



Top Stories



Hundreds of Monks arrested after protests

Military government crackdown

"Halo 3" creates new opening day record



The long awaited finale in the "Halo" series, "Halo 3", has beaten the previous record of opening day sales held by "Spiderman 3" of

US\$151 million.

Featured story

Arrest warrant issued for Jackie Selebi, President of Interpol



Police have issued an arrest warrant with Jackie Selebi, the president of Interpol. Recent

media coverage of the murder of Brett Kebble have raised questions of the close friendship between Jackie Selebi and Glenn Agliotti.

Wikipedia Current Events

Four employees of the International Red Cross, including two foreigners, are abducted in Afghanistan's Wardak province.

•The President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf registers to run in the October 6, 2007 election.

•A new round of talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear program starts in Beijing.

•According to sources close to the military, Senior General Than Shwe is now directly commanding soldiers after several commanders refused to use force to crackdown on protesters.

•There are unconfirmed reports that Than Shwe's family is fleeing to a foreign country. A chartered Air Bagan flight carrying eight special passengers landed in Vientiane, Laos, at 6pm (local time)

•China, one of Myanmar's few allies, calls for restraint for the first time.

•Nine people are killed and 11 injured when junta security forces open fire on an anti-government demonstration in Yangon. Among the dead is a Japanese journalist.

•Burmese security forces raid several Buddhist monasteries arresting hundreds of the Buddhist monks who have led the protests.

Jewelry courier robbed; three men arrested

Three men were arrested after they robbed a jewelry courier today. The robbery was made at a McDonalds in Factoria, Washington at approx 9:40am ET.

The jewelry courier was robbed at gunpoint. The men drove away but the courier was lucky enough to provide a description of the vehicle and the men, as they got away. The vehicle was described as a white van. Local police followed the van towards Interstate 90 in Snoqualmie, Washington, east of Factoria, where the van was stopped. The three men were arrested and the van was searched by a K-9 unit.

The value of the jewels are unknown.

Arrest warrant issued for Jackie Selebi, President of Interpol

According to a report released by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), a warrant has been issued by the South African National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), which operates separately from the police, for the arrest of national commissioner of the South African police and president of Interpol, Jackie Selebi.

Recent media coverage of the murder of Brett Kebble have raised questions of the close friendship between Jackie Selebi and Glenn Agliotti. Agliotti was later arrested in connection with the murder of Brett Kebble.

Agliotti is alleged to have strong links with organized crime and racketeering.

Canada posts record \$14 billion budget surplus

Canada has a budget surplus of 13.8 billion dollars for the 2006–2007 fiscal year, totaling 1% of Canada's gross domestic product (GDP), Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced today. The record surplus was boosted by revenue from government corporations to 14.2 billion dollars, far exceeding the government's projections of 9.2 billion dollars and surpassing the record set by the previous year's 13.2 billion dollar surplus.

By federal law, all surplus must be used to pay down Canada's debt, and is not available for spending. 90 billion dollars in debt payments over the last ten years have reduced its debt to 467 billion dollars or 32.3% of national GDP, its lowest level in a quarter century. The announced debt payment is the largest in Canadian history.

The payment also reduced Canada's annual interest payments by \$725 million, which the government pledged to pass on to taxpayers through tax returns and reduced income taxes. The Conservative's "Tax Back Guarantee", proposed in the March budget, promises that money saved on interest payments will be deducted from Canadians' taxes. The Globe and Mail predicts the tax returns will be 30–40 dollars per taxpayer.

Canada has posted ten consecutive budget surpluses in the last decade. The Canadian economy, the 8th largest in the world, has benefited from rising global demand for its export

commodities, particularly oil and copper, as well as record corporate profits. This surplus was further increased by a 700 million dollar drop from expected government spending.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper cautioned that the Canadian economy is still facing "tough times" in its forestry, manufacturing, and some export industries. Critics point out that the Conservative government had said Canadians were overtaxed when they took office, and had vowed to eliminate "surplus surprises".

17-pound baby born in Russia

A Siberian woman, Tatyana Barabanova, 43, residing in Russia was shocked, after giving birth to her twelfth child, to see a 17-pound (7.75 kg) baby.

Nadia, born on September 17, 2007, by Cesarean section at a maternity clinic in Aleisk, Russia, weighed in at a massive 17 pounds 1 ounce. "We were all simply in shock," the mother stated. When asked what the father said, she answered "He couldn't say a thing - he just stood there blinking."

Barabanova said they did not have the money for "special foods", so she "ate everything". Nadia's eight sisters and three brothers all weighed in at more than 11 pounds (5 kg), according to a local news reported, quoted by the Reuters news agency.

This is the second time this has happened, a Brazilian woman had given birth to a 17lb (7.73kg) baby in January 2005.

John Vanderslice plays New York City: Wikinews interview

John Vanderslice has recently learned to enjoy America again.

The singer-songwriter, who National Public Radio called "one of the most imaginative, prolific and consistently rewarding artists making music today," found it through an unlikely source: his French girlfriend. "For the first time in my life I wouldn't say I was defending the country but I was in this very strange position..."

Since breaking off from San Francisco local legends, mk Ultra, Vanderslice has produced six critically-acclaimed albums. His most recent, Emerald City, was released July 24th. Titled after the nickname given to the American-occupied Green Zone in Baghdad, it chronicles a world on the verge of imminent collapse under the weight of its own paranoia and loneliness. David Shankbone recently went to the Bowery Ballroom and spoke with Vanderslice about music, photography, touring and what makes a depressed liberal angry.

DS: How is the tour going?

JV: Great! I was just on the Wiki page for Inland Empire, and there is a great synopsis on the film. What's on there is the best thing I have read about that film. The tour has been great. The thing with touring: say you are on vacation...let's say you are doing an intense vacation. I went to Thailand alone, and there's a part of you that just wants to go home. I don't know what it is. I like to be home, but on tour there is a free floating anxiety that says: Go Home. Go Home.

DS: Anywhere, or just outside of the country?

JV: Anywhere. I want to be home in San Francisco, and I really do love being on tour, but there is almost like a homing beacon inside of me that is beeping and it creates a certain amount of

anxiety.

DS: I can relate: You and I have moved around a lot, and we have a lot in common. Pranks, for one. David Bowie is another.

JV: Yeah, I saw that you like David Bowie on your MySpace.

DS: When I was in college I listened to him nonstop. Do you have a favorite album of his?

JV: I loved all the things from early to late seventies. Hunky Dory to Low to "Heroes" to Lodger. Low changed my life. The second I got was Hunky Dory, and the third was Diamond Dogs, which is a very underrated album. Then I got Ziggy Stardust and I was like, wow, this is important...this means something. There was tons of music I discovered in the seventh and eighth grade that I discovered, but I don't love, respect and relate to it as much as I do Bowie. Especially Low...I was just on a panel with Steve Albini about how it has had a lot of impact.

DS: You said seventh and eighth grade. Were you always listening to people like Bowie or bands like the Velvets, or did you have an Eddie Murphy My Girl Wants to Party All the Time phase?

JV: The thing for me that was the uncool music, I had an older brother who was really into prog music, so it was like Gentle Giant and Yes and King Crimson and Genesis. All the new Genesis that was happening at the time was mind-blowing. Phil Collins's solo record...we had every single solo record, like the Mike Rutherford solo record.

DS: Do you shun that music now or is it still a part of you?

JV: Oh no, I appreciate all music. I'm an anti-snob. Last night when I was going to sleep I was watching Ocean's Thirteen on my

computer. It's not like I always need to watch some super-fragmented, fucked-up art movie like Inland Empire. It's part of how I relate to the audience. We end every night by going out into the audience and playing acoustically, directly, right in front of the audience, six inches away—that is part of my philosophy.

DS: Do you think New York or San Francisco suffers from artistic elitism more?

JV: I think because of the Internet that there is less and less elitism; everyone is into some little superstar on YouTube and everyone can now appreciate now Justin Timberlake. There is no need for factions. There is too much information, and I think the idea has broken down that some people...I mean, when was the last time you met someone who was into ska, or into punk, and they dressed the part? I don't meet those people anymore.

DS: Everything is fusion now, like cuisine. It's hard to find a purely French or purely Vietnamese restaurant.

JV: Exactly! When I was in high school there were factions. I remember the guys who listened to Black Flag. They looked the part! Like they were in theater.

DS: You still find some emos.

JV: Yes, I believe it. But even emo kids, compared to their older brethren, are so open-minded. I opened up for Sunny Day Real Estate and Pedro the Lion, and I did not find their fans to be the cliquish people that I feared, because I was never playing or marketed in the emo genre. I would say it's because of the Internet.

DS: You could clearly create music that is more mainstream pop and

be successful with it, but you choose a lot of very personal and political themes for your music. Are you ever tempted to put out a studio album geared toward the charts just to make some cash? JV: I would say no. I'm definitely a capitalist, I was an econ major and I have no problem with making money, but I made a pact with myself very early on that I was only going to release music that was true to the voices and harmonic things I heard inside of me—that were honestly inside me—and I have never broken that pact. We just pulled two new songs from Emerald City because I didn't feel they were exactly what I wanted to have on a record. Maybe I'm too stubborn or not capable of it, but I don't think...part of the equation for me: this is a low stakes game, making indie music. Relative to the world, with the people I grew up with and where they are now and how much money they make. The money in indie music is a low stakes game from a financial perspective. So the one thing you can have as an indie artist is credibility, and when you burn your credibility, you are done, man. You can not recover from that. These years I have been true to myself, that's all I have.

DS: Do you think Spoon burned their indie credibility for allowing their music to be used in commercials and by making more studio-oriented albums? They are one of my favorite bands, but they have come a long way from A Series of Sneaks and Girls Can Tell.

JV: They have, but no, I don't think they've lost their credibility at all. I know those guys so well, and Brit and Jim are doing exactly the music they want to do. Brit owns his own studio, and they completely control their means of

production, and they are very insulated by being on Merge, and I think their new album—and I bought Telephono when it came out—is as good as anything they have done.

DS: Do you think letting your music be used on commercials does not bring the credibility problem it once did? That used to be the line of demarcation--the whole Sting thing--that if you did commercials you sold out.

JV: Five years ago I would have said that it would have bothered me. It doesn't bother me anymore. The thing is that bands have shrinking options for revenue streams, and sync deals and licensing, it's like, man, you better be open to that idea. I remember when Spike Lee said, 'Yeah, I did these Nike commercials, but it allowed me to do these other films that I wanted to make,' and in some ways there is an article that Of Montreal and Spoon and other bands that have done sync deals have actually insulated themselves further from the difficulties of being a successful independent band, because they have had some income come in that have allowed them to stay put on labels where they are not being pushed around by anyone.

The ultimate problem—sort of like the only philosophical problem is suicide—the only philosophical problem is whether to be assigned to a major label because you are then going to have so much editorial input that it is probably going to really hurt what you are doing.

DS: Do you believe the only philosophical question is whether to commit suicide?

JV: Absolutely. I think the rest is internal chatter and if I logged and tried to counter the internal chatter I have inside my own brain

there is no way I could match that.

DS: When you see artists like Pete Doherty or Amy Winehouse out on suicidal binges of drug use, what do you think as a musician? What do you get from what you see them go through in their personal lives and their music?

JV: The thing for me is they are profound iconic figures for me, and I don't even know their music. I don't know Winehouse or Doherty's music, I just know that they are acting a very crucial, mythic part in our culture, and they might be doing it unknowingly.

DS: Glorification of drugs? The rock lifestyle?

JV: More like an out-of-control Id, completely unregulated personal relationships to the world in general. It's not just drugs, it's everything. It's arguing and scratching people's faces and driving on the wrong side of the road. Those are just the infractions that land them in jail. I think it might be unknowing, but in some ways they are beautiful figures for going that far off the deep end.

DS: As tragic figures?

JV: Yeah, as totally tragic figures. I appreciate that. I take no pleasure in saying that, but I also believe they are important. The figures that go outside—let's say GG Allin or Penderetsky in the world of classical music—people who are so far outside of the normal boundaries of behavior and communication, it in some way enlarges the size of your landscape, and it's beautiful. I know it sounds weird to say that, but it is.

DS: They are examples, as well. I recently covered for Wikinews the Iranian President speaking at Columbia and a student named

Matt Glick told me that he supported the Iranian President speaking so that he could protest him, that if we don't give a platform and voice for people, how can we say that they are wrong? I think it's almost the same thing; they are beautiful as examples of how living a certain way can destroy you, and to look at them and say, "Don't be that."

JV: Absolutely, and let me tell you where I'm coming from. I don't do drugs, I drink maybe three or four times a year. I don't have any problematic relationship to drugs because there has been a history around me, like probably any musician or creative person, of just blinding array of drug abuse and problems. For me, I am a little bit of a control freak and I don't have those issues. I just shut those doors. But I also understand and I am very sympathetic to someone who does not shut that door, but goes into that room and stays.

DS: Is it a problem for you to work with people who are using drugs?

JV: I would never work with them. It is a very selfish decision to make and usually those people are total energy vampires and they will take everything they can get from you. Again, this is all in theory...I love that stuff in theory. If Amy Winehouse was my girlfriend, I would probably not be very happy.

DS: Your latest CD is Emerald City and that is an allusion to the compound that we created in Baghdad. How has the current political client affected you in terms of your music?

JV: In some ways, both Pixel Revolt and Emerald City were born out of a recharged and re-energized position of my being....I was so beaten down after the 2000 election and after 9/11 and then the invasion of Iraq,

Afghanistan; I was so depleted as a person after all that stuff happened, that I had to write my way out of it. I really had to write political songs because for me it is a way of making sense and processing what is going on. The question I'm asked all the time is do I think is a responsibility of people to write politically and I always say, My God, no. if you're Morrissey, then you write Morrissey stuff. If you are Dan Bejar and Destroyer, then you are Dan Bejar and you are a fucking genius. Write about whatever it is you want to write about. But to get out of that hole I had to write about that.

DS: There are two times I felt deeply connected to New York City, and that was 9/11 and the re-election of George Bush. The depression of the city was palpable during both. I was in law school during the Iraq War, and then when Hurricane Katrina hit, we watched our countrymen debate the logic of rebuilding one of our most culturally significant cities, as we were funding almost without question the destruction of another country to then rebuild it, which seems less and less likely. Do you find it is difficult to enjoy living in America when you see all of these sorts of things going on, and the sort of arguments we have amongst ourselves as a people?

JV: I would say yes, absolutely, but one thing changed that was very strange: I fell in love with a French girl and the genesis of Emerald City was going through this visa process to get her into the country, which was through the State Department. In the middle of process we had her visa reviewed and everything shifted over to Homeland Security. All of my complicated feelings about this country became even more dour and complicated, because here

was Homeland Security mailing me letters and all involved in my love life, and they were grilling my girlfriend in Paris and they were grilling me, and we couldn't travel because she had a pending visa. In some strange ways the thing that changed everything was that we finally got the visa accepted and she came here. Now she is a Parisian girl, and it goes without saying that she despises America, and she would never have considered moving to America. So she moves here and is asking me almost breathlessly, How can you allow this to happen--

DS: --you, John Vanderslice, how can you allow this---

JV: --Me! Yes! So for the first time in my life I wouldn't say I was defending the country but I was in this very strange position of saying, Listen, not that many people vote and the churches run fucking everything here, man. It's like if you take out the evangelical Christian you have basically a progressive western European country. That's all there is to it. But these people don't vote, poor people don't vote, there's a complicated equation of extreme corruption and voter fraud here, and I found myself trying to rattle of all the reasons to her why I am personally not responsible, and it put me in a very interesting position. And then Sarkozy got elected in France and I watched her go through the same horrific thing that we've gone through here, and Sarkozy is a nut, man. This guy is a nut.

DS: But he doesn't compare to George Bush or Dick Cheney. He's almost a liberal by American standards.

JV: No, because their President doesn't have much power. It's interesting because he is a WAPO right-wing and he was very close

to Le Pen and he was a card-carrying straight-up Nazi. I view Sarkozy as somewhat of a far-right candidate, especially in the context of French politics. He is dismantling everything. It's all changing. The school system, the remnants of the socialized medical care system. The thing is he doesn't have the foreign policy power that Bush does. Bush and Cheney have unprecedented amounts of power, and black budgets...I mean, come on, we're spending half a trillion dollars in Iraq, and that's just the money accounted for.

DS: What's the reaction to you and your music when you play off the coasts?

JV: I would say good...

DS: Have you ever been Dixiechicked?

JV: No! I want to be! I would love to be, because then that means I'm really part of some fiery debate, but I would say there's a lot of depressed in every single town. You can say Salt Lake City, you can look at what we consider to be conservative cities, and when you play those towns, man, the kids that come out are more or less on the same page and politically active because they are fish out of water.

DS: Depression breeds apathy, and your music seems geared toward anger, trying to wake people from their apathy. Your music is not maudlin and sad, but seems to be an attempt to awaken a spirit, with a self-reflective bent.

JV: That's the trick. I would say that honestly, when Katrina happened, I thought, "okay, this is a trick to make people so crazy and so angry that they can't even think. If you were in a community and basically were in a more or less quasi-police state surveillance

society with no accountability, where we are pouring untold billions into our infrastructure to protect outside threats against via terrorism, or whatever, and then a natural disaster happens and there is no response. There is an empty response. There is all these ships off the shore that were just out there, just waiting, and nobody came. Michael Brown. It is one of the most insane things I have ever seen in my life.

DS: Is there a feeling in San Francisco that if an earthquake struck, you all would be on your own?

JV: Yes, of course. Part of what happened in New Orleans is that it was a Catholic city, it was a city of sin, it was a black city. And San Francisco? Bush wouldn't even visit California in the beginning because his numbers were so low. Before Schwarzenegger definitely. I'm totally afraid of the earthquake, and I think everyone is out there. America is in the worst of both worlds: a laissez-faire economy and then the Grover Norquist anti-tax, starve the government until it turns into nothing more than a Argentinian-style government where there are these super rich invisible elite who own everything and there's no distribution of wealth and nothing that resembles the New Deal, twentieth century embracing of human rights and equality, war against poverty, all of these things. They are trying to kill all that stuff. So, in some ways, it is the worst of both worlds because they are pushing us towards that, and on the same side they have put in a Supreme Court that is so right wing and so fanatically opposed to upholding civil rights, whether it be for foreign fighters...I mean, we are going to see movement with abortion, Miranda rights and stuff that is going to come up on the

Court. We've tortured so many people who have had no intelligence value that you have to start to look at torture as a symbolic and almost ritualized behavior; you have this...

DS: Organ failure. That's our baseline...

JV: Yeah, and you have to wonder about how we were torturing people to do nothing more than to send the darkest signal to the world to say, Listen, we are so fucking weird that if you cross the line with us, we are going to be at war with your religion, with your government, and we are going to destroy you.

DS: I interviewed Congressman Tom Tancredo, who is running for President, and he feels we should use as a deterrent against Islam the bombing of the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

JV: You would radicalize the very few people who have not been radicalized, yet, by our actions and beliefs. We know what we've done out there, and we are going to pay for this for a long time. When Hezbollah was bombing Israel in that border excursion last year, the Hezbollah fighters were writing the names of battles they fought with the Jews in the Seventh Century on their helmets. This shit is never forgotten.

DS: You read a lot of the stuff that is written about you on blogs and on the Internet. Do you ever respond?

JV: No, and I would say that I read stuff that tends to be . I've done interviews that have been solely about film and photography. For some reason hearing myself talk about music, and maybe because I have been talking about it for so long, it's snoozeville. Most interviews I do are very regimented and they tend to follow

a certain line. I understand. If I was them, it's a 200 word piece and I may have never played that town, in Des Moines or something. But, in general, it's like...my band mates ask why don't I read the weeklies when I'm in town, and Google my name. It would be really like looking yourself in the mirror. When you look at yourself in the mirror you are just error-correcting. There must be some sort of hall of mirrors thing that happens when you are completely involved in the Internet conversation about your music, and in some ways I think that I'm very innocently making music, because I don't make music in any way that has to do with the response to that music. I don't believe that the response to the music has anything to do with it. This is something I got from John Cage and Marcel Duchamp, I think the perception of the artwork, in some ways, has nothing to do with the artwork, and I think that is a beautiful, glorious and flattering thing to say to the perceiver, the viewer of that artwork. I've spent a lot of time looking at Paul Klee's drawings, lithographs, watercolors and paintings and when I read his diaries I'm not sure how much of a correlation there is between what his color schemes are denoting and what he is saying and what I am getting out of it. I'm not sure that it matters. Inland Empire is a great example. Lynch basically says, I don't want to talk about it because I'm going to close doors for the viewer. It's up to you. It's not that it's a riddle or a puzzle. You know how much of your own experience you are putting into the digestion of your own art. That's not to say that that guy arranges notes in an interesting way, and sings in an interesting way and arranges words in an interesting way, but often, if someone says they really like my music, what I

want to say is, That's cool you focused your attention on that thing, but it does not make me go home and say, Wow, you're great. My ego is not involved in it.

DS: Often people assume an artist makes an achievement, say wins a Tony or a Grammy or even a Cable Ace Award and people think the artist must feel this lasting sense of accomplishment, but it doesn't typically happen that way, does it? Often there is some time of elation and satisfaction, but almost immediately the artist is being asked, "Okay, what's the next thing? What's next?" and there is an internal pressure to move beyond that achievement and not focus on it.

JV: Oh yeah, exactly. There's a moment of relief when a mastered record gets back, and then I swear to you that ten minutes after that point I feel there are bigger fish to fry. I grew up listening to classical music, and there is something inside of me that says, Okay, I've made six records. Whoop-dee-doo. I grew up listening to Gustav Mahler, and I will never, ever approach what he did.

DS: Do you try?

JV: I love Mahler, but no, his music is too expansive and intellectual, and it's realized harmonically and compositionally in a way that is five languages beyond me. And that's okay. I'm very happy to do what I do. How can anyone be so jazzed about making a record when you are up against, shit, five thousand records a week—

DS: —but a lot of it's crap—

JV: —a lot of it's crap, but a lot of it is really, really good and doesn't get the attention it deserves. A lot of it is very good. I'm shocked at some of the stuff I hear. I listen to a lot of music and I am mailed a lot of CDs, and I'm on the web all

the time.

DS: I've done a lot of photography for Wikipedia and the genesis of it was an attempt to pin down reality, to try to understand a world that I felt had fallen out of my grasp of understanding, because I felt I had no sense of what this world was about anymore. For that, my work is very encyclopedic, and it fit well with Wikipedia. What was the reason you began investing time and effort into photography?

JV: It came from trying to making sense of touring. Touring is incredibly fast and there is so much compressed imagery that comes to you, whether it is the window in the van, or like now, when we are whisking through the Northeast in seven days. Let me tell you, I see a lot of really close people in those seven days. We move a lot, and there is a lot of input coming in. The shows are tremendous and, it is emotionally so overwhelming that you can not log it. You can not keep a file of it. It's almost like if I take photos while I am doing this, it slows it down or stops it momentarily and orders it. It has made touring less of a blur; concretizes these times.

I go back and develop the film, and when I look at the tour I remember things in a very different way. It coalesces. Let's say I take on fucking photo in Athens, Georgia. That's really intense. And I tend to take a photo of someone I like, or photos of people I really admire and like.

DS: What bands are working with your studio, Tiny Telephone?

JV: Death Cab for Cutie is going to come back and track their next record there. Right now there is a band called Hello Central that is in there, and they are really good. They're from L.A. Maids of State was just in there and w:Deerhoof

was just in there. Book of Knotts is coming in soon. That will be cool because I think they are going to have Beck sing on a tune. That will be really cool. There's this band called Jordan from Paris that is starting this week.

DS: Do they approach you, or do you approach them?

JV I would say they approach me. It's generally word of mouth. We never advertise and it's very cheap, below market. It's analog. There's this self-fulfilling thing that when you're booked, you stay booked. More bands come in, and they know about it and they keep the business going that way. But it's totally word of mouth.

Hundreds of monks arrested in monastery raids; continue protests

At least 200 monks have been arrested in Myanmar during night-time raids on monasteries not long before sunrise. Government forces began to crack down on protestors after several days of peaceful demonstrations, but despite the violent treatment from military personnel, the monks returned to the streets in the morning.

100 monks were taken by security forces when they raided a monastery at Ngwe Kyaryan. "Only two or three sick monks were left behind", a witness near the monastery said. Some reports state that shots have been fired at demonstrators, with one "collapsing", but it's not known if the individual was shot.

"There are fire trucks, water cannons positioned in a number of places - there are about three of them outside city hall. There are a number of prison vans also to be seen in certain places", said Mark Canning, the British ambassador in Rangoon.

The United States and European Union have said that they are deeply troubled by events, issuing a statement calling on the United Nations Security Council to consider sanctions, but China and Russia do not believe sanctions will "be helpful" and immediately dismissed the call, calling the situation a matter for the "internal government" of Myanmar.

"France will not accept the gagging of Burma's opposition", said Nicolas Sarkozy, the French President, who also said that "[the Security Council] expressed their concern vis-a-vis the situation, and have urged restraint, especially from the government of Myanmar."

Australian PM rules out economic sanctions against Myanmar

Australian Prime Minister John Howard has announced that it will investigate implementing "targeted financial sanctions against regime figures and supporters," but has ruled out economic sanctions against Myanmar. He noted that economic sanctions could harm the people of Myanmar. "You always have a conflict in these situations between demonstrating your position by some kind of sanction, but making sure that those sanctions don't hurt the people who we are really trying to help," he said.

Howard noted the important role that China has in the crisis. "The country that can exert most pressure on Burma is China and we will be encouraging, and we are doing it already, encouraging China to exert a positive influence on the regime to encourage it to hold back on the repression and to adopt a more accommodating attitude towards the people," he said.

Howard described the government of Myanmar as "a thoroughly loathsome regime." He said that his government would tighten visa restrictions for regime officials, and maintain the ban on defence exports to Myanmar.

Law Council of Australia criticises both parties on legal aid

The Law Council of Australia has criticised both major parties for failing to commit to increases in legal aid funding. The LCA said that the Greens and Democrats have both committed to an immediate increase of \$140 million, but that Labor and the Coalition are still yet to make any commitment.

Law Council President Tim Bugg said, "The Budget surplus in 2006/07 was \$17.3 billion; this year it is projected to be \$10.6 billion – yet we're supposed to accept that a fraction of this amount cannot be spared to assist less fortunate Australians pursue their right to justice."

An Australian Democrats policy document says that low levels of legal aid funding results in poorer Australians receiving a reduced level of justice from the legal system. "This has increased community frustration with the legal system, which undermines respect for the rule of law," the document says. The document commits the Democrats to, "an urgent injection of Commonwealth funding into legal aid and community legal centres."

The Greens policy document commits to "adequate funding" of legal aid, but does not specifically call for an increase in funding.

"Halo 3" creates new opening day record

The long awaited finale in the "Halo" series, "Halo 3", has beaten the previous record of opening day sales held by "Spiderman 3" of US\$151 million. In the United States, "Halo 3" got \$170 million worth of retail sales in the opening day alone.

The game by Bungie Studios is available in 37 countries, which means the exact opening day figure will be much higher.

More than one million Xbox Live subscribers logged on to play "Halo 3" against each other over the Internet in the first 20-hours of launch, according to Microsoft Game Studio's corporate Vice-President, Shane Kim.

In comparison, "Halo 2", only sold \$125 million on its first day of retail sales back in 2004. The first two "Halo" games have sold a combined total of 15 million copies.

It has been reported that Microsoft spent millions of dollars on marketing the third installment of the popular "Halo" series.

"Halo 3" was launched on September 25 at midnight in each time zone, meaning New Zealand was the first country to play the game, followed by Australia.

Scientists discover 11 new species of life in Vietnam

At least 11 new species of life have been discovered in the rainforests of Thua Thien-Hue Province in Vietnam in a region of the forest described as the "Green Corridor." The discovery was made by researchers from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Among the new species of are five

orchids and at least three other species of plants, two butterflies, a snake and at least 10 more species of plants are believed to be new species, but are still being studied.

"You only discover so many new species in very special places, and the Green Corridor is one of them. Several large mammal species were discovered in the 1990s in the same forests, which means that these latest discoveries could be just the tip of the iceberg," said a technical adviser in Vietnam for the WWF, Chris Dickinson.

The new species of life are exclusive to the rainforest in Thua Thien-Hue Province.

The new snake, which can grow to 80 centimeters long, has been given the name white-lipped keelback because of a yellow-white stripe on the top of its head and makes its home near small streams and feeds on small animals and frogs.

The new species of butterflies are one subfamily of the Satyrinae species and the other a species of the Skipper butterfly.

The orchids, all of which are considered very rare because they were found to have no leaves whatsoever on the plant, grow in "matter" that is rotting and also contain no chlorophyll. The other two new plant species are of Arum and Aspidistra.

The WWF is concerned that civilization may move closer into the rainforest, destroying the homes of these new species, but the government of Thua Thien-Hue Province says it's dedicated to making sure that they are protected, along with the rainforest.

"The area is extremely important for conservation and the province wants to protect the forests and their environmental services, as well as contribute to sustainable development," said Provincial Forest Protection Department Director for the province, Hoang Ngoc Khanh.

The species were found in the rainforest in 2005 and 2006.

Dr Karl to run for Australian senate

Dr Karl Kruszelnicki has announced that he will run for the Australian senate in the upcoming federal election. Kruszelnicki will be number two on the Climate Change Coalition's New South Wales Senate ticket.

"I'm in the business of communicating important ideas. I've dedicated my life to it. This is another way to continue that dedication. And I'm looking forward to the opportunity to talk about the big questions in a political context. The personal is political," Mr Kruszelnicki said in a media release.

According to his ABC bio, Kruszelnicki has worked as a physicist, labourer, roadie for bands, car mechanic, filmmaker, hospital scientific officer, biomedical engineer, TV weatherman, and medical doctor at The Kids Hospital in Sydney. However Dr Karl is best known for his work as a science commentator on Australian TV and radio.

Ontario Votes 2007: Interview with Libertarian candidate Mark Scott, Toronto—Danforth

Mark Scott is running for the Libertarian in the Ontario provincial election, in the Toronto—Danforth riding. Wikinews' Nick Moreau interviewed his regarding

his values, his experience, and his campaign.

Stay tuned for further interviews; every candidate from every party is eligible, and will be contacted. Expect interviews from Liberals, Progressive Conservatives, New Democratic Party members, Ontario Greens, as well as members from the Family Coalition, Freedom, Communist, Libertarian, and Confederation of Regions parties, as well as independents.

[edit]
Interview

Why have you chosen to involve yourself in the political process? Why did you choose to run in this constituency?

I have Three children who will be left with the debt of our current government mismanagement. I live in this riding and believe in the responsibility of membership and elections are the point of decision for change.

What prior political experience do you have? What skills and insight can you bring to office, from other non-political positions you may have held?

I have studied the Objectivist Philosophy and Personal Empowerment. I am a student of life and know that any freedom has the responsibility included.

Which of your competitors do you expect to pose the biggest challenge to your candidacy? Why? I have entered this election to present myself as a Leader, the other candidates are their own challenge to prove themselves worthy of Leadership.

What makes you the most desirable of all candidates running in the riding?

I present an other point of view to seek change in Government Responsibility; Government is Responsible to Military, Police and Justice. Welfare of the people is the individuals responsibility. Faith is the individuals responsibility. Roads, Schools, Health, Wealth, Wisdom... individuals responsibility. Government needs to do the responsible monopoly they have been elected to have. The members of this province need to control the Government and hold the MPP's responsible to protect our right to own property, seek prosperity and behavior toward an other, by law.

What do you feel are the three most important issues to voters in your riding? Are these the same top three issues that are most important to you? What would you do to address these issues? Repeat of previous Answer. I present an other point of view to seek change in Government Responsibility; Government is Responsible to Military, Police and Justice. Welfare of the people is the individuals responsibility. Faith is the individuals responsibility. Roads, Schools, Health, Wealth, Wisdom... individuals responsibility. Government needs to do the responsible monopoly they have been elected to have. The members of this province need to control the Government and hold the MPP's responsible to protect our right to own property, seek prosperity and behavior toward an other, by law.

What should be the first order of business in the 39th Legislative Assembly? Reform Government responsibilities, holding a MPP accountable to their actions. A crime is a crime. To mismanage the public authorities, mis-use of

funds, deception, abuse of office... the position of Office is accountable as if they were a share holder in a Corporation. Because that is the position the MPP holds.

Are the property taxes in your riding at a fair level for the amount of services received in the municipality? Taxation is theft at this point in time. When our taxes are used to build anything that would be sold to private interests, that is theft of our money. I do not need a Sky Dome, Toll road Hospital Built by my taxes. I could have become a share holder in a venture to build these structures, I would have gain or lost in that venture, as share holders do. I would not have had to experience the theft of my money without recourse.

How can the province lead the way in stimulating job creation? Let the free market develop itself. Create free-trade between provinces, countries, etc.

What are your views on the mixed member proportional representation (MMP) referendum? The more voices heard the greater the democracy.

What role, if any, does "new media" play in your campaign, and the campaign of your party? (websites, blogs, Facebook, YouTube videos, etc) Do you view it as beneficial, or a challenge? The more voices heard the greater the democracy.

Of the decisions made by Ontario's 38th Legislative Assembly, which was the most beneficial to your this electoral district? To the province as a whole? Which was least beneficial, or even harmful, to your this riding? To the province as a whole?

I can not speak to your question, without a specific reference to an issue.

My Name is Mark Scott, I am your Libertarian Choice for Creative Warrior in this Election and Referendum A caring Force for Change is Vital to your Future, The Current Government has an Agenda of Confusion and Control. Confusion of the important issues and Control of your Liberty Faith is a Personal Choice Politics are a Personal Choice Libertarian Policy is Personal Responsibility, Personal Commitment and Personal Choice. Government is only Responsible to Protect our Property and Right to Prosper The Prime Directive of Government is Military, Police, and Justice Your Vote is Important, One Vote, Your Vote, Will make a Change for Better Government My name is Mark Scott, I support The Libertarian Choice in Toronto-Danforth In this election, Just Consider, the Force, of your Choice

Today in History

- 48 BC – Pompey the Great was assassinated on orders of King Ptolemy of Egypt after landing in Egypt following a decisive defeat by Julius Caesar at the Battle of Pharsalus.
- 1066 – William the Conqueror and his fleet of around 600 ships landed at Pevensey, Sussex, beginning the Norman conquest of England.
- 1542 – Portuguese explorer Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, the first European to travel along the coast of California, landed on what is now the City of San Diego.
- 1972 – Paul Henderson scored the game-winning goal against

Vladislav Tretiak, securing a Canadian victory in the Summit Series over the Soviet ice hockey team.

1994 – The ferry MS Estonia sank while commuting between Tallinn, Estonia, and Stockholm, Sweden, claiming 852 lives in one of the worst maritime accidents in the Baltic Sea.

September 28 is St. Wenceslas Day in the Czech Republic, Teacher's Day in Taiwan.

Quote of the Day

You can decide what you want to eat for dinner, you can decide to go away for the weekend, and you can decide what clothes you're going to wear in the morning, but when it comes to artistic things, there's never a rhyme or reason. It's, like, they just happen. And they happen when they happen.
~ Meat Loaf

Word of the Day

autodidactic; adj

1. Of, relating to, or being self-taught.

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