

# NEWS

## National and world news in brief

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### Hamas wins Palestinian parliament vote

RAMALLAH, West Bank: In a stunning defeat of the traditional ruling party of the Palestinian Authority, the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas won a surprising 58 percent of the votes. Hamas, which won 76 seats in the Palestinian parliament, soundly defeated Fatah, which has been in power for several years and only held on to 43 seats. President Bush, who has been pressing for democracy in the Palestinian Authority and the rest of the Middle East, was less than accepting of the people's choice. "We don't have a government yet, so you're asking me to speculate on what the government will look like," Bush told reporters Thursday in the White House. "I have made it very clear, however, that a political party that articulates the destruction of Israel as part of its platform is a party with which we will not deal." Bush continued, stating that it was a sign that the people were not happy with the lack of a resolution with Israel. "Obviously, people were not happy with the status quo," he said. "The people are demanding honest government. The people want services. They want to be able to raise their children in an environment in which they can get a decent education and they can find health care. It's a wake-up call to the leadership."

The major issue surrounding the election is that Hamas has been known to support specific Palestinian terrorist groups to make its voice heard to an Israeli government that would rather ignore them. However, in addition to the support of terrorist groups, it also runs a system of charities and schools in the Gaza Strip, making action against the group a politically touchy issue. A statement released by acting Israeli Prime minister Ehud Olmert read, "I will not negotiate with a government that does not meet its most basic obligations -- to fight terrorism. We are prepared to assist the Palestinians and [Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas] very much but they must meet their commitments."

The election was very successful in terms of those turning out to exercise their rights to vote. It is estimated that over 77 percent of the eligible Palestinian population turned out to make their voice heard.

Mustafa Barghouti, a member of the Palestinian National Initiative, a democratic opposition party, said, "Wednesday was a great day for Palestine. This is the best democratic practice ever in the Arab world."

### Best-selling book author exposed as liar

CHICAGO, Illinois: James Frey, author of "A Million Little Pieces" and "My Friend Leonard," recently appeared on "Oprah," the show that boosted his books to bestsellers to explain himself after his "memoir" was exposed as mostly fictional in a special investigative report. "It is difficult for me to talk to you because I really feel duped ... but more importantly I feel that you betrayed millions of readers," said host Oprah Winfrey during the show.

A special investigation recently published by The Smoking Gun showed that nearly everything that supposedly happened in Frey's life story was either heavily embellished or fabricated entirely, including a three-month jail term that Frey never served and makes up a large part of his story. His actual time served was about six hours. The report goes on to note that any private dialogue that went on in the book occurred with people that are either dead or there is no proof that they actually existed at all. No records from police stations in at least four states corroborate any of his supposed offenses, and no one who knew him during the periods of time his books cover confirm any of the "facts" they contain.

The new statements from Oprah mark a drastic departure from her earlier comments defending his books and the messages they contain. "I left the impression that the truth is not important," she said.

"I made a mistake," Frey told Oprah during the interview Thursday. He went on to explain that the same demons that caused his drug addictions and criminal history made him "mischaracterize" himself in his memoir.

### New Earth-like planet found

WASHINGTON: Astronomers have discovered a planet that may be similar to Earth circling a star about 20,000 light-years away.

The discovery was made using a new technique that uses the gravitational fields of other nearby stars and objects to magnify and amplify the light reflected off planetary bodies before it reaches the Earth, where astronomers with telescopes are then able to observe it.

The discovery is part of the new Project OGLE, or Optical Gravitational Lensing Experiment and is part of roughly 500 observed lensing events a year.

"This is an important breakthrough in the quest to answer the question 'Are we alone?'" said Michael Turner, a representative of the National Science Foundation. "The team has discovered the most Earth-like planet yet, and more importantly, has demonstrated the power of a new technique that is sensitive to detecting habitable planets," he said in a released statement.

The planet, temporarily named OGLE-2005-BLG-390Lb, is about five times as massive as the Earth but estimated to have a cool surface that could possibly sustain life. It is located in the Sagittarius constellation near the center of the galaxy.



Source: CNN.com, Yahoo! News, The Smoking Gun

## Behrend Briefs

It's that time of year again when spring is right around the corner, and graduation consumes the thoughts of our hard working seniors. As a salute to our dedicated senior class, we must decide upon a special gift to send them on their way.

Previous Senior Class Gifts include the Lion (03-04), flag-pole at the Baseball and Softball fields (2002) and most recently the benches (2005). Many will be happy to hear that a process is underway for establishing a permanent home for the Lion near the Junker Center and the Smith Chapel.

Currently, a selection committee of students and administrators will meet throughout the spring to establish a list of potential gifts for consideration. We are asking YOU for your thoughts and ideas regarding the 2006 Senior Class Gift. The committee will stop accepting ideas on Feb. 6, 2006. Students will then vote on the particular gift, one they believe will be most beneficial to our Behrend Community.

If you are interested in helping to leave a lasting mark on Behrend, please contact Meghan Bool at mehb332@psu.edu or Jed Smith at jjs423@psu.edu.

Global Internet security teams are warning that the W32.Blackmal.E@mm e-mail worm, initially released on Jan. 17, is programmed to implement a very destructive routine that repeats on the third day of each month. The worm, which is scheduled to begin this malicious activity on Friday, Feb. 3, replaces the contents of files such as Word documents, Excel spreadsheets and Powerpoint presentations. Students are reminded to keep their antivirus programs updated.

## Classifieds

"Rise above principle and do what is right."

~Walter Heller,  
American economist (1915-1987)

Janet Neff Sample Center  
for Manners & Civility

## Police and Safety

1/18/2006  
Suspected Marijuana in Niagara Hall. See incident.

1/20/2006  
Complainant reported that his driver's side window was smashed on his VW Passat sedan sometime between 0030 hours on 01/16/06 and 2200 hrs on 1/19/06 as it sat in Jordan Rd. Lot.

1/24/06  
Discovered fraudulent permit on a green Ford Taurus parked in the Turnbull Hall Lot. See incident.

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO LIKES TO WRITE? DO YOU LIKE TO WRITE? THEN IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU WANT TO WRITE FOR THE BEACON! COME DOWN TO A LAYOUT NIGHT ON THURSDAYS. THERE IS FREE PIZZA.

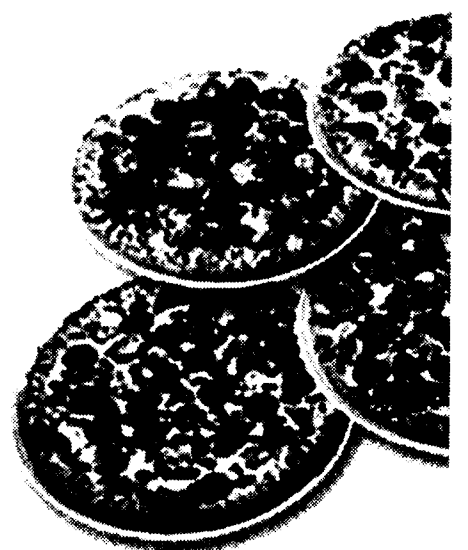
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