IN OTHER News

Smoker pays the price
MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE
AP - A US man says he swiped his debit card at a service station to buy a packet of cigarettes and was charged over 29 quadrillion dollars.

Josh Muszynski, from New Hampshire, checked his account online a few hours after the purchase and saw the 17-digit number - a stunning $US23,148,855,308,184,500 - or $A29.14 thousand trillion.

Muszynski told WMUR-TV that he spent two hours on the phone with the Bank of America trying to sort out the string of numbers - and the $US15 ($A18.88) overdraft fee. The bank corrected the error the next day.

Author tries Twitter-ature
WASHINGTON, AFP - An American writer who failed to find a publisher for his novel is putting the book on Twitter - 140 characters at a time.

Matt Stewart, a San Francisco-based novelist, began "tweeting" his first book, The French Revolution, on the micro-blogging service this week. Stewart said putting the book on Twitter was a "social experiment" to "see how the world reacts to a long-form tale told in snippets." He also acknowledged that he had been unable to find a publisher.

Stewart said it would take approximately 3,700 "tweets" to transmit all of the 480,000 characters in his book.

Camels keep their cool
DARWIN, AAP - Men have long known it’s best to play it cool during courtship but camels appear to have taken the advice literally.

Research from the University of Queensland has found the key to a bull’s reproductive success could be a lowered body temperature. Working with a team of camel behaviourists and ecologists, Professor Gordon Grigg has been tracking camels in Central Australia.

According to the experts’ research, male camels have the ability to drop their body temperature, which may help them last longer in rutting displays. During courtship, male camels compete intensely in elaborate and ritualised performances that range from posing to strutting, as well as jostling and running.

Whatever holds the key to a camel’s mating prowess, it appears to be working - there are about 1.2 million camels roaming outback Australia.

Kiwi kids slags teachers online
AUCKLAND, AAP - A Kiwi schoolboy has sought revenge on his teachers, by labelling them "circus freaks" and drug addicts on Facebook.

The 15-year-old from the ski town of Queenstown, in the South Island, is facing suspension after creating an online quiz that slags off individual teachers and rips apart their physical attributes.

The unnamed boy then invited friends to compare themselves to staff members at Wakatipu High School then matched them to the ones they were most like.

The school’s deputy principal, Grant Adolph, told the Southland Times the comments posted on the site about his staff were appalling, and suspension would likely follow.