

# Prism

*Issue 2, December 2005*



# Editorial

by Ben Hoyt

WE'RE BACK, IN BOLD AND BLACK.

We figured that if we couldn't break the grey, we could at least tame it. It's zebras and chessboards this time.

Anyway, this issue's theme is *Home*, so do try to spot the homely themes: being local, trying to be content where we are, and wisely using what we have. Along with that, we've got a great local food column, a good selection of more general life-and-culture pieces, and even a crossword page.

Please forgive the delay in getting this issue out. There's only so much time in a day, and we just decided it's better to aim for quality rather than getting it out quick. It should be excellent Christmas reading.

Our website (address below) is also falling behind a little. We're hoping to do a bit of a revamp shortly: we'll put all of *Issue 1* online along with a handful of the *Issue 2* articles.

Special thanks go to Gerry Leibbrandt from Prime Photography, who supplied many high-quality photos for this issue. And the neat back cover is by Peter van Leeuwen.

Have a read, and share it around when you're done! ♦



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# Letters

*to the Editor*

## So that's what "redaction" means

Hi guys, great stuff!

Of course I'll subscribe to this. I recommend what is written wholeheartedly to anyone. It's fresh, inspiring, cool, and a whole lot more. I'd say to anyone: you cannot afford to skip this magazine.

Redaction team: a job very well done and certainly a promise of what is to come. Keep it up! We need this kind of stuff.

*Jim Kloeg*

## Opposing "Opposing Zeals"

I must take issue with one of the more obvious cases of hyperbole in *Opposing Zeals*, Genevieve Smith's article in the previous issue. As the mother of a small child, I have recent and continued contact with some of the organisations mentioned.

Perhaps it has just passed me by, but so far I haven't noticed their desire or any strategies to steal my child or dim her into a "willing worker for the Government".

In fact, their stated aims are quite benign: educating parents in domestic hygiene, promoting breastfeeding, training nurses in taking care of babies, and my personal favourite – inculcating a lofty view of motherhood.

To demonise them is not only misleading and unnecessary to make the point that we need to take responsibility for our children, but is just the sort of rhetoric I would have thought a magazine wanting to appeal to anything other than conservative Christian right-wing enthusiasts would want to avoid.

On top of all this, I believe that Genevieve has no children of her own, though her article would lead you to believe otherwise.

*Kathy Bartlett*

## Thank you

Thanks heaps to all the people who contributed feedback for the first issue of *Prism*, and all those who subscribed! Also a big ups to editor Ben for his hard work and commitment! Our next issue's going to be awesome.

*Esther Zorn*

## Prism is still a babe

We waited with eager anticipation in our household for the first *Prism* – it was certainly enjoyable reading.

Personally, I do have a few queries about some of the articles, but as you state in your editorial, "we haven't achieved all this in the first issue", i.e., encouraging each other to think Christianly about all of life.

The magazine is still a "babe", and I'm sure it will mature with time.

It's a great forum for gifted young (and maybe not so young) writers and artists to share their gifts with others.

We wish you and all the team God's blessing on this project.

*Frances Leibbrandt*

We welcome feedback, so please write in – casual or formal, positive or negative, short or long.

# Home and away

by Aaron Stewart

IN THE BEGINNING, God created the world, and made humans – Adam and Eve – his representatives in it. Representation came with conditions, though, and when Adam and Eve broke them, something about their world broke too. It became damaged and hostile, and humans began to die – to return to the soil as dust.

So begins the story that shapes the way Christians and Jews understand their place on earth. “Place” and “home” are woven deeply into this story of exile and return, of a wandering people wishing for the undoing of all that’s gone wrong.

New Zealanders may feel isolated from many of the world’s troubles, but even here all is not well. The health system cannot find care for everyone who needs it; our young people kill themselves at rates among the highest in the “developed” world;<sup>1</sup> the far north is rife with bad housing, ill health, drugs and unemployment; street dwellers exhibit the semi-conscious haze of substance abuse in central Wellington; alcohol and chemical binges are part of youth culture generally; and some 18,000 babies annually are permanently exiled.<sup>2</sup>

Maori also know exile. Robbed of the heritage and rights guaranteed with solemn Treaty by an apparently Christian Crown, today they are removed as guardians of the land. Their displacement is a story told repeatedly in our statistics – social, economic, educational, health and legal. The responses around every backyard BBQ are opinions ranging from ignorant Pakeha chauvinism to radical advocacy of Maori sovereignty.

No, all is not well in Aotearoa. And that’s leaving aside the tragedies of road deaths, cancer, violent abuse, sour relationships, job loss, natural disaster, economic hardship and environmental degradation.

Some say these issues are “the problem of evil” for Christian theology. Indeed! But Christian theology does not somehow rationalise evil away. Rather, it invites us to personally participate in the story of evil’s defeat, as a historical and ongoing fact. And so this Christian story matches and answers the problem of evil in a truly engaging way. By inhabiting the story, everyone – tradesman, student, street dweller, civil servant, labourer or IT worker – may find directions for finding and rebuilding our home.



But we have much to learn from the story. Most of all, in our time we need to re-learn the value of place, of some *particular* place. Despite our access to easy, cheap travel, and the way that the internal combustion engine has so altered our experience of the world, a rich life is not found in the constant moving about of the middle class. Sometimes we merely trail our fingers over a skin of locations that differ only by their promise of pleasure or short-term prospects. We need anchors. We need to commit to and guard particular localities, to forge ties to the folk in them – that is the stuff of roots and belonging, of contentment and home-building. It is the stuff of gardening. It is also the stuff of redemption. By occasionally saying “no” to the pull of forever moving, the desert spaces of modern

life become cultivated oases.

In the Christian story, the image for separation is *exile* – a sending-away from the Garden of Eden, the place of meeting between God and man. From the beautiful Garden humans were meant to grow outwards and care for all of creation. But their unfaithfulness made them strangers to the life and promise the land once held.

The image for life is *return to the land*. And this image is beautifully set up in the tale of Israel, released by God’s power from slavery in Egypt, wandering toward the rich and abundant land promised to their ancestor Abraham over 350 years earlier.

## Wandering

Whether displaced Maori, culture-shocked Asian immigrant, or cynical Pakeha youth, Israel’s tale – otherwise so foreign to urban lives – invites us to reconsider our sense of dislocation and start heading home. Over two million of Abraham’s descendants left Egyptian slavery, through the agency of God, for the explicit purpose of worship. He revealed Himself not only as their champion, but as the one who then accompanied them toward their new and better life. We can span the globe in a second with our email, but meeting a globe-trotting *god* when we’re alienated offers us the same prospects as Israel: some specific part of earth might become home once again.

Christians therefore have a robust outlook on the world. As believers we walk with Israel’s wandering God. When exile shadows our path, we see ourselves living the reality of much of human history. Particular places don’t represent

our only identity and happiness. But neither do we practice deliberate rootlessness. We feel constantly directed toward *homemaking*.

By the power of the story, we feel called to undo the destruction exile has wrought in all our relationships. And therefore we build homes and communities, exercising what is rightly called faith. At the best of times we build *homely practices* into the full range of our relationships: with ourselves, our relatives, neighbours, friends, lovers, employers, workmates, native-born and immigrants, our pets and herds, homes, gardens and districts, our environmental and legal structures, our food and purchasing decisions, our travel and career choices, art, business, philosophy, politics, commerce. All these are homecomings of some particular place and circumstance, and they weave the tapestry of a full humanity, rich, textured, cultivated, satisfying.

Some might detect a flaw, or rather a massive and arrogant assumption, in this story. Christians say that we have come to know Israel's God, but we are clearly not the Jews of Old Testament Israel. Nor have we escaped Egypt as Abraham's children, heading toward a land promised to his descendants. By what right, then, do Christians say we inhabit Israel's story? How can we take universal lessons for modern life from Israel's ancient tradition – a people from whom we are not even descended? Aren't our claims a kind of theft of someone else's story?

Israel's history is the history of all mankind because an Israelite finally returned home. Jesus Christ went into the worst of exile – death – and rose again to life, re-entering the land as one never again to be exiled from it. And so he became the great new Gardener for the whole human race. In going before Israel and doing her task, he has given us the whole earth.

Therefore, those who inhabit Israel's story do so through Christ, who invites us to live within the story's terms. We do better than old Israel, wandering in the Middle East – we can simply stop where we are and start gardening. For we know that behind any place we stop stands the God who has redeemed it all.



This is the reason Christians live with a kind of double vision. On the one hand we know that the garden of earth is not yet cultivated as it one day will be. We can accept things going against us – we can accept the remnants of exile. But this acceptance is because we have a deep sense that this place is already our home, and that exile isn't ultimate, but merely for a time. We wander with Israel's God, toward a land both promised and already secured.

## Coming home

Endless travel is possible. We can get temporary and superficial pleasure by consuming fleeting impressions. But we'll have to keep moving, lest we get bored.

Overcoming boredom means staying still for long enough to get below the surface, to discover the roots and nature of a place, to begin to drink in its character and moods. And when we start taking responsibility – when we stop being consumers and start being gardeners – then we will discover the deep satisfaction that we'd never find in the fleeting impressions of constant movement.

The Christian story tells us that we are God's representatives in the particulars of life: gender, blood, culture, history, people, land. As we hear this story and make it our own, we will infuse these particulars with life, and will use that life to nurture others. Our identity and our historical roots will be both strong and loving. We will steward the land for others, because God called it very good, and because it is our life.

The Christian story challenges easy rootlessness, treating everyone identically, and a culture that markets everything for consumption. None of these respect particulars. We have lost neighbourliness, in all its senses, and our lives are only emptier as a consequence. Busier, perhaps, more stressed, but less significant. We must reclaim the localities, the belonging, the welcome and responsibility of being in one place and not another, of belonging to *someone* and not another. We must construct homes.

But coming home means rejecting the destructive, power-hungry, and inhospitable ways of life that we have inherited. We must give up all the ways in which we contribute to this, and instead embrace a full humanity, living Israel's story through Christ, in the dignity of representing God, here and now.

We must come home, and begin homemaking. ♦

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- 1 In the 15–24 and 25–34 age brackets both males and females were among the top five rates for OECD countries with comparable data in 2002 – see *Suicide Prevention Information New Zealand*: <http://www.spinz.org.nz/page.php?p=53#200>
  - 2 *Statistics New Zealand Press Release*, 15 June 2005: <http://tinyurl.com/8vkvr>



# Summertime

by Franci Hoyt

EVERY YEAR, AS THE DAYS get longer and warmer, my appetite changes from desiring warm comforting stews and roasts to lighter meals that are easy, yummy and often cold. It's in summer that we congregate around the barbeque – the men with beer in hand squinting against the smoke and the women fluttering about trying to slap together something to go with the sausages and tomato sauce.

The backyard barbeque is something of a Kiwi tradition, and in keeping with our theme of Home, I thought I'd share some ideas and a few of my summer favourites to accompany your backyard barbeques this summer.

## Think outside the sausage square

- Barbeque steaks to make steak burgers.
- Raw strips of meat and chopped vegies make a wonderful help-yourself stir-fry buffet where everyone can choose what they eat and how they cook it. Add a sweet-sour sauce, soy sauce and rice, and you have a great meal.
- Chicken barbeques well and tastes wonderful, especially with a honey-soy marinade. Be sure to cook it right to the bone – a bit of charring only adds to the taste!
- Fish is also great barbequed, as are pork belly strips.
- Let your imagination lead you. That Tui ad's got the right idea – you *can* cook most things on the barbie.

## Some tips and quick salads

In New Zealand, we have heaps of little fruit and vegie shops on the outskirts of town and in the country-side. When you pass them, make a point of stopping and getting some fresh produce. With these people you know that the produce

hasn't been in some cool store for the last six months. Sometimes you can even pick your own. Support these little shops if you haven't in the past, and you'll wonder why you never had. In the meantime, some general salad ideas:

- *Meaty salads* – add meat to your green salad: tuna, for example, or cold meats left over from Christmas dinner or last night's barbeque. It's great for a light lunch.
- *Green salads* – most supermarkets now sell mixed salad leaves. They are a quick and fancy alternative to cutting up a head of lettuce. Add some red onion, tomato and any other vegies that you like. Olives and feta cheese add a nice Mediterranean taste. Toss and drizzle with lemon juice, olive oil, or a salad dressing. Croutons are not only for soup – try them in a salad too!
- *Coleslaw* – once again, you can buy freshly cut coleslaw mixes from your supermarket. Or, even better, make it yourself: just shred some cabbage, grate in a few carrots and toss in a few raisins. Drizzle with a vinaigrette dressing for a refreshing, crunchy coleslaw.
- *Mixed bean salad* – make a delicious bean salad: a tin of Craig's Mixed Bean Salad along with a tin of their Four Bean Mix, a tin of sliced peaches (yes, the sweet ones), some chopped up red onion, red capsicum, and a dash of worcestershire sauce. Let it marinate in the fridge overnight – the flavours will be much richer the next day.
- *Dessert salads* – there are so many desert salads out there, and most of us are only familiar with "fruit salad". I've included two other recipes you will definitely enjoy.
- Remember, it doesn't have to be green to be a salad! ♦

### Creamy molded carrot salad

1 tin (410 g) pineapple crush    ¼ tsp salt  
 1 packet lemon jelly            2 cups carrots, grated finely  
 100 g (125 mL) castor sugar    125 mL cream, whipped

Drain pineapple juice and add water to make 250 mL. Heat until boiling and dissolve jelly in it. Let it cool until thick but not set, then beat until creamy, adding sugar little by little.

In another bowl, mix carrots and pineapple. Fold into jelly mix. Beat cream until stiff and add to jelly mixture. Rinse mold with cold water, then fill with the salad. Refrigerate until set.



### Mum's potato salad

5 large potatoes                    75 mL mayonnaise  
 1 boiled egg, chopped            75 mL condensed milk  
 ¼ red onion, chopped

Boil potatoes with skin on, cool, then peel. Cut in desired size squares and place in salad dish. Mix other ingredients, then pour over potatoes and mix gently.



### Warm chicken-and-walnut salad

2 tsp olive oil                      1 stick celery, chopped  
 400 g chicken breast            1 tin baby corn  
 2 rashers bacon                    100 g camembert (optional)  
 2 medium onions                 2 tbsp lemon juice  
 50 g chopped walnuts            fresh chives (optional)  
 100 g mixed salad or lettuce

Heat oil in wok. Slice chicken and stir-fry until tender. Remove from heat. Add bacon to wok, stir-fry until crisp. Stir-fry onions, add celery, then add chicken and nuts. Stir-fry for 3 minutes.

Place salad leaves in a serving bowl. Top with chicken mix. Slice and sprinkle on camembert. Decorate with baby corn and garnish with chopped chives. Drizzle on lemon juice.

### Rainbow jelly fruit salad (dessert)

5 packs of different coloured jelly  
 fruits to correspond with those colours  
 boiling water  
 1 ½ cups evaporated milk

This recipe is best done in stages. Prepare the first colour (the one you want on top) according to directions on packet. Let it cool. (If you like, you can prepare it with 1 cup boiling water and add ½ cup evaporated milk when it has cooled to room temperature. This gives it a creamy texture.) Put some sliced fruit of that colour on bottom of mold, add a little jelly (not too much, otherwise the fruit floats) and refrigerate until set. Add the rest of that colour of jelly and let set.

When the first layer of jelly has mostly set, slice fruit of next colour and leave until first layer has completely set. Add second layer of jelly following directions above. You don't always have to add the evaporated milk.

Repeat until you have used all the colours, then turn out on a nice platter for a beautiful looking desert.

### Ambrosia (dessert)

250 ml whipped cream            3 cups miniature marshmallows  
 1 litre natural yoghurt            pinch of cinnamon  
 ½ cup slivered almonds          1 block of chocolate, chopped  
 1 punnet strawberries, quartered  
 (or any fruit of your choice)

In a large bowl, combine whipped cream, nuts, fruit, marshmallows, chocolate and cinnamon. Mix together well and refrigerate for 30 to 45 minutes.



## Gardening families

by Janette Bartlett

IT WON'T BE LONG and I'll be celebrating my fiftieth birthday, the Lord willing, and upon reflection I thought I'd share a couple of things I've learned along the way.

My mother was not known for her eloquent speech. She did not have a vast vocabulary. She found English to be a tiresome and difficult language. But without saying too much, she taught me, her wayward daughter, a very valuable lesson. Through her quiet example I saw her live her life with contentment. Although she had many burdens – with her health, her financial situation, family disagreements outside her control, as well as her troublesome child – she had a very certain hope in her Lord and obeyed His Word by devoting her life to her husband, children and church community.

When I was blessed with a husband and then later with a family, I was confronted with the reality of my role as a woman. Up to that point I was pretty adept at looking out for Number One – myself! But now I needed to focus on others. That required a determination to consciously rethink the old ways and learn a better way to be satisfied and content.

Our culture encourages women to believe that the only way for them to feel fulfilled and useful is to work outside the home. It is only there that you can stimulate your mind and make a valuable contribution to society! But how wrong they are! What could be of more use to our society than to nurture our children and watch them develop into strong, independent, thoughtful, Christian young men and women who are capable of maintaining loyal relationships, hard work and logical thought. And all this requires a deep commitment of time and energy on the part of the parents, particularly the mother.

When I looked at the Bible's "super woman" in Proverbs 31, it struck me that she was a very intelligent, thoughtful, industrious lady. This passage encouraged me to view a woman's role in a different light. This woman is no wimp!

*She considers a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong . . . She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies belts to the tradesmen. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future.*

She doesn't sit at home with her feet up watching all the TV soaps. No, she works hard to provide for her family in every way. She supports her husband by managing the household well, providing that physical, mental and emotional help for each individual in that unit. That's time-consuming hard work!

Each of us has been given certain abilities. I have a passion for gardening. I've tried to use this gift for the benefit of my family as well as for my own relaxation. We bought our first property in Masterton and, along with a very small house, we had a half-acre paddock where we raised chickens, sheep and a calf, as well as an orchard and large veggie garden. It was always our aim to grow our own food; we had such satisfaction when we could say that *everything* on the dinner plate was raised on our own section. We took great pride in providing for our family in this way with inexpensive, nourishing meals. And alongside the practical vegetable gardens, I was always keen to enrich our lives with a good selection of beautiful flowers and trees.

Gardening and nurturing children are similar in many ways. Each takes a great deal of effort and patience, but the reward is unbelievable. To reap that reward you must cultivate a spirit of determination and self-discipline. You must be willing to rework the same patch of ground repeatedly. And in each season – each stage in your child's life – learn to sit back and enjoy all that hard work. Remember to sustain yourself with prayer and God's Word so that you can keep on with the work.

A Christian home should be an oasis for all the members in it. I believe that as the wife and mother I was responsible to cultivate a restful, happy atmosphere in our home and provide a loving and contented example. Obviously, I have only given my family a flawed example, and need to own up to my faults. Don't be fooled by the world's opinion; all this is hard work, and very stimulating!

And thank you, Mum, for your good example to me. ♦

# Stay-at-home mum

by Heidi Hendrikse

THIS MORNING YOU'VE packed away the cards. It was a nice decoration for two months, since bringing home the baby. It looked rather messy, too, but it's one of those things new mums do, isn't it? Now, as you look through the words, it makes you feel despondent.

*Babies are so very sweet,  
No wonder you are thrilled  
To see this special dream of yours,  
So happily fulfilled.*

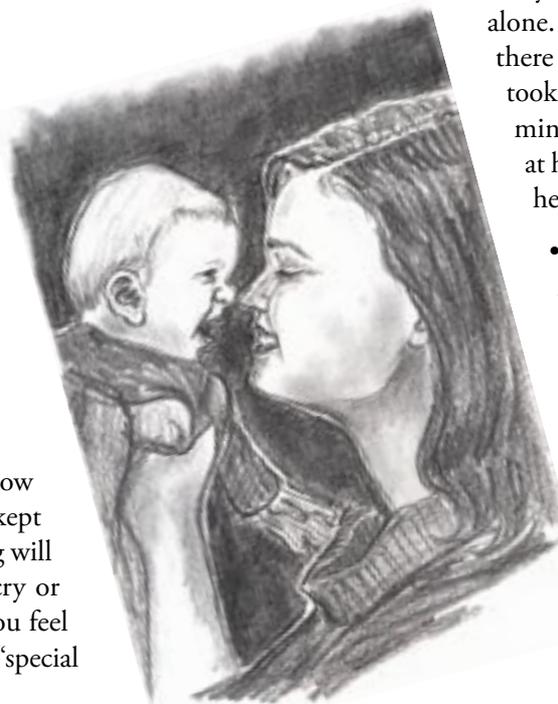
Who wrote that? If you are honest, right now little Sarah isn't sweet at all! Once again, she's kept you awake for most of the night, and nothing will make her happy. Should you leave her to cry or carry her around? In any case, just quietly you feel like doing something to her. What about this "special dream so happily fulfilled"?

The baby was supposed to be lovely, a gift from God, the result of that precious union of the two of you. You looked forward to it, to be able to stay at home, look after baby, keep house for your husband. However, you miss the satisfaction of your old job, the stimulating conversation of colleagues and, last but not least, the pay packet.

Your body has changed, too. It's like looking at a stranger in the mirror; breastfeeding freckles on your face, dark circles under the eyes, bust twice its size, a few extra kilos, and the floppy sponge that once was the flat tummy you were so proud of. Not to mention all the changes emotionally. You feel your husband finds it hard to accept your lack of interest in him, but you have enough on your plate already. You could never tell him all of this. And your best friend, who had her baby six weeks before you – *she's* loving every minute of it. What's wrong with you?

There are many new mums who suffer like this, in silence. I did. It was hard to go from working at full speed to being at home with a baby. I loved my little girl to bits, but you can only cuddle so much in a day. I loved cooking, preserving, and keeping house – well, most of the time anyway – but it still left this empty feeling. I loved my husband, our life together and the blessings God had given us. But I still felt unhappy!

I read books such as *I Want to Enjoy My Children*, *Christian Homemaking*, and even *Lord, My Whole Life Hurts*, but they only added to the guilt already there. I really just wanted to be content at home!



If you feel like this, you're not alone. And the hard thing is that there are no instant answers. It took me much prayer and determination to finally be content at home. I found that these can help:

- Sing, no matter how bad it sounds, or put on some music. Your baby will love it, and it can bring peace and joy to your heart.
- Read. The Bible is an excellent start, but child-rearing books and magazines can give you a lift as well.
  - Talk about it with your husband (who probably knows already anyway). Confide in a friend – even the one with the new baby. You'll be surprised at her similar feelings.
- Pray without ceasing. Make each thought a prayer to the One who understands, who listens, who knows. Prayer accomplishes much.
- Don't rely on your feelings. We have about 40,000 thoughts each day, and as many as 77% of them are negative. So talk to yourself. Tell yourself you're not going mad, you do love baby, and hubby, and you can be happy and content.
- Be active and get out of the house, especially when you feel the walls are screaming at you. If you like gardening or walking, go for it; if you want to visit a friend, do that.
- Enjoy baby. It sounds like a cliché, but they are only little for a very short time. Even if she screams for hours on end, dirties every nappy, has a rash or is colicky, it will pass. Having the benefit of hindsight, it sure is a lot easier to deal with than stroppy teenagers!
- Be patient – it's been a big change. Having a baby ranks high on the stress list. Give yourself some room. Have a good cry if it helps you. But always remember that your job as a mother is one of the most important in the world. ♦

# to be content

by Hettie Arends



Russian pomp

CONTENTMENT IS A VIRTUE that at times I've lacked. Perhaps this is also true for you, if you are honest with yourself. There was period when I was discontent about not being able to make a much-desired trip back to visit the country of my birth and my relatives, and glimpse some more of the world. When we were able to go, I gained so much more than expected! And when we returned home I was struck with an almost overwhelming feeling of thankfulness and, well, *contentment* that we live in such a free, spacious, friendly, scenic, modern country! (I could keep the superlatives flowing.) What a blessing to have been born in a country with a rich European-Reformed heritage and culture; but what a godsend also to *live* in this Aotearoa, this "Godzone", with all that it entails.

It was a privilege to have visited Holland earlier this year, fulfilling years of longing to see both the fatherland and our ageing relatives, and experience that culture once again. It was a huge trip and so we decided to also realise some other longstanding dreams by visiting more of Europe, including Russia.

As anticipated, we found Holland to be beautiful, clean, and charming; the relatives warm and welcoming, and yet it was also evident that many of them had drifted away from

their heritage, and that their lives were much more regulated than ours here in New Zealand. The space, stunning scenery and uncomplicated lifestyle we generally take for granted are simply not to be found there. Having said this, it is not my intention to run Holland down in any way, as I still consider it my homeland and have proudly (perhaps stubbornly) retained my Dutch citizenship. I merely wish to focus on thankfulness and counting our blessings!

Nowadays there is increased talk about the downward spiral in our country, and perhaps many felt pangs of disappointment (or worse) at the prospect of another three years under a left-wing government, but let's also focus on and cherish what we do have in this land of ours. Compared with many other countries, we have a lot to be thankful for.

New Zealand has so far been spared from the escalating terrorist attacks that are plaguing much of the world and subjecting many other lands to fear. We passed through London just six days before the July subway and bus attacks, frequenting all of the stations that were subsequently targeted. We heard the news back in the relative safety of the Netherlands (on a lovely tourist island to be precise), and immediately felt that we were being looked after. Before departing from New Zealand, we had spoken words of

reassurance to our children (as they did not accompany us on this trip) and these words now became real for us. Yet in most of Europe, the heightened security and anxiety was immediately evident.

Natural disasters feature more and more in world news reports, but here in our country we are almost free of such events – and certainly on the scale of say the Asian tsunami, the American hurricanes or the Pakistani earthquake. Our land is long overdue for a large earthquake, tsunami or eruption (they have historically occurred here), yet none have occurred in my lifetime. The bird flu threat that now appears to have Europe on high alert is something that is still relatively remote from our shores. Our geographic isolation is a reason to be thankful.

We enjoyed three hectic days in London, making the most of our pre-paid day and transport passes (this is where our Dutch natures definitely came in useful). The city holds history and culture aplenty, but we found it to be quite impersonal – so huge! You certainly do not experience the friendliness and laid-back way of life found in Kiwi-land. The majority of people on the subway appeared rushed, unhappy and unfriendly. You get the impression that many people only *exist* rather than actually *live* in such a hectic, overcrowded city.

Ever since I began to study French at school I have wanted to visit “the city of romance.” A five-day bus tour showed us nearly all of the “must-see” sights of Paris, and more. Astounding! The Parisians were friendlier than we had been led to believe, with many attempting to speak English to us. But again in such a vast, bustling city there are no personal connections to be made. Paris was disappointingly dirty and grimy, certainly not “green and clean” like New Zealand.

Russia was the biggest eye-opener of all. We wanted to see this country’s diversity of culture – the architecture, art and history, and also experience the very different way of life we knew we would be exposed to. Communism may be officially gone, but its scars can be observed across the psyche of the people. There is a poor work ethic and customer service is elusive. The majority of the population looks sad, is poorly dressed and lives in poverty (compared with our Western standard of living). A small minority, known as the “New Russians”, the “Russian Mafia” and other such names, is now said to (unofficially) run the country. They can be seen driving at high speeds in expensive vehicles with tinted windows, while the remainder of the population has to be satisfied with decrepit Ladas for transport!

Our hosts told us that the Russians attempt to escape their circumstances as much as possible, and that is one reason

why Russia has a rich fairytale tradition. Now fairytales may be sweet and romantic, but alcoholism, beggars and mistreatment of women are not! Much of the infrastructure of Russia’s cities is quite poor, and in the countryside it is practically non-existent. Russia functions by means of bribes and corruption, which are still rife within many government departments. Some everyday tasks that we perform effortlessly are nearly impossible to complete there: try sending a parcel from somewhere in Russia – if you manage to complete this errand within an afternoon you will be doing very well.

A distinct lack of cleanliness seems to go hand-in-hand with the poor work ethic. Now being of Dutch descent may make me finicky in this area in the eyes of some, but the old



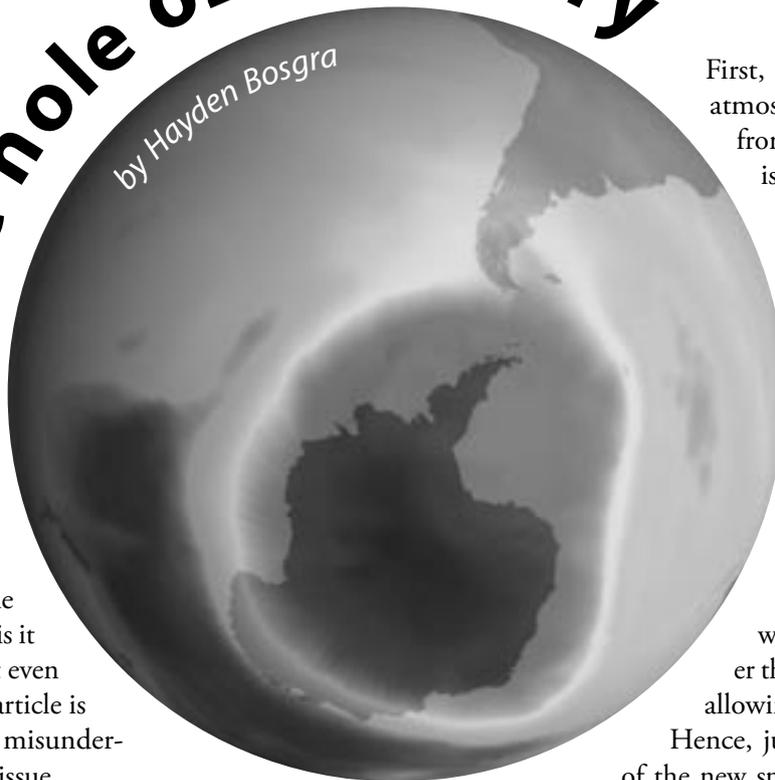
Russian poverty

adage “cleanliness is next to Godliness” certainly came to mind. As this vast nation has tried to live officially without religion for some 80 years, the results of this “experiment” speak for themselves – laziness, filth, escapism and dishonesty are all evident! Don’t get me wrong, we did enjoy our Russian visit – our hosts were kind gracious people, our New Zealand Russian friends acted as fine tour guides, and we saw amazing sights and had the opportunity to just relax. We concluded that Russia is something you have to *experience*. And yet for us it was an enriching experience because this country, more than any other, made us appreciate how great our life in New Zealand really is!

“Count your blessings; name them one by one” is the song that went through my mind, and when we came home, I resolved never to complain again, fully aware that I will need to be reminded of this. I am so thankful the journey taught us some worthwhile lessons, and hope that sharing our experiences and impressions will also encourage you to bloom where you are planted. For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ♦

# The hole ozone story

by Hayden Bosgra



THE “HOLE IN THE ozone layer” is one of society’s catch phrases. But do we as the public really understand what’s meant by it? How is the ozone hole formed? Why is it such a problem now? Is it even relevant? My aim in this article is to clear up some of the misunderstandings about the hole issue.

First we need to understand some background information. Ozone is formed by the sun’s ultra-violet (UV) radiation breaking up oxygen molecules ( $O_2$ ) to form oxygen atoms (O); these oxygen atoms react with other oxygen molecules to form ozone ( $O_3$ ). The ozone then absorbs UV radiation to return to O and  $O_2$ . (Ozone can also break up and form  $O_2$  by reacting with free oxygen atoms.)

These reactions happen over and over, forming and destroying ozone. The whole process is important because the UV radiation that ozone absorbs is very damaging to living creatures, and this is the major atmospheric process that absorbs it.

Twenty years ago, however, scientists recorded that ozone was being destroyed faster than they had expected. There was some kind of competing reaction going on. But they soon discovered the culprit: chlorine. Specifically, it was chlorine coming from CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons – compounds that contain both chlorine and fluorine). The CFCs are transported into the stratosphere (about 20 km above the earth), where UV radiation breaks them down and releases chlorine. Some of the chlorine starts to break down ozone; the rest reacts quickly with other compounds in the stratosphere to form hydrochloric acid and chlorine nitrate, which do not react with ozone.

These reactions are common throughout the world. But when we consider the polar regions, there are a couple of peculiar features that change the process. We will look specifically at Antarctica because it is the most relevant to us here in New Zealand.

First, during winter, the polar atmosphere is almost isolated from the surrounding air. This is due to the polar vortex wind from the higher stratosphere bringing down very cold air. The isolation allows chemicals to build up without mixing outside the vortex.

Second, because it’s extremely cold (about  $-80^\circ\text{C}$ ), polar stratospheric clouds are able to form. These are clouds made up of nitric acid and water. As they form they lower the concentration of nitrates, allowing a build-up of chlorine.

Hence, just before the first sunrise of the new spring, the concentration of chlorine is very high.

As the first sunrise comes, there is enough UV radiation to break the chlorine bond and form chlorine atoms. These atoms react with ozone to form chlorine oxide. When enough chlorine oxide is produced it can combine to form a molecule of two chlorine oxides ( $Cl_2O_2$ ), which reacts with the ozone and destroys it rapidly. This continues for about two to three months, forming the hole in the ozone layer.

By the end of November the polar vortex breaks up and the air warms up, allowing the clouds to dissolve. The nitrates can again react with chlorine to form unreactive chlorine molecules, and the ozone regenerates, causing the hole to close up.

The hole implodes, and the ozone-less air cascades out from the polar regions over our beloved New Zealand, giving us very little UV protection in early summer. This leads, of course, to very short burn times and high skin cancer rates.

As you can see, the ozone hole is specific to the polar regions, so no ozone hole should sprout up above us – at least anytime soon.

But where does that leave us? I believe the ozone hole is a strong warning. God has created an atmosphere that is very finely tuned, and even (for example) the relatively small increases in CFCs can have a big impact on our environment. Also, we have looked here at only the “ozone hole”, which is specific to Antarctica; the other worrying problem is a general depletion of ozone over Europe and North America. That, however, is a different story! ♦

# Working for families?

by David Holtslag

I'VE BEEN THINKING.

And the more I think, the more concerned I become regarding the "Working for Families" scheme that Labour's pushing. I'll go so far as to say that, *in the long term*, it won't really help out any families, and will eventually be "working against families".

When reading about policies like these on paper, it can be hard to understand their actual impact in everyday life. There are lots of facts and figures that can easily confuse many "mainstream" New Zealanders. So I hope that the real situations below will help you understand the true impact the package will have.

Currently, my wife and I do not receive any financial assistance from the government – and rightly so, considering my handsome pay-packet. If Labour has their way, however, next year April will see my wife and I become beneficiaries, by approximately \$45 a week (about \$2300 per year). That's no small amount of money, and I guarantee you we will become very skilled in putting the money "to good use". If we had two children, we would be looking at approximately \$90 a week (\$4700 per year). All of a sudden, I'm voting Labour! But please, bear with my gripe ...

Then comes the day in 2006 when my wife and I have spent the \$45 a week extra and NZ Post (my employer) says, "Well done, David – you put in an outstanding effort, and we're going to reward you with a 5% pay rise plus a \$2000 bonus!" Well, isn't that good news. I look forward to the bonus payment and an extra \$35 a week (about \$1800 after tax). But wait ... pay day comes and what do I see, only another \$18 extra in my pocket (about \$950 after tax). Why is that? Where is that missing \$850 I worked hard for?

Well, you remember the \$45 a week Labour had started giving me? Remember how I became very used to it very quickly and became nice and reliant on it? Well, as soon as I received my pay rise, that \$45 a week dropped to \$28 a week. So my pay went up but the "government's pay" went down. Why on earth did I bother to work hard to receive

that increase? What incentive is there for me to work hard for my family to earn more money, when the end result is not really more money!

And another example. A good friend has five children and runs his own business. He's getting government pay too, about \$200 a week. Why should he try and grow his business (possibly work more hours and hire someone to help out) when the extra \$5000 he earns a year does not mean he gets an extra \$5000 in his pay-packet!

Where's the incentive for people to achieve and work harder, both for themselves and their families? I don't think there really is an incentive.

But what's happening in the background? Come April 2006, Labour believes that 260,000 families will be on this scheme. They call it "tax relief for families". No it isn't. Someone works, gets a pay-cheque that has been *fully* taxed and then *also* gets paid some money by the government (which means there is some very large government machine being paid to return the tax people have paid already!). April 2005 saw \$36.6 million of family assistance payments compared to \$22.7 million in April 2004, a 61% increase. I'd be afraid to know how much it cost the government machine to actually make those payments of \$36.6 million. And the payments and costs are only going to increase further.

Are we seeing a government keen to get more and more people reliant on the State to provide their weekly pay packet? Are we seeing a government putting themselves (paying themselves?) into a position where no one would want to vote them out?

Working for Families is a programme I believe is not in the interests of New Zealanders. Short term, many people with families will be getting some more cash in their pocket, which no doubt they will find useful. Long term, they will become reliant on the State to provide their pay. They won't look to themselves to work harder and earn more, but will cry out to the State to increase their lot.

Working for families? Definitely not, it's working against families. ♦





by Richie Flinn

# Windfarms, brothels and you

NEW ZEALAND IS A HOME of remarkable God-given resources, resources we are obliged to harness and protect. Sometimes, in our zeal for development, we don't strike the best balance between harnessing and protecting.

For example, pessimists among us will speculate that New Zealand is on the verge of an energy crisis. Energy production is struggling to keep up with the increasingly voracious appetite of Auckland's laptops, Playstations, iPods and hair-straighteners (and Waikato's electric fences). Electricity prices are rising. Meanwhile, renewable energy generation is decreasing. Hydro and wind generation went down 7.7% in the year ending June 2005,<sup>1</sup> placing more pressure on non-renewable sources such as thermal, coal and gas. The Gas Association of New Zealand acknowledges that Maui (New Zealand's major gas field) will become uneconomical in 2007, but it lives in the hope that the gas production industry will soon be able to "find more".<sup>2</sup>

Meridian Energy is proposing to build 70 wind turbines on property it owns in Makara, west of Wellington. "Project West Wind" is projected to provide electricity for 110,000 homes (or the equivalent of Wellington Central, Lower Hutt and Porirua combined).<sup>3</sup> This is a tiny fraction of New Zealand's total appetite for electricity, unlikely to relieve much pressure in the electricity market. Yet even this small relief may prove to be out of reach. The barrier? The Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991.

The RMA is a very large statute designed to "promote the

sustainable management of natural and physical resources".<sup>4</sup> In conventional terms this means making sure we don't cause undue harm to the environment. In other words, the RMA says whether Meridian can stick up 125-metre-long tubes of metal with great big fans on the end, as well as whether you can subdivide your property, add a deck onto your house, or discharge chemical waste into yonder babbling brook.

The statute itself is rather revolutionary. It was invented in the mid-'80s, in a decade all about reform and de-regulation. Traditional planning statutes follow what is known as the "command and control" principle. As its name suggests, the command and control principle says that in order to protect the environment the government should dictate how resources are to be used, and by whom.

So, for example, the local council could say that for the good of the environment cafés and restaurants can only be operated in certain areas, or that lawns on the north side of town can't be trimmed shorter than 30 mm. The intention of the RMA was to get rid of this kind of meddling. To do this it included two key features.

The first is not so much something included as something excluded. The RMA expressly says that *every possible activity* is permitted – with a small number of exceptions – unless it breaches an express rule set by the relevant local council.<sup>5</sup> The Act itself prohibits almost no activities. It doesn't contain any rules on how high you can build your house or where cell phone towers can be built. Instead it lays down general

principles, and then provides a bunch of procedural rules which allow local authorities to regulate the environment.

Of course, this means very little if local authorities regulate oppressively. This is where the second feature kicks in – the concept known as “effects-based regulation”. This is a bit of jargon which means that – in theory – any rules set by a local council restrict *environmental effects* rather than activities per se.<sup>6</sup> For example, a local council shouldn’t make a rule that says “factories are forbidden on Pevensie Avenue”, but rather something like “discharges of carbon monoxide exceeding 10 mg/L are forbidden on Pevensie Avenue”. The obvious benefit of the latter approach is that landowners are free to do what they want with their land, provided their activity doesn’t damage the environment.

So the RMA is a magnificent statute which protects the environment without unduly interfering in people’s lives. In theory. Unfortunately the devil is in the detail. Because the Act fails to give a clear direction to local authorities, it has been applied more or less as a traditional planning statute by most councils – that is, they regulate activities rather than effects. Moreover, despite Parliament’s clear intention that restrictions be based on *environmental effects* only, courts and councils have agreed to also weigh up “social, cultural and economic” considerations. The end result of this is that in a vast number of resource consent decisions (big ones such as Project West Wind and minor ones such as suburban property subdivision), the result will turn upon the discretion of an elected councillor or an unelected bureaucrat who is permitted to consider not only environmental effects but practically anything he or she thinks relevant.

For instance, a council planner may refuse a resident from adding a shop onto his premises because *in the planner’s opinion* the shop will have bad social or economic effects. Note that it’s not because such a development is prohibited by the district plan, but rather because, upon weighing the costs and benefits of the proposal, *the planner*, an unelected official, thinks it’s unsuitable. The proposed shop may not even have any adverse ecological effects (in fact it may have positive effects), but the planner can still refuse the application based on his ideas of the social or economic good. And this happens in what is supposed to be a statute to regulate effects on the *environment*.

Everyone everywhere should strenuously oppose this kind of regulation. It’s nothing more than central planning in disguise. It is not what Parliament intended with the legislation,

and it is a fundamental compromise of individual liberty for no other purpose than to enforce a local government’s view of good over all others.

For example, tussles between councils and brothel owners have been well publicised in the wake of the Prostitution Reform Act 2003. Some councils have sought to regulate the location of brothels via the RMA (considering the social effects of the activity on the surrounding neighbourhood). While the intentions are good, Christian planners should oppose such measures. The RMA is supposed to regulate ecological effects only, and preserving the Rule of Law is more important than the morality of individual cases. If councils can regulate brothels in this way, what’s to stop them from preventing the building of churches?

We must also avoid throwing out the environmentalist baby with the socialist bathwater. Unfortunately, environmentalism and leftist politics are often seen to go hand in hand. It is a sad reality that the environmentalist movement has been hijacked by those who believe resources should be centrally allocated, and this phenomenon has led many

Christian groups to avoid environmental causes – they’re seen as guilty by association with left-wing policies. But Christians everywhere must be environmental activists. Mainstream Greens are responsible for a lot of environmental legislation that’s ill-conceived (or ill-applied), and they share very few premises with us, but we must join forces with them to protect the Earth God has given us.

God assures us that His world is not going burn itself to a crisp at any moment, but that certainly shouldn’t stop us from doing everything we can to give effect to that promise. On the contrary, we should be provoked to do God’s will for our environment, including doing what we can to make our resource management legislation work properly. ♦



1 Statistics New Zealand: <http://tinyurl.com/atqgk>

2 From the NZ Gas Association’s *Frequently Asked Questions*: <http://www.ganz.org.nz/index.cfm/FAQs>

3 Meridian Energy, *Project West Wind Proposal*: <http://tinyurl.com/9xqcm>

4 RMA section 5: <http://tinyurl.com/araga>

5 RMA section 9: <http://tinyurl.com/dn4s5>

6 Parliament made it abundantly clear that this was their intention. See, for example, *Hansard 51b* (July 1991), Resource Management Bill Third Reading, 3018–3020.

# Don't think twice

by Jonathan Marinus

I PASSED HER BY, then gave her a thought,  
Courage and bravery cut short.

I put one foot in front of the other,  
I took cover.

In the arms of another.

God bless me –  
And my strength of character.

I've come a long way since when,  
I put my lips to second-hand butt ends.

That was then.

Then I expended a thousand moments,  
Giving her a thought,  
A thousand moments,  
Then a thousand more,  
Till the moment was gone and so I saw.

But yes, that was then.

God bless me –  
And my strength of character.

I take it down and give her a thought,  
Something sweet and short,  
Like courage and bravery and all those noble things,  
And a hope that heaven brings.

Ah, not to fear. She'll pay me back another year,  
She'll pay me back and disappear,  
Not to fear, not to fear,  
She'll disappear.

"A man of conviction", the ladies say. ♦



# Of wells and fairies

by Aaron Stewart

AT THE BOTTOM of my garden is a well. I don't know if I've mentioned it before, but sometimes the fairies like to play in the well. I don't know why. Sometimes they tell me to have a go too, but I say no. I'm a wee bit scared of the well. It is deep, and dark at the bottom, and once you're in, it seems hard to get out.

Sometimes the light is at just the right angle, and you can see the water in the bottom. It looks very black down there. At times it is very sad, because you can see a fairy's body. They can't get back up if they go too deep, you see. So they fall and eventually drown. Sometimes I try and call to the fairies who are flying low to come back up before it is too late, but they hardly ever do.

I try not to drink from that well, because it is dark water with death in it. But sometimes, when the light is just right, and it shines deep into the well, it shines onto the wings of the fairies who have flown too low, and they sparkle and shine. They look beautiful. Then they call me, and ask if I want to fly with them down in the well. And sometimes I want to, because I want the beauty of their wings and the light to shine on me, too.

The fairies don't know they are doomed, and so I always hope that they can fly back out. Even then I often want to join them, because they aren't yet dead, and they look beautiful down there, and somehow it might work out okay. But it never does – unless one of the fairy princes comes and rescues them, sent by the fairy king. Sometimes they don't even cry out for help, even when they realise that they have flown too low. I think the air down there must be a wee bit bad, and it must do something to the fairies. They don't call out, and so the fairy princes hardly ever rescue them.

So, most of the time, I cry at the top of the well, as I watch their beauty fade and the shadowed depths block the light that sparkled on their wings. They seem to get tired, and slowly fly lower and lower, and the light can't reach them at all. But still, sometimes you can see them in the water, when they are dead and unmoving. I don't know why, but maybe it is to warn me not to fly with them into the well.

But some of my best friends are fairies. ♦

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT book of Leviticus, God forbids the Israelites from clipping the edges of their beards (Leviticus 19:28). Apart from orthodox Jews, most people living in New Zealand today would see this verse (as well as many of those surrounding it) as well and truly obsolete. I decided to put this mindset to the test by analysing the feasibility, and indeed the wisdom, of beard growth in twenty-first century New Zealand.

I'll begin with bearded women. Hirsutism – excessive growth of hair – among women is rare, and usually results in derision from most quarters. Is this a completely unfair prejudice on the part of the public, or is there something more to the issue?

The ridicule arises from the inherent masculinity of a beard. Just as moisture is the essence of wetness (thanks Derek Zoolander), so too beards are the essence of manhood. The presence of a beard is a signal, I believe, not only that its owner has reached manhood, but that he has in fact embraced it, and for this reason there is stigma attached to bearded women.

But, accompanying the masculinity, there are also safety concerns for beard-growing men. I asked Wainuiomata's hairiest cobbler, Dennis Bartlett, to describe his most dangerous beard-related experience. I expected an anecdote involving a close shave with rotating machinery; instead he told me about something far more chilling. Chilling because it strikes all too close to home for so many New Zealanders.

"Driving along the road one summer with the window down, my beard blew up into my eyes. I could only see out of one eye as I was driving along."

Of course, a century ago, when horse-drawn carts were the norm, this wouldn't have been an issue, but with the continual development of the automobile, the beard has become a very real threat to the safety of modern road users.

Beards also add an element of danger to the process of eating. An anonymous source told me of an evening spent at his would-be in-laws' home. Dessert was cream buns, and he unwittingly indulged in one. Suspicion of its crunchy texture soon turned to mortification when he discovered he had swallowed the tip of his beard. His future in-laws could only see the funny side of a beard coated in saliva and cream, but the accident is far from a joking matter.

And the safety issues don't stop there. A beard grower must



## Shaving grace

by Tim Sterne

also be aware that the effects of continually ignoring his five o'clock shadow are more far-reaching than simply his own face. For example, Bartlett's wife, Janette, claims the beard once "asphyxiated" her in the middle of the night.

Yet despite the risks, there are definitely positives for today's hirsute man. My father – barbigorous for more than 30 years – cites savings in time and money as the major advantage of growing a brush. I must admit, the statistics are compelling. A man who shaves for five minutes every

day for 50 years will spend a total of 38 working weeks in front of the mirror. Let's say he values his time at \$20 per hour. That's \$30,400 in lost earnings. Using Gillette Sensor blades and Gillette shaving foam he will spend around \$3500 over those 50 years keeping his face smooth – an opportunity cost of \$33,900.

Serious whiskers come at a cost too, however. Dandruff can be quite a problem, Bartlett claims, and recommends Wella's *Free & Lovely* shampoo. So let's do the maths again. At \$4.89 a bottle, *Free & Lovely* will cost the bearded gentleman around \$15 a year. Calculate total shampooing time (18.25 hours per year), and the comparison between opportunity costs is astounding. Clean shavenness: \$33,900. A decent beard: \$19,000. A total saving of \$14,900 over a lifetime.

But money isn't everything – there's also looks. Male grooming hasn't always been New Zealand's strong point. Is the beard to blame? Undoubtedly the most uncomfortable aspect of my research, I decided to check out some fan sites for arguably the world's sexiest man, Brad Pitt, to see how he makes use of facial hair. In more than half the pictures he had at least two days' growth and around 25% of the photos were of a bearded Brad. Proof, if ever I saw it, that beards can be beautiful.

Growing a beard is not for the faint-hearted. There's no doubt it can be a dangerous experience – at times life-threatening. But the rewards more than compensate. Aside from the financial and aesthetic advantages, a beard is a signal to the world that its owner is a man. Young men of Aotearoa should be encouraged to foster this hairiness and scream to the world, "We are real men!"

But this exhortation does come with a warning. Bartlett gives this advice to the aspiring beard grower: "If you're gonna grow a beard, grow a decent one." ♦

# BlobWatch

by Jonathan Marinus

Life is short,  
watch decent DVDs



*Russian Ark* (2002)  
PG, 96 minutes  
Directed by Aleksandr Sokurov  
Starring Sergei Dreiden, Mariya Kuznetsova, Leonid Mozgovoy



*The Deer Hunter* (1978)  
R18, 183 minutes  
Directed by Michael Cimino  
Starring Robert de Niro, John Savage, Christopher Walken

NOW LET'S GET one thing straight. I'm a sucker for sub-titled flicks. The foreign eye frequently spies things about this life and world that film-makers steeped in the Anglo-Saxon tradition pass over. But this film left me and my couchmate stumped.

Sure, *Russian Ark* was filmed in one continuous, world-record, take. Sure, it's something like a lavish dream. But a 96-minute, essentially drama-less tour through a labyrinth of galleries and ballrooms is not my idea of a compelling evening on the cushions.

Nonetheless, Sokurov's work is, on one level, intriguing. His cameras track an unseen narrator who, with a French diplomat, finds himself in 18th century Russia in the Hermitage, St Petersburg's renowned art museum. What follows is an other-worldly tour of Russian history and the personalities who have enlivened it. The narrator and his French companion are, of course, very curious about all they see and hear, and proceed to poke about the galleries and ballrooms of this grand edifice soaking up their peculiar circumstance.

Really, one could argue that *Russian Ark* is little more than a flesh-and-blood Madame Tussaud's.

Don't get me wrong, though, it's not a bad film; it's just a case of buyer beware. By all means, hire it if you want the museum experience in the comfort of your own home. If you don't, leave it on the shelf. ♦

THESE DAYS, VIETNAM is a tourist hotspot. Forty-odd years ago, it wasn't. I won't even bother fossicking about for words to describe what it was. If you want an idea, watch *The Deer Hunter*.

Having said that, the film is not really about the Vietnam War. It's too profound to be distracted by elaboration of American foreign policy of the time. The film is simply about ordinary blokes, Russian-American steelworkers, fulfilling their patriotic duty and the awful cost they incur doing so. It is a story told without prejudice or pride.

De Niro, Savage and Walken play Michael, Steven and Nick – three mates who sweat their days away at the local steel mill. After hours, they're joy-riding about the sleepy streets of their dormitory town in their massive white Cadillac. They dance, they drink, they carouse. And they hunt deer.

Cimino spends good time tracking them as they prepare for and then execute the hunt. And for good reason. The deer hunt is a war. But it's a war utterly unlike the war they're about to chopper into. The first war brings them together. The next will wrench them apart and send their souls hurtling, helter-skelter, into mindscapes of unspeakable anguish.

In what seems like a flash, the hunters become the hunted. Left isolated on the battlefield, the three of them wind up in enemy custody. There, their Vietnamese captors force them to play Russian roulette – for kicks. Just as they took aim at their antlered prey back home, they now direct steel barrels towards their own temples.

It is here, in their bamboo prison, that they melt down. And as they personally disintegrate, so too does their previously iron-clad bond of mateship. Though this bond does not melt entirely, it never again resumes the shape it formerly held. The remainder of the film is an intimate survey of the wreckage left by their tour of duty.

*The Deer Hunter* takes a strong stomach. Nothing about the film is pretty. It is emotionally brutal. Yet none of it seems false or pretentious. It is simply a compelling tale of devastation wrought. Devastation made worse by the victims' lack of spiritual resources and faith in God. ♦

# Sugar and spice and all things nice

by  
Daniel  
Flinn



THERE IS A PARTICULAR kind of girl who is beautiful and selfish and heartless. She does not care about others because the world has never required her to. This is because, in secular currency, beauty has a much higher value than kindness and gentleness. If a plain girl is kind, her kindness will be overlooked on account of her plainness. If a beautiful girl is cruel, her cruelty will be overlooked on account of her beauty. Beauty can buy a girl fame, wealth and popularity, even though she possesses a plenitude of character flaws and vices.

Billy Joel speaks of this girl in one of his most powerful love songs, *She's Always a Woman*. The song begins with an observation that her powers are powers of destruction.<sup>1</sup> Even the merest glance can be used to terrible effect (“She can kill with a smile, she can wound with her eyes”).<sup>2</sup> Her conscience is not bothered by deception (“She can ruin your faith with her casual lies”), nor has she any regard for the truth (“She can ask for the truth but she’ll never believe you”). Her appearance is a mask (“She only reveals what she wants you to see, she hides like a child”) and her offers of paradise (“She’ll promise you more than the garden of Eden”)<sup>3</sup> are illusory (“the most she will do is throw shadows at you”). She is selfish (“Oh she takes care of herself”), capricious (“She just changes her mind”), inexorable (“Oh and she never gives

out and she never gives in”), and vindictive (“She’ll carelessly cut you and laugh while you’re bleeding”). She will not be obligated to anyone (“She’ll take what you give her as long as it’s free, yeah she steals like a thief”), nor does she need anyone (“She can take you or leave you”), and she always acts in her own interest (“She does as she pleases”).

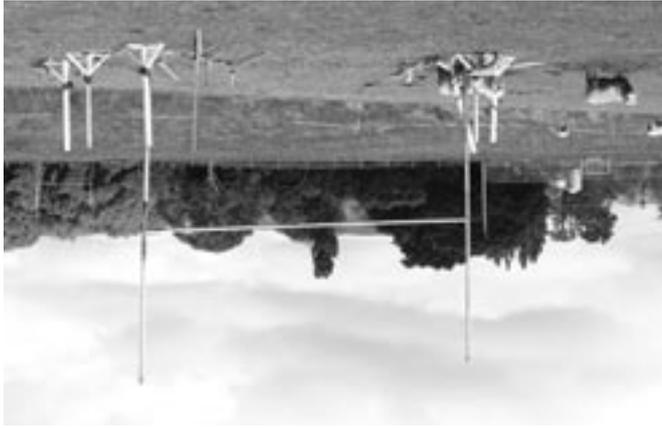
So far the song seems to be a searing indictment on women of this description. However, the singer’s reaction to the girl in question is strangely ambivalent (“She’ll bring out the best and the worst you can be”). At times she seems to display benevolence (“She’s frequently kind and she’s suddenly cruel”),<sup>4</sup> and the songwriter seemingly does not hold her culpable (“Blame it all on yourself”).<sup>5</sup>

The lyrics hint that the singer is deluded about the girl’s true nature. Billy Joel’s refrain effectively communicates that her conduct does not matter, because “she’s always a woman to me”.<sup>6</sup> However, it is less clear whether her femininity sufficiently justifies her actions. One can’t help but wonder if the singer’s description of this girl as “a woman” is more of a subtle criticism than an excuse.

Both genders can learn a lesson from this song: first, beauty does not entitle girls to be so nasty;<sup>7</sup> second, beauty shouldn’t trick guys into thinking that girls this nasty are not as nasty as they really are.<sup>8</sup> ♦



- 1 Prov 5:5 “Her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of Sheol.”
- 2 Prov 6:25 “Do not desire her beauty in your heart, nor let her catch you with her eyelids.”
- 3 Prov 5:3 “For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and smoother than oil is her speech”.
- 4 Prov 5:6 “Her ways are unstable, she does not know it.”
- 5 Prov 30:20 “This is the way of an adulterous woman: she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, ‘I have done nothing wrong.’”
- 6 Prov 6:27 “Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?”
- 7 Of course, not all girls *are* this nasty. The article addresses a stereotype, nothing more.
- 8 Prov 31:30 “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.”



# Rugby vs golf<sup>1</sup>

by Ben Hoyt

IN THESE GLOOMY DAYS I'm sure to need a disclaimer, so here it is even before I'm asked. Those who know me will know that I write with my tongue in my cheek. Partly serious, mostly not. And certainly not politically correct. Those who don't know me could misread me, but at least they have been warned.

I'll state my theory up-front: *rugby is better than golf*. Not only cooler and more fun, but actually better. I could even be bold and say it's more Christ-like. In an age when right and wrong mean nothing, in an age which knows of "gentle Jesus, meek and mild", this is going to be hard to prove. But hard is easier than impossible, and I may just be the right man for the job – I can speak objectively because I don't play either rugby or golf. And now, let the game begin.

Our lives are not to be aimless wanderings around a course, eighteen holes or no; they should be directed and meaningful. In golf, you hit the ball this way and that, till finally you end up, unbelievably, right where you started. In sensible sports you start at one end of the field and work your way to the other. So in rugby you head for a goal that looks like an 'H', and your enemy aims for the other 'H'. Heaven and Hell, perhaps? Rugby emulates the real world; golf does not.

At root, golf is self-centred and individualistic. It's all about me; it's about number one getting a hole in one. Unlike rugby, there can be no unity among the brethren, because there is only one player. Today we hear a lot about "being a team player", and despite this cliché being abused by politicians, it is true. The Scriptures say that we are "not one member but many", and that we must use our different abilities – together.

One of rugby's virtues is that it is manly, and sometimes to be manly means to fight. Take the "grandmother case": your

grandmother is about to be cruelly robbed and murdered by a crook. If you see this and merely watch, you are no man but are worse than useless. Christ calls us to be peacemakers, but not pacifists. And certainly not cowards. Now in rugby, our grandmother's life is not at stake, but what better way to discipline ourselves for "the good fight of faith" than to train? Golf might train us for some things, but it doesn't train us to defend.

Is Jesus really the gentle, mild, and most of all, handsome man we all know and love? He is certainly gentle to those who seek His help, but He is quite un-gentle to Pharisees and hypocrites. As for those who ripped off others in His temple, He stands up for what is right by pulling out a whip. Rugby teaches us to fight for what is good, for the goal.

Neither did Jesus say "stop fighting your enemy"; but He did say "love your enemy". In rugby this means that if your opponent falls over, you might give him a hand and help him up, for we can't just forget chivalry in a battle. Golf, on the other hand, teaches us nothing: there is nothing worth fighting for, let alone anyone to fight. It goes without saying that the war will be over when you run from the battle and onto a deserted golf course.

St Paul sheds more light on the subject: he speaks about "running the race", not walking it. In other words, he's talking about rugby, not golf. He also uses the example of a boxer who doesn't just use his fists to beat the air. Paul, it seems, would have made a better Lomu than a Woods.

Finally, there are the superficial (or perhaps strangely deep?) resemblances. Jesus had twelve disciples, giving thirteen in total – the number of players on a league team. If you include Matthias and Paul, who came later, you have fifteen: the *very* first XV, if you like. And rugby involves conversions: after you have scored a try, you have a conversion, much like becoming a Christian. The scrum at first glance appears similar to the Christian ceremony of "the laying on of hands". Then, at certain points in a match, one man is lifted up above the rest, reminding us of the Psalmist saying that his "head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me". After the match, there is the ceremony of anointing the head with lager, and a kind of baptism administered by sprinkling, under a shower.

The parallels are endless, so I will conclude with a little more from St Paul, this time advice about being forwards (not backs) in all of life: "Press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Among other things, he's telling us to throw away our clubs, put our caddy out of a job, and start running for the try-line. ♦

<sup>1</sup> After all, satire is a little upside-down. By the way, if you write to us with a satire piece that takes the opposite point of view, we'll publish it as *Golf vs rugby* and give you one issue free!

# Quaint quotes and a crossword

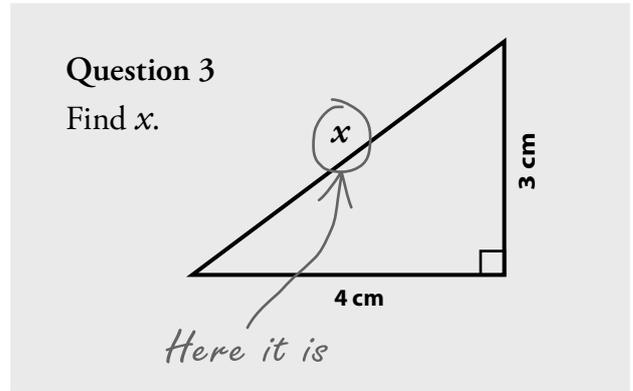
selected by Andrea Munroe

A hat should be taken off when you greet a lady and left off for the rest of your life. Nothing looks more stupid than a hat.

*P J O'Rourke*

He felt that his whole life was some kind of dream, and he sometimes wondered whose it was and whether they were enjoying it.

*Douglas Adams, The Hitchhiker's Guide*



Teach a child to be polite and courteous in the home and, when he grows up, he will never be able to edge his car onto a motorway.

*Unknown*

3b

1 M

7b

4a

3a

9b

6a

10b

4b

8

6a

7a

6b

9a

10a

N A M E T H E M O V I E

- 1 Put that thing back where it came from, or so help me ... !
- 2 Tell me that was your stomach.
- 3a,b I think we've all arrived at a very special place. Spiritually ... ecumenically ... grammatically...
- 4a,b If I were very beautiful, and had nut-brown hair, would you keep me?
- 5 You were born to privilege and with that comes specific obligations.
- 6a,b ... and thank you so much for bringing up such a painful subject. While you're at it, why not give me a nice paper cut and pour lemon juice on it.
- 7a,b The elegant European woman didn't stay for tea. But the promise of tomorrow hung in the air.
- 8 That is the sound of inevitability.
- 9a,b When I give the word, your little town thingie will be bye-bye. Bye-bye!
- 10a,b I need a holiday. A very long holiday. And I don't expect I shall return.



# Recumbent glory

*with the Cressys*

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME you were cycling and got pulled over for speeding? Was it in a 100 km/h zone?

Welcome to the world of *recumbent human-powered vehicles*. Yep, that’s the official mouthful. Thankfully, Derek and Othniel Cressy are more casual about it; they usually just call them “lie-down bikes”.

It all started earlier this year when the two of them woke up one morning and decided they were seriously interested in speed. High speed. Neither of them (in theory, at least) are the boy-racer type. This was going to be different. Why not human powered? And – in line with our “home” theme – why not make the bikes themselves, in their garage?

The inspiration came first from a book on Kiwi ingenuity, and then by reading about the “Wind Cheetah”, a recumbent trike made by the University of Canterbury’s mechanical engineers. The basic idea is to get as low as possible to minimise air resistance. Air friction is the cyclist’s main barrier to high speed. If your frontal area is half the size, you should be able to go almost twice as fast.

That’s just about right, too. Othniel’s machine is a low, slender two-wheeler

with a very small frontal area. Where you’d cycle at 25 km/h, he’d be doing 40. Most people would max out at 40 km/h, but by then he’d be going 60 (and that’s on the flat).

Derek’s “bike” is actually a three-wheeler, so it’s slightly slower, but also more stable and easier to ride. What’s more, Derek plans to cover it with a carbon-fibre fairing – a thin, streamlined shell to reduce drag even further (as well as making a good umbrella). While Derek’s recumbent is awaiting completion, Othniel already uses his almost daily.

Apart from speed, what’s their motivation? They joke about making millions: especially with the way petrol prices are going, couldn’t they start selling these things? But mainly what drives them is plain curiosity to see how far they can push their creative engineering.

They think it’ll be a while before one of them breaks Sam Whittingham’s incredible 130 km/h record. In the meantime, if you’re driving around Masterton and see a speeding flash, it’s probably just Othniel in all his recumbent glory. ♦

	Derek’s	Othniel’s
<b>Weight</b>	18 kg	16 kg
<b>Length</b>	1.7 m	1.8 m
<b>Gear ratio</b>	7.5:1	8.3:1
<b>Steering</b>	tilt	standard
<b>Brakes</b>	disc	caliper
<b>Top speed</b>	50 km/h	60 km/h

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These are dark times, and we didn't have quite enough subscribers to pay for this last bit of ink. So please have a good hard think about subscribing, or if you already have, perhaps you could rope in a friend or two. Gift subscriptions are always a nice idea – just \$20 to give someone high-quality dead tree matter for a year. For more info about how you can help, just contact the editor. ♦

In humility is the greatest freedom.

As long as you have to defend the imaginary self that you think is important, you lose your peace of heart.

As soon as you compare that shadow with the shadow of other people, you lose all joy, because you have begun to trade in unrealities, and there is no joy in things that do not exist. †

*Thomas Merton*



*by Peter van Leeuwen*