



Top Stories

Bush to skip Republican convention to monitor Gustav

George W. Bush, the President of the United States, has said that he will not attend the 2008 Republican National Convention as a result of Hurricane Gustav. The move comes hours before the expected landfall of the category 3 hurricane.



Italy will give Libya US\$5 billion as compensation for occupation

The government of Italy has agreed to pay Libya \$5 billion as compensation for its occupation of the country from 1911 to 1943. The agreement was reached



between the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, and Baghdadi Mahmudi, Berlusconi's Libyan counterpart.

Pakistan's military offensive suspended for Ramadan

The Government of Pakistan has decided to halt the military operation in tribal areas during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. There will be no operation from the night of August 31 till October 2, However, security forces are prepared to deal with the militants using full force, if the militants take advantage of the ceasefire.

SPECIAL REPORT

News agencies suggest that campaign operative for Republican Party edited article on vice presidential nominee

Multiple news agencies, including the New York Times and CNET yesterday suggested that a campaign operative for Sarah Palin, the Republican vice presidential candidate, worked on the Wikipedia article on her in the 24 hours before the vice presidential candidate was announced. After seeing these allegations, Wikinews decided to investigate the claim further.



Wikipedia Current Events

U.S. Republican Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin's 17 year old daughter Bristol is revealed to be five months pregnant.

•The US military hands control of Al Anbar Governorate over to the Iraqi government.

•ACLU lawsuit challenges gag orders in National Security Letters.

•2008 Atlantic hurricane season

•Hurricane Gustav makes landfall in the United States southwest of New Orleans, Louisiana as a Category 2 hurricane.

•Tropical Storm Hanna becomes Hurricane Hanna (2008) with hurricane warnings issued for the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos.

Wikipedia Current Events

•Tropical Storm Ike (2008) forms east of the Leeward Islands.

•The European Union suspends talks on a new partnership agreement with Moscow until Russian troops have withdrawn from Georgia.

•Russia accuses the West of sending weapons to Georgia along with aid while the European Union considers possible sanctions against Russia.

•Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda abruptly resigns less than a year after taking office, triggering a leadership election.

•Government of Orissa report states 558 houses and 17 places of worship were burnt in 2008 Orissa violence.

•Robert French sworn in as the 12th Chief Justice of Australia.

Government of the Bahamas issues warning over Hurricane Hanna

The government of the Bahamas has issued a hurricane warning for the Central Bahamas, the Southeastern Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos islands.

As of 17:30 UTC today the Hurricane is moving towards the west-southwest at a speed of 7 km/h and it is expected to hit the central and southeastern Bahamas during the next two days.

According to the National Hurricane Service the maximum sustained wind speed of the

hurricane will be 120 km/h.

The hurricane is expected to produce up to twenty centimeters of rainfall over the affected areas of the Bahamas.

Forecasters have also predicted that the hurricane may strike the United States. "Right now, the uncertainty is such that it could hit anywhere from Miami to the outer banks of North Carolina," commented Jessica Schauer Clark, a spokesperson National Hurricane Center. "So people really need to keep an eye on it."

Bush to skip Republican convention to monitor Gustav

George W. Bush, the President of the United States, has said that he will not attend the 2008 Republican National Convention as a result of Hurricane Gustav.

During a statement made to the press, Bush told reporters: "In light of these events, I will not be going to Minnesota for the Republican National Convention,". He continued saying: "I'm going to travel down to Texas tomorrow to visit with the Emergency Operations Center in Austin, where coordination among federal, state, and local government officials is occurring."

"I intend to go down to San Antonio where state and local officials are prepositioning relief materials for Texas and Louisiana, and I'll have a chance to visit with residents of both states who have been evacuated."

Rick Davis, campaign manager for John McCain 2008, also tried to explain the reasons for the change to the the schedule saying that "we [John McCain 2008 and the Republican Party] are deeply concerned about the safety and

welfare of the residents of the Gulf State region. Our top priority is to assist those who will be affected by Hurricane Gustav. This is not a time for politics or celebration; it is a time for us to come together as Americans and assist the residents of the Gulf States."

During the press statement in which Mr. Bush announced that he would not attend the conference, he also commented on the dangers of the hurricane. "The message to the people of the Gulf Coast is, this storm is dangerous. There's a real possibility of flooding, storm surge, and high winds. Therefore, it is very important for you to follow the instructions and direction of state and local officials. Do not put yourself in harm's way, or make rescue workers take unnecessary risks. And know that the American people stand with you. We'll face this emergency together."

Ray Nagin, the mayor of New Orleans, Louisiana yesterday ordered a mandatory evacuation of the city ahead of Hurricane Gustav. Nagin stated that residents "need to be scared" in what he calls "the mother of all storms".

US presidential candidate Barack Obama's lead increases after Democratic National Convention

United States presidential candidate Barack Obama's lead in the polls has increased by 3.3% over John McCain since the Democratic National Convention. Last week, the two candidates were statistically tied. Now, Barack Obama is polling at 49.0% and John McCain is polling at 44.1%, a 4.9% lead, according to the latest Day to Day Politics Poll Average. The margin of error for the poll average is at 0.93%.

This is the largest lead Barack Obama has had in the past two months. The last time it was this high was July 27, 2008 when it was 4.8%. For the past 6 days, the Gallup Poll and the Rasmussen three day tracking polls have held steady for Barack Obama at 49%.

McCain has recently added Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin to his nomination ticket. A poll shows that among white women, McCain has a slight advantage, 46% to 42%. When the public is asked about the selection of Sarah Palin, 52% rate the selection as excellent or good. On whether she is qualified for the White House if she needed to fulfill the role of presidency, only 45% say she is qualified, whereas 50% say she is unqualified.

The Day to Day Politics Poll Average for the past week used the Gallup Tracking poll, the Rasmussen Tracking poll, and the CNN poll.

News agencies suggest that campaign operative for Republican Party edited article on vice presidential nominee

Multiple news agencies, including the New York Times and CNET yesterday suggested that a campaign operative for Sarah Palin, the Republican vice presidential candidate, worked on the Wikipedia article on her in the 24 hours before the vice presidential candidate was announced. After seeing these allegations, Wikinews decided to investigate the claim further.

The user who added the content on Wikipedia was known as Young Trigg, and Wikinews has learned that the account was created at exactly 08:02 UTC on August 28. Just eight minutes later the user

made their first edit to Wikipedia. In this first edit the user said that Palin "briefly worked as a sports reporter for local Anchorage television stations, while also working as a commercial fisherman with her husband, Todd, her high school sweetheart"

In the second edit Palin and her family were described as "avid outdoors enthusiasts." This edit also said that "Sarah and her father would sometimes wake at three am to hunt moose before school, and the family would regularly run 5k and 10k races"

Some of the other edits say that Sarah was "brought to statewide attention because of whistleblowing on ethical violations by state Republican Party leaders," she played in a "championship game despite a stress fracture in her ankle, hitting a critical free throw in the last seconds," and she won a "scholarship to help pay her way through college." Young Trigg also noted that "Palin holds a lifetime membership with the National Rifle Association. "

The editor also said that her election of mayor came "despite the lack of support from party leaders and being outspent by her Democratic opponent." Other positive claims added included the statement that "Palin successfully killed the Bridge to Nowhere project that had become a nationwide symbol of wasteful earmark spending."

Young Trigg also removed the sentence that said that "critics [of Palin] included the state Republican party's chairman, Randy Ruedrich, one of her fellow Oil & Gas commissioners."

This unusual editing pattern aroused some suspicion among

other editors of Wikipedia. One of these editors is Justen Deal, who told Young Trigg that "some of yours edits may have affected the article in such a way so as to reflect more favorably on the subject of the article." He also gave Young Trigg the following message: "If you have a close connection to some of the people, places or things you have written about in the article Sarah Palin on Wikipedia, you may have a conflict of interest. In keeping with Wikipedia's neutral point of view policy, edits where there is a conflict of interest, or where such a conflict might reasonably be inferred from the tone of the edit and the proximity of the editor to the subject, are strongly discouraged. If you have a conflict of interest, you should avoid or exercise great caution when: editing or creating articles related to you, your organization, or its competitors, as well as projects and products they are involved with; participating in deletion discussions about articles related to your organization or its competitors; linking to the Wikipedia article or website of your organization in other articles (see Wikipedia:Spam); and, avoid breaching relevant policies and guidelines, especially those pertaining to neutral point of view, verifiability of information, and autobiographies."

Deal described his reason for suspecting a conflict of interest to a reporter for Wikinews. He said that "It was clear to me that an editor very familiar with Wikipedia and the governor had made a single-purpose account that had made a significant number of edits that were universally favorable to the subject of the article. Given the fortuitous timing, it made

sense to remind the editor of our conflict of interest guidelines."

After this message was sent by Deal, Young Trigg said that "I will acknowledge that I volunteer for the McCain campaign." The user did however state that "I did not know Palin was the nominee when I made my edits," and "no one instructed me to make these edits. No one knew that I made these edits. I did this on my own 'becuz' I like improving Wikipedia articles."

Below is an extract from Young Trigg's comment:

"I am not Sarah Palin. I think it is obvious that I am not the five-month old Trig Paxson Van Palin. I am not a member of Sarah Palin's family, or even Michael Palin's family. To my knowledge, I have never even been in the same room as a member of the Palin family. I did not "edit for five hours." I edited for a couple of hours over a five-hour span while I was reading the Internet. The timing was coincidental. I finished reading the Palin biography that day, went to her page, and saw a lot of "cite needed" places and thought I should improve the article and created an account to do so. There is a huge problem with Wikipedia in that editors are rely exclusively on Google and leave out stuff that can be found in books. Is it so strange that a biographical encyclopedia article should include cites to the only book written about the subject? Ninety percent of the "whitewash" allegations made in the Daily Kos thread were edits made by other editors. The others are legitimate edits. No one has identified a single edit made by me that violates Wikipedia rules or was inaccurate. I was not the person who added

the claim that Palin was the vice presidential nominee. A vandal or Palin fan did that, perhaps based on Internet rumors that were going around at the time. The same thing happened on the Pawlenty page, the only difference was that the people editing the Palin page happened to be editing a page that ended up getting a lot of attention the next day. No one instructed me to make these edits. No one knew that I made these edits. I did this on my own becuz I like improving Wikipedia articles. I create SPAs precisely for the sort of reason this to-do came up: crazy people making up conspiracy theories wanting to blame the editor for their own problems, and then huge games of telephone where people who don't understand Wikipedia blame one person for every edit that happened to an article. Have you seen some of the threats in the Daily Kos comments? One of my accounts is for editing hockey articles; another for articles about history; another for evolution; and so on. (Unlike Sarah Palin, I believe in evolution.) Forgive me that I want to remain anonymous rather than have my family exposed to one of those crazies or have Daily Kos auditing every edit I've ever made about the Whiskey Rebellion. (I have not actually edited Whiskey Rebellion, that was a hypothetical example. Don't waste time crawling through the contirbutors there.) Correction, this comment made me curious, and I just edited Whiskey Rebellion. Sorry. I did not know Palin was the nominee when I made my edits. (According to the Wall Street Journal, McCain didn't make up his mind until Thursday, hours after most of my edits.) If there's a politician out there hoping for appointments who want to hire me to edit their articles, maybe they

will have the same luck, but I doubt it. (That's a joke. Again, no one hired or asked me to edit this article.)"

Young Trigg made a total of 43 contributions (many on talk pages) and announced they would retire from Wikipedia at 07:58 UTC on August 31. In addition to editing the article on Sarah Palin, the user also anonymously contributed to Wikipedia to say that Palin was the VP nominee before the official announcement the following message:

"Where did you hear Palin was the VP nominee? I can't find anything online."

Wikinews contacted the McCain campaign a with a request for a statement regarding this issue; and, at the time of publication, had not received a response.

Pakistan's military offensive suspended for Ramadan

The Government of Pakistan has decided to halt the military operation in tribal areas during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. There will be no operation from the night of August 31 till October 2, However, security forces are prepared to deal with the militants using full force, if the militants take advantage of the ceasefire.

Pakistan's government decided on the suspension to allow displaced civilians near the country's border with Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to return home for the month-long period of fasting, which is expected to begin September 1st. Pakistan's border with Afghanistan is rife with Islamic extremists and has been the site of recent deadly clashes between Pakistani security forces and militants. Since then, Islamic militants vowed to retaliate, and

the country has been rocked by several suicide bombings.

Pakistan's five-month-old government at first tried peace talks with militants, but those efforts were ultimately fruitless. It has turned to force in recent weeks, even going as far as using air power to strike insurgent hide-outs.

The exact start of Ramadan depends on the sighting of the new moon. Muslims are required to abstain from eating and drinking from dawn to dusk.

The government ceasefire will stay in place until the second day of Eid ul-Fitr, which heralds the end of the month of fasting with three days of feasts and celebrations.

German Television reportedly manipulates interview with Putin

ARD, a German television channel allegedly manipulated an interview with Russian Prime Minister Putin. Reportedly, more than half of the interview was cut and dropped. A spokesperson for the channel have said that there was no manipulation of the interview which was published on August 30th, 2008.

Star Trek: The Experience to close

Star Trek: The Experience, located in the Las Vegas Hilton, is due to close its doors after a 10 year run. Even though the attraction is popular, the tenant, Cedar Fair Entertainment Co., could not come to an agreement with the Hilton over the terms of a new lease. The Experience will end with a decommissioning ceremony modeled after the US Navy, at 10PM on September 1st.

Dark Knight hits \$500 million

'The Dark Knight', the 2008 film sequel to 'Batman Begins', has hit the \$500 million mark in the domestic box office. It is only the second movie in history to hit this mark. The first film was 'Titanic', and completed it's run at over \$600 million. 'The Dark Knight', while taking only six weeks to do what 'Titanic' took 3 months, is not expected to beat out the number one player. Recently 'The Dark Knight' has been topped by "Tropic Thunder" in the domestic box offices.

Hazmat incident closes two St. Louis ERs

Two hospital emergency rooms in St. Louis were closed and quarantined after several patients arrived claiming to have been exposed to hazardous chemicals. Three men arrived at St. Anthony's Medical center, three showed up at SSM DePaul Health Center and while an additional person was seen at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, which did not have its emergency room closed. The chemical was later identified as nitroaniline. So far two have died from the effects of the chemical.

Today in History

31 BC – Final War of the Roman Republic: Troops supporting Octavian defeated the forces of Mark Antony and Cleopatra in the naval Battle of Actium on the Ionian Sea near Actium in Greece.

1666 – A large fire began on London's Pudding Lane and burned the city for three days, destroying St Paul's Cathedral and the homes of 70,000 of the city's 80,000 inhabitants.

1898 – Mahdist War: Forces led by Horatio Kitchener defeated Sudanese tribesmen at the Battle of Omdurman in Omdurman, Khartoum, Sudan, establishing British dominance in northeastern Africa.

1945 – On the deck of the United States Navy battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, representatives from the Empire of Japan and several Allied Powers signed the Japanese Instrument of Surrender, formally ending World War II.

1998 – Swissair Flight 111 en route from New York City to Geneva crashed into the Atlantic Ocean, killing all 229 on board. September 02 is National Day for Vietnam (1945)

Quote of the Day

The first casualty when war comes is truth. ~ Hiram Johnson

Word of the Day

spoilsport n

1. Someone who puts an end to harmless fun.

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