



Top Stories



U.S. entertainment writers' strike may end this week

Arson suspected in Namdaemun gate fire in Seoul



Namdaemun Gate, one of South Korea's most iconic landmarks, caught fire

Sunday night, destroying the first and second floors but keeping the brick base intact. The police believe the blaze was a case of arson.

Featured story

Israel town sues Google for slander

The town of Kiryat Yam in Israel is suing Internet corporation Google over an alleged inaccuracy in its Google Earth software, which claims the town was built over the ruins of an Arab village.



Wikipedia Current Events

Illinois Senator Barack Obama wins the Maryland and Virginia

Wikipedia Current Events

Democratic primaries. By CNN's calculation, Obama now leads Sen. Hillary Clinton in the delegate count for the first time since early in the campaign.

- Arizona Senator John McCain wins the Maryland and Virginia Republican primaries.
- European Space Agency's Columbus module is attached to the International Space Station.
- The U.S. Senate votes to grant immunity to telecommunications companies for their role in NSA call database.
- Chilean opera singer Ernesto "Tito" Beltran is sentenced to two years in jail by a Swedish court for rape during a concert tour in 1999.
- Russia and Ukraine resolve a dispute over Ukraine's natural gas debt which saw Gazprom threatening to cut off supplies.

New 'Star Wars' film to be released in August

George Lucas has announced that there will be one last Star Wars movie to end the six movie epic, but it won't have any actors.

Star Wars: The Clone Wars, an animated film is scheduled to be released into theaters on August 15 of this year.

"I felt there were a lot more 'Star Wars' stories left to tell. I was eager to start telling some of them through animation and, at the same time, push the art of

animation forward," said Lucas in a statement to the media.

Movie goers cannot be fooled though. Lucas says that although the film is animated, people can expect the same kind of galactic space battles and action that all the other Star Wars films have. The approximate running time of the film is 100 minutes.

The film is produced by Warner Brothers and Lucasfilm LTD. The new movie is also set to continue as an animated, 30 minute "mini-movie" series this autumn. The show can be seen on the Cartoon Network.

TIBE joins International Publishers Association for publishing industry in Taiwan

As many publishing executives, companies, and world-wide media anticipated for the 2008 Taipei International Book Exhibition (TIBE 2008), the fair joined the International Publishers Association (IPA) as their member after permission by the IPA last Tuesday (Feb. 5) and the Taipei Book Fair Foundation (TBFF) held a contract-signing ceremony today for the partnership program between IPA and TIBE at the press conference of TIBE 2008.

Director of the Government Information Office of the Republic of the China Jhy-Wey Shieh said after the signing: " This contract-signing doesn't come easily because the International Publishers Association not only did many hard works for the copyright

protection from books in several countries but also promoted the freedoms of publication and speech because they (the IPA) won't allow a country controlling public speech like China. We hope the public in Taiwan can treasure the freedom of speech which didn't come easily after a martial law age. "

After the contract-signing, members from the TBFF will have opportunities to gain experiences from publishing industry and world-class book expositions in several countries, and the publishing industry in Taiwan will be improved progressively in the future.

2008 Taipei International Book Exhibition Preview: An exposition with different cultures

The 2008 Taipei International Book Exhibition (TIBE 2008), organized by the Taipei Book Fair Foundation (TBFF), will start tomorrow and end next Monday (Feb. 18) at the Taipei World Trade Center in Hall 1 & 3 and in the Taipei Show (TWTC Hall 2). Before the opening of the main show, the TIBE changed significantly.

Since the Preview Exhibition was held in 1992 in Jhonghe City, Taipei County with the "History of books in China" theme, the preview exhibition wasn't eventually held before the main show every year.

This pre-main-show exhibition style was replaced by a consuming battle between bookstores from actual to virtual (via Internet) and reading festivals from municipal libraries in Taiwan that the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China promoted. But in 2008, after the TBFF was

regrouped last year, the preview exhibition finally returned on Feb 2 & 3 with the "Book Market" and "Arts and Crafts". With the preview exhibition, the reading population is expected to expand rapidly and widely in Taiwan.

To gather on different cultures, the TBFF not only arranged a variety of seminars from book-cover designing, changes of publishing industry, publishing style, and strategies from global publishing industry, but also invited executives from the publishing industry world-wide such as Michel Le Bris, Gilles Lapouge, Shaun Tan, Markus Zusak, Tony Wheeler, and Maruen Wheeler and executives from the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Apart from seminars and executives, the Stiftung Buchkunst (Book Art Foundation) will showcase several awarded books from "Giant of Japanese Design" and some book design awards in the "Most Beautiful Book Designing" pavilion. Two book design awards by TBEE named the "2008 TIBE Prize" and "2008 Golden Butterfly Award" will be successively announced on Feb 13 & 14.

Not only on book-designing and pavilions, even though Australia was named as the main international pavilion, the TBFF chose the opening movie "What My Eyes Have Seen" from France and a closing movie named "The Edge of Heaven" from Germany, those selected movies including the opening and closing ones will be screened at the movie pavilion. The Travel Literature Pavilion will show a different style varied from the 2007 Taipei International Travel Fair, not only just about traveling but also mixed with cultures and literature.

Finnish internet censorship critic blacklisted

The Finnish police have added Finnish hacker Matti Nikki's website criticizing Internet censorship to Finland's new national child porn filter. The blacklisting was noticed when Finland's second largest Internet service provider Elisa started blocking the page today. More of the ISP's are expected to join the filtering when their blacklists are updated from the police's master list.

The banned site has been a harsh critic of Internet censorship over the last three years. It contains information and news about how censorship has been discussed and developing in Finland. Although the site's provocative name is lapsiporno.info ("childporn.info") there is no child porn on the site - the content is mainly text.

Tekniikka & Talous magazine asked Commissioner Lars Henriksson of Finland's National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) why the page was censored. His answer was that he cannot discuss individual sites, but said that sites which are linking to child porn pages are also within the scope of the law. This interpretation, however, seems to conflict with the actual laws, the scope of which was supposed to be only sites with illegal pictures in foreign countries.

The domain may have been censored because it published and maintained an incomplete version of the Finnish child porn blacklist. Nikki's list contained roughly two-thirds of the 1500 blacklist entries, and it was created by scanning a large amount of sites and logging the censored pages.

The scan also found that the top three results of a Google search

for "gay porn" are blacklisted, and that most of the blocked sites are actually physically located in the United States or the European Union.

Leena Romppanen of Electronic Frontier Finland commented that "The local authorities have taken no action on these sites.

Therefore, either the sites do not contain child pornography or the FBI has not informed the local authorities. Both of the alternatives are equally scary."

Matti Nikki's opinion is that the majority of the censored sites are legal adult sites and that the police are not doing that much research when they are deciding which sites to block.

Internet censorship has been a hot topic in Finland as of late. There have been proposals of extending Internet filtering to Internet gambling sites, sites related to terrorism and violence, and torrent-tracker The Pirate Bay.

Four new breeds in the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show

This year, four breeds of dogs are competing for the first time in the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, at Madison Square Garden in New York City, United States.

The new breeds making their Westminster debuts this year, are the Plott, a hunting hound originally bred by two German immigrant brothers in North Carolina; the Tibetan Mastiff, once described by Marco Polo as "tall as a donkey with a voice as powerful as that of a lion."; the Beauceron, a herding dog originally bred to herd flocks of sheep in France, later used to sniff out landmines and send messages during the World Wars; and the Swedish

Vallhund, a breed dating back to the time of the Vikings, used on farms to catch vermin, herd cattle, and as a guard dog, noted for its double coat and harness markings.

This brings the number of unique breeds competing in the famous dog show to 169.

The Plott, the Beauceron, and the Vallhund were shown on Monday. The Tibetan Mastiff will be shown tonight as part of the Working Group.

Newspaper campaigns to elevate Vancouver Olympic character from sidekick status

The only real animal out of the bunch, Mukmuk shouldn't be stuck with second billing among 2010 Winter Olympic mascots, says the Vancouver Sun newspaper.

Mukmuk was introduced on November 27, 2007, along with Miga, Quatchi, and Sumi, the Olympic and Paralympic mascots. However, he only appeared in the introductory video and on the website, while the three others appear in costumed character form around the country, and as merchandise "created in effigy by the thousands".

Only 205 Vancouver Island marmots are known to exist, due to predators (mostly wolves and eagles), and loggers.

Writer Jeff Lee is asking readers to join their "campaign to make him a real, live mascot instead of a virtual sidekick". He's asking for public opinion to send to The Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (or simply, "Vanoc") on why Mukmuk would make a good mascot, or even why he wouldn't.

Lee will be regularly writing articles for the paper, as well as blogging, publishing reader thoughts, drawings, and ideas of "who Mukmuk really is"; all the other characters have detailed back stories.

According to press materials, "Mukmuk is a small and friendly Vancouver Island marmot who always supports and cheers loudly for his friends during games and races. When he is not hibernating or sunbathing on rocks and logs, he enjoys getting out to meet other types of marmots and animals. In fact, this is how he became friends with the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic mascots."

The Vancouver Sun first received reader feedback sympathetic to Mukmuk, as a Nanaimo resident wrote in, noting their paper was the only one to even picture the character. The other three appeared on newspaper covers through BC and nationwide, once launched.

An online petition launched at an unknown date before December 4 has only gathered 18 signatures.

France's Sarkozy to meet with Brazilian president da Silva

The Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is due to meet the French President Nicholas Sarkozy later today. Lula da Silva is due to meet with Sarkozy in French Guinea.

The two are expected discuss issues such as greater cooperation between the two countries and the coordination of work on areas around Brazil and French Guiana. In addition, subjects such as biofuels, nuclear science and defence are expected to be discussed in the meeting.

After the meeting, at the headquarters of the local Lula and Sarkozy will present the design for a road bridge that is planned to be built over the river Oiapoque, linking the Brazil to French Guiana. Initial forecasts are suggesting that the bridge, will be about 400 meters long, and will cost approximately US\$38.6 million. It is scheduled to be completed for 2010.

The cost of the project is planned to be divided equally between Brazil and France. This was made clear in an agreement between the two nations that was signed in July 2005. The agreement was approved by the Brazilian government in November 2007 and was approved by the French Parliament in March 2007.

Broken pipes cause flood in Darwin D. Martin House in Buffalo, New York

Buffalo, New York – According to radio communications by the Buffalo, New York Fire Department, at approximately 10:15 p.m. EST two water pipes inside the Darwin D. Martin House, a National Historical Landmark, broke causing several rooms to flood.

The breaks were discovered in the gift shop area of the house but quickly began to flood other areas near the shop as firefighters had a difficult time locating the main shut off valves.

At 10:50 p.m., firefighters reported to have shut off "several main valves" stopping the flow of water. The cost of the water damage is not known, but covered several rooms. Recent sub-zero temperatures in the city is said to be the cause of the break. At the time of the call, the temperature was only 10°F with a wind chill of

4°F above zero. On Sunday the temperature was only 3°F with a wind chill of -23°F.

The house, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, has seen rough times over the years, experiencing problems such as vandalism. The first half of the complex was built in 1903 and finished in 1905. After the pergola, conservatory, and carriage were demolished, restoration and rebuild began in 1992 and is scheduled for completion in 2008 or 2009.

U.S. entertainment writers' strike may end this week

The Writers Guild of America (WGA) strike, which has crippled entertainment productions in Hollywood since November, may be over as early as Wednesday.

In an email to its members Saturday, the WGA announced the arrangement of a tentative agreement with the studios. The union's members will vote on the agreement sometime during the next two weeks. However, a decision to return to work could be made as early as Tuesday. The WGA has recommended that its members support the contract, as it provides money to writers whose work is transmitted over the Internet.

There were two meetings held with the writers, one in New York and the other in Los Angeles where the writers seemed to be enthusiastic about getting back into business. Such shows as Desperate Housewives, the American The Office, and Grey's Anatomy will begin again if the votes go as planned.

Executive producers for TV series, sometimes called show runners, are heading back to work before the guild takes a final vote. They

are preparing for the writer's return, which is now expected to be as early as Wed. Show runners are also members of the guild. They are allowed back at work Monday under the stipulation that their work only consists of producer related tasks.

Australian parliament to apologise to Stolen Generations

The Australian parliament will apologise tomorrow for past mistreatment of Australia's indigenous population. The wording of the apology will be revealed after 5pm AEDT (UTC +11) today, and will be read in parliament tomorrow at 9am AEDT.

Opposition leader Brendan Nelson has given in-principle support to an apology, but has criticised the government for the delay in releasing the wording. He has written his speech without seeing the apology.

"If Mr Rudd wants to unify Australia, to bring our nation together, the most important person he should be negotiating with is me," Mr Nelson said yesterday. "We're two days away from this, for goodness sake. He should be sitting down with me and saying 'these are the words which we propose, what do you think?'"

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said that the words must be tabled to parliament first.

The Government's manager of business, Anthony Albanese, said that it was more important for members of the Stolen Generations approve of the apology. "Quite frankly, what's important is the people most affected are comfortable with that

wording," he said.

In an opinion piece in today's The Sydney Morning Herald, Tony Abbott defended John Howard's legacy. "Its refusal to say 'sorry' meant that Howard never received the credit he deserved for groundbreaking policies such as the intervention in Northern Territory Aboriginal townships," Mr Abbott wrote. "The Liberal Party's decision to support an apology to stolen children is not a repudiation of John Howard. It should help us to defend a key part of his legacy, the Northern Territory intervention, and to pursue good policy without accusations of bad faith."

Today in History

1689 – Glorious Revolution: Instead of James Francis Edward Stuart, the Prince of Wales, acceding to the throne, his half-sister Mary and her husband William were proclaimed co-rulers of England.

1815 – The Cambridge Union Society, one of the oldest debating societies in the world, was founded at the University of Cambridge in Cambridge, England.

1867 – Work began on the covering of the Senne, burying Brussels' polluted main waterway to allow urban renewal in the centre of the city.

1880 – American inventor Thomas Edison observed the Edison Effect, which later formed the basis of vacuum tube diodes designed by English electrical engineer John Ambrose Fleming.

1945 – World War II: The Allies began the strategic bombing of Dresden in Dresden, Saxony, Germany, resulting in a lethal firestorm which killed tens of thousands of civilians.

Quote of the Day

Love has no uttermost, as the stars have no number and the sea no rest. ~ Eleanor Farjeon

Word of the Day

concupiscent adj

1. Amorous, lustful; feeling sexy.

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