

news you're not supposed to know

nose WEEK

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From GRACELAND



To HOMELESS

noseWEEK

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Welcome, Dear Reader

Much of the rhetoric surrounding the Truth Commission - "Indemnity", "Forgive and Forget" and "Only Following Orders" - is really concerned with punishment or blame, not with truth.

The need for truth is quite independent of the need for retribution, punishment or forgiveness. In importance truth stands alone. Absence of truth makes for instability and lack of trust - whether it be in a personal or a public relationship. That South Africans of the Old Order often lied - whether from necessity, because they considered it wise, or simply from habit - most people have come to accept. That they should continue to lie to us, we will not accept.

As a second-hand car is better than no car at all, so as large a part of the truth as we are able, and can afford, to gather, may be enough to allow us to move on. But only someone who is either stupid or devious can suggest that part of the truth is *better* than all of the truth.

Our real fear is that our knowledge about the Old South Africa will remain so defective that the evil which remains hidden will succeed in causing the new to founder.

We have to know the truth - the real story and those involved in it. Judgment of their deeds, motives and the pressures that might have persuaded them; of the mores of the time - all are separate issues which can be debated, and depend on circumstances.

What actually happened cannot be changed. Truth is unchanging. Nothing will flourish without it.

Truth is not negotiable. Punishment is. Forgiveness is. But never truth.

March 1995

Cover picture: Benny Gool. Alternative song titles from Paul Simon's tour: You can call me Al - I know what I know - Diamonds on the soles of her shoes



Dear Sir

Am I to understand that Hansie Cronje has been smuggling Winnie Mandela's friend's diamonds to Julian Askin, in order for him to finance ABSA's grovelling for Gauteng's Provincial account? Or am I suffering from information overload?

Andrew Cross
 Kenilworth

PS - Where's the new noseWEEK?

Dear Sir

I have been most interested in the "covers off" in your magazine and reports of various bumbings, and have a suggestion: keep at the back of your mind, somewhere, the cover-ups and bumbings going on over the HIV-AIDS pandemic, both here and in other parts of the world. The early link with homosexuals in North America was most unfortunate but inevitable because of their "lifestyle". Their understandable fear that all HIV cases would be put into isolation eventually led to it becoming politically incorrect to test people for HIV - although it is considered alright to test people for TB, typhoid and other less fatal diseases.

At present the AIDS pandemic is out of control in most parts of the world, including South Africa, and nothing that is being done now will control it. Condoms are useless in unsophisticated communities; their only use is to keep a lot of well-meaning people happy. SA statistics are based on

blood tests from pregnant women taken at clinics and extrapolated on to the whole population; so they are not likely to be very accurate.

One gathers that it would be politically incorrect to organise a proper sampling campaign (but not for TB!). Last year the figures indicated that there were just over one million cases in SA, and that the number is doubling every 13 months. But this does not appear to have created the stir that one would have hoped for. After all, at this rate, in four periods of 13 months there will be 16 million cases.

Recently an authority was interviewed on the SABC and he was asked if the propaganda effort had had any effect on the general population so far. He replied that it had not and that it was not likely that much notice would be taken until there were a lot of deaths. There will not be a large number of deaths for another 5 years.

One gets the impression that some authorities are hoping that "medical science" will come up with an answer soon. This is very unlikely. I am looking forward to my next noseWEEK.

Biologist

Fish Hoek

Howzit, Hernus?

Dear Sir

Where is Mr Hernus Kriel? Since the election the public has heard, or read, little of what the premier of the Cape is doing.

Have the media decided that he is not "newsworthy"? If, like Mr F.W. Botha, he is keeping a low profile, why have the media not investigated his reasons for so doing? Or is he not in office?

I feel that, by failing to keep us informed, the press has not acted with the interests of society at heart.

R.S.Hrabar
 Camps Bay

Just what the doctor ordered!

Dear Sir

noseWEEK is brilliant and most entertaining - No. 10 read like a thrilling tragicomedy, only more disturbing and alarming. It was very impressive in its detailed reporting.

Dr Herbert Becker
 Constantia

Dear Sir

noseWEEK is a win! Keep dishing it up!

M F Levitt
 Halfway House

Share and share –but not alike

Dear Sir

Your publication is much appreciated - it contains the sort of things we need to know but are never informed of in the conventional media. Do I understand you correctly - nose10 notes on the very *nouveau riche* - that the individuals mentioned are simply awarded shares to this value for nothing, unlike the rest of us who have to buy them?

W M Pitt Fennell (Thoracic surgeon)
East London

Yes - which might explain why the price of NAIL shares dropped from R2 to R1 per share. - Ed.

All in the family

Dear Sir

After reading your latest article on the Good Hope Designer Collection I feel the need to communicate with you about my friend, Anthula Markowitz's, credibility with regard to her fund-raising efforts. I have had the privilege and the pleasure of working with Anthula on two fund-raising events benefiting our local school. In these dealings I have found her to be nothing other than dedicated, sincere and completely professional. The focus fell not on her but on our children. We will always be grateful to her for the endless hours that she managed to give us despite the demands of her personal life and business.

Michele Stern
Fresnaye

I suppose we ought to be relieved that Ms Markowitz is at least concerned for her own child's welfare. But what do you say about her attitude to the poor children dependent on School Feeding - which is what our article was about? - Ed.

Dear Sir

Whilst your magazine is doing a good job of exposing the Tollgate & Askin shenanigans, I cannot for the life of me understand why you would attempt to impugn the dignity of Advocate Bertrand Hoberman.

He is a man of impeccable honesty and does not deserve to be attacked in such a scurrilous manner. An inquiry by you into his past and present career will bear testimony to his impeccable credentials.

I trust that in the light of the foregoing you will publish the factual truth about Mr Hoberman so as to reflect correctly upon the measure and character of the man.

Michael Keller
Blair Gowrie

We have only published the facts about Mr Hoberman's unhappy role in the Tollgate case, which you prefer to ignore. - Ed.

Sir Gus



I'm sending you out to seek The Hidden Agenda.

Mastering MASTERBOND

Dear Sir

Until today I believed you to be well informed. Your vitriolic attack on me and your total ignorance of Masterbond, South Africa's most tragic swindle, truly amazes me. This even after all my attempts to expose the massive cover-up by the State of the corruption on high. The swindles now continue under the guise of a "rescue scheme". Regarding Allen Levin working for free: this is untrue. I personally paid him R12000 plus a return airfare Jhb to CT. Thereafter he was working on a contingency basis until dismissed by me. I have never squealed for charity, but instead have sacrificed R87000 of my personal money by selling my possessions and bonding my home, plus thousands of hours, working free to expose the corruption and helping the elderly victims recover their money.

I never ever set myself up as a financial advisor. I in fact was advised by an investment consultant employed by United Bank/UBS to withdraw my money from UBS and to invest it in a REGISTERED FINANCIAL INSTITUTION ... Masterbond!

Far from having been tempted into Masterbond by "unreasonably high dividends", most victims were pensioners who, faced with the constantly rising cost of living, approached reputable financial institutions such as S A Perm, UBS, Sanlam, Old Mutual, FNB, Bowrings, Syfrets, and Trust Bank, or attorneys etc. Their "highly trained financial advisors", including managers, invested us into Masterbond, in most instances for only ,5% extra. (What we did not know was that their commission was up to 40 times greater.)

Masterbond was advertised as a Registered Financial Institution even in the monthly magazine of the SA Association of Retired

Persons and Pensioners, and were designated as such on its short-term bond investment application form. These two examples come from the Inspection Reports of the Senior Inspector of the Department of Finance, Mr Tommy Pretorius, dated 14 January 1986. [Which demonstrates that the authorities knew of Masterbond's illegal activities, but allowed them to continue for a further four years. Hence the need, now, for an official cover-up. - Ed.]

Your treatment of the Masterbond issue [nose10] was an insult to all the destitute victims who were swindled due to corrupt and useless officials.

As for the "miserable job" you say I have been doing, I remind you that I am completely untrained. But I am the only person who had the guts to try. I make no apology for blindly following an attorney who at two meetings attended by more than 850 victims received an overwhelming vote of confidence. While being misled I was in some illustrious company, which included chartered accountants, judges and a few attorneys, 11 trade unions (who invested R11m), the SPCA, Catholic Churches (R3m), the Salvation Army (R400 000) and the Urban Foundation (R5 million).

As regards your suggestion to "forget about Masterbond and get on with your lives" - Have you tried to survive on half a tin of Husky dogfood per day? Or tried to find gainful employment at 75 years of age? These old people have lost their self-provided pensions, their homes, their cars, their furniture etc. Many are terminally ill and now cannot afford their medication. You tell me how to advise them to "get on with their lives".

Don MacKenzie
Masterbond Victims Association
Blanco

You are right. We apologise and thank you for taking the trouble to write to us again. Driven by rage and outrage, you have set out the situation in a letter which is clear, sharp and to the point. Masterbond is, clearly, yet another demonstration of the rot at the top levels of government in the last ten years of the Afrikaner empire. And they're all snug as ever at the Financial Services Board and the Reserve Bank. Nothing has improved, except their salaries. No Husky dogfood for dinner there - their dogs eat steak. - Ed.

And , finally, ...

... a reply from Allen Levin

Dear Sir

I do not dispute that Don MacKenzie wrote me a letter on 5 July 1994, and that that letter has remained unanswered until now, but:

1. I was at that stage overseas and the letter was not brought to my attention.
2. I had already informed Don as far back as 6 May that I considered it inappropriate to furnish him with any further advices whatsoever.
3. If indeed Don required a response to his letter of 5 July, he need only have written to me again, which he did not do.

As to Don's queries [see nose10], I need merely state that it was considered that a winding-up of all the companies and enquiries into their affairs would best serve the interests of investors.

For Don to suggest that I should have advised him to register a trust to protect himself "as an individual from being responsible for the opposition's costs" is tantamount to suggesting that I advise in a fraudulent scheme.

The Chief Justice has set his face against contingency litigation and this ruling is applied throughout the Republic, with one exception: leave was granted by the Law Society of the Transvaal to a particular attorney (myself) to act [for the Masterbond victims] in the envisaged litigation against the Financial Services Board, which permission will not be revoked.

I have never decried Don MacKenzie's efforts on behalf of the Masterbond victims, notwithstanding that a goodly proportion of it was ill-conceived and misguided - and here I speak with specific reference to his vituperative attacks on all involved, which did little to gain the sympathy so badly needed.

I have requested him, *ad nauseam*, to furnish me with a disciplined list of claims. At no stage was he entitled to assume that my staff would type the requisite lists.

I requested him to sign an irrevocable power of attorney in my favour, for reasons which I set out in writing. For him to suggest that my "... sole concern was to gain control ..." is devoid of any foundation.

I have no idea why he seeks to raise my involvement with the Supreme Group of companies [another spectacular corporate fraud and insolvency, largely settled in secret - Ed.], when I merely mentioned Supreme as an example of what can be achieved in a shorter time frame, given proper application and co-operation.

Had it been any other client, I would have ceased acting for him many months earlier, but because I was carrying out my services *pro amico* and for the Masterbond victims, I resolved to view his approach on a much more lenient and understanding basis. In truth and in fact I did give more than 1000 hours of my time, free, to the Masterbond victims because I believed they had been wronged.

Regrettably, Don MacKenzie's conduct eventually rendered any continued meaningful assistance by me impossible.

The one really good thing to come out of your article was the suggestion to subscribe to noseWEEK. Please find enclosed cheque for that purpose.

Allan Levin
Johannesburg

Note: This letter has been substantially shortened - Ed.

Dear Sir

Could it be that the Law Society fears that if it takes action against the Masterbond attorneys it might be helping to expose the attorneys' Fidelity Fund to a massive claim for damages by the Masterbond investors? I for one am baffled as to why the Law Society has just ignored the Nel Commission's findings re the lawyers at Hazell and Rabie - or so it seems. I note from the latest Hortors legal diary that only Robin Hazell has been struck off, and that all the other partners and articled clerks continue in practice, but with a new name.

Another Shy Lawyer
Cape Town

Dear Sir

I have been interested to read in the Sunday Times of an attorney suing a judge for defamation.

Is this perchance the charitable "Hello Allan" (nose10) who gives so freely of his time to Masterbond victims, or the better known Allan Levin, purveyor of legal [word deleted] to the rich a.k.a. "Hello Edith [Venter]"?

Unaccustomed as I am to see such sophistry I would have thought the issuing of a writ, for defamation by a Supreme Court Judge, in his own court, was contempt.

It will be interesting to see if Mr Justice Fine agrees and jails the schmuck.

John M Bell
Sandton



LEVIN vs FINE

Allan Levin has issued a R100 000 summons against Acting Judge Dennis Fine, who last September dismissed an application to recuse himself from one of Mr Levin's cases. At issue was an allegation that there might be "bad blood" between Mr Levin and Mr Fine.

In his judgment, Judge Fine described the application for his recusal as "scandalous and reprehensible". He said it was based on statements that were "manifestly false". Mr Levin's version

of events in the case he described as "highly mendacious", while, said the judge, his "feigned affectation of propriety and regret is transparent".

Judge Fine referred the matter to the Law Society and marked his judgment "reportable", ensuring that it will be enshrined in South Africa's published law reports. Mr Levin claims in his libel summons that the Judge did this maliciously in order to ensure that it would be widely distributed and read in the legal community to damage his reputation.

CONS GOLD

The insider traders - all the names and clues

Inspencers of the UK Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) last year concluded (in a 600 page report) that there had been a leak of insider information regarding Minorco's plans to launch a £5bn (R25 billion) bid for Consolidated Goldfields (CGF).

They found that most of the illegal insider dealing that had then followed on the London Stock Exchange, had its origins in Johannesburg. But the British inspectors were unable to secure the necessary assistance from the JSE and other SA authorities in order to properly identify most of the culprits. The South Africans still appear to be in no hurry to identify them, but noseWEEK readers can't wait - so here are all the names and all the clues.

Minorco's bid was announced on 21 September 1988 but, the DTI inspectors concluded, the leaked information had been known to certain insider dealers by mid-June, at the latest. *[It is our view that certain, very privileged, insiders probably knew enough to take some seriously profitable action as early as April. - Ed.]*

The DTI men found no irregularities with the dealings in CGF shares ahead of the bid. *[We are not so sure - see below. - Ed.]* They found it significant, however, that 4% of the issued share capital of CGF was held in highly geared call options.

Each call option contract gives the holder the right to "exercise" or purchase 1000 shares. Traded Option contracts can be bought and sold without exercising the options to the shares. In contrast to call options, put options give the holder the right to sell shares. The DTI noted that no SA investor had bought put options - a clear indication that they did not anticipate anyone being desperate to dump their CGF shares. In fact, of course, they secretly knew that Minorco was going to be desperate to buy shares.

At the time of the bid there was no traded options market on the JSE - and, the SA Reserve Bank confirmed to the DTI, it was an Exchange Control contravention for a SA national to buy traded options abroad. The DTI inspectors discovered that between mid-June and the day of the bid, SA

insiders had nevertheless acquired 3 950 CGF call option contracts (giving them tradable options to buy 4 million shares at a bid price of £14 ea. on 21.9.88). The total cost of these contracts was £2 398 000 (approx R12 million). How did the insiders manage to smuggle out that much forex to invest in options offshore? Or who, outside, financed them? Whichever way they did it, the insiders earned themselves a cool £6 786 000 (at least) in profits - and probably as much as £9 377 000 (approx R47m) on their investment. (A further £2.6m in profits were realised by Swiss bank nominees, who the DTI believed were more SA insiders trying to hide behind the Swiss gnomes.)

And at least some would have been tempted to bring their profits home to SA - as anonymous finrand investments by mysterious Jersey and Liechtenstein companies - earning them another 40% via the finrand discount.

The main scorers (they made £4.26m profit) on the insider deals came in the guise of two Liechtenstein companies, which were established on 24 June 1988 with the sole purpose of conducting an insider dealing scam - and which could generate a large nest-egg in sterling, hidden behind Swiss secrecy laws. These bent companies were "Arbitrage Investments & Securities Foundation" and "Nisprin Foundation".

The "Foundations" started buying CGF options on 3 August through Verwaltungs und Privat Bank AG (Verwaltungs), a Liechtenstein bank that placed the orders, which it received from Johannesburg. The orders were placed with London brokers Savory Millin, a subsidiary of Swiss Banking Corp. - coincidentally the lead financier of Minorco's bid. Prior to the announcement of the bid, the Foundations had accumulated 2845 CGF option contracts at a cost of £1.65m.

CGF served Section 212 notices on the Foundations' bankers, Verwaltungs, basically ordering them to explain why they had accumulated so many call options. Verwaltungs chose to reply through their London lawyers, Titmus, Sainer & Webb, who assumed a posture of bland denial: "Investment instructions given to our

Bank were not based on insider information of any kind,;" they declared. No-one believed them.

The DTI concluded that whilst the Foundations had said their beneficial owners were from the US and their advisor was a Dutchman in London (sic), this was clearly another lie. Orders to buy CGF's options came from Jo'burg direct to Switzerland. Frankel Kruger's fax number and Greg Blank's assistant **Robin Gardy's** name appeared on faxes from the Foundations. Also documents from **Max Pollock** who later merged with Frankel Kruger in December 1990, were connected with the Foundations. The Foundations submitted memo's to the DTI, prepared retrospectively to the bid, and using material from both Frankel Kruger and Max Pollock, in their attempts to justify their investment strategy. The DTI didn't believe this bull, and concluded that, although the Liechtenstein authorities wouldn't surrender the required information relating to the Foundations, they thought the "SA authorities are best placed - and perhaps the only people - that can identify the beneficiaries of the Foundations' traded option deals". Now London brokers are speculating: have the SA authorities been bribed not to pursue this investigation, or is the JSE choosing not to open up the names of these crooks and prosecute, for fear of upsetting the investment community?

Names of those linked to the foundations by the DTI:

Leslie and Sydney Frankel of Frankel Kruger stockbrokers at the JSE. Leslie, father of Sydney, in the late 1980's would often be seen posing with his naff metallic blue, chauffeur driven Rolls. While he has some redeeming features, his son has none.

Jacques and Pierre Desmidt. Jaques, a Director of Anglo (parent company of Minorco), was named by Greg Blank, shortly before he went to jail, as the original CGF mole. The DTI failed to name him as Blank had earlier refused to give evidence to the DTI. The DTI did, however, name Jacques' son, Pierre Desmidt, who worked for Frankels and was said by the

DTI to be the runner between Frankels and Desmidt. The Desmidts and Frankels, were all in London at the time. Sensing the shit was about to hit the fan, the Frankels hired top London lawyers, Slaughter & May, to tell the DTI that it was "purely a coincidence" that they were in London at the same time as Desmidt.

A whole chapter of the DTI report is devoted to Frankel Kruger, and various directors and employees feature prominently, but as the DTI were unable to pursue their inquiries in SA or take evidence of those concerned, they concur that the "SA authorities and the JSE are in a much better position to investigate these matters if they so choose". Needless to say, as the stockbroking establishment has its nose in this trough, the JSE is unlikely to pursue the inquiries further. But let us, dear reader, have a look at the clues.

Names are clues!

John McNair, former finance director of Smith New Court, made £24,000 from his CGF options. Coincidentally his son had taken a holiday job with Frankel Kruger and McNair had bought his options on the same day as the Foundations started buying.

Colin Whitehead, director of Frankel Kruger at the time, made a profit of £53,400 from his CGF options.

Anthony Waks, a client of Frankels, made £97,380 from the options bought through McIntosh Martin (London partner of Martin & Co). The account was opened and the order was given by Colin Whitehead.

Alan Davidovitz joined Frankel Kruger in Feb 1988 as a dealer on the JSE. He shared in the profits of the "Waks" account at McIntosh Martin.

Another client of Frankels, **Debbie Mosselson**, made £88,700 when she opened an account at Shearson Lehman in London for her sister, an Australian resident.

Dialand Establishment - which made £393 000 - was a three-man syndicate: London resident **Laub** and brothers **Lawrence** (Lolly) and **Colin Meyerowitz**, diamond dealers in JHB. Oh, another coincidence: Lolly just happens to be the godfather (well, sort-of) of **Greg Blank!**

Look at the list and then ponder the fact that, between July-Oct 1988, Frankel Kruger were the most active JSE firm in CGF shares (the only CGF medium traded in SA). Between Aug 1 - Sept 20, Frankels bought 220,817 out of 337,702 shares traded, and profits were quickly realised on 347,210 shares between Sept 21-30.

Conclusions of the DTI

On 20 September 1988 the open long (call) option position was 7025 contracts; 3950 (56%) of them were directly held by the SA insiders. Of these, 3,652 had connections with Frankels and Blank. Blank is doing eight years for fraud, having been convicted on 20 October 1992. He has not been charged for his insider dealings in CGF yet.

Reading the shadows

The Foundations were established on 24 June 1988 on the same date as **Eagle Holdings**, who also bought options and subsequently made £34,000 profit. Eagle is a Panama-registered company administered (owned) by **Walton Imrie**, in Switzerland. Imrie is a former SA resident and friend of Greg Blank who also stashed away a few grand when he sold his CGF call options through Rand International, Peter Rawson's London broking firm. Liechtenstein lawyer Dr Alex Wiederkehr (an associate of Dr Herbert Batliner, the signatory for the Foundations), along with two other associates, were directors of Eagle Holdings between 1982-87.

The SA authorities came to London seeking assistance in relation to the Old Mutual inquiries, but in relation to the CGF investigation, the DTI reported that the "SA authorities were unable to suggest arrangements which were acceptable to the DTI. This was fatal to our ability to fully pursue our inquiries in SA". Who is covering up for whom in SA? Would Mr Frank Kahn, Cape Attorney General in charge of these high-level investigations, like to explain what his problem was with assisting the UK DTI?

Roger Phillimore, Director of Minorco, on 17 October 1988 told the London Stock Exchange of a relationship between Laub (Dialand Establishment, controlled by Laub and the Meyerowitz brothers, and established by Dr E H Batliner of Verwaltungs) - and a company associated with De Beers, the Diamond Trading Company, based at De Beer's premises in London. Laub, an Antwerp diamond dealer based in London,

is a major client of Diamond Trading Company, and he went around London boasting about the profits he made in CGF. Laub is also the brother-in-law of Colin Meyerowitz, and the Dialand profits were split: £153,000 to Laub and £233,000 to Colin and Lolly Meyerowitz. Laub's has another company registered in Liechtenstein, **Euro-Diam** and the shareholders are Laub and **Diahold Corp Inc** (a Panama co), which, by coincidence, was also established by Dr E H Batliner, the GM of Verwaltungs Bank. He had a connection with Mr Jerry Lipschitz of Max Pollock. However, the first time that Dialand bought UK equities was the CGF option deals. The Meyerowitzes' £233,000 profit was transferred to a company they own, called **Silver Sprint Investment Inc.**, in the Channel Islands. A director of Silver Sprint, **John Milne**, gives as his address [*what a coincidence!*]: Lys Royal, 2 Rue Tony Neuman, L-2241 Luxembourg. This happens also to be the registered address of Central Holdings, the principal holding company of the non-SA interests of the Oppenheimer family and certain privileged Anglo directors. Pim Goldby also conveniently reside there, as they just happen to be the SA auditors for Anglos, De Beers and the Oppenheims.

The Rupert connection

On 9 July 1988 CGF sold Rembrandt 10% in GFSA (reducing CGF's interest in GFSA to 38%) for £131m, payable in pounds - which represented a 10% premium over market price. Rembrandt also acquired pre-emptive rights over a further 30% of CGF's holding in GFSA. Anglos were furious. Rudolph Agnew, Chairman of CGF, would later claim that "the agreement between CGF and Rembrandt represented the final act which led to Minorco's bid for CGF on 21 September 1988".

Which is doubtful, since, three months earlier already - on 29th March 1988 - UK bankers Morgan Grenfell had prepared a paper setting out plans for a bid by Minorco for CGF. On 7 April 1988 Dr Anton Rupert met Cadbury (Chairman of Morgan Grenfell, who would later announce Minorco's

bid for CGF) in Stellenbosch; then, on 18th April 1988, Rupert met Anglo chairman, Julian Ogilvy Thompson (known to corporation sycophants as JOT), in Johannesburg, where, according to Anglos, Rupert told O'Thompson that he had been approached by a consortium consisting of an American entity, an Eastern entity and the Kuwait Investment office. So the wheels were grinding....

Coincidentally (sic), in April 1988, Manoir Co (BVI) Ltd was formed as a joint venture between Rembrandt and Power Corp of Canada (Power is listed in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver). On 26 April 1988, Lifegro Assurance Co sold 520,000 CGF shares, on **Johann Rupert's** instruction, at R48 (£8.80) to **Le Manoir**, British Virgin Islands (owned 50% by Le Manoir and 50% by Rothmans International - Rembrandt's offshore empire). Rupert told the DTI inspectors that he (in his offshore guise - as Manoir, that is) bought the CGF shares because he thought the gold price was going up. Ho, ho, ho.

Lifegro is now called Momentum Life, but in 1979 Volkskas and Rembrandt and Momentum acquired a majority holding in Lifegro and, coincidentally, of the 10 directors of Lifegro at 21 December 1987, three were directors of Rembrandt. So intelligent SA observers will be excused if they reckon it was simply a case of Rembrandt and friends taking an asset, which they had reason to believe was about to bear fruit handsomely, out of an insurance company, where such profits would be wasted on dumb policyholders, and moving it offshore, where the personal fortunes of the smart boys at Rembrandt could be enhanced to greatest effect. All at a remarkably opportune [*prescient?*] moment.

Rupert told the DTI that "Manoir (BVI) had been selected as the vehicle for the CGF investment in order to avoid paying tax on Rembrandt's existing holdings". Lies, lies, and more lies. The DTI inspectors found that, on June 10th 1988, Ms Francesca

MacArthur of Ansbachers (now owned by our own FNB) in London, had prepared a note following a meeting, which recorded: "the strategy of Manoir is that its CGF shares will be sold within 3 months....".

Rembrandt owned a further 439,430 CGF shares that were also transferred to Manoir. Following the Minorco bid, Manoir sold its CGF shares through Ansbachers, and the company was then wound up.

Manoir was, of course, a convenient little tax fiddle for both Rembrandt and Power. But the real bonus was that the profits made by Rembrandt were made - and could be held - offshore, in pounds sterling. Had they left the shares taken over from Lifegro in SA, the profits would have been in rands, in South Africa - bad news for a patriotic Afrikaner company.

And, finally, some other names

Now look at some of the other JSE insiders and contacts who bought CGF options in London at a remarkably convenient and profitable time.

Mike Soekoe, Director of Simpson McKie, owned 26 option contracts.


Beverly Bebe (sister to Andrew Hurwitz, who worked for Hayes Rinaldi) held 30 option contracts.

Bill Picken of S P Reid had 49 contracts and Jos "The Boss" Nesbitt - one of Peter Rawson's ex-Zim boys, and also with S P Reid - had ten.

Peter Jardine, ex-director of Ferguson Brothers, had "4 Oct." option contracts.

Geoffrey Cox (father of Dave, who worked with Colin Harper at the Old Mutual and is now Attorney General Frank Kahn's right-hand man) also bought "4 Oct." contracts.

AWB Guernsey (founded by A W Bradshaw, ex Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, later London exchange), run by **Peter Rawson** (he used to manage Ed Hern's London office), held 341 contracts, on which **Colin Harper** and his cronies of the Link Syndicate made 237,000 UK pounds (approx R1,2 million).

In January 1991, shortly after he resigned as senior dealer from the Old Mutual, Colin went to London with his family to spend some of his pounds stashed there. He was also seen wining and dining with his insider pals at Rawson's club in the City, the Square Mile. Interestingly, accompanying Harper on a fully paid trip that included a skiing holiday at lush St Moritz, was **Dave Cox**, his former appie at Old Mutual, who is now helping Frank Kahn with his investigations ... !??? . 

Liston Ntshongwana

NEW MAN IN BUSINESS ...

Thebe Investments remains South Africa's most interesting new business entity. Observers of the new, independent broadcasting scene would be well advised to take note of the following recent report from Reuters - and then follow their nose...

Black-run Thebe Investments Corporation is heading a multi-national project to establish a countrywide black television channel, the company's special projects manager, Liston Ntshongwana, has said.

Mr Ntshongwana told the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications that the project, dubbed Station for the Nation, had been thoroughly researched.

He said Thebe, working through its Moribo Investments subsidiary, had gathered a number of potential investors - local and foreign with significant experience in the field.

The project, he said, was not financially, politically or ideologically linked to the ANC who set up Thebe Investments in 1990.

You may well ask, Who is Mr Ntshongwana?

Mr Ntshongwana, it transpires, comes to us from the Old South Africa. One of the first black trainees in Pik Botha's Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr Ntshongwana launched his diplomatic career in 1979 with an unauthorised withdrawal of R10 000 from official funds and an unscheduled flight to South America. A year later he quietly returned to Transkei - to forgiveness and promotion.

Then already, a Transkei opposition spokesman noted that Mr Ntshongwana appeared to enjoy the most extraordinary immunity from prosecution.

Ntshongwana was to feature again in the events that led to the sudden eviction - in 1984 - of several leading liberal figures from the University of Transkei.

For years the staunchly Afrikaner principal of Unitra, Prof. Ben deV van der Merwe, D Ed (UOFS), had enjoyed the happy and willing obedience of his Students' Representative Council. But things started to go wrong in mid-1983, when the newly-elected SRC members were the first to hint at corruption at Unitra. They had discovered that the previous SRC under L. Ntshongwana had removed all the funds from their kitty.

At the new SRC's insistence, a commission was appointed by the university to investi-

continued next page...



Liston continues...

gate the use of SRC funds "during the period of 1982 to May 1983, when Mr Ntshongwana was president". It was one of several commissions of enquiry set up to investigate corruption at Unitra that year - but it was the only one that succeeded in completing a final report before numerous staff members involved in the investigations were expelled from Transkei and the entire new SRC fled to avoid arrest by the security police.

The report revealed that the 1982 SRC had overspent its budget by R10 990,51 - thus depriving the 1983 SRC of nearly 25% of its funds.

Messrs Ntshongwana, W Dotwana and W Pooe were members of the 1982 SRC who were called upon to account for monies that had been advanced to them, but for which they had not given any account. Ntshongwana failed to appear before the commission and adopted a "refractory and defiant" attitude when approached. Transkei police were called, but informed commission members that they required "further information" before laying a charge.

The commission reported that it had had difficulty establishing who was responsible for the misuse of SRC funds because witnesses were untruthful, SRC records had mysteriously disappeared and, significantly, "records in the University's accounts department appeared to have been tampered with". It did find, however, that:

- **Cheques totalling R1400 which were paid to Ntshongwana and Pooe for a sports event that never took place, had never been returned.**
- **The SRC's typewriter had disappeared.**
- **Proceeds of the sale of 40 tracksuits had not been banked or been spent in the interests of the SRC.**
- **No trace could be found of the door money taken at SRC film shows and discos.**
- **Certain university authorities appeared to have given certain SRC members funds without authorisation.**
- **Mr Ntshongwana and Ms Letlaka (daughter of Transkei's then Minister of Justice) were to have attended a conference at Medunsa, the medical university north of Pretoria, "but there is no evidence that they ever attended. Instead they stayed at the President Hotel in Johannesburg and hired a car - allegedly to travel to Sun City".**

Later in 1984 - with the University still in disarray - its illustrious new graduate, Liston Ntshongwana, was back in the news when (apparently while on home leave from his first full-time posting at the Transkei embassy in Pretoria) he and some American friends marched into the Transkei Development Corporation offices in Umtata and demanded that the officials there should

forthwith hand over Transkei's only fuel depot to their newly founded private company.

The startled officials were presented with an official letter, indicating that this was an instruction from President Matanzima himself (who, incidentally, was also to have an interest in the company).

The brave TDC men rushed to the Transkei Supreme Court for an interdict to protect them from this paper holdup. Their statute, they explained, did not allow them to alienate TDC property, acquired with public funds, without proper arrangements for payment. The court agreed and the "take-over" of Transkei's most strategic asset was off.

Within weeks of their court victory, however, most of the top men in the TDC learned that their services were no longer required in Transkei.


(There was further consolation in store for Mr Ntshongwana and friends who had seen their ambitions to control the Transkei economy so rudely smashed. In 1985 the fuel depot was destroyed in a night-time bomb attack.)

The petrol depot was not the only item of interest to the new entrepreneurs. One of Liston's American friends, Emmet Eaton Cash III, was at the same time negotiating on behalf of unidentified "American interests", who were proposing building a floating harbour, an international airport, a gambling mecca and a world tax and banking haven on the Pondo coast, just South of Sol's Wild Coast Sun.

But soon thereafter Sol himself was seen entering the offices of the Umtata consultants hired by Mr Cash to present his scheme to the Transkei authorities, and nothing more was heard of Cash's casino. His ideas for transforming Transkei into a banking mecca, were taken over by mafia banker Vito Palazzolo.

Liston and friends did, finally, have some success - once the TDC was "under suitable management". This time - at the end of 1985 - they took over the TDC's Kei Panelbeaters. The number of wrecks along Transkei roads was a good indication that the business was profitable. At the time it was showing a nett profit of R300 000 per year. The new shareholders paid the TDC a mere R6000 to take over the company. They included Ntshongwana, Minister Letlaka (who by then was married to Liston's former wife), Prime Minister George Matanzima, and Monty Ntloko, a new director on the TDC board.

Ten years ago the original nose magazine reported: "Ntshongwana, a Michael Jackson clone with acquired American accent, mock leather parachute jacket and executive jet on order, is not likely to settle for being Transkei's Uncle Sol. Next stop, according to undercover commentators in Umtata, is likely to be a seat in the cabinet".

Watch this space. 



Shawn Benjamin

At its most recent graduation ceremony, UCT conferred the honorary degree Doctor of Literature on Mendel Israel Kaplan. The citation noted that he was the driving force behind Cape Gate, one of the largest privately owned companies in the Southern Hemisphere. He has an LLB from UCT and an MBA from Columbia University in New York. In five books (published by Kaplan), he has documented the experiences of his Jewish forebears, their migration to South Africa at the turn of the century, and the life they, their children and their grandchildren made for themselves. At UCT he was instrumental in creating the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies, acquired two valuable library collections for it; and established a Chair of Jewish Civilisation.

In Israel he sponsors a Chair in the History of Egypt & Israel at Tel Aviv University and a Chair in Medical Ethics at Ben Gurion, and supports archeological projects, a botanical garden and a tennis centre.

In Johannesburg Kaplan provided the means to found the new Orthodox congregation to which he belongs. In the Cape he is also a substantial donor to non-Jewish charities.

The citation notes that he is a very important figure in World Jewry, and that he is on personal terms with a number of world leaders.

It was not always that way.

After moving to Johannesburg in the early 70s, he failed in several attempts to gain top office in the Zionist Federation. Julius Weinstein ruled supreme in those days. The establishment then was happy to leave Kaplan the onerous job of fund-raising for the Israel United Appeal, not anticipating that he would raise so much money that the balance of power would shift from the Federation to the IUA.

Kaplan had learned where influence lies and, by 1980, he had established himself as a force to be reckoned with. The same insight appears to apply to his private and business life, where his close friend is steel magnate Eric Sampson - not much loved, but the man who wields most power and influence in the SA steel industry.

Today Kaplan is chairman of the international Jewish Agency (and the first non-American to be on the board since 1948), and successor to US Seagrams billionaire, Edgar Bronfman, as Chairman of the World Jewish Congress.

It is said his personal intervention with Mr Gorbachev played a vital role in the release of thousands of Russian immigrants to Israel.

THE POWER OF *m* ONE *y*

An Encounter with Mendel Kaplan by Immanuel Suttner

The hall looks at him expectantly. Everyone knows he is chief honcho, de big macher, and they wonder what he is going to say. He strides with quick steps to the mike, a short, slightly corpulent man. His voice is middle-class Seth Africen, unmodulated by the carefully enunciated mockery of received pronunciation which Sowth Af-ri-cans use to indicate education and sophistication. It's the voice of a motor mechanic in Orange Grove or Bez Valley describing how he put a supercharger on his V6 over the weekend - only this motor mechanic doesn't prove his power with the meta-language of biceps or curses; he does it one rung up, with millions, and with name dropping, and with string pulling. The occasion is the annual Conference of the PWV (Gauteng) council of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

"You all know me, I'm Mendel Kaplan, you know how I work. I'm chairman of the Jewish Agency and vice president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. I divide my time between three different parts of the world."

One country is too small for him. Like Adam HaKadmon, who was made of the dust of the entire earth, Mendel, apparently, is made of the suburbs of Cape Town and Johannesburg and Jerusalem, sprinkled with the sweat and tears and fears of eastern Europe, and held together by ceaseless international commuting.

"This is the new SA", he says jokingly, "democracy - so you can choose between three different topics I've prepared."

I don't mind his semi-mocking reference to the new SA - we all know how fragile it is, how thin a crust is the rhetoric of a rights culture over the destructive forces bubbling underneath, how dangerously far people's economic realities are from political developments - in fact, I envy his refreshing lack of political correctness. But I suspect that what is proffered jokingly represents his real modus operandi: the democracy he wishes to see is the freedom to choose between the alternatives chosen for the Jewish community by somebody else - namely Mendel. By the way, no-one in the audience responds with a fourth subject which falls outside the offered three. Not for nothing is it said that a community gets the leaders its deserves.

So he begins his talk, about the Jews of Siberia. Kaplan has a superb memory for detail and anecdote, and a gutsy way of relating his experiences which enthral his audience with its sub-text of power and can-do-ness. He may get a fact or two wrong, generalise, superficialise, but that doesn't matter because you know what he's really talking about is getting what he wants, and that, for those of us who long since downscaled our ambitions to humble daily routines, is a fascinating possibility we want to vicariously share. King Mendel desires something, he hires a jet and gets a budget and brings it over. He wants something else, he talks to the president of Kazbjekistan, trades favour for favour, and averts the severe decree. He tells us that everything works on a Mafia system there, and is it only I who hears the unspoken words ".... and I'm quite at home with such a system."?

His body language is extremely open. He uses his hands to good effect - sometimes they are in the air, sometimes briefly in his pockets, once, strangely, he holds a hand in a "safe my china" gesticulation. Everything is intended to demonstrate control. The more he speaks, the more his self-confidence becomes apparent, a self-confidence so boundless it is indistinguishable from arrogance. Coupled with his indubitable drive and determination, it's a dangerous quality, for Kaplan is in the position to do as much damage as good to the constituency he claims to represent.

His position in the Jewish Agency means he is involved with the logistics of moving Jews from countries where they are in danger - like the CSR, Azerbaijan, Syria, Ethiopia or Yugoslavia - to places of safety, like Israel. But not all of those rescued wish to end up (or feel safe) in Israel, and the line which divides humanitarian aid from social engineering is a very thin one. You need a lot of luck - and humility - to stay on the right side of that line. Elaborate schemes to alter demographics have a habit of making their proponents drunk, and as any resident of the twentieth century knows, when social engineering backfires, it backfires badly. SA's bantustans and Stalin's attempted resettlement of Siberia are cases in point.

As Kaplan's speech ends he offers to take questions. When there are no immediate

responses he congratulates himself: "There, you see I've stunned them."

A woman puts up a tentative hand and says she has been to a conference in Kiev and ...

"Yes, I know all about that, I read your report," Kaplan rudely interrupts.

"What can we do to help there, they seem to need so ..."

"Nothing, the customs duties are too high for you to send anything."


The sub-text: *you* can't do anything, *I* can do everything. All demagogues rely on the systematic disempowerment of their congregants. They rely on the fears of the collective to keep their position of privilege. They step bravely forward to protect the trusting sheep in their care. Thus gaining more votes, more money, more resources to disburse or withhold as they see fit.

"Todah Rabah (thank you)," says Kaplan, in conclusion, yanking chairperson Marlene Bethlehem towards him, "Todah Rabah, there are no more questions."

Kaplan is the kind of man who makes enemies, not least for his success, his unapologetic manner, the fact that he dares to do. Certainly there is much jealousy involved, but certainly there is more.

Jealousy, maybe. Distrust, definitely.

A man who so constantly aggrandises himself, who commissions ghost-writers to write books celebrating his family's involvement in the Apartheid economy of South Africa [*massive orders for razor wire by the Defence Force were a big money-spinner - Ed. J.*], who makes sure his photograph is plastered wherever he can put it, who hires and fires editors of Jewish newspapers and chief rabbis without consulting the community these appointments affect - and I ask this as a concerned and involved member of the Jewish community - does he have our interests at heart?

A person is led down the path he wishes to go, says an old Talmudic maxim. In this world, it seems to me, those who seek power - and work hard for it - eventually gain it. And those who seek wisdom gain wisdom. Generally those who find power don't find wisdom all that attractive. Maybe that's why so many of those who have accumulated power don't have the wisdom to use it with dignity and restraint. 



NEW TOP GUN

Purdey, suppliers of sporting rifles to kings and princes, is about as British as the crown jewels. Not any more. Last October Johann Rupert bought out the old English family business to add to his empire's collection of status symbols. All are supposed to lend

respectability to the nicotine business by virtue of their artistry, expense or association with wealth and celebrity. Rupert the Younger bought Purdey from Thomas Purdey's nephew, Richard Beaumont, who has retired in a style that befits the last of a great line. The gunsmiths is the latest addition to Rupert collection held through the empire's Swiss company, Vendome. Already in the collection are watchmaker Piaget, Montblanc pens, Dunhill, Cartier, Chloe, Baume & Mercier, Karl Lagerfeld and Hackett, maker of classy male attire. As the UK Sunday Times observed: "It's as if a boy with a lot of money and a great deal of social insecurity had pointed to the first ten pages of Vogue magazine and said: "Daddy, buy me these." The paper goes on to quote an unnamed analyst: "There are always people who will invest in a good name. If you have ten good names, the thinking is, you can be ten times more attractive."



We regret to have to inform you that there has been an unfortunate incident at the heart of the Sport of Kings. It really chokes us to tell, but we have to - because the chaps at the Thoroughbred Breeders Association (TBA) won't. Why won't they? Because it makes such asses of the very important men who keep assuring us that they're perfectly in control of everything.

In recent years the **TBA Sales Division** is supposed to have accumulated a little pot of gold for the race horse owners of South Africa. At the end of November last year, however, the better-bred members of the TBA got a most mysterious letter from the **Sales Division**. It informed members that there is reason to believe that "the appropriate internal controls have not been exercised in the TBA accounts department" and that there "may have been malpractices". All rather vague, except for the final paragraph:

"Whatever may or may not have happened affects only the TBA and its members and staff, all of whom have been informed. Since no outside individuals are concerned this event is not of interest to the general public. We have therefore decided not to issue a press release, nor is it desirable that this matter be discussed with non-members until all the facts are known."

The letter was co-signed by **Chris von Solms**, chairman of the TBA Sales Advisory Board, and **Laurence Allam**, chairman of the TBA, apparently to ensure that all who received it realised that this was a "We're-all-in-this-together, so-keep-your-trap-shut" sort of occasion.

Ten days later another letter followed. This time Von Solms and Allam, again holding hands, informed members - with regret - that there had, in fact, been a misappropriation of funds. Members will have been relieved to learn that, while the exact extent

of the damage was not yet known, "the culprit" had been identified and was "no longer in the employ of the TBA".

Another ten days passed before the celestial twins descended again to at last declare the identity of the culprit: **John Mitchell**, who had been the TBA's financial manager for the past three years. By that time the auditors had already attributed losses totalling R1,3 million to Mitchell. They also knew that most of the money could not be recovered, as he had become a compulsive punter and had lost it all on bets made through the convenience of his own Telebet account, and at the Tote agency next door.

To forestall questions about the quality of management and supervision in the lucrative Sales Division, Von Solms and Allam told members that they "should be aware" that white collar crime is the fastest growing type of criminal activity in our country, "hardly a day passing without reports of fraud or embezzlement in some or other organisation, including banks and others with large internal audit departments". So that makes it OK at the TBA?

The subject is particularly sensitive since it now emerges that the TBA Council was informed more than two years ago that Mitchell, the Sales Division's new financial manager, had served a jail term for fraud. When confronted, he had admitted this, but said he had served his debt to society and only wanted a second chance. Asked why he had not advised the Council at his employment interview, of his criminal record he explained that when he had done so previously, he had always been unsuccessful in getting a job. The majority on the TBA Council were sympathetic and approved his appointment.

But now it is rumoured that, besides Mitchell, others might also have got into the swing of things, and have traded the TBA's tractors and mowers etc., for BMWs, Land Cruisers and motor boats etc. But since proper inventories were never kept, no-one knows for certain what has gone, how and to whom.

Central to the cover-up is General Manager **Graeme Hawkins**, who is unable to explain how it was he had not noticed such massive shrinkage, or that TBA cheques were being used to pay an employee's recurrent gambling debts.

Our well-informed sources believe the shortfall in the TBA accounts, once properly audited, may total R3 million or more, and that members will receive yet another unctuous letter from their chairmen asking them to contribute to making up the shortfall. This after ten years of undreamed-of high sales and spending. **ff**

JULIAN ASKIN GIVEN CARTE BLANCHE?

Well, not quite...

Readers who watched the recent interview with Julian Askin, presently under house arrest in Italy, by Derek Watts and noseWeek editor, Martin Welz, on M-Net's **Carte Blanche**, might be interested to know some of the juicier bits that did not make it on to the show.

Obviously, when two hours of interviews have to be cut to fit a 20 minute Carte Blanche slot, only some bits make it - and several interesting side-tracks don't.

Most interesting, however, are those cuts demanded by attorneys Malcolm Freed and Paul Jenkins (of Webber Wentzel) - not for legal reasons, as their brief might be imagined to require, but for reasons of business.... shall we say, prudence?

The attorneys ordered to be cut from the broadcast all those parts of the interview in which Askin claimed ABSA knew, or ought to have known, about the crooked goings on in Tollgate.

Webber Wentzel, who still bear the wounds of a *previous* little venture into journalistic honesty, are understandably over-cautious. That was the time the attorneys let through a programme that was seriously critical of senior Broederbond, Piet Welgemoed - then the Nat Minister of Transport and Telecommunications. Just when M-Net were relying on their friend Mr Welgemoed to ensure that they got a healthy slice of the cellular phone cake. M-Net MD, Ton Vosloo, went into one of his tantrums and threatened to withdraw all M-Net's legal work from Webbers because of their insensitivity.

Which firm of attorneys can honestly say they'll wager transparency against a guaranteed R2m annual fee from M-Net?

Here are a couple of points which saw the snip of the expedient scissors:

In the interview Askin explained how, in March 1992, he had informed Badenhorst and Cronje and others on ABSA's board in Johannesburg that he had discovered that their top executive, Volkskas MD Hennie Diedericks, had stolen tens of millions out of Tollgate. He had been Askin's predecessor as MD of the company.

Q: Now what happens to Mr Diedericks [in the months that follow]?

Askin: Nothing. Mr Diedericks carries on as managing director at Volkskas.



Cut from answer: What subsequently happened, of course, was that, about a week or so before Tollgate was put into liquidation by the bank, at a meeting in Johannesburg, Mr Brits [*DJ Brits, ABSA Group Executive: Risk control*] asked my London advisor to leave the room, saying "I want to have a word with Mr Askin". After he left the room, Mr Brits rounded on me and said "Now listen, for your information, Mr Diedericks has just been made head of the Post Office - so what are you going to do about that, you fokking Engelsman?". Those were his exact words. I was staggered - this was a man I knew to be crook. What was he doing, being made the head of a public utility? At that stage, of course, I didn't realise that Tollgate itself was about to be bombed from a dizzy height.

[Further note: *The hapless Mr Diedericks subsequently took to the bottle, and quietly fell to pieces. When eventually summoned to testify at the Tollgate enquiry, he was too drunk to do so. Soon thereafter he was "retired" from the Post Office, declared bankrupt, and admitted to an institution for alcoholics. - Ed.]*

Q: If one looks at the major insolvencies ... liquidations of companies ... all involving substantial debts to banks in the ABSA group - how has this bank survived?

Askin: Well, I'm led to believe that they were only able to put Tollgate into liquidation - which I said should never have been done, as a bank's last priority should be liquidation - because they were given an

enormous loan by the SA Reserve Bank, undisclosed, and at a very low rate of interest. In fact, when I went to see Johann Rupert about it, he told me that the loan did exist - it was over a billion rand - and that his father resigned his directorship of the Reserve Bank as a result of this secret loan. It's terribly wrong that a commercial bank should use subsidised money to put a business into liquidation.

Later in the interview Askin explained his disenchantment with the secret Section 417 Enquiry being conducted by Advocate B Hoberman SC:

Askin: The most staggering thing of all is that it's only now, recently, that any executives from ABSA itself have been called before that enquiry. That

enquiry, in my view, was going to be closed down without any executive from ABSA being called before it. It's only because, A, I have stayed in the ring and will not back off, and, B, two liquidators have finally broken ranks, just a while ago, [*cut from here:*] and decided that ABSA's behaviour wasn't proper, and have forced Mr Hoberman to bring those people from ABSA before the secret enquiry.

And other cuts of that ilk.


One scene which the diligent Mr Freed cut from the interview showed Welz in Florence, with the statue of David in the background, explaining how Askin saw himself as David battling against Goliath.

Mr Fried was horrified. The scene must be cut, it is defamatory. But why? Nobody in their right minds could possibly consider that statement to be libellous in any way.

No matter, it had to be cut out, Mr Freed insisted. Again, but why?

Because, he carefully explained, because David won.

We leave you, dear reader, to ponder on that.

PS - When ABSA MD, Mr D C Cronje, recently went to London to chat up UK businessmen about ABSA's prospects, he did not tell them that half his top executives are being grilled before a secret enquiry - or that his bank is only surviving thanks to a massive "lifeboat" secretly provided by the Reserve Bank. But then, of course, his hosts were Barings ... 

The Maureen Barnes column

Jani Who?

Ah Jani, in spite of all your efforts, you seem to have had your 15 minutes of infamy. When I phoned Auckland Park the bright young thing in the studio asked: "Who is Jani Allen?". Quite the most satisfying question I've been asked in a long time.

That, after the emaciated painted lady was given prime time by TV1's 6 on One to mount - via the nauseating Cliff Saunders - an extraordinary attack on the British High Court (which I am sure can stand the strain) and, far worse, on her former colleagues who, quite bravely in at least one case, travelled to England to give evidence for the defence when Jani sued Channel 4 for libel. It is worth remembering that Ms Allen lost the case in which she denied having an intimate relationship with Eugene Terre'Blanche.

But, as SATV's interview revealed, Ms Allen has been born again, and this natal miracle is deemed to be more important than impartial journalism.

Clutching a Bible - so mutilated by highlighter that I expected to see her struck down by an offended deity - and peering through dissipated, mascara-laden eyes, Ms Allen told us more than anyone could want to know about her newly-found religious beliefs. Shades of Tammy Bakker.

And, when Jani had finished castigating her enemies and explaining how her new-found God understands her so well, I could have done without the gratuitous endorsement by a starry-eyed Jane Hicks on behalf, one assumes, of SATV. She might, as she said, find Jani's humility "moving" but the more sane of us were crying humbug.

Curiously, in the equally biased and sycophantic interview by Lin Sampson in the August edition of *Playboy*, Jani made no mention whatsoever of finding God, religion, or even a pair of lost spectacles. She was too busy swapping unoriginal one-liners with Sampson and viciously insulting her erstwhile friends and colleagues. No humility here. The appalling article succeeds in obscuring the fact that in the London court action it was Allen who was out for blood and money.

It seems odd to me that Jani was given space to mount her attack by a magazine published by Times Media, which also publishes the *Sunday Times* - where most of

the journalists she was slandering are employed. Even odder that, in spite of objections by staffers, the *Sunday Times* itself followed this up by printing an extract of the *Playboy* article, solely to promote its sister magazine's sales.

What Ms Allen fails to understand is that her notoriety and the general contempt in which she is held by civilised people is not because of unsavoury aspects of her private life, or with whom she did, or did not, sleep - but the fact that she espoused the cause of a vicious and violent organisation and its leader. Even now she does not condemn Terre'Blanche on moral grounds, still finding him "not a bad man".

And she had a sympathetic ear in Ms Sampson, who describes the rage against Jani as "the first public showing of what would become the new South African psychosis", and sneering at defence witnesses who, in the company of Ms Allen, found it necessary to declare themselves against apartheid and anti-Semitism.

In the *Playboy* article, Sampson, who appeared captivated by Allen, launches, enraptured, into her usual little list of her subject's designer clothing and accessories: "pleated Trixi Schober trousers in faux-poor crushed linen, jewelled sweaters produced in Mariuccia Mandelli's unmistakable hand, a sculpted Karl Lagerfeld handbag, scarves and gloves by Nanni".

Like most South Africans who can't distinguish Loving from Living, Ms Sampson can't tell Absolutely Fabulous from absolutely anything. And, of course, she omitted (as did Cliff Saunders in the SATV interview) to find out the things we all want to know.

How, for instance, has Jani been supporting herself in the UK, and how did she get a work permit to do so? Talented South Africans, unhampered, as Jani is, by having been "impaled on the blowtorch" of a neo-Nazi's blue eyes, are denied the chance to live and work in England. And, now that Jani has found religion, does she intend paying the thousands of pounds she owes in damages and costs? If Sampson is to be believed, Jani is supporting quite a designer lifestyle over there. She could, perhaps, be like the rest of us - skip the Lagerfeld and pay off her debts.

Don't watch this space.

Cliffie's coming home!

The sight and sound of the dreadful Cliff Saunders raised, along with my blood pressure, another pertinent question. Just what is this apologist for apartheid still doing at the SABC? When I placed my little cross on that long voting paper, I really didn't expect, almost 12 months later, to be still confronted in the privacy of my own home by Cliff "Yes Mr Minister" Saunders.

The nightmare is not over yet. According to the SABC, now his European gravy train has rolled to a halt, Cliffie is on his way home to continue his job of "political correspondent" for SATV.

Job satisfaction

A piece in the Cape's *Distrikspos* gives an indication of why so many old Nats are quickly coming to terms with the new South Africa.

A very unhappy resident of the small Cape seaside town of Strand wrote to the paper and complained at having to support a millionaire town clerk, Laurie Groenewald. Groenewald took early retirement recently, along with a retirement package worth R1.5 million - only to have Strand's mayor, Chris Hattingh, immediately reappoint him as town clerk on full salary.

Thereafter unhappy municipal colleagues observed that Mr G came to work accompanied by a bodyguard.

The *Distrikspos* reader, having noted that R1.5 million invested at a modest 12.5% would provide Mr G with R15 625 in interest every month, in addition to his monthly salary of R9 000, called on the mayor to immediately stop the soustrein and send Mr G packing - or otherwise face demands for an official enquiry.

Asked by the *Distrikspos* to comment, the mayor said he was tired of the "inadequate reporting and gossip that have been spread by press and radio". He confirmed that the town clerk had retired on December 31 1994, but the Council had then been fortunate to retain his services on a contract basis for a further ten months, at the same

salary and perks as he had received before his retirement.

The mayor went on to say that "there is nothing out of the ordinary about the town clerk's retirement package", and referred the newspaper to the Schedule of Salary Scales for Chief Executive Officers, as determined by the Remuneration Board. In this schedule, the mayor pointed out, Strand is rated a 9th grade municipality - which, besides being a fair assessment, must lead one to conclude that there are many municipalities where the pickings for town clerks are several degrees better.

"However," continued the mayor, "during negotiations in the presence of Council Members, personal threats were directed at the town clerk and the Council has been obliged to arrange for Mr Groenewald's protection on a temporary basis." He explained: "Wild demands were being made for Mr Groenewald to be fired - with which the Council could, unfortunately, not comply."

Herman Charles Bosman, where are you?

Have a snifter

The German-owned Hotel Grande Roche in Paarl is often called the grandest in the country. Although lauded to the skies by experts, it has always been a bit too traditionally European for my taste - silver salvers, excellent but formal service, exotic fare and prices to match.

According to one of the aforementioned experts who recently had a meal in their Bosman's restaurant, the standard, while still high, is not what it was when the hotel first opened. The differences are quite small, but noticeable. At the beginning, for instance, they offered - perhaps rashly - many different flavoured butters from which to choose; now there are just unadorned little squares of the plain and ordinary. And their baskets are no longer filled with home-baked, crusty bread, but with uninteresting shop stuff. The service, however, remains faultless.

Unfortunately, the hotel has a traditional sexist view of women too. This might, of course, be because the men who can afford to go there usually come accessorised with a big BMW, a fat wallet and a pretty little lady. Whatever - back to Bosman's. The women of my spy's party were all handed menus without prices, while all the men, guests included, were given priced menus. Then came pud time. The small dessert menu carries a list of sweets with accompanying liqueur suggestions, including three Remy Martin cognacs, with their Louis XIII listed first (at R260 a tot!), followed by the XO and finally, the VSOP (at



24,50 a tot). A less than mega-rich host could be in for a bit of embarrassment if an uninformed woman were to select - as well she might - the first cognac on offer in her unpriced menu. Talk about blind tasting.

ABSAlootly Fabulous

Don't worry folks, ABSA's found a new source of funds - old age pensioners.

A retired woman in Cape Town returned shortly before Christmas from a two-month visit overseas, and was going through her accumulated mail. One envelope contained a pile of junk from ABSA's insurance brokers in Johannesburg. The accompanying, unsigned, letter explained the benefits of taking out more insurance with them, and announced that they had organised additional accident insurance for her.

After reading this tedious hard sell, and having no previous insurance with ABSA, the retired lady put the papers aside for disposal.

Next she checked her ABSA / Volkskas Card account, which showed a debit, dated shortly after her departure for overseas, for R65 by "EDC* M* ABSA Makelaars Jhb ZA".

First she rang the local card account query number and established that the R65 was the cost of the accident policy mentioned in the junk mail. Apparently they'd taken it out, without permission, in her name and charged her for it. As you may imagine, she protested, only to be told by a surly cookie that, because she hadn't queried the charge within thirty

days, it was too late. If she wanted to take the matter further, she must write.

Since then she has endured lots of agitation, frustration and anger but, at the time of writing, still hasn't got her money back.

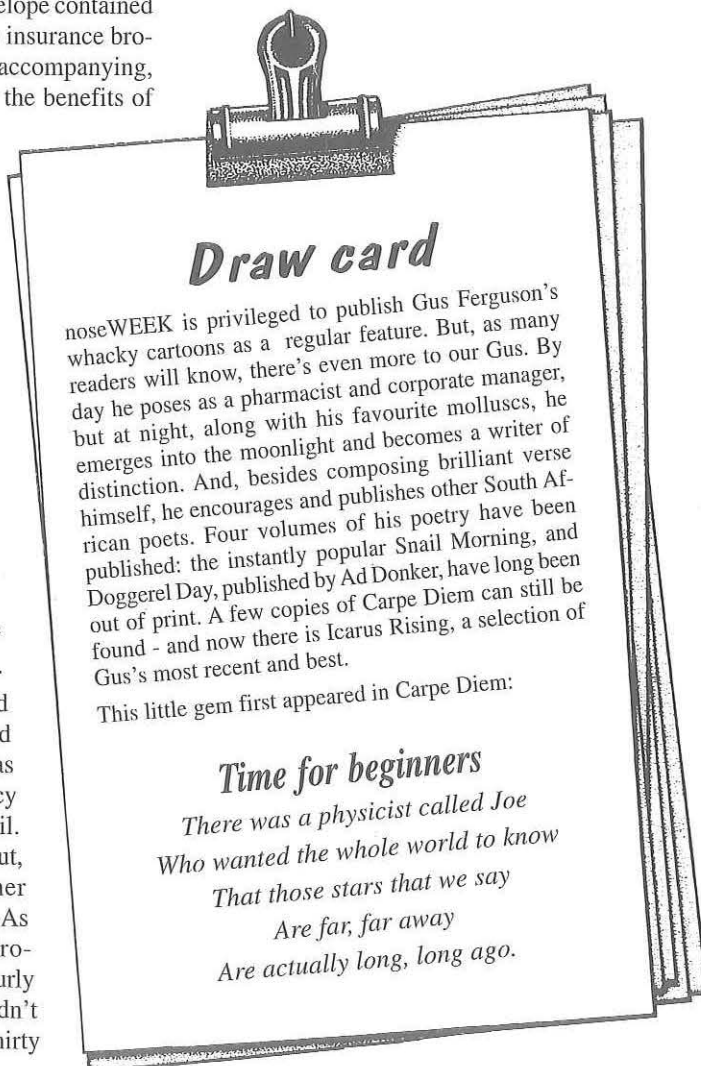
"What infuriates me," she says, "is that I always thought my card account was private and personal. I have lost faith in the system."

This woman happens to be a retired businesswoman, who knows her rights and who has her wits about her. Many others do not have her skills. Pensioners, widows, single women and the more vulnerable among us should check their ABSA card accounts very carefully. There is a thief at ABSA [again! - Ed.].

What strikes a chill into her soul is the final paragraph on that unsigned junk mail, which read: "P.S. We shall inform you regularly of the most popular basic insurance policies which we negotiate on your behalf as part of our service to you."

Please don't bother, chaps.

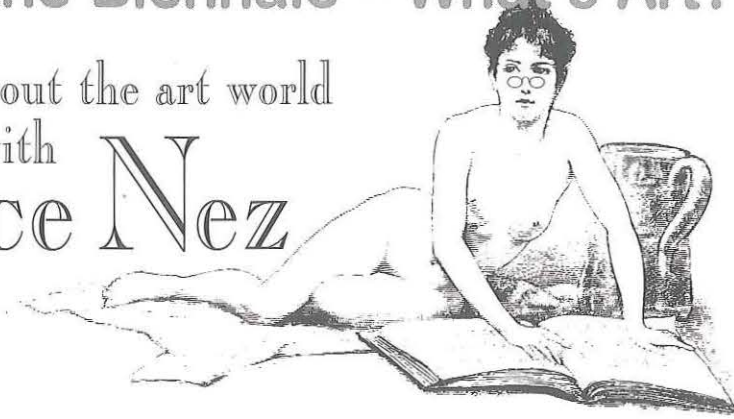
It looks like fraud to us. It would be interesting to know who at ABSA's perpetrating it ...



Stuff the Biennale - What's Art?

nosing about the art world

with
Pince Nez



In Europe and America, huge amounts of money are raised through the black tie, expensive, first nights and openings at which 90 percent of society longs to be and to be seen. In those distant parts, culture is in. The arts are OK.

More than that, to be on the board of a museum or arts group is a position of prestige and is highly prized - and, unlike here, to be on first name terms with an artist confers a greater distinction than knowing the Minister for Imports and Exports. It is, by the way, South Africa's lack of respect for artists that causes our artists to take themselves so seriously. They gather in bars around the country - the latest hotspot is Bob's Bar in Yeoville - seeking solace in each other's company.

But to return to arts and culture in South Africa: It would seem to be on the way out, and with not even a bang. The only event which draws a crowd, dressed up and intent on being seen, would appear to be the opening of a shopping centre - and sometimes just the re-opening. Hyde Park, Sandton Square and the Waterfront have become the cultural heights to which Mr and Ms Average aspire.

The genuine places of culture are gradually and inexorably slipping off the map. The Johannesburg Art Gallery finds itself marooned in a sea of warring taxis - and so its annual attendance figures are too embarrassingly low to mention.

The Market Theatre is an "island of sanity in a troubled world" as its mission statement proclaims, but island it certainly is, surrounded on every side by the ubiquitous taxis, muggers and roadworks. What an absurdity to read that the city security commission now proposes to make a number of safe areas and, top of its list is the Newtown Cultural Centre - something the concerned participants have been lobbying for for years, and whose proposals have so far been studiously ignored by the same powers who now make these statements of intent. Pity, because there may be culture in Newtown, but by now there's no one there to see it.

In Cape Town the conversion of the National Gallery into a Ndebele Village continues.

For the rest, Richard Loring continues to pull in the crowds with his particular brand of lowbrow entertainment in Midrand - the outskirts of Tembisa apparently do not strike the same terror into the hearts of theatregoers as a drive into the city.

And of course there are Sun City and the Lost City. They drew in the crowds to watch the Miss World contest - none less than the Minister of Arts and Culture and his deputy were sitting in the audience. It is to be hoped that they were there for the girls, who were beautiful, rather than for the abysmal performances. Or perhaps they had gone to applaud the Deputy Minister's daughter who was one of the judges.

Sol Kerzner is rapidly becoming our local Czar of Culture. Maybe he and Dr Ivan May of Nedbank will end up jointly funding the Arts Trust, and then we can look forward to a steady and slushy diet of beauty contests, the three tenors and variety shows, with the ghastly Whitney Houston, or her equivalent, thrown in for comic relief.

Perhaps the general public is spending so much money on tickets to see these so-called superstars, that they haven't any left for the real thing. But it is a comfort to know that anyone who went to Ellis Park to watch the Whitney Houston concert must have serious doubts about ever attending another one - such was the horror of the evening.

In Gauteng the Gauleiters of Arts and Culture have decided that an Arts Council is a good thing. Indeed, who could disagree. But in keeping with the all-pervasive fear of being seen to be undemocratic, it was equally agreed that members of the Arts Council should be democratically elected. The vexing question of how this was to be achieved - a cultural referendum, perhaps - was tactfully left for another day.

So another worthwhile initiative will founder through lack of decisive action, and for fear of offending anybody who might complain at the "lack of transparency", "neglect of the grassroots constituency" and all the other buzz phrases which bedevil the workings of government. Czar Sol may be our only hope.


Another departure marks the art scene in Johannesburg. Trent Read's Contemporary Art Gallery has gone. A pity, since it enlivened the lives of gallery-goers and its residential neighbours in Rosebank - though they may not be so sorry to see just another office block in its multi-hued stead. The story goes that Trent is moving to Knysna and will manage his stable of artists from there. Knysna is the new destination for artists from all over. Holidaymakers may be surprised at what they soon will find in the proliferation of "Ye Olde Craft Shoppes" - no more crude depictions of the Knysna Loerie and the last remaining Elephant, but Serious Art.

There is very little news on the Johannesburg Biennale front. Christopher Till has been uncharacteristically quiet, keeping his slate clean for the job we are told he applied for in Brazil, though the report he recently gave to his bosses on the Council contains enough anomalies and misstatements to require explanation.

First among these was his statement that the Biennale would show the world that "Johannesburg is a sophisticated, world class city where it is beneficial to live, invest, do business, be entertained and involved in cultural activity". The locals who attempt to do any one of the above would certainly question the validity of this - so might the visitors to the Biennale when they have been mugged or shot *en route* to the cross-cultural experiences Christopher and his team are providing. Cross-cultural, by the way, did not include the participation of any African country, despite "admitted" expenditure of nearly R4 and sponsorships of R2.5 million. In fact to remedy the lack of African entries, members of the team charged about Mozambique in an effort to buy genuine African Art exhibits - something that equally did not appear in the budget. And what about all the travelling to Europe and South America? Where does that appear in the budget? Who is paying? And which department is coughing up for the improvements to the buildings specifically earmarked for Biennale exhibitions - yet another non-entry in the budget? The total costs of this farcical exercise must by now have reached in excess of R10m. A real disgrace.

What may be an apocryphal story, but a good one, is that at a cocktail party in Sao Paulo on the Biennale team's recent visit to Brazil, Lorna Ferguson was asked if she was acquainted with the famous painter and muralist Diego Riviera (1886 - 1957). "No!" she exclaimed, "is he here, what does he look like?" On being given a description she rushed around the room looking and enquiring for a Mexican with a large, droopy moustache and long black hair. Her chagrin, when the joke was exposed, was evidently quite explicit. **IT**

Pigging Out...



at
*Lady Phillips
Tea Garden*
Vergelegen - Somerset West

It started well when, having tried unsuccessfully to book for a Saturday lunch at this trendy luncheon venue, and having been placed on the waiting list, we were phoned a few days later by soft-voiced American Mary Beth, to say we were in.

The magnificent Vergelegen estate, now in the heart of Somerset West, which itself is now only just outside Cape Town, was built by that infamous 17th Century property tycoon, Willem Adriaan van der Stel (son of the more famous Simon).

In 1917 the estate was purchased by Sir Lionel Phillips for his wife, Florence. Guys really knew how to please a lady in those days. Anyway, Flo spent a small fortune restoring the place - except for the vineyards which she yanked out. When the Phillipses passed on to richer pastures, the place was bought ('acquired' says the brochure as if money didn't come into it) by industrialist Punch Barlow, who lived in it until 1966 when he sold it to the mighty Anglo American Farms - who proceeded to do a Boschendal on it. Now it is open to respectable visitors on all but three days of the year; picnicking, dogs, fires and littering all verboten.

To get to Vergelegen from Cape Town you drive on the exciting airport road, from where you get a wonderful view of Table Mountain and the thousand upon thousand squatter shanties which line the freeway. In addition, you dodge stone-throwers, goats, sheep, cattle, horses and pedestrians. It was comforting to have read in the local paper, before starting our journey, that the stone-throwers are now only gang motivated and not, thank heavens, political.

Apart from a narrow escape when we, and several other kindly motorists, braked to let

a duck and her ducklings cross the road, only to have a speedster slam into the cars in the next lane, we arrived at the stately home physically unscathed, if psychologically a trifle battered. The duck, I am pleased to report, was unmoved by the incident.

My first gripe came as we drove in and found that even if you were partaking of luncheon, you still had to pay a R6 per person entrance fee (children and oldies R4). This entitles you to a wine tasting - which the uninformed have no time for - and a cellar tour, ditto. What it does is to add a fair sum to your lunch bill, but from Anglo's perspective does keep out any riff-raff who might feel like a stroll.

The staff at the reception office-cum-shop (as was everyone we spoke to) were charming and helpful. At our request they phoned the restaurant and asked if we could take time to taste some wine (since we'd paid for it).

Young Andrew in the tasting room was well-drilled, good-humoured and hardworking. And the limited tasting we and our livers felt up to before lunch, did help us choose a wine for our meal. And some to take home.

Rather depressing was the absence of any sign of affirmative action in staff relations. The only dark faces were those of the gatekeepers. Shop, restaurant front of house and wine cellar were all white, and quite often foreign, except, of course, for the chap who toted the wine we bought to our car. Times are not a-changing at jolly old Anglo.

The gardens, thanks to labour, money, and, one imagines, Lady Phillips, are simply super and bring on waves of delusions of colonial grandeur, darling. Oh to have a little place like this and 150 gardeners to tend it.

The magnificent buildings are another story. Instead of the traditional white, someone's favourite decorator has painted the lot in a kacky colour called Naples Yellow - a name which says it all. Terrific for workers' cottages in Naples, maybe. The relief plasterwork picked out in white, makes it look like that cheap plastic moulding you can stick on. Anyone interested in seeing what the place *could* look like should see Alain Proust's superb photograph - taken in the mid-80's, before the restorers got their elegant little hands on it - which appeared in Great Colonial Houses of South Africa.

We make our way to the restaurant - I'll gag if I repeat its twee name - where we had a table on the vine-shaded patio. Inside is too swagged, tagged and draped in floral patternia for my taste, but outside all is bright, light and dappled green. All our fellow guests seemed to be happy tourists.

Now a word about my companion, who has a deathwish when it comes to choosing food. A man of usually conservative eating taste, he becomes slightly deranged when faced with a menu; ordering either food he detests - perhaps in the vain hope that this time it

will be different - or some outlandish experimental dish which nobody in their right mind would choose. He does these things with such authoritative style that our guests are often inspired to follow his lead. Many unsuspecting souls will, as a result, never forget meals they shared with him.

At Vergelegen he gazed at the menu contemplatively. Not for him the lamb pie, the line fish, or even a mushroom crumble. He decided on the rather bizarre "Orange Scented Oxtail" which summoned up visions of a cowherd with an aerosol can.

He was almost saved when our charming waitress told him that there was no oxtail, scented or otherwise. But before he could choose something else, she helpfully offered ostrich neck prepared in the same way. Imagination is a curse. At least with oxtail one can be reasonably sure they've cut off the rest of the beast. Would the neck come complete with beak and beady eyes? No, we were assured, the head was definitely removed. Deathwish, swallowing his disappointment at this, confidently ordered the dish, followed closely by our young guest, who knew a gourmet when he saw one. They both took the opportunity to order Tarte Tatin which, the menu advised, should be reserved when ordering your main course.

Thai Style chicken with noodles was adventurous enough for me, and I averted my eyes when Deathwish and guest's ostrich neck *a l'orange* arrived. Their verdict: tough and tasteless and overpowered by citrus sauce. "A bit like old chuck," said Deathwish. Upchuck, more likely, I said wittily to myself.

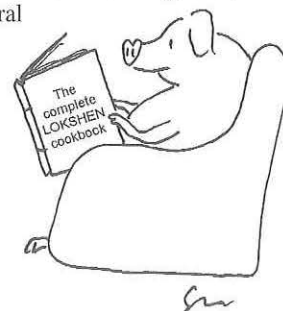
Anyway, when our waitress asked if they'd enjoyed it, they both said no. She smiled understandingly: "Most people find it an interesting food experience, but don't want to have it again," she confided.

When the pud arrived, all was forgiven.

Food prices at the LPTG are reasonable, ranging from R12 to R27 for a main course, and you can even have a sandwich or a cheese platter if you wish. The Vergelegen and Boschendal wines are bargains. Our Vergelegen off-dry blend Vin de Florence was R14,50. Chardonnay was R17 and the two most expensive wines on the list were Boschendal's Lanoy '90 at R19 and Le Grand Pavillon at R20,50.

Seasonal visitors to the Cape will need to book well in advance to ensure a pleasant lunch, ostrich neck notwithstanding, served in an idyllic pastoral setting a zillion light years from reality.

- Mo-Tori



noseWEEK

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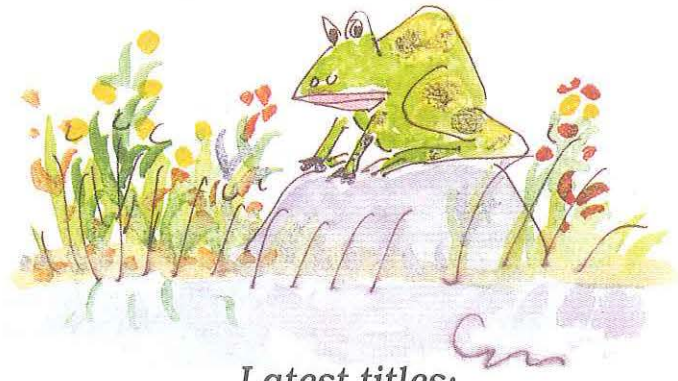
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