

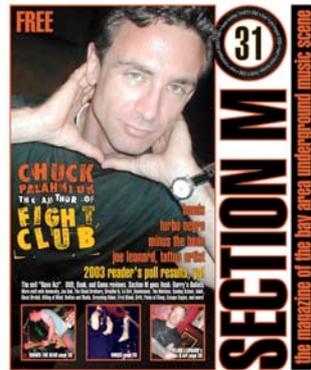
## FEBRUARY 06 - CONTENTS

### FOCUS: SPECIAL INTERVIEW

---

**Fanzines and alternative culture in the USA:  
an interview with Michael Houghton.**

*By Vincent MONDIOT*



### POLITICS & SOCIETY

---

**Do all roads really lead to Rome?** *By Christophe JAMOT*

The next British Catholic Cardinal might be not only a convert but also a married man.

**Will openly gay priests ever be able to spread the Gospel south of Dover ?**

*By Anne-Laure COZANNET*

The Anglican Church is divided on the question of ordaining openly homosexual clerics.

**The Canadian eldorado** *By Samir BENKHALFOUNE*

Immigrants flock to a country where economic growth and social stability ensure that they are more than welcome.

**News briefs on Arizona survival maps for wetbacks, UK-born Kiwis, ethical espionage and religious tolerance in British nurseries.** *By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE*

### ARTS & BOOKS

---

**No sanction to bigotry, no assistance to persecution: 350 Years of Jewish Life in the USA.**

*By Caroline ADAM*

Two major exhibitions on Jewish history are being shown on the East and West coasts. Both tell the stories of adults, children, immigrants and victims...

**News briefs on Hollywood message films, South Africa's black Jesus and Michael Jackson's abaya.** *By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE*

### BUSINESS & MEDIA

---

**How much is too much for a burger?** *By Jérôme VASSILIEFF*

"High-class fast food" is the new hype in the UK. The customer's hunger for tasty food happily satisfies the businessman's hunger for profit margins.

**Corporate vandals not welcome !** *By Radan JOVANOVIC*

Sony has hired graffiti artists for a major stealth advertisement campaign throughout America. Philadelphia is the first big city to react.

**Advertising against advertisements.** *By Charlotte MARCHALANT*

Christmas, Winter Sales, Valentine's Day, Spring Sales, Summer Specials... the buying season lasts all year long.

**News briefs on barbarism against Barbies, the freebie cure for an ailing press and diet drinks for Australian men.** *By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE***SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

---

**Modern alchemy: MMORPGs and how to turn virtual stones into real money.**

*By Fatima MEZARI*

Modern technology has finally helped unravel the secret formula that alchemists have been looking for: MMORPGs, i.e. "massively multiplayer online role-playing games".

**The silent epidemic: diabetes in the US.** *By Sugandhi NADARADJANE*

Almost 21 million Americans are believed to be diabetic; another 41 million are estimated to be pre-diabetic. Yet the dangers of this epidemic are little known outside public health circles.

**News briefs on mobile music and hearing loss, tutorials for technophobes, and the virtues of black tea.** *By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE***ENVIRONMENT & TRAVEL**

---

**Are badgers the only ones to blame for bovine TB?** *By Bérangère MAILLET*

Cattle farmers in England have to face yet another epidemic : bovine tuberculosis (TB). Badgers are blamed for spreading the disease; a massive cull is being discussed

**News briefs on the cost of refusing to go green in Australia, biopiracy in Pakistan, winter holidays in Newfoundland for men & in Alaska for women.**

*By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE*

**SPORTS**

---

**To be, or not to be in the Olympic Games? Darts is the question.**

*By Sébastien DEMOUGEOT*

If bridge was the rising star of the Salt Lake City Winter Games in 2002, darts is campaigning hard to be invited in Beijing in 2008 or in London in 2012.

**The fall of the house of Williams.** *By Mohammed Lamine BOUZERIDA*

As Serena and Venus drop out of the top 30, the Australian Open confirms the demise of the Williams dynasty.

**News briefs on Armstrong's busy retirement, US college football bowl bonanza and boxing black-out on Australian TV.** *By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE*



So, by that definition, *Section M* definitely wasn't a zine. We started off with our first issue by printing 10,000 copies on newsprint through a professional print house. By the end we were printing 20,000 issues, and had a paid ad staff, and a paid distribution manager. We also had an editing staff that worked diligently, though not always successfully, to fix all the typos and work with our writers to fully develop their writing (far more than in the real world of newspapers and magazines, I have found since then). We tried to keep the Q&A interviews to a minimum, and really forced our writers to write. And we had far higher standards for photography, layout, and just general quality than the majority of zines.

But then we also had a far more open expression than a real magazine. Because we were operating somewhat in a void with not much to compare ourselves to, we stumbled onto our own format. I am not saying no one had done it before. We had a lot in common with magazines like *Punk* and *Creem* – magazines that pushed the limits of what a magazine was supposed to do, and yet still did it within a commercial format. I think they also stumbled onto it too. Weird, innovative things often happen almost by accident with people who don't really know what you are and are not supposed to do.

### **Can you tell us about the music scene in Sonoma County and the beginnings of *Section M*?**

Sonoma County has always had a strong music scene, at least since the 1960s. This is one of the places the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane played all the besides San Francisco, and a lot of bands stop off here on their national tours because it's a whole other market really close to San Francisco. Though we don't always get credit for it, Greenday grew up here as much as they grew up in Berkeley, and so did Primus. Tom Waits lives here, and so does the singer from Metallica, as well as about a billion other celebrities, musical and not.

Our little scene has always had its own kind of internal support system and cross-pollination, like all strong little scenes do. There were a lot of exciting, innovative bands around our area (still are). However the problem has always been getting local people to know about them, and recognize that there were local bands they could see for a few dollars, from a couple feet away, who were often just as good or better than major label bands, and that that experience was much more exciting than seeing some band playing a stadium, watching from half a mile away as they're projected onto a giant monitor.

I have been involved in the Sonoma County music scene for pretty much my entire teen and adult life. I had been putting out a weekly list of shows for the Sonoma County area called *Northbay Underground* (inspired by *The List* which is still done by Steve Koepke in the East Bay), as well as helping bands get their songs up online in Real Audio format – the cutting edge technology at that point. I had made a lot of friends in the music scene, and amazingly, had helped increase the attendance at local shows quite a bit.

In 1998, I graduated from college with an art degree, and was for the first time in my life, doing alright financially. At the time, after a lot of late night conversations with friends about how what our scene needed was a magazine, eventually a group congealed and we decided to do *Section M*. It almost happened by accident: I was supposed to be just helping the group get it started, someone else was going to fund it, and I was going to maybe even walk away once I had helped the initial phase. It didn't really work that way.

### **Why did you put this adventure to an end?**

The easy answer is burn-out. I was the only person who worked on every single issue through the life of the magazine – everyone else burned out far, far faster. No one else could put in the kind of time, passion, know-how, and unfortunately money, that I had put in over

the years. I also wound up having to declare bankruptcy. After five years, my health and sanity had just been destroyed by literally 16 to 20 hour days of work and four hours of sleep a night when we were in production. Through all this, I somehow managed to hold down a day job, as a self-employed architectural draftsman, and had been paying a great deal of the bills out of my own pocket or with credit cards, which is the only way the magazine was able to exist at all. I figured it was time to let someone else have a turn.

Even in the world of “real” magazines, editors tend to burn out after a couple of years, and someone else has to take over. Unfortunately, there was no one to take over, so I just had to let it go.

### **Section M was free. How did you manage to keep it alive?**

\*I\* was kind of the financial resource of *Section M* which seems foolish in retrospect.

Making it free was our number one mistake. Or at least KEEPING it free, and never changing over to selling it. We had a very strong readership. Even people who claimed to hate us kept reading it and reacting to it, and that was great. If we had sold the magazine, I think we would maybe have survived. Instead, we were trying to make all our money off of advertising, which is a slippery slope. Most labels either want you to be a national magazine, or they want you to come out monthly, which we couldn't afford to do because we all had day jobs, or they want the ads to be absurdly cheap, which most zines can do because they are doing smaller runs than we did. Labels also often want something in return: namely reviewing their CDs or writing about their bands, which might or might not compromise your integrity. Every time we increased our ad sales, we had to spend more money on things like new ad salesmen to do it, or increasing distribution, so we kept losing money, no matter how big we got. Every time someone tells me they want to start a magazine, I advise them not to give it away for free but to sell it. That way your loyalty is to your readers 100%. If you don't need the advertisers to break even, you have a lot more freedom, or at least a lot less headache trying to assert your freedom.

### **How would you describe Section M's readership ?**

We defined it as 14 to 34, young and hip, and by the end we had readers from Sacramento down to San Jose as most of the major cities in the top half of California stocked *Section Ms*. But we wound up with quite an audience outside of our original target as bands would grab stacks when they toured through. People well above and under the supposed target age also read it. *Section M* was read by people who wanted to know about the San Francisco Bay Area scene with a sprinkling of national bands, or who just wanted to read intelligent, well written, and entertaining articles. We always tried to make the magazine stand on its own as a separate entity – entertaining all by itself, even if you didn't know the bands in it.

### **Do you think that the internet is threatening the very existence of the “zine scene”?**

The internet is actually a fairly direct evolution out of the zine scene. The whole idea of blogging – anyone and everyone being able to write about their own life or observations – really comes fairly directly from the zine scene. I don't think the personalization of the internet would have happened without the precedent of the zine scene.

To worry that the zine scene is threatened by the internet is assuming a far more romantic idea of the zine scene's actual size than actually existed. Most of the zines that were made prior to the internet were getting read by like 400 people tops, with notable exceptions like *Cometbus* and *Maximum RockNRoll*. Most people's *Myspace Blogs* get read far more than most zines ever did.

The zine scene, though it's really important, has never been popular with a gigantic percentage of the populace, and it's always been fairly local and/or specialized. If anything, the internet has made it easier for people to find other people who do zines and trade them, and way easier for people to order their zines from distributors or read their zines online instead. Plus, the whole scene of independent distributors really arose in the 1990's at the same time as the rise of the truly independent labels, and has been helped immensely by the internet coming along at the same time. So it is possible that without the internet, the independent distributors wouldn't have arisen and therefore we wouldn't have the more successful fanzines that we have now, like *Maximum RockNRoll*. The zine scene is just as strong or stronger than it is ever been, and it is way stronger if you count the blog scene, and all the personal websites and webzines as part of it.

**Section M was quite political and polemical at times. As an editor, how did you deal with freedom of speech and your writers' opinions? Did the fact that Section M was not a "real" magazine make a difference ?**

Absolutely. I mean really, literally and figuratively the buck stopped with me, which was an insane amount of freedom, as long as I was willing to foot the bill myself. That's part of what's so great about the internet. For the price of a computer and an internet connection, you can get your voice out there and never worry about money getting in the way.

I gave my writers as close to full freedom as I was comfortable with at any given time, which got to be greater as the magazine was around longer. Early on, there were times when I was worried about offending advertisers whose money we desperately needed (which is why, again, selling your magazine is better – readers love it when you offend people). I also had to deal with some of our distribution locations freaking out because of swearing in the magazine when we first started. After a while, though, I realized how little each tiny battle mattered in the big picture.

One of the big things I always strove for too, was making sure that we were a hub of discourse. If someone was really offended about something that we wrote, I always encouraged them to write a rebuttal, because even if people got angry, I figured that kind of open communication was best. Even though that wound up getting me, personally, into trouble with some people who blamed me for things that were written.

We were, sadly, part of the very small minority who were criticizing the Bush administration right after 9/11. And probably some people who held pro-Bush ideas would accuse us of not offering truly free speech by not covering their side, but when I offered to let any of them write an article for us, they never accepted. I just figured, if *Section M* was allowed to be controversial when needed, it just made it more exciting to read. For better or worse, *Section M* was my vision. I got to publish whatever I wanted, which looking back was quite a privilege and a responsibility.

**Section M doesn't exist anymore. Which zines would you recommend ?**

Every once in a while a magazine like ours arises in a very local scene and manages to thrive. Before us, there was *BAM* magazine for San Francisco, which was amazing in its time, but went under. *Alive & Kicking* out of Sacramento, the magazine that inspired us to start our own, and who we mercilessly ripped off format-wise when we started, is still around. I am really fond of *Devil in the Woods*, which I think is still coming out of Modesto, and pretty fond of *AMP*, which started locally in San Francisco and is now a national magazine. There's *The Stranger* out of Seattle that has consistently good writing, though not just about music.

February 2006

*Alternative Press* is decent, but not the local kind of thing we were doing. *Skratch* magazine, out of San Diego, as well as a whole host of others, like *Punk Planet*, *Maximum RocknRoll* and *Razorcake*, are far more like the punk, mostly Q&A zines of yore, but are a good place to find music if punk is your thing. There is a fantastic online resource for great, and probably lots of not-so-great print zines at Stickfigure Distribution and Mailorder (<http://stickfig.securesites.net>). In the Bay Area, several magazines have come and gone since we went under. *East Bay Express* and *The Guardian*, both weeklies, have done a pretty good job of covering the local music scene, though that's not their only focus. As far as Bay Area music magazines, *The Wave* came in around the time we were heading out to take over the Bay Area scene, but they were a bigger, corporate paper, though still pretty good writing. There was *Zero* out of the South Bay. I am not sure if they still exist, but their content was pretty terrible.

Zines I've been fond of are *Cometbus*, and *Burn Collector*. There are some great online zines too. My favorites are *Delusions of Adequacy* and *Pitchfork* ([www.adequacy.net](http://www.adequacy.net) ; [www.pitchforkmedia.com](http://www.pitchforkmedia.com)). Now you can just go to a search engine and type in your favorite bands' names, and below their official site, there will probably be about 1,000 reviews at different little e-zines.

But for the true novice, the best place to find out what you can get is probably to ask the intimidating hip guy who works at your local hole-in-the-wall record store. He probably knows what zines you should be reading.

*Section M's* back issues are available at [www.sectionm.com](http://www.sectionm.com).

## POLITICS & SOCIETY

### [Do all roads really lead to Rome?](#)

By Christophe JAMOT

**The next British Catholic Cardinal might be not only a convert but also a married man.**



While the Church of England is currently debating the ordination of women bishops, one must remember that no less than 430 traditionalist priests left the Anglican Church in the decade following the decision to ordain women priests in 1994. Graham Leonard was one of them. At the time he was an Anglican bishop. He had been a member of the Church of England for more than thirty years when he decided to convert to Rome in 1994. Being an influential figure, he led many other priests out of the Anglican fold.

Now rumour has it that Monsignor Leonard (which is the honorific title bestowed upon him by Pope John Paul II in 2000) might be chosen by Pope Benedict XVI to receive the red hat -- in other words, to become a cardinal. The fact that a convert may become a cardinal is already quite startling, but when the convert happens to be a married man, the picture is considerably clouded. Roman Catholic priests, let alone bishops and cardinals, are never married, due to vows of celibacy.

The last time a convert was granted the title of Roman Catholic Cardinal was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Cardinal Henry Edward Manning had been married but was a widower when he was called to Rome in 1875. Since Mgr. Leonard's wife is still alive, it might well mean that he is unlikely to become Cardinal for the time being. However it seems the Vatican winds are strongly blowing in Graham Leonard's favour, as his candidacy is backed up by a fair number of influential people in England as well as in the Vatican.

A decade ago some members of the Catholic Church had found it very difficult to accept that converted married priests should sit in their pews and read Mass. Some are still most unhappy about it today, but things might go from bad to worse if Mgr. Leonard actually receives the red biretta. They might argue that other priests in Britain deserve this distinction as much as Mgr. Leonard does.

Even if Mgr. Leonard eventually becomes Cardinal in recognition of his good deeds in the Catholic Church, many might misinterpret the Pope's choice. If he becomes Cardinal while he is still married, onlookers might think that Benedict XVI wants to give a less conservative image of the Catholic Church. It might also be a timely advertisement to recruit more of the Anglican clerics who disagree with their own Church.

Sources: "Bishop who converted to Rome is tipped for top honour," *The Times* 2 January 2006.  
"Clerics open long path to female Archbishop of Canterbury," *The Guardian* 17 January 2006.  
"Marital status may scupper move," *The Times* 2 January 2006.

## POLITICS & SOCIETY

### [Will openly gay priests ever be able to spread the Gospel south of Dover ?](#)

By Anne-Laure COZANNET

#### **The Anglican Church is divided on the question of ordaining openly homosexual clerics.**

At the moment, the ordination of openly gay individuals is a subject of great debate in the Church of England. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury and head of the worldwide Anglican Communion, triggered off a debate with Church conservatives by saying he was in favour of the ordination of homosexuals, as well as the appointment of women as bishops. He also said he approved of the celebration of same-sex marriages. This did not go down well with Church conservatives, who contend homosexuals should repent before being accepted in the Church. When Rowan Williams announced he was going to meet Gene Robinson, an openly gay US Anglican bishop, the conservative pot boiled over.

However things are changing fast in the Northern churches of the Anglican Communion. Gene Robinson was elected bishop by the Episcopalian Church of the United States in 2003. At the same time the first gay marriage was sanctioned by Canadian Anglicans. Church conservatives in the UK were not pleased to say the least, but the Global South groups strongly voiced their disapproval. The main Anglican countries of the Global South are Uganda and Nigeria in Africa, the Philippines in East Asia and several countries in Latin America. The Anglican Communion is very different from the Roman Catholic Church in that it is extremely decentralized. Canterbury is its heart and the seat of the Archbishop, but all Anglican churches worldwide are fully independent and are free to appoint whom they wish as clerics.

In Nigeria, the biggest Anglican country in Africa, the whole issue of openly gay clergy is extremely sensitive. In the wake of the recent debates in the UK, Peter J. Akinola, head of the Nigerian Anglican Church, removed all references to communion with the Church of England from its constitution. As far as he is concerned, homosexuality is a "Western thing", and is above all an "evil thing". This opinion seems to be widely shared in the Global South, which has created a deep rift within the Anglican Communion.

This is a good example of how different cultures experience Western or imported religions, and how incompatible worldviews can provide religious leaders with certain challenges. In the Christian part of Nigeria, gays have no legal rights and often face harassment and arrests. Persons convicted of "homosexual acts" can be condemned to up to fourteen years of jail. Most of the time the only way they can then escape this fate is by bribing their jailers thereby obtaining an early release. However they are still faring better than a lot of their compatriots. The Northern provinces of Nigeria are Muslim and apply the *sharia* (Islamic law), which means convicted gays are sentenced to death.

Sources: "Gay Nigerians Push to Be Recognized by Anglican Church," *The New York Times* 24 December 2005.

"Anglican Traditionalists Warn Church on Gay Rights," *The Guardian* 1 November 2005.

"Unholy Orders," *The Economist* 10 July 2003.

"Give Prayer a chance to Heal Church Rifts, Says Williams," *The Guardian* 17 November 2005.

"Williams May Meet Gay US Bishop During London Trip," *The Guardian* 20 October 2005.

## POLITICS & SOCIETY

### [News briefs on Arizona survival maps for wetbacks, UK-born Kiwis, ethical espionage and religious tolerance in British nurseries.](#)

By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE

#### [US survival maps for wetbacks](#)

The Arizona-based rights group Humane Borders designed survival maps showing highways, rescue beacons and water tanks in the desert that spreads across the US-Mexico border. 70,000 of these maps will be distributed in Mexico by the National Human Rights Commission. It is estimated that 500 Mexicans died trying to cross the border illegally in 2005.

Source: « Mexico hands out US survival maps, » *The Australian* 26 January 2006.

#### [More and more UK born Kiwis](#)

Recent statistical reports shows that the number of citizens of the United Kingdom being granted New Zealand residency has more than doubled over the past three years, reaching 31% of the total number of people getting residency. The number of new Kiwis coming in from China and India is declining.

Source: « Immigrants increasingly from UK, » *The New Zealand Herald* 3 January 2006.

#### [Ethical Espionage](#)

Ethical espionage is an oxymoron to many, but amidst the current debate over interrogation techniques, torture and partisan use of classified information, it can be seen as an « emerging field ». On January 27-28, a gathering of 200 academic experts and intelligence officers discussed these twisted issues in a series of panels organised by the Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics (JSCOPE) in Virginia.

Sources: Conference site: <http://eli.sdsu.edu/ethint>; « An Exotic Tool for Espionage: Moral Compass, » *The New York Times* 28 January 2006.

#### [Developing religious tolerance in British nurseries](#)

532 anti-Semitic incidents were reported in Britain last year - the highest number since records were first kept in 1984. The National Union of Teachers said to the all-party Parliamentary inquiry, which was set up in November 2005, that "the optimum stage in which to communicate tolerant attitudes" is when children are three- to five-year-olds and attend nurseries or playgroups.

Source: "Children 'should learn religious tolerance in nursery schools'," *The Independent* 26 December 2005.

## ARTS & BOOKS

### [No sanction to bigotry, no assistance to persecution: 350 Years of Jewish Life in the USA](#)

By Caroline ADAM

**Two major exhibitions on Jewish history are being shown on the East and West coasts. Both tell the stories of adults, children, immigrants and victims...**

The exhibition "From Haven to Home : 350 Years of Jewish Life in America," was first shown at the Library of Congress in 2004 as a commemoration of the first Jews who left Brazil and arrived in New Amsterdam in 1654 and who settled permanently in America. The exhibition was then displayed in Cincinnati and New York City. It has now stopped over at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles, which is one of the most prominent in Jewish cultural centres on the West coast.

The exhibition is a tribute to the Jewish immigrants who fled their native countries hoping to build a new home for themselves in the United States. It features more than 200 treasures of American Judaica, coming from the Library of Congress. The exhibition includes films, pamphlets, sound recordings and also letters from Presidents, such as George Washington declaring to the Newport Hebrew Congregation in 1790 that America "to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance." \*

The curators did not aim at creating a "hall of fame" for Jews, but rather to illustrate the United States' commitment to religious freedom. The Jews who were persecuted in Europe and elsewhere came to America to enjoy this freedom and practise their religion. Michael Grunberger, head of the Library of Congress, says that the exhibition also aims at recognizing "the immigrants as being agents for their own acculturation and how they worked hard to become Americans." \*\*

A new culture and a new religion, namely American Judaism, were born as a result of this freedom and acculturation.

While the Skirball Centre exhibition goes until February 12<sup>th</sup>, another exhibition has just opened on the East coast at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. "Life in Shadows : Hidden Children and the Holocaust" focuses on the terrible fate of Jewish children during the Second World War. The items on display are quite mundane: a child's worn clothes, a photograph of an 8 year-old Jewish girl in a Catholic orphanage, but the stories behind the artefacts are always very poignant. \*\*\* The objects remain, but the stories still need to be told.

Sources: \* <http://www.skirball.com/>

\*\* "Breathing Free in America," *Los Angeles Times* 12 January 2006.

\*\*\* "Holocaust Children's Objects: Ordinary but Powerful," *The New York Times* 24 January 2006.

## ARTS & BOOKS

### [News briefs on Hollywood message films, South Africa's black Jesus and Michael Jackson's abaya.](#)

By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE

#### [Messages from Hollywood](#)

*Syriana*, *Good night and Good Luck*, *The Constant Gardener*, *Brokeback Mountain*, *Capote*, *Munich*, *Jarhead*... this year's list of nominees for Golden Globe awards mostly contained 'Big Idea' films, giving an indirect insight into US current cultural and political debates. *King Kong* was pretty much the only 2006 representative of the feel-good escapist factor in the American film business.

Sources: "In Movies, Big Issues, for Now," *The New York Times* 18 January 2006.

#### [South Africa's black Jesus](#)

*Son of Man*, directed by Mark Dornford-May, premiered on January 22 at the Sundance film festival. It offers a new interpretation of the Bible switching the story from first-century Palestine to 21st-century Africa. Shot in rural Eastern Cape and Khayelitsha, the film depicts Jesus Christ as a political activist fighting oppression under a regime not unlike Zimbabwe's.

Sources: « SA 'black Jesus' film to premiere at Sundance, » *The Mail & Guardian* 21 January 2006 ; « Christ as a black revolutionary, » *The Mail & Guardian* 27 January 2006.

#### [Michael Jackson's abaya](#)

Michael Jackson was recently spotted in an abaya, or full-length robe, in a shopping mall in Bahrain's capital, Manama. The pop star was wearing a traditional women's dress with a veil covering his face and black gloves - but he was still wearing men's shoes. Michael Jackson is a guest of the royal family and rumours are that he will settle in the Gulf state for good.

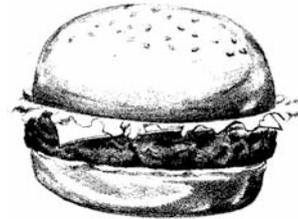
Sources: "Jackson goes shopping dressed as a woman," *The Times* 25 January 2006; « Michael Jackson shops as woman, » *The Australian* 26 January 2006.

## BUSINESS & MEDIA

### How much is too much for a burger?

By Jérôme VASSILIEFF

**“High-class fast food” is the new hype in the UK. The customer’s hunger for tasty food happily satisfies the businessman’s hunger for profit margins.**



**Not your ordinary burger...**

If you are a true burger lover in London you can now go and indulge in your favourite delicacies either at the Fine Burger Company or at Hamburger Union. On Scottish high-streets there are two other of these high-class fast food chains: Relish and the Gourmet Burger Co. But what qualifies as a gourmet burger, and how much money is there in this niche business? GBK, the restaurant chain that initiated this frenzy, is a case in point.

The Gourmet Burger Kitchen has become a business model. GBK was created by three New Zealanders who were used to eating good meat in their country, and were most disappointed by the awful quality of fast food in London. They decided to create their own chain of restaurants: "It's that casual but quality food experience you get in New Zealand we wanted to bring to London," says one of the founding members of GBK.\*

In any other fast food restaurant, patrons order over the counter, take their drinks, and pay. But at GBK's the food is brought to you by a waiter. The burgers look actually quite different from their McDonald's cousins. They are made of extra fresh ingredients, they are large and extremely varied. You can order a deer or a lamb burger rather than a boring beef burger. You can even have a kiwi burger, with beetroot, egg, cheese and pineapple, served with Czech beer!

Obviously this comes at a certain price. A standard GBK menu costs between 10 and 12 pounds, while a single burger might cost around 7 pounds, whereas a McDonald's or Burger King menu will be around 4 pounds and a burger alone about 1 pound. Obviously GBK restaurants are only to be found in London's poshest suburbs, like Notting Hill, Richmond or Fulham. At least in these areas people seem keen on eating better food for a higher price, which explains why there is a rash of GBK look alikes.

Chic burgers and trendy fast food restaurants are a lucrative bet. GBK was recently sold by its founders for 7.4 million pounds... The new GBK owners intend to open between 9 and 18 branches next year, and then 10 to 15 every year, at first in the UK and then in the rest of the world. Will the new and eager gourmet cook push old Ronald McDonald into retirement?

Sources: \* "Camembert with that, sir?" *The Guardian* 2 January 2006.  
Official GBK site: <http://www.gbkinfo.com/index.php>  
Forum on GBK : <http://forums.egullet.org/index.php?showtopic=6749>

## BUSINESS AND MEDIA

### Corporate vandals not welcome !

By Radan JOVANOVIC

**Sony has hired graffiti artists for a major stealth advertisement campaign throughout America. Philadelphia is the first big city to react.**

Photograph by Rob Greenleaf.  
for more, visit  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/habitforming/sets>



Just before Christmas, a new species of graffiti was spotted on the walls of Philadelphia's low-income neighbourhoods: a wide-eyed cartoon kid skating on, or playing with, what seems to be the last Sony product, the PlayStation Portable aka PSP (a hand-held gaming device costing \$ 214.99). Both anti-graffiti groups and graffiti aficionados were appalled. There was no hint that it was an ad. The brand "Sony" or the name of the product "PSP" did not appear on the graffiti: this was clearly stealth advertisement.

John Street, the mayor of Philadelphia, was not amused either. He does not approve of any kind of spraying on the walls of his city. His communications director, Joe Grace, declared, "We believe in removing urban blight ... and now we have a major corporation come in and just throw up ads without approval."\* The mayor threatened to take the case to court. A Sony representative tried to justify the campaign claiming Sony had hired local artists to spray the pre-drawn designs on the walls of New York, San Francisco and several other cities across the country. Make no mistake, this was a form of artistic expression. He also specified to *Wired* magazine that "the ads were aimed at 'urban nomads', people who are on the go constantly."\*\*

But the sedentary population of Philly was not fooled. Eddie Torres, a worker in a local furniture shop says "It's all about hip-hop, urban and all that, [...] they're just trying to get into the teenagers' minds. I think it's sharp."\*\* Whereas New York rappers used to spray the city walls to express their suburban angst, or East L.A. Chicanos used graffiti as a means of political expression, Sony's market-researchers adopted this most un-corporate medium for a most corporate message.

No wonder some of the ads were quickly adorned with unambiguous slogans such as "Get out of my city!!!", "This is why Amerikkka... is so fat!" and "Corporate vandals not welcome".

Sources: \*«Sony Draws Reproach Over Graffiti-Style Ads,» *The Los Angeles Times* 2 January 2006.

\*\*«Sony Draws Criticism for PlayStation Ads,» *The Los Angeles Times* 30 December 2005.

## BUSINESS & MEDIA

### Advertising against advertisements

By Charlotte MARCHALANT

#### **Christmas, Winter Sales, Valentine's Day, Spring Sales, Summer Specials... the buying season lasts all year long.**

"Advertising is the single most powerful psychological experiment ever carried out" says Kalle Lasn, leader of the Canadian anti-consumerism organisation AdBusters.\* Given the consumerism and shopping addiction that has taken over most developed countries, it is hard not to see his point. His proposal to defy the corporations that fuel media with advertising is seducing an increasing number of followers. But how do you go about fighting such a global industry?

The Internet is a platform that has enabled AdBusters's message to reach beyond the borders of Canada ([www.adbusters.org](http://www.adbusters.org)). The self-proclaimed "culture jammers" are an eclectic group of people of all political persuasions, Christians and rockers. Their biggest campaign, Buy Nothing Day,\*\* was launched in 1992 by a handful of "burnt-out activists" as Lasn coined them. It soon developed into a worldwide event celebrated in over 65 countries. But with its success came headaches...

The movers and shakers at AdBusters are aware that in order to have a real influence, they need to broadcast their ideas on television, radio and in magazines. In other words, and paradoxically, they have to advertise their anti-advertising message. The organisation has been engaged in a legal battle with MTV and Fox for years, as the networks refuse to broadcast their spoof commercials that condemn Mc Donald's, SUVs or TV itself. A spokesperson for Corus Entertainment, a Canadian media giant, argued that these commercials "run counter to the fundamentals of *their* business".\*\*\* The verdict pending, AdBusters' ads are only available online. To their adversaries, AdBusters remain mere trouble-makers, a thorn in the foot of corporate North America.

There is another twist to the AdBusters story. Their efforts to air their products on television lend credence to the idea that they have become an "unironic vehicle for an almost hysterical world view" \*\*\*\* as Andrew Potter put it. This former member of the organisation is the author of *The Rebel Sell*. Fellow Canadian activist Naomi Klein put forth a similar interpretation in her best-selling book *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (HarperCollins, 2002) in her discussion of AdBusters' "anti-brand" brand of shoes, which Adbusters have put up for sale on the web. So, is Lasn revolutionising the market or has he gone beyond hypocrisy into madness? The debate remains open, but one thing is sure: if you want your message to be heard, you have to make compromises. Naomi Klein, who benefited from the advertising network of a major publisher for her anti-consumerism book, would most likely concur.

Sources: \* "Ad Busting and culture jamming" *Satya Magazine* May 2005

\*\* Buy Nothing Day advocates the practise of absolute non-consuming for a period of 24 hours. See [www.buynothingday.org](http://www.buynothingday.org) or [www.adbusters.org](http://www.adbusters.org)

\*\*\* "AdBusters vs. Canadian Broadcasters" *The Langara Journalism Review* 2005.

\*\*\*\* "AdBusters' Fat Chance," *Now Toronto* April 2005.

## BUSINESS & MEDIA

### [News briefs on barbarism against Barbies, the freebie cure for an ailing press and diet drinks for Australian men.](#)

By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE

#### [Barbarism against Barbies](#)

According to academics from the University of Bath, schoolchildren are most imaginative when it comes to torturing and mutilating Barbie dolls. Breaking apart, scalping, decapitating, and microwaving are widespread techniques to dispose of this toy which seems to generate particularly hateful responses from boys and girls aged 7 to 11. The study shows the right age for having a Barbie to be around 4.

Source: "Barbarism begins with Barbie, the doll children love to hate," *The Times* 19 December 2005.

#### [The ailing paper press & the freebie cure](#)

In the UK national newspapers circulation fell by 2% in 2004 and by another 3% in 2005. Free CDs, DVDs and books are seen by many press executives as the only way to attract new readers, and more specifically to lure young ones away from the internet newsbusiness. However it is both a costly and risky strategy: giving away one DVD in hundreds of thousands costs as much as \$1--\$1,5 million. There is always the option to raise prices a little but competition is stiff. So far US quality papers have shunned this practice.

Source: « Extra, extra, » *The Economist* 21 January 2006.

#### [Diet drinks for health-conscious but prejudiced Australian men](#)

Diet drinks are a booming market in Australia : last year sales of the non-sugary soft drinks increased twice as quickly as the total soft drinks market. However studies show men are still turned off by the word « diet » on the cans. Hence soft drinks companies launched sugar-free colas that avoid the d-word. Pepsi Max had opened the way. Now Coke Zero by Coca-Cola Australia is the latest attempt at conquering thirsty health-conscious men.

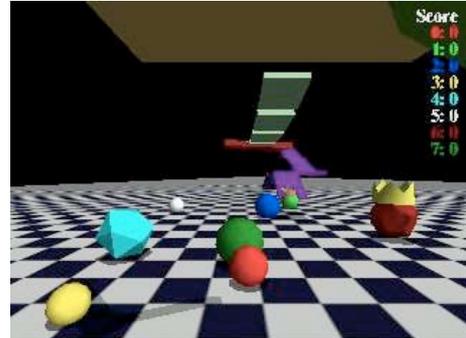
Source: "Diet coke for blokes," *The Australian* 19 January 2006.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Modern alchemy: MMORPGs and how to turn virtual stones into real money

By Fatima MEZARI

**Modern technology has finally helped unravel the secret formula that alchemists have been looking for: MMORPGs, i.e. “massively multiplayer online role-playing games”.**



Network games are all the rage in both developed and developing countries all over the world. Millions of players indulge in *Second Life*, *World of Warcraft*, *Ultima Online* and other role-playing games everyday. They usually spend several hours a week sitting in front of their computers at home, at work or in Internet cafes.

Generations of young and not so young players are hooked on these MMORPGs that often consist of adventure games where players are on a mission to overcome dangers. Whether these games depict a phantasmagorical world or a very life-like one, the standard aim is always pretty much the same: to accumulate as much power and wealth as one can. But if the in-game power and wealth remain virtual, there is a very real twist to it all.

Online network games have generated a surprising trade: that of virtual goods. Successful players acquire virtual estates, virtual people, virtual weapons, virtual potions or virtual bank notes. Bartering or selling these in-game items is a booming business: the trade is now estimated at over \$100m a year. The transactions take place on eBay or on sites like: [www.gamingopenmarket.com](http://www.gamingopenmarket.com) or [www.ige.com](http://www.ige.com). Players then use these artefacts by simply logging into the game and transferring the gains or virtual items they have just bought.

The prospect of having fun and making money at the same time sounds most attractive. Jason Ainsworth, 36, makes a living out of selling such virtual goods, earning an average of \$1800 a month. Mr. Ainsworth who lives in Las Vegas, spends at least four hours a day playing / working.

But synthetic worlds can be quite as ruthless as real ones: stories of forgeries and thefts are not uncommon. Speculation is rife: in 2005, an island featuring in the *Project Entropia* game was bought for \$26,500 by a clever virtual-estate dealer who then made profits by selling the hunting and mining rights to other players.

Sources: “The Game Is Virtual. The Profit Is Real,” *New York Times* 29 May 2005.  
“Online Gaming. Worlds Without End,” *The Economist* 14 December 2005.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### The silent epidemic: diabetes in the US

By Sugandhi NADARADJANE

**Almost 21 million Americans are believed to be diabetic; another 41 million are estimated to be pre-diabetic. Yet the dangers of this epidemic are little known outside public health circles.**



Urban lifestyle, unhealthy diet and lack of exercise are well known causes of obesity among children and adults. But whereas obesity is something you can see, there is another little noticed chronic disease sweeping across America: diabetes.

Diabetes is caused by an insufficient production of insulin resulting in high levels of sugar in the blood, which is harmful to the human body. Having diabetes is sometimes known as "getting the sugar" and diabetics "have the sweet blood." However benign these phrases sound the reality is so much more, dare we say, sour. Diabetes is progressive and often fatal. It can be monitored but it has no cure. The side effects and associated problems caused by the disease are scary enough: amputation of toes or the leg, blindness, memory loss, nerve damage, kidney and heart disease, among others.

One in three American children born after 2000 are expected to become diabetics. Among Latino children the rate is more daunting: as many as one in two. Asian Americans develop the disease at much lower weights. Immigrants are most at risk because of the radical changes in lifestyle and diet. Diabetes is also directly linked to social condition. For instance in New York, where the poverty rate hovers at 20.7% compared to 12.7% nationwide, there are an estimated 800,000 diabetic patients, i.e. more than one in eight inhabitants. This is nearly a third higher than the national rate, and more that double that of Boston.

The high cost of health insurance in the US also contributes to the problem. Patients who are most at risk neglect or cannot afford to have regular check ups, letting the disease advance unhindered. Diabetes has become a major public health issue with drastic economic consequences. In 2002, medical bills, disability payments and lost workdays due to diabetes were an estimated \$132 billion. This compared to an estimated \$171 billion a year for all forms of cancers.

The American Diabetes Association says the average life expectancy of Americans could diminish for the first time in more than a century; reason enough to increase public awareness on this growing crisis.

Sources: "Good Care, Bad Business," *The New York Times* 10 January 2006.

"Diabetes and Its Awful Toll Quietly Emerge as a Crisis," *The New York Times* 9 January 2006.

"Drug Maker's Efforts to Compete in Lucrative Insulin Market Are Under Scrutiny," *The New York Times* 28 January 2006.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### [News briefs on mobile music and hearing loss, tutorials for technophobes, and the virtues of black tea](#)

By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE

#### [Mobile music and hearing loss](#)

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) reported that 30 million Americans aged 3 and older suffer from some form of auditory disorder, which is more than double the figure from 1971. The ageing of the population explains part of the increase; however, noise-induced hearing loss is also more and more widespread. Users of personal cassette players, Discman-type portable CD and MP3 players are particularly at risk. Longer battery life and storage capacity are not good news, except for hearing-aids manufacturers — clearly a growth industry.

Source: « The iPod and the Fury, » *The New York Times* 17 January 2006.

#### [Tutorials for technophobes](#)

One-to-one "iPod survival" tutorials are to be offered at Selfridges Oxford street department store in London. Costing a steep £65 for 40 minutes, the lessons can also be taken at home and are designed to teach how to download music or podcasts, create playlists etc. Selfridges says it is merely responding to customer demand. Shopping tutorials are also clearly needed : the iPod manufacturer offers such workshops for free in its store just down the road, as well as on the internet.

Sources: « Learn to use an iPod at Selfridges - for just £65, » *The Guardian* 16 January 2006 ; « iPod school opens in London, » *The Australian* 16 January 2006.

#### [The virtues of black tea](#)

Dr Das of Bose Institute in Calcutta, has been researching the molecular mechanisms of black tea. The anti-carcinogenic qualities of the beverage seem to be evident in cases of both lung and colon cancer. Black tea intake also activates the immune system, and seems to contain more antioxidants than most fruits and vegetables. It helps prevent heart disease and strokes, fights cataracts, and boosts insulin activity.

However, tea is already the, second most consumed beverage after water, eventhough its virtues are numerous they don't seem to be quite enough to keep people healthy.

Source: « The cheering cuppa, » *The Statesman* 28 January 2006.

## ENVIRONMENT & TRAVEL

### [Are badgers the only ones to blame for bovine TB?](#)

By Bérangère MAILLET

**Cattle farmers in England have to face yet another epidemic: bovine tuberculosis (TB). Badgers are blamed for spreading the disease; a massive cull is being discussed.**



Cattle farmers in England have been hit by bovine TB since 1986. At first the infection was not widespread but it has now become rampant. Each year, more than 5,000 farms are affected and 20,000 cattle are slaughtered. Bovine TB costs vast amounts of money to farmers, taxpayers and the government. The Treasury has already spent £100 million in compensation, and it is estimated that the epidemic will cost the government another £2 billion over the next decade. Scientists highlight the danger of transmission to human beings if they eat raw or undercooked meat from an infected animal, or drink the milk of an infected cow. Moreover bovine TB can spread to other animals.

Badgers are commonly held responsible for spreading the illness. Therefore the government suggested a massive cull in the counties most affected, starting in July 2006. But badgers have been a protected species since the 1980's, and the proposed cull generated outrage among wildlife protection associations. 90% of public opinion is against badger culling, particularly as there is no clear-cut evidence of the efficiency of such a drastic measure, quite the opposite: "The study of the effect of culling in 30 sites in Western England shows that culling badgers caused a 19 per cent reduction in the incidence of cattle TB in the areas culled but led to a 29 per cent increase in surrounding areas." \*

Green activists argue that in the United States after five years of bovine TB epidemics (spread by deer this time), the disease was stopped thanks to strict controls and tests on all cattle before they were transported. No American cattle have been infected this year. The British government is ready to re-install pre-movement testing of cattle shortly, but farmers would have to foot the bill. There might be yet another option: recently, a variety of the BCG vaccine used on humans to protect them from TB started being tested on badgers. But inoculating the beasts could prove tricky, particularly as the Government has untimely decided to lay off 60 skilled badger trappers by the end of February. Their skills could have come in handy.

So all in all, are the badgers the only ones to blame? British farmers might be tempted to side with the black and white mammals. They, rather than the government, are likely to be most hit and held responsible for this sorry state of bovine affairs.

**Sources:** \* "Doubts Over Badger Cull To Protect Cattle," *The Telegraph* 15 December 2005.

"Badgers Cull To Beat TB Could Begin Next June," *The Telegraph* 17 December 2005.

"Badger off," *The Economist* 20 December 2005.

"Trappers Face Sack Before Badger Cull," *The Telegraph* 5 January 2006.

## ENVIRONMENT & TRAVEL

### [News briefs on the cost of refusing to go green in Australia, biopiracy in Pakistan, winter holidays in Newfoundland for men & in Alaska for women](#)

By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE

#### [The cost of refusing to go green in Australia](#)

The Australian National Audit Office claims the Federal Government could save \$10 million a year if its agencies were more environmentally conscious. Saving energy, introducing water-saving measures, managing motor vehicle emissions, and cutting or recycling general office waste are all ways to implement green office practice and reduce costs.

The Australian Taxation Office was the only department that met Government targets for cutting pollution for last year.

Source: "Refusal to go green wastes \$10m a year," *Sidney Morning Herald* 2 January 2006.

#### [Biopiracy in Pakistan](#)

The northern provinces of Pakistan are a major reservoir for the biological riches and indigenous knowledge longed for by pharmaceutical corporations and biotechnology companies.

It is believed that some of the NGOs working for "conservation of medicinal plants" in these areas might sometimes act as intermediaries for big firms. Recently local people were spotted selling a plant found in the Kaghan valley at Rs6,000 per kilogramme for export. Both biodiversity and indigenous cultures are under threat as natural habitat and social interaction patterns are disrupted by this lucrative but often illicit trade.

Source: « Resources : a threat to our 'green gold' » *Dawn* 28 January 2006.

#### [Winter holidays: Newfoundland for men, Alaska for women](#)

Newfoundland and Alaskan winters are often equated (in the public mind) with freezing temperatures, icy winds and gloomy darkness. But both could become attractive holiday destinations for adventurous singles : while there are too many women as a percentage of Newfoundland's population, in Alaska, there are far too many men. The two states each have a little over half a million inhabitants. Alaska is five times the size of Germany ; Newfoundland, aka "The Rock", is half the size of Britain.

Both offer decent skiing, as well as warm post-ski conversation.

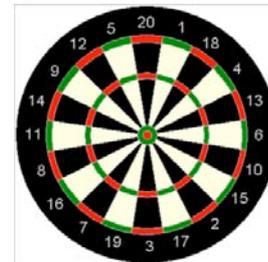
Sources: "Alaska much more than cold and dark," *The Mail & Guardian* 31 December 2005; "A ski trip like narn other," *The Guardian* 4 January 2006.

**SPORTS****To be, or not to be in the Olympic Games? Darts is the question.**

By Sébastien DEMOUGEOT

&lt; Seb170678@hotmail.com &gt;

**If bridge was the rising star of the Salt Lake City Winter Games in 2002, darts is campaigning hard to be invited in Beijing in 2008 or in London in 2012.**



Darts is a game that consists in throwing a small sharp-pointed object at a board which is divided into different sections with points ranging from 1 to 20. It was and still is a traditional pub game in the UK. However pub boards are an endangered species as people start realising that it is rather dangerous to leave darts in the hands of potentially dizzy drunkards. If you are looking for the real thing as well as the friendly atmosphere, a list of pubs with “the less common boards” – i.e. traditional boards - is available on <http://www.tradgames.org.uk/>. Rules and organisation vary quite a lot according to region.

But beyond this enjoyable leisure activity there is the professional sport. Darts has been officially recognised as a sport by the 4 UK sport councils since June 2005. With about 6 million people practising regularly, darts is a trendy sport that tends to fill the screens of TV channels such as Sky Sports, BBC Worldwide, and Eurosport which broadcast the Lakeside World Pro 2006 last January.

However, opinions are divided when it comes to the future of darts. The supporters would like it to become an Olympic sport. They claim that professional darts is a very serious sport with strict rules, gender categories, classifications, etc. For instance the Lakeside World Pro 2006 was open to men and women of all ages ; the 2006 World Champion is a 21 year-old Dutch boy called Jelle Klaasen. But so far, despite the existence of worldwide competitions, darts has not been recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as a potential Olympic sport, unlike bridge, billiards, bowling, life saving and several other sports which are considered much more physical. If darts wants to gain recognition from the IOC, the various darts federations and governing entities will have to come to an agreement. A single darts federation would have leverage to weigh on the decision of the IOC, hopefully before London 2012.

Sources:The Online Guide to Traditional Games' website <http://www.tradgames.org.uk/index.html>The British Darts Organisation's website <http://www.bdodarts.com/>The Professional Darts Corporation's website <http://www.planetdarts.tv/>

## The fall of the house of Williams

By Mohammed Lamine BOUZERIDA

### **As Serena and Venus drop out of the top 30, the Australian Open confirms the demise of the Williams dynasty.**

Even if most of the talk at the Australian Open has been about the return of Martina Hingis, Jelena Dokic and Mary Pierce, a good deal of ink has flowed on the subject of the catastrophic performances of the Williams sisters in Melbourne Park. For the first grand slam of the year, both Serena and Venus have miserably failed in their attempts to convince their fans that they are as committed as ever.

Venus, the 10<sup>th</sup> seed, crashed out after a series of unforced errors, knocked out in the opening round by the Bulgarian teenager Pironkova, who ranks 94<sup>th</sup> in the world. This came as a great disappointment for a former world champion who only last year won Wimbledon in the longest final in history ! Granted, before that last purple patch, Venus had not won a slam title since 2001, but still, fans were incensed by this anti-climax. As if to add insult to injury, when asked if she would ever be able to recapture her former glory, the star bluntly answered: "Believe what you want to. Guess what? I don't care." Trying to fathom out the Williams sisters according to what they say after a match is more often than not a waste of time.

Shortly afterwards, Serena joined her older sister in disgrace even though she fared slightly better and moved through to the third round. The reigning champion, who triumphed in Melbourne in 2003 and 2005, failed in her quest for a third Australian Open crown. It seems she never fully recovered from her knee operation in August 2003, but fans and foes in Melbourne did not fail to notice that Serena had put on quite a lot of weight.

However, the Williams sisters are not prone to self-flagellation. As Venus put it: "if I wasn't fully fit, I would still say I was fully fit." After losing her game, she declared it was necessary for both Serena and herself to return home and work hard on their game, adding that the plan was: "stay healthy and stick in there."

The mantra rang somewhat hollow.

As if the sisters were cut from the same cloth, at one point they were on top of the world, and now, with their hearts in their boots, they are both down in the dumps. Why? Injuries certainly did not help, but the sisters most certainly lack the rock solid motivation they once had. Their father Richard Williams had decided upon their careers early on and he pushed them hard to realise his vision, although they were never submitted to the sort of treatment Mary Pierce or Dokic had to endure. Having achieved everything their daddy wanted and beyond, the stellar sisters turned to other things: Venus is now studying design and runs her own company, while Serena has taken up acting. Tennis is not their only galaxy anymore.

Sources: "Serena in Denial Over Her Terminal," *The Guardian* 21 January 2006.

"Venus Crash Lands in Australia," *The Guardian* 16 January 2006.

"Former Champions Show Class," *The Age* 18 January 2006.

## SPORTS

### [News briefs on Armstrong's busy retirement, US college football bowl bonanza and boxing blackout on Australian TV](#)

By Pauline LAVAGNE D'ORTIGUE

#### [Lance Armstrong's busy retirement](#)

Seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong (34) has been visiting South Africa on behalf of Unite 4 Health, a corporate social investment health programme initiated by a pharmaceutical company.

The Texas-born cyclist has been rather busy ever since he ended his legendary sporting career. He has written two books, *It's Not about the Bike* and *Every Second Counts*. He has appeared in countless commercials, and is in talks about a movie based on his life, with Matt Damon in the lead role. And of course, he has been active in several charities and foundations linked to the fight against cancer.

Source: "Armstrong on his bike for charity," *The Mail & Guardian* 20 January 2006.

#### [US college football bowl bonanza](#)

Big sport competitions are always a source of joy for America's top corporate sponsors, but college football-bowl season is the opportunity for the 56 universities represented to sell themselves to a national audience.

As most college football television contracts include free airtime slots, the colleges compete to present the most attractive commercials. Green campus lawns, white lab coats, multi-ethnic students, brand new computer facilities and hip tunes are simply inescapable during halftime.

Source: « If you like our football team, you'll love our chem labs full of Asian students, » *Slate* 30 December 2006.

#### [Boxing blackout on Australian TV](#)

Finding and buying a ticket for Aussie Stadium is the only way Sydneysiders are likely to see the AD\$5.5 million Anthony Mundine-Danny Green fight on April 19. No TVs will be allowed to broadcast the showdown at the 48,000-capacity venue. The much anticipated clash between the longtime super-middleweight rivals should thus be watched by one of the largest crowds in modern boxing history.

Source: « Box ban for Mundine-Green battle, » *Sidney Morning Herald* 1 February 2006.