

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Affie Adagio

Our end of year celebration was indeed enjoyable, although the number of guests was not as large as last year.



Angela Drury took the first prize and rightfully so for her creativity. Actually there were 7 prizes and, so, many went home happy. Please remember to support the following events:

FEBRUARY SGMs 10th February

Please mark the date for the **two** Special General Meetings in your diaries (**Feb 10**). A more detailed cover letter will reach you in January.

CAHS CONVENTION 2008

The CAHS Convention for 2008 is to take place in Sydney **May 2-5** and there will be details in the next edition of Vpts which will reach you the first week in April. Please also mark this event in your diary.

DARWIN DAY IN SYDNEY 2008

One Darwin Day event in Sydney is organised by John August together with the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts on **Feb 13** with speakers Dr. Darren Curnoe of the University NSW Human Origins Group and Dr. Anne Musser (tbc) from Australian Museum. The other event is HuVAT for **March 9** with Dr. Victor Bien as speaker (see p4). Please check our website for details of these events.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF

As can be seen on the front cover this year is the International Year of the Reef which is a worthwhile cause and for more information the website is:
<http://www.iyor.org/default.asp>

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

John August

Updating 'Happy Human'

Victor has recently scanned in 'The Happy Human', our long running introduction to Humanism.



'The Happy Human' was written defensively – justifying ourselves to Christians. But this discussion is less relevant – Humanists are much more taken for granted, and the focus needs to be on the fact that values do not need a religion – and filling in the picture for atheists. The place of Islam in society, and religion generally are also becoming greater concerns. We'll keep you informed of progress.

Recent Events

I recently attended a pro-choice rally in Annandale. Emerging from the local Catholic Church, a group calling themselves “Helpers of God's Precious Infants” make a procession to the local abortion clinic where they loiter about and do their best to make clients feel uncomfortable. Our own protest, organised by the Sydney “Reproductive Freedoms” group had the objective of delaying the HOGPI procession and making some noise along the way. I gave my lungs a workout, but otherwise watched and participated passively. I was joined by Ann Young, President of the Rationalists. Ann pushed the limits with the police, and became involved in some of the scuffles that broke out (Yes – they still happen !) After the event, other younger attendees declared Ann to be “Awesome !” It was definitely an experience – you start to see police exceeding their powers, but you need to have the self – confidence to express that. Much discussion was had. If you'd like to know more about “Reproductive Freedoms”, let me know.

Ann invited me along to the Annual meeting of the Preterm, a charitable abortion provider – again an experience, with many other attendees (apart from Ann and Waratah, one of our Vice-Presidents) scratching their heads over why I was there.

Attempted meeting with Howard

I recently sought a meeting with then PM Howard to inform him of the non-religious viewpoint. **Howard declined to meet.**

Rudd also refused to meet with our delegation and passed us on to someone else. Kevin Rudd also needs to also pay attention to non-religious Australia.

We put out a media release drawing attention to Howard's response. Some extracts are provided below:

"Howard has met with the Exclusive Brethren, a fundamentalist Christian Group. Peter Costello defended them as 'Australian citizens, just like anybody else' and further said 'This is no crime. In fact the crime would be if a Member of Parliament refused to meet somebody on the basis of their religious convictions.'

However, John Howard refused to meet with a delegation of Ann Young, President of the NSW Rationalists, and myself, John August, President of the NSW Humanists, groups representing non-religious Australia. The last census found the non-religious in Australia to be around 20% of the population. We represent a substantial minority which Howard has refused to meet with, while it seems that John Howard and other senior parliamentarians have met with numerous religious believers, sometimes in an official capacity. This is representative of Howard's whole approach to policy, as he seeks to favour the religious, and ignores non-religious Australia.

We have long been concerned about Howard's policies. His Government quashed the ACT Same-Sex legislation and reversed the Northern Territory's Voluntary Euthanasia Legislation. The Howard Government has criticised abortion, allowing anti abortion counselling services to masquerade a neutral party, ignoring that more than 50% of abortions are the result of failed contraception, or that however risky abortions are, they are more risky than childbirth. The Howard Government had also funded Church initiatives on its whim, amongst many other concerns.

We are not after special treatment, and would be re-assured if Howard had at least met with a group, any group, asserting a non-religious viewpoint. We haven't heard of any such meeting and challenge Howard to tell of any such meeting he has made. This failure to engage with non-religious Australia is particularly telling in light of Howard's meetings with the Exclusive Brethren. It tells us a great deal about the way Howard relates to the religious and non-religious in Australia."

Financial Committee (with Victor Bien)

We've had an appeal for funds on this matter, and there's been some discussion. So, we thought we'd try to put the facts straight.

At present, outgoings within the Humanists exceed expenses by \$2,000 - \$3,000 per annum. At present rate, we have 5 years till we reach a crunch point. We could then reverse mortgage Humanist House (retaining occupancy), and then sell it at some later stage, investing the remainder and seeking other venues. This would be a last ditch option, with fine details still to be worked out. It is clearly not what we want to have happen, and we are looking at ways of preventing it. What we need to do is make up this annual deficit through increased room hire, increased membership and increased membership

fees. Room hire has shown a recent increasing trend (with thanks to the efforts of David Duffy), as has membership. However, an increasing number of our members are in the pensioner category, and only represent a minor contribution to annual finances.

For this reason, we are planning to modify pensioner/student rates so that if you are a member of a group with similar aims (Atheists Foundation, Rationalists, other State Humanist groups, Skeptics), your Student or Pensioner membership will remain at \$15 pa, and otherwise the basic Student/Pensioner membership will increase to \$20 pa.

We will be doing our best to avoid making separate appeals for funds. We do want a sustainable financial situation, and are aiming at this goal. We plan to be open about the situation to all members, and will let you know of exact numbers in future reports. If we do make another appeal, it will be the context of making all members aware of the financial situation, so such appeals do not come from out of the blue.

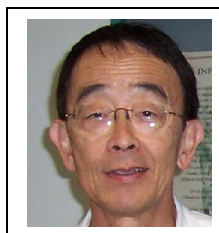
If you have any ideas for improving the financial situation, please let us know.

There have been suggestions of running fund-raising dinners and promoting the sale of Viki's books, which we'll be looking into.

CHARLES DARWIN DAY 2008

Victor Bien

The need for Humanists to celebrate Darwin Day, the birth of Charles Darwin, and the need to assert the importance of his concept of evolution



by natural selection in understanding ourselves, human society as well as nature continue unabated. It is important for Humanists to not lose interest because for us evolution is "old hat". The reality is that there are very many people out there who stubbornly reject the concept with the by now well appreciated (or at least we should well appreciated) pack of "reasons" ad nauseum. We need to take the approach which I understand Carl Sagan took which was to tirelessly explain detail by detail why supernatural explanations like creation are not adequate. By an account I read he changed the minds (deconverted?) of significant numbers of people by such an approach. An important part of the context of this debate about evolution is that not all Christians see it as a problem, just that a significant and noisy proportion do. In the absence of any contrary suggestions for my talk I will recount Richard Dawkins Darwinian account or explanation why human beings tend to be religious found in his book *The God Delusion*.

So the title of my talk will be: *A Darwinian explanation for religion by Richard Dawkins*.

DARWIN DAY UPDATE for 2009

Relayed by Victor Bien

Edited from: "Darwin Day Celebration"
mcherry@darwinday.org

Dear Darwin Day Supporter,
I am writing to you with exciting news about the Darwin Day Celebration. But first let me remind you that the next Darwin Day is just 83 days away. More information is available at <http://darwinday.org>

In order to increase its resources and impact, the Darwin Day Celebration (DDC) has become part of a larger organization. Existing DDC volunteers will stay involved, but Darwin Day will now be run as a distinct program within the Institute for Humanist Studies (IHS). The Institute for Humanist Studies –

<http://www.humaniststudies.org> --

is an international educational nonprofit that promotes reason and humanity. IHS shares the vision of Darwin Day as a way to honor Charles

Darwin, to promote understanding of evolution and the scientific method, and to provide a new global holiday that transcends separate cultures and religious traditions. The Darwin Day Celebration will continue to support, promote and coordinate Darwin Day events organized across the world.

As you probably know, **February 12, 2009** marks the **200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth**. While promoting D Day for 2008 we will also be working on making 2009 a global celebration that draws unprecedented attention to Darwin's life and legacy, and that also establishes D Day as a major annual holiday. Many people are already planning bicentenary events.

Sincerely, Matt Cherry, Executive Director
Institute for Humanist Studies

CHURCH SIGN DISRUPTS A QUIET NEIGHBOURHOOD

John August [President, Humanist Society of NSW and committee member of Sydney Outdoor Lighting Improvement Society]

Barbara Locke, a local resident can no longer enjoy the quiet tranquility of her balcony at night - because of the severe glare caused by a sign erected outside a Church opposite. Barbara has been complaining about this for many years - drawing attention to the fact it was erected without a development application - with the Council using the excuse of claiming it was a "minor" change. The signs cost \$22,000 and hardly seem "minor". Certainly the disruption to Barbara's life has not been anything but. And as for improving security - anyone could skulk about behind the signs and be completely invisible - such is the effect of glare. Reverend Sulzberger is living demonstration that belief is no guarantee you will be ethical - he has even confronted Barbara in the local shopping centre, quoting Bible verse to justify the sign. Wonder what he'd do if his life was disrupted by glare from a neighbour's light.

Barbara has contacted the local Bishop, who did nothing more than phone the Reverend to get the impression that it had all been resolved - when it had not been. Clearly, developers push dodgy things

through Council almost all the time. We're used to it. But, it seems that the Anglican Church is not immune to such excesses, pushing through developments which ignore the impact on others. So much for the Golden Rule.

The Council has not been terribly helpful either - just getting a lighting engineer to measure the light from the sign - which doesn't tell you anything about the glare. For this, you need to measure the background light. Fortunately, Barbara has enlisted the help of others and myself from the Sydney Outdoor Lighting Improvement Society - and we plan to measure the glare into her flat. Whenever you hear of the Anglican Church doing good charitable works, keep this one up your sleeve! We'll let you know how Barbara progresses in her ongoing battle.

LOOKING AT THE CONSTITUTION

Rosemary Waratah Gillespie

The "Constitution" of the NSW Humanists Society as it presently stands consists of two parts, the "Objects" and the "Rules".



We are looking at ways to improve it in order to reduce the risk of a hostile takeover and to incorporate contemporary human rights values. Humanism and human rights go naturally hand in hand, and our objects include: "defend freedom of expression" and "gain and maintain for non-religious people the same rights as are enjoyed by members of religious bodies". However the principle of equal rights goes further than this. Denial of human rights during the nineteen thirties plunged Europe into World War II and the horrible holocaust under the Nazi regime. Out of the smoking ruins of war there emerged a

new vision of a world at peace, based on the twin principles of equality and human rights.

After the United Nations was established it developed many human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The rights enshrined in these instruments provide a basis on which oppressed peoples and groups can seek justice. We can strengthen our organization by incorporating modern human rights principles into our constitution. This is one of many issues which will be considered at a special meeting to decide the proposed amendments to the constitution in February 2008.

Following the last Annual General Meeting, the newly elected Committee appointed a Constitutional Sub-committee to examine ways the constitution could be improved. Members of the Sub-committee include Affie Adagio, Victor Bien, John August, Mark Pavic, David Duffy, and myself. Our recommendations will go to a full committee meeting in January and be posted to paid-up members of the NSW Humanist Society for consideration at the February meeting. A whole range of issues will be up for consideration, from the membership form to inserting objective criteria where this appears to be necessary. If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact me. Best wishes for the festive season Waratah, Convenor, Constitution (Rules) Sub-committee

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Dennis Morris (Western Australia)

[Our best wishes to Dennis who has recently had a stroke and yet submitted this article for Vpts..Ed]

IF ONLY homo-sapiens had evolved from the bonobo (pigmy



chimpanzee) branch of apes we might have been a peace loving, instead of a warring, human race. From our genetic mutation rate, scientists estimate that the last common ancestor of chimpanzees and humans lived 5 million years ago. Since Darwin's day, paleoanthropologists have discovered many fossils of ancient humans, as well as a dozen other human-like species, which show that human evolution was marked by five transitions. 5 million years ago, our ancestors were pushed onto the African savannahs. Next, the first stone tools appeared about 2.5 million later. Then a million years later, crude blades developed into massive hand axes. Half a million years ago, our ancestors fourth mastered fire and became more adept at making spears and other tools. Finally, 50,000 years ago, we developed truly modern minds – as shown by paintings on cave walls, carved jewellery, intricate weapons and elaborate burials.

Evolutionary conflict between the sexes can lead to male-on-female violence, as in chimpanzees. However, with the right conditions, a tranquil existence, develops where sex becomes a tool of peace, rather than survival of genes.

Bonobos (pigmy chimpanzees), diverged from chimpanzees about 3 million years ago. The two species have since evolved very different social lives. Chimpanzee societies are male dominated, but females are in control in bonobo societies. Bonobos are the peaceful apes. Scientists only recognised the difference from chimpanzees 76 years ago. In 1929 a German anatomist a skull he was studying of what he thought was a juvenile chimpanze and realised it actually belonged to a different species. Bonobos live south of the Zaire River in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They are smaller than chimpanzees and more slender, with long legs and narrow shoulders. Their lips are reddish and their

ears are small and black. Their faces are flatter than a chimp's and they have long, fine black hair neatly parted in the middle. But there are also behavioural differences. During World War II, bombing of the German city of Hellabrun did not affect chimpanzees in the local zoo - but all the bonobos at another zoo died of fright. A few years later two German primatologists studying bonobos at Hellabrun noticed they had different preferred sexual positions. Chimpanzees mated more canum (like dogs) while bonobos were more hominum (like people). Humans are the only other primate so inclined.

This research was ignored, and it was only in the 1970s scientists rediscovered these dramatic differences. As with chimpanzees, male bonobos stay in the community where they were born and females leave to find a new community at adulthood. However, she doesn't face a gang of bullying males ready to kill her baby and force her into sex. If you toss a bunch of bananas into their midst, the females eat first and the males wait their turn. If a male bonobo tries to attack a female, he's liable to be stormed by a pack of angry females. They have been known to pin an offending male to the ground as one of them gives his testicles a painful bite.

Male bonobos have their own hierarchy, but the sons of the dominant females who rank highly; among themselves, males form hardly any bonds. A female bonobo joining a new community also enters a perpetual orgy. While female chimps are sexually receptive 5 percent of the time, for female bonobos it's 50. Their sex lives start early, with young bonobos start trying to mate before they can possibly conceive. Bonobo sex is not just heterosexual. Young males will fence with their penises or give oral sex to each other. Females, meanwhile, rub their genitals together until they reach orgasm (what primatologists call the "gg rub").

Sex is not just for reproduction, or even for protecting babies against angry males. It is a social tool. A new female will work her way into a bonobo community by approaching a resident female and giving her lots of sexual satisfaction. This favour wins her an alliance, over time she makes further advances into the community. Sex can also defuse escalating tensions. When bonobos come across food - be it a fruit tree or a termite nest - they start screaming in excitement. But instead of fighting over the food, the bonobos then have sex. Likewise, if a male has a fit of jealousy and chases another male away from a female bonobo, the two males may later reunite for some scrotal rubbing. Sex keeps the underlying competition from escalating. "The chimpanzee resolves sexual issues with power; the bonobo resolves power issues with sex", writes Frans de waal, a primatologist at Emory University, in his book *Bonobo: The forgotten Ape*.

Richard Wrangham, a primatologist at Harvard University and his colleagues have proposed that the difference in behaviour between the primates stems from where they live. Bonobos live in humid jungles, where the supply of fruit is much more reliable than the open forests where chimpanzees often live. And even if there's no fruit, they can turn to the herbs that grow in abundance. Thanks to the abundance of food, bonobos can keep up even with babies in tow. The females don't compete, rather forming long term alliances. This cooperation keeps the males in line, and there is no infanticide. Because males are peaceful, they don't wage war against other groups. When two groups of bonobos meet up, they have sex rather than fight.

"It looks as though a relatively simple change in the feeding ecology is responsible for this dramatic difference in sexual behaviour," says Wrangham.

For female bonobos the benefits of this social structure are clear: they become pregnant several years earlier than chimpanzees and can have more offspring. The difference researchers suspect, lies in the fact that a female chimp has to cope with the threat of infanticide. Bonobo females, thanks to their power, no longer have to worry about it.

Alliances, betrayals, deceptions, trust, jealousy, adultery, motherly affection suicidal love - it all sounds rather human. Nevertheless, we humans are animals - males with abundant sperm and females with scarce eggs - and our ancestors were subject to evolution just as much as any pipefish or jacana. Could inclusive fitness, reciprocal altruism, and conflicts between males and females originate in the way we act, or even the way we think? Perhaps, if we had evolved from the bonobo branch of apes we would be making love not war.

[edited by Vpts co-editor John August]

WIN \$100,000 SAYS JOHN PERKINS

John Perkins

A MELBOURNE atheist is offering \$100,000 to believers who can prove their religion is true.

John Perkins — an economist, secular rationalist activist, and Senate candidate for the Secular Party — laid down his challenge at the Victorian Humanist Society's annual dinner on Wednesday night.



He told The Age he accepted that God's existence could not be proved or disproved. But billions of people worldwide thought only one religion was

true — theirs — and to believe just one out of so many was **irrational**.

To win the cash, the evidence must be proved to be supernatural under agreed conditions and in front of Mr. Perkins. "If, for example, someone had a weeping statue of Jesus or the Hindu god Ganesh that drank milk — claims that are quite often made — it would have to be something concrete like that," he said. "An ancient text or philosophical argument won't do."

Mr. Perkins admitted he did not have \$100,000 but said he could raise it in the unlikely event it were needed.

He agreed that some people might think the challenge was a stunt. "But it as a serious intent, which is to challenge people to think about why they believe things."

The Rationalist Society of Australia has declined to endorse the challenge, saying a claimant would have proved something was true in the supernatural world, which was nonsense. As rationalists did not believe such a thing existed, they could not judge such a claim. Rationalist president Ian Robinson said it might tarnish the society's good name before neutral observers.

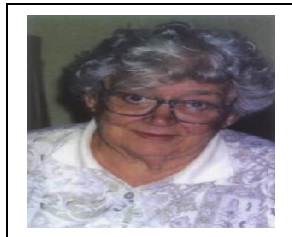
<http://tinyurl.com/3clus3>
<http://challenge.theAtheist.net>

BOOK REVIEW: *Off My Shoulders*

Dick Clifford

Firstly I want to recommend a present which is suitable for almost everybody: **Book Review "Off My Shoulders" VICKY POTEPA**. Vicky, well known member of the NSW Humanist Society, is now the author of a very good book, "Off My Shoulders". It is the story of her life, it is well written, the sort of book you can't put down, it goes into great detail from her early life in Suez, her immigration to Sydney, her employment, her house

building, her marriage, translating letters for migrants, being politically active in the Labor party, the Humanists, Women's Lib, Vietnam protests, prison visiting, the CRC (Civic Rehabilitation Committee) and all the time she is trying to put right the problems of her own family members due to greed, ignorance and poverty, not to mention the war and the Depression.



Women should read this book as it shows how they can take charge of their lives and not rely on men.

Men should read this book so they can have a better understanding of what can go wrong in childbirth, and the importance of helping rather than looking after No 1. This book is a fine example of what it means to be a Humanist, how ordinary people with a few talents can live a good humanistic life, without having to believe in powers up above. The book also has very good photographs and will be of great interest to migrants. The book costs \$40 including postage, make your cheque out to the Humanist Society of NSW and post our order to Humanist House, 10 Shepherd St, Chippendale, 2008

Now there is just about time to send off your order for the Vicky Potempa book!

THE VEIL OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ISLAMIST SOCIETIES

Maryam Namazie

[IHEU *International Humanist News*, August 2007:19]

Recent reports on the Islamic regime of Iran's crackdown on women who are 'badly' veiled (*bad-hejab*) and their resistance to the regime's campaign of arrest and harassment has been reported quite extensively in comparison to other similar events over the years. This is partly due to amateur video footage taken via

mobile phones by passers-by uploaded on YouTube for the world to see. There are two pieces of footage that everyone should take a look at. One is of an unveiled woman shouting 'we don't want the veil; we want freedom'. The other is of a young girl who is being questioned by security agents for being 'badly veiled'; she pulls off her veil in front of them and is kicked into a waiting car to be driven away. Given that veiling is compulsory in Iran, these acts of defiance are all the more heroic.

This ongoing battle between the Islamic authorities and women over the veil clearly reveals why it has become a symbol like no other of the violence women face under Islam and why 'improper' or 'bad' veiling and unveiling have become a symbol of resistance to Islam in power and its violence against women. It is for this very reason that the slogan '*neither veil nor submission*' has become a rallying cry ever since the regime imposed compulsory veiling on women after expropriating and crushing the revolution to consolidate its rule.



An Iranian woman beaten for protesting against the veil "the veil is anything but a piece of cloth or clothing.. [it] is a tool for the suppression and oppression of women"

With the myriad examples of violence against women in islamist societies — from stoning to legally sanctioned domestic violence — the 'fuss over veiling' may seem overboard for those who have heard about the 'right to veil' and 'freedom of clothing' from Islamists who deceptively use rights language in an effort to make the veil

palatable to a western audience. But the veil is anything but a piece of cloth or clothing. Just as the straight-jacket or body bag are anything but pieces of clothing. Just as the chastity belt was not a piece of clothing. Just as the Star of David pinned on Jews

during the holocaust was not just a bit of cloth. The veil is a tool for the suppression and oppression of women. It is meant to segregate. It is representative of how women are viewed in Islam: sub-human, 'deficient', 'inferior', without rights, and despised. Trapped in a mobile prison not to be heard from or seen. The veiled woman is veiled to prevent her from being seen or touched by anyone other than those who have some form of ownership over her — her father, husband or brother. In many instances it is a matter of life and death. In Iran just recently paramedics were denied access to two sisters who needed emergency assistance because their brother deemed it sinful for the paramedics to touch them. They died as a result. And we have all heard of the example of Saudi Arabia where girls' schools are locked as usual practice to ensure the segregation of the sexes.

"Australia's senior Islamic cleric., has compared unveiled women to 'uncovered meat' implying that they invite rape and sexual assault"

In 2002 when a fire broke out at a school in Mecca, the guards would not unlock the gates and religious police prevented girls from escaping — to the point of even beating them back into the school — because they were not properly veiled; moreover they stopped men who tried to help, warning the men that it was sinful to touch the girls. Fifteen girls died as a result and more than fifty were wounded. As I said - a matter of life and death. Moreover, the veil imposes sexual apartheid and the segregation of the sexes very much like racial apartheid in the former South Africa. But in this instance, in addition to the segregation that is carried out in society, such as separate entrances for women in certain government offices, separate areas for women's seating on buses, the banning of women from certain public arenas like

sport stadiums, a curtain dividing the Caspian sea for segregated swimming and so on, women are forced to carry the divide on their very own backs.

And don't forget the more subtle aspects to it, though just as detrimental, like the sun never touching a woman's hair or body and the adverse health effects of that. And how depressing it must be to be deemed so vile and dangerous as to need constant cover. And imagine the effects of the veil on girl children. Sexualized from age nine, kept segregated from boys, taught that they are different and unequal, restricted from playing, swimming and in general doing things children must do — nothing short of child abuse. And this is not only the situation for women and girls in countries where Islam rules. At least in places like Iran, there is mass resistance in the form of a social protest movement. The veil is also imposed on many women in Europe via threats and intimidation. But because of the respect the veil and religion are granted due to racist cultural relativism, women and girls are often left to the mercy of regressive Islamic organisations and parasitical imams.

A mullah in Green Lane mosque in Birmingham has said, for example: 'Allah has created the woman deficient' and a satellite broadcast from the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdul Aziz al-Sheikh, beamed into the mosque suggested that children should be hit if they don't pray and don't wear the *hijab*. Then there is Australia's senior Islamic cleric, Sheik Taj Aldin al-Hilali, who has compared unveiled women to 'uncovered meat' implying that they invite rape and sexual assault. 'If you take out uncovered meat and place it outside ... without cover, and the cats come to eat it ... whose fault is it, the cats' or the uncovered meat's? The uncovered meat is the problem. If she was in her room, in her home, in her *hijab*, no problem would have occurred.' That women transgress the veil daily is a testimony to their humanity and not the

laws, states or groups that impose it by force or intimidation. No apology, justification, appeasement or cultural relativism can deny the indignity and violence that the veil is and represents. The veil is an offence to 21st-century humanity. It has to be opposed unequivocally. Full stop.



* Maryam Namazie was born in Iran, which her family left after the Iranian revolution. She now lives in the West where she has worked ceaselessly for human rights, particularly on behalf of refugees. She was recently involved in setting up the Council of Ex-Muslims in Britain (see report Page 12).

TIME FOR A LAUGH

Relayed by Doug Everingham

The real reason that we can't have the Ten Commandments posted in a courthouse is this:

You cannot post in a building full of lawyers, judges and politicians...

"Thou Shalt Not Steal,"
 "Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery,"
 and
 "Thou Shall Not Lie"

It creates a hostile work environment

Affie's Graduation Celebration



MEMBER NEWS

Angela Drury



A warm welcome to all **NEW MEMBERS.**

Sincere thanks to the following members for

GENEROUS DONATIONS:

Nan Marsh, Michael Peters, P. Buckle, Dr I Edwards, John Levack, Charles Murray.

Your contributions help keep the Society viable.

Thank you to all who have purchased **Vicky Potempa's autobiography** "Off my Shoulders" - still available from Humanist House for \$35 as a fundraiser for the Humanist Society of NSW. We thank Vicky for her donation and for her fascinating story. (more books available for purchase)

FANCY DRESS & FUNNY HAT PARTY

held on Sunday 9 Dec 07 was a good end to the year and there were 7 prizes with the first prize going to me. Below are photos from the event and one from **Affie's graduation celebration** at the Rose Garden Pavilion in Royal Botanic Gardens in September attended by 61 people.

