

Getting abreast in mining

SANDY BAY GOES MINING

One of SA's leading mining companies, Gold Fields appears to be expanding its horizons to 'support' more downstream projects.

Working underground can be a rather hot and sweaty experience. Some women miners found it cooler if they stripped down and wore their overalls tied around their waists like their male counterparts. This however, caused minor rumblings with the result that the mine took a decision to supply their women miners with sports bras. The jury is still out as to whether their male counterparts feel they are being discriminated against because they are not receiving the same type of support!

PROUDLY SA CAMPAIGN TAKES OFF?

Senior South African executives have embraced the Proudly SA campaign with a vengeance. The CEO of one of SA's leading airlines faced a major dilemma when he was taking his partner away for a weekend to London. Which airline to use – 'fly the South African dream' (local) or foreign. For discretion purposes he chose the latter. But in hindsight this option too proved problematic. His boarding a competitors' airline was witnessed by the country's leading tour operations.

MARY FITZGERALD PLEASE STAND UP

The recent renaming of Newtown Square to the Mary Fitzgerald Square was not without some controversy. According to Redeye's informants many of the towns' leading dignitaries were clueless about who Mary Fitzgerald was. During the ceremony, one such dignitary turned to

former Cosatu general secretary turned Gauteng Premier Mbhazima (Sam) Shilowa for help. He in turn vaguely responded that she was some kind of unionist. The saga does not end here. A black academic in turn asked why the square was named after a white Irish women, while a leading figure in the arts and culture world questioned what Newtown had to do with unions when it was an arts and culture precinct. (For something more about Mary see p 86.)

THE JOYS OF PRIVATISATION

As South Africa continues on its privatisation path, it is important to see how other countries have fared. Taking a train to or from London should provide a small taste of the joys of privatisation.

The privatisation of British Rail led to one company owning the trains and another the rails. This makes for a highly synchronised commuter system. You can get on a train which will leave on time but there is no guarantee it will arrive at your destination (if ever). Arrival depends on the state of the rails – whether working or not.

Employers in London have made contingency plans. If you are known to use the train you are given a 45-minute grace period, which is not regarded as official working time if you are late. Trains on time are unheard of and no one is prepared for such a case. Redeye's informant on the spot had a rather traumatic experience when he arrived on time for a meeting. His hosts were totally thrown by this, could not believe it was possible and then had to rearrange all his meetings.

Redeye looks forward to contributions which should be sent to salb@icon.co.za