underneath 2. By pulling back on the long tab The Finger should fling forward emphatically, giving a reality check to any oncomer.



Subversive Connect-the-Dots

Always fun on a rainy day, follow the numbers to connect the dots, revealing a subversive image. If it happens to be a sunny day you can just go to page 25 to see a photo of the image.



Emergency Pipe

Due to the late night nature of smokin' down you may not have access to an Off Ya Tree store to replace a lost/disfunctional/confiscated apparatus. Light weight, easily disposed and quickly constructed, the aluminium foil pipe is the perfect solution. Role the barrel first using a pen, scrunching the foil around the pen for strength. Then turn the end of the barrel upwards and open it out using a gumnut, texta lid or thimble for shape. Remove the pen and your ready to go!

WARNING: ONCE THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ADOPTS BRITISH STYLE 'ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR' LAWS, THE ABOVE "THINGS TO MAKE AND DO" MAY BE ILLEGAL AND PUNISHABLE BY SEVERAL YEARS IMPRISONMENT.

TAPPING INTO NICHE MARKETS: THE LONG TAIL

How many words do you use on a regular, everyday basis? Perhaps one hundred? And how many words do you think you know? Too hard to guess? Finally how many words are in the English language? Lots. The occurrence of many barely used words in our language, with a disproportionate share of word use going to a small subset of words, is the concept of the long tail. Many people are aware of the concept of the long tail, especially in relation to the example above. Put briefly, it is the statistical occurrence of "power-law" distributions in populations. It means there is an incredibly large amount of observations in the population that occur with very little frequency. But this techno-jargon can best be explained with some examples. The long tail is present in music, film, television and even literature because the big corporations controlling these mediums focus on marketing a small set of content to the general public. This is exacerbated by retail outlets that have limited shelf space, and hence generally showcase only the latest "popular" content. Hence we are bombarded by five or six hit films (think Tom Cruise), a handful of teenyboppers (a la Britney, 50 Cent, and the BEP), *Desperate Housewives*, *Grey's Anatomy* and Dan F***ng Brown.

Some people can see through the fog though, and may actually have tastes that

vary from popular content to obscure titles and cult classics, given that thousands of songs, films, books and shows are produced every year. And here is where the fun begins. With the advent of online retailing, offering the entire tail has suddenly become a feasible business plan. The very nature of online business makes this so; they don't have limited shelf space, they don't need to keep large inventories of low selling items, and they don't need multiple stores to reach the entire world market. For examples just think of Amazon.com, offering just about every book ever written and iTunes, doing the same for music.

For consumers this represents an exciting time for satiating wants; it is now possible to order just about any obscure content from anywhere in the world, and from any time in the past. Making the tail more accessible is, or has the potential to be, a huge money maker for those involved, because there is a largely unsatisfied demand in these markets. People will only ever devote a limited effort to finding an obscure item, and thus making it easier to find such items should encourage more sales. To put it in context think about your own personal tastes; are there any bands, books or films you rate in your top ten that wouldn't be stocked in any retail store?

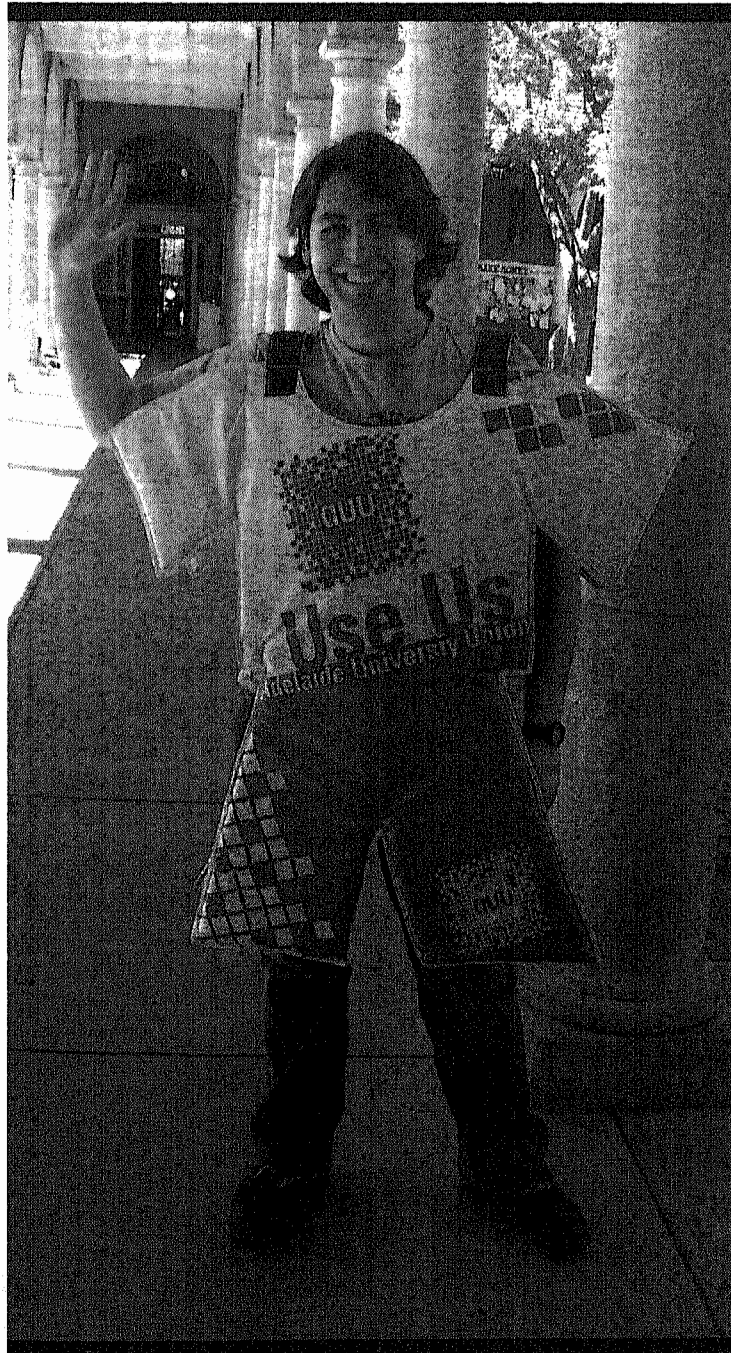
The future holds promise for lovers of cult

classics, the obscure, the old or just the plain strange as people are able to boost their collections of CDs, DVDs, and books to include all their favourite titles. And while it will still take time for the online world to offer everything we could ever want, the tail is firmly caught in the consumers trap.

To encourage everyone to think about their own obscure demands here are some of mine...

- Art - A.W. Bouguereau, a brilliant French academic painter, look for his piece in the SA art gallery.
- TV - Remember *Kingswood Country*, *Doogie Howser M.D.*, and *You Can't Do That on Television?* TV at its best.
- Film - *The Tunnel*, an account of the tunnels between East and West Germany, based on a true story.
- Books - *Serengeti Shall Not Die*, another inspiring true story of a father and son team of zoologists.
- Music - *Tangerine Dream*, the godfathers of trance.

Adam Monkhouse



Job Choices: Marketing

Often referred to as the most marketable commodity at Adelaide University, I decided to interview John Pezy about his dizzying rise to SAUA President, which started unsurprisingly as a marketing meat puppet just last year. Perhaps the lamest job ever, life as 'Checkers' (the name given to the mascot by some marketing genius) offers an insight into the spectacularly mediocre world of marketing.

Have you had a worse job before?

No, this was actually my first job.

Is the suit an occupational health and safety hazard, considering it's so tempting for kids to take a running punch at you, yet it has none of the protective padding of a traditional novelty suit?

Most people wanted to either hug me or punch me, and both types asked permission first, so I generally directed the blows towards the padded area.

Are there any other hazards to the job?

Well on a hot day it gets pretty sweaty in here.

What part of your body gets the sweatiest?

Well it ain't my chest and the suit don't really cover much else if you know what I mean.

What kind of insults have been thrown at you this year?

Michelin Man. I've blocked the rest out of my memory. The laughing and pointing from young children tends to make you hurt inside.

What kind of personality does it take to be a successful marketing executive?

Not too much pride, you have to be prepared for a lot of laughing. You also have to be quite good at talking to people, I've had conversations for half an hour before about the suit and the AUU.

Do you feel any kinship now with promo girls?

I guess I can kind of understand but they're quite different jobs really. I don't think I was chosen for my appearance specifically. I'm just a body to hang a sign on whereas their bodies are usually used as the signs, which is worse I guess.

John Pezy gets paid \$17 - \$18 p/h.

interview by Dan J

“I’m always amazed that people will actually choose to sit in front of the television and just be savaged by stuff that belittles their intelligence.”

Alice Walker

A cursory glance at a week’s television schedule will more often than not reveal a hodgepodge of dodgy crime shows, medical outings and the all powerful (and all encompassing) reality programme *du jour*. Yes indeed, we as a race are just so desperate for a splash more reality in our lives, we’ve assigned it demi god status on the ‘toob. Now, I’m saying nothing new here. Wittier writers than myself have taken on the reality formula and stripped it barer than an episode of *Uncut*, and to much greater mirth. But gosh darn, I still manage to remain utterly perplexed at our obsession with what is, for all intents and purposes, a heavily constructed version of reality that ultimately appeals to the *schadenfreude* in all of us. Have our lives become so bleak, so dreary, so apparently two dimensional that the option of consuming others’ lives voyeuristically is not just appealing, but arguably essential? If that’s the case, then plug me in for a recharge because I just can’t get enough of that reality love.

It all began back in the summer of 2001. I was living in a fairly ordinary house and working in a frankly demoralising and mentally destructive waitressing job. One night, as I slouched in bed considering the iron fence that I was lucky enough to have as a panoramic view, the distinctive tribal bellows of the *Survivor* theme song filtered into my ears. It took one episode of backstabbing, bitching and island dwelling to get me addicted. Ten glorious seasons later, and I still think Jeff Probst is one of the handsomest men in the world. And even though I shall love others, none will ever quite come close to matching the raw passion that *Survivor* incites in me.

My friend Inga is perplexed by my need for regular reality injections.

“But Audrey,” she says. “You’re so...intelligent!”

Intelligent maybe, but bloodthirsty? Definitely. I like nothing more than to see a motley crue of mostly impassioned Americans battling it out for reality supremacy. It’s fun for me to watch their scheming, twisting and slithering and scoff, “S’not how I would’ve done it.” The raw satisfaction of seeing one of the villains get booted off sends an adrenaline charge through me unparalleled yet by man nor feast. In my twisted reality world, I reward scheming, plotting, wheeling and dealing as long as the rewards are good and the charm goes up to eleven.

Think about those labels. Villains. Heroes. Jesters. Saints. Reality television is less about reality than the government is about truth. It’s marketed, constructed, packaged and buffed to shine brilliantly on your plasma screens, with just the hint of a few cracks here and there for authenticity.

Okay. Nothing new there. But even I can admit when some shows have gone too far.

Take the spate of body improvement shows leaping off the US conveyor belt of late. Now,

I’m all for a bunch of fatties getting together and losing weight *en mass* until one emerges victorious as *The Biggest Loser* – but there’s something about network executives paying for people’s plastic surgery in order to create entertainment that leaves me just a little bit queasy. And as the producers of *Extreme Makeover* have recently found out, such shows can be very litigious. A recent contestant on the surgery extravaganza was traumatised at being told her recovery time would be outside of the show’s filming schedule, so she’d have to pack up her bowling bag and boot scoot it back to Texas quick smart. Considering the same producers had just exposed her to secret video tapes of her ENTIRE family discussing how revoltingly unattractive she was, with her mother-in-law claiming she

ARIAs and who will win *Australian Idol* are not only sought, but validated! It’s as if the previous twenty something years of your existence was but a bland nightmare. You have been born into the kind of star you always knew you were meant to be – dull, forgettable, with arguably few brain cells but with hair done by Toni & Guy and your name on the door list.

Of course, the real matter for discussion is who allows these average dunderheads to become the glittery d-list celebrities they are. Obviously, it’s the public. This is my major problem with reality television (aside from the other major problem being that brazenly patriarchal and insipid shows like *Australian Princess* are not only conceived, but produced, made, paid for, applied for, screened and ultimately consumed). We revere the celluloid

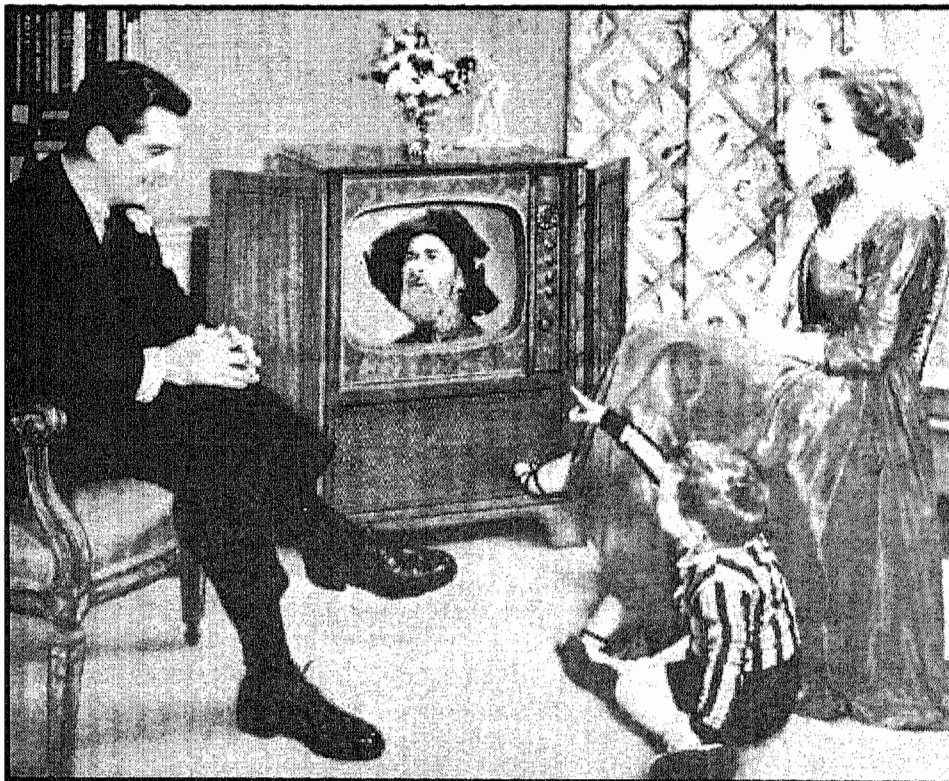
to such degrees of insanity that it means any old duffer can get their mug on TV and somehow be seen to have done something extraordinary. The most average of the average people that appear on *Big Brother* don’t entertain the public by discussing great works of literature or debating politics (although Tim brought a tiny glimmer of hope). Quite the opposite, in fact. It’s almost as if they are deliberately vying for the Stupidest Person Alive award while often ridiculously proclaiming how ‘intellect’ they are. At the risk of causing ‘conflict’, for me, it all hinges uncomfortably on this seeming rejection of intelligence that pervades Australian popular culture. Tim wouldn’t have been anywhere near as popular as he was if he hadn’t also been extremely funny and self-deprecating. His slow reveal of himself ensured a new viewing market for *Big Brother*, with many previous rejectors of the show suddenly rooting for him to win to prove that, albeit rarely, sometimes intelligence can

beat the lowest common denominator in this country. But it was all to no avail – the Logan brothers, tepid, ridiculous and jovial as they were, took home the million and the majority that voted for them got to pat themselves on the back for maintaining the ‘good Aussie bloke’ status quo we strive so hard collectively to uphold.

Salvadore Dali once said, “What is a television apparatus to man, who has only to shut his eyes to see the most inaccessible regions of the seen and the never seen, who has only to imagine in order to pierce through walls and cause all the planetary Baghdads of his dreams to rise from the dust?”

But then, Dali never had the privilege of seeing Derryn Hinch shake it on *Dancing With The Stars*.

Audrey Hefferneggar would love to compete on *The Amazing Race* with her pops.

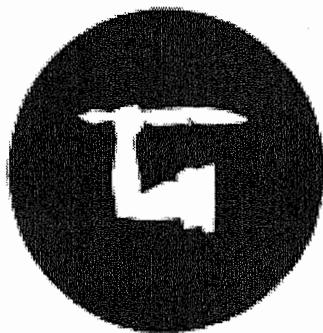


EVERYONE KNEW THAT MONDAY NIGHT WAS FAMILY NIGHT...

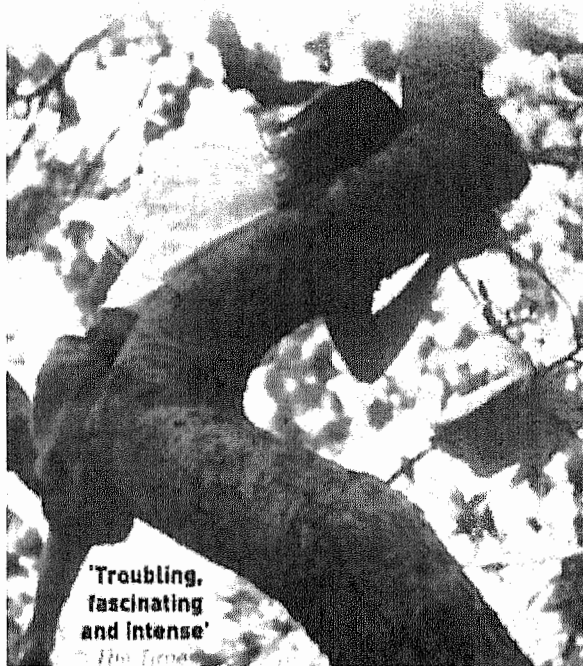
never thought her son would marry such a fug, she was relatively damaged. As if having her dream of beauty shattered wasn’t enough to deal with, so overwhelmed with guilt over her comments was said contestant’s sister that she killed herself on a cocktail of drugs and alcohol leaving the poor lamb to raise all three of her children while shopping at midnight to minimise the risk of people catching sight of her ugly kisser. The ABC network in the states really bugged up that one, yet disturbingly it isn’t the first death suffered as a result of Reality TV Gone Wrong.

With such opportunity for public ridicule and trauma, why on earth would anyone apply to these shows? Most often I imagine it’s the promise of celebrity and stardom. Look at the dizzying heights of success achieved by the various *Big Brother* casts. But kidding aside, if Blair McDonaghue and Fitzy can ascend to the enviable positions of soap star and radio hack then why shouldn’t anyone be able to? Being a reality teeve star *means* something. Suddenly, your opinions on crucial world issues like the

MARY MARTIN



BOOKSHOP

BELLA BATHURST
SPECIAL

Special
Bella Bathurst
Picador, \$22

Traumatising games, hateful words, twisted psychological torture - welcome to the realm of the teenage girl. Without wanting to stereotype those special years of manic bitchiness too heavily, it is a well known fact that teenage girls bear dangerous amounts of power when it comes to the ability to destroy another's life. The old adage lies through its bared teeth - 'sticks and stones may break your bones, but I've got something worse...'

Special tells the story of a group of teenage school girls spending a post exam period in the Forest of Dean in England. Their activities are boring (gym) and strenuous (hiking) and their entertainment is limited. The lack of mental stimulation proves a volatile trigger for a series of events that will see the girls experience drugs, sex, drinking and mental anguish. As the novel progresses, it becomes apparent to the girls what is obvious to the reader - they are their own worst enemies, and each bears the ability to cut mental scars deeper than the physical.

Bella Bathurst appears to know her subject

well. She captures the uncertainty of female teenage years while shadowing it with the false bravado that precedes them. However, occasionally the language appears forced and clunky - visually, Bathurst is far too fond of using italics to provide emphasis. She has been vigourously endorsed by Maggie O'Farrell, whom I also accuse of being a little too enamoured of her ability to write.

Despite these irritations, *Special* does hit a number of observations bang on the head. Bathurst spends a great deal of time establishing a periphery character in Izzy, the allergic, unpopular and annoying scapegoat. As one of the four main characters Hen notes, "Izzy was the scratching post against which they all relieved their itches. Izzy was necessary because it was always necessary to have someone to hate. If it wasn't Izzy then it might well have been someone else. And, as Hen was aware, that person might well have been Hen."

Bathurst occasionally scratches uncomfortably close to the history of her reader - presuming that reader was also once a relatively typical teenage girl. Overall, it is an effective book with some room for improvement - much, ironically, like a teenage girl.

Clementine

A GLORIFIED TRIBUTE TO WHERE'S WALLY?

Ahh Wally. That adorably geeky man with a permanent grin on his chiselled features hiding in crowded scenes of various insane characters. Who can forget the adrenaline pumped race against time (and school mates) to spot him and the elated shout of "There he is!" as you spotted his stripy red and white jumper and beanie. Not to mention the glare from the wicked old librarian for yelling so loud... oh what fun! In the era before Harry Potter ruled children's imaginations Wally was the hero, and it was Wally who first made horn rimmed round glasses cool. Come to think of it Harry Potter looks like a teenage version of Wally hmm...

However these books were more than just finding Wally, Wally also had his own posse. These included his stalker girlfriend Wenda, who followed him everywhere, Wenda's dog Woof whose tail was all that would appear on page, Wizard Whitebeard who sends Wally on his quests to discover himself, and his devoted fan club the Wally Watchers. Like all good children's book there must be a bad guy and Wally's arch nemesis was Odlaw, who wore a black and yellow striped jumper and a mask over his eyes. He never actually did anything bad in the books yet "his bad deeds are many" according to the creator Martin Handford. Together these zany characters captured a generation of children's attention and brightened up the boring school library. Don't underestimate the educational factor within the *Where's Wally?* books for they were more than light comic relief. They provided a visually rich history lesson and a tour around the globe where from one page to the next you were magically transported from Ancient Rome to modern day New York, the pyramids to

pirate ships, the beach to the Stone Age. Who needs an atlas with Wally as your guide to the world!

This week's themed novelty edition provided me with the perfect excuse to pay tribute to my childhood friend Wally and indulge in the memories of a time of blissful ignorance, foot warmers and slap bands. Kudos to you Wal.

Random Facts about *Where's Wally?*

- In North America Wally is actually called Waldo and Odlaw is Waldo spelt backwards, as in diametric opposites.

- There was an internet prank of a Flash animation where you are supposedly looking for Wally but actually end up seeing a Harlequin foetus instead. (I looked it up... it's a baby covered in diamond shaped scales instead of skin and their face is pulled into a clown like grimace... eww!). The picture is accompanied by a loud scream causing sheer terror and a change of underwear for the viewer.

- There was a 13 episode television series made and broadcast on the ABC in Australia.

- There is supposedly a movie version being made this year by Nickelodeon Movies where Wally accidentally activates a time machine and has a space adventure.

- Where's Waldo has been banned in many American schools and libraries due to a topless mermaid being depicted in one of the pictures. A mini-puzzle edition was also banned in Long Island due to a cleverly (or not

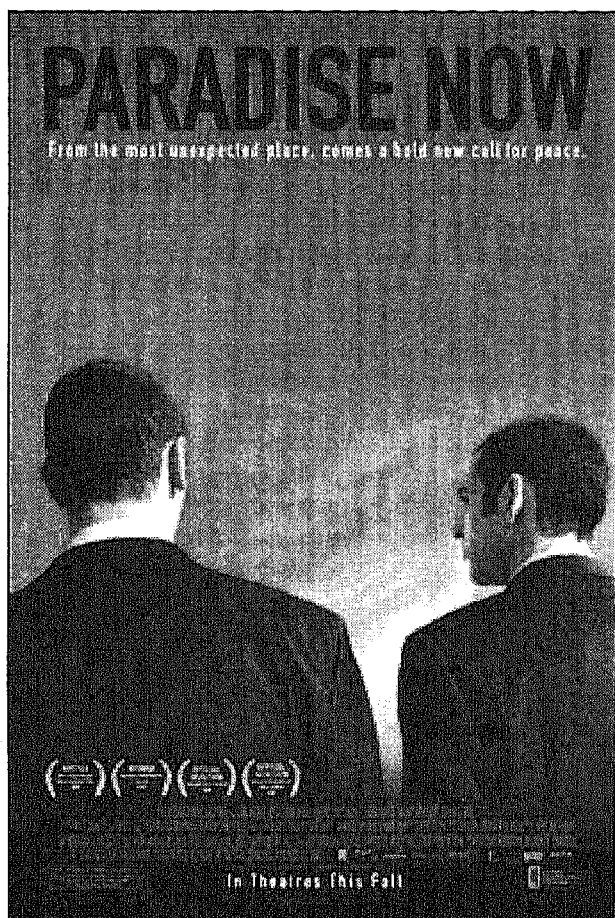
so!) hidden nipple that was visible in a crowded beach scene.

- A Maori version called 'Where's Waari?' has transformed the children's game of hide and seek into a history of the Maori through short stories.

Karlie Goetze



PARADISE NOW



Director: Hany Abu-Assad
Starring: Kais Nashef, Ali Suliman, Lubna Azabal - Said, Khaled, Suha

It is rarely easy to view a concept such as war from the perspective of all parties involved. The majority of Australians have been fed some form of information on terrorism - most of this information is relatively subjective. Whether accurate or not, certain figures across the world can be almost demonised - made into caricatured representations of evil. *Downfall*, released earlier this year, broke new ground as a mainstream film by humanising one of the most known figureheads of "evil" - Adolf Hitler. With *Paradise Now*, a film hailing from Palestine, we are given a fictional example of terrorism the Middle East, but the principle of remaining free of moral judgement is the same. *Paradise Now* presents terrorism and the motivations behind it, but thankfully manages to sidestep the biases that might not have been avoided by a lesser filmmaker.

Said (Nashef) and Khaled (Suliman) are close friends who work for another mechanic in Palestine. Both also hold very strong political opinions, a point of contention for friend Suha (Azabal). Suha is the more affluent of the three friends. She is also the more worldly of the

three, having travelled across many parts of Europe, and this is reflected in her demeanour. For example, when having her belongings inspected by troops as she enters Palestine, she calmly looks the men in the eyes. Suha is also unaware when Said and Khaled are called upon to carry out a suicide mission in Tel Aviv. She finds out later, as Said and Khaled are split up accidentally when their mission goes awry, and one of the two men begins to have second thoughts about the attack.

To say much more than that would spoil the story, suffice to say that *Paradise Now* does not try to justify terrorism in any form - nor does its story follow any predictable path. Writer/director Abu-Assad focuses on the events before an attack instead of the aftermath. The conflict he spins between the three friends is both absorbing and eventually chilling, raising numerous valid points on the concept of war. As one of the friends begins to waver, we identify that taking the lives of other people in demonstration requires a huge suspension of emotion and rationality. Being raised to believe that such acts are completely justified, and changing that belief, may be even harder.

Brian O'Neill

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD

Director: Jay Chandrasekhar
Starring: Seann William Scott, Johnny Knoxville, Jessica Simpson, Burt Reynolds & Willie Nelson

The long anticipated arrival of Jessica Simpson on the big screen is here people - you can breathe again! Here she puts on her cowgirl boots and gingham shirt to walk the Daisy Duke road. And I must admit - she's not half bad. Oooh, that hurt. Along with cousins Luke (Knoxville) and Bo (Scott), the Duke shenanigans are resurrected for some lighter-than-air fluff, allowing you to leave your brain at the door and have a giggle at the downright silly hi-jinx *The Dukes of Hazzard* guarantees.

Set in modern day, the boys may have been born in the 70's for this version, but they are still livin' it. Trading moonshine on the sly, driving around in the famous 'General Lee' Dodge Charger, eluding the local redneck law - Sheriff Coltrane, gettin' down and dirty with the local buxom tail and always cryin' a lively

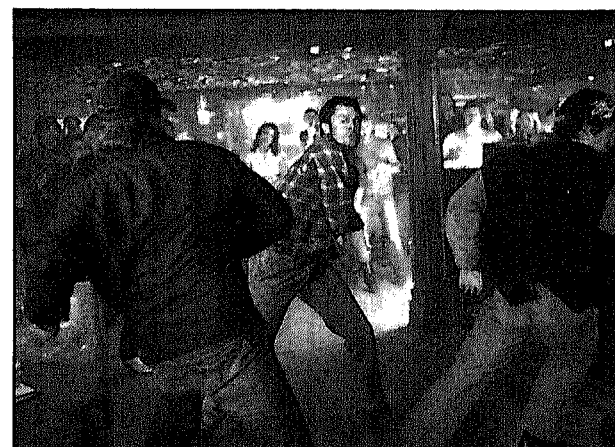
"Yeeeehaw" at any time of the day.

In this film of the much-loved and cheesy-as-hell 70's TV show, the conflict of the week is saving the beloved Duke family farm from the evil Boss Hogg (Reynolds) and his re-development plans. So what'll the Dukes do to save the day?! Watch and find out...

I've read some backlash from fans of the series and have used my powers of deduction to realise that the film does not remain completely true to the show. So if you are a fan of the series and have not yet seen the film, put your hopes in the "RUBBISH PLEASE" bins outside the cinema and enjoy the film for what it is - a rollicking high-energy yokel of a time! Oh, plus some hot action from Knoxville and Scott - or Simpson, depending on where your interests lie.



Lucky L.



80's teen movie quiz

Here's something for all you John Hughes fans out there: a little trivia game for those who can't get that Simple Minds song or Molly Ringwald out of your head. Answer the most questions correctly and quickly and the first in with the most answers right wins a little sumpin' spesh!

1. What was Anthony Michael Hall's character in *Sixteen Candles* actually credited as?
2. What kind of shoes did Sean Penn's character Spicoli make famous in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*?
3. Name the song Lloyd Dobler played for Diane Court through his ghetto blaster propped on his shoulders in *Say Anything*?
4. What did guys call Ferris Bueller's sister?
5. What did Ally Sheedy's Alison say happens to your heart when you grow up?
6. Who played the "Romeo" to Deborah Foreman's "Juliet" in *Romeo and Juliet*-inspired *Valley Girl*?
7. Who turned out to be the head vampire in *The Lost Boys*?
8. In *Risky Business*, how did Joel Goodsen make the money to buy back his parents stolen furniture?
9. What did dorky Wyatt and Gary forget to do when they tried to make a second woman for Ian and Max in *Weird Science*?
10. Who was the crown prince writer/director of teen movies in the 80's (a totally subjective question, but hey, you get that!)?

THE PROPOSITION

Director: John Hillcoat

Starring: Guy Pearce, Ray Winstone, Emily Watson, David Wenham & John Hurt

Nick Cave's literary headspace is much different to the current mode of his music. While The Bad Seeds have evolved into a new-testament era of love, joy and gospel choir, *The Proposition* is firmly rooted in his badass, gGod challenging laudation of profanity and violence. Many reviews of *The Proposition* have related it to the first Cave/Hillcoat collaboration, *Ghosts...of the Civil Dead*. However *The Proposition* delves even deeper into the unique and distinctive mind of Mr Cave, and is much more in the vein of his novel, *The Ass Saw The Angel*. Only here Cave's genius performs a much more voluble execution. Rather than religious mania to express the roots of the Southern Bible Belt, Cave uses a morality which is much more in tune with the Australian Outback: family. In the past the protagonist for much of Cave's violence, incarceration and effects has been religion, but now these same emotions are in the face of *storge*, family love, the bond between people otherwise brought together by chance.

This is the film that will save Australian cinema. It is a pity we have had to rely on our expatriates rather than new talent, to pave the way. The portrayal of 1880's Australia is explicit and foreboding. The landscape is a beautiful hell of red dirt, dying

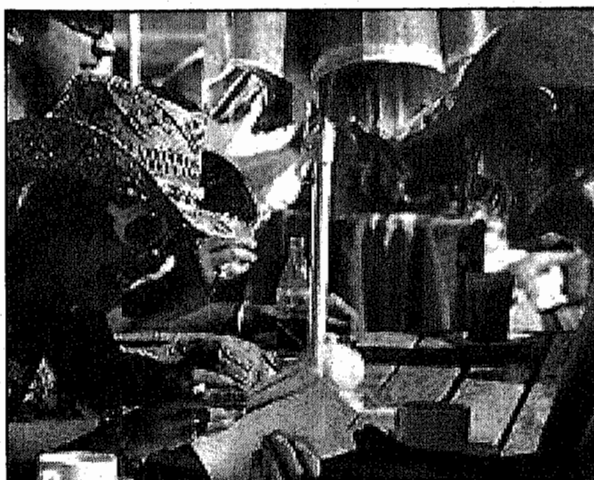
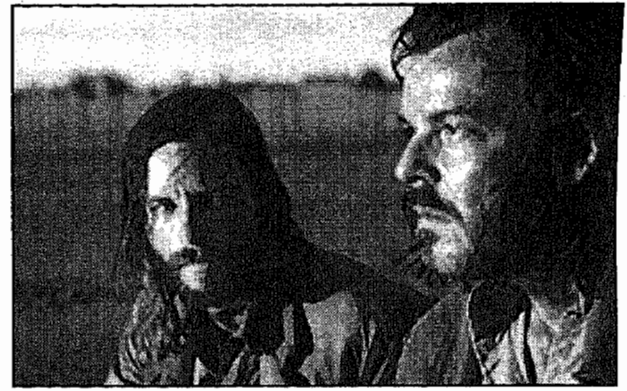
trees and all-encompassing no-man's-land. Cinematographer Benoit Delhomme has done an exceptional job accenting the acute friction lying twixt the reality of Australia and what the colonialists would like it to be. The tensions between the gentry of colonisation and the prisoners of it, between blacks that have fallen in line with white rule and those that haven't, and the terror of the outlaws of the day are geographically mapped, and everyone is an enemy. The vocabulary is elegiac. Even the violence has a heartfelt splendour to it that hasn't been seen in films since the original spaghetti westerns or samurai films.

Guy Pearce is quite stoic as main character Charlie Burns, although not required to carry any sort of charisma. He is a simple highwayman with morals and valour. The personality is supplied in buckets by learned bounty hunter and alcoholic Jellon Lamb (John Hurt). He is the definitive 'Cave' character, both wizened and bloodthirsty.

The soundtrack, written by Cave and Warren Ellis of the *Dirty Three* is spacious and ambient, and a definite treat.

The Proposition isn't the western many critics are calling it. It is a Nick Cave piece, without time or dimension, and lies quite spectacularly at the forefront of an art form that hasn't lived up to its potential this decade.

Jimmy Trash



WOLF CREEK

Director: Greg McLean

Starring: John Jarrat, Kestie Morassi, Casandra McGrath & Nathan Phillips

Watching *Wolf Creek* is like being dragged by a rope behind a very fast moving ute. The film critics are saying will 'save the Australian film industry' (evidently people realised how shit *Somersault* actually was) is horrifying, terrorising and exceedingly disturbing.

Despite what you may have heard, *Wolf Creek* is not a horror movie. There is little gore or slash and few genuine 'leap from your seat' moments. This possibly accounts for the few negative reviews it has received from some slasher fans. Don't be fooled - Greg McLean's debut is one of the most terrifying movies I've ever seen.

It's important with *Wolf Creek* not to give too much away - as a film, it relies upon the slow build up of tension and the disturbing recognition that its subject matter is probably not a work of fiction. Based loosely on the Ivan Millat backpacker murders and the recent Peter Falconio disappearance, *Wolf*

Creek hypothesises an outcome for three backpackers stranded in the middle of the Australian outback with only the seemingly friendly hand of a local to help them out.

Sparsely cast and shot entirely in South Australia, *Wolf Creek* stars the impeccable John Jarratt (Playschool will never look the same again) and rising stars Nathan Phillips, Kestie Morassi and Cassandra McGrath. Although it occasionally enters slasher flick 'don't drop the weapon near the body' territory, it is on the whole a uniquely terrifying and brilliantly acted first feature from an extremely promising new writer/director. As one review stated, McLean has managed to 'do for backpacking enthusiasts what *Open Water* did for scuba divers'. This is not a film to be seen alone - and if you don't have a spring fling, make sure you have a good friend who'll let you sleep over. And for God's sake, always, always look behind you when you get into the driver's seat.

Audrey

H O R R I F I C G I V E A W A Y

Want free tickets to the premier of the film *On Dit* calls
"one of the most terrifying movies I've ever seen"?

Come down to the office anytime this week and pick up a hellish stack of free passes.

BLAST FROM THE PAST - FEAR (1996)

Director: James Foley (*Glengarry Glen Ross*)
Starring: Reese Witherspoon (*The Man in the Moon*), Mark Wahlberg (*Boogie Nights*), William L. Petersen (*Manhunter*), Alyssa Milano (*Who's the Boss?*)

Nicole (Witherspoon) is the perfect girl next door (what a shocker), great family, friends, life. Then she meets David (Wahlberg). He's older, mysterious, sexy - what a combo for a sweet little strawberry blonde virgin. David protects her and makes her feel special, until special becomes psycho obsession! Yes, another "if he seems too good to be true he probably is" tale with Marky Mark getting nice and nutty on Nicole and her family.

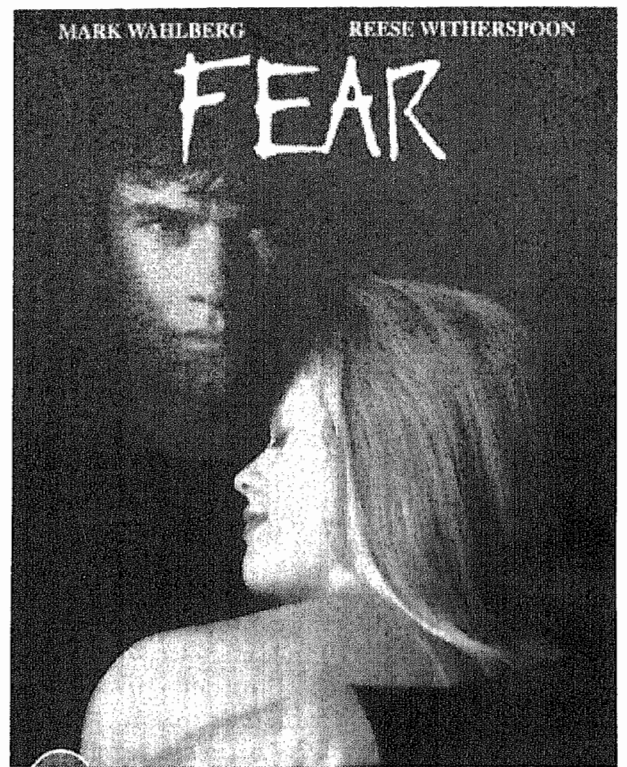
When this film was released, I went with a bunch of my friends to see it for my 17th birthday (don't bother doing the math - I'm old). What a hoot! Eating popcorn, giggling, checking out Marky Mark's hot "six pack" and wishing for Witherspoon's chic druggie top with black A-line mini skirt wardrobe. Who cares if there's no substance, the acting's not

that great or the plot is, well, non-existent. 17 year olds don't need these things - just cool stars and a wicked soundtrack, which *Fear* was fortunate enough to have. I'm being a bit harsh, though. The acting isn't terrible, the poor buggers just don't have a lot to work with. Dear old William L. Petersen is valiant in his attempts to take the whole thing seriously - just as he does on *CSI* week after week.

Fear is fabulously cheesy teen fun with a corker scene that opened my eyes up to the clitoral pleasure of Marky Mark's good vibrations and a roller coaster; and a howler of a scene where the family dog is taught a lesson by David and his thug friends for barking too much. They just shouldn't put scenes like this in films aimed at 17 year olds if they want anyone else to hear the movie over the laughter. Really.



Lucky L



Top Five Scenes That Made Me Crap My Dacks



2. *The Blair Witch Project* - The end, oh, the end. The camera drops and there he is in the corner - egad!



5. *Signs* - That freakin scary alien in the home movie - no shit Joaquin, you had a right to wig out.



1. *Friday the 13th* - Kevin Bacon getting stabbed through the neck while lying in bed - don't make the same mistake as I did and WATCH it in bed.

4. *Evil Dead* - The "tree rape scene". Must be seen to be believed. Wanna root?



3. *Stephen King's It* - Pennywise comes up out of the gutter - just leave the fucking boat kid!!!



QUOTH THE RAVEN

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"

If you know what film this quote is from shoot us an email at onditfilm@hotmail.com and let us know. A bevy of prizes await you. Prizes which may or may not be free tickets to *Wolf Creek*

skulduggery by oz

I WISH I COULD GET OUT OF THIS TEST...



C'MON! GIMME SOME LUCK, FOUR-LEAF-CLOVER

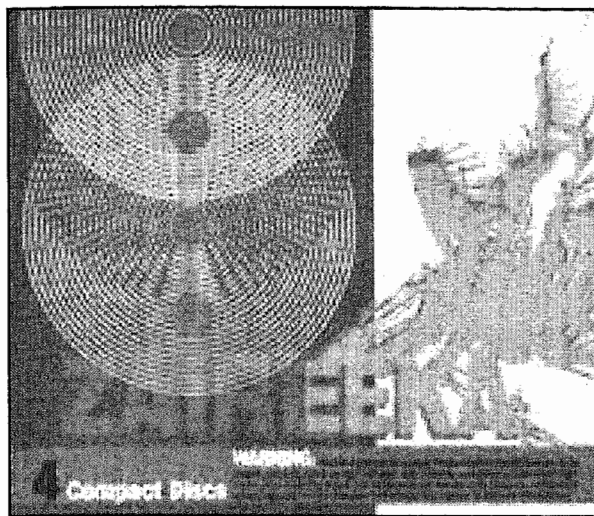


SON, THE HOSPITAL JUST RANG. YOUR BABY HAS CANCER. OBVIOUSLY, YOU'RE FREE TO GO.



ALRIGHT,





The Flaming Lips
Zaireeka
Warner Brothers

The Flaming Lips' aesthetic has become almost more widely known and spoken about than their music and it seems as though more people know the surreal and almost mythic stories about them than their recordings. The tales of their live shows involving animal suits, self-immolating fans, a perpetual rotation of drummers and their constant experiments with musical style have elevated them to being one of the weirder sideshows of the 'alternative' scene. Almost anyone who was a teen in the mid nineties will be familiar with their only hit, the catchy and surreal "She Don't Use Jelly" but proportionally few have ever heard a single note of anything else they have ever recorded.

Zaireeka is an album that could have only been made by The Flaming Lips. Equal parts inspiration and madness (the title is a fusion

of the words Eureka and Zaire), it's a one of a kind recording. In the mid nineties Flaming Lips front man Wayne Coyne began playing around with a multitude of sound sources to produce one composition in what he dubbed the 'Parking Lot Experiments'. It involved getting 40 cars into a closed parking lot and have them all play specifically composed pieces of music on each of their tape decks concurrently. Coyne found that the cumulative effect was something new and impressive, but found that the recordings he took of those sessions didn't reproduce anywhere near as well. When the multiple sound sources were reduced to one flat recording and played through a single stereo it was dull and lifeless, and he began to think that the very thing that made the Parking Lot Experiments successful was being in the middle of an ocean of sound and looked to reproduce it for people to listen to in their lounge rooms.

Zaireeka is four separate CDs designed to be played on four separate CD players. Listeners are encouraged to play around themselves with balance, tone, pitch, number of CDs, sources and players, but must ensure that each track is specifically cued to begin playing at the same time. What is most interesting about the concept is that it ensures every single performance is utterly inimitable. Depending on the make, positioning, volume and other variables of the players, no performance can be repeated. Another surprising element that introduces variability is the unreliability of individual players. In Coyne's research he discovered that CD players don't all read at the exact same speed as each other, they will randomly wobble in and out of synch with each other adding an extra vagary to each listening.

Each CD contains different compositions, occasionally long periods of silence, but all combine to create one composition.

It's near impossible to consider *Zaireeka* in the way one would any other CD due to the intended variability and it's certainly a record that sell on its basic concept. There are a few standout pieces, namely 'Riding to Work in the Year 2025' and 'A Machine in India' but the major attraction to *Zaireeka* is the experience. Those who are interested would be best advised to order it through CD stores (and be prepared to pay quite a bit for the experience) or inquire at the *On Dit* office.

Danny Wills

Dot to Dot Solution!



The connect the dots shape on page 18 is in fact Jackson Pollock's subversive and controversial 1954 enamel work entitled *Lavender Mist*.

HEY YOU! WANNA BE A..

Student Radio applications are now open for 2006.

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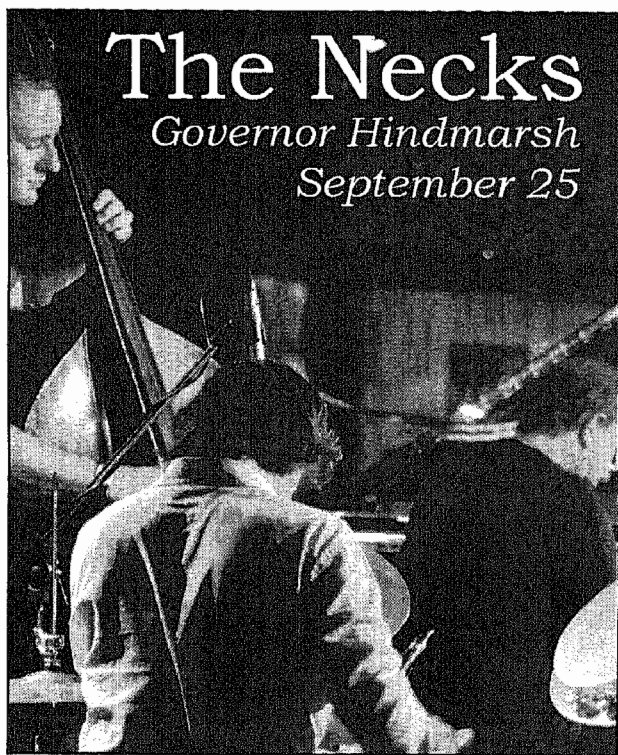


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Student Radio

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A better reviewer than I once described the music of The Necks as "what happens in experimental music when the experiment actually works," or words to that effect. A crappier reviewer described them as "Brian Eno meets Charles Mingus, best sampled with substances." Both are fair assessments of the Sydney trio who are yet to disappoint an Adelaide audience.

The chemistry between bassist Lloyd Swanton, percussionist Tony Buck and pianist Chris Abrahams is the cornerstone of their success, and causes a live audience to suspect the presence of an uncanny kind of musical telepathy. Their hypnotic compositions – entirely improvised for the stage – unravel with such empathy and discipline that it is hard to imagine that these sounds could be arranged more perfectly. The Necks in full flight is the artistic equivalent of a deadly serious bout of tantric sex, a marathon cross-country drive, an hour-long head massage or a flawless game of timed chess.

Last month's live show at The Governor Hindmarsh was no exception, and perhaps the best value for money performance I've seen. The show began with the usual custom of a moment's deliberate silence – it should come as no surprise that the kind of concentration necessary for an improvised performance of such control starts with a blank mental canvas. Nevertheless, some smart bastard behind the bar couldn't resist breaking the silence with a "Carn, play us a song, then!" I noticed a smirk on Swanton's face – the impending fifty-minute rhythmic onslaught was about to make one more philistine feel appropriately stupid.

This is precisely the beauty of The Necks. Somehow, these three have achieved the impossible: they've made improvised avant-garde jazz (for want of a more specific genre) accessible to the uninitiated. You don't have to be smart to enjoy a Necks show. Nor do you require an encyclopaedic knowledge of Jazz to appreciate their genius. All that is required is a modicum of patience and the willingness to let the sound have its way.

At one stage during the second set I was surprised to hear what sounded like a woman's voice in my right ear. After more than a split second I snapped out of my hypnotised state and turned my head to realise that I had mistaken Abrahams' incredible piano for some schmuck in the audience attempting to harmonise with the music.

Such is Abrahams' dexterity and sense of phase that he is famously noted for his ability sculpt strange, organic and unexpected

sounds out of the raw frequencies of a finely-tuned piano. Effectively, Abrahams is at times no longer playing the piano, but playing *with the sound that the piano is making*. Zen Jazz, dig?

The driving force behind Abrahams is the combination of Swanton's acoustic bass and Buck's infinitely patient percussion. The two are fascinating to watch – you half expect the hypnotic conversation between them to render them both hopelessly cross-eyed – but Buck's expression remains beatific as he casually resonates a cymbal with one end of a stick, then lets gravity tatter the snare with the other.

Buck seemed responsible for the rise in tension midway through the first set, which Abrahams developed and exploited during a surprisingly raucous crescendo. The second set was by no means an afterthought, ultimately resulting in Swanton daringly reaching for his bow almost three quarters into the piece – his

thoughtfully frantic (frantically thoughtful?) iteration of the main riff was itself worth the price of admission.

Finally, a word of warning. Unlike their eminently gratifying live performances, some of The Necks' studio recordings can be a shade difficult to read. Nevertheless, 1989's debut *Sex* is a good introduction, as is their latest studio recording *Mosquito / See Through* (2004), a double album featuring an hour of unsettling minimalism, followed by a dynamic and masterfully layered composition that is more akin to one of their live shows. If you truly want something close to the live experience, I'm afraid you'll have to shell-out the extra quid for *Athenium, Homebush, Quay & Raab* (2002), an astonishing four part *tour de force* that'll have you holding your breath until their next Australian tour.

Tristan Mahoney

Josephine Foster with Headdress of Neon Flames & John Dale *Jade Monkey, Friday October 14*

This was a show that promised everything from transcendental art-noise to foot-stomping acid-folk and the achingly delicate strains of a beatific songstress. Fortunately, it delivered on all three counts.

First up was local noisenik John Dale. If the chattering crowd didn't notice Dale apply a small vibrating device to the neck of his acoustic guitar, they were soon silenced by the accompanying roar of pre-recorded synth, which grew to a cacophonous volume. The sustained din was truly overwhelming, best described as the sound of an incredibly bright, ethereal light. This is the kind of medicine Adelaide audiences need more of, and Dale's meditative approach is worth looking out for in the coming months.

Next was the spectacular seven-piece Headdress of Neon Flames. In honour of the main act to follow, Headdress belted out a set of uncharacteristically rehearsed songs that took advantage of sometime frontman Lenin Simos' penchant for loud, guitar-driven folk.

The opening broadside was a dynamic kind of prog-ballad, alternately shimmering, melodic and heavy. Several new songs followed, each of them exhibiting the unique mix of chaos and warmth that Headdress have become known for. What was most surprising about this performance was its sudden departure from the stoned-out improvisation that had characterised the band's last few shows. Despite the occasional glitch – a necessary result of their straddling the line between improvisation and deliberate arrangement – watching these guys stand and deliver is at times akin to catching a pack of ageless wolves howling into a stormy summer night. This might have been the band's last performance for some time, but look out for their appearance on one or two locally produced compilations.

Finally, Josephine Foster. This renaissance enchantress has been described as the female Devendra Banhart, but the sheer unearthly beauty of her voice is almost unique in the world of so-called freakfolk. While some critics insist that her sound belongs to some kind of agrarian paradise of yore, Foster's music seems native to a more cosmic realm –

not least because of her rare ability to isolate tones and delicately resonate them within a given space. Imagine the warm, feminine ghost of Joni Mitchell wandering the Elysian fields for a thousand years before being reincarnated into some kind of intricate, extra-terrestrial oscilloscope.

Foster played to a hushed audience that wasn't expecting such fragile beauty. It is one thing to hear Foster's voice streaming over the internet or from a pair of stereo speakers, but it's quite another to see the mythical siren herself sparsely pluck her guitar and carefully mould her voice to the warmly lit surrounds of The Jade Monkey.

It's unfortunate that words like 'sublime' are so overused nowadays, not least because sounds like these defy all other description. What is truly sublime about Foster is the quiet tension that she evokes in the listener – at once blissful and melancholic; a rare and charming mixture of innocence, vulnerability and lonely resignation.

Tristan Mahoney





GERSEY

INTERVIEW

Long before the days of punchy guitars in tight black pants there was a tendency to plug into delay pedals and let songs write themselves. Melbourne band Gersey are one of the many bands that subscribed to this style, brought to our attention by bands like Mogwai and reinterpreted, mainly in Melbourne, by bands such as 2 Litre Dolby, Art of Fighting, etc.

Gersey's latest release, an EP of four tracks entitled *The Girl Is My Gun*, seems to have left the days of extended and embellished intros/outros behind, now in favour of songs of a more direct and driven nature. I talked to singer Craig Jackson about why the Gersey lads have abandoned this style.

"I don't think we've abandoned them completely, on the EP it may sound like we have, but I think once the new album is completed there will still be an element of the old Gersey in there. It just got to a point where we'd done two records of that kind of stuff, and we had such a big break between the two releases, so it made sense to move on for our own sanity. It hasn't been an easy process either; it's taken twelve to fourteen months to get this stage.

The main thing was to try and retain a good part of the Gersey sound but make it a little more upbeat. Maybe to try and reflect our lifestyles and our live shows more; try and get that on tape rather than the beautiful soft sound-scapey albums that we've made in the past and then come out and play these dynamic shows and drink until sun-up, it doesn't really make sense!"

Adding to the confusion is Gersey's new recruit, producer and Magic Dirt member Dean Turner. It's a development that contrasts working with the more atmospheric Tim Whitten (Smiths, Go-Betweens, Art of Fighting) in the past.

"On this one we had a lot of time to write the songs and get to know the songs. The actual thing with Dean was a complete fluke. It sounds ridiculous but we were at a party, I was asking him about Magic Dirt and he was asking about Gersey. I was telling him we had this song that we had 17 or 18 choruses for, which was *The Girl Is My Gun*. I said to him we've heard it so many times we just don't know what the difference is anymore and what the best one is. He said what he is good at is choosing that kind of

stuff and arranging. Next thing you we were in Birdland and he was producing, it was a very natural thing that happened but very odd as well. One of those happy accidents that plague this band."

However, happy accidents aren't the only sort that plagued Gersey in not so recent times. Unbeknown to fans and critics alike, the lads have been on an extended hiatus since they'd broke comfortably into America. The actual story is that while looking into the sun things went a bit offside.

"We took a break after the Flaming Lips thing [support show in Jan 2004]. What happened is the record label in America, Kindercore, went under; so we didn't go out there. Instead [we] used it as a sign to take a break and get away from each other, because we were going to kill each other. For the last twelve or fourteen months we've been writing, rehearsing and playing a couple low key shows under other names [such as?], ahh... it was called The New Set, how original!"

This new approach has brought with it new challenges, especially for Chris who's launched himself into strikingly prevalent singing on the EP. I asked whether he felt at all intimidated by taking under a new discipline.

"Yeah, definitely. But if we were going to take this step I needed to get up and get right out there, many late nights in smoky bars drinking as much alcohol as I can to get that gravel in the voice [sure!], and that was the exact reason you know!

No! It was weird to start of with. It's always weird hearing your voice back,

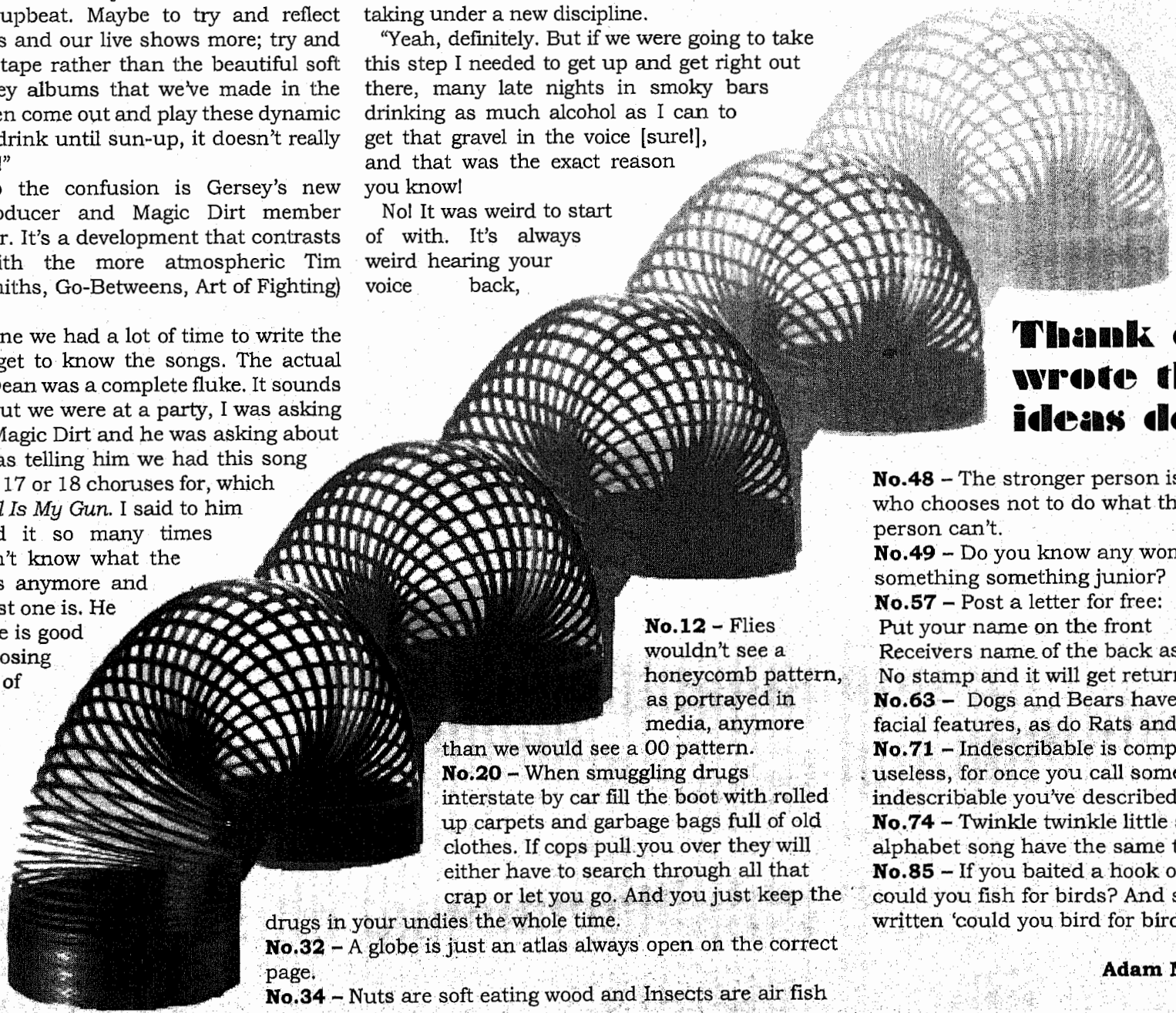
especially singing, Jesus! Dean really pushed me to sing like I was a singer rather than just a vocalist."

Did you have much singing training?
"Well I became singer by default because no one else could sing in the band and I had the best voice out of everyone. Over the years I've taken a few singing lessons. The good thing is that with each recording that we do my voice is getting stronger and stronger. So by album number ten, when we're doing the reunion tour, I'll have the great voice. [Excellent. I can't wait for that. When's that coming out?] Well if we calculate it probably about 2030."

It seems, if promises are lived up to, that we won't have to wait that long for another stand out album at least. "Well we're going to record the rest of it in February with Dean and it should be out in April."

Be sure to get your fix before then when Gersey play Sat 21 October @ Jive

BV



Thank god I wrote these ideas down...

No.48 - The stronger person is the one who chooses not to do what the other person can't.

No.49 - Do you know any women named something something junior?

No.57 - Post a letter for free:

Put your name on the front
Receiver's name of the back as sender
No stamp and it will get returned to sender

No.63 - Dogs and Bears have similar facial features, as do Rats and Seals

No.71 - Indescribable is completely useless, for once you call something indescribable you've described it

No.74 - Twinkle twinkle little star and the alphabet song have the same tune

No.85 - If you baited a hook on a kite, could you fish for birds? And should it be written 'could you bird for birds'?"

No.12 - Flies wouldn't see a honeycomb pattern, as portrayed in media, anymore

than we would see a 00 pattern.

No.20 - When smuggling drugs interstate by car fill the boot with rolled up carpets and garbage bags full of old clothes. If cops pull you over they will either have to search through all that crap or let you go. And you just keep the

drugs in your undies the whole time.

No.32 - A globe is just an atlas always open on the correct page.

No.34 - Nuts are soft eating wood and Insects are air fish

Adam Monkhouse

Marvellous

Death in Venice
Opera Australia
 Opera Theatre, Sydney Opera House
 September 7-23

A marvellous production, a marvellous Aschenbach, a marvellous baritone, a marvellous conductor and a marvellous choreographer. Oh, and the orchestra and chorus were pretty good too. In fact, it's hard to fault this revival of Jim Sharman's production that made its first appearance at the Adelaide Festival in 1980.

Philip Langridge was simply outstanding as Aschenbach. A difficult part both to act and to sing, the tenor was on the button with his intonation in a score that demands much. He was convincing in his portrayal of the character's descent as he falls in love with the young Tadzio and then tries to deal with the consequences.

Peter Coleman-Wright performed just as well in his many roles, from the ghostly traveller to the macabre hotel manager. Each manifestation of Dionysius was delivered with full voice and cunning smile.

Shannon Chad Foley deserves special mention for the effective expression in his performance as the travel bureau clerk. Benjamin Nichols was Tadzio, and knew what director and choreographer required of him, his slow and careful movements fitting perfectly with the music.

Meryl Tankard had done a wonderful job with all of the dancers, and the combination of her choreography and Brian Thomson's sets was magic. At one point there was a clever illusion using only a curtain that made characters look like they were swimming in the sea. This was just one of the remarkable achievements of Jim Sharman's production, another important one being the seamless transitions between scenes.

Conductor Richard Hickox earned praise both for his conducting, which demonstrated his intimate knowledge of Britten's music, and for his decision as artistic director of Opera Australia to bring this production back after a fifteen-year absence from the stage. The small orchestra was responsive and was assured in its tackling of the challenging score.

An absolute triumph for Opera Australia, one can only hope that the public doesn't have to wait for another fifteen years to see this production of *Death in Venice* return with a similarly impressive roll call of artists.

Benedict Coxon



Don Teddy

Don Giovanni
Opera Australia
 Opera Theatre, Sydney Opera House
 August 16-September 22

Teddy Tahu Rhodes, a New Zealander, has been the subject of much praise in recent years, and in Mozart's interpretation of the story of Don Juan, *Don Giovanni*, he showed why. His skills as a comedian and his much-lauded voice together made for an outstanding performance in the title role.

From the moment he burst onto the stage without his trousers, he had the audience in stitches. His delivery of his many one-liners was sharp, particularly in his exchanges with Leporello, sung by Richard Alexander. The dramatic moments were handled just as well, Rhodes being wonderfully convincing in Don Giovanni's descent into hell.

Aside from Alexander as the weary Leporello, Arend Baumann was solid as the Commendatore (no pun intended), and Kate Ladner and John Heuzenroeder were clear-voiced as Donna Anna and Don Ottavio respectively. Taryn Fiebig's acting skills were impressive in her portrayal of the innocent Zerlina and Richard Anderson made a fine Masetto, while Cheryl Barker garnered more than a few laughs with her hopelessly desperate Donna Elvira.

In fact, there were no weaknesses in the cast, which provided the opportunity for some well-coordinated ensemble singing, especially in the final sextet, *Questo è il fin di chi fa mal*. The orchestra was equally on the ball under Johannes Fritzsich.

The classic production originally directed by Göran Järvefelt was effectively brought to life by Matthew Barclay, the transformation of the stage from Don Giovanni's home to hell and then back again being managed particularly well. Carl Friedrich Oberle's collapsing set had people jumping out their seats.

It was enjoyable to see a good production of an opera by Mozart with such an impressive cast, and particularly such a talented singer in the central role.

Benedict Coxon



Fun Fairytale

Hansel and Gretel
Opera Australia
 Opera Theatre, Sydney Opera House
 August 25-September 24

Fairytale charm is the enduring feature of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, and this was clear in Opera Australia's revival of Elijah Moshinsky's 1992 production.

Sarah Castle and Tiffany Speight as Hansel and Gretel respectively had the difficult task of playing children, and their efforts were entirely admirable. Acting was almost more important than singing in these roles, but the voices struck a balance between being full-voiced and sounding too mature for the parts. Anne-Marie Owens as the Witch, had perfected her evil laughter and looked frightening in her garish costume.

The children's parents were exceptional as well, Warwick Fyfe showing why he is being offered so many roles by Opera Australia, and Elizabeth Campbell finding a role that suited the tone of her voice perfectly. Fyfe had members of the audience smirking with his drunken entrance, and Campbell delivered a one-liner about Vegemite that provided one of the funniest moments of the performance.

Unfortunately, this single joke was the only redeeming aspect of the English translation of the libretto, which in its desperation to find rhymes for words merely ended up annoying people with the affected manner that the dialogue took on.

Fantastic, colourful sets by Mark Thompson constantly impressed, particularly the exploding oven (though the volume of the accompanying sound effect could have been turned down).

Richard Hickox guided the orchestra through a score that seemed to swing between Tchaikovsky and Wagner. The extended orchestral pieces were handled well, and the cacophony on stage at the end of Act II did not prove to be too much of a distraction for the players!

It is possible that *Hansel and Gretel* has made its way into the repertory on the basis of little more than its charm, and that it needs more 'meat' to be completely satisfying. However, this did not stop a talented cast and a visually striking production from providing an enjoyable evening's entertainment.

Benedict Coxon



Youthful Production

La Bohème
Opera Australia
Opera Theatre, Sydney Opera House
August 4-October 29

Freshness is the attractive aspect of this retelling of one of the best-known operas in the repertory. Many members of the audience would be familiar with *La Bohème*, but a cast of talented young singers combines with Simon Phillips' new production to ensure that there is more than enough to maintain interest.

Heading the impressive cast is Rosario La Spina as Rodolfo. Not yet thirty years of age, he produces a full sound that will only become more powerful as his career progresses. The occasional scoop up to a note à la Australian Idol is forgivable, and takes nothing away from the assertion that in five to ten years he will establish himself as a world-class tenor.

Opposite La Spina is Nicole Youl as Mimi. While she looks a little too well-fed to be an impoverished resident of the Paris' Latin Quarter (never mind that she suffers, and is killed by, consumption), her singing is more suited to her role – her lightness of voice is perfect. Natalie Jones is a delightfully tarty Musetta, her Effie-like appearance eclipsed only by her spirited rendition of the famous waltz at the end of the Act One.

Strong support is given by Tim DuFore as Marcello, Jud Arthur as Colline and Shannon Chad Foley as Schaunard, though any time



that Arthur's dynamic approaches *forte* he tends to sound more like he is shouting than singing. The orchestra, and particularly the violins, captures the larger-than-life drama in Puccini's score under the capable direction of another young artist, Tom Woods.

Simon Phillips' attempt at setting the opera in the twenty-first century is, on the whole, successful. From the squalor of the artists' apartment to the garish amusement park that is the location of the Caf  Momus, there are clever touches throughout. The most amusing of these comes at the conclusion of the first Act, when a hip-hop dancer struts his stuff to the accompaniment of Puccini's very nineteenth century score. Stephen Curtis' sets are hauled up and down on pulleys, giving a useful versatility to the design, and the image

of the rose that is seen painted on the windows of the apartment is a nicely symbolic way to end the opera.

The beauty of this production is that although the story's setting has been updated, and thereby adds some interest for the people who've seen the opera more times than they care to recall, there is nothing to distract from the story itself. The story is still told simply, which is perfect for anyone not familiar with the work. Phillips' successful negotiation of this balancing act is supported by strong performances from a group of singers that is likely to form part of Opera Australia's ensemble in the years to come, and makes for entertainment of high quality.

Benedict Coxon

Young Singers Set the Standard

The Magic Flute
Elder School of Music
Scott Theatre
September 8-10

Staging an opera is a massive undertaking, requiring a lot of rehearsing and preparation by all involved. For its annual opera, the Elder School of Music joined forces with the Adelaide Centre for the Arts to present a modernized version of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, complete with English libretto and denim jeans. This was an ideal opportunity for young people to present a performance of high quality, and gain valuable experience in doing so.

The overture provided a rather shaky start to the evening. Under the direction of Keith Crellin, the Elder Conservatorium Chamber Orchestra remained well below standard for the entire performance, particularly the violins. Glaring mistakes were rife – wrong and out of tune notes being the most obvious issue. Well done to principal flautist Alex Castle, whose solos and ensemble playing were impeccable throughout. The young singers on stage were let down by half of the orchestra members, who sounded as if they hadn't learnt their music.

Act I was a fantastic display of singing from the outset. The acting and ensemble singing of the three ladies (Sarah Windsor, Kirilie Blythman and Anna Legge) was excellent and very entertaining. Tom Flint was an hilarious Papageno, providing amusement throughout the performance. James Pratt possibly had the

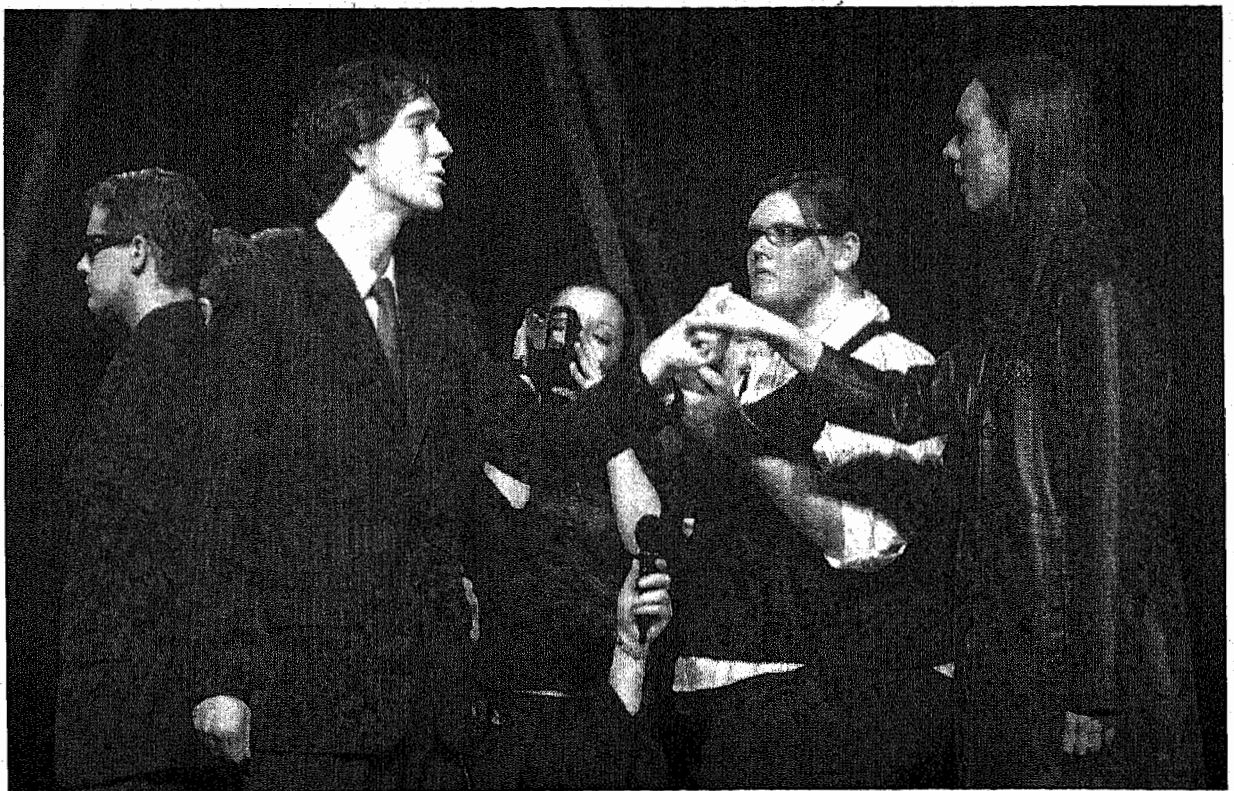
most difficult role – Tamino – but he handled the part well and with confidence. Pratt wasn't helped by the orchestra, who blasted away beneath him providing competition rather than accompaniment.

Sky Ingram was an absolutely delightful Pamina; her acting and singing were beautiful and skilful throughout. Together with Lachlan Scott (Sarastro), these two were the stars of the show. Scott's singing was powerful, and his low range was particularly impressive. One of the funniest parts of the production was a video of Sarastro as a CEO inspecting building sites and generally being a 'good guy'; his smugness was communicated perfectly, and the audience was in fits of laughter. Praise

must also go to Norbert Hohl, whose portrayal of Monostatos was as slimy and sinister as one could hope for.

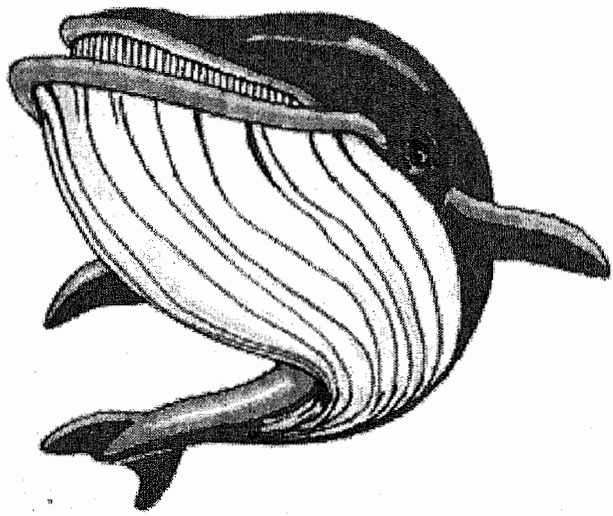
The production was very impressive. Costuming was interesting, entertaining and appropriate. The lighting was clever and effective, particularly in Act I when ladders were illuminated and in Act II when Pamina was sleeping in the moonlight. The omnipresent pyramid in Act II was also a nice touch. I wasn't so sure about the footage of oily seabirds during the Queen of the Night Aria, as I felt it rather distracted the audience from Angela Black's feat of hitting a top F!

Edward Joyner



Musings on food

I wonder what it would be like to eat a blue whale. It's nothing that I lose sleep over, but it's a real pity that I will probably never get to sample the succulent flesh of this maritime leviathan. The best bits of animals are often far too small, but imagine a sirloin steak the size of a cow - it would be simply awesome. There'd be no need to surround a tasty eye fillet with vegetables that are really only there to fill you up if it weighed 3 kilograms. It kind of makes me sympathise with the Japanese and Norwegians, who have known these delights for many centuries and are only now being stripped of them, but then I remember that they would in all likelihood happily hunt whales into extinction to sate their hunger for delicious, delicious cow-sized steaks if they could, and I decided that it's probably not such a bad thing that I've never tasted blue whale.



You wanna know what's crazy? Mock meat. Every time I see it, I always marvel that there's actually a market for such a product, but after many years spent laughing at the very idea, I recently found myself in a position to try some and, much to my astonishment, I actually quite enjoyed it. There's a delightful little establishment on Gawler place called The Tea House that's simply perfect for a quiet study session and is a far cry from the images of Nigel scooping lentil stew off the floor in *The Young Ones* for me that the word vegan usually conjures up for me. What struck me the most was simply the deliciousness of the mock meat- barbecued like pork, which was also the meat that it most closely resembled but the succulent, juicy bundle of sweet, sweet gluten that I sampled was a far cry from the dried-out, stringy, red-tinged creation that seems to find its way into every combination fried rice between here and Szechuan. It was like eating the flesh of a suckling pig that had been weaned exclusively on ambrosia and honeysuckle and bathed in lavender oil hourly before resting on a bed of jasmine flowers. I still haven't tried mock meat out of a can and may never do so, but I no longer think the concept is quite so ludicrous, and that's just about all I have to say about that.

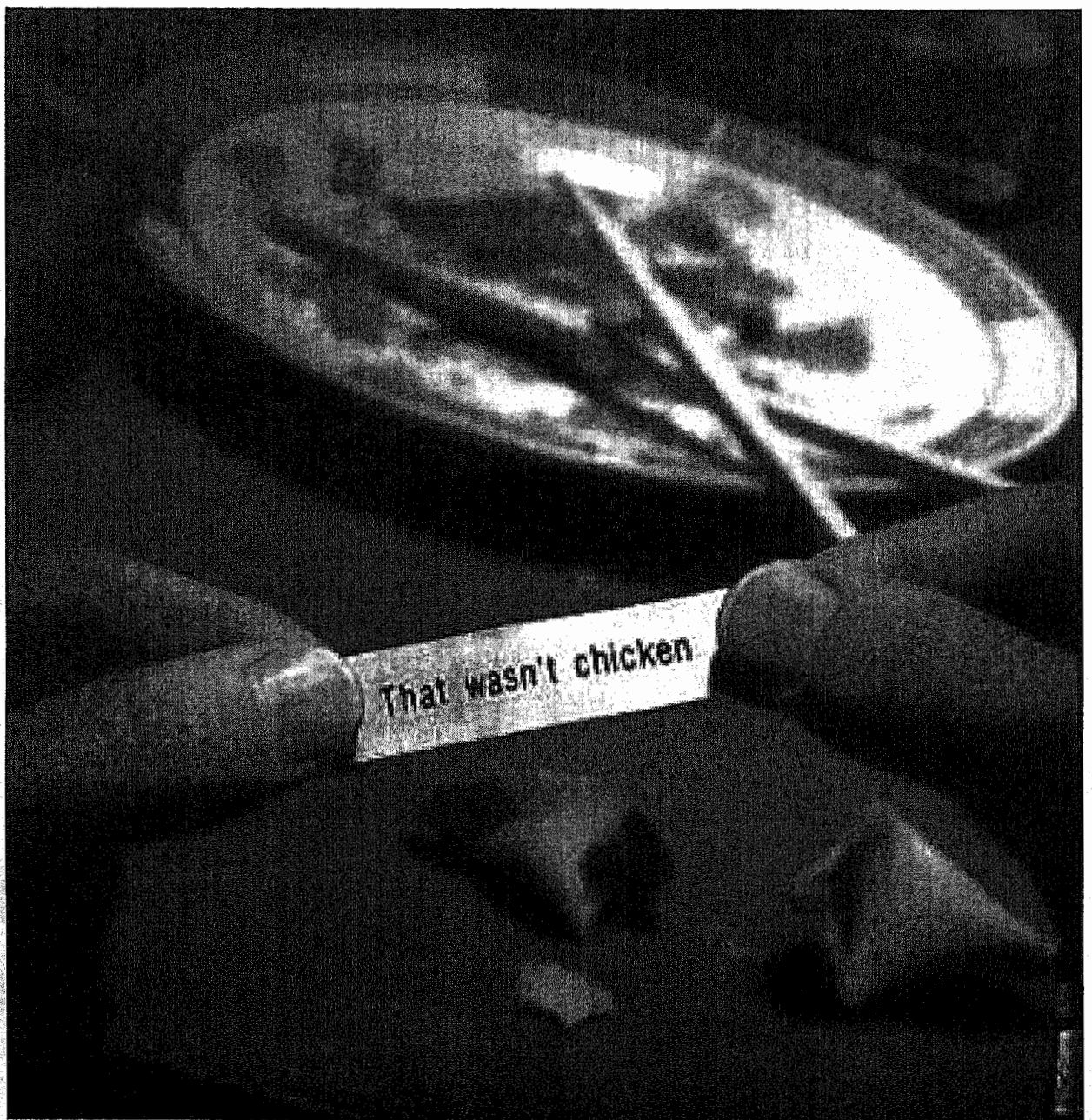


The Mayo Refectory Union Building Adelaide University Meals \$4-7

Finding a juicy list of pejoratives describing Mayo food is, coming just ahead of graduating with a media degree, just about the easiest thing to do at this uni, and there's many a student who's been burnt trying to get a quick bite to eat on the way to a lecture or tute. Most of your corner store basics are on offer- chips, soft drinks, chocolates and even a few health bars, and though the prices will have you wondering how they can claim that it's subsidised, it's hard to mess the basics up. One look into the bain maries, on the other hand before closing, on the other hand, and you'll have far more insight than you ever wanted into what it must have been like to look down at the mess of wrecked humanity laying on Hamburger Hill. As well as chips and wedges (with gravy that's alternately so lumpy you could use it to pave roads or a watery, vaguely ashtray flavoured soup), on any given day there'll probably be a choice between orange, green and brown sludge, all of which have their own peculiarities; brown is generally gritty with the poorly mixed in imitation curry powder, while the fact that it looks like an

elephant turd has been split in half and slopped on your plate isn't terribly appetising; the sloppy green mush is often the best bet as it's not too aromatic and if you get in while it's fresh and still hot enough to burn your tongue you'll hardly notice what you're eating, though it's best not to think too hard about what kind of meat has been used; the kindest thing to say about orange really is really that it's a pretty safe bet for any masochists. Though it's easy to be tempted by a \$3 plate when the clock strikes 3, after sitting in the heat all day the lasagne sheets are generally so dry and hardened that you could sharpen knives on them, while the fried rice is crunchy enough to warrant a health warning and the noodles are best left alone even when fresh. Be careful when there are big functions on, too, because it's not unknown for them to recycle leftover food and serve it to the students. If you do find it to your liking and have withdrawals when you leave uni, you should be able to achieve a similar level of enjoyment (and considerably more nutritional value) by licking public toilet floors.

ABC



This Way Up

