

20

years

noseweek



TAKE COVER!

It's 20 years, since Noseweek was launched. But where did it come from and where's it going? By Martin Welz

NOSEWEEK OWES A LOT OF IT'S original inspiration to the British magazine, *Private Eye* – but not as much as its long-defunct garage-produced predecessor called *Nose* once did.

Nose operated more-or-less undercover in the early 1980s as a “newsletter” sent to the 800-or-so paid-up “members” of The Paper Club – a device to avoid having to register as a newspaper (with all the nasty legal and political leverage that gave the apartheid government). It was produced as a weekend hobby by myself and (the late) fellow *Sunday Express* journalist Wilmar Utting with contributions from colleagues and friends.

At the *Express*, our investigations enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the editor, Ken Owen. But we had come to the conclusion that readers found investigative reporting heavy going, if not impenetrable, because of the formal, worthy reporting style editors and newspaper tradition prescribed. Much of the really exciting, interesting stuff couldn't be published, forbidden by one or other law, or because it would offend the newspaper's politics, its shareholders, or its advertisers. Or simply because it did not fit the convention of what constituted a news report.

We also rebelled against the prevailing newspaper convention that required doctors, lawyers and bank managers – the professional and the powerful – to be quoted with awe and reverence as authorities not to be questioned. It not only made for dull copy; it was frequently misguided and inevitably undemocratic.

Using the satirical style employed by *Private Eye* was one way of livening things up, and levelling the social playing field – but that's not journal-

ism. *Private Eye* offered another option. Thanks to the chance intervention of the gifted Irish journalist Claud Cockburn half a century ago – who caused a sensation with both his content and style when he stood in as editor at the last moment so the founders could go on holiday. To this day the first few pages of *Private Eye* contain entirely factual “insider” reporting – written in an irreverent, confiding style. That worked for us.

* * *

South Africa in the 1980s was effectively a security state at war. Journalists could not report on riots or many other events without the prior permission of the police. They could not report on issues ranging from conditions in prisons to the nuclear programme. Reporting critically on what went down in the so-called Commissioner's Courts that enforced the Pass Laws was regarded as treason by the security police. No journalist even thought to write about behind-the-scenes goings-on at the Reserve Bank, or at any bank for that matter. God resided there.

It was the decade after the Soweto Riots and detention without trial was the order of the day. In that general atmosphere of fear many found security in unquestioning obedience.

Newspapers were in decline, the *Sunday Express* was about to close, followed shortly by the *Rand Daily Mail*. The government banned a few more. Oppression was everywhere. We saw it as a challenge, believing – as have others over the centuries – that you can tell a great deal of uncomfortable truth and get away with it by clothing it in humour. Writers and story tellers have devised a remarkable number of

ingenious ways of conveying a message without actually saying it; you can more safely ridicule those in power if you first make yourself ridiculous.

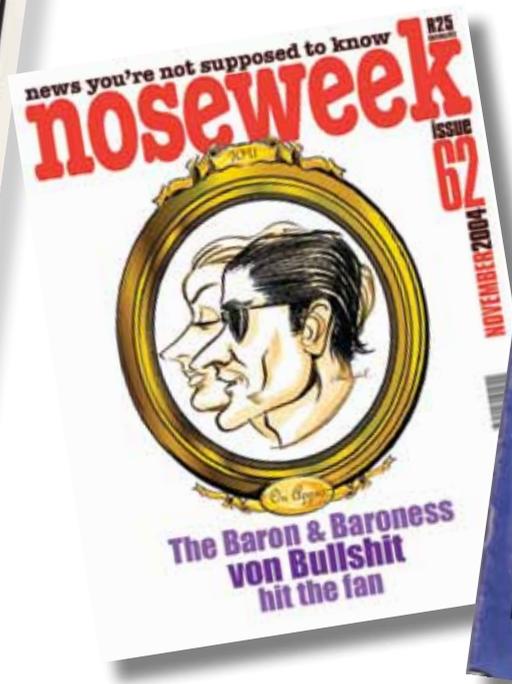
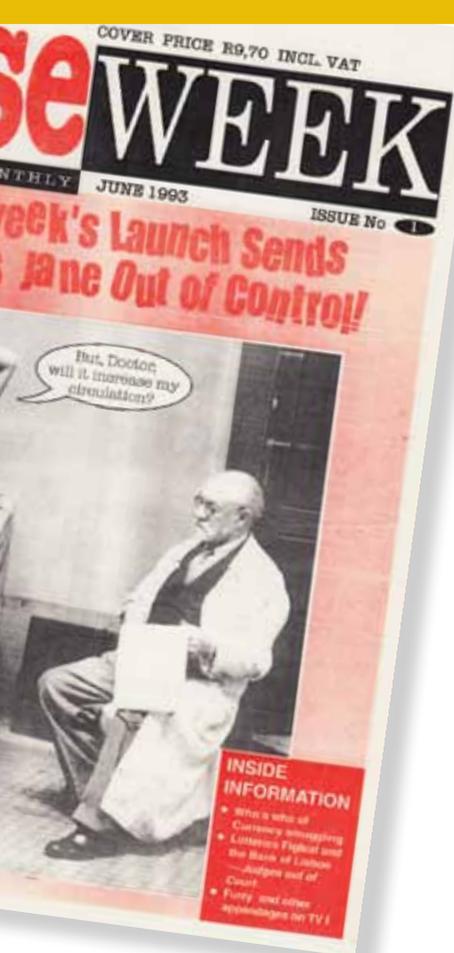
We envisaged a magazine in which we could tell news stories – in the voice of a story teller who entertained intelligent readers and led them to read between the lines and draw the obvious conclusions.

We learnt two important lessons in the course of producing the 10 issues we managed to bring out of *Nose* magazine: you don't need satire to make a point about South African business and politics. Just report forthrightly, and South Africans respond – first with shock, then with the laughter of recognition. Our reality is often so outrageous it doesn't need to be caricatured.

Also, we soon enough discovered that tweaking the beards of authority by telling the truth remained a risky game. *Nose* magazine came to a sticky end when the Minister of Law and Order, Louis le Grange, had me charged with criminal libel after we reported – based on an illicit tip-off from within the Revenue Office – that he was being investigated for tax fraud and had tried to use political leverage to suppress the investigation.

I was rescued from a dismal fate by the Receiver, a Mr du Plessis, who deserves to be remembered. Although he had not been our source, he bravely





stepped forward to testify in my defence. I was found not guilty, but the trial effectively bankrupted me.

Down, but not out. I and others like me – Max du Preez and Jacques Pauw who founded *VryeWeekblad* and the refugees from the *RDM* who started the *Weekly Mail* (now the *Mail & Guardian*) had tasted freedom. When, 10 years later, the new democratic era had dawned and I had no job, the thought of reviving *Nose* as a commercial venture became irresistible.

Three friends, varsity pal (now Judge) Eberhard Bertelsmann, schoolmate (by then top dog at Arthur Anderson) Pierre du Toit and Mary Slack (teach her father not to give her a directorship!) funded the first print bill, and in June 1993, *Nose* was reborn as *Noseweek*. My partner in the new venture, Maureen Barnes, found the title *Nose* “too physical” and suggested adding the “week” bit. Never mind that the plan was to produce a monthly magazine, and, besides, the play on the better-known *Newsweek* might give us some borrowed status.

In fact, the joke earned us an amused mention in the international edition of *Noseweek*. So much for making ourselves look ridiculous.

The first issue of *Noseweek* contained what would become our

characteristic mix of serious reporting leavened with tongue-in-cheek irreverence. Our first cover launched a full-frontal attack on what would become one of our standard targets: hypocrisy in the mainstream media.

South African *Cosmopolitan* editor Jane Raphaely had decided to feature an effectively nude Madonna in leather harness on the cover of her magazine to attract male readers. (It was a great success.) To justify this commercial exploitation of female nudity she argued that Madonna was in control of her situation and not a victim.

For our first cover, we found a famous historical photograph of the French impressionist painter Matisse, sketchbook in hand, sitting back to sceptically survey his shapely nude model. Thanks to Photoshop, we could perch Raphaely's head and pearls on the nude's shoulders, declaring in a bubble, “but, doctor, will it increase my circulation?”

If it makes her feel any better, I reckon that cover increased our sales by 40% – from 600 copies to 1,000 – in one fell swoop! And my pious editorial justification: “How better for a woman to assert her unique, individual femininity than to take off her clothes?” made it into the *South African Book of Quotable Quotes*.

Inside, straight out of the starting blocks, we took on the South African Reserve Bank and the country's two largest law firms, Webber Wentzel (now Webbers) and Sonnenberg, Hoffmann and Galombik (now Edward Na-

than Sonnenbergs or ENS.) All three regularly inhabit our pages to this day.

The story signalled to readers that *Noseweek* was willing to take on the biggest targets – usually avoided for fear of litigation and of losing advertising revenue. Banks, note, are probably the biggest single litigators and the biggest advertisers in the world.

Our story told how wealthy Sea Point property speculator Norman Benjamin had used the services of these two major law firms to devise a scheme to smuggle several millions offshore to his daughter, Rosemary, in Texas, by fraud, and in contravention of various currency control laws.

It told of how, despite having these legal heavyweights as his co-conspirators, the scheme had gone horribly wrong, ending in Benjamin himself being defrauded of all his money. The moral of the piece: just because major law firms are prepared to devise schemes to assist wealthy clients in breaking the law, doesn't necessarily mean they are good at it.

Perhaps even more telling: the judge hearing Benjamin's case took no note of the role played by these law firms in a fraudulent scheme. No mention was made of reporting them to the Law Society. Even the Reserve Bank chose to ignore the case, which raised the question: Does the legal system serve justice, or does it exist to control the lower classes while serving the interests of the rich and powerful? That is

a question posed time and again by *Noseweek* stories – except that by now the answer is more crudely evident.

That first issue of *Noseweek* also contained the first cartoon by Gus Ferguson (See illustration, page 26). It sweetly defused an obnoxious crudity that confronts us whenever we use a public subway, with a gentle humour that was lost on the likes of the SA Reserve Bank – who used it as an excuse to cancel their subscription.

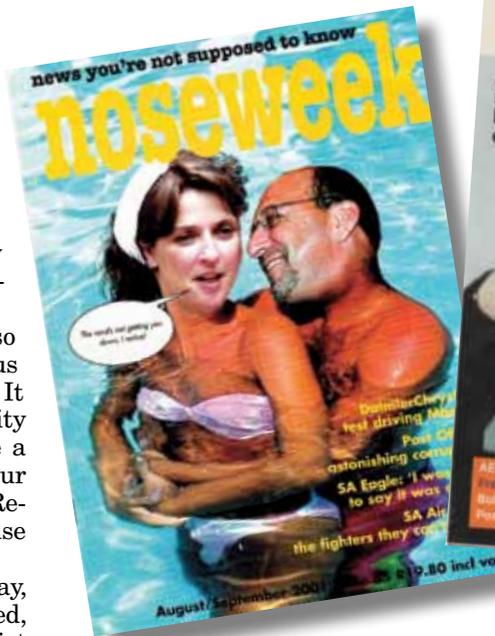
The Reserve Bank has stayed away, and Gus is with us still. He was joined, from *Nose26* onwards, by columnist Harold Strachan who continues to have the Last Word. Harold also drew the cover cartoon for *Nose42*!

After 40 issues *Noseweek's* satirical covers were abandoned when some readers began to take them literally, then accused us of fraud, saying they appeared to herald a news story that invariably wasn't there.

Gone, but many of those old covers can hardly be forgotten. One (*Nose20*) featured Madiba in friendly conversation with one of the Spice Girls who, like thousands of others, had been lined up by her publicist to borrow shine from the great man's aura. To his kindly question, "You don't have a clue who I am, do you?" the sweet, ever smiling girl replies, "Well, not exactly, no."

The cover of *Nose28* has former Judge Willem Heath explaining his cop-out report on the Reserve Bank's shady Absa lifeboat in one cruelly satirical line, "They put the electrodes about here". The lifeboat story, first floated in *Nose3*, has become the ghost ship that still regularly haunts the Reserve Bank and Absa's horizon. It's most recent appearance was recorded in *Nose160*.

The cover of *Nose34*, heralding yet another round in the Arms Deal, featured then-ANC Chief Whip Tony Yengeni – a recipient of one of the "discount" Mercedes Benz 4x4s given to a host of officials and politicians to ease the way of the Arms Deal – on a joyride with Armscor chief executive Lou Swan in a Merc driven by Daimler Chrysler boss Christoph Kopke, whose speech bubble declares: "Ve are taking zem for ze ride." As, off corse, zay ver... as you'll see in the news pages of this anniversary issue.



And then some scandal! On the cover *Nose35*, in August/September 2001, we publicly revealed what had been long known in the inner circles of politics and business: that then-Finance Minister Trevor Manuel and the head of Treasury, Maria Ramos, (pictured in a loving embrace in a sparkling swimming pool) were having an affair. That raised several issues of propriety, not least a serious conflict/confluence of interest.

Noseweek was headed for its 40th issue when we eventually decided to address the problem casual readers had with our satirical covers. The solution: use drawn cartoons rather than photographs – South Africans accept that drawn cartoons are a joke or a sendup. For the following 30 covers we experimented with various cartoonists, in search of a style that suited us – and one who could handle us. He arrived in the form of Dr Jack, whose first *Noseweek* cover appeared on *Nose69*. He has done three out of every four covers since, his cover drawings effectively becoming part of our identity. It comes as no surprise to us that he has been chosen Africa's Cartoonist of the Year. (See Page 11)

For variety – or when the subject calls for a different style, Colin Daniel or Dov Fedler do perfectly – as Dov has done for these celebratory pages.

Cartoons can also be drawn to reflect a particular character and context – aptly demonstrated on the cover of *Nose62* announcing our exposure of Constantia's Baron and Baroness von Maltzahn, as the Baron and Baroness von Bullshit, the umpteenth foreign scoundrels to have come to the Cape to hide their ill-gotten gains, while managing (with embarrassing ease)

to present themselves to gullible, fawning locals as aristocrats or "retired" bankers. (Remember the thieving Harksens, beloved mega-patrons of the legal profession, featured on the cover of *Nose40*?)

Another brilliant example is Colin Daniel's iconic portrait of Brett Kebble as "Fat of the Land" (apologies to Aubrey Beardsley) illustrating another *Noseweek* theme: how celebrity status is too easily granted to the very rich and influential.

Top businessmen, such as Pepkor boss Christo Wiese; fertiliser and rugby millionaire Louis Luyt; FNB boss Basil Hersov; electronics magnate Bill Venter; and Mutual and Federal's Douw Steyn – oh, and even Mr Corporate Governance Mervyn King (King Pong on the cover of *Nose45*) did not look all that good after a typical *Noseweek* once-over.

In the case of Brett Kebble, he – and we – took the exercise to levels not easily equalled. When *Noseweek* first cast its jaundiced eye on his fat paunch and gibbering jowls, he was still revered as national patron of the arts, a brilliant businessman and a progressive sponsor of black empowerment. A number of important people in politics and business had to have known that all was not what it seemed. Even the directors of Investec Bank knew, but chose to secretly exploit their knowledge of his criminal vulnerability for their own massive profit. No-one was saying anything. Only *Noseweek* dared take him on, revealing to the world that he was in fact a thief, a fraud and a brazen tax evader on a spectacular scale (possibly exceeded – if recently published figures are to be believed – only by ponzi operator and international money launderer Barry Tannenbaum, who made the cover of *Nose117*).



So strongly was *Noseweek* associated with Kebble's ultimate downfall, that at 2am one day, I received a call on my home phone from an anonymous caller informing me of his assassination only hours earlier.

It was, however, Kebble's corruption of pretty well the entire younger generation of ANC leadership, plus

a fair number of their seniors, that caused the most serious and lasting damage. The youth he corrupted have proceeded to perpetuate his corrupt lifestyle, prompting a *Noseweek* cover that many perceived to be bizarre if not in bad taste: "Kebble isn't Dead", declared *Nose*72, the fourth cover to feature him.

And only recently, one of his early recruits in business, Sekunjalo's Iqbal Survé graced the cover of *Nose*156 – related to his involvement in some fishy business with the Minister of Fisheries. Currently Survé is dodging questions about the source of funds with which he is to buy control of the Independent newspaper group.

Finally, lest it (and he) be forgotten: One of *Noseweek's* best was the debunking story in *Nose*9 about millionaire US tax fugitive and con-artist Dr Robert Hall – yet another who had set himself up on an old Cape wine farm. He all but got us closed down, when he sued for defamation and dragged us through a seven-week high court trial. We won, but the costs and effort silenced us for more than a year – until our loyal readers came to the rescue with sufficient funds to get *Noseweek* to the printers again.

While *Noseweek* is better-known for debunking false celebrities, it has on occasion done the reverse: reinstating and celebrating those unfairly denigrated or others who have since redeemed themselves – among them the late Philip Frame (posthumously); currency smuggler and fall-guy

Michael Addinall (*Nose*56); Jimmy de Lange who got a long jail term – after a questionable trial – but used the time to get a university education (*Nose*92); and sports coach and administrator Laraine Lane (in this issue).

Next in ranking – after the rich and infamous – came the financially powerful and falsely caring institutions such as banks and insurance companies. FNB took the full-frontal, back in *Nose*3, with a headline: "Would you buy a second-hand car from this bank?" It has since been the subject of another 38 articles and three covers. Investec has been the subject of 35 stories, got a mention in many, many more, and scored four covers. Absa stars in 50-odd stories, gets many more mentions and scores three covers.

Nedbank has been the subject of 26 stories and three covers. Search our website and read just the headlines for a treat!

So much for talking to the powerful about themselves. Even more important has been our commitment to serving the interests of the "small guy" who's been abused by his boss or his bank, or been left behind by arrogant or neglectful officialdom. Most of our days are spent on such stories. You will find them in every one of *Noseweek's* 165 issues.

Many come from whistleblowers near the heart of the wrongdoing, for whom *Noseweek* is the trusted destination of choice.

Two examples come instantly to mind: the 500 impoverished road accident victims whose RAF awards were stolen by their attorneys, H Mohamed and Co. Alerted by a brave whistleblower, Mark Hess, *Noseweek* took up their cause, the lawyers were jailed and the victims got their money.

Then there's avid *Noseweek* reader Sydney Nkatsha who called from the



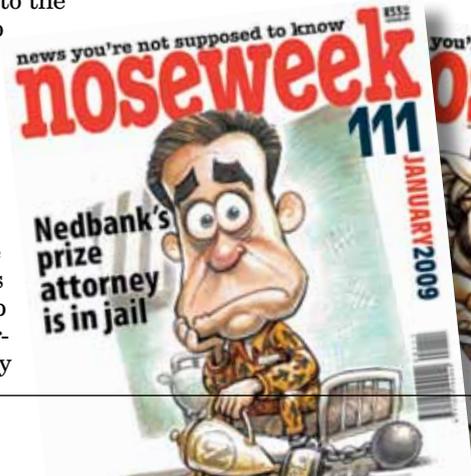
Eastern Cape to tell us how his neighbour, Arrie Johannes, had lost his home in what was clearly a property scam. It took us just over three months to plough through the paperwork, two more of dealing and demanding answers, before we were ready to write the story. It continued over four issues (97, 98, 99 & 109). The fraudulent sale in execution was eventually reversed by the high court in Grahamstown in a precedent-setting judgment.

Issue 4 saw a change in *Noseweek's* masthead with the introduction of the strapline "News you're not supposed to know". There is much that government, big business and other habitual criminals don't wish their voters, their customers, their investors and their robbed victims to know.

There's an argument for every claim to secrecy: in the Reserve Bank Act; the Income Tax Act; the Divorce Act; the Children's Act; the Police Act; the Companies Act – even for "client confidentiality", "proprietary information" and National Key Points.

But we should be as frightened of secrecy as we are of the dark. What human beings will do if they think they can't be seen!

To *Noseweek*, it has always been, and remains, a provocation. We... [*That's enough.* – Ed] ■



Through the years, *Noseweek* has relied heavily on its readers for their support, their criticism and their story ideas. Nowhere is this better reflected than in the vibrant letters pages. From the outset, readers have shared our trials, tribulations and even our joys. Twenty years on, we use this birthday to celebrate historically with a selection of letters which appeared in the 20 issues produced in the difficult first five years.

1993

Banker's reserve

I ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE FIRST issue of *Noseweek*. For obvious reasons, eg cover page and page 9 [see cartoon below], I cannot associate myself with your publication. Kindly remove my name from the circulation list.

CF Swanepoel
General Manager
SA Reserve Bank
Pretoria

Obviously you are so obsessed with sex (cover page) and rude jokes (page 9) that you failed to notice pages 3,4,5,6,7 and 8, which should have concerned you more. Your much-appreciated letter, together with the Reserve Bank's failure to stop the illegal flight of billions of rands from South Africa, lends support to the long-held theory that the wankles at the Reserve Bank generally look at the wrong pages. Regarding your request to dissociate yourself from our publication, regrettably, with things being as they are at the Reserve Bank, we are unable to promise anything. – Ed

Frank's taste

Re: Cape Town's mayor, Frank van der Velde (Nose1).

I'M NOT SURPRISED HE SWIMS SO HAPPILY off Green Point in a sea polluted with municipal sewerage – he talks so much shit, he's used to the flavour.

CJE
Claremont

Break-in at No 10

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS is still in a quiet sweat about a most unfortunate break-in at 10 Hamilton Street, Pretoria, in mid-March. Minister Pik Botha shares the President's

offices at the Union Buildings, from where statements are regularly issued denying involvement with Angola's Unita movement. Less well-known is the "Angola section" of Foreign Affairs which is installed in rented accommodation – at 10 Hamilton Street.

M
Johannesburg

Bullion on banks of the Buffalo

WHAT A RELIEF IT IS TO READ OF GOOD, clean, old-fashioned dirt, instead of the new South African politics.

Are you going to do something about the foreign millionaires who are buying up properties around the country? There's one in East London that becomes curiuser and curiuser. Is there bullion on the banks of the Buffalo?

JDL
Cathcart

Under the bedclothes

I ENJOYED NOSE1, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT what I expected. I was looking forward

to something humorous, but found that it reports on various acts of skullduggery in a very serious way.

As for your humour: surely you could find some way to score off Jane, other than by putting her nude on the cover? I live among old-fashioned, harmless old folk. It's a pity I have to read the modern equivalent of the *Police Gazette* under the bedclothes, for fear of being thought a voyeur.

I wish you every success. Let us get some of these pirates behind bars.

SG Appel
Vereeniging

Dr Zackyl & Mr Take-you-for-a-ride

After Sharpeville, Anglo subsidiary LTA won the contract to build the multi-million-rand, riot-proof new headquarters for the Department of Bantu Administration, nerve centre of the apartheid system in Pretoria. There to hand over the keys at the opening ceremony was LTA chairman Zac de Beer – better known as leader of the opposition Progressive Party. The Anglo-controlled press obligingly did not record the event. Noseweek was less obliging, prompting this reader's response:

DE BEERS WERE COSIER WITH THE REGIME than you can imagine. On the road out of Kimberley lies the De Beers game farm Rooipoort. On it, is a historical building known as the Shooting Box.

Here, Harry and the Boys from Anglo and De Beers do some shooting and relaxing. Here, too, were invited (in the '70s and '80s) most of the military and Nationalist top brass to relax, shoot and talk. Invitations came from Harry himself.

Most guests behaved, except for Magnus and a few of his cronies: often at night they would creep in on a sleeping comrade and douse him with a bucket of water. Ha, ha.

One wonders, of course, what was



The offensive Gus cartoon: see "Banker's reserve" above

discussed between the brass and their hosts, staunch supporters of the old Progressive Party.

Roamer
Cape

Fear and trembling at NAT press?

I TRIED TO BUY YOUR MAGAZINE IN [Nasionale Pers's] Leisure Books, Cape Town and was advised that they were "not permitted to sell it". Is this in the spirit of the free flow of information?

Cameron Gray
Cape Town

■ *Just prior to publication of Nose3 (August 1993) the directors of CNA-Gallo, owners of 90% of the book and magazine outlets in South Africa, including CNA and Exclusive Books, heard a malicious rumour that Noseweek was causing strop and would be sued for millions. They panicked, and banned it from their stores. This was conveyed to our readers in the Nose3 editorial. Noseweek and its loyal and influential readers immediately went on the campaign trail.*

Free pass for struggle folk?

AS A FOUNDER SUBSCRIBER TO THE original *Nose* that ceased publication in 1984, I looked forward to your re-entry into the national sewers. Three issues on and so far OK. The hatchet jobs on the Van der Veldes and Zac de Beer were a bit contrived, but, what the hell.

But wait, something is missing. Not a word about the struggle folk. No frauds, lechers, bullies or rogues in the liberation constituency? Can it be that Welz has lost his balls and joined the ranks of the politically correct?

Robin Carlisle, MP
Cape Town

Why, Mr Carlisle, how nice to find you floating down our sewer. The Van der Veldes were a bit of a bad joke, but De Beers? We note you carefully side-step the problem of Zac's secret (business) dealings in Pretoria. Like friend Tony, do you fear losing Anglo's pocket money? The "liberation constituency" has yet to acquire the power and money sufficient to justify our closer attention. But each dog will have his day. Meanwhile, to show we are not altogether unaccommodating, this month's DP

scoundrel, Johannesburg city councillor Clive Gilbert – who for years enjoyed the protection of party big nobs Uncle Zac and Gubby Gibson – is hoping to join the ANC. Maybe that way he plans to speed their progress to perfidy. – Ed

■ *The anti-CNA campaign continued: Readers will note that, while they eagerly market smut, bookshops controlled by CNA/The Literary Group – which include all branches of Exclusive Books, Bookworm and Pilgrims – still banish Noseweek from their shelves "for business reasons". Many reputable, independent bookshops and newspapers do, however, stock us. Call us for your nearest supplier – and remember this when you are shopping for books. Support independent booksellers and support freedom of speech. – Ed*

The FNB story

WE ARE AN AGGRIEVED CREDITOR OF KPL-Etsa in liquidation and commend your bravery in publishing an unabridged version (*Nose3*) of the events culminating in that company's demise.

The absence of advertising in your publication, welcome as it is, is always going to make its future precarious and expensive. Our decision to subscribe is made in an attempt to enhance your ability to publish the truth and be damned – a dangerous course and probably, alas, a recipe for trouble. Government, big business – the establishment – do not suffer lightly fools who rush in where angels fear to tread!

We, for our part, have publicly pledged our company to a code of ethics and honesty. We wish you every success for the future.

ED Hinton
Company Secretary
O-Line Support Systems (Pty) Ltd,
Johannesburg

Worthy objective

I AM GETTING LONG IN THE TOOTH, OUT OF touch and losing my sense of smell, therefore I was stimulated and revived when I came across issues 2 and 3 of *Noseweek*. These have provided me with a great deal of entertainment, following the activities of some of our major African stars, gyrating amid their concomitant constellations viz: Zac, FNB, LTA, Stals, Basil Hersov and his

royals, Kultural Chris and the lovely Lorna. Our orbits have all collided in the past. Any research into the habits of the denizens of the deep must be a worthy objective. Herewith an investment for one year's subscription – with good wishes for increasing success.

Kenneth Birch
Northlands

Date for a laugh

AT LEAST I KNOW FOR DEFINITE THAT THERE is one day each month that I will smile in the new South Africa – the day that I receive my edition of *Noseweek*!

F Michael Judin
Sandton

No-bell for our Fanny

RE: THE ATTACK ON FRANCES KENDALL (wife of Leon Louw) concerning the publicity given to her nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. When you say *Noseweek* is "banned" from bookshops controlled by the CNA/Literary Group, surely you mean the CNA *et al* choose not to stock it? Presumably they are simply showing their good business sense and good taste.

Gavin Weiman
Chairman, Groundswell
Norwood

Readers may write to the Louws, their publishers, Amagi Books, and their support group, Groundswell, all at the same address. Unlike Noseweek, their various books on The Solution for SA, the Sex-Y Factor and other important matters are available at all branches of CNA and Exclusive Books. – Ed

R1,000 for us, good word for Zac

THANK YOU FOR FORWARDING THE issues I was unable to obtain at the CNA. Although I must congratulate you on having the guts to expose wrongdoing, I strongly disapprove of the article on Dr Zac de Beer. To imply that he was involved in assisting the Pass Laws Act in any way is ludicrous. Add the enormous contribution he has made to social change in this country, and I feel you owe him an apology.

There is no doubt the time is right for a publication like *Noseweek* which exposes the many wrongs in this country. *The Investors' Guide* has tried sev-

GUS



eral times to do the same, but nobody wants to “get involved in a scandal”.

Consequently I enclose my cheque for R1,000 to assist you with your aims and express the hope that a more accurate balance between good and bad will be forthcoming.

Taco Kuiper
M D, *The Investors' Guide*
Johannesburg

Thank you! For R1,000 we are prepared to strongly disapprove of that article about Zac and the new HQ his company built for the Department of Bantu Administration. We agree that it is preposterous merely to imply that he assisted the government's efforts to carry out the Pass laws, when it's a fact that he did so – but only to boost his company's profits. – Ed

Hustlers

GUESS WHO THE FUNDERS AND CO-OWNERS are of *Hustler*, the magazine that's been offending respectable ladies by asking them to expose their fannies? Likewise the major shareholders in TIM Marketing, previous operators of the 087 sex lines? None other than the respectable gentlemen at Syfrets, the trust company controlled by Ned-bank.

Financial Advisor
Meadowridge

Off colour

I HAVE BEEN TASKED TO MONITOR YOU. YOU failed to use the window of opportunity to move the goalposts or level the playing field. You are also reported still to be taking medicine (under doctor's orders, of course) while all the sports

stars and criminals have moved up to medication. Address the problem and work through your relationships.

Rudi Benecke
Johannesburg

1994

Blind Trust

I WAS SAD TO NOTE THE FRANKLY CRUEL manner in which your November editorial referred to the fact that Viva Trust chairman Dr William Roland is blind. Regrettably I cannot ask you to cancel my subscription, as I do not have one.

Julia Nicol
Observatory, Cape Town

Dr Roland is not only blind, he is also grown up and quite capable of giving as good as he (occasionally) deserves to get. He does not need pity. You do – you don't have a subscription to Noseweek. (Dr Roland does.) – Ed

Poison and lies

HOW RIGHT YOU ARE THAT THE APPEAL Court appears to have got it entirely wrong about SA Police Gen Lothar Neethling. I certainly have reason to believe Captain Coetzee when he says that Neethling supplied poison to be used by a police hit-squad. In 1975 when I visited the police forensic laboratories in Pretoria on official business, Neethling, under the most bizarre circumstances, boasted to me that he had developed a poison which would precipitate a heart attack and then be untraceable in the corpse.

Neethling was also not such a trust-

worthy witness. He made a statement to the police when he collided with another vehicle while driving under the influence of alcohol. He was persuaded to withdraw the statement and pay a hastily arranged admission-of-guilt fine when it was explained to him that a lying witness had no career as an expert police witness. I am prepared to testify to this under oath.

Ex-Justice official
Cape Town

Pricking consciences

YOUR OCTOBER 1993 ISSUE CERTAINLY woke me up. We are becoming increasingly disinterested in the why of things, simply accepting them as given. Is it in case we regret what we might find, or because we may feel obliged to do something about it?

Peter Hall
Parkhurst

An Open Letter to Exclusive Books

I HAVE ALWAYS ENJOYED SHOPPING AT Exclusive Books. I also regularly order books from overseas through your bookshop. Thus I read with horror that you are prepared to stock porn magazines but not *Noseweek*. I can only assume the reasons given in *Noseweek* are true, since it is difficult to account for this absurd censorship in any logical manner. I shall accordingly boycott your bookshop until I am able to buy my *Noseweek* there.

Wendy Powell
Rondebosch

Show the way

COULD YOU PLEASE PROVIDE ME WITH A LIST of independent bookshops in the Cape Town area?

John Cartwright
Department of English
University of Cape Town

CNA censorship

I REFER TO COMMENT MADE IN *NOSE7* concerning the CNA's position with regard to your publication. Our policy is to keep an open mind in matters such as these. You should accordingly feel free to submit copies of your future editions to us for consideration,

and you have my assurance that any such submission will be carefully and objectively reviewed by us. Advance copies for consideration should be submitted to Butch Courtney, Director of our News-stand Division.

G D O Cooper
Merchandise Director
CNA Ltd, Johannesburg

In view of your history in this matter, how open can your mind possibly be? You speak of "matters such as these". Such as what, for instance? It is not clear to what you are referring. You banned Noseweek from your shelves without having had a copy "submitted" to you "for consideration". In fact you appear to have done so without having "carefully and objectively" reviewed the issues of Noseweek that had been published at all. If you had done so, you would have been able to show what you found that was factually wrong or so offensive that the public deserved to be protected from us.

Why should we submit to censorship by Mr Butch Courtney, and what makes him so specially qualified and informed that he is able to judge the truth or otherwise of our reports and decide what is suitable for South Africans to read – and what not?

What other publications are submitted to Mr Courtney for him to decide who should be able to buy them? Surely then it would be better for CNA to openly declare its support for a Board of Censors? Or is CNA promoting "privatised", corporate fascism to replace the fascist state we have only just seen on its way?

Please feel free to call us whenever you decide to stick to your usual business of distributing and selling books and publications – of all kinds and to all tastes. For spiritual and legal advice we go elsewhere. – Ed

Helderberg's deadly cargo

NOW THAT THE AIRFORCE'S CCB-TYPE "privatised" operations, code-named "Pasload" and "Gauntlett" have become public knowledge – thanks to *Noseweek* – perhaps it is time the public was also told that one of the four pallets loaded in the combi section of the Helderberg, the SAA flight from Taipei that went down in flames over the Indian Ocean killing all its passengers and crew, held a cargo ad-

dressed to Pasload.

In certain informed Air Force circles it is said the pallet contained no triggering devices and components being smuggled from America for SA's rocket programme, in a desperate bid to stop what at the time was thought to be an otherwise unstoppable Cuban advance in Angola. No wonder there was no turning back.

The fact that the Helderberg enquiry was chaired by a judge with long-standing ties to the SA and Israeli military establishment could be significant.

Put the Helderberg on the agenda of the Truth Commission and see who complains.

Your Air Correspondent
Cape Town

De Beers's Russian connection

MY LETTER IS PROMPTED BY THE ANECDOTE you quoted on radio regarding Harry Oppenheimer's son-in-law Gordon Waddell being seen by a British journalist in Moscow attending the Bolshoi Ballet during the 1970s – and its implications. Less well-known is the remainder of the story: South Africa's "Cold War" with the Soviet Union led to a professor of geology called Smirnoff being posted to Lesotho in those years. His interpreter was a man called Levchenko, who was accompanied by a beautiful wife called, as in all good spy stories, Ludmilla.

At that time, proving that ultra Marxism could co-exist with ultra capitalism, there was much pondering in Moscow and the [De Beers] Central Selling Organisation (CSO) on how to bridge the political gap, keeping their fairly natural association apart.

Diamonds in the old USSR were a strategic mineral and, as such, fell under the old GRU (military intelligence). British intelligence had already identified the interpreter, Levchenko, as a Soviet military intelligence officer during his service in India years earlier. Truth being stranger than fiction, Ludmilla was, in fact, a ranking colonel in the same Soviet service and ran the entire Smirnoff operation in Lesotho.

The project involved Smirnoff's being permitted to travel each month with Levchenko and Ludmilla to

Mafeking, the travel visa having been obtained via De Beers's contacts in the immigration department and in the Bureau of State Security (Boss). The excuse? To have samples of Lesotho material assayed by the scientifically well-equipped De Beers laboratory. In this way the contact was set up for Waddell and, later, Oppenheimer himself, to obtain reciprocal visas to visit Russia, ostensibly to examine, at first hand, Russian diamond mining operations. In reality it was, as you stated, to come to an agreement suiting both the Soviets and De Beers; all related to the international marketing of diamonds.

Levchenko and wife Ludmilla suddenly disappeared from Lesotho, with no trace of their having left through normal diplomatic or immigration channels.

Mike Bowery
Petersvale

■ *Our readers' campaign had been a success: we were back in CNA and Exclusive Books and were rapidly becoming one of South Africa's top-selling magazines.*

More Forex frolics

I READ WITH INTEREST YOUR REFERENCES to that mysterious off-shore entity called Stonehage (Forex Frolics, *Noses* 8 & 9). Coincidentally, Basil Hersov's Hermanus holiday house is called... Stonehage!

Jones
London

You talk coincidence! Read the following extract from Private Eye:

"Rupert Agnew, Consolidated Goldfields chairman, testifying to US enquiry into Minorco's takeover bid: 'Mr Ogilvie Thompson told me there was a company – Central Holdings – established by the Oppenheimers in Luxembourg [and which] would from time to time take the initiative in new investments, some of which were later followed by investments by Anglo American and/or De Beers... he indicated that key Oppenheimer executives derived benefit from the family company'."

Private Eye comments:

"But the Central Holdings trail in fact begins 20 years ago when it was set up to receive a \$40 million port-

folio of unidentified investments from Hagstone Investments, a South African company whose address was given as the Joburg Stock Exchange. Hagstone owned all the Luxembourg company's shares. Which, in turn, owned Hagstone. What was in that portfolio is hard to discover as the company was dissolved and its records seem to have been misplaced"

"One suggestion is that this transaction may have been related to a wish to create a vehicle outside the grip of South Africa's tight currency/taxation regulations."

Analysis strikes a chord

ON BEHALF OF THE PICK N PAY WORKERS who are members of the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union, I wish to thank you for Maureen Barnes's objective analytical essay on the recent strike – especially with regard to the so-called anti-Semitism allegations of the Pick n Pay bosses.

We look forward to future editions.

Tommy Bangani
Regional Secretary, SACCAWU
Cape Town

1995

Gem of a scandal

AM I TO UNDERSTAND THAT HANSIE CRONJE has been smuggling Winnie Mandela's friend's diamonds to Julian Askin, for him to finance Absa's grovelling for Gauteng's provincial account? Or am I suffering from information overload?

Andrew Cross
Kenilworth

A wee mistake?

A BUSINESS SECTION SMALLS AD (NOSE11) says "Elephants pass wines" from the beautiful Franschhoek Valley – to be released soon. I have always wondered where some of the stuff came from.

Phil Freeman
Simon's Town

Shades of authenticity

IN DESCRIBING VERGELEGEN (NOSE11), your food correspondent comments

that the buildings have been painted a kacky yellow called Naples yellow "by someone's favourite decorator". I was the decorator. I wish to put an end to the often-repeated inaccuracy that I was responsible for choosing this shade.

The decision to paint Vergelegen ochre was taken by the architects and their clients. It was based on a scrape which suggested that at some stage the house was painted that colour, as were many other Cape buildings.

There are no rigid rights and wrongs in restoring a house that has changed over 250 years. My view was that since great efforts were being made – correctly I felt – to preserve Vergelegen as it was in the Phillips' era, the house should be white, reflecting the Arts and Crafts passion shared by Cecil Rhodes, Lady Phillips, Herbert Baker, and other cognoscenti of the day.

Graham Viney
Bantry Bay

The traditional ochre would have been a limewash that quickly assumed a powdery, faded look – with little resemblance to the crass plastic colour chosen by the architects responsible for the restoration. It is nice to know that you are not to blame, and that your good taste can always be relied upon. – Ed

1996

Lawyers' delight

LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT YOUR EXPOSE [nose13] of the Law Society and its coverups has been met with delight by the bulk of the legal practitioners in the Cape Province. I have been in practice for over 30 years and am glad at long last to have found an ally who has the guts to stand up to the Law Society and its mafia-style behaviour.

J Ince
Kleinmond

Eye openers

NOSE13 WAS AN ABSOLUTE JOY TO READ! Your article on Christo Wiese was astonishing and the piece on Woolworths really knocks its own responsibility programme.

At the Open Society Foundation's annual lecture on 17 August, the Speaker of Parliament, Dr Frene Gin-wala, referred to your article on that important firm of attorneys, Sonnenbergs. She remarked particularly on the professions – like the Law Society – hiding behind their own colleagues, and your uncovering of the facts.

Pam Herr
Fish Hoek

■ *There was a 14-month gap between the appearance of Nose14 and Nose15 as a result of the all-consuming libel action brought against Noseweek and its editor by millionaire US tax fugitive Dr Robert Hall, following our exposé of his dubious past in Nose9. We eventually won the case, but the cost of a seven-week high court trial would have closed us down nevertheless, had it not been for the scores of readers who came to our rescue with sufficient funds to get us up and running again.*

1997

Press on with civil rights

MY WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR having successfully defended the defamation action brought against you by Dr Robert Hall. You have struck a major blow for civil rights in South Africa.

Christopher Merrett
Librarian, University of Natal, PMB

Big business versus Marxists

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR COURT victory. We might differ on political and economic philosophy but such clashes are irrelevant in the search for truth, which seems to be *Noseweek's* main aim. I happen to be a free marketeer, but having worked for big companies, I recognise that big business managers are as obnoxious as Marxists, hate free competition as much, and even worse, speak jargon-ridden drivel.

Andrew Kenny
Noordhoek

I Nose what I likes

WELL, WELL, JUST WHAT HAVE YOU CREATED here? A South-African crotch-kicker like *Private Eye*. It's long overdue.

We live in a time in which the gravy train has taken on the appearance of a blubber cauldron, and you must give every VIP the benefit of doubting him.

So we need frequent sanity checks on all big business and government.

Matthew Loxton
Centurion

High price to save Absa

WHY, IF SOUTH AFRICAN TAXPAYERS HAVE paid so high a price to help save the Absa banking group, were we not given a substantial share in it which would now compensate for our investment and the risk? Why do the then-shareholders benefit so handsomely, when it was they who put the bank in so precarious a position?

A C Gillett
Claremont

A healthy diet

I APPLAUD YOUR PLAN TO SEND COPIES TO parliamentarians, but suspect they'd not be used for reading. The new lot of Orwellian pigs are already showing an alarming tendency to keep things quiet. Ergo, more power to your elbow.

Mike Young
Sedgefield

No, not all, Mr Young... – Ed

■ THANK YOU FOR THE COMPLIMENTARY copy of Noseweek, which, as always, I found most interesting – particularly the editorial in *Nose16*. Wishing you best of luck.

Gill Marcus, MP
Deputy Minister of Finance

Ms Marcus is one of many parliamentarians who have received complimentary subscriptions to Noseweek, sponsored by our readers as part of our relaunch fundraising effort. Letter-writers Kenny and Young are among those who generously contributed. – Ed

Sleeping plant?

THE REFERENCE TO PHILIPPE LE ROUX raises some curiosity for those UCT students in the early 1970s who remember him as a Nusas leader and a so-called radical student who, when sought by the security police for a relatively minor offence, dramatically skipped over the Botswana border.

The later role he played as a sanctions-busting agent of apartheid South Africa, the company he has kept and his other nefarious activities [*while MD of UK motorbike manufacturer, Norton*] of course raise questions about his *bona fides* as a student leader. Could his dramatic flight (on a motorbike *nogal*) have been rigged? Was he an elaborately set up, long-term “sleeping” plant of the state security agencies?

Student
Johannesburg

Resignations and disappearances

WITH THE RECENT RESIGNATION FROM Denel of Mr Johan Alberts in order for him to devote more quality time to his family, instead of to the boring daily routine of flogging old stocks of AK47s, RPGs etc, it crosses my mind that we have not heard a peep at the TRC from or about his predecessor, Mr Tielman de Waal, despite his having played an important role in the Total Onslaught.

Vra Net
Paarden Eiland

'B' for Ball's Olympic effort

HOW DARE YOU PUBLISH AN INFORMATIVE, well-worded, concise and hard-hitting magazine, as in this country, we have an enviable record of centrally mediated “Manufactured Consent”.

If you carry on there will be no more



*“This is either profound,
or a mass of typos”*

fig fronds of misinformation to hide behind.

I would like to thank Mr Chris Ball for masterminding the Olympic bid. Without his dedication and expertise it could all have been very different.

V Grate-full
Cape Town

Parliament takes note

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ARTICLE ON Amway. I raised this matter in Parliament in August, saying: “The scheme looks like a pyramid one... In an Amway pamphlet it is stated that one’s annual income can be R400,000... But the US Federal Trade Commission demands that it be clearly stated on labels of Amway products that 54% of distributors each get nothing, and for the rest, the average payout is \$65 (R325) per month.”

Any readers who have had their fingers burnt in this regard are welcome to contact me.

David Graaff MP
National Assembly

■ I WAS VERY DISTURBED TO SEE YOUR response to Amway. It is clear you are not fully informed about the workings of this fine corporation. Amway has been cleared by the highest courts in the world and has been set as the standard by which all other multi-level marketing organisations are judged. As with any franchise, there is no guarantee you will be successful. Amway gives you the opportunity and teaches you how to do it. If you fail, don’t blame Amway! I speak from my own experience in the few months I’ve been involved with this opportunity.

Peter D Joffe
Amway Distributor
Parklands, Johannesburg

Wrath of Muhammad

WE NEED NOT DESPAIR BECAUSE TEXANS have chosen to maintain sanctions against South Africa! By God, The Prophets and CNN, El Nino is going to flood Texas by New Year’s Day, and I will rejoice in the justice of the Laws of God and physics.

Muhammad Jadwat
La Mercy Beach, KZN

20 years

noseweek



George Mazarakis, Executive Producer: Carte Blanche:

Heartiest congratulations on having reached this milestone! Noseweek has in many ways **defined fearless investigative journalism in South Africa** and we all salute your efforts.



Jane Raphaely, chairman of Associated Media Publishing:

Happy 20th birthday, Noseweek, and many more. **Please rake the muck here until it manures the mealies.** So much better than publishing New Age pulp fiction.



Pieter van Dalen, DA MP and spokesman on Fisheries:

As a Member of Parliament who likes to expose corruption and injustice, it is heartening to find media willing to do the same, no matter the personal cost. **You are the WikiLeaks of South Africa.** I pray that you will long be around to defend our independence. That we may look forward to thousands of exposing and well-researched articles for many more years.

Murray Hunter, R2K:

A magazine like Noseweek will always have at least as many enemies as it has friends. This is a sign that it's doing its job. But on its 20th birthday those of us who are counted among Noseweek's friends are grateful for all you've done to expose uncomfortable truths, ask tough questions, and provide **a home for some of the most fearless investigative journalism on the continent.** May you still be nosing about in other people's dodgy business 20 years from now!



Mariette Liefferink, environmental activist:

Noseweek, unfettered by the advantages obtained from big business or the state, has never been diverted from publishing inconvenient and uncomfortable truths. **It will be most lamentable when corruption ceases to meet with opprobrium,** and when abuses are no longer regarded as dishonourable. I salute Noseweek and thank its editor and its well-informed journalists for being controversial and shaking the powers while others look quietly on.



Prof Robin Palmer, director of the Institute for Professional Legal Training, UKZN, Durban:

All real human progress is due to single-minded mavericks, and Martin Welz – or his alter ego, Noseweek – is **a single-minded maverick with a powerful sense of justice.** The debt South African society owes to this courageous and indefatigable investigative magazine will only become apparent with hindsight.



20 years

noseweek

Sylvia Vollenhoven, filmmaker:

Noseweek's journalism is **a valve that stops this whole pressure cooker of a country from exploding**. We don't always value your early warning system as much as we should. I loved your aggressive teen years and look forward to the next decade.



Zapiro, cartoonist:

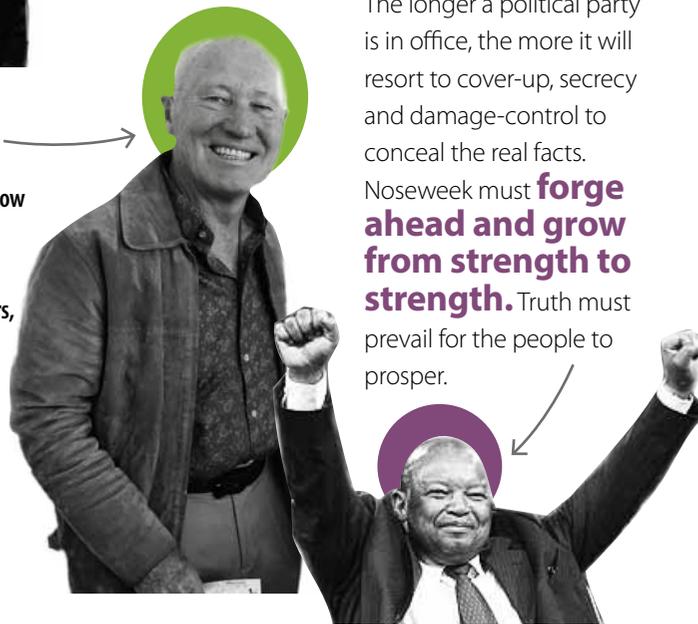
When secrecy becomes law, when mainstream media come with political strings attached, when self-censorship becomes an infectious disease, that's when **we really need irreverent independence and fearless snooping**. Long live Noseweek, long live!



Picture: Karina Turok

Terry Crawford-Browne, arms deal activist:

The arms deal scandal has highlighted how South Africa's constitutional democracy has been almost gutted by the "criminal underworld" of corrupt politicians, bankers, lawyers and auditors. As the privileged elite, they are even more venal than the sleazy gangsters of the criminal underworld or even the Italian Mafia. For the past 20 years, Noseweek has made **an extraordinary contribution in exposing these characters**.



Mosiuoa Lekota, Cope leader:

The longer a political party is in office, the more it will resort to cover-up, secrecy and damage-control to conceal the real facts. Noseweek must **forge ahead and grow from strength to strength**. Truth must prevail for the people to prosper.

Rhoda Kadalie, executive director – Impumelelo Social Innovations Centre:

Noseweek is fearless, feisty and irreverent. **When it smells a rat, it goes for it**. It is ruthless about unmasking the allure of ill-gotten wealth and exposes those in power who got there because of corruption. Nkandla and Gupta are two current examples of why we desperately need to keep Noseweek alive.

Paul Hoffman, director of the Institute for Accountability, Southern Africa:

Noseweek – the canary in the coal mine of entitlement expectations; the cuckoo in the crow's nest of accountable leadership; and the guardian against decapitation of the goose that lays the golden eggs – **a truly fowl magazine**.



Richard Young, electronics engineer and founder and MD of C²I², one of the arms deal bidders that lost out because of high-level corruption:

Noseweek's Martin Welz, investigative journalist-par-excellence, proved that **the real reason for the Arms Deal was not the defence of the motherland, but the ANC's Houdini-like escape from financial bankruptcy** and its desperate need of funding for its 1999 election campaign. (Plus the collateral enrichment of its leaders and cadres.)



20 years noseweek



Lindiwe Mazibuko, parliamentary leader of the DA:

Noseweek has provided anyone brave enough to read it with witty, painfully forensic, dry, irreverent, and well-informed stories for 20 years. The best compliment that I can pay is that **Noseweek must be one of the few publications in which politicians (all of them!) pray they will not feature** or even get just a mention. Happy 20th Birthday, Noseweek.

Anton Harber, Caxton Professor of Journalism at Wits:

Noseweek is an eccentric and essential part of our journalistic landscape. It is **bold, unpredictable and maverick, determinedly taking on all and sundry** and getting up the noses of a lot of people. Sometimes it gets up my nose, and that is not a bad thing. South Africa would be a lot poorer and a lot duller without Noseweek. May we look forward to another 20 years of the unexpected obsessions and probing questions of editor Martin Welz.



Raenette Taljaard, senior lecturer in politics at UCT:

When I was an MP Noseweek was **an essential companion to the oversight work we had to do** – critically so during SCOPA's ill-fated arms probe. Viva Noseweek!



William Gumede, author and political commentator:

Noseweek has set **a tradition in South Africa of breaking stories which are followed up a few weeks, months or even years later by the other media.**

With the apartheid-era new information bill, with declarations of private homes as national key points and while the real national key points such as Air Force Base Waterkloof are being used for private purposes, South Africa needs, now more than ever, an investigative magazine like Noseweek.

As corruption and lying increase in the corridors of power, we need a brave and gutsy publication like yours. Congratulations.

Justin Nurse, Founder of Laugh it Off:

Congratulations to Martin Welz and his team at Noseweek on their 20th anniversary. I will forever be grateful to Noseweek for their support in my case against SABMiller, and for the example they continue to set for independent media in SA. They kowtow to no one and believe there are no sacred cows. If the media is the watchdog of society, then **Noseweek is surely the bull terrier with the bit between its teeth.** I mix my animal metaphors intentionally, for Noseweek is indeed a curious beast.



Beezy Bailey, artist:

Noseweek successfully tackles the massive shit storm of corporate and political corruption that engulfs us, as a beacon of intelligence, hope, insight, moral fortitude and, most importantly, fantastic humour. Viva a free press in our young democracy. One hundred more years to you, Martin Welz and the team.

