

'SIT DOWN GIRLIE'

Girlie wears it well



Walk a mile in my (high heel) shoes

The Age (17 September 2009) picks up an AFP report that women unionists in the United Kingdom have put their foot down concerning high heels. At the Trades Union Congress held in Liverpool Lorraine Jones of the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists objected to women being required to wear high heels in some workplaces to make them look glamorous. She considered this as far from being a trivial issue because of the serious damage high heels can cause to lower limbs and feet. Despite some opposition from another delegate who argued that the union risked being portrayed in the media as 'killjoy fashion police' and should not be telling women what to wear the motion was passed.

Holy Sex!

Girlie's dear old dad used to say that marriage was a public declaration of a very private intention, however Catholic couples are being encouraged to pray together before having sex. The *Prayer Book for Spouses* contains a prayer which couples can recite before getting into bed thereby 'purifying their intentions' so 'the act' is not about selfishness or hedonism. (*Daily Mirror* reprinted in the *Herald Sun*, 5 September 2009).

Whipping girls

A Sudanese woman journalist refused to back down after being sentenced to flogging for the heinous crime of wearing jeans in Khartoum. Her sentence was subsequently reduced to a fine which she also refused to pay but her lawyers said they would try to persuade her to accept the reduced sentence. Lubna Ahmed al-Hussein denied any wrongdoing and argued the issue was one of principle and a woman should be able to wear what she wanted without being whipped for it.

In Malaysia, the Prime Minister has urged a Muslim model who faces caning for drinking beer to appeal the sentence and not just accept her fate. Kartika Sari Dewi Shukarno, 32, was taken into custody by religious officials to be caned but won a reprieve until after Ramadan. If carried out her punishment of six strokes would be the first time a woman would face caning under Islamic law in Malaysia. The mother of two has defied authorities by refusing to appeal against the sentence.

London Collywobbles

Sally Capp, a former solicitor and banker, is the first woman to be appointed as Australia's Agent General in London. Ms Capp will begin the job before the end of the year accompanied by her husband and son. Ms Capp said it would be hard to leave Melbourne because she will be away from the Collingwood Football Club of which she was a board member.

Clean, green and bonking

The 'green' revolution has come to the sex industry. A Berlin brothel suffering from the economic crisis is offering discounts to clients who can prove they arrived by public transport or bicycle. Madame Regina Goetz who runs the *Maison d'envie* or *House of Desire* is cognisant of the fact that her establishment is located in a Green Party stronghold. Now that she is offering an 'eco discount' business is roaring. 'In a business like ours, there are always ups and downs', she said. One of her prostitutes, described as 'a pretty blonde in her thirties with short hair sporting fish net tights and sexy red lacy undies under her turquoise dressing-gown said, 'We have a really nice atmosphere here, the neighbours are great'. <news.com.au> Comments on the story included, 'Can you please publish the address. I can't find a telephone listing or get any hits via a google search'.

Abortion

The *Journal of Law and Medicine* (2009, v17,2) contains two articles on abortion law. Ben White and Lindy Willmott explore the recent Queensland decision of *Queensland v B* [2008] 2 Qd R 562 which has significant implications for the law governing consent. The judgment imposes a court approval for terminations of pregnancies of minors who are not Gillick-competent. The authors argue such an approach is an unjustifiable extension of the reasoning in *Marion's* case. It is the first Queensland decision on medical terminations and reveals systemic problems with the Queensland criminal law and the need for reform. It involved an application by a hospital requesting *parens patriae* jurisdiction to authorise the termination of an 18 week pregnancy of a 12-year-old girl.

Naomi Oreb critiques the likely impact of the *Abortion Act 2008* in Victoria arguing the Act was supposed to reflect rather than alter current clinical practice. She traces the development of Victoria's abortion law and compares the legislative model with the common law approach. She discusses uncertainties on abortion law imposed by the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms focussing on the intersection between a woman's right to choose and doctors' rights to freedom of conscience.

MERRI CHRISTMAS is a feminist lawyer.