**Discrimination is in vogue**

Dame Vivienne Westwood, who founded the punk fashion style in England, has criticised the magazine industry as being racist. She believes editors should be compelled to include a quota of black and ethnic minority models. Magazine editors have complained that if they use black or ethnic models on front covers then sales will drop. Dame Vivienne says too bad, ‘They have to be prepared to take a drop every now and again and then people would get used to it and think, ‘I should buy this magazine because there’s a beautiful black girl on it’ (The Age 15 October 2007).

**Beauty parlour goss**

Black women voters in the United States are facing a dilemma in choosing their candidates for the Presidential primaries. Many want a black President but they also like Hillary Clinton. Katharine Seelye reporting from Columbia, South Carolina has been listening to the goss from the beauty parlours that she describes as ‘the social hubs for black women in the Carolinas.’ Clara Vereen has been a rural hairstylist for more than 40 of her 61 years and she says, ‘I’ve got enough black in me to want somebody black to be our President. But I want to be real too.’ One part of being ‘real’ for Ms Vereen and other blacks is their fear that a black President would be assassinated. She wonders if not voting for Barack Obama might mean he stays safe. Black women will be an important constituency in South Carolina where voting in the Presidential primaries may occur as early as January 2008. Black women are also strong supporters of Hillary Clinton.

**Libs don’t need an Emily’s List**

Siobhain Ryan (The Australian 15 October 2007) predicts that Labor will boost the number of women in its ranks if voters continue to favour Labor. Emily’s List is a group that promotes women’s participation in the Labor Party and its National Convener, Hutch Hussein, is hoping that there could be 33 women members in a Labor caucus, an increase from 20. Julie Bishop, then minister assisting the Prime Minister on Women’s Issues, saw no need to set targets for representation of women citing what she saw as the Liberals’ outstanding record on female representation.

**Go Doris**

Newly anointed Nobel prize for literature winner Doris Lessing is reportedly delighted with her win. Two weeks prior to her 88th birthday, she was the oldest recipient of the $A1.7 million prize and was quoted as saying, ‘I’ve won all the prizes in Europe, every bloody one. I’m delighted to win them all, the whole lot … It’s a royal flush.’ (The Age 12 October 2007) She has written 25 important works but is best known for *The Golden Notebook* which the Nobel Academy has described as, ‘belong[ing] to the handful of books that have informed the 20th century view of the male-female relationship.’ The Nobel citation described Doris Lessing as, ‘that epicist of the female experience, who with scepticism, fire and visionary power has subjected a divided civilisation to scrutiny.’

**Get thee out of the nunnery**

Matthew Day in Warsaw reports on a battle royal between an order of Polish nuns and the Vatican (The Age 12 October 2007). The Sisters of Bethany refused to comply with a court order to leave their convent in the village of Kazimierz Dolny, south-east of Warsaw. The fight began back in 2005 when the Vatican sacked the order’s Mother Superior Jadwiga Ligocka who had claimed ‘private inspiration by the Holy Spirit’. The Sisters then locked themselves into the convent and failed to follow orders from the Vatican. In full view of the television cameras the officers moved in, evicted the 64 nuns and arrested two who were said to be abusive and aggressive.

**Only in America**

The Age Odd Spot (18 October 2007) tells of a lawsuit that probably could only happen in the Land of the Free. An American bride is suing a florist for $451,543 because her wedding flowers were the wrong colour. Elana Glatt claims Posy Floral Design were supposed to supply dark rust and green hydrangeas for the table centrepieces but instead used pastel pink and green.

**Who cares for carers?**

Carers for people with mental or physical disabilities suffer from ‘extraordinary’ rates of depression and have the lowest sense of well-being. Robert Cummins of Deakin University presented these findings at the launch of Carer’s Week during October 2007. Women make up the bulk of carers.

MERRY CHRISTMAS is a feminist lawyer