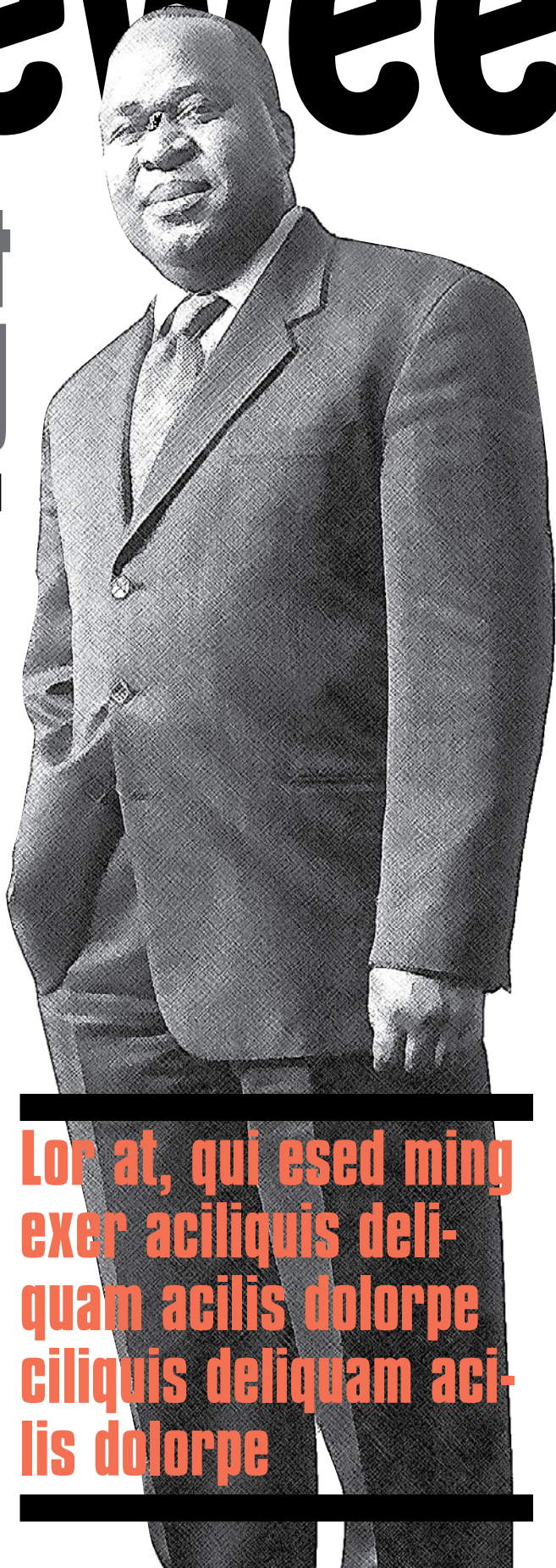


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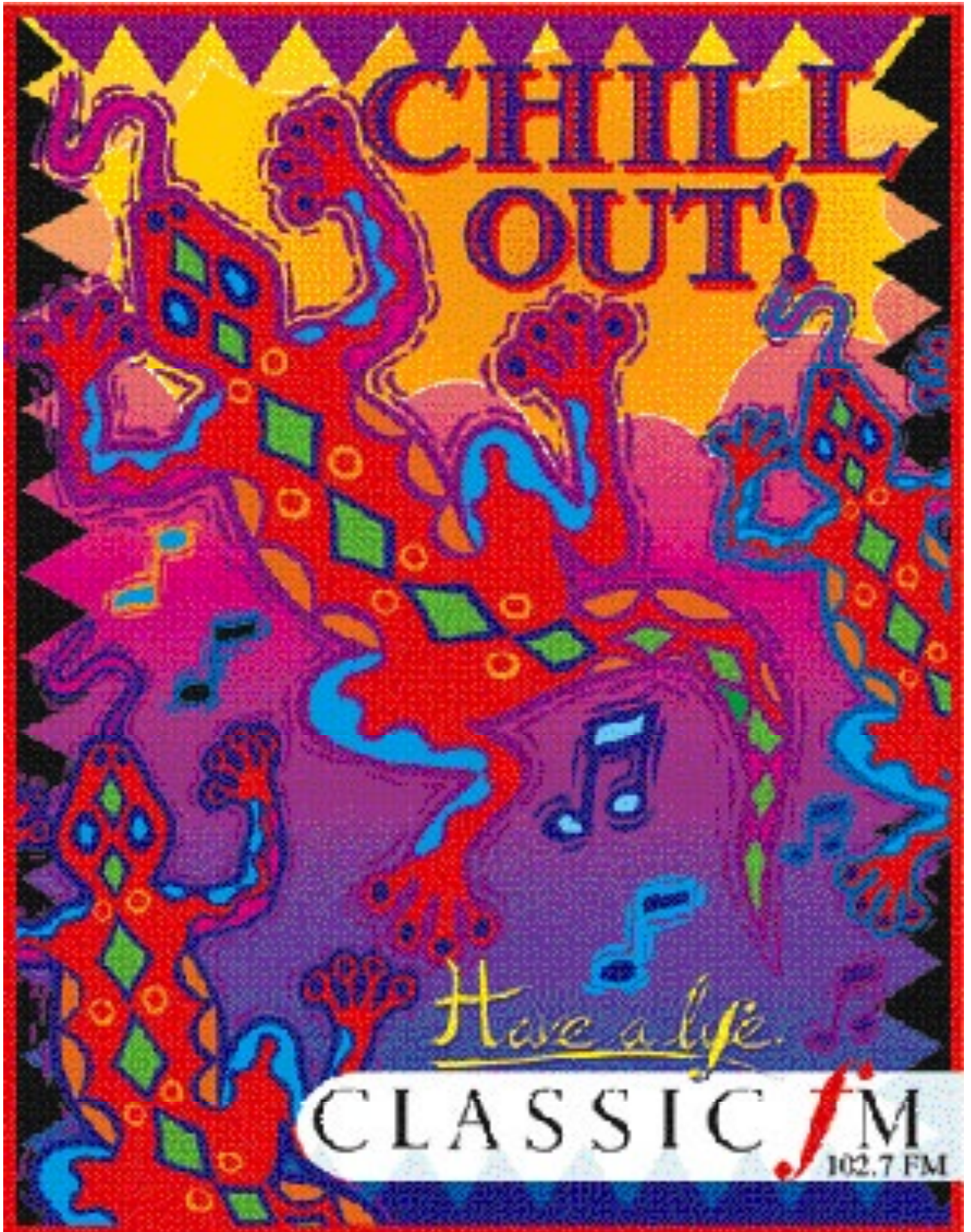
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Outside Gauteng on DSTV's radio bouquet, channel 58 or worldwide on www.classicfm.co.za

Picture of Frame

Poor Philip Frame – chastised as the archetypal capitalist and exploiter – was everything regulators and unions detest.

Yet today his 30,000 jobs seem far more benevolent than the moral posturing of his detractors. A few more Frames might just feed the poor a lot better.

Robin Bosomworth
Newlands, Cape Town

■ Why is King still permitted to dominate the corporate governance arena after your Frame Trust exposé? Will any

they closed their Accolades programme, hoping that my bank would consider me a sufficiently valued client to care. I was told that it was “out of their hands”.

The solution is to tell both Standard Bank and Voyager to stick it, and move all my accounts to FNB whose ebucks never expire and can be used to buy a wide range of items.

Shaun Hodgkiss,
Fourways

■ South Africans are notorious for putting up with bad situations. I am a Voyager

need for a “private” room was expressed for the first time. Our manager explained that a sea-facing room with a private terrace would be available in three days, and would be allocated to them. Mr Pogrund refused this, and left.

Within a day, I received an e-mail from Mr Pogrund, stating that if I did not refund him in full, he would sue. We offered him our Whale Room with private terrace, but received no response.

He then complained to *Portfolio* and Cape Town Tourism. *Portfolio* could

I am talking about. (Female genitalia – in glorious technicolour – are hardly Leonardo da Vinci.)

But the sad conclusion I have drawn is that the splendid level of investigative journalism you practise is marred by colloquial vulgarism. If the new SA has nothing else to talk about or refer to other than things below the belly button it is in a poor way indeed.

Dr Patricia McMagh
Rondebosch, Cape Town

Stuffed nose

Nose would be %@#sed, bowed and defeated were it to have its expletives deleted.

Gus Ferguson

See Backchat on page 30. – Ed

“Why is King still permitted to dominate the corporate governance arena after your exposé?”

politicians – or the Institute of Directors – have the courage to stick their necks out on this?

Sam Hansen
by e-mail

Voyager to nowhere

Well done on exposing SAA for the arrogant, bloated organisation it really is. After being abused once too often, I let my Gold Voyager status slide to zero. Do SAA care? Of course not!

Dieter Rencken
London

■ I tried to book a return flight to London. There was a seat when I needed to leave, but not a single economy seat back – from any European city – for a Voyager claimant till next January!

I called Standard Bank, who moved their credit card customers to Voyager when

member. I intend to e-mail a scanned file of your article (*nose46*) to my 10 best friends asking them to forward it to their 10 best friends. The message will include SAA’s e-mail address. Hopefully, within 14 days SAA will be getting hundreds of e-mails a day.

Stanley Cohen
by email

More Stannic panic

What happened to your promised follow-up article on Stannic? You’re doing sterling work. Don’t tell me you were gagged?

Sean Goss

Eldorado Park, Johannesburg
No, other matters intruded. But watch this space. – Ed.

Whale of a time

Allow us to add the detail Mr Pogrund left out of his letter in *nose46* regarding his reservation at Whale Cottage, Hermanus.

When he sent an e-mail enquiry for accommodation, I offered him a good sea-facing room, as he requested. At no stage was the word “private” mentioned. He signed off our reservation confirmation form and cancellation policy. Our policy states that a walkout by a guest results in the full payment being due.

The Pogrunds arrived late on the day, and did not feel their room met their expectation. Mr Pogrund’s

not help him, as we do not advertise in it. Cape Town Tourism head Sheryl Ozinsky recommended we offer him a weekend at Whale Cottage. We did, but he rejected the offer.

To put an end to five months of correspondence, we refunded Mr Pogrund for two days’ accommodation. He has not acknowledged receipt.

Mr Pogrund holds a poor view of Sheryl Ozinsky if he thinks that my status as deputy chairman of Cape Town Tourism would have restricted her “actions”.

The Pogrunds are the only guests who have walked out since we opened in September.

We have done our best to satisfy Mr Pogrund in the hope that a positive approach would result in a happier ending for all.

Christiane von Ulmenstein

Whale Cottage, Hermanus

Hijacked by design

The graphic design of *nose46* is simply awful. The power of your marvellous magazine to communicate has been hijacked by your designer, who has no clue how to lay out pages that communicate quickly and effectively.

Fonts and design styles are used willy-nilly from page to page; bold, ugly and confusing. A once good read has been made difficult. Buy your designer a copy of *The Spectator* to show how it should be done.

Anthony Bannister

Nottigham Road, KZN

What! No sex, no sin, no sensation – and no fun with layout either? Trying to be upper class is such hard work, we’ve given up. Jokes aside, I thought we looked pretty lively. But watch how we develop over the next few issues, and then tell us what you think. – Ed.

Yachties see stars

Congratulations on getting better and better!

Durban yachties are agog, following your revelations regarding the Cape-to-Rio and Royal Cape Yacht Club. We will probably be seeing some of the “stars” in July when Point Yacht Club hosts the NCS/MSK and Lipton Cup Regattas.

Were you aware that Anthony Stewart [RCYC manager who resigned his

Gutter talk

I fear I am unable to renew my sub, as my financial situation since moving to an old-age home is no longer elastic. In any event I am finding the use of the language of the gutter – “arse” and “fucking” – rather dreary.

Although I am 90, I am not some stuffy Bible-thumping prude: I horrified my friends by buying a copy of *Hustler* because I like to know what



Bi-polar bears

job and his membership of the club in 2000 – see *nose45*] is the son-in-law of [current RCYC commodore] Craig Middleton?

HR
Durban

No! –Ed.

Lazerson treatment

I have read and reread your article about Ivor Lazerson and can see no good reason why you published it.

A feud between Lazerson's widow and his daughters from a previous marriage is something that occurs everywhere. Of what consequence is it to anyone outside the family. The man is dead. What can be achieved by displaying this dirty linen?

There can be little doubt that any husband who received a divorce summons from his wife when he was terminally ill would disinherit her. The only surprise is that the "top lawyer" who urged Sue-Ann to do so as a tool to obtain maintenance

from a dying man did not anticipate this!

HP Vermaak
Die Wilgers, Pretoria

You've correctly identified many of the issues we wished to raise. The problem of under-provision for the maintenance of a surviving spouse, particularly in a second or subsequent marriage, is indeed remarkably common – as is the potential for bitterness and conflict in such situations. The problem can be addressed in various ways: by means of moral pressure on those proposing to make such a will; by sharpening professional awareness among "top lawyers" of the available options – and by promoting appropriate changes to the law.

The central point of our story was that Sue-Ann Lazerson is probably the first surviving spouse in such circumstances to claim a right to maintenance by her husband's estate in terms of the new law. – Ed.

■ I was fascinated by the message you tried to send Ivor Lazerson in your last issue. Pity I don't have more influence at West Park cemetery, or I'd have delivered it myself.

One evening about 11 years ago my (now ex-) wife and I had a final showdown. She moved out the bedroom. I took a sleeping pill and went to bed.

Next door, in my office at the house, the country's second-most-senior advocate, Attie van der Spuy, was working late, consulting with my client and accountant Leon Beinash.

Later, I was woken by my wife summoning me to the lounge to meet a surprise visitor. I pulled on some boxer shorts and was confronted by Lazerson. Without further ado he ordered me to sit down and sign a divorce agreement. I didn't even know Nancy had already gone to see a lawyer.

I told Lazerson to f-off out my house, whereupon he grabbed me by the throat and

started to throttle me. Weight for age I have to concede his superiority. The noise of the assault filtered through to my office and Beinash, weighing in at about 240kg, and Van der Spuy rushed to my rescue.

Lazerson had disconnected my phone, so I made a citizen's arrest and Van der Spuy went to the neighbours to phone the police. Lazerson decided it was time to bolt. I pursued him to the locked front gate where he turned to face me – and kicked my lower jaw, smashing it.

Later, when I was discharged from hospital I went to the Law Society of the Transvaal to lay a charge. The Law Society scheduled a hearing on five occasions. Beinash, Van der Spuy and I turned up on each occasion – but Lazerson simply never pitched up. The committee refused to hear the case or make a finding in his absence. Case closed.

Peter Soller
Johannesburg



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BANKS MUG R20m LOTTO WINNER

Tata ma

He won R20m on the Lotto and insisted on anonymity.

Uthingo's contracted financial advisers, PSG, signed him up to manage his fortune.

Absa muscled in – and persuaded him to sign up with them.

PSG sued him for R532,100.

He didn't know to defend the case and the high court has now ordered him to pay up.

He fled his home for a secret Bushveld hideout.

We tracked him down.

He's mega rich – but peeved at all the hassle.

MEET DAVID MATHUMBU...

The numbers 2,5,27,44, 45 and 46

came up on the National Lottery on 26 July last year. A rollover delivered a whopping second biggest ever payout jackpot of R20 million that Saturday for the sole punter who picked the unlikely run of digits.

The winner of draw No. 168 provoked some consternation at Uthingo, operators of the Lotto. For it was five days before the winner emerged.

It was only on August 1 that a press report revealed: "Lotto's newest millionaire came forward to claim his R20m jackpot prize yesterday, putting an end to days of speculation about his identity.

"The Gauteng man in his 40s only checked his ticket yesterday morning after hearing news reports that the money was still unclaimed.

"I never thought I would win the jackpot so I didn't even bother to check my ticket after the draw," said the man, who was not identified."

Uthingo – CEO Humphrey Khoza – makes much of the assistance its Winners Services department offers to dazed winners. "Winner Services exists in order to make the winning experience enjoyable and pleasant, not only at the time of the win, but on an ongoing basis," says the Lotto operator's blurb. "A key priority when returning a winner's call is to assess their emotional state, their current circumstances and safety and to set an appointment for the first face to face encounter.

"Although Winner Services cannot control and determine the future of winners, the aim of the department is to help minimize the possibility of any negative consequences such as reckless extravagance, and to reduce the risk of being lured into business by unscrupulous dealers. The unit goes out of its way to help retain the dignity of winners by providing financial

management and investment advice with the assistance of accredited and credible consultants."

So it was that when the winner of draw 168 finally revealed himself an immediate "face to face encounter" was with a representative of PSG Financial Services, one of a panel of 13 financial services companies contracted to Uthingo. Says Winner Services manager Trish Nxumalo: "We allocate the companies to winners in alphabetical order, so they all get a chance to see a winner."

PSG Financial Services, which trades as PSG Investment Services, is part of the Stellenbosch-based listed PSG Group headed by Jannie Mouton. The investment services arm has 190 financial advisors and R13bn in assets under management.

When it comes to deciding on investments, Uthingo insists that its winners must never be rushed into signing anything. Nxumalo says a period of a week to "go home and think about their money" is the usual.

So it comes as a surprise to discover that last August 1, just one day after he came forward to claim his prize, PSG's investment consultant Marius Kruger moved in what might be described as indecent haste to secure a "partly written and partly oral contract of mandate" whereby the winner appointed PSG as "my personal investment advisors to manage my finances in view of the money I won in the National Lottery."

Under the oral part of the mandate, it was agreed that PSG would provide the winner with financial advice, prepare a detailed financial plan and draw up a will.

Uthingo's Nxumalo, who quite properly refuses to disclose the winner's name or whereabouts, describes the mega winner to noseweek as "a family man with about

chancers

four children who was working, I think, for a Gauteng company that makes furniture". She adds: "He's not that educated. If you're talking financial investments I don't think his understanding is that much."

The winner had opened a bank account with a branch of Absa some 400 kms from Johannesburg, close to his family home in Mpumalanga. It must have contained some R500,000, since the funds available for PSG to manage had shrunk to R19.5m.

Says Nxumalo: "He then decided he didn't want advice from PSG."

What on earth happened? "He walked into the Absa bank because he wanted to withdraw money," explains Nxumalo. "I got a call from him when he was in the bank. We always encourage the banks not to force winners to sign anything until they've had a chance to understand what they're signing.

"He went to this branch, some place in Mpumalanga, where one of the bank's brokers wanted him to sign over investments immediately. They pounced on him and said 'we can't let you leave without signing your investment literature'.

"I spoke to the bank and said 'you can't force people to do that, we've given him a week to go home and think about his money. We could have forced him to invest, but we didn't because we wanted him to sit and think about it.

"He'd had advice from PSG; he'd been given time to go and think about the advice before he made a decision."

[So why did PSG's Marius Kruger have the winner sign a mandate on August 1, the day after he emerged to claim his R20m?]

Nxumalo continues: "The investment broker said that one of the rules of Absa bank is they need to force people to sign over investments immediately; they can't let him out of the bank. He had to literally sign his money over. I was very unhappy

"I said to the Absa broker: 'Do you realise that he doesn't know what he's signing?' The broker said: 'I need him to sign over investments now'."

with that because I don't think it's true that the banks have a code that forces people to sign.

"I said to the winner: 'Do you understand what the investments are?' He said: 'I just came here to withdraw money.'

"I said to the Absa broker: 'Do you realize that he doesn't know what he's signing?' The broker said: 'I need him to sign over investments now'."

The man who signed up Mathumbu for the second time, Johan Swart, works at the Absa branch as a freelance investment broker: "We're still handling his finances," Swart confirms to noseweek. "But I'm not open for any discussions. We try to keep everything private."

Swart's move came as a blow to PSG Financial Services, which had stood to earn substantial fees from a continuing relationship with the winner. It also emerges that initial advice offered to Lotto winners by Uthingo's contracted financial advisors comes at a heavy price.

Last October 29 a peeved PSG wrote to the winner demanding commission payment of R532,100 for its spurned services.

Based on the R19.5m involved in the mandate, this broke down to:

- On R7m at 2.78%: R194,600
- On R10m at 3%: R300,000
- On R2.5m at 1.5%: R37,500.

The winner failed to cough up the half million, so on January 8 this year deputy sheriff Tertius Robertson, based in Limpopo's Phalaborwa, served a summons on him for this amount. Alternatively, PSG sought payment of R44,348 for its "reasonable and necessary expenses", claiming that 43 hours had been devoted to research, travel and proposals in preparing its financial plan for the winner. The services of PSG's Marius Kruger do not come cheap; his hourly rate is R822, and time represents R35,346 PAGE 26 ►



eight luxury apartments, named The Warehouse, has been marketed by Pam Golding at R1.2m to R1.5m a unit.

But local residents are outraged – and with good reason. Apparently fashionable architects and senior bank executives regard themselves as above the law. To clear the site for The Workshop, Van der Hoven bulldozed a protected block of art deco flats called Dudley Court without a demolition permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (Sahra). And The Warehouse, whose full length windows and balconies loom over the once-secluded homes in First Avenue East, went up without planning permission from Johannesburg city council.

Dudley Court, built in 1936, was the work of renowned architect AA Ritchie McKinley. Van der Hoven razed it around the end of 2000. He was arrested and charged with illegal demolition under Sec 34 (1) of the National Heritage Resources

10m above the law

When a controversial architect went into partnership with a top FNB banker to erect the R11m development, above, in a quiet Jo’burg suburb they didn’t let trifling obstacles such as money or legislation get in their way. Now they may have to pull down their building and reconstruct the art deco block they illegally demolished

Act. All buildings more than 60 years old are protected by the act.

Van der Hoven, 47, first appeared in Johannesburg magistrates’ court on 7 February 2001 and through a long series of postponed hearings has been on R2000 bail ever since. The state’s case is finally due to be wound up at his next scheduled court appearance on 25 June.

Conservationists await the outcome of the architect’s trial with interest. On conviction, the offence carries a non-specified fine, or imprisonment not exceeding two years. But the magistrate also has the power to order anyone convicted of destroying a protected heritage resource to knock down anything put up in its place – and rebuild the demolished building to its original plans.

Which unfortunately might involve Van der Hoven and Lategan in having to raise

The friendship between

the flamboyant architect and the courteous, quietly-spoken banker was born some eight years ago, when they lived around the corner from each other in Johannesburg’s Saxonwold. They shared a passion for cycling, and trained together in the mornings.

Brilliant but controversial architect Justus van der Hoven told his cycling mate Theunie Lategan, chief executive officer of FNB Corporate, about his dream to build a massive combined office-residential

development in the tranquil tree-lined residential suburb of Parktown North.

Lategan agreed to go into partnership with him and cough up the dosh needed to make Van der Hoven’s dream a reality – more than R11m. Well, he didn’t quite cough up the dosh: the money, explains Lategan, came in a loan from his own FirstRand bank and a family trust.

Today the development is complete. The 3749m² office component, named The Workshop, is nearing full occupancy by top-notch tenants paying R55 a square metre in rent; the residential chunk of

several more millions from a certain bank with which they are well connected.

As a vehicle for the office-residential development the duo formed a company called 602 Parktown North. They are its sole directors.

Although Lategan's psychologist wife Antoinette has declared tearfully that they've put R11.4m into the project, Lategan is reticent to confirm the figure. "I'll have to check my numbers," he says. "It's a substantial investment. It's actually my family trust that's the investor, I'm not. Other than being a trustee of my family trust and a director of 602 I have no personal interest in the investment."

Does that mean that FNB forgot to get a personal guarantee from Mr Lategan for the loan? Because the 46-year-old banker confirms: "I got some bank funding yes, that's correct. Several million. Any property development that you do, you do it with sustainable finance.

"I'm just the minority shareholder. Justus, or his family trust, is the majority shareholder. I haven't really been involved; all the run-ins and encounters have been with Justus van der Hoven. I personally

was the sleeping financing partner."

Lategan's FNB Corporate, a division of FirstRand bank, is a major provider of transactional banking services and credit facilities to large- and medium-size corporates, financial institutions and government departments. In fiscal 2002 the division's after tax profits soared by 26%, to R424m.

But following his foray into property development with Justus van der Hoven the banker is ruefully pondering whether he'll get his R11m back. "On the residential component we are either breaking even or making a loss," he says. "Due to the resilience of the neighbours they've wiped out all our profit as far as The Warehouse goes. And financial rates are shooting through the roof. It took us two years to develop it when it should have taken six or seven months.

"In terms of The Workhouse offices we are now renting them out for commercial purposes. I will only know one day, if we sell it, whether we make a profit or not."

Looking back on the venture, Lategan says: "It has been a financial strain, I have to admit that. I can also say, and my

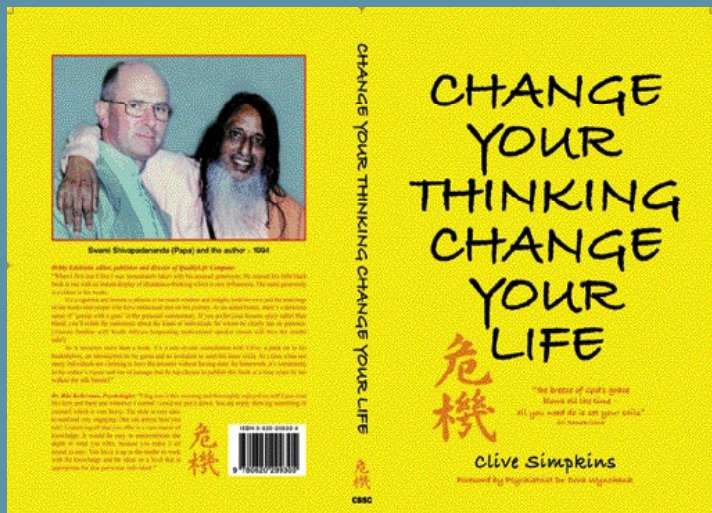
partner [Van der Hoven] knows it, that I was hugely upset about many things that happened – like building without the necessary approvals."

Despite this Lategan appears to feel that Van der Hoven's cavalier style was justified. "If you knew what transition the city council has gone through in the last five, six, seven years," says the banker. "Go and talk to professional developers and share their frustrations on how difficult it is to get things done."

Apart from the demolition of Dudley Court, the big issue for local residents has been the two blocks that comprise The Warehouse apartments. Van der Hoven obtained zoning rights limiting The Warehouse to two storeys on the southern side, which would normally mean a building around 5.5m tall. His plans showed two storeys all right, but each had a massive height of 5.3m, with room for mezzanine levels on each.

Comments a town planner: "He was trying by sleight of hand to get what amounts to a four level building when he was only allowed to have two, plus one mezzanine." PAGE 27 ▶

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LOVELIFE HAS SA MEDIA AGAINST THE WALL

When Aids charity loveLife

gave the Royal Cape Yacht Club R600,000 towards the Cape-to-Rio yacht race, they got a pretty raw deal in return. You'll recall from our report (*nose45*) that most of the funding didn't go on the race, and when the loveLife crew of youngsters arrived in Rio, there was no money for them to spend ashore and they all mutinied.

But, as it turns out, loveLife's lost lucre is little more than a drop in the ocean for the charity, which has proved adept at wheedling large dollops of dosh out of funders, even if it has yet to show, after four years in the game, that its programmes have made any impact at all on reducing teenage HIV infection.

Even had loveLife's ocean-going adventure turned out to be a triumph, one wonders how it would have contributed to HIV prevention in South Africa – which, in case you've

The millions of rands one Aids charity is spending on publicity is leaving the press, broadcasting and the ad industry panting for more. But its confusing message appears to be making little difference in reducing HIV infection among teenagers – its stated aim

forgotten, is a core objective of its programme.

The salty smell of the ocean seems to have almost as strong a grip as the heady whiff of money at loveLife's headquarters. Last year, the charity kicked in sponsorship for British explorer Robert Swan's mission to clean up Antarctica – with help from six loveLife youth Groundbreakers – subsequently trucking the yacht around South Africa to “mobilise youth to take control of their lives and their environment.”

The effects of this grand scheme, which included a massive stand at Johannesburg's Earth Summit, are yet to be seen – but loveLife's CEO, David Harrison has announced new plans to team up with Coca-Cola to send a team of his Groundbreakers yachting up the west coast of Africa, all the way to arrive in Athens for the 2004 olympics.

Which brings us back to the money.

For a start, the South African government bypassed tender and NGO funding procedures to earmark R75m over three years for the loveLife programme. Reading through the list of loveLife's 35-member advisory one can't help wondering whether having friends in high places might have helped a touch. Pals of loveLife include:

- Minister of Health Manto Tshabala-la-Msimang;

- Company director and former Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale, who is chairman of loveLife;

- SA Tourism chief Cheryl Carolus;

- Saki Makozoma, CEO of black empowerment consortium Nail;

- Former first daughter Zindzi Mandela;

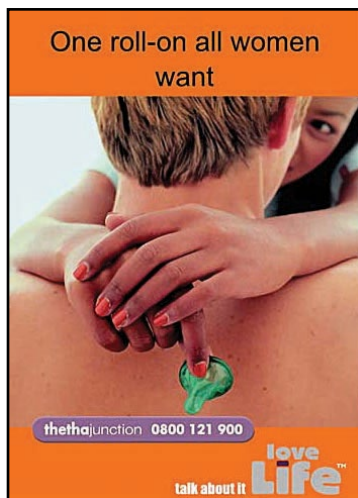
- Supreme Court of Appeal judge Edwin Cameron; and

- Zulu King Goodwill Zwelethini.

All these big guns no doubt ensure political buy-in – provided nobody is rude enough to mention obvious conflicts of interest.

The Almighty is also spoken for and between them Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, Archbishop Buti Tlhagale and Dr Molefe Tsele respectively take care of Anglican, Catholic and South African Council of Churches interests.

But hold on, there's more: e.tv's CEO Marcelle Golding; former loveLife staffer Judy Nwokedi – now head of public broadcasting at SABC – and Moegsien



likely to compete or interfere with the publication of the Product [*Scamto* or *ThethaNathi* – loveLife supplements published by Independent Newspapers and the *Sunday Times*].”

One may be excused for wondering whether this is what kept the blinkers on when reporting on loveLife – or was it just bad luck that journalists missed the resignation of loveLife's convenor and executive board chair, first lady Zanele Mbeki... or the death by drowning of youth participants at the loveLife games?

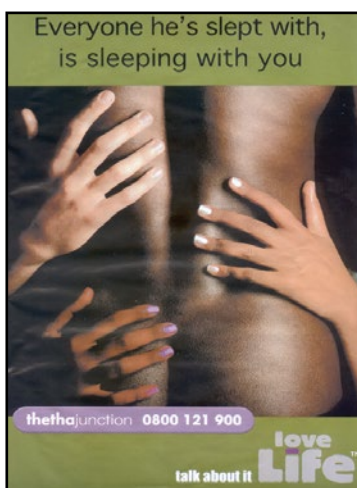
Instead junkets and press releases prevail, and who could forgive the *Sunday Independent* hackette who wrote: “The red carpet came to the dusty township of Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg, on Saturday...” when former presidents Mandela and Clinton, along with Hollywood stars Kevin Spacey and Chris Rock, launched the local loveLife Y-centre, but failed to notice that Orange Farm's community leaders and residents had been kept out of the event for “security reasons”.

Or perhaps the media are simply deaf to the constant banter about loveLife's absurd approach to HIV prevention. LoveLife adverts on the SABC carry the tagline, “in partnership between loveLife and SABC”. Does this mean that anyone who walks through the door with a social cause in their briefcase can get buy-in from the national public broadcaster, or

Perhaps the media are simply deaf to the constant banter about loveLife's absurd approach to HIV

Williams, editor of *The Star* (owned by Independent Newspapers which, as we'll see, gets a fat slice of the loveLife pie) swing some weight in the media affairs department.

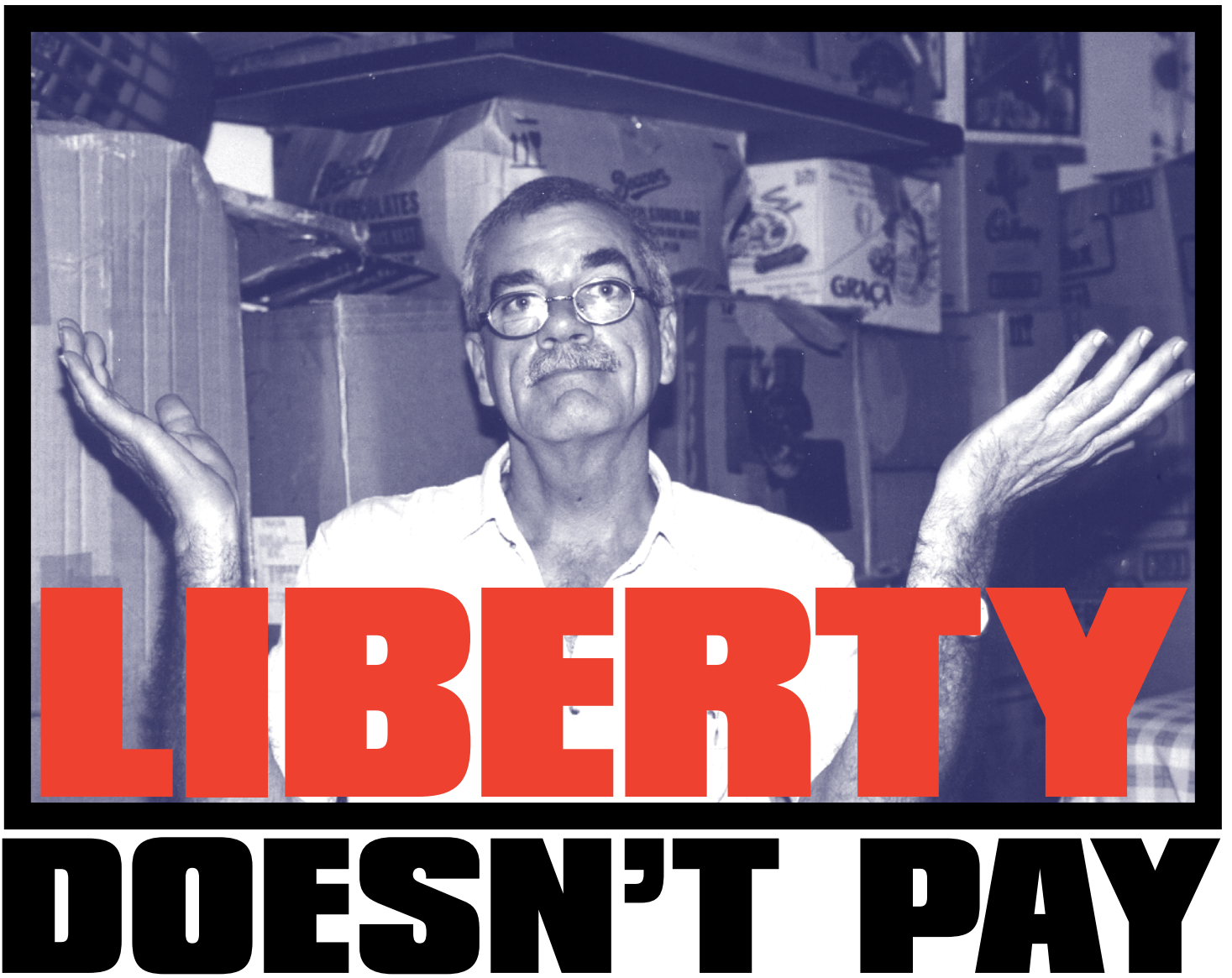
Media seems to be largely what loveLife's activities amount to. Local Aids NGOs have raised concerns about cosy contracts between loveLife and Independent Newspapers and the *Sunday Times*, which include protectionist clauses that read: “For the duration of this agreement, the Company [newspaper group] will not, either directly nor indirectly, engage in any way, either on its own behalf or on behalf of others, in the provision of content of such a nature as would or might



does loveLife have a special deal?

Media partners and corporates aren't about to complain. They take a good cut of loveLife's R60m annual communication budget, which pays for publishing contracts to print and distribute the *Scamto* and *ThethaNathi* newspaper inserts, broadcast advertising and programmes and investment in over 2000 billboards countrywide [singlehandedly keeping the outdoor media industry alive].

LoveLife are now in their fourth year of operation in SA, in a campaign that has the stated purpose of halving HIV infection among South African youth in five years. It hasn't shown up in the national statistics yet, but hang that, PAGE 28 ►



Leslie Newell suffered six armed robberies followed by his wife's illness and subsequent death. At least, he thought, her R1.3m life policy would allow him to carry on and to look after his two stepchildren. Then his insurance company broke the bad news....

IF YOU HOLD LIFE INSURANCE with liberty life, you would be well advised to put all dealings with your Liberty agent in writing.

To his cost, Leslie Newell did not. He claims that a verbal mix up with his Liberty agent has lost him R1.35m he should have received on his wife's life policy, following her tragic death two years ago.

Newell, 44, married Annie-Marie in 1997. For both of them it was the second time around. They bought two franchised convenience food stores in Randburg which they managed together. "Annie and I got on so well," he says. "Everything was going lovely."

Until the armed robberies. "We had five or six at Annie's store," says New-

ell. "One evening there was a terrible shoot-out. About 12 armed guys burst in, wounded the security guard and beat up the customers. The staff were traumatised.

"Annie said she was fine and refused to talk to a counsellor. But she was clearly under strain, acting and talking in ways that were not normal for her."

Annie's condition deteriorated. She couldn't sleep and, when she did, had nightmares. She became hyperactive and got up in the middle of the night to clean the house. She came from George – her parents still live there. So in October 2000 the Newells, including Annie's two children by her former marriage, decided to start a new life there.

While the couple struggled to find

jobs in George, it became clear that Annie was seriously ill. "We'd wake up in the morning and find threats written in lipstick all over the windows," says Newell. "One evening there was blood on the front doorstep. The kids were terrified."

Annie was under the doctor for stress, as well as a psychiatrist at George hospital and a neurologist. On June 11 2001 she died in her sleep, aged 39. The autopsy report stated that her death was from natural causes.

get life insurance again with her mental condition.

"Clarke also said we should keep the R400,000 one on my life (monthly premium about R800). He explained we could stop those premiums for six months because there was enough cash in there to sustain payments for that period.

"We reduced the monthly premiums to about R1200, which was manageable. It was what I wanted, a period of grace."

Newell paid Liberty Life R1605

Annie's.

A shattered and near-destitute Newell handed over his stepchildren – then aged 13 and 15 – to Child Welfare and moved back to Randburg.

A meeting with Clarke followed. Says Newell: "When I asked him about the mix-up with the policies he said: 'don't go that route. We can prove Annie's policy is valid. We'll sort it out and you'll get paid. But don't go that route about the mix-up.'"

The unnamed author was clearly very confused, writing this letter to a dead woman

But for Leslie Newell a second nightmare was already under way, with Liberty Life.

In January 2001, five months before his wife's death, in addition to the strain of Annie's illness Newell was struggling to find work in George. So he phoned his Liberty Life agent, Johannesburg-based Rob Clarke, and asked for a period of grace on his monthly life insurance premiums.

Newell, a loyal client of Liberty Life since 1989, had a number of policies in force. These included two on Annie's life – one for R1.35m and another for R400,000. Newell also had a R400,000 policy on his own life. These three were all taken out after their marriage.

"I was in financial trouble and all the policies were costing about R4000 a month in premiums," says Newell. "Clarke said he'd stop the monthly debit orders going through the bank, find out about a period of grace and come back to me.

"Two months later Clarke came back and said he had spoken to his people at Liberty, who said we couldn't have a period of grace; there was no such thing."

So Newell decided to cut back. He lapsed Annie's R400,000 policy. "But Clarke was adamant that I must keep the big one for R1.35m," says Newell. "He said she'd never

in cash to cover the two months of arrears that had been created on Annie's policy as he waited to hear about the (non-existent) period of grace. "I didn't hear from Clarke and assumed he had reinstated Annie's policy after I'd paid these arrears," he says.

"I assumed that every month the debit orders on her policy were continuing. I didn't check my bank account; I had enough problems with my wife being mentally unbalanced.

"After Annie died I phoned Rob Clarke. He called me back and said 'Les, thank God we kept the big one for Annie'. Three months later he said: 'There's a slight hiccup on Annie's policy, but don't worry – it's a minor technical problem.' He said Liberty was being difficult because it was such a big policy."

When Newell phoned again he was told the agent was away for a fortnight. So he spoke to an executive at Liberty Group head office, Alan Meekham, who informed him for the first time that two premiums on Annie's policy had not been paid, that her policy was null and void and the matter closed.

It emerged that Clarke had not stopped the premiums on Newell's life policy – it was not a self-sustaining policy after all. Neither had he reinstated the premiums on

At that meeting, says Newell, Clarke gave him an unsigned letter of confirmation regarding Annie's R1.35m policy (contract number 56543815000). The letter, dated two months earlier, August 4 2001, is addressed to Annie (by then nearly two months dead). It states: "We confirm that the abovementioned contract has been cancelled with effect from 01 August 2001."

It goes on to urge (the deceased) Mrs Newell to think carefully before terminating the contract. "The termination of a contract or a reduction in cover means a loss of valuable benefits which may be difficult to replace," it reads.

The unnamed author was clearly very confused, writing this letter to a dead woman. But it does confirm that Annie's policy was in force at the time of her death on June 11 2001.

Days after this meeting, Liberty Life gagged Rob Clarke. "He phoned me and said he'd been told he's not allowed to talk to me any more," says Newell.

Newell complained to the Ombudsman for Long Term Insurance. Liberty Group's legal head Leonard Benjamin told the ombudsman: "After the death of the late Mrs Newell in June 2000 [*wrong, she died in 2001 – Ed*] Mr Newell made contact with

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Johnny Bizos

on Costa Gazi

I have known Costa Gazi for 47 years, and we were apart for 22 of them. I was 19 when I went to university. Costa was a second year medical student in 1957 when I met him, one of three students who became my lifelong friends. Three Greeks and a Jew: me, Costa, Nic Stathakis and [Dr] Solly Farber.

Solly passed away last year to our sorrow and dismay and that is how life is, life itself is a terminal disease and we have to take it philosophically. In reality, this should have been about him and Costa. They had a profound relationship. I was a student on main campus, they were on medical campus. In Solly's absence, I'm doing the interview.

I was naive and I really believed Greece was the father of democracy. So when I came to South Africa, I was truly appalled to see that the Greeks had swallowed, bait hook and sinker, the

The [Greek] ambassador hauled us to the Pretoria embassy and gave us a lecture second to none of the dangers of being used by dangerous communists

apartheid ideology and practices. It was in this climate I met Costa, and we decided we needed a platform to tweak the prejudices of the community and propound our views. We decided to register the Students Hellenic Association.

It cost me two shillings and sixpence to register the SHA. In those days, that would have bought a mixed grill, a salad, two slices of toast and a cup of tea. We got Nic and Costa on the committee. We campaigned for the release of a Greek, underground fighter who during Nazi occupation climbed the Acropolis and brought down the Swastika and hoisted the Greek flag. It was an act of courage that fired our imagination. But he had been imprisoned by the Greek government for being a communist. We campaigned for his release. It was a very disturbing message to the Greek community, and the ambassador hauled us to the Pretoria embassy and gave us a lecture second to none of the dangers of being used by dangerous communists. But we didn't take any notice of it, we continued participating in demonstrations and protests.

As students we got up to all sorts of things. We became streetwise in making pocket money. Costa worked at race courses helping bookies. We were guinea pigs with experiments by some medical research bodies, on the effect of whisky on the blood every three hours. Costa had an irresistible desire, particularly at Greek parties, to do things that didn't go down well. We were young and exuberant and to an extent irresponsible. I think people did make allowances for our pranks, but not our politics.

Costa was a very easy man. He had a lot of energy and a captivating smile. He related to people in a very normal and relaxed way, in particular to black people. I PAGE 20 ►



THE PAIR OF US

Costa Gazi

on Johnny Bizos



Costa Gazi and Johnny Bizos, lesser-known brother of George Bizos SC, have been friends for 47 years, since meeting as leftwing Greek-speaking students at Wits University in the 1950s. Both opposed apartheid, so much so that Gazi was eventually imprisoned for his views and went into exile, and they lost touch. On his return to South Africa in the 1990s, Gazi looked up his old friend. Today Dr Gazi is the PAC's controversial spokesman on health and Bizos is an importer of cycle parts. They talk to Marion Edmonds about their friendship.

When I came back from exile I tried to reconnect with people I had known. I met up with Johnny Bizos in Johannesburg. I was living in East London, and I would sometimes stay with Johnny when I went up to Johannesburg and sometimes with Solly Farber, but now since Solly's death this year, I stay with Johnny and his wife, Denise.

We just carried on as if nothing had happened. He had two children by then and I had four. The 22 years of separation in between didn't seem to intervene.

Certainly we have had a few angry noises about the way our lives have been disrupted, because he was also monitored by the Special Branch. We chuckle a lot. His concern now is short-term insurance – how they are robbing us silly. I brief him on HIV-Aids and Mbeki's total resistance to HIV-viral drugs. He doesn't quite agree with me. He thinks my attacks

He's grown some very big pumpkins! He thinks of himself as peasant these days, and I call him a peasant because of the way he thinks

on Mbeki are too direct, too strong. He tends to be more conciliatory.

When I stay with him, I watch him work in the garden, but I don't start at the crack of dawn like he does. He was always very fond of village life, he often talked about the village in Greece where he grew up. To this day he spends a lot of time tending his vegetables. He's grown some very big pumpkins! He thinks of himself as peasant these days, and I call him a peasant because of the way he thinks. He's fairly wealthy but he lives a very simple lifestyle, and doesn't buy fancy things. He is non-aligned politically so he can say what he wants. He is very keen on having that right as a peasant might. His childhood in Greece under Nazi occupation was very formative.

When he arrived in South Africa he was in his teens, and he had to learn English and then start studying. He had a lot of problems, with people not accepting his English as good enough. Now he is very proud of his ability in English. He's very charming. I don't ever remember him losing his temper.

The Greekness is a strong bonding factor between us as well as the political thing. The difference in personality never interferes.

I first met Johnny at Wits University. I was 17. It was through the attempts by Greek students to form the Students Hellenic Association, with membership open to anybody who was interested in Greek culture. The main things we did was to create an organisation which stood for the values of democracy and non-racialism.

Johnny was imbued with Greek culture whereas my Greekness was second-hand from my parents. I was PAGE 20 ►

Johnny on Costa

◀ PAGE 18

observed that he had an affinity for them and a burning desire for social justice that is still strong today. And this is what really bought me close to him. Towards the end of our studies, Costa found the peccadilloes of the Greek community restraining and the issues of apartheid were far more important. He met Joe Slovo who educated him in socialist ideology and introduced him to Karl Marx and all that.

After we finished university, Costa became the registrar in a hospital. I was his best man at his first marriage. He loved well, but not wisely. Women find him irresistible to this day, but his personal life is a bit of mess. He knows this, I've been telling him. If you observe the personal lives of public persons, they are often in a mess. There is a price to be paid for obsession. Costa is no exception.

I got married in 1966 and I went to Cape Town. I was horrified when Costa was arrested. He had been recruited to the Communist Party at university and he was betrayed by a man called Ludi, a friend. We all thought he had empathetic attitudes towards the black man's burden and then when the case came up, guess who was the state witness – Ludi. And that made me absolutely bitter. I still have the newspaper photo of Costa coming out of court, followed by Ludi. Just the mention of the man's name is enough to send the blood to my head. That was the way the police state was operating. We were amateurs in this game and they had it all buttoned up.

While I was in Cape Town, something really significant happened in my education. I came to the decision that socialism was not conducive to liberty and freedom. This represented a fundamental change in my attitudes. Costa knows about it and we differ about it, not on our aims but on the means of obtaining the aims. This divergence has not affected the bond between us and it took place in the twenty years that we were separated, Costa being overseas in exile. After he had gone, we tried to stay in touch through bush telegraph, unsuccessfully because he was moving fast and furiously in England.

In 1968 the Soviet army invaded Czechoslovakia, and Costa thought this was unjust, and he revolted against the official line of the Communist Party. So Costa was expelled. He never resigned from the ANC, he just went away so to speak, in view of his fundamental arguments and disagreement with Jo Slovo who he has never forgiven for expelling him from the party. The sense of justice and his courage to defend and articulate his views does not make him an organization man. I told him that I doubt his grasp of the Byzantine art of politics. Politics is the art of the possible; Costa is not a man of consensus.

When he returned from exile, we picked up where we left off. He had put on weight and bulk which is necessary for a politician's credibility. I told him for a socialist he'd done well! He has made some bad decisions: he joined an unelectable party. I even sort of intimidated him, maybe he should go back to the ANC. But he finds the relationship between the ANC and the SACP unacceptable and he is vociferous about that. When you mention the name Slovo, he spits fire.

We had this discussion regarding the citizen's relations with the state, and it will continue and follow us to our graves. Even if he still feels I deserted the faith, I regard him as a dear friend and I am thankful he's joined me in my life's journey. ▣

Costa on Johnny

◀ PAGE 19

exposed to South African white culture from the time I started school. My Greek wasn't a match for his.

Not all the Greek students had the same kind of attitude as us. Many were very pro-government. Johnny, myself and a third guy, Nic, tended to be the three musketeers within the organisation. The aims of the SHA were to stand for a non-racist South Africa. Johnny was leftwing inclined and so was I.

He had a Volkswagen Beetle that I borrowed from time to time to take a girlfriend out. We went to parties together. There was one party and we discovered that the Greek ambassador was there. We had some ANC stickers with us, so we plastered his car with these stickers while the chauffeur was drinking in the kitchen, and we got into a lot of trouble. We had also stolen some cheese from the fridge. We were poor students, and those things are important, food you know, you get tired of eating pilchards. The SHA met a lot of resistance from the community. The Greek newspapers supported the government of the day, and were very upset at us of being pro-communist, I think that was the phrase.

Johnny is a careful fellow, not as flamboyant and reckless as me. He exercised a lot more caution. His childhood in Greece under Nazi occupation made him more cautious. He's soft-spoken, but always with a lot to say. He was very much in touch with church affairs, and got into trouble with the church because he exposed their strong connections with the National Party. That was when I was getting more deeply involved in the Congress of Democrats. He graduated well ahead of me, and got jobs. He went abroad with one of the big corporations. He pursued business studies, and eventually while I was in exile, opened up his own business, importing bicycle parts.

I finished university and we lost touch. I went into exile after jail terms, so he and I didn't see much of each other until I returned. During apartheid, we assumed that the Special Branch monitored the phones, so I used to keep in touch with him through Nic Stathakis, who had moved to Switzerland.

I tried to develop Africanism and African ties, but he has tried to understand Africa as a foreigner. It's not a big difference between us. He is very empathetic to black people. There is a woman who sells stuff just outside his premises and he financed her son to go to school and he will do things like that. On a Saturday morning he plays cards with some other Greeks. They meet up in a café. They certainly don't play bridge. Poker is the name of the game, but not very big stakes. His wife is resigned to it. He phoned me recently while on holiday. He was on his way to the casino and he asked me which number to play, because he wanted to bet 10 rand for me.

George, Johnny's elder brother himself never joined the ANC, although he was certainly a political lawyer and was very close to Mandela and very close to Winnie. Johnny suffers his shadow. He just asserts himself as Johnny, and doesn't revel in George's shadow. Of course when people say Bizos, ears prick up. Johnny was to become my the godfather of my son, Ivan, but because he was away George Bizos became my son's godfather as a kind of substitute. Now Johnny has reasserted his primacy over that role and George has been pushed into his own vegetable garden, so to speak. Johnny is non-aligned, and does not often see eye-to-eye with George. ▣

STREET LIFE

Justice discharged

Justice, the teenager whose account of his four-week spell in Johannesburg Prison, aka Sun City, appeared in our last issue, had his day in Johannesburg Magistrates' Court on June 5. We are pleased to report that magistrate Peterson ordered the



boy's discharge after the state failed to produce a credible case.

A junior police officer – student constable Gladstone – was the prosecution's only witness. He was unable to convince the court that spark plug pieces produced in court had been found in Justice's pocket.

It remains a shame that a youngster who was 15 at the time had to endure four weeks in "Sun City" and a number of court appearances before justice finally prevailed.

SWERSKY

'Pauper' De Witte arrested

Divorce attorney Abe Swersky's former client and ongoing associate in shady business, Jan Walter de Witte – once an ostentatious multi-millionaire, now officially a pauper maintained in

luxury by "sympathetic friends" with funds in offshore trust accounts – was arrested by Wynberg police on May 16 on a charge of contempt of court. This followed his umpteenth failure to appear in the Randburg court – the last time on January 20 this year – to explain why he is more than R400,000 in arrear with maintenance payments to his ex-wife, Maria van Waasbergen (see *noses* past).

He last paid up in 1999 – roughly when, with Swersky's assistance, he was creating a fictitious trust to disguise the ownership of most of his local assets.

Immediately after his arrest, De Witte was taken to the Wynberg Magistrates' Court, where the state applied to have him transferred, in custody,

to the Randburg court. At the hearing De Witte's attorney, Richard Marcus, applied for a postponement of the application to 13 June, and produced a medical certificate in which it was claimed that De Witte was "not fit to travel".

The prosecutor wanted De Witte held in custody because of his history of non-compliance with court orders, but the magistrate refused to order his detention, on the grounds that it was "a maintenance matter and not a criminal case". De Witte was released and warned to appear again in the Wynberg court on June 13.

■ An otherwise healthy De Witte has previously suffered an unexpected



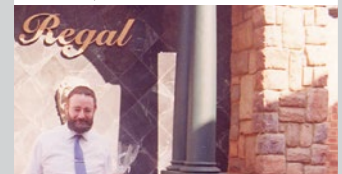
– but similarly fortuitous – bout of illness. His failure to appear in the Randburg court on 4 October 2001 was also explained by means of a medical certificate. Dr Peter Louw certified his client's delicate state of health on that date.

There is some scientific controversy about whether a bad hangover constitutes a disabling medical condition. But, whatever the current consensus – or De Witte's medical condition on that date – it did not prevent him from, that night, hosting a great party (at the Constantia mansion which he once

now defunct Regal Bank was arrested at his home in Linksfield in a dawn raid on Friday May 30.

"Regal Bank was placed under curatorship in June 2001 after a run on the bank's deposits which came after a spate of negative publicity and the eventual rescinding by auditors Ernst and Young of the holding company's 2001 financial statements."

Six months earlier, in *nose42* (December 2002), we reported how the Reserve Bank's curatorship of Regal Bank appeared to be becoming a laugh-a-minute show – with each laugh probably costing R1000 in curatorship fees. In February (in *nose43*), we related some



"There is some scientific controversy about whether a hangover constitutes a disabling medical condition"

owned, but, please note, which he now merely occupies rent free) that continued into the wee hours.

REGAL TREASURY

Road to ruin

To start with, a quote from Moneyweb:

"Regal Treasury Bank founder Jeff Levenstein has been freed on bail of R250,000 after appearing in the Randburg regional court charged with fraud, reckless trading and share-price manipulation. He was ordered to hand his passport to the investigating officer.

"The former chairman and chief executive of the

of Levenstein's delicious adventures, post-Regal, and a reader (Letters) asked: "Why did Reserve Bank deputy governor Gill Marcus state that most of the people who suffered losses were wealthy, when a lot of [Regal's] victims were, in fact, pensioners, domestics and average citizens? Was she being her normal arrogant self, or was she hiding something?"

Maybe that had something to do with what happened next. Early in May Ms Marcus publicly admonished the Scorpions Investigating Unit for dragging its feet over the case. The arrest of Levenstein followed three weeks later.

In his last interview (on Moneyweb's *Classic Business* show) more PAGE 22 ►

◀ PAGE 21 than a year earlier, Levenstein vehemently denied having done anything wrong.

“I have factual evidence that there was wilful intent to bring the bank down,” he said in the interview, restating his assertion that there had been a conspiracy to shut down his company, and that Regal’s chairman, Derek Cohen and Investec had been involved.

Watch this space.

ZIMBABWE

(Very)quiet diplomacy

At State House in Harare on Monday 5 May President Mugabe received a delegation of three African heads of state. When Mugabe asked his visitors what it was they wished to say to

Josephthal & Co in New York had swelled to \$397,035. A handy R3m-plus for the attorney’s estate – and a windfall discovery for the tax man.

SAA VOYAGER

Flying in circles

In February, Colin McCarthy of Stellenbosch booked (and paid for) a return ticket to fly SAA to London last month. He and his wife had just heard that their daughter, who lives in the UK, was expecting a baby in early July.

Colin thought it was a good occasion to use his Voyager miles and get Gran a ticket to accompany him and see her new grandchild. She could even stay a week

From C McCarthy to Hendry Shai

Re: Voyager booking
Dear Mr Shai

I’m convinced that your intervention has been responsible for my wife being given a seat to fly with me from Cape Town to London on 11 June 2003. Thank you very much.

Can I now prevail on you to assist us in getting her a flight back home to Cape Town during July 21-23?



We are not returning at the same time. She is wait-listed and while we initially thought that finding a

Time is running out since we have to apply for visas. Thank you in anticipation.
Colin McCarthy

From Hendry Shai @ flysaa to C McCarthy

12 May 2003

Re: Voyager booking

Dear Mr McCarthy

We are currently unable to confirm the 21st or the 23rd.

With Kind Regards

Hendry L Shai

Manager, Voyager Elite Call Center

From C McCarthy to Hendry Shai

Re: Voyager booking

Any other possibility until the end of July 2003?

From Hendry Shai @ flysaa.com to C McCarthy

13 May 2003

Re: Voyager booking

Dear Mr McCarthy

We have looked at all possible dates and at this stage we are unable to confirm the flights.

With Kind Regards

Hendry L Shai

Manager Voyager Elite Call Center

“For SAA the consequence is that in future I will travel on another airline”

him, President Obasanjo of Nigeria was the first to share his thoughts. He spoke a while about the situation in Zimbabwe and the need for conditions to improve. Mugabe then turned to South Africa’s president and asked him what ideas he wanted to share. Mbeki said he had nothing to say. President Maluzi of Malawi then proceeded to give his view of the situation. So we are informed.

LAZERSON

Well-cooked nest egg

By the end of March, the late Ivor Lazerson’s secret little nest egg with

or two longer to help get the new arrival settled in. So he e-mailed an application to flysaa.com. Throughout March the only news he got from Voyager was bad. On 26 March, he received the following email:

From Hendry Shai @ flysaa.com

Dear Mr Mc Carthy,
With regards to your booking, we are unable to confirm at this stage as we have fully utilised the allocation [of seats to Voyager members on flights to London in July].

I will still have a look at it and see if there are any cancellations

Then, early in April, good news! Mr Shai had found a “Voyager” seat for Mrs McCarthy.

flight home would not be a problem, our travel agent feels we should be more concerned.

Thank you in anticipation.

Colin McCarthy

From Hendry Shai @ flysaa.com to C McCarthy

29 April 2003

Dear Mr. Mc Carthy

I will have a look at the return flight. Control is unable at this stage but they will have a look at the booking for me.

With Kind Regards

Hendry L Shai

From C McCarthy to Hendry Shai

Re: Voyager booking

A last but urgent request to you to look into the possibility of a return flight for my wife from London to Cape Town roundabout 22 July 2003.

From C McCarthy to Hendry Shai @ flysaa (cc: noseweek)

Dear Mr Shai

SAA has succeeded with its game plan in the use of Voyager miles! We could not wait any longer (visa applications, etc.) and I have now bought my wife a return ticket to London.

For SAA the unintended consequence is that in future we will travel on another airline, starting with our daughter and her baby for whom we will buy a ticket on KLM or BA to visit us in October.

Why accumulate miles on SAA if you can’t use them with a reasonable degree of convenience? I’m sure you know that this is a growing perception among the travelling public. If not, read the story in the May edition of *noseweek* on the “SAA Voyager Ripoff”.

The experiences described and sentiments expressed in the article tally with ours.

Colin McCarthy
Stellenbosch

Monk-y business

in Burma

After getting 'found' by a cigar-toting tour guide called Ethel, sold off at an auction, and going on a date with a pair of trishaw riders, **Jacqui Kadey** washes up at a monastery where fur flies

ON MY FIRST DAY

in Rangoon, I was single-mindedly making my way to the yoghurt shop recommended in the travel guide, when I was "found" by this crazed Burmese woman.

Cars were hooting and people shouting, so I turned to look behind me. Crossing the road was a slightly built woman (so many Burmese women have that definitive look of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi), her hair tied in a bun, hand bag under arm and, improbably, a fat cigar hanging from the side of her mouth.

She was screaming at all the cars, one step short of giving them the finger for failing to let her cross the road. The men on the sidewalk were all laughing. I was momentarily panicked when I realised it was me she had in her line of sight. She charged up to me, grabbed me by the arm and briskly marched me

along.

"The deal is this," she says. "You buy me food and I'll be your tour guide." "Who are you?" I ask.

"Ethel," she says. Ethel?! Well, what had I got to lose? I was only going to be in Rangoon for two days, after all.

It quickly became clear I had got myself a great deal: our first lunch together cost me a whopping 40 cents (R4) for the two of us!

The tone for the rest of my journey through this country once called Burma – now Myanmar – was set.

I arrived in Rangoon – sometimes called Yangon – from Bangkok, at night, which of course is a *big* no-no for a woman travelling on her own. But, fear not, the taxi safely, courteously and cheaply delivered me directly to my hotel. Which reminded me: this was my first visit to a real, genuine, military dictatorship where foreigners are still (sometimes) followed and the

locals are from time to time required to do slave labour for the state.

Somehow this government, whose party goes by the name Slorc, managed to seize power in 1962 and did away with all traces of democracy. But in 1990 the people rose and demanded elections. As in so many dictatorships, they tried the line that if you can't shut the people up, pretend to give them what they want. An election was held. Big mistake. The National League for Democracy won. So the Slores "cancelled" the elections and had the NLD's charismatic leader Aung San Suu Kyi put under periodic house arrest – she still gets harrassed where she remains to this day, despite her Nobel prize.

True to form, as in the rest of South East Asia, one mention of South Africa and Burmese faces light up and bubble forth: "Nelson Mandela! He's like our Aung San Suu Kyi!" Suddenly I am everyone's good friend. PAGE 24 ►

For Ethel, though, every day is business as usual. She should have her own page in the guidebooks! She had an office where you could leave messages (a wooden crate in an alley off the main road, conveniently close to where most black market currency dealing takes place). She has a wealthy client base (unsuspecting dollar-rich tourists), and she has a route, the local tour of Rangoon. (To cover the rest of the country she has agents – but more about that later.)

I had such fun with Ethel. I was dragged around Rangoon, told what to pay for the taxi, when to eat, and where we were going next. By the end of day one I was wearing traditional Burmese clothing, had “make-up” on my face (sandalwood paste smeared all over, nothing “made up” about that), and was being auctioned off to several eligible young, and not so young, Burmese men. (I have never seen a country with so many good-looking men!)

By nightfall we had landed up in a very nice bar-restaurant with live music. Ethel disappeared and reappeared after 20 minutes with Mark the Australian on her arm. Mark tells me that he was walking past the bar and saw this woman squatting on the sidewalk, with a huge cigar in her mouth.



that dead fish smell lingering around him. If I pinned some money to his robe he would give me a message from above. I did as instructed and he told me I would be safe in my travels, and wealth would follow me. Yes, but would it actually catch up to me?

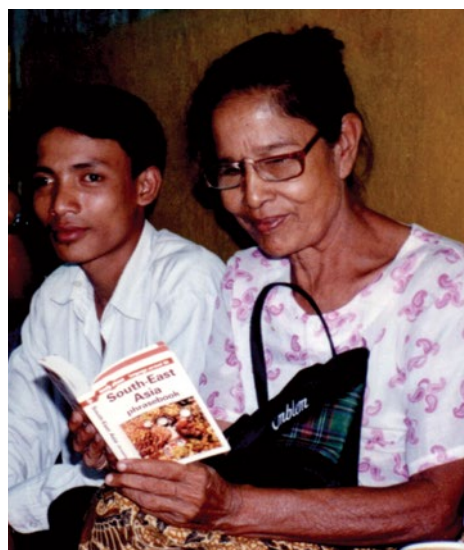
Burma is devoutly Buddhist, but nat, or spirit, worship remains a part of daily life. The nats are believed to enter the bodies of trance-dancing mediums, and will do favours if they are placated. They come alive with the sound of music, dance, drama and song. The séance is a festive occasion, where alcohol flows, inhibitions are lost, and the odour of dead fish pervades. Quite intoxicating!

I was exhausted after two days with Ethel, when she put me onto a bus to Mandalay. Just before I left, she sent me off to a fortune teller and then bought me a treat. In a betel nut leaf the Burmese wrap an assortment of roots and berries and some other non-descript herbal products, all giving off a cinnamon taste. You place the parcel in your mouth, bite softly and occasionally, and it generates saliva that you spit out. The first time she gave me this I was able to spit the saliva on the street, as the locals did. But my farewell treat was given to me in

The central figure was dancing rhythmically to the music, with a dead fish in each hand

She stopped him, asked him if he was on his own, and then dragged him into the bar for me. How sweet of her.

Next day she took me driving from temple to temple. On the way to one of them we passed a large ornately decorated marquee on the side of the road. Our driver pulled over and Ethel pulled me out. There was noise and chaos everywhere. Drums thumped and symbols clashed. The marquee was filled with locals all looking inwards. I could see large carpets laid in the centre, and there were men with painted faces dressed up in pearl necklaces and long robes, all rather camp. The central figure was dancing rhythmically to the music, with a dead fish in each hand. Ethel told me that he could speak to the spirits, but apparently only with



Ethel

the car on the way to the bus station. I started to spit into a tissue, but soon ran out of tissue. Ethel, ever helpful, tells me to spit it out of the car window, again, just like the locals do. I do it. I can do this, easy. I do it again. We get to the bus station, I get out of the car, and find that my door is streaked with burgundy. Clearly I could not do this. I stood in front of the car door to hide it while instructing Ethel and the taxi driver to take my backpack to the terminal. Their backs turned, I frantically wiped down the car door with my expensive bottle of mineral water and the inside of my T-shirt. Ethel is probably still telling the story.

For the 15-hour bus trip from Rangoon to Mandalay I was seated next to this beautiful man who wanted to

practise his English. Being the sweet person I am I was happy to oblige. He was so lovely and in the end he told me there was so much he wanted to say to me and share with me, but just didn't have the English words. Oh Mom, I want to bring him home, please Ma!

The fun had only just begun. As we pulled into the bus station in Mandalay, there was a little round Burmese

woman that ran the guesthouse took me to a nunnery and explained the life of a Buddhist nun. Some of the nuns were as young as six and seven. In the early evenings the nuns walk through the town and the locals bring food to put in their baskets. The monks do the same, but at dawn. It's sad to know that more people feed the monks than they do the nuns. But the monks do

the building and preservation of such pagodas, regardless of the social cost.

Next on the itinerary was Inle Lake. The Bagan guesthouse arranged for a taxi to take four of us on the horrendous eight-hour journey along narrow, pot-holed roads. On our arrival there was no little man with a sign to greet me. Where's Ethel? Getting slack here?



man standing with a sign, "Jacqui - Africa". Since I was the only Western woman on the bus everyone joyously called out my name and made way for me. Unbeknown to me, Ethel had arranged a guide, transport and accommodation!

Mandalay is great and flat, very conducive to cycling. In the course of my cycle tour I even found some new friends: two trishaw (a tricycle rickshaw) riders that I met one night in front of my hotel. We sat on a bench in the street and spoke for hours. They ended off the evening by asking me on a date the next night. My first date in decades! Next evening they arrived to pick me up at 7pm. The three of us jumped onto one trishaw. One cycled and cycled until he was tired. Then the other cycled and cycled and cycled until he got tired. Then I sat on the saddle and cycled ... and ... cycled ... until we came to our destination, the holiest shrine in Mandalay. Beneath the shrine there are little outdoor bars and restaurants. Stag's meat was ordered, Burmese rum and Red Bull and the discussions began. At 3am I was taken home, convinced I'd been out with four men. At 5am Mark the Aussie (who had also been sent to Mandalay by Ethel on alternative transport) woke me to catch a boat to Bagan. A 14-hour boat ride down the Irrawaddy River is not a good morning-after treatment.

At Bagan, standing on the banks of the river, was another little round Burmese man holding up a sign "Jacqui - Africa". That's my Ethel! The

share their food and will not allow the nuns to go hungry.

Bagan, like Manadaly, is flat, so bicycles were hired. Elaine (from Canada) and I rose early one morning and headed east towards the rising sun. The warlike Burmese from centuries ago built pagodas across the plain of Bagan as far as the eye can see. Some are grand and well-restored, some old and crumbling. The Burmese devote a great deal of their energy to preservation of their rich history and Buddhist routes. The recently retired leader General Ne Win is a religious, superstitious dictator who forced people to contribute their life's savings to

The lake is beautiful, with little villages along it and floating gardens on the edge. We took boat trips to monasteries, a floating market (probably better than the one outside of Bangkok.).

At the Jumping Cat Monastery the monks have over many years trained their cats to jump through hoops. The fat healthy creatures seemed none too impressed with having to put on the show.

Between shows they spend their days lying idly on sun drenched teak floors being stroked, loved, and fed tidbits.

But all good things must come to an end: for the cats the show must go on, and for me it was time to go on, too. ☐

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Lotto winner

◀ PAGE 9

of the R44,348.

The winner failed to put in an appearance, and on March 24 default judgment for the full R532,100 was granted to PSG in the Pretoria High Court. With this in the bag, the company is no longer seeking the R44,348 under its alternative claim.

By filing its action in the high court, Uthingto's contracted financial advisor has betrayed the anonymity-seeking winner's name to the public domain. It is Michael David Mathumbu. No precise address is given in the court papers, just the name of a sprawling township in Mpumalanga. Once there, deputy sheriff Robertson had quite a job finding the house. His bill for service states: "Asked at the clinic for the way to the defendant." Then: "Asked a man next to the road for the way to the defendant."

There was another visit by the Phalaborwa sheriff's department last month, on May 8, to serve the warrant of execution – and attach what assets could be found there.

Deputy sheriff Robertson refuses to discuss these visits, or to illuminate *noseweek* with the winner's precise address.

But an attorney involved in the proceedings says: "There was nothing to attach. He's built one room onto his small house, but he still fetches water from the river. His standard of living has stayed exactly as it was before."

And the sheriff can't swoop on the Absa branch that corralled Mathumbu's millions, for it falls under the jurisdiction of another sheriff's department.

It was at this point that *noseweek* decided to set off on safari to Jock of the Bushveld country to track down the mysterious David Mathumbu. As we drove through the rolling hills between the Drakensberg and the Kruger National Park, we recruited a roadside wood carver named Doctor to assist us on our mission.

We reached the township where the writ had been served. After hours of combing the dusty streets we found Mr Mathumbu the taxi owner; we found Mr Mathumbu the post office worker. But no David Mathumbu,

furniture company worker lately of Gauteng.

Doctor, who proved a superb investigator, refused to give up. His patient questioning of the citizenry finally led to a faint lead. Then another. Finally – a breakthrough: we were told that David Mathumbu no longer lives in the township; he's upped sticks to a new home in the heart of the bushveld.

And there, miles from anywhere, we finally found him. Off the dirt road, the substantial house stands atop a small hill and it's a hive of activity as a gang of blue-clad labourers toil on building extensions.

There's no sign of the R765,000 top-of-the-range 7 Series BMW that are Mathumbu's wheels these days. But as we pull into a freshly cobbled parking area the size of two tennis courts a man wearing dark glasses and a brightly-coloured Madiba shirt strides to meet us. There's a gold chain around his neck; more gold glints from a front tooth. It's not a warm welcome from Prince Sibuyana, who declared himself to be Mathumbu's "brother". Sibuyana also tells us with faint menace that he's an inspector in the police.

Quite what a police inspector is doing acting as minder for a R20m Lotto winner is not explained. But Sibuyana is clearly relishing the role and doing quite well out of it, thank you.

The windows of the house are shrouded with drawn curtains. With some reluctance the inspector leads us over an immaculate highly polished black cement doorstep into the lair of David Mathumbu. Inside, it's a treasure trove of exotic furnishing. We pass through a room packed with a magnificent dining suite into a softly lit lounge crammed with leather sofas. The sound system takes up most of one wall.

The inspector wants to know just what we're doing here. Doctor starts to look nervous as we explain that we wondered how Mathumbu felt about this R532,100 default judgment obtained on him by PSG.

There's an awkward silence. Then into the room shuffles Mr Moneybags himself. The shoulders of David Mathumbu are bowed, as though he carries the weight of the world upon

them. He's wearing a plain shirt and a pair of immaculate and clearly expensive slacks. There's a glazed look in his eyes and though it's past noon he looks as if he's just got up.

We explain that we're from *noseweek* and repeat the question about that R532,100 default judgment. Mathumbu looks blankly at the inspector, who answers for him. "That is being handled by our attorney in Nelspruit."

So can Mr Mathumbu give us a short interview on how his life has changed since he won the Lotto? "If you want to speak to David about small things or big things the answer is no," rasps the inspector.

Can we just have a 10-minute chat with you? we ask the mega millionaire. "Ten minutes is too long. Five minutes is too long. I'm busy," says Mathumbu.

But your life has surely changed enormously? "I'm still the same David," mutters the jackpot winner.

This is developing into an interview. The grim-faced inspector rises from the depths of his leather sofa. There's a definite tension in the air. "This," announces the looming minder, "is enough. You must go now."

So we leave, with many unanswered questions. Where is Mathumbu's wife? Where are his children? With him at his new abode? Still in the humble township house? Is he seeking to have PSG's default judgment overturned? How's the lucky winner planning to spend his 47th birthday on June 16? Could we have a quick photo?

No. No. Nothing. Goodbye. We depart the hilltop fortress and snap off a picture of it from the dirt road below. Leaving behind a man who like Howard Hughes seems fated for a life of minders and suspicion, battling to keep his money from predators equally determined to wrest it from him.

Poor rich David Mathumbu.

■ In Nelspruit, the winner's attorney, Kurt Jordaan, says: "The R532,100 claim by PSG Financial Services is the biggest rip-off I've seen of disadvantaged people who've got lucky. PSG did nothing. Winners should be properly protected – this guy can't even properly read and write. We are going to have the default judgement overturned." ▣

Dudley Court

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“He then put in new plans in which he took out the top mezzanine and reduced the height of the second storey. By manipulating the regulations he’s produced a building slightly less than 10m tall.”

The council refused to approve the new plans, but despite two stop orders Van der Hoven continued building. The local residents erupted in fury. Laurence Lurie, who works as a producer of the *Egoli* TV soapie and lives close to The Warehouse in First Avenue East, led the Parktown North Residents’ Association into battle.

“Despite the two stop orders, construction work continues on the site,” Lurie exploded in an e-mail to ward councillor Judy Stockill on 20 March 2002. “The construction company Iguana informed me that they are aware of the stop orders, but that Mr Van der Hoven had instructed them to continue work regardless.

“They are aware they are breaking the law, but do not believe that the council will take any action against them.”

Lurie now tells *noseweek*: “Parktown North is a garden suburb; it’s one of the oldest suburbs in Johannesburg. My house was built in 1907. It’s a quiet restful area with lots of trees and the residents’ association is trying to maintain that quiet feeling. Blocks of flats change the nature of the suburb.

“The scale of The Warehouse is huge. We got the council to issue stop orders, but as far as Van der Hoven was concerned they were just an irritant; they weren’t going to stop him.

“He’s a charming man, but I think round the bend. He regards all these sort of things as a bit of a game.”

Architect Herbert Prins is chairman of the Egoli Heritage Foundation and he views the demolition of Dudley Court as “very serious”. Prins recalls: “Van der Hoven had applied to the old Monuments Council [now Sahra] for a demolition order. I served on the plans approving committee and we turned down his application. He subsequently received reminders from Sahra that this building was a Heritage site and should not be demolished.

“In the face of that he demolished it, so it’s not as though he did it innocently. In terms of the act anything over 60 years is protected, and no demolition order should

be issued by a local authority without a permit from Sahra.

“Somehow or other Van der Hoven bypassed that. He went to a health department official. The buildings behind Dudley Court were in a shocking state and he got a demolition permit from the health inspector. He then assumed, rightly or wrongly, that that demolition permit covered Dudley Court as well as the outbuildings.

“Hundreds of buildings are going up in Johannesburg without planning permission. It’s scandalous. I would like to see the court take a tough line

In April the question of The Warehouse apartments was considered by the Johannesburg city council’s town planning tribunal. Summing up the local residents’ concerns the tribunal stated: “The developer has proceeded with construction in defiance of the neighbours, the law, the by-laws, the regulations and the authority of local government.”

At the tribunal, Van der Hoven was represented by attorney Shaun Mitchell. “We don’t profess to come with clean hands,” Mitchell told the hearing.

Mitchell tells *noseweek*: “The fact is that Justus has built without the amended plans being approved. It is unfortunate that he chose to proceed along that route, but he did and as his attorney I had to deal with it and try and get the matter approved. “The tribunal asked us: why now would you suddenly want to comply when you haven’t before? I said: I have

Theunie Lategan sitting next to me and he gives his undertaking that he will comply with the conditions of approval.”

So, the sleeping partner has woken?

As *noseweek* went to press the tribunal’s decision had not been announced. But Mitchell says it seems certain that The Warehouse development will be retrospectively approved.

Says Van der Hoven: “We’re very happy now. There’s no big story. We’ve had a bit of drama, but now we have permission for the development as it stands.

■ Theunie Lategan seems also fated for a villain’s role in the long-running 417 insolvency inquiry into the collapse of failed retailer Retail Apparel Group (Rag). FirstRand was lead banker in a consortium that was owed R160m when Rag went under. The evidence alleges that FirstRand may have pulled the plug on Rag when the company’s fortunes were on the up. It’s been suggested that FirstRand “engineered” the retailer’s downfall by securing its debts before calling in the loans. Lategan’s testimony has been delayed because the bank asked for a full list of topics on which he and fellow senior bank official Ferdi Swanepoel would be questioned. When this was refused by the 417 commissioner, Hendrick Strydom, FirstRand took the matter on review to Durban High Court, but on June 6 Judge Alan Magid dismissed the bank’s application, ordering FirstRand to pay all costs. ▣

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it's a seductive proposition for funders and politicians.

The question is: are loveLife's megabuck investments really buying anything other than a favourable press? Their approach to billboard advertising, for example, seems to have overlooked that thousands of billboards are more likely to reach adult commuters than the campaign's stated 12-17 year-old target audience. To say nothing of the eye-searing colours and messages with befuddling sexual overtones.

The previous series of messages included the conversational gem, "I wanted to wait, but Abram was inside me before I could say no (Sandy 15)", and the response "Sssho... did I rape her? Now that we talk, I understand that love is not sex (Abram 17)", which seems to suggest that rape can be dealt with without police involvement or due legal process.

What about the current series, which includes a woman holding a lime green condom next to the slogan, "The roll on all South African women want". Are we to understand that all South African women are "easy" – it's yes to sex if you've got a condom in your pocket (especially if it's lime green).

It's not the myth about sex with virgins curing Aids that's the problem – it's loveLife's idea that rape should be normalised and that South African women are desperate for sex.

It's no surprise that there have been frequent complaints about the billboards to the Advertising Standards Authority (who seem overly keen to give loveLife the benefit of the doubt) and the National Association of People Living with Aids and Treatment Action Campaign have pointed to racist overtones, obscure messages and waste of money. But at least loveLife are keeping the billboard companies in business – what better than a client who doesn't care too much about effectiveness and doesn't mind that they're bearing the cost of advertising to a far larger market segment than their intended target audience.

Much the same approach applies to their partnerships with *Sunday Times* and Independent Newspapers – which hardly count 12-17 year olds as promi-



nent in their readership – and which are more likely to reach the upper classes less affected by HIV/Aids. But one assumes that the plan is that parents would pass the fortnightly youth magazines, *Scanto* and *ThethaNathi*, to their children. That is, provided they overlook the images of dry-humping teenagers, double page spreads featuring mock bondage and price lists of the latest must-have fashions.

LoveLife's safer sex lifestyle comes at a price that includes wising up to milking one's parents of spare cash for the latest fashion accessories. It's a relief to know that the printing contracts extend to producing extra copies to reach poorer communities – no doubt scaring the hell out of parents who can barely afford food, and who now have to find the spare cash for five pairs of fashionable Soviet-brand takkies (a different colour for each day of the week is suggested by the latest *Scanto* ads) if they want their kids to "live a healthy lifestyle" and survive the Aids epidemic.

It's cold comfort to know that this grand expensive scheme is not a wholly South African operation, but rather the brainchild of the US-based Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation, who are cashing in on their investments in the anti-apartheid struggle under the keen eye of one Dr Michael Sinclair. LoveLife's technical advisory group is heavy with Americans and medical doctors – and their understanding of loveLife is limited to stage-managed PR junkets to loveLife activities. LoveLife's launches and events have tie-ins with big US celebs. Bill Clinton, Kevin Spacey and Chris Rock were all

brought in to launch loveLife's Orange Farm Y-centre. (One wonders whether loveLife CEO Harrison's much published pre-launch assertions that oral sex was safe sex was to ensure that dear Bill wasn't embarrassed when he got here.)

Money also pours in from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation – which contributes to loveLife's flush R200m-a-year budget. LoveLife are also favourites of the Global Fund for HIV/Aids, TB and malaria (which also counts Gates as a benefactor). The Global Fund has committed \$80m (nearly R700m) over five years to Lovelife's programme – a large slice of the \$671m allocated worldwide for the period – overlooking many more urgent African country proposals in the process.

Applications for a slice of the Global Fund's largesse are overseen by none other than Minister of Health Manto-Tshabalala's department, that at the last-minute set up the Country Coordinating Mechanism which allowed loveLife to get Global Fund funding – while very obviously overlooking many more needy South African NGOs.

The beancounters at the *Sunday Times* and Independent Newspapers will be happy though – 20% of loveLife's Global Fund \$80m budget is committed to paying them to print *Scanto* and *ThethaNathi*, publications shamelessly aimed at teenage mallrats, helping them to put their parents in penury by encouraging them to buy, buy, buy.

Looks like everybody gets a tidy rake-off in this scheme of things – including the Grim Reaper. Who said AIDS was going to cut into profit margins? **7**

Mr Clarke. At this juncture the contract was two months in arrears and had already lapsed in accordance with its terms.

“Despite this, due to an error by a member of staff who misinterpreted the contractual provisions, Mr Clarke was informed that the claim would be met and he in turn conveyed this to Mr Newell. However, this was clearly an error and the fact that there had been a mis-statement regarding the status of the claim ... does not mean that the out of force policy contract had somehow revived.”

After an adjudicators meeting held in February this year, chaired by Judge Nienaber, the ombudsman wrote to Newell’s attorney: “In our view Liberty Life are acting within their legal rights in denying liability and regrettably Mr Newell’s complaint cannot be upheld.”

So why didn’t Rob Clarke reinstate the monthly debit order in April 2001 for the premiums on Annie’s policy? And why hadn’t he warned Newell that the premiums were in arrears? Clarke declines to discuss the matter with *noseweek*, referring us to Liberty Group’s legal head Leonard Benjamin.

“I’m not prepared to go into specifics,” says Benjamin. “We don’t believe that Rob Clarke is responsible in any way for the lapsing of the contract. He did everything correctly.” Benjamin adds that Clarke is a tied agent for

the group – “his relationship with Liberty is analogous to an employee.”

However, it seems that the ombudsman is having second thoughts about his finding. “The matter hasn’t been finally disposed of,” reveals Benjamin. “Mr Newell has asked the ombudsman to open up certain areas of the investigation and he is going to re-look at the matter.”

Meanwhile, Leslie Newell is struggling to rebuild his life. He lives in a small flat in Randburg and has been working for Seven-Eleven as an area manager for Gauteng and Botswana. After the convenience store chain was placed under provisional liquidation last month, his future there is uncertain.

Annie’s children? Jaco, now 15, is with foster parents in Margate. After an unhappy spell with another set of foster parents 17-year-old Patricia is living with her father in Klerksdorp. “I didn’t want to lose them,” says Newell. “But Liberty’s mistake left me penniless and at the end of my tether.

“It would be too disruptive for them to come back to me now. I must accept the fact that I’ve lost them.”

JSE-listed Liberty Group had a good insurance year in 2002, with net premium income rising by 16.2% to R16.4bn. Reflecting a stringent attitude to payouts, however, money dished out in claims and policy owner benefits crept up by only 6.5%, to R11.9bn. ☐

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Er, I don't know if we should really be saying this, but:

“%@# \$!”

WELZ: I believe the offended reader's view is based on assumptions that were once very common (to use the wrong phrase, perhaps); assumptions about what is proper, “in good taste” and, most particularly, appropriate to “our” social class, dear. Which raises the question: does refraining from using these words show we are upper-class – or are we just being carrot-up-arse? As if it's only the lower classes that think about sex, or think it's fun and desirable – and a rich source of allusion. “We”, apparently, should only discuss or allude to sex in scientific, unemotional and unsexy terms. “Why use sexual allusions when others will do?” seems to be the stance. But by the same token, I ask: why not? Or am I a verbal nudist/exhibitionist?

RUDEN: Gosh, let's see (and please, I don't mean that literally!). I think the issue is broader. Every society seems to recognise some words as obscene, and to allow them on some occasions but not others. I have just published a translation of a play that was first put on in Athens in 411 BC, Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (available from Clarke's bookshop in Cape Town as well as from Amazon.com – buy, buy!). The plot: all the wives of Greece go on sexual strike to force their warring men to make peace. The male chorus chants to one husband:

*Forsooth, your guts are going to blow!
How will your nuts remain
Intact? Will you not go insane?
Your manly parts are out of luck
Without their regular morning f—k.*

Greek comedy was part of religious festivals funded by the state, yet “f—k” was fine. But if an author had used the word in a tragedy, at the same festival in the same theatre, on the same afternoon, he would

Gus Ferguson's cartoon in the first issue of noseweek featured a bit of graffiti – a phrase consisting of two four-letter words that have been the standard graffiti in SA for at least a century. The phrase is aggressive, gender insensitive and offensive. But in his cartoon Gus charmingly disarms the phrase by redirecting it at himself. It became “fuck poe(t)s”.

The cartoon caused the SA Reserve Bank to cancel its subscription, never (officially) to return. (Central bankers are, apparently, all poets on the side.)

Now, 10 years later, the subject has once more reared its ugly head. A reader has decided not to renew her subscription because of our use of “the language of the gutter”.

This has prompted an in-house debate on when it may be appropriate to use such language. Contributing sub-editor Sarah Ruden (Harvard PhD in Classics) and editor Martin Welz (Pretoria part-time BA and BProc in law and life in the Old SA) talk it over.

All in the best of taste, of course.

have been in for some rough treatment. It was all a matter of precise occasion.

WELZ: At *noseweek* our attitude is similar: the words exist in the language, to be used when appropriate – and not to be used, when inappropriate. “Arse” has a derogatory edge that we would generally avoid, but with reference to Trevor Manuel it was appropriate. Harold Strachan's “stone-fucking-dead!” (*nose44*) was a natural expression of extreme outrage and despair.

RUDEN: Christianity of course made sex a more strictly controlled topic throughout the post-classical West. But disgust over the “four-letter words” of English had an extra inspiration. The Norman Invasion brought a French-speaking nobility to rule over a Germanic Anglo-Saxon peasantry. “F—k” derives from the Anglo-Saxon for copulation – it apparently wasn't a dirty word to start with.

WELZ: In modern Dutch, a *fokkerij* is simply a stud farm.

RUDEN: Oh. The Normans in their castles did presumably sometimes talk about having sex – but they weren't going to use the word those hairy yokels were using; *au contraire*: they despised it, and other Anglo-Saxon words for body parts and bodily functions.

WELZ: That reminds me of Michael Cope's deliciously pretentious literary rephrasing of a very common Cape expression: “Jou Marcel Proust!!!”

RUDEN: You're certainly right about class being involved. But here's where I diverge from your take on these things.

The level and feel of words are as fixed a part of language as meanings – wherever they come from, they're just here, until long processes alter them. It is simply a fact that swearwords do not generate much esteem among us.

WELZ: Us?

RU DEN: Well, I mean the mainstream – middle-class people at the mall is how I picture it, though I know how subjective (and American) that is. Neither does eating dogs turn our crank (and here I assume it's your crank too), perhaps for reasons with an equally arbitrary background. Are we going to change? And should we?

I suspect that the demand that people put up with words that are, by tradition, repugnant to them is an attempt to enforce a sort of sexual revolutionary political correctness. These arbiters of political correctness try to change the language artificially and thereby change our thoughts, from the real "What pity I feel for that crippled man," to the fake "What admiration I feel for that ambulatorily challenged man."

The pooh-poohing of outrage at obscenity feels similar. The aim of shifting values may be the same. "Sex requires respect, restraint and judgment, in speaking as well as doing" is – maybe – intended to become "Sex is only f—king."

WELZ: The implied accusation that we are on a mission of perversion, when we occasionally use these words, is a set-up argument. We're not. We don't make the language. It's spoken as it is spoken – on the street, in films, in novels. That debate was settled some 50 years ago, when four-letter words became widely used (and accepted) in novels and films.

In any case, how might one change a language "naturally"? Aren't you substituting one form of hypocrisy for another? How about: "The chap with the fucked-up legs is actually a great guy!?" True, "fucking" may imply less reverence for sex, but there are at least two legitimate considerations: first, a reaction to the sort of polite language that implies hypocrisy about sex; a denial that we all – or most of us – desire a good fuck from time to time. The other consideration is that the expletive "fuck!" is just that – in

usage it has nothing to do with sex. It just happens to sound the same as *that* word for sex.

RU DEN: Good points – except for the last one. The force of the expletive is inseparable from the meaning of the verb. I think one thing we can agree on is that controversy about language reflects social reality. And recently we've had whiplash-fast changes in values – or we've watched them. The widespread resentment of currently PC language says that many people feel they're being yanked into worlds that aren't terribly solid yet (if they will ever be), or worlds that they haven't even had time to think about. Isn't the same true for complaints about swearwords in public discourse?

But here's another reason to be circumspect about obscenity. Swearwords can make for bad, boring writing. Everybody has better strong language than we do. An Arab might say, "May Allah excrete on your house and the weight thereof crush it!" We say (if we are not well brought up), "F—k you!" It's not even a coherent image.

WELZ: But it gets the message across in two words rather than ten – without having to drag Allah into it.

RU DEN: Hey, succinctness is only one goal in literature. It may get in the way of creativity. This is one reason that, in translating *Lysistrata*, I used the f-word only twice, though previous translators had scattered it pretty freely and with full scholarly justification. I was allowed, and I wasn't afraid of outraging purchasers of a book with this cover. But I wanted to write something more interesting, more fun than a bunch of four-letter words.

WELZ: I go along with that. Your translation is both interesting and fun, with a lot of truly inventive five- and six-letter substitutes for the boring old four-letter items! One or two of them had even me pausing for breath. Aristophanes had clearly been around the block once or twice. Two thousand, four hundred years later, nothing in our limited vocabulary of expletives would shock him.

But a great deal in his would make our reader cancel her subscription to the classics. **W**

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BACK OF THE 1978 CHRYSLER

Valiant exhaust pipe and spare door for a 1968 Renault 4L and the mortal remains of deceased Yamahas and things I find this cardboard box in a dim recess of the garage, sealed up with gummed paper. Pre-contact adhesive. Pre-stickitape. Gum Arabic, pre-all-and-every petrochemical adhesive. What on earth can it be? Mean? Neither cockroach nor cryptotermes borer has penetrated its ancient mysteries. I break the seals. Is there a curse on it, as on Tutankhamun's burial chamber?

Before my eyes are ancient *Readers' Digests*. Dear God, do such things yet exist? I fold back the creaking pages of the top copy. I stagger back. Before my startled gaze is an answer. The answer. The answer to my agonising these last months: What makes American culture great?

My Budgie Taught Me to Pray, says the story.

The answer is: Humility. Suffer little children to come unto me. If you want the Truth about Life, turn to the most innocent.

As you turn into final approach for Tempelhof Airfield in your ex-paratrooper DC3, your exterminator citysmasher converted Liberator bomber, whatever, get the little hankie parachutes ready with the Hershey Bars. The Berlin Airlift is on, we not only saved everybody from Hitler, we're saving them from Stalin too, see the kids running about down there, the CANDY BOMBERS have arrived!

So it wasn't about US recovery from the Great Depression. It wasn't about suffocating half a million Krauts underground in the city firestorms and incinerating the other half aboveground. It wasn't about nuking another half million city Slants in a couple of goes elsewhere. It was about candy! Hershey Bars!

Any gum, chum? A useful piece of only English for a Froggy child. The loose-hipped broad-shouldered big-mandible toothy-smile GI always had gum, it's what Liberation was about. Ask the innocent. Any time you want gum, little children, come unto me.

So the little children are big now, and what the hell's the matter with them? Both the French dude with the Frenchified sex mannerisms and the German dude who seems to have forgotten what we did to Hitler may well have scored a Hershey Bar on a hankie parachute or a lump of gum. Well, okay, their big brothers maybe. So when we want to help the people of Iraq with Her-

The US involvement in WW2 wasn't about saving us all from tyranny, reveals Harold Strachan, it was actually about bringing the world Hershey Bars

shey Bars why do they have to hit us with all this bullshit about international law? If they hadn't laid all that hypocritical United Nations stuff on us we'd have had the whole country knee-deep in candy by now. The whole economy would be up on its feet and booming: oil for chocolate.

So this is where the humility comes in, you see. And forbearance. I mean, what happened to the virtue of gratitude? I mean our soldiers went ashore in Somalia smiling, amongst the sunbathers on a holiday beach, so loaded with chocolate they'd had to leave their sleeping-bags on the landing craft. Somali kids were dying from lack of chocolate.

We give them chocolate, and are they grateful?

No, they're spiteful and they're hateful.

They SHOT our boys. With an evil big gun on a truck, called a Technical. They roped a corpse behind it and dragged it round the town in the dust just for spite. Barbarous, unChristian; like Achilles dragging poor Hector's body round the walls of Troy behind his chariot, but then he was probably a Muslim too. An extremist clearly.

Come on, let's be fair! And at least objective; we were never people to go around the world declaring war on folks. Okay, there was 1941, but after Pearl Harbor we had to because the dirty Nips had in fact declared war on us by attacking a prime military target. What we declared was peace, by pacifying a couple of prime civilian targets.

So when did we go about declaring war? When the victims of the Viet Cong needed liberation, what did we do? Why, with suitable biological/chemical agents we sprayed from the air every leaf of every tree beneath which these swine might lurk, and fell upon them with our napalm Phantoms and that quaint all-American plane called Puff the Magic Dragon side-firing 6000 cannon shells a minute into a spot where its infra-red had detected their body heat two miles away.

And what did the victims do? Why, just because the Agent Orange had killed all their crops and half a million of themselves too by way of mere collateral damage they drove us out saying we could keep our capitalist chocolate and escape if we could from the roof of our embassy building.

I mean we had casualties too, you know; hundreds of our boys who loaded the stuff are on military medical pension with kidney transplants and total loss of memory. Maybe it's Freudian. Maybe they don't want to remember the ingratitude. ☐

BUDGIE

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PERSONAL

Brian Hulley (alias Hubbles) MBCLB (UCT) MR. Graduated 1970. Contact bhulley@iantic.net.

Craig – even though in Dublin – still up with the “skinner”. Love, Marilyn.

Datsy – go for your badge!

Doodie Stoddart: give me a call. Brian – Port Elizabeth (041) 585-3109.

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Ian Fletcher, accountant. Hi, old friends from Gauteng are looking for you. PO Box 53129, Kenilworth, Cape Town, 7745.

Mike: Not Hustler but at least the family won't be embarrassed! Happy Birthday, BH.

Thanks to everyone who made the vehicle free event in Cape Town such a huge success.

Truth seeker? Share your wisdom with me. Input onto a proposed website. Email Mario Pretorius at info@masters.co.za.

Volunteers: Iraq Vets? – needed to bomb The N2 Somerset West and embed its 5 traffic lights forever. Signed: Aaarrgh.

Werner: May Slim Shady be with you while I am away. D.

Congratulations, although Tash Nash will take a bit of getting used! MP.

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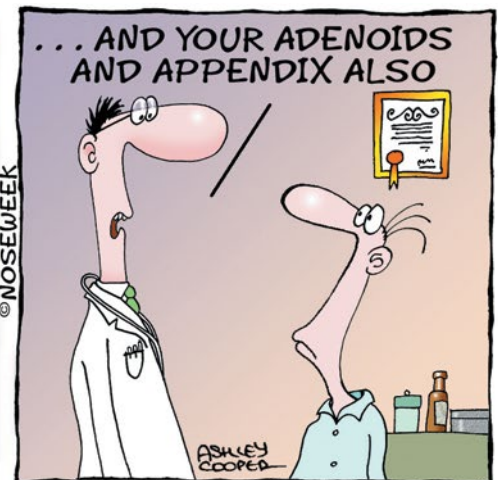
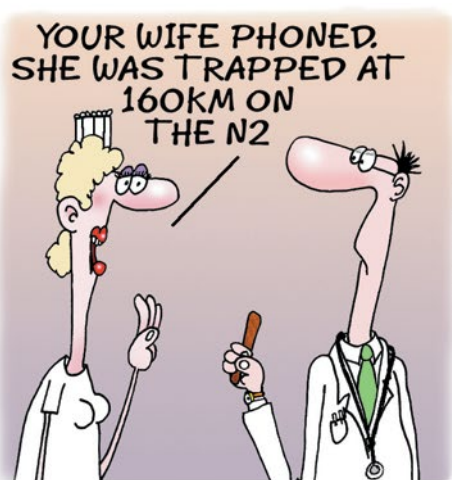
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