



### Top Stories

#### **NASA: Signs of liquid water found on surface of Mars**

NASA scientists have announced that the Mars Global Surveyor has captured images of deposits in gullies on the surface of the planet Mars which have been created since the areas were photographed seven years ago. These deposits are believed to be the residue of liquid water breaking out of cliffs and crater walls, carrying sediment downhill through the gullies, and later evaporating. The gullies are located inside the Terra Sirenum crater and the Centauri Montes regions.

#### **Same-sex marriage reaffirmed in Canada**

The Canadian House of Commons has voted 175 to 123 to defeat a motion by the Conservative minority government to re-open the same-sex marriage debate.

### Featured story

#### **Body of James Kim found in U.S. wilderness; wife and children survived**

CNET reporter James Kim has been found dead in the southwestern Oregon wilderness after getting lost with his family on November 25. Kim, 35, was found at 12:00 noon Wednesday, half a mile from Rogue River.

### Wikipedia Current Events

•George W. Bush, the President of the United States says that Syria and Iran might be included in

### Wikipedia Current Events

regional talks on the future of Iraq if they meet certain conditions.

- Hewlett-Packard pays a fine of \$14.5 million to settle an investigation by the Attorney General of California related to leaks from its boardroom.
- Police in Phoenix believe that they have captured the Baseline Killer who has nine killings attributed to him. They had Mark Godeau in custody since September in relation to two alleged sexual assaults in 2005.
- A tornado has ripped through Kensal Green in North West London, injuring 6.
- The Doha Asian Games suffered a tragedy when South Korean rider Kim Hyung-chil died after falling from his horse during the equestrian competition.
- Nigerian gun men attack an Agip oil terminal in the Niger River delta and take three Italians hostage.
- Nearly 100 people are dead or unaccounted for in Vietnam as a result of Typhoon Durian. It had earlier killed over 550 people in the Philippines and left a similar number missing.
- Seven towns are under immediate threat from bushfires in Gippsland in the Australian state of Victoria.
- A motion brought by the Conservative government to reopen debate on same-sex

### Wikipedia Current Events

marriage in Canada is defeated by the Canadian House of Commons.

- Fiji's Great Council of Chiefs condemns the coup d'état and calls on coup leader to stop his activities. It refuses to meet with him.
- Jona Senilagakali, the newly-installed Prime Minister of Fiji, conceded the coup had been "illegal" but it was "an illegal takeover to clean up the mess of a much bigger illegal activity of the previous government."
- Claims are being made that the military may attempt to arrest Ratu Ovini Bokini, Chairman of the Great Council of Chiefs. Around 300 villagers have surrounded his compound in Tavua to defend him.
- Grand Ayatollah Fazel Lankarani of Iran issues a fatwa calling for the deaths of Azeris Rafiq Taği, a writer, and Samir Sadagatoglu, his editor, who were charged in November 2006 with "inciting national, racial and religious enmity" after they criticized Islam.
- The Hard Rock Cafe chain of cafes, hotels and casinos, as well as its extensive collection of rock and roll memorabilia, is purchased from the Rank Group by the Seminole Tribe of Florida for US\$965 million.

**NASA: Signs of liquid water found on surface of Mars**  
NASA scientists have announced

that the Mars Global Surveyor has captured images of deposits in gullies on the surface of the planet Mars which have been created since the areas were photographed seven years ago. These deposits are believed to be the residue of liquid water breaking out of cliffs and crater walls, carrying sediment downhill through the gullies, and later evaporating. The gullies are located inside the Terra Sirenum crater and the Centauri Montes regions.

"These observations give the strongest evidence to date that water still flows occasionally on the surface of Mars," said the head scientist for the Mars Exploration Program in Washington D.C., Michael Meyer.

The bright appearance of the deposits suggests that, at some recent period, the surface material in these gullies has either been heavily disturbed or covered over by new, different, material. Whilst it is not proven that this is the result of water activity - it could be frost, for example, or the result of localised landslides - it ties in with previous theories that suggest liquid water is locked below the surface of Mars, occasionally being released in short and violent local bursts.

"These fresh deposits suggest that at some places and times on present-day Mars, liquid water is emerging from beneath the ground and briefly flowing down the slopes. This possibility raises questions about how the water would stay melted below ground, how widespread it might be, and whether there's a below-ground wet habitat conducive to life." said Michael Malin of Malin Space Science Systems located in San Diego, California. Malin is the head investigator for the Mars Orbital

Camera, the instrument which made these photographs, and is the author of the report about the discovery, published in the journal *Science*.

One factor suggesting water is the shape of the deposits, which are sinuous and appear to "flow" downhill. "The shapes of these deposits are what you would expect to see if the material were carried by flowing water. They have finger-like branches at the downhill end and easily diverted around small obstacles," explained Malin. Scientists do not know how or why the water is making its way to the surface. "The big question is how does it happen, and does it point to a habitat for life?" said Meyer.

However, many in the scientific community stress possible alternative explanations for what has been seen, suggesting that the features could have been created by dust, sand or liquid carbon dioxide. Oded Aharonson of the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) described the hypothesis of recent water activity on Mars as just one possible explanation and insisted further study was needed to determine whether the deposits could have been left there by the flow of dust rather than water.

Other scientists think it possible that the gullies were caused by liquid carbon dioxide. One reason is that computer models of the Martian crust indicate water could exist only at depths of several kilometres, but liquid carbon dioxide could persist much nearer the surface.

Contact was lost with Mars Global Surveyor in November, and has not yet been recovered. The spacecraft has been in orbit since 1997, operating over a lifespan

which far exceeded the two-year mission originally planned. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, manages the Mars Global Surveyor mission for the NASA Science Mission Directorate located in Washington D.C..

### **Opponents: New Zealand government sneaks bill Into House to avoid public backlash**

The New Zealand Government has tabled the Therapeutic Products and Medicines Bill, despite unprecedented political opposition.

In 2003 the Hon Annette King signed a Treaty with Australia agreeing to hand control of the natural health products sector over to an Australian regulatory body, however she needs to pass enabling legislation in New Zealand. "This will be a world-class joint scheme designed to regulate the safety, quality, effectiveness and promotion of therapeutic products in both New Zealand and Australia. That includes the regulation of complementary and alternative medicines, over-the-counter and prescription medicines, medical devices, blood and blood products and tissues and cellular therapies," Ms King said.

Twice the Bill has been thrown out by select committees, but the Government is determined to ram it through Parliament, according to the New Zealand Health Trust.

"Late tonight the Bill was finally tabled, with no announcement from the Minister," said Amy Adams, spokesperson for the Trust, "Clearly the Minister is keen to sneak it into Parliament under cover of the silly season, in the hope that she can keep it under the public's radar."

"I welcome the support of a

majority of the House who want to see the Bill go to Select Committee where New Zealanders can have their say," Ms King said.

The NZ Health Trust conducted research earlier this year which showed 62% of New Zealanders used natural health products. "This Bill represents a massive and irreparable change to the way we make rules for New Zealand dietary supplements," Mrs Adams said.

"Under the proposed regime, well over a million New Zealand consumers would find the choice of products adversely affected, and experience cost increases. So you can see why the Government is trying to sneak this into the House without any fuss - they don't want the public to know."

All the political parties except Labour have pledged their opposition the proposal, despite some intense lobbying by Australian and New Zealand officials.

"It is a very serious thing to hand sovereignty over your country over to another nation," Mrs Adams said. "And all the other political parties see the sense in making sure the sector is regulated from New Zealand - not as a minor state of Australia."

Ms King said: "The Bill... ensures that New Zealand will have an equal say in the setting up and running of the new Authority and joint scheme." The new authority will be like a crown-owned entity and will have to provide an annual report and a statement of intent to parliament each year.

### **Woman burning her flatulence causes emergency landing on American Airlines flight**

An American Airlines flight from Washington to Dallas was forced to land in Nashville after a Dallas woman lit her flatulence to disguise its odour; several passengers noticed a suspicious smell.

The Dallas woman, who had ignited her fart in the lavatory, had not been forthcoming about the burning smell noticed by other passengers. All passengers and crew were disembarked while the plane and luggage were searched.

A bomb sniffing dog located her spent matches and the woman admitted to lighting her fart to disguise odor after a "lengthy questioning" by the FBI. She said her flatulence was caused by a medical condition.

A spokeswoman for Nashville airport said "Since there was no malice involved and the incident was accidental, she was not charged with anything."

After the flight resumed, the woman was not allowed back on the plane.

### **Same-sex marriage reaffirmed in Canada**

The Canadian House of Commons has voted 175 to 123 to defeat a motion by the Conservative minority government to re-open the same-sex marriage debate. If the motion had passed the government would have proposed a bill to restore the traditional definition of marriage as being exclusively a union between a man and a woman. The Conservative and Liberal parties did not whip the vote allowing their MPs a free vote.

The motion voted on read as follows: "That this House call on the government to introduce legislation to restore the traditional definition of marriage without affecting civil unions and while respecting existing same-sex marriages."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, 47, made holding the vote a key promise in the 2006 federal election campaign.

About a dozen Conservative MPs, including several cabinet ministers voted against the motion in the free vote while about a dozen Liberal opposition MPs voted for the motion. No MPs for the opposition Bloc Quebecois and New Democratic Party voted in favour the motion although two members of the BQ were not present for the vote.

"We made a promise to have a free vote on this issue; we kept that promise, and obviously the vote was decisive and obviously we'll accept the democratic result of the people's representatives," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Thursday at a news conference in Ottawa following the vote. "I don't see reopening this question in the future."

The Liberals said that even if a new law banning same-sex marriage was passed it would be struck down by the courts as unconstitutional. Constitutional lawyers say that the Tories would have to change the law by invoking the notwithstanding clause of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which Harper opposes doing.

"It was the wrong move to question the rights of the people and to try to override the Charter of rights...He must not be very

proud of that," said Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion.

High profile Tory cabinet ministers Peter MacKay, David Emerson, John Baird, Jim Prentice, Lawrence Cannon, and Josée Verne voted against the motion. House speaker Peter Milliken, who is a Liberal and votes only in the event of a tie, supports the same-sex marriage law in Canada.

Harper declared the matter closed, following the vote, ruling out the possibility of revisiting the issue. "I don't see reopening this question in the future," the prime minister told reporters when asked if his government would reintroduce the motion after the next election should the Conservatives win a majority government.

Same-sex marriage was legalized in 2005 by the former Liberal government lead by Paul Martin after a series of court rulings legalized same-sex marriage across most of the country. The 2005 legislation made Canada the fourth country in the world to legalize gay marriage. Over 12,000 gay couples have married in Canada since Bill C-38 passed.

Belgium, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, and Canada are currently the only countries that allow gay marriage.

#### How MPs voted

Yeas (123):

Abbott, Ablonczy, Albrecht, Allen, Allison, Ambrose, Anders, Anderson, Batters, Benoit, Bernier, Bezan, Blackburn, Blaney, Bonin, Boucher, Breitreuz, Brown (Barrie), Brown (Leeds-Grenville), Bruinooge, Byrne, Calkins, Cannan (Kelowna-Lake Country), Carrie, Casson, Clement, Cullen (Etobicoke North), Cummins,

Davidson, Day, Del Mastro, Devolin, Doyle, Dykstra, Epp, Fast, Finley, Fitzpatrick, Flaherty, Fletcher, Gallant, Goldring, Goodyear, Gourde, Grewal, Guergis, Hanger, Harper, Harris, Harvey, Hawn, Hearn, Hiebert, Hill, Hinton, Jaffer, Jean, Kamp (Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge-Mission), Karygiannis, Kenney (Calgary Southeast), Khan, Komarnicki, Kramp (Prince Edward-Hastings), Lake, Lauzon, Lee, Lemieux, Lukiwski, Lunn, Lunney, MacKenzie, Malhi, Mark, Mayes, McKay (Scarborough-Guildwood), McTeague, Menzies, Merrifield, Miller, Mills, Moore (Fundy Royal), Nicholson, Norlock, Obhrai, O'Connor, Oda, Pallister, Petit, Poilievre, Preston, Rajotte, Reid, Ritz, Scarpaleggia, Scheer, Schellenberger, Shipley, Skelton, Smith, Solberg, Sorenson, Stanton, Steckle, Storseth, Strahl, Sweet, Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest), Thompson (Wild Rose), Tilson, Toews, Tonks, Trost, Tweed, Van Kesteren, Van Loan, Vellacott, Wallace, Wappel, Warawa, Warkentin, Watson, Williams, Yelich.

Nays (175):

Alhabra, Andre, Angus, Asselin, Atamanenko, Bachand, Bagnell, Bains, Baird, Barbot, Beaumier, Belanger, Bell (North Vancouver), Bell (Vancouver Island North), Bellavance, Bennett, Bevilacqua, Bevington, Bigras, Black, Blaikie, Blais, Bonsant, Boshcoff, Bouchard, Bourgeois, Brison, Brown (Oakville), Brunelle, Cannon (Pontiac), Carrier, Casey, Chamberlain, Chan, Charlton, Chong, Chow, Christopherson, Coderre, Comartin, Comuzzi, Cotler, Crete, Crowder, Cullen (Skeena-Bulkley Valley), Cuzner, D'Amours, Davies, DeBellefeuille, Demers, Deschamps, Dewar, Dhaliwal, Dhalla, Dion, Dosanjh,

Dryden, Duceppe, Easter, Emerson, Eyking, Faille, Freeman, Fry, Gagnon, Gaudet, Gauthier, Godfrey, Godin, Goodale, Graham, Guarnieri, Guay, Guimond, Holland, Hubbard, Ignatieff, Jennings, Julian, Kadis, Karetak-Lindell, Keddy (South Shore-St. Margaret's), Keeper, Kotto, Laforest, Laframboise, Lalonde, Lapierre, Lavallee, Layton, LeBlanc, Lemay, Lessard, Levesque, Lussier, MacAulay, MacKay (Central Nova), Malo, Maloney, Manning, Marleau, Marston, Martin (Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca), Martin (LaSalle-Emard), Martin (Sault Ste. Marie), Martin (Winnipeg Centre), Masse, Mathysen, Matthews, McCallum, McDonough, McGuinty, McGuire, Menard (Hochelaga), Menard (Marc-Aurele-Fortin), Merasty, Minna, Moore (Port Moody-WestwooduPort Coquitlam), Mourani, Murphy (Charlottetown), Murphy (Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe), Nadeau, Nash, Neville, Ouellet, Owen, Pacetti, Paquette, Paradis, Patry, Pearson, Perron, Peterson, Picard, Plamondon, Prentice, Priddy, Proulx, Ratansi, Redman, Regan, Richardson, Robillard, Rodriguez, Rota, Roy, Russell, Savage, Savoie, Scott, Sgro, Siksay, Silva, Simard, Simms, St. Amand, St. Denis, St-Cyr, St-Hilaire, Stoffer, Stronach, Szabo, Telegdi, Temelkovski, Thibault (West Nova), Turner, Valley, Verner, Vincent, Volpe, Wasylycia-Leis, Wilfert, Wilson, Wrzesnewskyj, Zed.

#### **Factory explodes in Milwaukee, USA**

At approximately 8:10 AM CST December 6, 2006 a factory owned by a company known as the FALK Corporation exploded in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The blast could apparently be felt up to thirty miles away. A plume of

smoke was seen rising from the explosion site, and the area around the factory was reported to smell of burning wood.

The explosion apparently occurred when a container of 72,000 gallons of propane exploded, destroying the building. Three people are confirmed dead and forty-six injured, with one person suffering life-threatening injuries, according to a press conference with Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and Milwaukee Police Chief Nan Hagerty at 5:00 PM CST broadcast on WTMJ-TV in Milwaukee. Local news reports state that the three dead were aged 37, 49, and 38.

With a population of 596,000 (according to the 2000 Census), Milwaukee is the 19th largest city in the United States.

The factory had made industrial gears since the 1800s.

### **Two prisoners fall unconscious while being transported in New Zealand**

Two out of three prisoners fell unconscious while being transported in a prison van from Wellington District Court to Upper Hutt, New Zealand's Rimutaka prison, the third remained conscious for the entire duration. It was said by the third prisoner that there was a strong gas leak that was entering their van.

An investigation has been launched by the New Zealand Department of Corrections in regards to where the leak originated from. The van has been removed from service until the cause has been determined.

The third prisoner said: "Shortly after the van left Wellington gas started seeping into the back of the van." Once the prisoner

became aware of the leak he tried to grab the attention of the staff to stop the van by banging on the walls. The van did not stop. The staff followed correct procedure during the transport.

Dave East, Department of Corrections regional manager for Wellington, last night, said: "Two prisoners were found unconscious on their arrival at Rimutaka Prison... The prisoners quickly regained consciousness."

All three were checked by both a prison medical team and then later hospital staff as a precaution. It has not yet been determined why the prisoners were overcome and what by. They have been returned to prison.

### **Today in History**

1854 - Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogmatic definition of Immaculate Conception.

1941 - World War II: Takashi Sakai and the Imperial Japanese Army invaded Hong Kong and quickly achieved air superiority by bombing Kai Tak Airport.

1941 - The Holocaust: The Chełmno concentration camp in Poland, the first Nazi extermination camp to use poison gas, began operations.

1980 - Mark David Chapman fatally shot former Beatle John Lennon outside the Dakota apartments in New York City.

1991 - Leaders of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine met to dissolve the Soviet Union and establish the Commonwealth of Independent States.

December 08 is Constitution Day in Romania (1991).

### **Quote of the Day**

May memory restore again and again  
The smallest color of the smallest day:

Time is the school in which we learn,  
Time is the fire in which we burn.  
~ Delmore Schwartz ~

### **Word of the Day**

segue; v

1. To move smoothly from one state or subject to another.
2. (music) To make a smooth transition from one theme to another .

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