

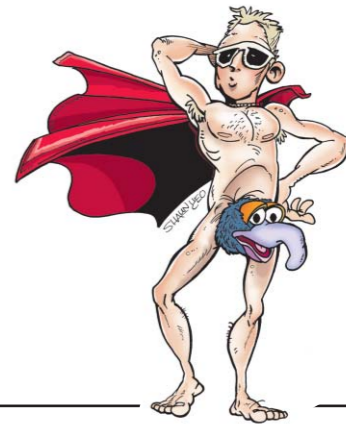
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A space challenge

Weather to duck out for a Stag

MATE
Mark Wilson



AS the cold draws in, thoughts start wandering to those pillars of any good winter, duckshooting, skiing and, of course, Stag rugby.

Snow has just begun to grace the mountains of the south, which is not necessarily a good sign for a top ski season if last year is anything to go by, but let's hope that for once the massively optimistic skifield PR machine has it right when they claim the ski season of the century is on its way.

It's funny how short people's memories are when it comes to weather; each time someone is interviewed in regard to a severe weather event or season, it's always the wettest they can remember or the driest or the coldest for 50 years, and these events seem to happen each year.

I have skied in Queenstown since 1984 and remember most seasons since '87 and can tell those with short memories who seem to claim each season is the best season or each snowfall is the biggest snowfall, either they are new to town or were on some mind-altering substances over the years if they can't remember many better seasons and bigger snowfalls in years gone by.

I think we can put it down to a childlike excitement that occurs around snow and also the huge marketing machines trying to create some good media coverage and hype for their products.

Anyone who hit the ducks last weekend would have thought winter was far from our doorstep as we basked in autumn sun and the ducks flew by higher than a dub music festival crowd.

Luckily, the act of blasting away at ducks is not the only entertainment available on opening weekend and the male bonding element can salvage an otherwise poor shoot.

This year there was the unique occurrence down on the farm of an all-female maimai. Yes, it is true, a maimai built by woman for woman at duck-shooting. Madness, you may say. Having not left the maimai in four years because of my aversion to walking for unnecessary reasons, I decided I needed to investigate this epiphany so embarked on a slog through the swamp to check out this rare breed of woman. I could hear them before I could see them - men, you will concur that this is not a rare occurrence - but at least I guess this means they did a good job with the camouflage. Decoy placement seemed to take second place to the assortment of snacks stacked neatly on the shelves.

A well-catered maimai it was; a danger to the ducks it may not have been.

Finally, the Super 14 is almost over. Good, because I think I'm growing weary of Super rugby.

Bring on the Air New Zealand Cup so ordinary New Zealanders can get in behind their grass-roots rugby.

Will this year finally be the year of the Stag, will referees' calls and balls bounce for once in our favour?

Star Trek cool and sexy? **Alyssa Braithwaite** finds out.

DIRECTOR J J Abrams has attempted to take the latest movie incarnation of the enduring franchise where no *Star Trek* has gone before: out of the domain of nerds and into a worldwide hit. First approached as a producer, the *Mission Impossible III* director saw it as an exciting challenge. "I never thought I would do a *Star Trek* film but when I looked at the script I thought, despite it being *Star Trek* this is a movie that I would want to go see, and certainly would love to have a chance to make," Abrams said.

After admitting early in the film's life that he wasn't really a fan of the series, Abrams further provoked die-hard Trekkies by appearing to care more about winning over new fans than catering to existing fans.

He is unapologetic. "We tried to avoid as much as possible making a movie that was as insular and myopic as the films I was familiar with and the series," he says.

"Trying to reach a broader audience was not part of their agenda.

"This movie felt from the beginning like if it was going to work it needed to reach beyond just the tried and true fans."

The 2009 *Star Trek* takes audiences back to the beginning, to when Captain James Kirk was born, and explores the early stories of all the characters.

While technically a prequel, the cast were constantly reminded that this was a new beginning for *Star Trek*.

It made stepping into the shoes of the iconic characters a little easier.

Zachary Quinto was cast as Spock, taking on the bowl haircut, slanting eyebrows and pointy ears made famous by Leonard Nimoy.

It is his first film role, and Quinto had an unusual first meeting with Nimoy.

"We were in the elevator, I was like 'hello', he was like 'hello'," Quinto remembers.

"And then as the elevator doors opened and he walked out he said 'you have no idea what you're in store for, kid' and then he was off."

They ended up working together preparing for the role, and Nimoy has a cameo in the film.

"I had the luxury of Leonard's involvement and his availability to me but it was clear they wanted to take this franchise in a new direction so we were constantly reminded that we were to bring our own perspective and our own point of view to these characters," Quinto says.

"I think, really, everybody across the board did that."

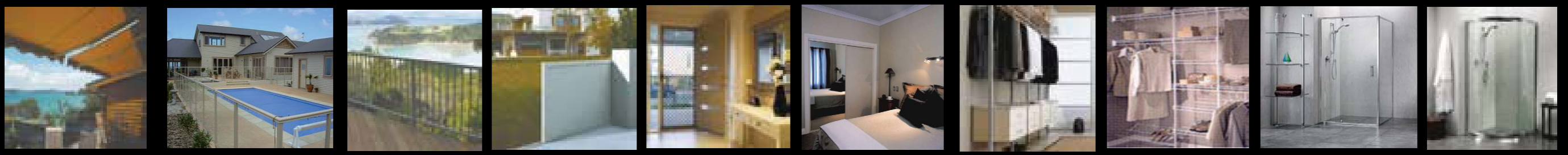
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