



The Howell Family

Your Missionaries to

New Zealand —

IN THE NEWS

POLITICS

US Free Trade - US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice hailed warmer ties with New Zealand but offered no commitment on a free trade deal the country wants with Washington. "New Zealand is certainly seen as a friend and an ally," said Rice at a joint news conference with Prime Minister Helen Clark. The reference to New Zealand as an ally was one of the strongest public statements of support for Wellington since relations between the two countries were ruptured in the mid-1980s by New Zealand's anti-nuclear policy. The policy prevented US naval vessels from docking in New Zealand because the United States refused to either confirm or deny the presence of nuclear weapons on board. The US retaliated by banning military exercises with New Zealand. New Zealand's major exports to the United States include meat, dairy products, wine and timber. Rice is the first Secretary of State to visit New Zealand in a decade and her staff said the two-day trip was part of an effort to become more involved in Pacific issues.

SOCIETY

Smacking - There will be a referendum to be held on smacking. Kiwi Party leader and petition organizer Larry Baldock said that the petition had been certified by the Clerk of the House as having enough valid signatures. "This is great news

and a huge victory," he said. When the petition was originally handed to the Clerk in February, 285,027 valid signatures were needed. It failed because too many were ruled to be invalid. This time, around 310,000 signatures were valid - 25,000 more than required to force a referendum. The referendum will be on the question: "should a smack as part of good parental correction be a criminal offence in New Zealand?" Mr. Baldock called for the referendum to be held with this year's election. "None of the reasons being given by the Prime Minister for delaying it makes any sense at all, and is simply a tactic for her to try and avoid this being an election issue. She will not drown out the voice of the people and should realize there is no point further angering everyone by delaying the inevitable."

SOCIETY

Name Change - A judge has forced a nine-year-old's parents to change her name. The lawyer for the girl, originally called Talula, told the judge she was so embarrassed of her name she refused to reveal it to friends. Her lawyer said she feared being mocked and teased. Family Court Judge Rob Murfitt temporarily placed the girl in the court's guardianship in February while a new name was picked. In his ruling Judge Murfitt said the name made a fool of the girl, setting her up with an unnecessary social disability.

Happily Married - Still happily married after 74 years, a couple celebrated one of the country's longest-lasting marriages. Both in their late nineties, Win and Alfie Gaze are still brimming with affection for each other, 74 years after tying the knot. The pair says they have always enjoyed their big family - and especially each other's company. Win says she and her husband get by tolerating each other's habits. Their family believes it's the third longest marriage in New Zealand history, just two years short of the record.

SCIENCE

Aviation Invention - Kiwi inventor makes aviation history. Christchurch inventor Glenn Martin has made what is believed to be the world's first viable jet pack. The prototype is being publicly unveiled at America's Oshkosh Air Show in Wisconsin, and it is being touted as a breakthrough in aviation history. "This is going to change the way people look at aviation and the way people get into aviation," says Martin, Jet Pack inventor. Back in the sixties there was the 'Bell Rocket Pack', which would only fly for 26 seconds, but Martin's machine is a quantum leap forward, being able to fly for up to half an hour.

NEWS SOURCES

- www.nzherald.co.nz
- www.newstalkzb.co.nz
- www.thekiwiparty.org.nz