

years' back, Crowe was the man Hollywood, in three consecutive best actor nominations, including his 2001 Oscar win for *Lady Bird*. But off-screen incidents and his film voices, particularly last year's romantic comedy *A Good Year*, were panned by critics and his boxing epic, *Underdog*, underperformed. The same criticisms were full of praise for Crowe's performance in *3:10 to Yuma*, a re-make of the classic 1957 western of the same name. Crowe plays cocky outlaw Ben Wade.

**Bathroom plea**  
 A Republican US senator arrested in a sex sting that seems likely to end his career will file court documents today asking to withdraw his guilty plea, his attorney said. Senator Larry Craig pleaded guilty in August to disorderly conduct following a sting operation in a men's bathroom at the Minneapolis airport. He said he regrets that decision, which he made hastily and without talking to an attorney. He said he pleaded guilty only to put the matter behind him.

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Soviet Union disintegrated. About one million Soviets have moved there since the early 1990s, making up a significant part of Israel's seven million citizens.

on radio shows and newspaper reports. Mr Olmert warned that the acts of the suspects in custody on charges of assault and vandalism. The young men covered more than a year ago.

— like how you cope with losing someone — became on-limits when you realise that the guy next to you has had the same experience."

David Alcock, 84, nursed his wife for 10 years; it was two years after her death before he looked in on one of the sheds.

"My doctor said coming here has made all the difference to my health," he said, poring over an elaborate doll's house being built as a raffle prize. "It chirps you up no end."

The shed that these men frequent is in the car park of an old people's home in Lane Cove, a suburb of northern Sydney. At first glance it looks like a bunker, but inside it is a treasure trove of tools and wood-working kit. Saws, screwdrivers and drills hang along the walls, alongside set-squares, trays of nails and an array of power tools. Its regular users make toys for hospitals, games for retirement homes and repair furniture for community groups.

Ted Donnelly, originally from Halifax in Yorkshire, described how the Lane Cove shed had proved a pioneering success story. As one of

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# Communal sheds allow aged men to bond

its organisers, he is helping arrange a national conference for men's shed users.

"The woodwork is the excuse, not the reason, why men come here," said Mr Donnelly, 73. "They come for companionship, though they may not admit it. I have seen amazing changes in these blokes."

Talking becomes easier when a bell rings: tools are doled out and the men perch on stools to drink tea and eat packed lunches. Half an hour later they are hard at work again, the sound of sawing punctuated by the odd guffaw.

Barry Golding, an associate professor of education at Ballarat University in Victoria, who has completed the first comprehensive study of men's sheds, described it as the most exciting research he has undertaken. "It's a myth that men don't talk — they do if they are given the right opportunity. If you put up a sign that said Men's Health Centre, men would not come. But if the sign says Men's Shed, then they will come. And that's when the magic begins."

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# Chinese Nessie 'can dashed yet again

A TELEVISION reporter claims to have discovered China's answer to the Loch Ness monster.

Zhuo Yongsheng shot footage of six "seal-like" creatures in the northeastern Tianchi lake, which local legend to monster fast as you would all d Legend version of

HOW IS IT YOU KNOW ABOUT TOILET MAKING RITUALS EARLY?

CRAIG'S ARREST REPORT...

IT'S IN WIDE CIRCULATION NOW. AS ARE ANY NUMBER OF RE-ENACTMENT

DOONESBURY

RESCUE crews searching for millionaire adventurer Steve Fossett stumbled upon another false lead yesterday when they discovered what they thought was a downed aeroplane, but there was no sign of the missing aviator.

Nevada Civil Air Patrol Major Cynthia Ryan said that once again the searchers' hopes had been raised and dashed. Rescue crews had spotted an object southeast of the ranch from where Fossett took off

Wild Beauty

All new, high quality book