



RANDOM NOTES

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THERE ARE NO EXTRA PIECES IN THE UNIVERSE. EVERYONE IS HERE BECAUSE HE OR SHE HAS A PLACE TO FILL IN. AND EVERY PIECE MUST FIT ITSELF INTO THE BIG JIGSAW PUZZLE.

UNIVERSE. Scientists working on Nasa's Phoenix lander are trying to work out why a soil sample dropped on to an instrument bay was not registered. The images sent back from Mars clearly show the sample lying across a screen protecting the opening to a tiny oven. But it seems that the soil may have been too lumpy to pass through into the Thermal and Evolved-Gas Analyzer. The sample was the first delivered to Phoenix's onboard laboratory by the 2.4m-long robot arm.

WORLD. Global food production must be doubled by 2030 and farmers in poor countries better supported, a UN summit on the current food crisis has concluded. Leaders from 181 countries made the commitment in Rome at the close of a three-day summit on food shortages. They also agreed to bolster humanitarian interventions to help deal with shortages and soaring prices. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon warned \$20bn a year was needed to alleviate the crisis.

BELGIUM. The main synagogue in Brussels has been re-dedicated as the Great Synagogue of Europe, in a sign of EU-Jewish unity. The president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, joined chief rabbis from across Europe for the ceremony in Belgium's capital. The 1878 synagogue survived the Holocaust, during which nearly 25,000 Belgian Jews perished.

CANADA. A man who asked his lover to carve a heart-shaped symbol on his chest during a rough sex game almost died when she accidentally pressed too hard and punctured his heart. The 25-year-old woman had been sentenced three years' probation after she pleaded guilty to assaulting the man in February 2007. Both had been drinking heavily and engaging in rough sex.

ISRAEL. Israeli troops have killed a Hamas gunman during a raid in the north of the Gaza Strip. A soldier was wounded in the exchange of fire. Earlier this week, some people were wounded in Gaza in a missile strike on a position used by Hamas. Also this week, PM Ehud Olmert warned that a major Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip appeared more and more likely.

NEPAL. The Supreme Court has ordered the relocation of the cavalry, in the latest blow to the abolished monarchy and the traditionally pro-royal army. The case was brought on the grounds that the horses pollute the main complex of government buildings. Nepal became a republic late last month, but up to now the King's Household Cavalry has not had to change its name.

PHILIPPINES. Ms. Rachel Ramos, secretary-general of the Table Tennis Association of North District, has just returned from her impressive umpire's duty at the TMS Singapore Table Tennis Open Tournament held on June 4-8. She will go next to Las Vegas, Nevada to umpire the US Open on July 2-5. Ms. Ramos is the first and only female ITTF umpire in the country.

UGANDA. Human rights group Amnesty International has condemned the arrest of three homosexual rights activists at a Ugandan Aids conference. Amnesty was concerned for the safety of those arrested because of a "history of harassment and degrading treatment" of gays by the police. The three got past security outside the conference and distributed leaflets to delegates.

ARTS. Australian police dropped this week an obscenity investigation into photos of nude children at an art gallery that sparked a major debate on censorship. Investigators said no charges would be brought over Bill Henson's portraits, which feature naked 13-year-olds. Henson, 52, said he had found support extended to him over the past weeks "profoundly humbling".

BUSINESS. An ancient gold cup mysteriously acquired by a British scrap metal dealer and kept in a shoe box for years by its owner has sold for \$98,000 dollars. The 14-cm object—which is decorated with the heads of two women looking in opposite directions and knotted snakes--went under the hammer in Dorchester, England. Its owner hoped to get up to \$980,000 for it.

CRIME. A suicide bomber has blown himself up near a military barracks in Algiers. The male bomber died and several people were injured in a series of blasts. Two bombs went off in a cafe used by soldiers, while the bomber detonated the explosives near the barracks. It is the first major bomb attack in the region since a court building and the UN were targeted last December.

ENVIRONMENT. Speedier family baths could help Japanese cut their burgeoning energy consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Japanese households consume less energy than their US and European counterparts, but consumption has been sharply increasing--a big reason why the environment white paper zeroed in on ways for people to save energy.

HEALTH. Adjusting meal times can help travellers recover from jet lag. Harvard University researchers believe the brain has a second "feeding clock" which keeps track of meal-times, rather than daytime. When food is scarce, the feeding clock overrides the master clock, keeping animals awake until they find food. Thus, the travellers can keep tiredness at bay by not eating.

LAW. A happily married couple in India got the shock of their lives when they learned they had divorced 10 years ago. Meena Verma, a mother of two children, tried to file a case against her in-laws for violence, only to be told by a court in Haryana state that she had been divorced for a decade. Her brother-in-law, a lawyer, had apparently forged the divorce a decade earlier.

LIFESTYLE. A French tourist and four other European divers spent two nights on a deserted Indonesian island eating shellfish and watching for komodo dragons as they awaited for rescue. Laurent Pinel, 31, and his group survived off mussels scavenged from the beach and had to fight off a komodo dragon during the 36 hours they were waiting on the tiny Rinca island.

POLITICS. Democratic hopeful Barack Obama has paid tribute to Sen. Hillary Clinton for her "valiant campaign" to become the party nominee for US president. He said that his former rival had shattered barriers "on behalf of my daughters and women everywhere". The praise came after Mrs Clinton formally abandoned her bid for the nomination at a rally in Washington.

RELIGION. An internet posting by al-Qaeda says it carried out this week's car bomb attack on the Danish embassy in Pakistan. At least six people were killed and 30 injured in the attack in Islamabad. It was revenge for the reprinting of a "blasphemous" cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed in some Danish newspapers in February. The cartoons led to worldwide protests.

SPORTS. Residents of Euro 2008 host city Vienna have reacted angrily on learning they must pay more for their beer in the city's official fan zone than people at venues in tournament co-hosts Switzerland. A large beer will cost 4.50 euros in the fan zone in the historic center of Vienna, whereas the same drink will cost 3.10 euros in the cities of Basel and Geneva, for example.

TECHNOLOGY. Adding 200 sites a day, Internet pornography seduces with never-ending variety--and creates a new group of sexual addicts. Researchers estimate that about 72% of visitors to pornographic sites are men. They spend hours a day cruising the Net for explicit sexual sites and become utterly dependent on the stimulus, making normal life no longer possible.

TRAVEL. Italy has begun confiscating cars of people driving under the effect of drugs or alcohol in the latest attempt to lower one of Europe's highest rates of road casualties. Two drivers in their early 20s, a woman under the influence of alcohol and a man who had smoked a cannabis joint, have had their cars seized since the legislation came into effect end of last month.

QUOTES. "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." *1 Corinthians 1:18...* "At first dreams seem impossible, then improbable, then inevitable." *Christopher Reeve...* "If you have grown, if you have contributed, if you have loved, if you have been loved--then you have lived." *M. Burkill*

FLASHBACKS. Benedict I began his reign as a Catholic Pope, on **June 2, 0575...** George Eastman demonstrated the first technicolor movie in Rochester, New York, on **June 4, 1929...** D-Day: 150,000 Allied Expeditionary Force landed in Normandy, France, on **June 6, 1944...** *The Source*, the first computer public information service, went online, on **June 8, 1979.**

MILESTONES. **Petra Gutierrez**, of Vgent Foundation Inc., was born at Cordon, Isabela, Phils, on June 3, 1963... **Sukarno**, first president of Indonesia, was born at Blitar, Indonesia, on June 6, 1901... **Bill Rafferty**, comedian (Laugh-In), was born at Queens, NY, on June 7, 1944... **Loida Gatchalian**, of Vgent Foundation Inc., was born at Bautista, Pangasinan, Phils, on June 8, 1957... **Ethel S. Seda**, of Vgent Foundation Inc., was born at Cebu City, Phils, on June 8, 1971.

JOKES. Man: "Excuse me Miss are you from Hollywood?" Woman: "Why?" Man: "Because you are the only *Star* I see!" *A Joke A Day...* A gentleman entered a busy florist shop displaying a large sign that read "Say It with Flowers." "Wrap up one rose" he told the florist. "Only one?" the florist asked. "Just one," the customer replied "I am a man of few words."

FEEDBACKS. "You are reading the first newsletter from the HOH Export department. We will use this to inform about updates and product news." *Mads Jorgensen, HOH Water Technology, Denmark...* "Congratulations on your 40th issue for the 6th volume of Random Notes. Thank you for me being one of your recipients." *Josie Lichauco, PFA, Philippines...* More comments from: Vic Andallo – *Australia*; Willy Thijs – *Belgium*; and Fausto Serrano – *Canada*.

LIGHTER SIDE. *Mark Confer and Joanne Wainwright were married this week at a swimming pool in Nikiski, Alaska. They did not jump with their feet. Instead, they came whooshing around and down the 136-foot water slide into the pool. The couple then bowed their heads while the pastor at College Heights Baptist Church, blessed their marriage. – fpg@rn*