



WIKINEWS PRINT EDITION

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Top Stories

Budget cuts threaten to close Arcibo, world's largest radio telescope

After nearly 50 years and several major discoveries, the Arcibo Observatory, the largest and



most sensitive radio telescope in the world, faces closure due to

severe budget cuts. In this exclusive report, Wikinews examined how much the observatory's budget was at risk and what the possible outcomes could be for the programs currently relying on Arcibo as their main research tool.

Thousands flee Nigerian town to escape from militants

Thousands of people have fled an

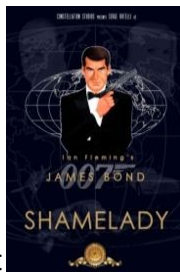


oil town in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

yesterday after an unknown militant group said that all people not originally from the area who did not leave the town would be beheaded.

Wikinews interviews Eric Saussine, director of the James Bond fan film Shamelady

Guns. Girls. Gadgets. Three things synonymous with the name James Bond. The world's most well known fictional secret



Top Stories

agent and pop culture icon, Bond is the definitive action hero. With his new film, Quantum of Solace, coming out soon, Wikinews shifted the spotlight to a little known 007 film: Shamelady, a French non-profit fan production. Director Eric Saussine told us about how Shamelady came to be, its future sequels and even had a few tips for the aspiring filmmaker.

North America's oldest retailer sold to U.S. owners of Lord & Taylor

Canada's oldest retailer, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), will be transferred from one American owner to another. NRDC Equity Partners, LLC, owners of U.S. department store Lord & Taylor, will purchase HBC from the estate of Jerry Zucker, who died in April.



Credit: Montrealais - GFDL

Wikipedia Current Events

Vihear temple.

- King Albert II of Belgium rejects the resignation of Prime Minister Yves Leterme, as no compromise was reached on devolution to the regions.
- Australia's Qantas Airways announces plans to cut 1,500 jobs worldwide

Wikimania 2008 opens at Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Egypt

Thursday saw the start of the fourth International Wikimedia Conference, better known as Wikimania 2008. The conference is being held in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, a modern library with conference facilities for multiple tracks as well as a grand hall where the opening ceremony and first presentation were held.

Speakers for the opening ceremony were the main organiser of the conference, Mohamed Ibrahim, His Excellency Dr. Ahmed Darwish, the Egyptian Minister of State for Administrative Development, Florence Devouard, the outgoing chair of the Wikimedia Foundation, and Jakob Voss of the program committee.

The theme of this year's conference is "Changing the shape of knowledge", and the choice of location is seen as an outreach to the Arabic and African communities.

According to Dr. Darwish, the conference has the full support of

Wikipedia Current Events

A report by the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice finds that the Cook County Jail systematically violated the constitutional rights of its inmates.

- A Cambodian general states that a border stand off between Cambodia and Thailand came close to a shootout last night over land near the World Heritage nominated Prasat Preah

the Egyptian Prime Minister who would have attended but for a clash with a prior engagement. In his introductory talk he described wikis as becoming more reliable and being a form of globalization which did not destroy local identity.

Talking of Egyptian efforts to improve education and make it a more continuous process he discussed increased e-Government and the fact that in this area Egypt had come in the top 25% of UN surveyed countries. The country's young population is seen as a driving factor in increasing Internet use.

Optimistically, Dr Darwish spoke of the a move from a two-sided situation to more collaboration between government and citizens.

Florence Devouard spoke briefly about the library, comparing their goals with those of the Wikimedia Foundation and drawing a number of parallels. One of the projects hosted by the library is a mirror of the Internet Archive. As a surprise announcement, she revealed that the language subcommittee had approved the creation of a new Wikipedia version for Egyptian Arabic.

Mohammed Ibrahim talked on how Alexandria winning the bid had significantly raised the profile of wiki projects within the Arab and African media. This was in evidence at a press conference held early afternoon. Around six or seven TV crews were present along with at least 30 reporters. Despite not being Western media, the focus of questioning was on academic skepticism towards Wikipedia; the oft-repeated confusion between Wikia and the Wikimedia Foundation was dismissed when brought up.

Jakob Voss, the last member of the opening ceremony team, gave a rundown of a number of statistics. The conference received over 150 submissions for talks and workshops. Of these approximately 75 were approved with around 100 speakers due to talk during the course of the three day conference.

Participation in the conference is around 600 attendees, coming from 47 different countries around the globe.

At a well-attended press conference the usual issues were raised, such as the reliability of Wikipedia as a source. It was also announced that with the stepping down of Florence Devouard as Chair of the WMF board, her successor will be Michael Snow.

Jimmy Wales gave a speech titled Freedom of speech, human rights, and free culture. In his speech he made a comparison between the Freedom House rating with the size of the Wikipedia in that language. He found a link between the two in the cases he looked at.

Other presentations included Rhonda Shearer speech on media accountability, Foundation goals and plans with Sue Gardner and Erik Möller.

The day ended with a board panel providing an opportunity for discussion with the board and a question & answer segment. This included the announcement that the new chair of the Foundation is Michael Snow.

Cuba to receive high speed internet connection from Venezuela

Documents leaked on Wikileaks and seen by Wikinews have

revealed that Cuba signed a confidential deal with Venezuela to ensure that Cuba gets access to a high speed internet connection by 2010.

The document, said, in Spanish, that the countries aim to "build and operate a line of fiber optic cables between Venezuela and Cuba." Julian Assange, an investigative editor on Wikileaks claimed that the information in the documents "adds weight to Cuban statements that the United States economic embargo of the island has forced it to rely on slow and expensive satellite links for Internet connectivity."

The document then says that cable will "extend between two terminals located at the coast of both countries."

Information Week has reported that the cable is expected to cost several million US dollars. They base this on a fact that a cable between Cuba and Florida, which is a much shorter distance than between Cuba and Venezuela, would cost half a million dollars. The US government has prevented the building of the Florida cable.

MUFON releases report on UFO sighting in Stephenville, Texas

On January 8, 2008 in Stephenville, Texas, one of the larger UFO sightings in the United States occurred. A few days ago the UFO investigative organization Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) released a 77-page report on the sighting. MUFON is a UFO investigative organization in the United States. Founded in 1969, it now has 3,000 members and is headquartered in Fort Collins, Colorado.

The MUFON report, entitled "Special Research Report

Stephenville, Texas" was written by Glen Schulze and Ropert Powell. Schulze has radar experience from working at the White Sands Missile Range. Powell has a chemistry degree and has extensive experience with semiconductors from working for Advanced Micro Devices.

The report is an analysis of radar records from the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Weather Service, obtained through several Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, and comparing them to witness accounts.

Shulze/Powell concluded that the radar data confirms the witness observations of an object, as well as the Air Force's statement that said ten aircraft were operating in the area. They say that it is too difficult to say what the witnesses saw, but that there was something there. Twice, they say, radar picked up an object travelling at nearly 2,000 mph, and at other times it showed a slow moving object.

Much media attention has been focused on the report's observation that radar records show one of two objects moving directly toward the Prairie Chapel Ranch in Crawford. This is the home of United States President George W. Bush, which has been nicknamed the Western White House. They did not draw any conclusion as to why such movement was observed.

The authors also concluded that military air activity was heavy at the time, but that the radar records show no overt action toward the unknown object. They express concern about the possibility that this could have been a terrorist aircraft with no

transponder.

Shulze/Powell stated that they felt that they had been stonewalled in some of their FOIA requests by some government agencies. They encouraged the government to more readily provide more information about the incident.

The Stephenville incident on January 8, saw dozens of witnesses reporting a large object in the evening sky that hovered above the community before it took off at high speed. Steve Allen, a pilot, observed the object from the ground and described it as being a half-mile with flashing strobe lights. He also said that it was pursued by two fighter jets, when it disappeared at a speed he estimated to be 3,000 mph.

"I don't know if it was a biblical experience or somebody from a different universe or whatever but it was definitely not from around these parts," Allen said.

Another witness was local law enforcement officer Leroy Gateman who reported it as a red glowing object suspended 3,000 feet in the air. "It was so fast I couldn't track it with my binoculars," said Gateman.

Rick Sorrells says he saw the object while deer hunting in the woods. "You look at the trees, and it was right here," he told ABC News. He estimated it to be the length of "three or four football fields," though he could not be entirely sure due to his vantage point.

Sorrells has later claimed that military helicopters have since overflowed his property at low altitude and that he has been getting strange phone calls. He also claims that an unknown man

came to his door, even once told him that, "Son we have the same caliber weapons you have, but we have more of them.", after Sorrells grabbed his rifle, and, "You need to shut your mouth about what you saw."

"I'm trying to decide whether or not to open the door," Sorrells said to the Empire-Tribune. "We're just standing there face to face looking at each other. I'm thinking he's dressed for the elements and the dogs are raising such a ruckus he must know he's in danger of being caught. That's when I realized he wanted me to see him." The man then turned away and walked into the woods.

The United States Air Force initially said witnesses must have seen reflections coming from commercial airliners. However, they later clarified that ten F-16 Fighting Falcons had been on a night-time training mission in the area on January 8.

"In the interest of public awareness, Air Force Reserve Command Public Affairs realized an error was made regarding the reported training activity of military aircraft," said the statement.

According to Air Force spokesperson Karl Lewis, the aircraft were from the 457th Fighter Squadron and the error in the initial report was due to an internal communications problem between offices at the base.

Three firefighters killed in blaze at Chinese plastics factory

A fire at a Rexam Plastics factory in China has claimed the lives of three firefighters. Nine more were injured in the accident in Shanghai's Fengxian District.

The first emergency call was received by Shanghai Public Security Bureau's 110 Command Center at 12:20 p.m. and reported the Jinhui Town factory as alight. A total of fifty fire engines and around 300 firefighters were dispatched to the scene of the blaze at the Rexam Plastic Packaging (Shanghai) Co. Ltd. facility.

Shortly after 2 p.m. a fifty-metre-long structural girder collapsed onto a group of firefighters. Those killed were crushed beneath it and died instantly. They were identified as Yao Lei, 20, Shi Jianhua, 31, and Yu Hai, 27. The nine injured were taken to Fengxian District Central Hospital, where one was transferred to Ruijin Hospital with burns and another to Shanghai No. 6 People's Hospital with suspected injuries to his spine.

All are said to be in a stable condition. There were no other injuries to firefighters or the general public.

The fire was contained by 5:30 p.m. and extinguished by 8:00 p.m. At its height it covered 2,000 square and smoke was spread over ten kilometres. The area was sealed off as a petrol station was 200 metres from the area, and air and water quality tests are underway. A nearby drinking water plant was shut down as a precaution.

Rexam employees said the fire spread rapidly because flammable raw materials and plastic products were stored in the workshop, which had most of its equipment destroyed. Meanwhile, local authorities say the beam fell due to poor construction. Production at the site is not expected to be affected.

Today in History

711 – Muslim conquests: Moorish Umayyad invaders led by Tariq ibn Ziyad defeated Roderic and the Visigoths at the Battle of Guadalete.

1870 – A dispute over who would become the next Spanish monarch following the deposition of Isabella II during the 1868 Glorious Revolution led France to declare war on Prussia.

1908 – Feyenoord Rotterdam, today one of the "big three" professional football teams in the Netherlands, was founded as the club Wilhelmina in a pub.

1919 – Following Peace Day celebrations marking the end of World War I, ex-servicemen who were unhappy with unemployment and other grievances rioted and burnt down the town hall of Luton, England.

1947 – Burmese nationalist Aung San and six members of his newly-formed cabinet were assassinated during a cabinet meeting.

July 19 is Burmese Martyrs' Day

Word of the Day

schmooze v

1. To talk casually, especially in order to gain an advantage or make a social connection.

About Wikinews

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