



Top Stories

U.S. Senator Craig to resign



Amid a storm of criticism and controversy, Senator Craig will be announcing his resignation on September 30th.

10 years on Princess Diana remembered



Hundreds attend memorial service in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, who died in a tragic car crash in France exactly 10 years ago.

Featured story

Canadian court clears Stephen Truscott of 1959 murder

After a whole life spent around a court case, accused killer Stephen Truscott has been cleared from his murder conviction that started in 1959, at the age of fourteen.



Wikipedia Current Events

Hugo Chavez, the President of Venezuela, states that he will meet with FARC guerillas to mediate a dispute with the Government of Colombia about the release of captives.

•Provisional data from the United Kingdom Meteorological Office shows that the 2007 British summer was the wettest on

Wikipedia Current Events

record with five areas of England on flood warning.

•Mike Nifong, the prosecutor in the 2006 Duke University lacrosse case, is found in criminal contempt of court for lying to a judge in the case and is sentenced to a day in jail. An explosion in Ingushetia near the Chechen border kills four Russian police officers.

•The Kroger supermarket chain recalls its "Southern-Style" and "Mustard" potato salads due to concerns over E. coli bacteria.

•Thousands of people protest against the ruling Hamas party in the Gaza Strip.

•The Pakistan government disputes claims by pro-Taliban militants that they have captured 300 Pakistan Army soldiers stating that a convoy of 100 soldiers has been trapped and they are working to relieve them.

•Negotiators from 158 countries reach rough agreements on greenhouse gas targets at a United Nations climate change conference.

•Republican Senator John Warner announces that he will not seek re-election to the United States Senate.

•Two Egyptian students at the University of South Florida are indicted for carrying explosive materials across state lines with one indicted for terrorism charges.

10 years on Princess Diana remembered

Exactly 10 years on from her death hundreds of people attended a memorial ceremony today led by her two sons, William and Harry, in memory of Princess Diana of Wales who was killed when her car hit a bridge pillar in France.

The ceremony was led by her two sons and was attended by many members of the Royal family including Her Majesty the Queen, Prince Philip and Prince Charles and other celebrities such as the Princess' brother and Sir Andrew Llyod Webber. Hundreds more listened to the ceremony broadcasted live outside. There was also a minute of silence in Harrods to pay respect.

During the ceremony Harry called his mum "the best in the world" and the Bishop of London, Right Reverend Dr Richard Chartres, said that Diana should be left to "rest in peace" and that the media speculation and conspiracy theories should now stop.

The second inquiry into the circumstances of the fatal crash is due to commence in the coming weeks.

U.S. Senator Craig to resign

United States Senator Larry Craig (R-ID) is announcing on September 1 that he will resign his post, effective September 30. Craig was involved in a scandal where he allegedly propositioned another man for sex in a bathroom at a Minneapolis airport. Craig has

previously claimed he was "in the bathroom for its intended purpose." The senator said in a news conference that "I am not gay. I have never have been gay," and that he "pleaded guilty to a lesser charge in the hopes that it would go away." This comes just before the Republican National Convention would have called on Craig to resign.

Number of suspects in Finnish dogfighting case rises to ten

The Keskusrikospoliisin (Sometimes called the National Bureau of Investigation in English), Finland's nationwide police criminal investigations organization, now has ten suspects in its current investigation into alleged dog fighting in the south of the country.

All the suspects are male Finns residing in southern Finland. The new developments are the result of an investigation into four to six alleged dog fights. Dog fighting is a breach of animal cruelty laws in Finland, and the case will be considered for prosecution in October. They are being investigated under suspicion of breaching the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

Chief Inspector Olli Töyräs of the Keskusrikospoliisin told reporters "I would not like to speculate on the motives for the arranging of these dog fights. At least thus far there has been no evidence of illegal gambling on the outcome of fights. There also does not seem to be any large-scale organization behind the incidents or connections with organized crime groupings. It would appear to be the pastime of a group of individuals." Despite this, the group is known to have links throughout Scandinavia, as well as possible links to Russia.

He added that about a dozen pit bulls from America were involved in the incidents.

Key evidence includes video footage and testimony from veterinary surgeons, who were present when police raided several locations suspected to be involved. "Statements by veterinary surgeons are a significant part of the investigation. They play the same role here as forensic pathologists would in a normal violent crime investigation," Inspector Töyräs said.

The investigation was begun as a result of an investigation into dog fighting in the United Kingdom by the state-run British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). A BBC journalist teamed up with a man with military experience to infiltrate a notorious dog fighting ring from Ulster, Ireland, known as The Farmer Boys. This uncovered links to a group involved in comparable activity in Finland. The documentary, which is part of the Panorama series, was broadcast in Finland yesterday by YLE.

The BBC had contacted Finland regarding it's discoveries in April. The BBC itself had begun it's investigation after Gerard Cavlan, a football player from Northern Ireland, was convicted on charges related to dog fighting.

The programme included graphic scenes of a dog fight in Finland, filmed using hidden cameras. The show's team also purchased a pit bull from a dealer in Finland with false documents showing it to be another breed (pit bulls are illegal in Britain) and successfully transported it back without detection via Germany and Ireland, taking a ferry into England from Northern Ireland.

The dog breeder is a member of SATHY, an organization which describes itself as "a Finnish club devoted to dog breeds not recognized by FCI related associations (such as the Finnish Kennel Club, and some others). [The] Most important breeds for us are the American Bulldog, American Pit Bull Terrier, Toy Fox Terrier, American Hairless Terrier and Olde English Bulldog."

SATHY has issued a statement via their website to the affect that they felt the programme was misleading, and that Finnish dog breeders have initiated legal proceedings against the British journalist responsible for the programme. One of the dog breeders shown during the programme denied any criminal activity when approached by the Finnish Helsingin Sanomat news service.

Privacy laws in Finland required the faces of those believed to be involved to be pixelated during the Finnish version of the broadcast, although this was not mirrored in the UK screening - which, in an unprecedented move, coincided exactly with the showing in Finland. The show was widely discussed on the internet, with large volumes of material requiring deleted by site administrators as breaching Finnish privacy legislation.

The investigation is the only one ever conducted into dog fighting in Finland. Töyräs explained the problem to journalists: "We have only had vague unconnected hints of this sort of activity in the past, and on the basis of these it was not possible to mount an earlier investigation."

Some Gaza Strip students to go without textbooks

The Israeli military refused to let 5 trucks of paper, intended for printing textbooks, into Gaza City and are retaining control over the trucks. The Israeli government is deciding if the paper can be considered humanitarian aid, and if so, let the paper in to Gaza.

Israel recently imposed a ban on the transportation of large amounts of paper to Gaza. Essential supplies are being let into the Gaza Strip, such as food, medicine, and petrol, yet paper is being forbidden which will cause most school children to go to school without text books.

UNWRA's Gaza director, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, John Ging was quoted as saying, "Some 200,000 children will go into our classrooms on [September 1st], and won't have the books they need."

Israel has said that in order to maintain transport of essential goods, food, medicine, and fuel, secondary goods must be left for later. An Israeli official said, "The priority right now is getting food in."

Peace talks between Sunnis and Iraqi Shi'ites begin in Finland

Peace talks took place today in Finland between two rival Iraqi factions, the Sunnis and the Iraqi Shi'ites.

The seminar was organized by the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded by former President of Finland Martti Ahtisaari. The CMI is focusing on trying to replicate the way peace deals were forged in South Africa and Northern Ireland,

who both also have representatives at the meetings.

Although the CMI have refused to name exactly who is present at the meetings, or reveal the venue, Finnish broadcaster YLE reports that those present include Muqtada al-Sadr, Adnan al-Dulaimi, the leader of the largest Sunni Arabian political party in Iraq and Humam Hammoudi, Shiite chairman of the Iraqi Parliament's foreign affairs committee.

The talks, which are held in conjunction with the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies of the University of Massachusetts Boston, are expected to last two days. Finland itself will play no role. Ahtisaari himself could not be present because he was attending another peace meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark.

White House spokesman Tony Snow stepping down

White House spokesman Tony Snow announced today that after a long battle with colon cancer, he will be stepping down as the White House spokesperson. Mr. Snow has served the White House since May 8, 2006.

"It's been a joy to watch him spar with you," said Bush. "He's smart, he's capable, he's witty, he's able to talk about issues in a way the American people understand," Bush continued. "I don't know what he's going to do, I'm not sure he does yet either," Bush said. "One, he'll battle cancer and win, and secondly he'll be a solid contributor to society."

Tony Snow said that he will be leaving the White House due to financial restrictions because of the cost of chemotherapy. Snow

had previously announced that he would be leaving prior to when Bush's term ends in January of 2009.

Fire kills six, badly injures seven in Croatia

In Croatia's worst ever firefighting tragedy, six men were killed and seven badly injured when they were trapped battling a fierce forest blaze.

The group - including volunteers aged 17 and 18 - was encircled by flames Thursday when the wind suddenly changed course while they were fighting the fire on Kornat island, national firefighting chief Mladen Jurin said. Police said eight men had been detained on suspicion of arson. The prime minister of Croatia promised an investigation.

A national day of mourning has been declared for September 3.

The incident follows a series of deadly fires in Greece.

Law banning same sex marriages in Iowa 'unconstitutional' says judge

An Iowa district court judge has ruled that a 1998 decision banning same-sex marriages in that state is "unconstitutional" and that the ban "violated the rights of due process and equal protection" of people in same-sex relationships said Judge Robert Hanson.

The ruling came when six homosexual couples filed a lawsuit against Polk County, Iowa for not allowing same-sex marriages saying that the ban violated homosexual couples' constitutional rights.

"[This is] a significant step forward in recognizing the constitutional rights of all Iowans. And it's an

amazing day for same-sex couples and their families all across Iowa," said a lawyer for the couples who filed the lawsuit, Dennis Johnson.

All six couples received a license to marry as soon as the ruling was made, but John Sarcone, the Polk County District Attorney says that he plans to appeal the ruling. For now, Sarcone has asked that Hanson to put a stay on the ruling and to not allow any same-sex marriage licenses to be issued until an appeal could be made. A decision on whether a stay should be granted is expected next week.

Iowa's governor, Chet Culver has also spoken out against the ruling saying that "while some Iowans may disagree on this issue, I personally believe marriage is between a man and a woman.

For now, same-sex couples can apply for a marriage license for only US\$5.00 and a waiver is available for couple who wish to apply to have their marriage license issued immediately instead of the normal three day waiting period.

Massachusetts is currently the only other state in the U.S. to allow same-sex marriages. 11 other states allow civil unions or domestic partnerships.

"Muslim Brotherhood" facing troubled times

The Muslim Brotherhood, the largest Sunni Muslim political group, and also an influential Egyptian association, has been under pressure from the Egyptian government. Founded in 1928 in Egypt, the Brotherhood grew to approximately 2 million strong in the 1940's. Soon the Brotherhood was at odds with the government, and one of their members even assassinated the prime minister.

Soon after the Brotherhood founder and leader Hassan al-Banna was assassinated, possibly by a government agent.

Tensions with the government have not eased in succeeding years. Although the Brotherhood shuns terrorist violence, it also promotes Jihad. Tensions with the government also arise from the Brotherhood's support of labor rights and political freedom. The brotherhood is at times critical of the government. The Muslim Brotherhood currently participates in the government; even though they are adversarial towards it, they are the largest opposition party, with 20% of Parliament. However, the Brotherhood has been officially banned for much of the time since 1954, so all of it's political members are forced to run as independents.

Recently the Egyptian government has resumed suppression of many Brotherhood activities. As many as 600 Brotherhood members have been arrested since it began. As many as four are believed to have been kidnapped or murdered, as the government had not announced their arrests until recently. The Egyptian government has even arrested 6 members of Parliament.

The Brotherhood is on the defensive on all of this. Regarding 4 of the members of parliament imprisoned the Brotherhood lawyer has said, "But they had nothing at all to do with this mess ... and the people questioning them know this, they're certain of this." The Economist speculates that the reason for this recent crackdown by the government is to create a more accepting climate for the rumored inauguration of the current president's son, Gamal Mubarak.

Jackpot rises on 'Mega Millions' lottery in US; breaks record

In just over 24 hours, the Mega Millions lottery jackpot in the United States has risen to US\$330,000,000 to make it the third largest lottery jackpot in the world.

On Thursday, the jackpot was at \$325 million and it still could rise before the drawing takes place tonight at 8:00 p.m. (pacific time), 11:00 p.m. (eastern time).

Twelve states in the U.S. participate in the lottery and the odds of at least one person winning the jackpot are one in 175,711,536. It costs just one dollar to purchase a ticket and if you win, you can receive the winnings in sums of 36,000 for every million won, each year, or receive it all in one lump sum which totals just under \$200 million before taxes.

On March 6, 2007, the Mega Millions jackpot of US\$390 million, the highest lottery jackpot ever in the world, was paid out to two individuals who lived in Georgia and New Jersey. If no one wins Friday's jackpot, which will have rolled over 16 times without a single winner, it could break the record for the largest lottery jackpot ever.

Two trains collide near Rio de Janeiro

A train, traveling at a high rate of speed, was carrying over 850 passengers when it rammed into an empty train near Rio de Janeiro. The empty train was in the process of being moved between sets of tracks.

Officials are currently putting the death toll at 8, and at least 70 others are seriously hurt. There are no more survivors trapped

within the wreckage. "We have to use blowtorches to open the sides of the train cars to reach the people," said Pedro Machado, commander general of the Rio de Janeiro Fire Department. "Our priority is to give support to the survivors, the passengers trapped in the wreckage, and reduce the number of fatal victims," said Col. Souza Filho, the head of Rio de Janeiro's Civil Defense Department in an interview with the Globo TV network.

"They had fractures in their arms, their faces, everywhere," said Marcos de Souza, director of the Posse Hospital in a televised interview. He said the hospital does have a large emergency ward but they are bringing in extra personnel to treat collision victims.

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The Secretary-General of the United Nations orders an investigation into how hazardous material from Iraq came to be in the United Nations headquarters in New York.

•White House Press Secretary Tony Snow resigns, effective September 14, 2007. Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino will replace him after his resignation is effective.

•A tank truck crashes into four minibuses in Kisii, Kenya resulting in at least 29 deaths and 30 injuries.

•The British Royal Family, including Prince Charles, Prince Harry and Prince William, and Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth, along with Prime Minister Gordon Brown and former Prime Minister Tony Blair, and hundreds more, gather for a memorial service for Diana, Princess of Wales, ten years after her death, at Guard's

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Chapel in London.

•The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Gordon Brown and the President of France Nicolas Sarkozy threaten the government of Sudan with sanctions over Darfur.

•While Greece brings the 2007 Greek forest fires under control, 8 people have died in 48 hours in forest fires in northern Algeria, six firefighters die in Croatia and the village of Les Useres in the Valencia region of Spain is evacuated.

•Angry Victorian farmers trap the Premier of Victoria John Brumby and Rural and Regional Development Minister Jacinta Allan as well as advisers and media in a machinery yard outside Colbinabbin, east of Bendigo to raise concerns about the Government's water plans.

• At least two people are killed and ten others injured by a suicide bomb at the Kabul International Airport in Afghanistan.

•At least ten civilians are killed and several more injured in Kunar province as Taliban rockets aimed at a US military base hit a nearby village.

Today in History

1763 – Age of Enlightenment: Catherine II of Russia endorsed educator Ivan Betskoy's plans for the Moscow Orphanage, an ambitious, state-run, experimental Russian Enlightenment project to educate orphans into ideal citizens.

1804 – German astronomer Karl Ludwig Harding discovered Juno, one of the largest main belt asteroids, naming it after the Roman goddess.

1923 – The Great Kanto

earthquake, measuring between about 7.9 and 8.4 on the Richter magnitude scale, struck the Kanto region of Japan, devastating Tokyo and Yokohama, and killing over an estimated 100,000 people.

1939 – Germany launched the Polish Campaign and attacked Poland at Wieluń and Westerplatte, starting World War II in Europe.
1983 – Soviet jet interceptors shot down the civilian airliner Korean Air Lines Flight 007 near Sakhalin island in the North Pacific, killing all 246 passengers and 23 crew on board.

September 01 is Start of the Liturgical year in the Eastern Orthodox Church; Constitution Day in Slovakia; Independence Day in Uzbekistan.

Quote of the Day

I have always felt that humor was a wonderful vehicle to let us become connected with each other and ourselves... I try to portray the similarities and polarities in men and women, so that we can acknowledge and embrace our collective consciousness.

~ Lily Tomlin

Word of the Day

precocious; adj

1. Characterized by exceptionally early development or maturity. Exhibiting advanced skills at an abnormally early age.

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