



Top Stories

New Jersey's State Supreme Court says gay couples have same rights as heterosexual couples

New Jersey's State Supreme Court has said that gay couples are entitled to the same rights and privileges as heterosexual couples, but also said that totally legalizing gay marriages in the state will be up to New Jersey's legislators.

Missing Los Alamos Laboratory documents found in drug bust

Documents believed to be missing from the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico have been found on a "flash computer drive" during a drug bust located inside a Los Alamos trailer park on October 17 and are believed to contain "classified material."

Featured story

Wikinews interviews South Koreans about relations with North Korea

An informal poll by a Wikinews reporter found that very few of those South Koreans polled changed their mind about reunification with North Korea and the perceived threat posed by the North, following the nuclear weapons test by North Korea on October 9.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Surgeons in the United Kingdom are given permission by a National Health Service ethics

Wikipedia Current Events

committee to prepare to perform the world's first full face transplant at London's Royal Free Hospital.

- The New Jersey Supreme Court rules that homosexual couples are entitled to the same rights as heterosexuals, but that lawmakers must determine whether the state will honor gay marriage or some other form of civil union.

- Argentine prosecutors formally charge the Iranian government and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah over the 1994 bombing of a Jewish centre which killed 85 people.

- The United States Federal Reserve keeps its benchmark interest rate at 5.25 percent for a third month and reiterates that officials are relying on lower energy prices and slowing growth to reduce inflation.

- Conflict in the Niger Delta: Villagers in Nigeria storm and seize three Royal Dutch Shell oil platforms in the Niger Delta, forcing oil production to be shut down at each one.

- The Islamic Courts Union in Somalia has begun recruiting thousands of people in response to alleged military action by neighboring Ethiopia, amid fears of all-out war across the country.

- The government of Niger announces that due to "difficult relations with indigenous rural populations," the country's

Wikipedia Current Events

150,000 Mahamid Arab refugee population who have lived in Niger since having fled Chad two decades earlier, will be deported back to Chad.

- General George William Casey Jr., the top United States commander in Iraq has said it will take 12 to 18 months before Iraqi security forces are ready to take over in the country.

- South Korean Unification Minister Lee Jong-Seok resigns. Defence Minister Yoon Kwang-Ung had resigned earlier in the week with the President of South Korea Roh Moo-Hyun expected to announce changes in his foreign policy and defence advisers soon.

- Brigadier Mick Slater, the commander of Australian troops in East Timor warns that a humanitarian disaster could happen in that nation, unless housing for refugees fleeing the unrest in Dili can be arranged before the approaching wet season.

- Carl Scully resigns as Police Minister of New South Wales for misleading the New South Wales Legislative Assembly twice in two weeks over a report on the 2005 Cronulla riots.

- Jon Lech Johansen claims to have unlocked the FairPlay copy protection on the Apple iPod.

East Timor Army Calls UN Police Action A Coup

The latest outbreak of violence has caused the death of at least two

people according to the United Nations, as hundreds of people engaged in fighting near Díli's airport since Tuesday night. There is a fear that the violence will dramatically escalate after a martial arts gang leader was executed on a Díli street, where for weeks rival gangs have fought fiercely.

The national television network went off the air last night, just as the East Timor army was preparing to address the nation declaring its troops should no longer be confined to barracks because of the lawlessness.

The feeling amongst the army's top brass is that the earlier forced resignation of former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri in June amounted to a coup and that it should be investigated.

This latest unrest began on Sunday, sparked by a UN report which blamed the former Prime Minister for the factional violence earlier this year that killed more than 30 people dead.

UN spokesman, Adrian Edwards, told reporters that the situation was volatile. "We've seen ... reports of people being injured and some being brought to the hospital," he said. "We've also heard reports of possible other fatalities, but those are not confirmed at the moment. "We're waiting to see, once we get a clearer picture of them. "But right at the moment, I think the operations to bring it under control are ongoing." Australian soldiers shot at a man today; he escaped unharmed.

An Australian citizen had to be flown back home to Darwin Hospital, after suffering injuries. Australia's Foreign Affairs

Department has warned Australians to exercise extreme caution if they go to Timor, and that Australians or Australian interests could be targeted.

New Jersey's State Supreme Court says gay couples have same rights as heterosexual couples

The New Jersey Supreme Court has handed down its verdict in *Lewis v. Harris*. The details are: homosexual couples are entitled to the same rights and privileges as heterosexual couples, but also said that totally legalizing gay marriages in the state will be up to the New Jersey Legislature who have 180 days to determine whether or not the state's constitution shall be rewritten to include gay marriages or civil unions.

"The issue is not about the transformation of the traditional definition of marriage, but about the unequal dispensation of benefits and privileges to one of two similarly situated classes of people," said the court.

"Although we cannot find that a fundamental right to same-sex marriage exists in this state, the unequal dispensation of rights and benefits to committed same-sex partners can no longer be tolerated under our state Constitution," said one of the judges, Justice Barry T. Albin.

The decision passed in a ruling of 4 support and 3 non-support votes.

In 2004, the state ruled that domestic relationships are allowed and that gay couples get some of the benefits that come along with marriage including the right to inherit their partner's belongings if a will was not written and health

insurance if one or the other works for the state.

If the state decides to allow same sex marriages, it would be the second state in the United States to completely legalize gay marriages. Massachusetts was the first and only state thus far to legalize gay marriages while some states such as Connecticut and Vermont have legalized civil unions.

Missing Los Alamos Laboratory documents found in drug bust

Documents believed to be missing from the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico have been found on a USB Flash Drive during a drug bust located inside a Los Alamos trailer park on October 17 and are believed to contain "classified material" related to "Secret Restricted Data, which means it would involve nuclear weapons data and may have concerned detection of underground nuclear weapons testing," according to Reuters who cites unnamed sources.

"During the course of the search, officers realized that some of the items seized appeared to belong to the Los Alamos National Laboratory," said a statement by the Los Alamos County Police Department.

It is believed that a subcontractor, Justin Stone, 20 is involved in a possible breach of security at the lab and according to Michael Anastasio, the lab's director, there is an "ongoing investigation." Stone is believed to have been working in Technical Area 55, an area of the lab where plutonium is kept or the X Division, where data for the designs of nuclear bombs are kept.

It is also believed that a woman,

whose name has not been released and worked in the laboratory, was being investigated by the FBI for charges relating to methamphetamine type offenses and was arrested when authorities executed an arrest warrant for the female.

"This is a serious matter, and we are taking immediate steps to address it. We intend to do everything possible to guard against any criminal activity, particularly where a breach of security may be involved. We have already taken a number of steps to address potential security risks," said Anastasio in a statement.

Drug paraphernalia along with methamphetamine drugs were also seized during the bust. Police were initially responding to a call of domestic violence.

Millions of old New Zealand coins still to be handed in

On November 1, 2006 the old five, ten, twenty and fifty cent coins will be illegal tender, but the Reserve Bank of New Zealand says there are still at least 100 million still to be returned.

According to the Reserve Bank, most of the old coins have been lost in drains or buried in rubbish. "We think there is still another 100 million sitting around in people's homes," Brian Lang, currency manager for the Reserve Bank, said.

Lang said: "So far, just over 280 million coins have been returned, but there are more out there. Since 1967 the Reserve Bank has issued more than a billion of the old 'silver' coins. So if you don't want to be stuck with loads of old coin - there's never been a better time to empty your coin jars, sweep the car glove box and

rummage behind the couch cushions."

The coins still awaiting to be handed in, by either spending them, taking them to a bank or donating them to charity, are estimated to be worth between NZ\$5 million and \$50 million.

"A last-minute burst of publicity may convince people to bring the coins in. It's a bit of a hassle though. Human nature being what it is, people just don't care," Lang said. The Karori Wildlife Sanctuary located in Wellington say that they have collected over \$9,000 in old coins. Sanctuary spokesman, Alan Dicks said: "The campaign was particularly fitting because the old coins depicted tuataras and kiwis, both of which can be found living at the sanctuary. The money will go towards supporting general ecological restoration of the sanctuary. We want to get over ten grand, but the more the better."

Lang said: "Though the coins will no longer be legal tender, banks will continue to exchange them until at least the end of the year," and the Reserve Bank will always exchange them. "We are still getting people coming in with two-dollar notes," Lang added.

U.S. mid-term election to host gay marriage referendum in Virginia

The U.S. gay marriage debate will face yet another test in Virginia with the up-coming November 7 mid-term elections.

The yes or no vote cast by Virginians on the referendum will decide whether Article 1, Section 15 (of the Bill of Rights) of the Constitution of Virginia would be amended to include the following text:

That only a union between one man and one woman may be a marriage valid in or recognized by this Commonwealth and its political subdivisions.

This Commonwealth and its political subdivisions shall not create or recognize a legal status for relationships of unmarried individuals that intends to approximate the design, qualities, significance, or effects of marriage. Nor shall this Commonwealth or its political subdivisions create or recognize another union, partnership, or other legal status to which is assigned the rights, benefits, obligations, qualities, or effects of marriage.

— *Section 15-A. Marriage which is proposed to be amended to Article I of the Constitution of Virginia*

Currently, Section 15 of the Virginia Bill of Rights is titled Qualities necessary to preservation of free government. The referendum, if passed, will take effect January 1, 2007, and would put the above text in a subsection, Section 15-A, following language that describes "a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue".

Virginia governor Tim Kaine, who says he does not support gay marriage, along with his wife and father-in-law, former Va. governor Linwood Holton and his wife, presented themselves outside the executive mansion in a press briefing Tuesday as a family unified against the broad, anti-same-sex marriage language of the referendum.

"It would invite protracted court challenges in areas including contracts, custody cases and end-of-life decisions," Kaine said of the referendum, according to the

Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Bob McDonnell, the Virginia General Attorney wrote in a 13-page legal opinion in September this year, that legal rights raised by the constitutionally of what would be defined as 'unmarried couples' are separate from those granted by the institution of marriage. "The general legal rights to enter into contracts, wills, advance medical directives, shared equity agreements and other legal instruments are not rights that arise from marriage," according to his opinion.

A recent poll by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research finds that there is still a majority in favor of the amendment. There are also clear distinctions between northern Virginians, who tend to oppose, and southern Virginians, who tend to support the amendment.

London Zoological Society reports on health of planet Earth

The annual Living Planet Report compiled by the Zoological Society of London and the Global Footprint Network and published this week by WWF International, assesses the health of the planet's ecosystems and measures the demands we make on the planet's resources.

The Living Planet Index is based on trends from 1970 to 2003 in over 3 600 populations of more than 1 300 vertebrate species from around the world. There has been an overall decline of around 30 per cent over the 33-year period. Tropical species populations declined by around 55 per cent on average from 1970 to 2003, while temperate species populations, have shown little overall change.

The Ecological Footprint measures

the area of biologically productive land and sea required to sustain humanity. In 2003 this was 14.1 billion global hectares, or 2.2 global hectares per person (a global hectare is a hectare with world-average ability to produce resources and absorb wastes). The total supply of productive area, or biocapacity, in 2003 was 11.2 global hectares, or 1.8 global hectares per person. Demand overshot supply first in the 1980s and has been increasing every year since, By 2003 the overshoot was about 25 per cent. Thus, it took approximately a year and three months for the Earth to produce the ecological resources humanity used in that year.

The Living Planet Index and the Ecological Footprint, along with other measures, have been adopted as indicators for the 2010 targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The report concludes with a description of the roles of the various disciplines required to 'shift humanity's current trajectory on to a path that will remain within the biological capacity of the planet'

James P. Leape the Director General, WWF International summarises: The message of these two indices is clear and urgent: we have been exceeding the Earth's ability to support our lifestyles for the past 20 years, and we need to stop. We must balance our consumption with the natural world's capacity to regenerate and absorb our wastes. If we do not, we risk irreversible damage.

PM reshuffles Cabinet, Pranab Mukherjee is new Indian Foreign minister

Pranab Mukherjee was appointed

the External Affairs Minister while veteran Congressman A K Antony took his place as Defence Minister in a minor expansion-cum-reshuffle of his 29-month-old government by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Kannada actor-turned-politician M H Ambareesh made his debut in the Union Ministry as Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting.

Jay Prakash Narayan Yadav, an RJD leader and a protege of Railway Minister Lalu Prasad, who had to resign last year following allegations of influencing the police in a case of electoral malpractices against his brother, returned to the government, again as Minister of State for Water Resources.

Oscar Fernandes took over Ministry of Labour.

Today in History

1597 - Twelve Korean ships commanded by Admiral Yi Sunsin defeated a large Japanese invasion fleet in the Battle of Myeongnyang.

1863 - The Football Association, the oldest governing body in football, was formed in London in England.

1881 - The Gunfight at the O.K. Corral took place in Tombstone, Arizona, United States.

1937 - Second Sino-Japanese War: Xie Jinyuan and his 'Lone Battalion' of Chinese soldiers began the Defense of Sihang Warehouse against waves of Japanese attackers during the Battle of Shanghai.

1955 - Prime Minister Ngô Đình Diệm became the first President of South Vietnam, replacing Nguyễn Emperor Bảo Đại as the head of state.

October 26 is Angam Day in Nauru, National Day in Austria.

Quote of the Day

A man doesn't begin to attain wisdom until he recognizes that he is no longer indispensable.

~ Richard E. Byrd

Word of the Day

maunder; v

1. To speak in a disorganized or desultory manner; to babble or ramble.
2. To wander or walk aimlessly.

About Wikinews

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