



Top Stories

US claims Iraqi militants armed with Iranian weapons

United States military and intelligence officials have presented material they say link weapons used by Iraqi fighters to Iran.

Australian Prime Minister targets Obama on Iraq

Australian Prime Minister John Howard has attacked US presidential candidate Barack Obama on his pledge to introduce a bill that would withdraw American troops from Iraq by March 2008.

Featured story

Cars big winner as 34th Annual Annie Awards handed out

Cars drove home the big prize last night, from the 34th Annual Annie Awards, while Flushed Away won five awards, the most of the night. The animation industry's highest honor, ASIFA-Hollywood's Annies recognise contributions to animation, and Wikinews was there, capturing moments on the red carpet.

Wikipedia Current Events

- India's Hindalco Industries buys Atlanta-based Novelis for US\$6 billion.
- Approximately 60,000 people in Mozambique are evacuated in the Zambezi River valley due to floods caused by three weeks of heavy rain.

Wikipedia Current Events

- A suspicious white substance is found in envelope at the Virginia Supreme Court building in Richmond, Virginia, United States, on the same day that Senator John McCain (R-AZ) speaks at the Jefferson Hotel.
- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad states in an interview that Iran does not fear the U.S. and that any foreign attack would be "severely punished".
- United States Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Christopher R. Hill, announces that tentative agreement has been reached over North Korean nuclear disarmament pending review by the signatories.
- Iraq's High Tribunal sentences former Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan to death for his role in the 1982 killing of 148 men and boys in Dujail following an unsuccessful assassination attempt against Saddam Hussein.
- Italian police arrest in raids 15 people who the police claimed were associated with the Red Brigades terrorist group.
- At least 76 people are killed in four bomb attacks in Baghdad.
- An earthquake of a magnitude of 6.1 on the Richter scale strikes about 160 km east of Cabo de São Vicente, Portugal, at 11:36 am (CET).

Dixie Chicks, Blige, Underwood big Grammy winners

The Dixie Chicks finally overcame controversy to dominate the 2007 Grammy Awards on Sunday night, winning five statuettes including the two coveted awards for Record and Song of the Year (for "Not Ready To Make Nice"). The country/rock trio, led by Martie Maguire, often criticized for their political views, also won for their album Taking the Long Way.

Mary J. Blige, who went into the Grammys with the most nominations, ended up winning three, while American Idol winner Carrie Underwood won two, including Best New Artist and for her song "Jesus Take The Wheel". With completion of the "big three" music awards (which includes the American Music Awards held in November, and the Billboard Music Awards held in December), Blige and Underwood were the only two artists to sweep all three major awards this season.

Ontario, Canada Health Minister set to marry this summer

Ontario's Health Minister/Deputy Premier George Smitherman, 43, will wed his long time partner this summer -August 5. The couple also hopes to adopt a child.

Christopher Peloso, 33, who is Smitherman's partner, works for a large chocolate company called Lindt. The couple met 10 years ago. Smitherman proposed on Christmas Day in Peloso's home of Sudbury, Ontario.

"Christopher had decided that he, at least, should wear a white or cream-coloured tuxedo, so I bought him one and slipped a little note in there," said Smitherman. "This is my greatest foray into romance to date."

The wedding will take place at Laurentian Lodge, a wilderness resort near the northern city of Sudbury, Ontario. It will not be formal and a beach party will take place after the wedding.

Smitherman is the first openly gay cabinet minister in the province of Ontario.

When asked what Smitherman will wear to the ceremony, he was quoted jokingly saying: "Probably a thong."

US claims Iraqi militants armed with Iranian weapons

During a press conference yesterday, United States military and intelligence officials presented material they say link weapons used by Iraqi fighters to Iran. Defense Secretary Robert Gates told reporters in Madrid on Friday that there was "pretty good" evidence that Iranians are supplying either weapons or technology to Iraqi militants.

Reacting to the U.S. claims, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in a television interview that the allegations were "excuses to prolong the stay" of the U.S. military in Iraq, and that the U.S. was pointing fingers at others in an effort to "hide its defeats and failures"; however in an interview with Diane Sawyer on February 12th, Ahmadinejad refused to address accusations that his country was supplying weapons to insurgents in Iraq. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Ali

Hosseini termed the accusations baseless propaganda and said that the U.S. had a long history of "fabricating evidence".

American officials displayed weaponry including Explosively Formed Penetrators (EFPs) and thermal detectors used for remotely exploding bombs. Some of the weapons parts bear the markings that the officials associated with Iranian manufacture. The officials claimed that such sophisticated weaponry could not have been assembled by the Shia militia and said that it must have been supplied from neighbouring Iran. The U.S. view is that only a state arms company would have the ability to manufacture weapons of this kind and the officials maintained that the weapons were smuggled in to Iraq by the Qods Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and have estimated that such an operation was known to the Iranian government and encouraged by it, but did not present any evidence to support the claims.

The U.S. evidence is being met with close scrutiny, after the experience of pre-Iraq war U.S. intelligence estimates of Saddam Hussein's weapons capability and links with Al-Qaeda, which were found to be inaccurate. When asked why this information was being released at this specific moment, even though the information had accumulated since 2004, the officials explained that they saw a near doubling of EFP attacks in 2006.

The U.S. claims that the such weapons have killed at least 170 troops and a much higher number of Iraqi civilians. Secretary Gates said that the EFPs did not form a large proportion of roadside bombs but that they were "extremely

lethal". Explosives, leftovers from former Iraqi army, have been a big killer of both Iraqi civilians and Allied forces in Iraq. Tens of thousands of civilians and over 3000 Allied troops have died in the nearly four-year-old Iraq war.

The exchanges come during a period of heightened tension between Iran and the U. S. over Iran's nuclear programme. The U.S. deployed a second aircraft carrier strike force in the Persian Gulf last month.

Cars big winner as 34th Annual Annie Awards handed out

Cars drove home the big prize last night, from the 34th Annual Annie Awards. The animation industry's highest honor, ASIFA-Hollywood's Annies recognise contributions to animation, writing, directing, storyboarding, voice acting, composing, and much more.

As mentioned, Pixar took home the big prize last night, after facing stiff competition from four other Happy Feet, Monster House, Open Season, and Over the Hedge.

But the biggest winner of the night didn't get a "Best Animated Feature" nod at all. Flushed Away won five feature animation categories including Animated Effects (Scott Cegielski), Character Animation (Gabe Hordos), Production Design (Pierre-Olivier Vincent), Voice Acting (Sir Ian McKellan as Toad), Writing (Dick Clement, Ian La Frenais, Chris Lloyd, Joe Keenan, and Will Davies).

Over The Hedge won awards for Directing (Tim Johnson and Karey Kirkpatrick), Storyboarding (Gary Graham), and Character Design (Nicolas Marlet).

Of little surprise, Randy Newman

won an Annie for Cars in the "Music in an Animated Feature Production" category. Newman has won many Oscars for his movie music, and has a nomination this year for the song "Our Town". Newman didn't attend the Annies, instead picking up a Grammy for "Best Song Written For Motion Picture, Television Or Other Visual Media".

DisneyToon Studios' Bambi II won "Best Home Entertainment Production", while "Best Animated Short Subject" went to Blue Sky Studios' No Time For Nuts, which is based on Ice Age.

"Best Animated Video Game" went to Flushed Away The Game, while a United Airlines ad named "Dragon" won a "Best Animated Television Commercial" Annie for DUCK Studios.

Foster an Annie fav on TV

Not only did Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends take home "Best Animated Television Production", but it also saw wins for Music (James L. Venable and Jennifer Kes Remington for Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends episode "One False Movie") and Production Design (Martin Ansolabehere for Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends episode "Good Wilt Hunting"),

Other ASIFA Television animation statuettes were handed out for writing (Ian Maxtone-Graham for The Simpsons episode "The Seemingly Neverending Story"), Voice Acting (Eartha Kitt as Yzma, for The Emperor's New School episode "Kuzclone"), Storyboarding (Li Hong for The X's episode "You Only Sneeze Twice"), Directing (Giancarlo Volpe for Avatar episode "The Drill"), Character Design (Mike Kunkel for The Life & Times of Juniper Lee episode "Party Monsters"), and Character

Animation (Yu Jae Myung for Avatar episode "The Blind Bandit").

ASIFA also hands out "Juried Awards" to various notable figures in animation. Bill Plympton, Genndy Tartakovsky, and Andreas Deja will each win the Winsor McCay Award, in recognition of lifetime or career contributions to the art of animation. Bill Matthews, Michael Fallik, Marc Deckter, and Eric Graf will each win a Certificate of Merit. The June Foray Award will go to Stephen Worth, for his "significant and benevolent or charitable impact on the art and industry of animation." The Ub Iwerks Award and Special Achievement award will not be handed out.

The awards were started in 1972, after voice actress June Foray noticed the industry lacked a formal way to acknowledge its achievements. Performing in over 202 productions, Foray's most known characters are Rocket J. Squirrel (Rocky and Bullwinkle) and Granny (Looney Tunes).

Wikinews was there

Professional photographer John B. Mueller was at the Annie Awards red carpet, taking photos for Wikinews. This is the first time Wikinews has sent a photographer to an awards show red carpet, something this news organization hopes to do with increasing regularity. All of the photos taken at the event will be released under the Creative Commons By Attribution license, which allows them to be used freely by anyone for any purpose, so long as they credit both Mueller and Wikimedia.

IBM to launch software that works on Linux, Windows and Macintosh

On Sunday the representatives of International Business Machines Inc. said that the company will

launch its new desktop software system for businesses. IBM's new product is called "Open Client Offering". The company hopes that its product will put Macintosh or Linux software on a more equal footing with Windows.

The Open Client Offering software was developed by IBM in-house, as well as with partners like Novell Inc. and Red Hat Inc. It is to answer the questions regarding the cost-effectiveness of managing Linux or Apple desktop personal computers alongside Windows PCs.

IBM officials stated that Open Client Offering will allow enterprises to use the same software on Windows, Linux or Apple's OS X. It will be unnecessary for companies using Open Client to pay Microsoft for licenses for operations because these will no longer rely on Windows-based software.

Scott Handy, IBM's vice president of Linux and open source, stated that the company worked together with the open source community and in the end found a way to develop a software that is able to function regardless of the operating system.

To create an alternative to Microsoft, IBM is going to offer Open Document Format software that the company developed for word processing, spreadsheets or presentations, instant messaging and blog tools and Internet Explorer's long time rival – Firefox Web browser.

The software developers at IBM believe that the usage of Open Client Offering can cut the cost of managing applications as well as maintenance and cost regarding customer support on company networks that require other software rather than Windows.

PSA Peugeot Citroen, being the second largest car manufacturer, signed a multi-year agreement with Novell, which is the provider of Linux software, to run Linux on its 20,000 desktop PCs. In addition Linux will be installed on 2,500 server computers.

RedMonk's analyst, Stephen O'Grady, said that today there is a strong appetite for Windows alternatives. However, he said, this doesn't mean that the alternatives are to displace Windows wholesales. O'Grady outlined that no one is going to significantly damage the desktop dominance of Microsoft.

Australian Prime Minister targets Obama on Iraq

Australian Prime Minister John Howard has attacked US presidential candidate Barack Obama on his pledge to introduce a bill that would withdraw American troops from Iraq by March 2008.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Howard said the move would hand victory to insurgents in Iraq. "I think that would just encourage those who wanted completely to destabilise and destroy Iraq, and create chaos and victory for the terrorists to hang on and hope for (an) Obama victory," Mr Howard said "If I was running al-Qaeda in Iraq, I would put a circle around March 2008, and pray, as many times as possible, for a victory not only for Obama, but also for the Democrats." —John Howard, Australian Prime Minister

"If I was running al-Qaeda in Iraq, I would put a circle around March 2008, and pray, as many times as possible, for a victory not only for Obama, but also for the Democrats."

Mr Obama dismissed Howard's comments as "empty rhetoric", unless he was to send another 20,000 Australians to fight in Iraq. "So, if he's (inaudible) if to fight the good fight in Iraq, I would suggest that he calls up another 20,000 Australians and sends them to Iraq. I would also note that we have close to 140,000 troops on the ground now, and my understanding is that Mr Howard has deployed 1,400", said Mr Obama.

The Australian government said its contribution to the war in Iraq was appropriate given Australia's population and military size and that Obama's response failed to address the "substance of the issue". Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said 20,000 troops would be "half of our army".

Mr Howard, considered a close ally of the United States government, has faced attacks and support from US politicians.

Democrat Terry McAuliffe said "Firstly, the Prime Minister has been a great friend of George Bush's. He has been with him lock-step from day one on this war in Iraq."

Republican presidential candidate Duncan Hunter said Howard had earned a right to comment about Obama's policy "I think the Aussies have earned a right to comment on the world stage about their partner in this endeavour, because they've been fighting side-by-side with us in Iraq," said Hunter.

"And so I think that John Howard, while it wasn't a very complimentary statement, he is basically stating the truth and that is that what we say on the Senate floor on or the House floor goes to a world audience."

"And it has an impact on not only our allies, but also our adversaries."

Roy Ryden, another US Democrat said Mr Howard's comment was "bizarre" and accused the Prime minister of interfering with US politics "The most charitable thing you can say about Mr Howard's comment is bizarre. You know, we'll make our own judgements in this country with respect to elections and Barack Obama is a terrific public servant."

Mr Howard has drawn criticism from some conservative Republicans with John Cornyn saying Howard should stay out of US domestic politics.

The Australian Prime Minister further defended his statement today, claiming Obama's plan threatened Australia's national security.

"If the United States were to withdraw her combat units from Iraq by the early part of next year it could only be represented as a defeat for the United States in Iraq," he said.

"I hold the strongest possible view that it is contrary to the security interests of this country for America to be defeated in Iraq."

Australia's strong links to the United States and its support for the U.S.-led war on Iraq were key issues for Howard's fourth straight election win in late 2004. The Australian opposition has used the comments as an opportunity to attack the government. Opposition leader Kevin Rudd said Howard needed to avoid taking sides in American politics as it was important for the Australia-U.S. alliance that leaders could deal with each other despite their political

affiliations.

New Zealand political party asks for names of schools under NZQA investigation

The New Zealand National party, opposition to the New Zealand Government, has called for the names of the five schools under investigation by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for alleged breaches of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) regulations.

The breaches that are being alleged are that the unidentified five schools are helping the students to memorize the answers and allow their students to cheat during assessments. NZQA has confirmed this.

Waverley High School, Taranaki, has already been suspended from administering internal NCEA assessments after it was confirmed in December that they were letting their students cheat. The high school is supposed to be very close to being closed.

Katherine Rich, National's education spokeswoman, has said that the public, especially parents, have a right to know if a school is possibly endangering the credits, the education and future employment of a student, which Ms Rich said NZQA does not have a right to do. "The credits being earned this term will have their credibility hugely undermined if, down the track, reports conclude that the school's NCEA breaches were not rectified." "... when a school develops a reputation for being slack on assessment, it's the young person who strikes trouble when they look for work."

"Parents will be livid if one or two years down the track when NZQA's investigation is complete, another

'Waverley'... story breaks and parents find they weren't told at the time," Ms Rich said.

Ted Haggard reaches financial settlement with New Life Church

The New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado has reached a financial settlement with its founder (and former head of National Association of Evangelicals) pastor Ted Haggard. Haggard stepped aside as senior pastor in the Church in November 2006, when a male prostitute claimed that he had engaged in a three year relationship with Haggard and that the two used methamphetamine.

Haggard, who was publicly critical of homosexuality, has agreed to leave the church he founded and led for two decades with a promise that he will not discuss the scandal, will move out of Colorado Springs, and will not reveal how much his financial settlement is.

On February 4th, Haggard sent an e-mail to New Life members stating, "We all wanted to know why I developed such incongruity in my life. Thankfully, with the tools we gained there, along with the powerful way God has been illuminating his Word and the Holy Spirit has been convicting me and healing me, we now have growing understanding which is giving me some hope for the future."

Rev. Tim Ralph said, after Haggard completed a three-week counseling program, "He [Haggard] is completely heterosexual."

However, Mike Jones, the man who had allegedly had a 3 year relationship with Haggard publicly replied, "Give me a break." Adding, "He's been performing oral sex on me for three years. You don't change that in three weeks." And

"Until he's honest with himself, he'll never be happy." Jones is currently writing a book detailing his relationship with Haggard due out in summer 2007.

According to interim senior pastor Ross Parsley, at services on Sunday February 18 the panel will "provide any necessary clarification of (Haggard's) restoration process and give us a report on the New Life staff."

Baghdad bombs kill dozens

At least 90 people were killed and around 180 were injured in a string of bombs in Baghdad on Monday. Two car bombs and a roadside bomb went off in the capital. The car bombs set buildings on fire, reports said.

Wikipedia Current Events

- A German court orders the release of Brigitte Mohnhaupt, a former member of the Red Army Faction, also known as the "Baader-Meinhof Gang" after serving 24 years in prison for her involvement in kidnappings and murders in the 1970s.
- Unions in Guinea resume a general strike to protest the President of Guinea Lansana Conte appointing Eugène Camara as Prime Minister of Guinea. At least 17 people have died in protests over the weekend. The protest started on the morning of the 12th with a march from the centre of Conakry to the palace. Widespread problems with armed bandits taking advantage of the insecurity have also been reported. Lansana Conte has now declared a state of emergency.
- China's trade surplus increases by 67%, increasing pressure on the government to float the yuan.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society claims that one of its ships has collided with a Japanese whaling vessel in the Ross Sea, leading to the Japanese vessel lodging a distress call.
- Islamist insurgency in Somalia: Five mortar bombs explode in Mogadishu, killing at least three people.
- Four state-owned enterprises of the Republic of China (Taiwan)—Chunghwa Post, the Chinese Petroleum Corporation, the China Shipbuilding Corporation, and the Central Bank of China—change their names to remove "China" from their titles at the request of President Chen Shui-bian. The decision is condemned by the Pan-Blue Coalition, the United States and People's Republic of China as a move towards Taiwan independence.
- Israel has carried out a successful test of its Arrow missile, the defence ministry says.
- Australian Prime Minister John Howard criticizes U.S. Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) for his stance on Iraq, saying that al-Qaeda in Iraq should be praying for Obama to win the election. The opposition Australian Labor Party says that Howard's statement imperiled the relationship Australia might have with the United States under a Democratic administration.

Today in History

- 1689 - Glorious Revolution: Instead of James Francis Edward Stuart, the Prince of Wales, acceding to the throne, his daughter Mary and her husband William were proclaimed co-rulers of England.
- 1880 - Thomas Edison observed the Edison Effect, which later formed the basis of John Ambrose

Fleming's vacuum tube diodes.
 1945 - The RAF Bomber Command began the strategic bombing of Dresden in Saxony, Germany, resulting in a lethal firestorm which killed tens of thousands of civilians.
 1984 - Konstantin Chernenko succeeded the late Yuri Andropov as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
 2004 - Researchers at Harvard University discovered white dwarf star BPM 37093, the universe's largest known diamond.

Quote of the Day

Every man's life (and ... every woman's life), awaits the hour of blossoming that makes it immortal ... love is a divinity above all accidents, and guards his own with extraordinary obstinacy.
 ~ Eleanor Farjeon

Word of the Day

- derail; v
1. To come off the tracks.
 2. To cause to deviate from a set course or direction.

About Wikinews

released under the GNU Free Documentation License.

To view a copy of the CC-BY license, visit:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/>
 or send a letter to
 Creative Commons
 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor
 San Francisco, California, 94105, USA

To view a copy of the GFDL, visit:
<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>

- Wikipedia Current Events
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Current_events
- Today in History
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
- Quote of the Day
http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Main_Page
- Word of the Day
http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Main_Page

About Wikinews Print Edition

For more information about Wikinews Print Edition visit:
<http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Print>

About Wikinews

We are a group of volunteer journalists whose mission is to create a diverse community where citizens from around the globe (including **you**) can collaborate to report the news on a wide variety of current events. By making our content perpetually available for free redistribution and use, we hope to contribute to a global digital commons.

Got news and no computer? Call the Wikinews Hotline

- +1-866-653-4265
 (toll-free in the U.S.)
- +1-202-742-5918
 (outside the U.S.)
- +44-871-218-6397
 (U.K. / Europe)

License

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License. Articles published in this Print edition were created by Wikinewsies. Other content