

NewsBank Hot Topics

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CURRENT EVENTS TOPICS

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CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS - Obama Cabinet Nominations

TOPIC: Leon Panetta has been nominated by Barack Obama to be the new Director of the CIA. What has been the reaction to Mr. Panetta's nomination? Who are some other of President-elect Obama's Cabinet nominees, and what has been the reaction? What is the process for approving the Cabinet nominees?

SEARCH TERMS: nominations AND Cabinet OR Leon Panetta

ECONOMICS – Unemployment and Recession

TOPIC: With the deepening recession showing an overall unemployment nearing 7%, one alarming aspect is the growing number of workers with both experience and a college education that are having trouble finding work. What are some other unusual aspects that the current recession is having on employment and employers? What are some ways in which economic stimulus packages are being debated in the federal government to address the problem of unemployment?

SEARCH TERMS: unemployment AND recession

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS – Israel and Hamas

TOPIC: Israel acted to end the rocket attacks on its citizenry by first an aerial assault on Hamas and government offices in Gaza and then a ground attack. The international community scrambled to find a way to bring another ceasefire to this flashpoint. Is there anything significant to the timing of these attacks? What might the outcome be?

SEARCH TERMS: Hamas AND Israel AND Gaza

HISTORY - Martin Luther King Jr.

TOPIC: Martin Luther King Day is celebrated on January 19th. What are some of the achievements of Dr. King, and what are some contemporary aspects of American life that can be directly related to those achievements? What are some of the ways in which we currently celebrate Dr. King's life on this holiday?

SEARCH TERMS: Martin Luther King

SOCIAL STUDIES RESEARCH TOPICS

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS - Roland Burris

TOPIC: Roland Burris has been selected by Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich to fill President-elect Barack Obama's Senate seat. What made this act controversial? What are the arguments for and against the seating of Roland Burris as Illinois new senator?

SEARCH TERMS: Roland Burris

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS - Democracy Thailand Style

TOPIC: Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej has approved the appointment of Abhisit Vejjajiva of the Democrat Party as the country's new Prime Minister. Who is Abhisit Vejjajiva and what does he represent? What is the political situation he faces?

SEARCH TERMS: Thailand AND Abhisit Vejjajiva

CRIME AND LAW - Tanzanian Legislator Fights Albino Discrimination

TOPIC: Al-Shymaa Kway-Geer is the first albino to serve in Tanzania's parliament. Why was she appointed to this position and what did President Jakaya Kikwete hope to achieve with her appointment? What are some of the types of discrimination that albinos face in this African country? How does she intend to influence change?

SEARCH TERMS: Tanzania AND albinism

CRIME AND LAW - Shooting Fatalities of Black Youths

TOPIC: A national study by Northeastern University shows that the rate of young black men killed by gunfire has risen strongly since the year 2000 while the general murder rate has leveled off. What are some reasons for this rise? What are some ideas offered to deal with the problem?

SEARCH TERMS: teenagers AND death rates

ECONOMICS - Bernard Madoff

TOPIC: Wall Street money manager Bernard Madoff has been arrested from running a Ponzi scheme. How did Mr. Madoff's scheme work? What are some examples of other schemes to defraud the public for money that had a wide-ranging impact?

SEARCH TERMS: Bernard Madoff

ECONOMICS - World Stocks Rise

TOPIC: Stock markets have recently begun to rise around the world. What has this been the reason for the recent change? What regions of the world have shown the highest gains?

SEARCH TERMS: stock markets

ECONOMICS - Ukraine, Russia and Natural Gas

TOPIC: European Union members as far west as Germany and Italy are suffering natural gas shortages. This is as a result of the dispute between Russia and Ukraine over natural gas prices and gas pipeline transit fees. What actions have the two sides taken? What are the implications of this conflict for the European Union?

SEARCH TERMS: Ukraine AND Russia AND natural gas

EDUCATION - Child Labor and Students in Sierra Leone Diamond Mines

TOPIC: In Sierra Leone's illegal diamond mines children are allowed to work so that they can pay their tuition in the local schools. The mine owners think they are providing the children an opportunity to aid to their education. What are the risks involved when children are too tired to work? How does fatigue affect a student's ability to do his/her schoolwork?

SEARCH TERMS: child labor AND schools

EDUCATION - Arne Duncan

TOPIC: Barack Obama has nominated Arne Duncan to be the new Secretary of Education. What are some of the achievements that Mr. Duncan has made in the past? Why did President Obama select Mr. Duncan? What are the primary challenges that Mr. Duncan will face when he takes office?

SEARCH TERMS: Arne Duncan

HISTORY - Turkish Academics in Armenian Apology

TOPIC: Around 200 Turkish intellectuals and academics issued an apology for their nation's World War I era ethnic cleansing of Armenians. What are some of the reactions by Turkish nationalists to the public discussion of their nation's history? In addition to domestic considerations what are the foreign policy implications for Turkey?

SEARCH TERMS: Turkey AND apologies

SOCIAL ISSUES - Domestic Abuse in Armenia

TOPIC: Armenia's strong family tradition appears to have been hiding an alarming rate of domestic abuse. One in four women in that country has suffered some form of abuse from a family member according to Amnesty International, and some women are starting to take measures to prevent further abuse. What should the government do to help these victims? What other organizations should be charged with this responsibility?

SEARCH TERMS: Armenia AND domestic abuse

SOCIAL ISSUES - Migration to South and West Slows

TOPIC: Population movement is slowing to the South and West according to recent research. What has been the reason for this? Why had people in the past moved to these regions?

SEARCH TERMS: South AND West AND population

SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS

ENVIRONMENT - Marine Monuments in the Pacific

TOPIC: President Bush has designated three national marine monuments in what is the largest marine conservation effort in history. What marine life will be aided by this protective effort? What has been the reaction to President Bush's act?

SEARCH TERMS: conservation AND marine resources

HEALTH - Laws for Fire-Safe Cigarettes

TOPIC: Five states have recently joined the 17 others in passing laws for new fire-safe cigarettes. How do these cigarettes work? What has been the impact of this change for states that have adopted it?

SEARCH TERMS: cigarettes AND fire-safe

HEALTH - Research Indicates No Health Risk to Cousins Marrying

TOPIC: New research shows that the risk of birth defects as a result of marriages between first cousins is not as great as it was previously believed to be. What are the legal implications of this research? How has immigration in Great Britain caused this issue to be a subject for possible reform by government agencies and officials? The researchers compared the rate of potential birth defects with what other risk factors?

SEARCH TERMS: birth defects AND family

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY - Corruption Probe Launched Over Awarding of Nobel Medicine Prize

TOPIC: Swedish anti-corruption agents are investigating allegations that pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca influenced the awarding of this year's Nobel Prize in medicine to German scientist Harald zur Hausen. What caused the investigation? Why would a pharmaceutical company seek to influence the awarding of the Nobel Prize? How will the investigation try to determine if this is a case of simple lobbying or a clear conflict of interest?

SEARCH TERMS: AstraZeneca PLC AND conflict of interest

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY— Drug from Genetically Engineered Goats

TOPIC: An anti-clotting drug has been made from the milk of genetically engineered goats. What specific condition does the drug help treat? What is needed to get this drug approved by the FDA?

SEARCH TERMS: goats AND drugs

SPORTS RESEARCH TOPICS

SPORTS - Detroit Lions 0-16

TOPIC: The Detroit Lions have suffered a perfect loss record, winning no games for the 2008 season. What other team in history has gone a full season without winning a game and what distinguishes the Lions' record from that team's record?

SEARCH TERMS: Detroit Lions

SPORTS - Australia Wants Tiger

TOPIC: Golf officials in Australia are working in cooperation with two state governments to lure Tiger Woods to one or more tournaments. How long has it been since Woods played in Australia? What is the fee that Tiger requires and why do officials feel the money is well spent despite current challenging economic conditions?

SEARCH TERMS: Australia AND Tiger Woods

SPORTS - Pau Gasol

TOPIC: Pau Gasol, the Spanish sensation that plays for the Los Angeles Lakers and a member of his national team has won the Europlayer 2008 award, becoming the first player of his country to win this award. This year he also reached 10,000 points scored. How will his play affect the title efforts of his U.S. team? How will his play contribute to his national team in Spain?

SEARCH TERMS: Pau Gasol

SPORTS - Harrington Player of the Year

TOPIC: Padraig Harrington has won recognition as golf's 2008 player of the year. Whose injury helped Mr. Harrington win this distinction? Who are some past players who've been awarded player of the year?

SEARCH TERMS: Padraig Harrington

SPORTS – Florida Gators win BCS Championship

TOPIC: The University of Florida Gators have beaten the University of Oklahoma Utes in the NCAA Bowl Championship Series game. What were the expectations of this game and what were its strongest plays? What interesting aspect of the Heisman Trophy winners pertains to this game?

SEARCH TERMS: University of Florida AND University of Oklahoma AND BCS

ARTS AND LITERATURE RESEARCH TOPICS

FILM AND TELEVISION - Golden Globe Nominations

TOPIC: The nominations for the Golden Globe Awards have been announced. What films have been named and what are the factors for these films that impressed the nominating committee? What is the process for nominating a film for a Golden Globe Award?

SEARCH TERMS: Golden Globe Awards

FILM AND TELEVISION - India, Terrorism and the Media

TOPIC: India's media has been taken to task for the redundant and sensationalist coverage of the Bombay massacre carried out by Pakistani terrorists. News organizations have now seen the need for self-regulation and government agencies are exploring new laws regarding the press. Who is responsible for policing the media? Do you think the government plays a large roll? How could these laws affect freedom of the press in India?

SEARCH TERMS: India AND terrorism AND media

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE - Bauhaus Birthday

TOPIC: 2009 marks the anniversary of the Bauhaus movement, the school of graphic design, art and architecture founded on 1919 by Walter Gropius in Weimar, Germany. What contributions has this movement made to modern day architecture?

SEARCH TERMS: Germany AND architecture AND schools

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE - Robert Graham

TOPIC: Robert Graham was a sculptor. What are some of his famous monuments? Who are some artists who have influenced his work and how?

SEARCH TERMS: Robert Graham

LITERATURE - Hemingway's Cuba Papers

TOPIC: The Cuban national heritage authority and the Social Science Research Council have scanned and organized documents from Ernest Hemingway's Cuban home. What are some of the documents of highest interest and why are they interesting? When did Hemingway live in Cuba and what influence did that country have on him?

SEARCH TERMS: Ernest Hemingway AND Cuba

LITERATURE - The Hazards of a Life in Journalism

TOPIC: Journalists around the world are increasingly subjected to arrest, assault, death threats, kidnapping and murder. What is behind this interference in a journalist's ability to report the news? Can freedom of the press be successfully instituted around the world? What conditions are necessary for this to happen?

SEARCH TERMS: journalists AND death threats

PERFORMING ARTS - Harold Pinter

TOPIC: Harold Pinter was a British playwright who greatly influenced the dramatic landscape. The term "pinteresque" was coined to describe his dramatic effects. What were those effects and what was his impact on contemporary theater and film?

SEARCH TERMS: Harold Pinter AND playwrights

PERFORMING ARTS - Bonnie Bramlett

TOPIC: Bonnie Bramlett was singer. What band did Ms. Bramlett sing with? What famous rock stars did Ms. Bramlett work with and on what material?

SEARCH TERMS: Bonnie Bramlett

PEOPLE RESEARCH TOPICS

PEOPLE - Al Franken

TOPIC: Al Franken has been the declared winner of the Minnesota Senate race. Why has Mr. Franken not yet been sworn in? What could contest his win?

SEARCH TERMS: Al Franken

PEOPLE - Griffin Bell

TOPIC: Griffin Bell was the U.S. Attorney General in the Carter Administration. What was controversial about his nomination? What were some of his career achievements?

SEARCH TERMS: Griffin Bell

PEOPLE - Helen Suzman

TOPIC: Helen Suzman was a South African anti-apartheid activist. She was called "South Africa's conscience". What was her role in South Africa's human rights struggle?

SEARCH TERMS: Helen Suzman AND South Africa

PEOPLE - Hu Jia

TOPIC: Democracy and human rights activist Hu Jia has been awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. What was the reaction in China? Where is Hu Jia?

SEARCH TERMS: China AND Hu Jia

PEOPLE - Maria De Jesus

TOPIC: Maria De Jesus was the oldest woman in the world at 115 years old. What is attributed to her longevity? What is the average human lifespan?

SEARCH TERMS: Maria De Jesus