

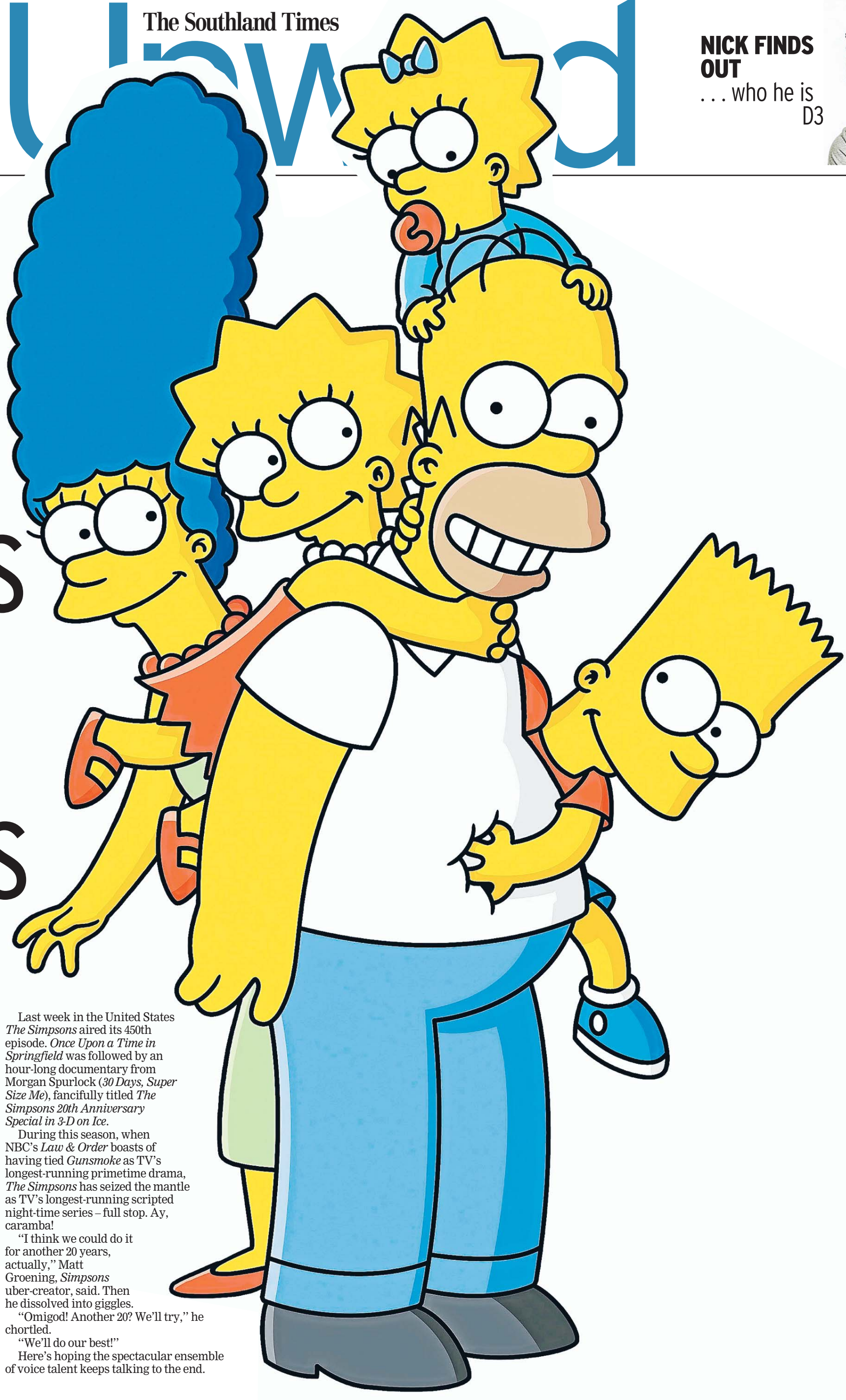
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20 years of yarns



The Simpsons began 20 years ago as a fluke then erupted into a pop-culture juggernaut, which has continued to spin yarns and spawn characters. When will it all end? **Frazier Moore** reports.

Last week in the United States *The Simpsons* aired its 450th episode. *Once Upon a Time in Springfield* was followed by an hour-long documentary from Morgan Spurlock (*30 Days, Super Size Me*), fancifully titled *The Simpsons 20th Anniversary Special in 3-D on Ice*.
 During this season, when NBC's *Law & Order* boasts of having tied *Gunsmoke* as TV's longest-running primetime drama, *The Simpsons* has seized the mantle as TV's longest-running scripted night-time series - full stop. Ay, caramba!
 "I think we could do it for another 20 years, actually," Matt Groening, *Simpsons* uber-creator, said. Then he dissolved into giggles.
 "Omigod! Another 20? We'll try," he chortled.
 "We'll do our best!"
 Here's hoping the spectacular ensemble of voice talent keeps talking to the end.

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Student slackers

MATE
 Mark Wilson



IT'S a hard road being a student or is it? It's summer, and in New Zealand we think, sun, barbecues and frujuj, yet for some summer means hard work.
 As we relax over a beer and sausage, the country must keep running to supply the holidaying public with core holiday services such as ice, beer, text message credit, Facebook, petrol for the boat and so on.
 Sun and a touch of rain in this summer's case a deluge of rain also spawns a time of rampant grass and crop growth, so contractors are in full swing down on the farm.
 All in all while it may be seen as a holiday large portions of the country see it as their busiest time of year.
 A segment of the population who don't instantly leap to mind when we speak of hard work are students.
 They seem to be in the headlines having a fine time learning the arts of socialising, drinking games and car rallies ending in riots. Hard work seems to be largely reserved for the summer to pay for the academic year's festivities.
 As the end of exams celebration hangover clears, thousands of students from the SIT in the south right through to its fee paying equivalent North Tec in Northland hit the work force as impact players over summer to repay debt and line their pockets to absorb next year's booze price hikes and rental increases.
 I've been through this cycle as I'm sure most people who have had a summer job have also. You know you only have two or three months so you pace yourself accordingly and work harder than a parole officer in South Auckland to fill up the account.
 I appreciate this effort and I'm sure so do parents, who are spared a few more precious retirement dollars, but what I can't understand is the students who think they are hellishly busy during the academic year.
 Has university changed since I was there half a decade ago? I had 9 or 10 hours a week of lectures and this was quite common, yes some had 20 but that's only half a normal working week?
 I thought studying was a great time, a holiday of sorts and would love to be able to go back and have a second dig at it.
 Parents out there you will have heard it, your student children telling you how busy and stressed they are, how they don't have time to do this and that because of study and exams and cold-start parties.
 What happens if you fail a paper, a gigantic D, that one letter means you get to go back and have another semester of fun, brilliant!
 In the working world if you have a debacle in your job you may lose it and then you don't eat! Not quite a level playing field?
 Students, enjoy university and polytech - it's the best time of your lives, work hard in the holidays but don't stress - another semester is far better than a mortgagee sale.

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