



MEET IVA

The new Monica Seles

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Picture by ROBERT PEARCE

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everytime. However, many competent communicators were bad spellers, and parents should not get too upset about it.

"Spelling is not the whole story in writing," he said. "People who bash teachers solely on the basis of spelling are not looking at the whole picture of literacy."

Ms Wild, who was an English consultant with the Department of School Education, said education experts agreed that a child who could not spell by the age of eight was unlikely to ever be a good speller. She agreed, though, that spelling was less important than the ideas in children's stories.

The Macquarie analysis also found that boys and girls used very different images in their essays. Boys used verbs of violence - such as hit, strike, fight, bash and punch - about three times more frequently than girls. Boys were reluctant, however, to use the word "love" - they did so about a third as often as girls. And when boys did use the word they usually did not use it in a positive way.

240 sue church over abuse

By JENNIE CURTIN

More than 240 writs were filed in the NSW Supreme Court yesterday claiming damages for alleged sexual and physical abuse by Christian Brothers and lay staff at their church-run colleges and institutions.

The group action covers institutions run by the brothers around Australia but has been launched in Sydney because the order is registered under a NSW act.

It comes a day after a Sydney man initiated his own claim against the Marist Brothers over an assault which occurred 30 years ago.

A Melbourne solicitor involved with the Christian Brothers claims, Mr Paul Mulvaney, said yesterday that the alleged abuses dated back to the 1940s and extended into the early 1980s.

Not all of the cases involve religious personnel. One group, centred on a Christian Brothers teaching college at Geelong in Victoria, relies on allegations of abuse in the 1970s and 1980s against specific lay teachers at the school. Those writs are directed at the brothers on the basis that the college principal, a Christian Brother, was negligent in not taking steps to prevent the assaults.

A large group of the claimants are the veterans of Christian Brothers institutions in Western Australia, where 4,000 child migrants, orphans and State wards were sent between 1901 and 1983.

The children came from Britain, Ireland and Malta and many have alleged that they were assaulted physically and sexually by some of the brothers.

The Christian Brothers published an official apology two months ago, acknowledging that abuses took place in the Hindon, Castledare, Tardun and Clontarf institutions and offering practical assistance to ease the pain of those who suffered.

Mr Mulvaney said the WA claims covered wider issues than sexual abuse.

They also sought damages for alleged exploitative child labour and physical punishment.

Other men are claiming psychological damage, saying they have suffered post-traumatic stress disorders.

The group's claim is being handled by a Perth lawyer, Mr John Gordon, who successfully led the class action asbestosis cases in the 1980s for victims of the Wittenoom mines in northern WA.

All the men bringing the claims were on the books of the organisation Victims of Institutionalised Cruelty, Exploitation and Supporters, its spokesman, Mr Bruce Blyth, said.

He told the *Herald* last night that the court compensation bid was just part of the group's efforts on behalf of alleged victims of abuse by members of religious orders.

The provincial of the Christian Brothers could not be contacted for comment last night.

COLUMN 8

THE SHOW must go on, especially at Government House. At a musical evening on Monday, a Conservatorium string quartet, half the bill, couldn't perform because one player had been in an accident. Into the breach stepped Guy Noble, there to conduct the Sydney Children's Choir - he doubled up and played a Chopin nocturne. As well, his girlfriend, the opera principal Penelope Brister, who had gone there in casual clothes to hand over Guy's forgotten necktie, was whisked back to Bondi to change into a formal gown, and returned to sing three pieces. Bravo from a grateful Governor and Mrs Sinclair.

THE LAST (we hope) of the dinosaur jokes:

Q: What's the difference between *Jurassic Park* and IBM?

A: One's a theme park full of old mechanical monsters that scare the customers. The other's a movie.

UNCANNY. Before World War II, a two-volume set of Parker and Haswell's *Botany* was awarded to a young Med student who topped Botany at Sydney University. Some time after the war, a friend borrowed Volume I but never returned it. The owner died in 1975 and last week his widow took the lonely Volume II to the Sydney University Bookfest to be sold. At the weekend she was helping to sort books when she came across her Volume II - lovingly tied up with the missing Volume I, with her husband's name still inside it.

THEY Could Have Picked a Better Time: Kevin Powell, of North Narrabeen, reports that Channel 7's *Real Life* on Monday night had an interview with Monica Seles about her recovery after being stabbed in the back by a Steffi Graf fan. Immediately afterwards: A promo for the Monday night film - *Back Stab*.

OUT of the mouths, etc. Yasmine Loupis, 19, of Como, listened to the radio news yesterday about the Government's tax change changes. "Why do they want the taxes?" she asked. Her mother, Maruschka, tried to explain about Government spending. "Then why don't they just work?"

IS SOMEONE now pretending to be in a beer commercial? Or has Moriarty struck? Oliver Sartor, 11, of Newtown (yes, yes, the Lord Mayor's son), went as Sherlock Holmes in a book character parade at his school, St Aloysius', during Book Week last week. He then left the outfit on a station or in the train - his father's tweed coat, his grandfather's deerstalker, plus a magnifying glass and a notebook. State Rail sleuths have not solved *The Mystery of the Missing Disguise* yet.

WHEN the State Cabinet was at Randwick Town Hall yesterday to meet civic leaders and local organisations, one local dignitary was missing. The Labor MP for Coogee, Ernie Page, was outside the Town Hall - he'd been invited to the reception but was too busy organising an anti-Government demonstration by cleaners whose jobs are going.

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