



Top Stories

Abu Ghraib prison to be closed

The infamous Abu Ghraib camp will close "within months" and all detainees will be moved to other camps in Iraq. There has been much attention focused on the prison due to torture and abuse of detainees.

Wikipedia's Wales is considering a "stable" version

Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales has said that he's considering a "stable" edition of the community-edited encyclopedia, according to an interview with the Toronto Star. The edition would be "a body of work" that has already "been through the community-review process", he proposed.

Featured story

Buffalo, N.Y. hotel proposal delayed further

The Common Council voted on Tuesday to send the proposed hotel development "to committee for further discussion." Although the city's Planning Board will meet for discussion about the proposal on the morning of March 14, they are not expected to make any decisions.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Further evidence accrues to show that the polar ice caps are shrinking.
- Terminal D at LaGuardia Airport in New York City was closed due to a security breach.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter enters orbit around Mars.
- More than 250 medical experts sign a letter in The Lancet urging the United States to stop force-feeding of Guantanamo Bay detainees and close down the prison.
- The World Health Organization announces that the number of people killed by measles declined by 48% between 1999 and 2004, from 871,000 to 454,000. The greatest decline, 60%, was in sub-Saharan Africa. The improvement is attributed to increased vaccination.
- John Profumo, the man at the centre of Britain's most famous political scandal of the 20th century, has died at the age of 91.
- Italian prosecutors ask for Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and British lawyer David Mills to be indicted in the on-going alleged bribery case.
- Twenty-six people are killed in Dera Bugti, southwest Pakistan, when their vehicle hits a landmine. The victims were primarily women and children. Both tribal rebels and security forces planted landmines in the area.
- Gale Norton has announced her resignation as United States Secretary of the Interior, effective March 31, 2006.

Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter enters Martian orbit

After seven months the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter entered Martian orbit. The successful maneuver garnered applause from NASA controllers at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

On Friday the orbiter made a 27-minute engine burn. The maneuver slowed the orbiter down twenty percent to 27,000 kilometers (11,000 miles) per hour. The maneuver put the satellite into an elliptical orbit set to bring the orbiter within 400 kilometers (250 miles) of the martian surface.

As of now the European Space Agency's Mars Express along with NASA's Mar's Global Surveyor and Mars Odyessy are orbiting Mars. The Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter will make it fourth satellite monitoring Mars.

The Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter was seven months ago on August 12, 2005. The orbiter was outfitted with the most powerful monitoring equipment ever sent to monitor Mars. In addition the craft will recover more data than all other previous missions combined.

USA leaving Abu Ghraib

United States army officers stated that the Abu Ghraib prison will be closed within months, and its prisoners moved to other prisons and camps in Iraq. Some of the 4500 detainees will be sent to the new Camp Cropper, which is built

for this special purpose. The operation of Abu Ghraib will be transferred to the government of Iraq. Lieutenant Colonel Keir-Kevin Curry said: "No precise dates have been set, but the plan is to accomplish this within the next two to three months."

Lt. Col. Barry Johnson, military spokesman, says "Clearly there's a lot of emotion attached to Abu Ghraib. For Iraqis, it dates back a lot further than abuses committed by American soldiers, and it makes it a magnet for attacks."

The prison complex was a widely feared center for torture and execution under Saddam Hussein, and as many as 4,000 people were executed in the prison in 1984. The buildings at Abu Ghraib were originally built by British contractors in the 1960s.

Pictures of extensive detainee abuse in Abu Ghraib taken inside the prison in November 2003 had been released earlier this year. In January 2005, United States Army court martial found Army Spc. Charles Graner guilty of abusing prisoners at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison. The jury sentenced Graner to ten years in prison. Total nine American soldiers were found guilty in the Abu Ghraib abuse case.

Czech pub food eating experiment resulted in lost weight, lower cholesterol

On February 8, the same day Super Size Me opened in Prague, a Czech film company's volunteer known as Karel Gustav Bozan began a 1 month diet of Czech pub food and beer in a Czech version called "Super Spek Me"; which translates loosely as "Super Flab Me".

Zuzana Pudilova of Aerofilms

described the volunteer at that time: "He is a well-built man between 45 and 50. He is almost 2 metres tall, he is not exactly thin but until now he has had quite a healthy lifestyle."

Karel ate typical Czech pub food for an entire month with three rules: no vegetables or fresh fruit (unless they came with a meal) no exercise, and lots of beer.

Karel's menu consisted entirely of typical Czech dishes. Obesity therapist, Iva Malkova, had warned at the beginning of the project: "People in the Czech Republic eat much more fat, especially animal fat than is recommended." Pub meals in the the Czech Republic often consist of such fatty items as goose with dumplings or sausages.

Yesterday the results were announced; Karel lost six kilos, his cholesterol went down and so did his liver enzymes, triglyceride and uric acid levels. His blood pressure did not change. At his interview with Radio Prague he said: "I feel good, great! The food was varied and there were even enough greens in the garnish. As for beer, I tried to alternate brands but I always settled it with Pilsner. I liked the experiment, it was all paid for by the distributor, Aerofilms. I would do it again, maybe they will propose it to me!"

Zuzana Pudilova of Aerofilms said: "The result of the experiment is surprising - both for us and the experts who monitored it. The medical report says our volunteer has lost weight and his blood sugar has dropped. So we have come to the conclusion that fatty Czech pub grub is not all that bad for you - which I guess wasn't meant to be the result of the experiment at all."

Daisuke Enomoto will be the fourth space tourist at the ISS

Japanese entrepreneur Daisuke "Dice-K" Enomoto, 34, is set to become the fourth private citizen in space. The Arlington, Virginia-based company "Space Adventures", which specializes in spaceflight-related travel, announced on March 7 that Enomoto was approved by the Russian space agency as a flight candidate.

Enomoto has now passed the physical examinations necessary to be cleared for training, finished the medical preparation, and signed the contract for the flight. His training with the Russian Federal Space Agency will include physical and aeronautical preparation as well as Russian language instruction.

Enomoto will be the first Japanese person to fly to the International Space Station (ISS). His trip, to take place in a Soyuz TMA-9 rocket, is scheduled for September, with a ticket price of US\$20 million.

United States entrepreneur Gregory Olsen returned from the ISS in October 2005; previous space vacationers were American Dennis Tito in 2001 and South African Mark Shuttleworth in 2002.

Wikipedia's Wales is considering a "stable" version

Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales has said that he's considering a "stable" edition of the community-edited encyclopedia, according to an interview with the Toronto Star. The edition would be "a body of work" that has already "been through the community-review process," he proposed.

"The basic idea is that we're going to do a research project to gather

feedback on all the articles on the website from the general public. Just a feedback we're going to use for research purposes, first to determine where our strengths and weaknesses are, and then, based on that, we're going to think about what to do as a next step."

With regard to whether this would hurt the democratic spirit of Wikipedia, Wales responded "Uhhmmm, no, not really. I mean, obviously, we want to be very careful as we change the social model in any way, to not wreck the magic of what works. I guess in that sense it's a concern, but we don't really have any worries about it."

Plans to create stable versions of articles date back for years, with the most serious of discussion happening from fall 2005 on.

Buffalo, N.Y. hotel proposal delayed further

Buffalo, New York – The Common Council of Buffalo voted on Tuesday to send the Elmwood Village Hotel proposal "to committee for further discussion", after citing the need for more public involvement.

The Elmwood Village Hotel is a development proposal by the Savarino Construction Services Corporation, a project designed by the architect Karl Frizlen of The Frizlen Group. The hotel would be placed on the southeast corner of Elmwood and Forest Avenues in Buffalo.

To make way for the project, at least five buildings located at 1119 to 1121 Elmwood Ave would be demolished. At least two properties on Forest Avenue could also be demolished. The Elmwood properties, according to Eva Hassett, Vice President of Savarion

Construction, are "under contract", but it is unclear if Savarino Construction actually owns the Elmwood properties. Hans Mobius, a former mayoral candidate, is still believed to be the current owner the properties.

Other properties could be at risk

The properties 605 and 607 Forest Avenue could also be included in the proposal. It is possible that Savarino Construction may try to obtain a variance for 605 Forest, which would allow them to enforce eminent domain, should the hotel be allowed to go forward.

The building at 607 Forest was also discussed to be rezoned, but it is unclear what the plans would be for that property.

During the February 28 Common Council meeting, Hassett stated that the properties 605 and 607 were "now off the agenda".

Pano Georgiadis, owner of Pano's Resturant at 1081 Elmwood, owns the property at 605 Forest and attended Tuesday's Common Council meeting.

"Having a hotel is a bright idea. We all love the idea of a hotel, but the way that it is presented, is wishful thinking. This hotel does not fit. It's like putting two gallons of water in a gallon jug, it does not fit. At the last meeting, the architect admitted that they are planning to put the underground parking lot and the hotel, right at the property line. If I open my window, I will be able to touch the wall, that goes fifty feet high", said Georgiadis.

"There is a problem having a seventy-two room hotel and fifty-five parking spaces. That means that all the other cars will spill all

over the neighborhood. The footprint is simply too small. If you have a bigger [parking] lot, and a smaller hotel, I will welcome a hotel. I have a parking lot at my own business, and I am chasing people all day long. Remember, the city says it has 'zero tolerance [for illegal parking]'. Try telling that to the guy from Albany who came to see his kids, that are going to Buffalo State, who would get tickets totaling over a hundred dollars", added Georgiadis.

The city's Planning Board is scheduled to meet on March 14, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. about the proposal. Although a discussion will take place, no vote is expected to be taken.

At the moment, none of the properties are zoned for a hotel. Savarino Construction plans on asking for a C2 zoning permit. If that does not work, they plan to implement a new zoning plan called a "special development plan" which would allow for only a hotel on the site. That zone would not be able to be changed.

Mobius accused of being a slumlord

"This [project] justifies Mobius's refusal to invest in any maintenance or improvements", on the properties said Clarence Carnahan, a concerned citizen. "Where were the Council persons over the years? Where were the city inspectors over the years, to make sure that he maintained and improved his properties? The government was supposed to be protectiong, not being preditorial. I see a predatorial issue here when it comes to this hotel. Over the years: Why has the local government been disfunctional when it came to Mobius's properties? Refusal to invest in

improvements, doesn't that sound like a slumlord? Maybe I am missing a point here, but what kind of messages does this send to other slumlords that haven't been jailed or fined? It's [the hotel] trying to be pushed through."

Carnahan also presented signs for residents and or business owners who are opposed to the hotel, that could be placed in windows or on stakes in the yard. Some of the signs said, 'No tell hotel', 'Hans off, no hotel', 'It takes more than a hotel to make a village'. and 'Keep Elmwood free, no hotel'. Carnahan plans on making more signs for a protest to be held on Saturday March 18, at 2:00 p.m. (EST) on Elmwood and Forest. Some signs were given to individuals after the meeting.

"First things first, Hans is the problem, and I don't think it has been addressed. Let's roll back the clock on this project. What can we do with Hans? There is such thing as eminent domain, which could be of greater interest to the community, to seize the property at its lowest assessed value", said Nancy Pollina, co-owner of Don Apparel with Patty Morris at 1119 Elmwood. "There are so many ideas that have not been explored and we are about to give this parcel away, to a big developer."

Mobius may be giving up

A freelance journalist writing for Wikinews has obtained a letter, exclusively, addressed to one of the five business owners from Hans Mobius stating:

There is a proposal to develop my property which you are currently renting. Because of opposition to this development, it does not look like it will happen. I will let you

know if there any changes.

Despite the letter, there have been no plans or decisions made to end the proposal.

So far, no business owners or residents of 1119-1121 Elmwood, have recieved an eviction notice.

Business owners and residents not against 'facelift'

Both business owners and residents gave an idea of what they would like to see happen at the corner.

Last year, developers renovated two buildings on Auburn and Elmwood Avenues, and many of the concerned citizens would like to see a similar development on Forest and Elmwood.

The renovation combined the two buildings into one, and allowed for more shop space. Before the renovation took place, the building on the left in the picture, was boarded up for several years.

Some of the shops in the new buildings include Cone Five Pottery, The Ruby Slipper, and Abraham's Jewelers.

Rocco Termini, a developer in Buffalo, proposed a similar design at the February 28 community meeting

In an interview after the February 28 meeting, Termini stated, "I will be willing to take a look at this myself, or I would be more than happy to be partners with Sam, Sam Savarino", who is President and Chief Executive Officer of Savarino Construction Services Corp.

So far Savarino Construction has no plans to team up with Termini.

Three charged following release of Cronulla riot wanted photographs

Three men have been arrested and a further six "positively identified" following the public release of photographs showing "persons of interest" to police in relation to the Sydney riots last year.

A 20-year-old man from Warilla, a suburb of Wollongong, handed himself into police yesterday after seeing his photograph in a newspaper. He was subsequently charged with riot and affray.

An 18-year-old man from Bella Vista was arrested in a Baulkham Hills hotel yesterday afternoon after he was identified by the public. A 33-year-old Miranda man was also charged after handing himself into police last night. He will appear in Sutherland Local Court today.

Following the release of the photographs on March 8, police have received information from the public identifying seven of those wanted in relation to the riots.

New South Wales police minister, Carl Scully, yesterday urged the others to turn themselves into police before being arrested. "I'd say to those people, save yourselves the embarrassment and turn up to a police station", he said.

Police and the police minister have also criticised Sydney's middle eastern community for failing to assist in identifying men wanted for revenge attacks after the riots.

"Generally speaking, when Caucasians are put on the front pages of newsletters, they're

identified", said Mr Scully.

"And unfortunately, when footage is presented of people of Middle Eastern background, we get zip."

A spokesman from the Lebanese Friendship Association said that the middle eastern community was being persecuted. "We are sick and tired of people saying why aren't we doing enough", said Keysar Trad.

"If the beat police can't recognise them, then the chances of anyone recognising them are very, very slim."

Other Muslim leaders urged parents to question their children and hand them into police if they suspect they took part in the revenge attacks which occurred after the riot. Lebanese Muslim Association spokesman Abdul El Ayoubi said parents should have questioned their children when the events first occurred.

"If (their children) were involved then they have a duty to take them in", he said.

"What they have done now, might be nothing to what they could do next time."

The NSW Islamic Council has also backed Mr Ayoubi's calls.

Detective Superintendent Ken McKay, the head of strike force Enoggera which is investigating the riots, said he was confident of making many more arrests over coming days thanks to the assistance of the public. "It wouldn't surprise me if we had, within the next day or two, the majority of them." he said yesterday.

"I'm confident (of arresting all 20).

If I was a betting man I'd be running at close to odds-on."

Today in History

1845 - Māori forces led by chiefs Kawiti and Hone Heke destroyed the British settlement of Kororareka in New Zealand, beginning the Flagstaff War.
1966 - In power since World War II, President Sukarno of Indonesia was ousted by Suharto and the military.

1990 - The Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic ceased to exist when Lithuania proclaimed the restitution of independence from the Soviet Union.
1996 - John Howard took office as the 25th Prime Minister of Australia.

2004 - The March 11th Attacks: A series of terrorist bombings on commuter trains killed 191 people and wounded more than 1,800 in Madrid, Spain.

Quote of the Day

"Let us think the unthinkable, let us do the undoable, let us prepare to grapple with the ineffable itself, and see if we may not eff it after all." ~ Douglas Adams

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