



### Top Stories

#### Space Shuttle Atlantis lands in California

Atlantis has made a successful landing in California, after being diverted away from Florida because of adverse weather conditions.

#### North Korea denies entry of IAEA inspectors

North Korea has decided not to give International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors permission to enter the country, claiming that the \$25 million of recently unfrozen funds has not yet reached their bank account.

### Featured story

#### Former Washington D.C. police officer sues district for racial discrimination and harassment

According to court documents obtained by Wikinews, Randy Squires an African American male and a former police officer of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia (DCMPD) has filed a lawsuit against the department alleging racial discrimination and harassment by a fellow officer.

### Wikipedia Current Events

•IDF soldiers, near Hebron, shoot a Palestinian who reportably later died of his wounds. The IDF states that the Palestinian was trying to run through the gate, the soliders yelled for him to halt, which he did not, and they shot the man. It was later found that

### Wikipedia Current Events

the man was unarmed.

•Director Michael Hayden of the United States Central Intelligence Agency announces plans to declassify documents detailing illegal activities performed by the agency between 1950 and 1980 including assassination plots, domestic spying and wiretapping, kidnapping and human experiments.

•Space Shuttle Atlantis lands safely at Edwards Air Force Base in California, after inclement weather prevents a landing at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, ending STS-117.

#### We, the two-headed snake, dies in U.S. museum at age 8

We, a two-headed albino rat snake that was featured on national television in the United States and attracted a sponsorship deal from a pharmaceutical company, died of natural causes on Tuesday at City Museum in St. Louis, Missouri. It was 8 years old.

A major attraction at the City Museum's World Aquarium, We will be preserved by a taxidermist and put back on display, according to an article yesterday in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Museum officials said We was incredibly long-lived for a two-headed snake. Often in two-headed animals, one mouth is not connected to the stomach, and because of complications, the animals will die within a month of

being born. But We was fortunate, in that both its mouths were connected to its stomach.

"A snake like that in the wild would not survive," curator Chris Hancock was quoted as saying by the Post-Dispatch. "But the fact that it lived that long and we were able to afford it and educate people about it is awesome."

Aquarium president Leonard Sonnenschein bought We in 1999 for US\$15,000 from a snake breeder in Indiana.

"It's terrible news," Sonnenschein was quoted as saying by the Associated Press. "People come in every day and say: 'I'm here to see the two-headed snake'."

About the size of a pencil when it was acquired, We was about 5 feet (1.5 meters) long and had a girth of around 1.5 inches (3.8 centimeters) when it died. At times, it appeared that We was straining to slither in two directions at once.

In addition to having two heads, We was also a hermaphrodite. Last year, the museum tried unsuccessfully to breed the two-sexed snake with a two-headed rat snake from Wisconsin.

A popular attraction at the museum, an estimated 1 million people came to see We while it was displayed. We once appeared on "Live with Regis and Kelly", a nationally syndicated television talk show.

In 2004, We was stolen from the museum, but was recovered within hours by police after a call by a tipster, who had seen some teens with a two-headed snake.

We even attracted corporate sponsorship, from a Florida-based biopharmaceutical company, Nutra Pharma, which develops treatments using modified cobra venom and cobratoxin. The Florida-based company signed a \$15,000 deal in November 2006 to make We its brand icon.

The museum had earlier in 2006 tried to auction We off in a fund-raising bid, hoping to attract a bids of up to \$100,000, but kept We when the highest bid was half that much.

### **Space Shuttle Atlantis lands in California**

The Space Shuttle Atlantis has performed a successful landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California, completing STS-117, a troubled but successful mission to upgrade the International Space Station (ISS). The mission had a total duration of 13 days, 20 hours and 11 minutes, much longer than originally intended due to a mission extension and a missed landing opportunity.

The landing in California is the result of the latest in a string of difficulties for the mission, as poor weather forced Atlantis first to postpone its landing at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, then to cancel it altogether, opting instead to land in California. NASA had previously expressed their desire to avoid a landing in California if possible due to logistical difficulties that would be caused by the diversion. Atlantis will now require flown back to Florida on the back of a modified Boeing 747 at a cost of around

US\$1 million. The flight is expected to begin next Thursday and will take at least a day or two from then. According to officials at the Kennedy Space Center, the delay is already accounted for as a previously identified possibility as part of plans for Atlantis's next mission, scheduled for departure on October 20, again for ISS construction work.

During this mission, the Atlantis crew added the 17.5 ton S3/S4 Truss, the second of the trusses on the starboard side, as well as adding its associated energy systems, including the unfurling a set of solar arrays with a 240 foot tip-to-tip length. The arrays will generate power for European and Japanese science laboratories set to be added to the ISS at a later date. During the same mission, another solar array was folded up to allow the truss it is mounted to to be relocated later this year. The shuttle also left crewmember Clay Anderson at the ISS and returned with ISS crewmember Sunita Williams, who earlier set the record for female space endurance during her latest ISS mission.

Although successful, there were numerous problems during the mission. A computer failure in the Russian segments of the ISS almost forced the shuttle's mission to be extended and left the ISS struggling to maintain thrusters, oxygen generation, carbon dioxide scrubber, and other environmental control systems, and relying on Atlantis to help. Officials even looked at the possibility of an unprecedented emergency evacuation of the ISS, although astronauts were ultimately able to repair the systems.

Other concerns included hail damage, which delayed the mission's launch; damage to the

thermal blanket, which required a spacewalk to repair; and discovery of unidentified debris shortly after Atlantis docked with the ISS. The mission had to be extended by two days in order to give astronauts time to repair the damaged heat-protection equipment. NASA officials held an emergency meeting Wednesday while engineers confirmed that they thought the repair would withstand the rigors of re-entry with the Earth's atmosphere.

### **Maid's escape from high-rise leads to crackdown on agencies in Malaysia**

Following the dramatic escape of an Indonesian housemaid from a 15th-floor apartment in Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian government has suspended the licences of 19 housemaid agencies, following complaints of abuse and unpaid wages.

The move by the Home Ministry yesterday comes after an Indonesian woman named Ceriyati Dapin climbed from a 15th-floor Sentul apartment on a makeshift cloth rope to escape an employer she said was abusive. In the incident last Saturday, the 33-year-old woman made it to the parapet of the 12th floor when she became fearful and froze. She was eventually rescued by the fire brigade. She said she had been repeatedly beaten and starved by her employer.

The maid agency that sent Ceriyati to her employer was a company called Kemas Cera, and it is among the agencies suspended. The employer was arrested on Monday and remains in custody while police investigate Ceriyati's claims, a police spokesman told the Associated Press.

"The maid was supposed to be

sent to an employer in Terengganu but was indiscriminately sent to another employer," Home Minister Radzi Sheikh Ahmad was quoted as saying by Bernama news agency.

In Indonesia, where newspapers have been carrying the story on their front pages, the Malaysian embassy in Jakarta assured the Indonesian government it was doing all it could to investigate the case.

In addition to suspending the agencies, 85 agency owners and managers have been blacklisted, and will be prevented from opening new operations under different names, the ministry said.

"They have until the end of this month to appeal the suspension and if they fail to do so, their permits will be immediately terminated," Radzi was quoted as saying by the New Straits Times.

This was the first time the ministry has taken such an action on maid abuse, Radzi added.

An industry group, the Malaysian Association of Foreign Maid Agencies, or Persatuan Agensi Pekerja Asing (PAPA), said it was shocked by the government's move, and that it could inconvenience maids.

"We panicked when news of this came out. No show-cause letters were given, nor were we informed by the ministry beforehand on the decision," the group's president, Raja Zulkepley Dahalan, was quoted as saying by The Star. "In addition to this, 12 of those agencies are registered under Papa, and have a good track record," Raja Zulkepley said.

The suspensions will leave maids

in a lurch, Raja Zulkepley said.

"Almost every day, about 200 maids from various countries, especially from Indonesia, make their way into the country," he told The Star. "With these 19 agencies under suspension, these maids are all now stuck in immigration and others in hostels, unable to move anywhere. We dare not even think about the other maids who are coming tomorrow, or the day after."

Malaysia relies heavily on migrant labour, mainly Indonesians, for such jobs as domestic servants, construction and plantation work.

Around 1,200 Indonesian housemaids run away from their employers every month, according to the Associated Press, often because of abuse, unpaid salaries or harsh working conditions.

The government has established a 24-hour hotline for reports on maid abuse. The hotline numbers are 03-8880 1455 and 03-8880 1399.

### **North Korea denies entry of IAEA inspectors**

After Christopher R. Hill, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs met with North Korean (DPRK) diplomats on Thursday, the country decided not to give International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors permission to enter the country, claiming that the \$25,000,000 remitted to them has not yet arrived.

"As of now, the frozen funds had not reached our bank account. Nobody knows why the remittance is delayed. Our side has informed the IAEA that we have no objection to them preparing the

visit as a plan, but we are not ready to give our official confirmation for the visit as scheduled by the agency," said counsellor Hyon Yong at North Korea's embassy located in Vienna.

The money is believed to still be in the possession of the Central Bank of Russia, which received control of the funds after they were transferred via the United States Federal Reserve System to Macau's Banco Delta Asia. Russian officials state that the funds transfer was to "be completed by today," but as of now the funds have not yet arrived to N. Korea.

Earlier this week North Korea invited IAEA inspectors into the country to monitor the shutting down of their nuclear reactor located in Yongbyon.

### **Thrill rides in U.S., Canada shut down after girl's feet are severed**

The United States amusement park operator Six Flags has shut down nine thrill rides at four parks after a 13-year-old girl's feet were cut off on a tower-drop ride yesterday at Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom in Louisville.

Kentucky state officials said a loose cable on a ride called the Superman Tower of Power severed the girl's feet above the ankles, but they had not determined how the cable to broke free, or at what point in the ride the accident happened. The ride lifts passengers 177 feet (54 meters) straight up, then drops them nearly the same distance at speeds reaching 54 mph (86 k/mph).

The girl, whose identity has not been released, was taken to a hospital. Details of her condition

were not immediately available.

Six Flags spokeswoman Carolyn McLean told The Courier-Journal that there has never been a major incident on the Tower of Power. Formerly known as the Hellavator, the ride was built in 1995.

In addition to Kentucky Kingdom, rides have been shut down at Six Flags Great America in Gurnee, Illinois; Six Flags St. Louis in Eureka, Missouri; and Six Flags America, Prince George's County, Maryland.

A Superman Tower of Power Ride at Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington has not been shut down because it is not the same as the ones in Kentucky and the other locations that have been shut, Six Flags spokeswoman Wendy Goldberg told the Associated Press.

The rides that have been shut down are made by a Swiss-owned company called Intemin.

Cedar Fair Entertainment Company said it was shutting down similar thrill rides at its theme parks at Kings Island in Mason, Ohio; Canada's Wonderland in Vaughn, Ontario; Kings Dominion in Doswell, Virginia; Carowinds in Charlotte, North Carolina; and Great America in Santa Clara, California.

### **Firefighters rescue nearly a dozen animals in Buffalo, New York house fire**

Buffalo, New York – A three alarm fire at a house owned by John and Evelyn Bencinich, two of the initiators of a lawsuit filed against the Elmwood Village Hotel proposal in Buffalo, required firefighters to rescue eight cats and two dogs in Buffalo, New York today.

At about 8:30 (eastern time) firefighters were called to the home on 48 Granger Place to put out a fire that had started in the basement. It quickly spread to the first floor where the main bathroom was destroyed. The fire did not spread to the second floor or attic.

Initial calls said that many animals were inside the house and firefighters quickly worked to rescue all the cats and dogs. At least one cat and one dog had to receive CPR and oxygen, but both are reported to be in stable condition. At least 3 cats are unaccounted for, but after a search of the house, the cats were not believed to have been inside at the time the fire started.

One elderly woman, Anna Bencinich, the mother of Evelyn, was rescued by neighbors who helped her from the burning house.

"There was smoke all over the house. The fire started in the basement and spread to a small portion of the first floor. Two firefighters were injured while fighting the fire and were transported to Erie County Medical Center," said Division Fire Chief Thomas Ashe who also said that sections of the kitchen wall at the back of the house had to be torn out to stop the fire from spreading through the walls.

One firefighter is being treated for bite injuries to his face that he received while attempting to rescue a dog. The other firefighter was treated for injuries he received to his hand, which was believed to have been caused by glass or a cat scratching him. The names of the injured firefighters are not known. The injuries are said to not be life threatening.

According to witness reports, the home owners had a new water heater installed just last week, but it is not known if the fire was caused by the heater.

"We believe the fire was caused by an electrical (malfunction). An investigation is being conducted," said Battalion Chief Joe Fahey who also added that they did not believe arson was the cause.

### **North Korea agrees to fast-track shut down of nuclear facilities**

North Korea has agreed to speed up the shut down of their nuclear facilities, following a surprise visit from U.S. diplomat Christopher Hill. The meetings, between himself and North Korean foreign minister Pak Ui Chun, were described by Hill as "very good discussion[s]" and, "very detailed, very substantive, and I believe they were also very useful." Another big success attributed to Hill is the North Korean agreement to shut down every single one of their atomic programs. "We discussed all aspects of the six-party process. And all aspects means all aspects," said Hill.

The Japan-based, pro-North Korean newspaper, Chosun Sinbo, stated "On the occasion(sic) of Assistant Secretary of State Hill's visit to the DPRK, the progress in DPRK-U.S. relations and implementing(sic) the six-party talks agreements will be accelerated," adding, "The DPRK does not wish to stand still, and it has no reason to delay the implementation of the (nuclear) agreement," DPRK stands for Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the official name of North Korea.

Hill, ending his trip right on schedule, flies to South Korea and

then to Japan to debrief his counterparts in their respective countries. Hill made this remark about the future: "So away from this two-day set of meetings, I sense that we are going to be able to achieve our full objectives – that is, complete denuclearization."

### **Suspicious package found outside Holland Tunnel in New Jersey, USA**

Hazmat crews shut down and diverted traffic in the Holland Tunnel leading into New York City when a suspicious package was discovered after an accident.

Reports say that the package was found near the entrance of the tunnel outside a gas station in Jersey City on the Jersey Avenue and 12th Street intersection and that the toll booths at the tunnel's entrance have been closed.

Police used a robot to detonate the package, but it is not yet known what was inside the package.

Shortly after 8:00 a.m. (eastern time) the tunnel was reopened to traffic.

### **'Kane' still tops but many changes underneath on American Film Institute's '100'**

Citizen Kane, a 1941 drama film about a power-hungry newspaper magnate, remains the No. 1 movie on the American Film Institute's 100 Years... 100 Movies list, but for the list's 10th anniversary, there have been many changes.

The new list, unveiled in a three-hour broadcast on CBS television in the United States on Wednesday night, contains 23 movies that weren't on the original 1998 list. Of the films that remained on the list, 36 improved their rankings, while 38 fell from their previous

ranking.

The No. 2 film, *The Godfather*, moved up from No. 3 on the 1998 listing, trading places with *Casablanca*.

*Doctor Zhivago*, the former No. 39, was the highest-ranking film to be removed from the list. Of the newcomers, the highest debut was Buster Keaton's 1927 silent, *The General* at No. 18.

Newcomers include *Titanic* from 1997, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* from 2001 (the sole 2000s film) and *Do the Right Thing* from 1989.

Of the films already on the list, the most dramatic leap was by John Ford's 1956 western, *The Searchers*, which rose 84 places from No. 96 to No. 12. Alfred Hitchcock's 1958 thriller *Vertigo* jumped from 61st to ninth place. Martin Scorsese's 1980 boxing biography, *Raging Bull*, rocketed from 24th to fourth place.

The computer-animated *Toy Story* joined the list at No. 99, while the 1940 Walt Disney musical cartoon, *Fantasia*, formerly at No. 58, left the list.

Steven Spielberg's 1977 sci-fi drama, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, also left the list, but was replaced by *Saving Private Ryan* from 1998 at No. 71.

Other films leaving the list included *Rebel Without a Cause*, *My Fair Lady*, *From Here to Eternity* and *Patton*.

The most dramatic drop was *The African Queen*, which fell 48 places from No. 17 to No. 65. At the bottom of the list is *Ben-Hur*, which fell from No. 72.

AFI said it plans revise its list every 10 years in an effort to gauge changing cultural perspectives. The 100 are chosen from a selection of 400 films in a poll of 1,500 Hollywood filmmakers, actors, writers and critics.

### **Former Washington D.C. police officer sues district for racial discrimination and harassment**

According to court documents obtained by Wikinews, Randy Squires, an African American male and a former police officer of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia (DCMPD) has filed a lawsuit against the department alleging racial discrimination and harassment by a fellow officer. Squires is also suing the former mayor of D.C., Anthony A. Williams, and the district's Attorney Generals office. Squires is also suing his superior officer, Robert Atcheson, for racial discrimination and harassment.

"Defendant Atcheson treated Plaintiff differently than similarly situated Caucasian police officers in several respect[sic], including but not limited to assignments, evaluation, and disciplinary actions, deprivation of overtime and use of departmental vehicles," stated court papers filed by Squires' attorneys, Donald M. Temple and Dhamian A. Blue of Temple Law Offices in Washington D.C.

Squires accuses Atcheson, a white-caucasian male and a lieutenant in the Environmental Crimes Unit (ECU) Warrant Squad and the Paternity Warrant Squad, of discriminating against him on the basis of the color of his skin and also harassing him while on the job. Squires originally started to work in DCMPD 1988, and shortly after he was hired, he began to

work in the ECU. Atcheson was in control of the unit Squires belonged to.

In court documents, Squires alleges Atcheson treated him with "flagrant racial discriminatory conduct," like using the word "mope," which is defined as slang for "nigger," and that the discrimination was "designed to intimidate, insult, emasculate and humiliate" Squires. In one incident in 2002, during a training exercise, Atcheson allegedly "deprived Squires of appropriate breathing apparatus, which is designed to save life in emergency and hazardous situations," but that the apparatus was "provided to two other caucasian officers."

Documents also allege that Atcheson had "falsified" a report to North Carolina State Police after Squires was arrested and wrongfully charged with "unauthorized taking of a police vehicle." Court documents say that the report to N.C. police states that "Atcheson falsely told Plaintiff (Squires) that he had photographic evidence of the police car outside Plaintiff's home overnight and of Plaintiff driving the car from his home."

Court documents also allege that Squires allegedly informed his superior officer of Atcheson, only known as 'Captain Brito,' of the incident, but no action was ever taken against Atcheson. Squires initially filed a complaint against Atcheson with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, (EEOC) in a letter on March 8, 2005.

The Washington D.C. police department has investigated the claims made by Squires, which "revealed inappropriate conduct toward Squires," but according to

documents, no disciplinary action has been taken against Atcheson or his superiors.

The defendants "deny any and all allegations" that Squires has made against them and also state that Squires "failed to exhaust their administrative remedies and/or failed to comply with other mandatory filing requirements." Defendants also say that "all actions taken by District (Washington D.C.) relating to Plaintiffs were necessary, reasonable, pursuant to lawful authority, and based on legitimate, non-discriminatory reasons" and that "the district denies that any district policymaker adopted, approved, condoned and/or maintained an unconstitutional policy, practice or custom of unlawful employment practices."

Squires is asking at least US\$350,000. Squires and the Defendants also request that a jury be present during the trial, which is scheduled to conclude on June 26.

### **Japan changes Iwo Jima's name**

Iwo Jima, a Japanese island known for one of the deadliest World War II battles and an iconic raising of the United States flag by U.S. soldiers, is now known by another name, or its old name to be exact.

Renamed Iwo To (pronounced "ee-woh-toh") as preferred by the island's original residents, the official designation was adopted on Monday by the Geographical Survey Institute of Japan and the Japan Coast Guard, the Associated Press and other news outlets have reported.

Meaning "Sulfur Island", the small volcanic island's name was changed in 1944, ahead of the

U.S. invasion, when civilians were evacuated. Some officers of the Imperial Japanese Navy arrived to fortify the island ahead of U.S. forces, and mistakenly called it Iwo Jima. In Japanese, "jima" is an alternative word for island. In kanji script, the writing of Iwo Jima and Iwo To is the same; only the pronunciation is different.

U.S. forces took the name Iwo Jima when they made the island their first toehold in the Japanese Home Islands, and after a fierce battle and an iconic flag raising on Mount Surabachi, the island's highest point, the name of Iwo Jima was burned into popular-culture consciousness.

Last year, American actor-director Clint Eastwood released a pair of films depicting the World War II battle, *Flags of Our Fathers*, telling the American side of the battle, and *Letters from Iwo Jima*, from the Japanese viewpoint. The films further cemented the island's name, and made original residents more resolved to change the name back to Iwo To.

"Though we're happy for Iwo To, which has been forgotten by history, the islanders are extremely grieved every time they hear Iwo To referred to as Iwo Jima," a local newspaper quoted the villagers' resolution as saying.

During the war, about 22,000 Japanese troops dug into heavy fortifications, and fought against the 100,000-strong U.S. forces. Fewer than 1,000 of the Japanese soldiers survived, and about 7,000 U.S. troops were killed. During the battle, the raising of the U.S. flag by group of Marines was photographed by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal. The image went on to become one of the most iconic of the war, and

was used to create a memorial to U.S. Marines in Washington.

After the war, local residents were not allowed to return to the island. The U.S. continued to occupy the island until 1968, and today it is used as a base for Japan Self-Defense Forces and visiting U.S. Navy personnel.

The island is part of the Ogasawara Islands chain, which are mostly uninhabited. Only Chichi-jima and Haha-jima support local populations. Though it is about 1,120 kilometers (700 miles) south of Tokyo, the island chain falls under the administration of the Tokyo metropolitan government. In March, officials adopted the resolution that changed Iwo To's name, after Ogasawara residents and descendants of Iwo To evacuees submitted a petition. The Japanese central government agreed, and an official map with the new name will be released September 1.

Though the island's evacuees and descendants are happy about the decision, some former soldiers are not.

"Naval maps have long used the name Iwo Jima," 84-year-old Kiyoshi Endo was quoted as saying by the Associated Press, in a translation from Japan's Sankei newspaper. "We should respect that history," said Endo, who leads an association of Japanese veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima.

Retired U.S. Marine Major General Fred Haynes, who was captain in the Marine regiment that raised the U.S. flag on Mount Suribachi, said the island's name change saddens him.

"Frankly, I don't like it. That name

is so much a part of our tradition, our legacy," Haynes was quoted as saying by the Associated Press (AP).

Haynes, 85, is the head the Combat Veterans of Iwo Jima. Each year, the group of about 600 veterans travels back to the island for a reunion.

Haynes is also working on a book about the battle, "We Walk by Faith: The Story of Combat Team 28 and the Battle of Iwo Jima." He doesn't plan to change the name, he told the AP.

"It was Iwo Jima to us when we took it," Haynes said. "We'll recognize whatever the Japanese want to call it but we'll stick to Iwo Jima."

### **Irish president opens new park dedicated to Irish refugees in Toronto, Canada**

Irish president Mary McAleese wrapped up a two-day visit to Toronto, Canada on Thursday by cutting the ribbon at the opening of a new park. The city's Ireland Park is dedicated to the Irish immigrants who fled the great famine to start a new life in Canada 160 years ago.

More than 1,200 people were present to watch McAleese disembark the Irish naval flagship L.E. Eithne to enter the park, after earlier having laid flowers at the St. James Cemetery which holds the remains of 281 immigrants.

Accompanied by 45 dignitaries, security and naval officers, McAleese then walked around the perimeter of the park, admiring the monuments and pausing to enjoy the live music.

McAleese then cut the scarlet ribbon, opening the park to those

gathered - including the likes of Toronto mayor David Miller, Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty, Irish ambassador Declan Kelly and federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty.

After the ceremony, the presidential entourage moved to the nearby stage to speak with the crowd, following the rendition of both the Canadian and Irish national anthems.

Following her thanks to Canadians on Wednesday for helping to promote Ireland's economic improvements over the past fifteen years, McAleese also thanked the country for being "a place of welcome for people around the world", noting that "the amazing Toronto welcome hasn't changed in 160 years".

But the speech was not simply about past history, as McAleese drew a parallel between modern refugees and those fleeing Ireland's famine in the mid-19th century, speaking of a "moral obligation to those around the world who continue to starve".

The speech left an impression on the crowd, including 4th-generation Irishman Arn Bailey. "It was really rather impressive", explained Bailey - rueing the fact that he was unable to decipher the opening Gailge phrase that McAleese spoke to the gathering "we are all immigrants to this place, and that is what makes us Torontonians"

Mayor David Miller also took his turn at public speaking, reminding those gathered that "we are all immigrants to this place, and that is what makes us Torontonians"

The brainchild of brothers Robert and Jonathan Kearns, the park was

built at a cost of \$3.5 million dollars over the past seven years. The governments of both Canada and Ireland pledged matching \$500,000 donations to help allay the cost, with the rest coming from donors and fundraisings.

"The Irish community of Toronto came forward with unprecedented generosity", explained park founder Robert Kearns, blessing their ancestors for having "stamped into the mold of this nation, the hallmark of...determination".

The park's main feature, a towering monument bearing the names of hundreds of immigrants who died on Toronto's wharves, is made of irregular limestone shipped from a 200-year old quarry in Kilkenny, Ireland. Interactive outdoor computer terminals rest in the shadow of an illuminated glass tower, which will remain lit at night as a beacon.

The eastern edge of the 300'x70' park is bordered by five bronze statues of destitute refugees, created by Irish sculptor Rowan Gillespie in Dublin, and shipped to Toronto in February at a total cost of \$325,000. The statues were made to complement a set of seven similar statues built on the coast of Ireland in 1997, to symbolise the emigrants leaving the island.

Approximately 38,000 Irish refugees landed in Toronto after their stay at Grosse Ile, more than doubling the city's population in a mere six months. While more than 1,100 died shortly after arriving in the city, McAleese noted that at least they "had the comfort of knowing that they died [in Toronto], among love".

Today, there are nearly four million

Irish-Canadians, a population rivaling that of the Emerald Isle itself.

The park is located along the Toronto Harbourfront, on a section of road renamed Éireann Quay in honour of the park in a ceremony last month.

### **Noel Cox talks to Wikinews about New Zealand's constitutional monarchy**

Gabriel Pollard, a freelance journalist writing for Wikinews, had the privilege of interviewing the chairman of the Monarchist League of New Zealand Incorporated, a professor of constitutional law and the head of the department of law at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT), Doctor Noel Cox. We spoke via e-mail and the questions asked were around the monarchy in New Zealand, following on from the previous Wikinews interview with Lewis Holden.

The Governor-General (currently being served by Hon. Anand Satyanand) is served by a person of integrity and long standing, free of political allegiance. They represent the Sovereign in right of New Zealand, a unitary country without an entrenched constitution.

A decade ago, Cox joined the Monarchist League of New Zealand Inc. when it was founded. The League was formed to help prevent a republican from replacing New Zealand's current form of Government and remove the Queen of New Zealand as the de-jure head of state....

...the Crown has an important role in ensuring the legitimacy and continuity of government. ...

Cox believes that a monarchy separates the ceremonial and the practical aspects of the government. It will help prevent the public losing confidence in the governmental system in New Zealand as a whole, regardless of criticism politicians may receive. This is due to politicians not having absolute power, held by the head of the monarchy in Britain, and public servants and the military pledge their allegiance to a non-political figure.

"In this time of increasing globalisation it is also good to remember that we are already part of an international family of nations, sharing the Queen with Australia, Britain, Canada and so on."

Cox said that there aren't many reasons for New Zealand to become a republic. Citing one of the most commonly used examples, Cox said, "New Zealand might become a republic if Australia chose to do so." Although he says that this is not a good way to go about it.

Unlike what Lewis Holden said in his interview with Wikinews, Cox says that New Zealand has a significant international profile, much bigger than the size of New Zealand would suggest and a republican isn't needed to enforce this. He says that a move to a republican would suggest internationally that we are unsettled. Canada uses the monarchy to help promote its own identity, saying that New Zealand could follow this example. And says that in no way can a Monarchy limit our independence.

If New Zealand was to become a republic, Cox believes that in some circumstances there would be



raised political and social tension and tension between the Government and Maori would also rise. "...the Treaty of Waitangi was a compact between Queen Victoria and the Maori chiefs is of crucial importance."

Despite republicans wishing to change, Cox believes that none of them would be dissatisfied with the service the Queen has given New Zealand, but show more dislike towards the British origins of the monarchy.

"The Treaty [of Waitangi] is what makes New Zealand unique, and the monarchy is an essential element of the Treaty."

In terms of the Treaty of Waitangi (Tiriti o Waitangi), a treaty between Maori chiefs and the Crown (signed by Queen Victoria), New Zealand becoming a republican would raise questions over whether or not it should be "scrapped altogether" despite it still being valid under law. "The legitimacy of government in this country - if not its legality - depends on a compact signed in 1840." Cox doubts that there would be any attempt to change the Treaty, saying that it would require a very brave politician. "The Treaty is what makes New Zealand unique, and the monarchy is an essential element of the Treaty. We should not assume that the emotional attachment to the Treaty is something that can be legislated away."

And finally, further distancing himself from Lewis Holden, Noel Cox is a Ford fan, despite driving a BMW.

### Today in History

1757 - Seven Years' War: British forces under Robert Clive defeated troops under Siraj ud-Daulah at

the Battle of Plassey, allowing the British East India Company to annex Bengal.

1858 - Edgardo Mortara, a six-year-old Jewish boy, was seized by Papal authorities and taken to be raised as a Roman Catholic.

1887 - The Parliament of Canada passed the Rocky Mountains Park Act, creating Banff National Park as Canada's first national park.

1894 - Led by French historian Pierre de Coubertin, an international congress at the Sorbonne in Paris founded the International Olympic Committee to reinstate the Ancient Olympic Games.

1972 - Over forty countries leave the Sterling Area, allowing their currencies to float independently of the British Pound.

June 23 is Victory Day in Estonia, Jāņi in Latvia, Saint Jonas' Festival in Lithuania, Grand Duke's Official Birthday in Luxembourg.

### Quote of the Day

Only in growth, reform, and change, paradoxically enough, is true security to be found.

~ Anne Morrow Lindbergh

### Word of the Day

toucan; n

- Any of various tropical birds from the family Ramphastidae, with a large colorful beak.

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