'SIT DOWN GIRLIE'
Girlie plods through the cesspool of sex, marriage, crime, taxes and witchcraft

Where's dad?
In February 2011 the Australian Institute of Family Studies (‘AIFS’) released a study into shared care arrangements involving 10,000 parents who had been separated on average for 15 months and involved children aged up to 17 (Patricia Karvelas, The Australian, 1 February 2011). The study follows the 2006 changes to the family law system encouraging greater involvement of both parents in their children’s lives after separation and a 30 per cent increase in shared care orders.

The study examined parents before they reached the courts and found children in separated families still spend much more time with their mother than their father. One of the authors, Ruth Weston, said in judicially-determined cases, where the number of contact hours were specified, shared care had increased from four per cent in the two years before the 2006 reforms to 34 per cent in the second half of 2008. But, explained Ms Weston, the study revealed about 80 per cent of children spent most nights of the year with their mother and a third never stayed overnight with their father. AIFS’s director Alan Hayes said that, although children spent more time with their mother than their father following a break-up, most parents in the study believed the arrangements worked well.

The study finds 11 per cent of children never see their father and 23 per cent see their father only during the daytime. Child support agency data showed that, from June 2003 to June 2008, the proportion of new cases where shared care was awarded rose from 9 to 17 per cent.

Robbery gone wrong?
Homosexuality is illegal in Uganda and a new anti-gay bill has been introduced. If passed, the law will introduce the death penalty for the offence of ‘aggravated homosexuality’. David Kato, a gay activist in Kampala Uganda, was killed in January 2011 and at his funeral the presiding priest pronounced homosexuality as evil and punishable by God. The Anglican priest Thomas Musoke declared, ‘You must repent. Even the animals know the difference between a male and a female’. A scuffle ensued when the leader of the group Sexual Minorities Uganda, Pepe Julian Onziema, pulled the microphone from the priest. The Ugandan police have said Kato’s killing has nothing to do with his gay activism — it was just ‘a robbery gone wrong’. This was despite the anti-gay tabloid Rolling Stone (not the music mag) running a story calling on readers to hang gay rights advocates.

Witches bitches
Beware! Romanian witches, tarot readers, astrologers, parapsychologists and spiritual mediums are angry (Roger Boyes, The Weekend Australian World, 8–9 January 2011). The black magic practitioners gathered on the banks of the Danube to cast spells against the government which plans to make them liable to a 16 per cent income tax. ‘Queen Witch’ Bratara Buzea has warned her spells always work, ‘We do harm to those who harm us’. Witchcraft and associated practitioners and body embalmers and driving instructors must now register as self-employed, pay income tax, provide receipts, be accountable for their spells and predictions, and contribute to social security and pension funds. While these practices were banned under communism, they have re-emerged to become what authorities describe as lucrative businesses.

The Cock’s Revenge
An audience member at an illegal cockfight north of Los Angeles has died after being stabbed by a bird with a knife attached to its leg (The Age, 9 February 2011). Kern County Coroner concluded the man died of an accidental sharp force injury to his right calf. Sheriff’s spokesperson Ray Pruitt said it was unclear whether a delay in seeking medical attention contributed to the death.

Resting with the Saints
The interestingly named Gore Hill was once the site of Saint Mary MacKillop’s burying ground. Now, for a mere $5000 ($8000 for a couple), you can be interred in the beautifully renovated Gore Hill Wall, unveiled in February 2011 with bronze imagery depicting Mary’s life, and space for the cremated remains of 250 people. Don’t miss this fantastic offer; places are limited, so die soon to ensure your resting place with the Saint.

Hippity Hop it, you backbiters
A worker at a childcare centre in Pakenham, Victoria has won an unfair dismissal case before Fair Work Australia. Hippity Hop Childcare sacked the worker claiming she had been ‘backbiting’ by saying one of her co-workers was lazy and another wasn’t a competent carer. Fair Work Australia Commissioner John Ryan stated that while a childcare centre was defined as a small business, the backbiting policy was an extremely blunt instrument. The worker was awarded $9480. Small businesses can fire employees without notice when there is serious misconduct.

‘Get me to the church on time’
In South America it is a tradition for brides to turn up late for their weddings; sometimes up to an hour late. The Priest at the Nossa Senhora de Lourdes Cathedral in Apucarana, Roberto Carrara, is fed up with late brides disrupting his busy schedule and has announced a $US300 deposit on weddings, redeemable only if the bride is on time. OMAY GAWD is a feminist lawyer.