

# NEWS

## National and world news in brief

By Patrick Webster  
managing editor

### NATO changes command in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan: NATO forces officially took over for U.S. troops in eastern Afghanistan, transferring responsibility for the country's safety in the process.

The change in command came following a year of steadily increasing violence and infighting between Afghan war- and druglords. NATO now has authority over 31,000 troops and the entire controlled area of the country.

"This historic day marks another chapter in the continuing progress of Afghanistan," said commander of the Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry. "A key point to remember in this transition is that the United States maintains its full commitment to Afghanistan. It will be undiminished. As a NATO member, the United States will remain by far the single-largest contributor of troops and military capability."

NATO commanders assert that uniting all the military forces in the country under a single command will improve cooperation and control between coalition forces sent by different countries. The takeover had not been planned to commence for some time, but the worsening situation in the Kandahar region accelerated the timeline.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees released a statement Tuesday that outlined the increasingly dangerous situation for civilians, and reported that an additional 15,000 families have left the area as refugees.

"This fresh displacement adds new hardship to a population already hosting 116,400 people earlier uprooted by conflict and drought," he said. "We expect further displacement may take place until conditions are safe for the population to return to their homes."

The Afghanistan peacekeeping operation is now the largest full-scale NATO operation in the alliance's history.

### Earth approaching warmest climate ever

WASHINGTON: NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and Pacific climatologists authored a paper claiming that the Earth is at or near the warmest point it has ever been in the last one million years, and links certain weather effects to global warming.

The report pointed out that the weather effect known as El Nino has intensified in recent years, and the average surface temperature of the Earth is within one degree Celsius of its highest temperature ever. El Nino, which is a weather effect that raises the surface temperature of the Pacific Ocean, has become more intense as the global temperature has increased. The temperature in 2005 was as high as it was in 1998, even though 1998 was an El Nino year and 2005 was not.

Scientists conclude that the increase in global temperatures will not only help accelerate global warming, but also increase the number and intensity of tropical storms.

"The effect on frequency of either phenomenon is unclear, depending on many factors, but the intensity of the most powerful events is likely to increase as greenhouse gases increase," the report states. "Slowing the growth rate of greenhouse gases should diminish the probability of both super El Ninos and the most intense tropical storms."

The new report is released amidst allegations that the Bush administration is trying to suppress similar reports by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration stating that global warming is contributing to more numerous and intense hurricanes.

### Harvard considers returning to religion in curriculum

BOSTON, Massachusetts: A Harvard faculty committee has recommended returning religious studies as a mandatory component of any degree.

The new committee report recommends that all students take part in a course dealing with issues of "reason and faith," including a currently offered course called "Why Americans Love God and Europeans Don't."

"Harvard is no longer an institution with a religious mission, but religion is a fact that Harvard's graduates will confront in their lives," the report says, stating that 94 percent of incoming students report discussing reli-

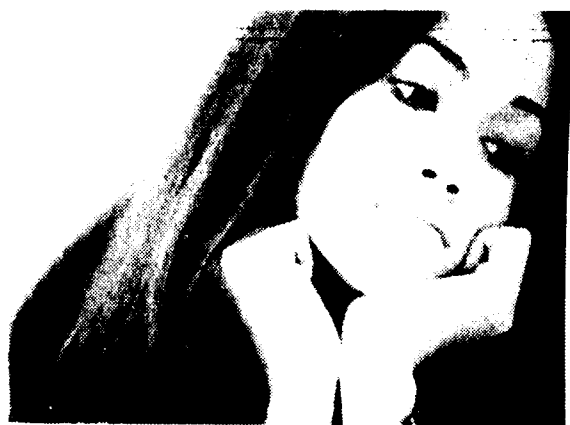
gion regularly.

The committee made the point that the new addition to the curriculum will help students deal with daily problems after graduation. "As academics in a university we don't have to confront religion if we're not religious, but in the world, they will have to," Alison Simmons, a philosophy professor who co-chaired the committee, said in a telephone interview with CNN Wednesday.

If enacted, the new program would return mandatory religion studies to a school that was founded 370 years ago to train Puritan ministers.



Source: CNN.com, Yahoo! News



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## Student archives now going digital

By Jerry Pohl  
calendar page editor

The archives of the Behrend Student Press have been digitized thanks to a \$315,000 endowment from an area school teacher. Teacher Verna Lombard left the money to the John D. Lilley library to commemorate her life-long appreciation of books. Aside from books, the most notable use of the endowment is that a portion of the archives of the student newspaper were sent away to be scanned digitally and put online. The library has been collecting all issues of the Behrend Student Press since the first issue nearly sixty years ago.

Only the first four decades worth of issues were sent away, leaving nearly two decades yet to be digitized, and as Lilley Library Director Dr. Rick Hart says, "I have every intention of doing it." Once the money for further digitization is avail-

able, Hart plans to get the more recent issues scanned and on line. With this new accessibility, students will be able to utilize the archives for historical projects, fact checking, and simple collegiate curiosity. The papers in the archives room of the library were only extensively searched once in the past decade to research an article on Beacon history. Hart is optimistic about the on line archives, saying, "It's my hope that this will generate use."

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-Dr. Rick Hart  
Lilley Library Director

The first issue of the paper was on Oct. 6, 1948, under the name The Nittany Cub. In 1971 the name was changed due to the staff's perception of a negative image associated with The Cub. The name of the paper would change several times but always was some variation of the Collegian until 1998.

In spring 1998 it was decided that the name might cause confusion between University Park's Collegian, which was also available on campus.

Suggestions were solicited, with the winning suggestion receiving \$25. Several people suggested the name The Beacon, connecting the paper to the community with the logo of Erie's lighthouse. The first to suggest the name was Nathan Mitchell.

Long before it was The Beacon, the same group of students that created the paper also made a yearbook. For various logistical reasons publication of the yearbook ended some years ago, but they are still available in the library archives room. The room also has the personal records of the Behrend family and Hammermill Paper Company, including legal documents, financial records and personal correspondence. Students can also check out DVDs of the Behrend family's home movies, available from the circulation desk. The new digital newspaper records can be accessed by way of the library's website: <http://www.pserie.psu.edu/academic/library/index.htm>.

The Behrend Beacon is always looking for writers and photographers. Any one interested in getting involved can stop at the Beacon office for more details.

## Quotes on Civility

"If we are forced, at every hour, to watch or listen to horrible events, this constant stream of ghastly impressions will deprive even the most delicate among us of all respect for humanity."

— Cicero (Marcus Tullius), Roman orator, philosopher and statesman (106-43 B.C.)

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