

### **CURRENT EVENTS RESEARCH TOPICS**

#### **ECONOMICS: Economic Recovery**

**TOPIC:** The stock market began to rebound during the month of July. The media is cautiously predicting that the recession is ending because of this and the rebound in the real estate market. Others are not so sure, citing the enormous consumer credit card debt and the high cost of employee health care to companies. What has been the cause of the recent spikes in the market? What have been some of the predictions for the near future of the U.S. and world economy? What are predictions for the long term economy?

**SEARCH TERMS:** stock market AND recession

#### **HEALTH: Health Care Reform Bill**

**TOPIC:** Legislation for health care reform is being debated in Congress. What details have been the primary focus of the debate, and what are the different views on them? What have been the major efforts to reform health care in the United States since the end of the Second World War?

**SEARCH TERMS:** health care AND legislation

#### **CRIME AND LAW: Sotomayor Hearings**

**TOPIC:** As part of the confirmation procedure, Judge Sonia Sotomayor has been questioned about her judicial process and philosophy by the Senate Judicial Committee. What are some questions that Judge Sotomayor was asked that outline philosophical legal approaches of both the judge and the questioner, and how are they shown? What is entailed in the full confirmation process?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Sotomayor AND Senate AND confirmation

#### **CRIME AND LAW: Seven Men Arrested in Terror Plot**

**TOPIC:** Seven men, six of them U.S. citizens, have been arrested in North Carolina for conspiring to wage violent jihad overseas. How did this conspiracy start and what was the process in which these men were recruited? How was this conspiracy discovered by law enforcement?

**SEARCH TERMS:** North Carolina AND terrorist AND conspiracy

### **SOCIAL STUDIES RESEARCH TOPICS**

#### **CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Sarah Palin Resigns**

**TOPIC:** Alaska Governor Sarah Palin has resigned. What are the reasons she gives for leaving office? What have been some challenges she's had recently as governor? What are her plans?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Sarah Palin AND resign

#### **CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Senate Cancels Funds for F-22 Raptor**

**TOPIC:** The U.S. Senate has cancelled funding for a premier fighter jet, the F-22 Raptor. What is the basis for the decision? What have been the arguments for continuing the funding?

**SEARCH TERMS:** F-22 AND Senate

#### **CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Ethnic Problems in China**

**TOPIC:** Uighurs, a Muslim minority group within China, rioted this month in protest of their treatment by the majority Han group. The authorities responded with repressive state violence, leading to many deaths. Why are the Uighurs angry? How is their situation similar to the Tibetans, and how is it different?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Uighurs AND riots AND Xinjiang

**CRIME AND LAW: Natalia Esremirova**

**TOPIC:** Natalia Esremirova was kidnapped from Grozny and found murdered in neighboring Ingushetia. She was investigating allegations of human rights violations in Chechnya. She is the latest human rights campaigner to be murdered in the former Soviet Union. Who are the others? How have the authorities responded to this spread of violence against human rights campaigners? Why do these crimes continue to occur?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Natalia Esremirova

**ECONOMICS: Brazil and Paraguay Hydroelectric Plant**

**TOPIC:** Brazil and Paraguay reached terms on the distribution of power from the Itaipu hydroelectric plant. Though jointly operated, Paraguay used only 5% of its power output and felt it was selling the remainder to Brazil at bargain prices. What are the new terms of their agreement? How do they differ from the previous terms?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Brazil AND Paraguay AND Itaipu

**ECONOMICS: Auto Manufacturers**

**TOPIC:** Porsche and Volkswagen have long had intertwined ownership. Recently Porsche executives tried to increase their stake in VW and failed, prompting the top two executives to resign. It seems the firms will now merge under conditions that favor VW. Why did the smaller company feel it could take over the larger auto manufacturer? Will VW taking over Porsche result in any long term changes for that brand?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Volkswagen AND Porsche

**EDUCATION: Unionization of Charter Schools**

**TOPIC:** An increasing number of teachers at charter schools are unionizing. What have been some primary reasons cited for their effort, and how do they differ in different parts of the country? What defines a charter school verses other kinds of schools?

**SEARCH TERMS:** charter schools AND union

**HISTORY: Anniversary of the Moon Landing**

**TOPIC:** It has been 40 years since NASA's Apollo 11 space mission first put a man on the moon. What were some of the experiments and discoveries made on that historic day? What were some difficulties experienced by the astronauts on the mission?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Apollo 11 AND moon

**HISTORY: From under the Waves**

**TOPIC:** Five Roman ships and their cargo have been discovered off the coast of Italy. They were at a depth that ensured a better state of preservation than many of the other ancient shipwrecks found in the Mediterranean. What sea route did they seem to be on? What was their cargo? What cultural role did their cargo play in Roman Life? How does artifact recovery allow us to understand more about past life and culture?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Ancient Rome AND shipwrecks

**SOCIAL ISSUES: Nigeria and Islamists**

**TOPIC:** Islamists in Northern Nigeria attacked police, who fought back in self-defense. What has prompted this violence? How connected to other Islamist movements are the Nigerians thought to be? What are some other minority groups in Nigeria?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Nigeria AND police AND Islamists

**SOCIAL ISSUES: The Arrest of Henry Louis Gates Jr.**

**TOPIC:** Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. was arrested for disorderly conduct after he argued with a police officer who was responding to a call that misunderstood Professor Gates' forced entry into his own home as a break in. What have been some later developments that have come out of this incident? What had made this incident so difficult to easily resolve?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Henry Louis Gates

**SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS**

**ENVIRONMENT: Wind Power**

**TOPIC:** More and more towns are adopting wind power as an additional source of energy. What have been some of the benefits to this around the country? What have been some unforeseen difficulties they are facing?

**SEARCH TERMS:** wind power AND energy

**ENVIRONMENT: Floods in Mongolia**

**TOPIC:** Mongolia suffered its worst flash flooding in decades as rainstorms battered the country. 24 people are dead, houses were destroyed and hundreds of livestock were killed. Could the increased desertification and growth of the Gobi desert have somehow caused this event? What relief efforts are happening in Mongolia?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Mongolia AND floods

**HEALTH: Swine Flu Vaccine**

**TOPIC:** Australia began testing of a vaccine for swine flu as the WHO declared that fatalities caused by it are increasing. The WHO fears that industrialized nations will order the bulk of the vaccines produced, leading to a disparity of fatalities between them and poorer, developing countries. What would be a fair way to distribute the vaccine?

**SEARCH TERMS:** swine flu vaccine AND developing countries

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Jupiter and Collision**

**TOPIC:** Amateur Australian astronomer Anthony Wesley captured an image of a rift in the cloud atmosphere of Jupiter, evidence of another celestial body crashing into the planet. The news sent other astronomers to their telescopes to verify the event. What do they think happened? What comet famously collided with Jupiter?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Jupiter AND impact

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: High-Tech Army Program**

**TOPIC:** An older Army program called Future Combat Systems is having problems in development and is now being scaled back. What are the details and goals of this program? What have been some of the problems it has faced?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Future Combat Systems

**SPORTS RESEARCH TOPICS**

**SPORTS: Buehrle Pitches Perfect Game**

**TOPIC:** Chicago White Sox pitcher Mark Buehrle recently pitched a perfect game against the Tampa Bay Rays. How many perfect games have been pitched in major league history and what games were they? What are some other highlights of Buehrle's career?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Mark Buehrle AND perfect game

**SPORTS: Tom Watson**

**TOPIC:** To the amazement of his fans, 59-year-old Tom Watson led the British Open going into the final day only to miss a tournament winning putt on the last hole. He lost in a four-hole playoff. Who won the tournament? What are Watson's prior achievements in this tournament?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Tom Watson AND British Open

**SPORTS: Tour de France**

**TOPIC:** Lance Armstrong rejoined the field of the Tour de France after four years away from the sport. While his teammate Alberto Contador won the race, Armstrong came in third. What was amazing about this finish? What are Armstrong's plans for the future? What was Contador's perspective about his teammate?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Lance Armstrong AND Albert Contador

**SPORTS: Michael Vick Reinstated by NFL**

**TOPIC:** Michael Vick has been reinstated by the NFL after serving 18 months for running a dog fighting ring. What are the limitations of his new status? What next steps need to be taken for Vick to play football again?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Michael Vick

**SPORTS: Hall of Fame Inductees**

**TOPIC:** Ricky Henderson and Jim Rice have been inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. What have been some highlights of each man's career? What are the criteria for induction to the Hall of Fame?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Ricky Henderson OR Jim Rice

**SPORTS: All-Star Game**

**TOPIC:** The American League has won this year's All-Star Game in St. Louis. How many All-Star Games have been played and which league has the most wins? What qualifies a player to make the All-Star team?

**SEARCH TERMS:** All-Star Game AND baseball

**ARTS AND LITERATURE RESEARCH TOPICS**

**FILM AND TELEVISION: Hollywood Financial Slump**

**TOPIC:** The American film industry has depended on the sale of DVDs as a primary source of its income in recent years but with the continuing recession, those profits have dropped significantly. How has the film industry adapted to the economic conditions? What have been some unexpected difficulties in reforming the industry?

**SEARCH TERMS:** films AND economy

**FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Comic-Con International**

**TOPIC:** Comic-Con International is a large annual comic book convention being held in San Diego this year. How has this convention expanded in the scope of its areas of focus since the original convention was held in 1970? What are some of the rare items that can be found at this convention?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Comic-Con AND San Diego

**FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Civil War Photograph**

**TOPIC:** A Spanish paper maintains that the Spanish Civil War photograph of a falling, just-killed soldier was posed by the photographer, Robert Capa, miles away from where it was said to have been shot. If the photo was staged, what implications does it have on the integrity of the work? In the digital age when photos can be easily altered, does alteration of image matter as much as it once might have?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Robert Capa

**LITERATURE: Vasily Aksyonov**

**TOPIC:** Vasily Aksyonov was a Russian author who found fame during Khrushchev's thaw and was later exiled. He was noted for being a chronicler of the Soviet Union's hipster movement, the stilyagi. What was Khrushchev's thaw? Who were other writers of the era who benefited from it? What were some of Aksyonov's works?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Vasily Aksyonov

**LITERATURE: Frank McCourt**

**TOPIC:** Frank McCourt was a famous New York high school teacher and author of memoir Angela's Ashes. What awards did Mr. McCourt's book win? What were some controversies coming out of his characterization of the Limerick?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Frank McCourt

**PERFORMING ARTS: Merce Cunningham**

**TOPIC:** Merce Cunningham was an innovator of avant-garde dance and choreography through the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What is avant-garde? What groups did Mr. Cunningham work with and what are some of the lasting contributions he has made to dance?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Merce Cunningham

**PEOPLE RESEARCH TOPICS**

**PEOPLE: Walter Cronkite**

**TOPIC:** Walter Cronkite was a famous news broadcaster. What has he come to represent among many Americans in regard to news journalism? What news organizations did he work for during the course of his career? What are some of the key moments that he is known for in his reporting?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Walter Cronkite

**PEOPLE: Kim Jong Il**

**TOPIC:** The leader of North Korea has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. How deadly is this form of cancer? What are the succession plans of the North Korean state? What impact will his illness have on North Korea's nuclear ambitions?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Kim Jong Il

**PEOPLE: Harry Patch**

**TOPIC:** Harry Patch was the last British veteran of World War I. He was predeceased by one week by Henry Allingham. Which branch of the services did they serve in? What honors were they given? What was Mr. Patch's opinion of the war?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Harry Patch OR Henry Allingham

**PEOPLE: Michael Jackson Death Investigation**

**TOPIC:** The investigation into what caused the death of Michael Jackson continues. What are some of the latest revelations in the case?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Michael Jackson AND investigation

**PEOPLE: Hawaii Confirms Obama Birth Certificate**

**TOPIC:** The state of Hawaii has confirmed that President Obama's birth certificate is authentic and that he was born an American citizen in the state of Hawaii in 1961. Has President Obama's birth certificate been certified as authentic before? Why does this question keep coming up?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Obama AND birth certificate