



Top Stories

Fire kills 32 in theatre in Beni Suef, Egypt

An fire in an Egyptian theatre killed at least 32 when an actor knocked over a candle during an evening performance.

Actor Bob Denver dies at 70

Actor Bob Denver, best known for his roles as "Gilligan" on Gilligan's Island and "Maynard G. Krebs" on The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis, died Friday at the age of 70.

Featured story

Linux installed on 2,460 desktop computers in Italian schools



A Linux computer operating system was installed in all public and private schools of an Italian province during the summertime.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Cairo: At least 34 people were killed and 60 injured by flames and an ensuing stampede when a fire broke out in the theater run by Egypt's Culture Ministry; about 1,000 people were watching the play.
- Four people died and 27 were wounded following an explosion in Gaza City at the home of Nidal Farhat, a senior Hamas member, which had been operating as a weapons laboratory.
- Typhoon Nabi kills at least 21 in Japan with over 50 still missing. Over 100,000 people were told to evacuate.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Jefferson Parish, Louisiana President Aaron Brossard told CBS's Early Show anchor Harry Smith today: "Bureacracy has murdered people in the Greater New Orleans area and bureaucracy needs to stand trial in Congress today. Take whatever idiot they have at the top and give me a better idiot."
- President George Bush announced today he would head an investigation into the New Orleans disaster response. He told reporters: "People want us here to play a blame game. We got to solve problems. We're here to solve problems. There'll be ample time for people to figure out what went right and what went wrong."
- New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin told CBS anchor John Roberts today: "I think this nation is going to be shocked one more time when we start pulling bodies out of all these homes."
- Almost 600 people have now been officially declared dead in an outbreak of Japanese Encephalitis in India. Officials fear the actual death toll might be much higher because many deaths in rural areas are not reported.
- Australian TELSTRA's share price tumbles to a two year low of \$4.32AU as the Prime Minister condemns the telcon's new management team as disgraceful and the Australian Securities and Investment Commission launches a criminal probe of TELSTRA's leaked and negative statements.

Iraqi president says Saddam confessed to crimes

According to the current Iraqi president, Jalal Talabani, Saddam Hussein confessed to various crimes and killings which were committed during his regime. Some of these cases are apparently under current investigation.

Talabani says that Saddam deserves to be hanged "20 times a day," although he does not wish to sign his death warrant; he wants his vice president, Adel Abdel Mehdi, to do so. This gesture is not meant to gain power over the courts, according to Talabani, "My not signing does not mean that I will block the decision of the court." Talabani is morally opposed to all capital punishment.

Talabani also stated that "There are 100 reasons to sentence Saddam to death."

Iraq seems to be starting a general trend of cracking down on criminals—three were hanged just last week, with possibly more to come.

Saddam's first trial comes October 19, where he will be tried for the mass killings of Shiite civilians in a town in northern Baghdad in 1982. If convicted, he could face the death penalty.

New Orleans police officer commits suicide

Sgt. Paul Accardo was found dead last Saturday, in an unmarked police car. The officer, who served

as a chief spokesperson for the New Orleans Police Department, committed suicide sometime last week.

"Paul was a stellar guy. A perfectionist. Everything had to be just right," said Sgt. Joe Narcisse, who worked with Sgt. Accardo. Working 20-hour days after Hurricane Katrina rolled through, seeing the dead and injured, hearing the cries of helpless families, and being unable to help them got to Accardo, said Capt. Marlon Defillo.

The New Orleans Police Department has suffered heavy losses in personnel. As many as 400 to 500 officers were unaccounted for, likely to be searching for their families, or attempting to return to what is left of their homes. But Accardo is the second suicide death to hit the force since the storm. Officials say that officers were being cycled off-duty, and received vacations, as well as counseling, to help reduce the grief and anguish that many officers are experiencing.

Funeral services are planned for Wednesday. Accardo is survived by his wife, Anne, his mother, a brother and a sister, and eight nieces and nephews.

Antony & The Johnsons win Mercury Music Prize

Antony & The Johnsons have won the 2005 Mercury Music Prize for their album *I Am a Bird Now*.

Anthony Hegarty, born in Chichester, United Kingdom, won the award of £20,000 for creating the most original album by a British or Irish act during the last year.

Other nominees included Coldplay,

M.I.A. and the bookies favourites The Kaiser Chiefs.

Actor Bob Denver dies at 70

Actor Bob Denver, best known for his roles as "Gilligan" on *Gilligan's Island* and "Maynard G. Krebs" on *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, died Friday at the age of 70.

Denver gained popularity on *Dobie Gillis*, playing the title character's best friend, a beatnik. The show, which ran for four years, was Denver's first major acting role. It is said that the popular cartoon *Scooby-Doo, Where Are You!* was based on the show, and Denver's role of Krebs represented the character "Shaggy".

Denver's real fame, however, came with the role of "Gilligan", a kind but naive and incompetent bumbler stuck on an island with six other castaways. Nearly every episode involved a plot to get off the island; however, *Gilligan* always ended up causing the plot to fail, in one way or another. The show, which ran for three years, gained popularity through perpetual reruns. "It was the mid-'70s when I realized it wasn't going off the air," Denver said in 2001.

After the cancellation of *Gilligan's Island*, Bob Denver starred in *Dusty's Trail*, a clone of *Gilligan's Island*, set in a wagon train in the old American West. It was also created by Sherwood Schwartz, the creator of *Gilligan's Island* and other sitcoms like *The Brady Bunch*. *Dusty's Trail* featured a one-to-one match with *Gilligan's Island* characters (*Gilligan* became *Dusty*, while the actress, *Ginger*, became the dance hall girl, and the farm girl, *Maryanne*, became the school marm, and the rich *Howells* became a rich rail baron

and wife, etc.). Bob Denver was the only actor in common. The show never caught on and was quickly canceled.

In May, Denver underwent quadruple bypass surgery, and was subsequently diagnosed with cancer. He died of complications from his cancer treatment at Wake Forest University Baptist Hospital in North Carolina.

Denver is survived by his wife and four children.

French President Chirac remains hospitalized

French President Jacques Chirac continued his hospital stay Tuesday in what a government spokesperson describes as favorable conditions. Chirac was admitted to a military hospital on Friday, where doctors called his condition a "small vascular incident" that hindered his vision.

Doctors report such a problem as he was having could range from a ruptured blood vessel to a stroke, since more than 80% of strokes are caused by blockage in an artery carrying blood to the brain. The problem reddened and bothered the eyesight of the 72-year-old Chirac.

Chirac was scheduled to meet with Gerhard Schröder in Germany Tuesday, but was forced to cancel. Chirac's doctor, Anne Robert, said the president was resting and expects to leave the hospital in a few days.

The head of the President's political party claims that nobody would stop Chirac in his quest for the presidency two years from now.

Chirac's wife was spotted leaving

the Val-de-Grace hospital in Southern Paris, where Chirac is being treated, but she refused to speak with reporters. It has been heard from French radio reports that she had just returned from a holiday in southeast France, trying to hide the fact that she was terribly concerned about her husband's current condition.

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin reports upon spending about an hour visiting Chirac, he was in "good form." The Prime Minister also reports "he can't wait to leave," to reporters afterward visiting the French president.

ABC's Levy leaves for Nine

Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC) television head, Sandra Levy, has quit to become the director of development for "Channel Nine."

Her new role is expected to focus on drama.

ABC managing director Russell Balding said that Ms Levy had lifted audiences to "historically unprecedented" levels. However, Ms Levy came under fire during her ABC tenure for an overly conservative programming approach to major news stories - notably a sluggish response to coverage of the December 2004 South Asian Tsunami.

The Channel Nine network, that she now joins, is in a rebuilding phase after coming under heavy ratings pressure in the past 12 months. Long the dominant commercial network in Australia, in 2005 it has seen numerous changes in its executive ranks, including the sudden resignation of CEO David Gyngell.

Its interim CEO, television veteran

Sam Chisholm, has launched cost-cutting at the network.

UK regulator warns Mastercard

The United Kingdom's Office of Fair Trading accused the credit card association Mastercard UK, which includes most major British banks, of overcharging the customers between March 2000 and November 2004.

The OFT found that an agreement between Mastercard UK members, setting the so-called 'interchange fee' - charge paid to banks by the retailers caused high cost for the UK consumers and was against the competition regulations. The British watchdog said that the fee was too high and forced the UK retail sector to raise prices.

Mastercard UK disagreed with the OFT and announced that it would appeal the office's decision. The company said that British consumers benefit from the agreement, as more retail stores accepted credit cards.

Mastercard has changed its feeing policy last November, but the change does not suit the OFT. If the company does not prove the new fees are not against the competition rules, it can be found guilty and fined up to 10% of its annual worldwide turnover.

The OFT is also investigating the Mastercard's biggest rival - Visa in the same case.

Allegations President Bush staged photo-ops in aftermath of Hurricane Katrina tragedy

In a press release issued Saturday, September 3rd, 2005, Democratic Senator Mary L. Landrieu of Louisiana claims that President Bush staged a photo

opportunity, at the breached 17th Street levee, by having equipment quickly moved into the background during the event. Senator Landrieu says the equipment was dispersed elsewhere the next day, but did not provide details.

Landrieu says in her press release, " ... we witnessed a hastily prepared stage set for a Presidential photo opportunity; and the desperately needed resources we saw were this morning reduced to a single, lonely piece of equipment. The good and decent people of southeast Louisiana and the Gulf Coast -- black and white, rich and poor, young and old -- deserve far better from their national government ..."

The President and Senator Landrieu toured the 17th Street levee on Friday, and held the photo-op. Senator Landrieu said she believed the repair effort was legitimate, at that time. Less than 24 hours later, she discovered only "one lonely crane" working on the site, while giving an aerial tour for ABC's This Week with George Stephanopoulos. A video of her tearful comments, during that tour, has been circulating around the internet (WMV).

Senator Landrieu made no specific accusations about the photo-op during the ABC tour. However, neither does her press release describe any measures taken to verify that equipment was in-fact pulled from other projects for the purpose of the photo-op, nor where the equipment is now. The canal wall breach, near Hammond Highway, was later shown Sunday on CBS' 60 Minutes with dump trucks and a power shovel building a single-lane pathway across the gap. The breach was closed

Monday.

Notably, Senator Landrieu was herself criticized by Anderson Cooper (CNN) on Thursday, after she responded to a question by rattling off a list of "thank yous" to other politicians (WMV, transcript). Democratic pundits have excused such detachment as an attempt to gain more federal assistance during the tragedy. Senator Landrieu's press release partially confirms this interpretation by attempting to simultaneously ask the president for more aid, while accusing him of misusing existing resources.

In related news, Germany's ZDF News reported that the president's visit to Biloxi was largely a staged event(video). Their onsite crew claimed that an "open air food distribution point Bush visited in front of the cameras was torn down immediately after the president and the herd of news people had left", and alleges that others were being set up were abandoned at the same time. Christine Adelhardt of Germany's ARD Tagesschule said "the extent of the staging is shocking me [as much as the disaster.]" She also claimed that, for the purpose of such photo-ops, heavy equipment was being moved to areas which would not require it (video). Senator Landrieu has not complained about any other staged photo-ops, nor has the American press accused the president's press team off any impropriety.

Mayor Nagin has apologized to the president for his earlier accusations of poor federal support for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Linux installed on 2,460 desktop computers in Italian schools



Linux running on a desktop computer in an Italian school

Over the summer a customized distribution of the Linux (or GNU/Linux) operating system was installed on 2,460 desktops in the Italian South Tyrol province of Bolzano. This deployment included all 70 of the province's private and public schools and affects more than 16,000 students.

The distribution installed, FUSS Soledad GNU/Linux, is a customized version of the popular Debian GNU/Linux distribution. FUSS Soledad GNU/Linux has multi-language support and uses the GNOME desktop environment.

In addition to the desktops in the schools, more than 20,000 "LiveCDs" are scheduled to be created and given free of charge to the students and their families. These LiveCDs allow students to use the same software on their home computers that they are going to use at school.

Project co-director Antonio Russo said, "With the participation of all the public and private schools, this will give to all the students, families, teachers, and operators from the educational world the opportunity to use an entirely free operating system, both at school and at home."

The switch was funded by the province of Bolzano, the European Social Fund, and the Center for Professional Formation in Italian Language.

Fire kills 32 in theatre in Beni Suef, Egypt

A fire Monday night in a theatre in Beni Suef, Egypt, has killed at least 32 and injured a similar number. The fire was started during a performance when a candle on the set was knocked over by an actor and the curtains were set alight. The blaze then spread to the stage, which was covered in paper, and then quickly engulfed the rest of the building.

There was a stampede as the panicking audience of at least 100 rushed for the only available exit door, which was blocked at one point by falling supports as the building slowly burnt. The other exit was covered in paper and caught fire before it could be used. Firefighters brought the fire under control after several hours, but not before the building was destroyed.

It is believed the deaths were caused by burns, smoke inhalation and injuries from the stampede. The remaining injured were reported by hospital director Ahmed el-Sharqawi to have burns covering between 30% and 90% of their bodies. A medical team specialising in burns and related care has been flown in from Cairo, and Cairo hospitals have indicated that they are ready to accept patients if necessary. The fire occurred on the third day of a nine-day theatre festival in the farming community, 120 km from Cairo, which featured groups from all over Egypt.

Wheelchair-bound Australian rescued in New Orleans

A 75 year old wheelchair-bound Australian man has been rescued from his home in New Orleans. Keith Faulkner was rescued by a neighbour after floodwaters stranded him in his home for five days. Mr Faulkner is suffering from cancer. He was left behind by his family as floodwaters rose.

"When the flooding started his family had no choice but to leave themselves, and he was left in the house as best they could manage," the Australian ambassador to the United States said.

The man was eventually moved by neighbours to a nursing home in Lafayette.

"He was rescued by a neighbour after five days stranded in his house and he's been in a nursing home in Lafayette, Louisiana," said Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs has been criticised for the lack of support provided to Australian victims of the disaster. The Labor Party has been particularly scathing in its attacks.

"The bottom line is this: when it comes to helping Australians on the ground, the Australian Government has failed miserably to persuade its closest friend and ally - the United States Government - to allow Australian consular officials access to help our own people," said opposition defence spokesman Kevin Rudd. Mr Rudd was referring to the US governments refusal of a request by Australian consular officials to enter New Orleans and search for Australians.

"You need a few days to allow people to assess the situation and

to deploy personnel. But a week later, we have one official go in and can only stay there until night-time and then has to skedaddle out of there. I mean, what's happening here? It's just not good enough," he added.

Some people have been critical of the Australians caught in the disaster. Former Federal Liberal Party Minister Wilson Tuckey attacked the victims, suggesting that they should have left New Orleans earlier.

"Why was the woman quoted by the Leader of the Opposition today so insistent, not that the Prime Minister get her out of her problems, but the Australian taxpayer get her out of her problems, when in fact all the warnings we heard here in Australia [said it] was unwise to stay," he said.

Australian Aboriginies sprayed by crop-duster

A group of 19 people, including local aborigines and Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) staff, were sprayed by a crop duster in rural Australia today. They were walking the proposed route of a freeway bypass, looking for sites that may have significance to Aboriginal people.

The freeway bypass will be part of the Hume Highway, near Coolac in south-west New South Wales.

Police are yet to rule out that the dusting was deliberate. A police spokeswoman made a public appeal for information.

"We don't know whether they knew the people were there or not so we're appealing for anyone who might have witnessed the incident or knows anything about

a low-flying crop-duster in the area to contact police," she said.

News available via the web does not (as of this writing) detail the effects of the spraying. It is assumed that there were no fatalities.

ABC Online reports that the pilot of the plane may face charges.

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Today in History

1191: Ayyubid forces under Saladin were defeated in the Battle of Arsuf during the Third Crusade.

1812: Napoleonic Wars: The French Grande Armée under Napoleon I forced the Russian army of Alexander I to withdraw in the Battle of Borodino.

1818: Carl III of Sweden was crowned king of Norway.

1940: The Blitz began when Nazi Germany's bombs landed on London, the first of 57 consecutive nights of bombing.

1986: Desmond Tutu became the first black to lead the Anglican Church in South Africa.

September 07 is Independence Day in Brazil (1822); Ganesh Chaturthi in Hinduism (2005).

Quote of the Day

"I am patient with stupidity but not with those who are proud of it." ~ Edith Sitwell

