



# newsLetter

A compilation of newsTicker 2 articles  
with working activities

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2005-02-01

## JAPANESE WHALERS FACE LAWSUIT

Animal activists fight for mammals

An international animal welfare group vowed to pursue a lawsuit accusing Japanese whalers of killing hundreds of whales within an Australian sanctuary.

The International Whaling Commission imposed a moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986. Japan still kills whales for "scientific research purposes", although whale meat still ends up on Japanese supermarket shelves.



In a landmark case, Humane Society International (HSI) accused Japan's whaling firm, Kyodo Sepaku Kaisha, of killing more than 400 minke whales in Australia's Antarctic whale sanctuary since 2000. Australia's Attorney General Philip Ruddock told the Federal Court that the case could cause an international disagreement with Japan and suggested diplomacy instead.

An HSI spokeswoman said, however, the government had not contested the case's legal basis and the animal welfare

group intended to pursue it even without the government's support.

Japan says the hunts are legal and that under commission rules it is entitled to catch 440 whales a year in southern waters for scientific purposes. Other nations, including Australia, dispute any such right.

In recent years, Australia has prosecuted several boat crews for illegally fishing in Australian waters. HSI says it wants the same resources and determination applied against whalers.

## Exercise

**Read the text and study the arguments for both sides. Divide into two groups, Japanese whalers and HSI representatives. The teacher can be the mediator.**

1. Japanese whalers: State your case and give reasons why you should be able to continue hunting the whales.

HSI representatives: State your case and give reasons why the Japanese whalers must stop hunting.

2. Both groups must compromise and find a diplomatic solution to the problem.

2005-02-02

## KIDMAN WINS IN COURT Restraining orders for paparazzi

Oscar-winning Hollywood actress Nicole Kidman won restraining orders against two Australian-based paparazzi photographers who she said had left her feeling intimidated and fearful of leaving her Sydney mansion.

Kidman attracts huge interest in her homeland and photographers have been staking out her home since she arrived in Sydney to begin filming her new movie, "Eucalyptus", in which she stars with Russell Crowe.



Kidman took action against the photographers after a bugging device was found near her home and a high-speed car chase through the city's streets. The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported that the chase involved paparazzi running red lights, swerving across median strips and driving on the wrong side of the road.

A court in Sydney issued interim "apprehended violence" orders against Jamie Fawcett, 43, and Ben McDonald, 32. These orders will prevent the two men from contacting or approaching Miss Kidman. The lawyers for the two men denied the allegations that they were involved in planting

the bug, found in an area where Kidman's security staff regularly gather, or had chased the actor's car.

Kidman recently said she puts on wigs and uses false accents to avoid photographers.

## Exercise

**Read the text and answer the following questions.**

1. Do you think celebrities have an obligation to speak to the press? Why or why not?
2. Do you think the paparazzi go too far when trying to get a story? Explain.
3. You be the judge. In small groups, set up 3-5 rules that accommodate both the paparazzi and the celebrity.

2005-02-03

## MORE THAN JUST A PHONE

Vodafone introduces its latest model

There's more to a cell phone than meets the eye. Vodafone, the British cell phone company, is certainly proving this is true with its new V603SH model. Its features include games that allow the user to practice their golf swing and even attack monsters.

However, unlike cell phones in the past that required fingers on the keypad, this newest version responds with a person's simple movements. The phone has programmed shakes and jerks that perform basic functions.

The V603SH weighs a mere 142 grams (five ounces) but can act as a golf club, a toy gun and even a television. When golfing, users just need to look at the back of the screen to see how well they've done. As a toy gun, users engage in the adventure game "House of the Dead."

For those addicted to television, the phone's liquid crystal display screen brings them their favorite shows any time they look at their phone. The screen can even rotate 180 degrees.



While the new Vodafone model is expected to go on sale in the next couple of weeks, the company has not yet set a market price.

## Exercise

**Read the article and complete the activities.**

1. What do you think about this new cell phone? Is it practical? Does it have useful or fanciful functions?
2. In small groups, create your own cell phone. It must be innovative, novel and realistic. Design its physical characteristics as well as its functions. Present your creation to the rest of the class. Which one was the most popular?

2005-02-04

## MICROSOFT LAUNCHES SEARCH ENGINE MSN Search goes on the market

In an effort to secure a strong position in the search engine market, software giant Microsoft launched its own version this week. Its search engine is basically a partial redesign of its MSN home page. But the new product now gives Microsoft its own search technology.



While Microsoft's Explorer and Windows have dominated the market as the main technologies for using the Internet, Microsoft had relied on its now rival, Yahoo, to provide the search engine function. Other rivals in the search engine market include Google and Ask Jeeves.

A test version of Microsoft's search engine was released in November but is now available in 25 markets and 10 languages. Known as the new MSN Search service, Microsoft claims that it "delivers more relevant results, instant answers to specific questions, and a collection of tools that give Internet users greater control in targeting and refining searches."

The corporate vice president of MSN information services

says that the company is committed to improving the speed and precision of the new search engine. However, search engine critics say that the MSN Search service does not do much more than the other search engines.

MSN Search is supposedly different because it was built "from the ground up" and aims to give consumers precisely the information they are looking for. From a strictly economic standpoint, the new search engine puts Microsoft in yet another lucrative market. This time advertisers on the search engine are paying the bill.

### Exercise

#### Read the text and answer the questions.

1. Do you use the Internet much? What do you use it for? What kind of information do you look up?
2. What are the differences between Microsoft's new MSN and other servers? Why is it better?
3. Try out the new MSN server and compare it with others. Which is your favorite server and why?

2005-02-07

## BACK TO THE VOLCANO

### Japanese islanders return home

It has been five years since the volcano on the Japanese Pacific island of Miyakejima erupted but it is only now that former residents are returning home. All islanders had to leave quickly after the eruption because of the toxic gas that filled the air.



The eruption of Mount Oyama in 2000 forced the 3,200 residents of the island to find a home elsewhere until further notice. But last week island government officials lifted the evacuation order and allowed residents to return.

Miyakejima is 150 kilometers, or 90 miles, southwest of Tokyo. Most people travel to it by high-speed ferry which takes about 6 hours from Tokyo.

Upon returning to the island, residents were pleased to finally be back home. A group of 62 arrived by ferry last week. About 2,000 more former residents are expected to return by the end of the year.

Residents now have access once again to gas, electricity, phone and water so their lives can return back to normal.

However, all residents and visitors must still carry a gas mask in case the toxic gas returns.

## Exercise

**Find out more about volcanoes and their legends. Go to the website below and complete the activities.**

[www.volcanoworld.org](http://www.volcanoworld.org)

1. Go to "Kids" and then to "Legends about Volcanoes". Choose a legend on a specific volcano. Find out where it is on the map. Read the legend and write a short summary on it.
2. In small groups, share your legends. Which one is your favorite?

2005-02-08

## GATES FOUNDATION FUNDS PROJECT Vaccines for developing world

Bill Gates, software mogul, is funding new vaccine project. Millions of lives could be saved each year if the development of new vaccines for deadly diseases in developing countries is sped up.



New vaccines for diseases such as rotavirus, pneumococcal disease and Japanese encephalitis, which mainly affect poorer countries, are being developed and may be made quickly and cheaply through such an initiative, experts said.

Rotavirus, while not a major threat in wealthy countries, kills nearly 500,000 children annually, mostly in poorer countries. Pneumococcal disease kills about 1.6 million people a year, mostly in developing countries. Japanese encephalitis can be fatal or cause lifelong disability for those infected as children. These are the diseases that the foundation aims to focus on.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, along with Norway and Britain have contributed billions of dollars to projects such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization

(GAVI). The Gates foundation donated an initial 750 million dollars to this initiative five years ago now another 750 million dollars earlier this week.

Normally it takes 10-15 years for a newly-developed vaccine to be made available to developing countries. The initiative hoped to cut this period down to about five years.

Experts said the delivery of new vaccines in developing nations was often delayed by a lack of information, high costs, improper health infrastructure, poor education and inadequate political commitment.

### Exercise

**Read and correct the mistakes in the sentences below. Check your answers with the original article.**

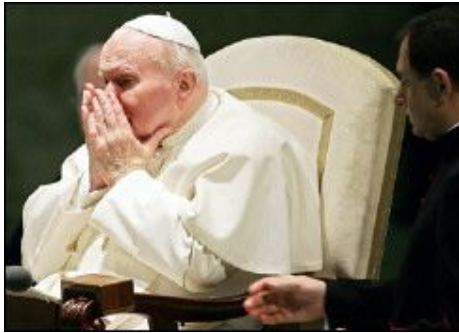
1. Millions of lifes could be safe each years if the development of new vaccine for deadly diseases in developing countries is fed up. (5 mistakes)
2. This are the disease that the foundation aim to focus in. (4 mistakes)
3. The Gates foundation donates an initial 715 million pound to this initiative five year ago, now another 715 million dollar earlier that week. ( 7 mistakes)
4. The initiative hoped cutted this period up to about nine years. (3 mistakes)

2005-02-09

## POPE STILL STRONG

Views his illness as gift from God

For the pontiff whose passion for skiing and other sports once earned him the sobriquet of "God's Athlete", illness has been a different way of practicing his priesthood.



Many ask why the pope, afflicted by Parkinson's disease and a host of other ailments, struggles on in such visible discomfort and exhaustion. The answer is simple, according to Vatican insiders. The pope sees his own condition as a means of dramatizing the problems of age and physical decline in a hedonistic world obsessed with youth and beauty. It is also his way of saying that life is beautiful even if painful. "The life of a man is a precious gift that must be loved and defended in all its stages," he said.

The pope even describes his own affliction as a gift from God. Physically debilitated, speaking with effort and at times unintelligible, the pontiff has not once considered laying down his burden and retiring to a quiet monastery.

The pontiff who scandalized some by building a swimming pool at his country residence and who became the first pope to be photographed on skis now has only his infirmity to

offer the world.

He has handled his suffering in a Christian way. To do this, he has had to call on all the physical and mental reserves that enabled him to survive forced labor under Nazi domination in his native Poland during World War II.

## Exercise

**Read the article and then go to this website on Pope John Paul II. Answer the questions below.**

[www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii)

1. What is the pope's real name? Where did he grow up?
2. Talk about his family.
3. What did he enjoy studying? What did he do between 1940-1944?
4. Talk about his educational background. What are his hobbies?

2005-02-10

## BIRD FLU DOESN'T STOP CELEBRATIONS

Vietnamese still offer chicken for Lunar New Year

The Vietnamese are celebrating their Lunar New Year this week. Traditionally, food during the celebrations always includes chicken. But while the bird flu epidemic has called into question the safety of having chicken be a part of the festivities, people are still including it as a main dish.



As part of the tradition, the Vietnamese offer a boiled chicken among other food as an offering to their ancestors. The week-long festival of Tet is extremely important in Vietnamese culture. Not only does it recognize the beginning of the New Year but it brings together extended families.

"Praying to ancestors is extremely important for Vietnamese people during Tet," said historian Le Van Lan. "We invite our ancestors to return home for the New Year by offering them two sugarcanes, as a bridge linking the two worlds," he said.

Vietnamese who are living all over the world come back to Vietnam during this important time. Vietnamese children

also receive money from their parents in the form of red envelopes that signify prosperity.

Even though it is essential for families to offer chicken to their ancestors every year, this year was particularly important because it is the "Year of the Rooster". In addition to the food offerings, some families stick a feather in the rooster's tail at the entrance to their houses to keep evil spirits away.

The fact that bird flu has already taken the lives of 13 people in Vietnam in the last five weeks has not deterred the Vietnamese from celebrating their new year with chicken. While some have safety concerns, most feel determined to follow tradition.

## Exercise

**Find out more about the Vietnamese Lunar New Year by visiting the website below and answer the questions.**

[www.saigon.com/~nguyent/tet.html](http://www.saigon.com/~nguyent/tet.html)

1. What does TET stand for? What day does the New Year fall on?
2. How long does TET last? How do families prepare for the holiday? Where does the family go on this special day and why?
3. What is a "Kitchen Spirit" and what is its purpose? What do the Vietnamese plant outside and why do they plant it?
4. Are there any similarities between your New Year's celebration and TET? What are they?

2005-02-11

## NEW TOURIST ATTRACTION IN IRELAND Cave with largest stalactite gets attention

Ireland has a new tourist attraction this month. It's not a monument or a historic building but a spike in a cave. The formation, called a stalactite, has become famous because it is one of the largest in the world.



The stalactite is hanging from the inside of a cave in Ardeamish County Clare which is in western Ireland. It has taken centuries for the stalactite to grow more than 23 feet, or 7 meters. Stalactites take hundreds of years to form as water containing calcium carbonate drips from the cave ceiling.

For years, a couple in the area, John and Helen Browne, have wanted to make the cave where the stalactite hangs an official tourist site. But Ireland's National Trust and another local group have been against the development for some time.

Finally, this month, planning authorities have decided to give the Brownes the go ahead to make the cave accessible to visitors. At the moment, the only way to get to the stalactite is to climb down a 425-meter passage and

through a stream.

### Exercise

#### Read the article and answer the questions.

1. What is a stalactite and how is it formed? What are the pros and cons to opening the cave as a tourist attraction?
2. Look for additional information on these interesting formations and answer the questions. What is the difference between a stalactite and a stalagmite? Name some famous places to visit these special formations.
3. Have you ever visited one of these caves? What does it smell like? Are there any caves in your area?

2005-02-14

## BRIT AWARDS GET MORE DARING Ceremony recognizes Britain's best rock stars

The best of the British rock world were together last week in London at what is known as the British version of the US Grammys or the Brit Awards. The ceremony marked the 25th year for the awards which recognized the best of Britain's rock stars.



The fancy affair included lots of champagne and wine for guests and performances from Scottish Franz Ferdinand and punk-pop Green Day. Franz Ferdinand, who was almost unknown in the music world a year ago, came to the event with five nominations, including best British group.

The Brit Awards began in 1977 but had a five-year gap between the first and second ceremonies. The event then lost popularity in the 1980's when mostly mainstream artists such as Sting, Phil Collins and Dire Straits kept winning year after year.

This year new bands such as The Streets, Snow Patrol and Kasabian are helping to make the Brit Awards "cool" again with several nominations for their more alternative music.

This more daring list of bands shows that the awards are now not just for the "safe and boring" artists.

### Exercise

#### Read the article and complete the exercises.

1. Name your favorite British bands. Give a brief written description of each one (name, kind of music, history, etc) and why you chose them.
2. Now, read off the names of the bands. Take a class poll and find out the top three most popular bands.
3. Compare your results with those of the Brit awards. Do they coincide?

2005-02-15

## CALIFORNIA SEQUOIA DYING?

World's second largest tree in danger

A giant California sequoia considered to be the second biggest tree on earth is fighting for its life after being hit by a succession of snow storms and fires, a park ranger said.

The huge Washington Tree in northern California's Sequoia National Park, which was 115 meters (254 feet) high and measures 45.9 meters (101 feet) in circumference, could be approaching the end of its life of more than 2,000 years.



The winter storms have whittled the giant tree down to a height of just 52.2 meters (115 feet). "It lost a big section off the top," ranger Alexandra Picavet said, adding that it still retained its title of the world's second biggest tree in terms of volume.

The green giant was also hit by a wildfire in 2003, one of the many over its long life span which has contributed to hollowing out the tree, slowly weakening its structure. The tree's hollow interior and sheared-off top made it more vulnerable to damage from this year's heavy snowfall. But,

while the tree suffers from the ravages of nature, it could still live for hundreds of years.

The Sequoia National Park, north of San Francisco, is one of California's top tourist attractions, drawing visitors from across the world to see the oversized trees.

## Exercise

**Find out more about Sequoia National Park in California by visiting the website below. Answer the questions.**

[www.visitsequoia.com](http://www.visitsequoia.com)

1. What has become extinct in the park?
2. What kinds of activities can you do all year round? What can you do in winter?
3. What kinds of accommodations are there? Where would you like to stay? How much does it cost? What is the most economical time of year to visit?
4. What is Bearpaw High Sierra Camp and what can you do there?

2005-02-17

## ISLAND HAS TOO MANY KOALAS Animals soon to starve to death

A South Australian island is facing an unusual problem at the moment. Contrary to its name, Kangaroo Island is not suffering from too many kangaroos but rather too many koalas. There are so many of these cuddly animals on the island right now that there is soon to be no more food for them.



The animals' main source of food on the island is a species of the eucalyptus tree called the manna gum. Officials say that the koalas are actually eating themselves out of their habitat.

They say that if the koala population continues to increase at such a rapid rate, the animals will soon starve to death. The state had actually planned to cull 20,000 Koalas until opposition from animal rights groups stopped them from killing the animals.

"That sort of management would appall the many thousands of tourists who come to South Australia from all over the world each year," said South Australia State Environment Minister John Hill.

Hill says that the koalas of Kangaroo Island have no predators. This means that their population has increased exponentially since the mid-90's. In 1996, there were 5,000 of the animals while today there are 27,000.

For the moment, the government says it will not destroy the animals. However, it is proposing the relocation of 650 koalas and the sterilization of 550. While this step will not stop the overpopulation, the hope is that it will at least slow their numbers down.

### Exercise

**Read the article and answer the questions below.**

1. What is happening on the Australian island?
2. What are the proposed solutions to the problem?
3. What do you think is the best solution? Explain.
4. In small groups, think of 3 other ways to solve the koala crisis. Compare your ideas with the other groups.

2005-02-18

## DIABETES AFFECTS MORE WOMEN Stress makes women more vulnerable

Type 2 diabetes is a disease that researchers are looking at more closely these days because so many people are getting it. While it was once a more rare disease, the fact that more people are very overweight and even obese has made it more common in recent years.



This month a researcher in Sweden found that weight is not the only factor in determining whether a person is at risk for Type 2 diabetes or adult-onset diabetes. She found that if you are female and have a stressful job, you are more likely to get the disease.

"We have discovered a link between stress, few possibilities to make decisions and little control at work and the development of Type 2 diabetes in women," said a researcher at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm.

The people in the study included 5,000 men and 3,000 women who were asked to answer questions about their work environment. Participants had to describe the conditions at their workplace in detail. The women who

experienced stress were more vulnerable to Type 2 diabetes than the men although it is still not clear why.

### Exercise

**Read the text and answer the questions.**

1. According to the article, who is most at risk of getting diabetes?
2. Name some things you can do to avoid the disease.
3. In small groups discuss why men are less likely to get diabetes. What are some contributing characteristics in men and women's makeup that could affect the outcome? Share your hypotheses with the rest of the class. .

2005-02-24

## HERO JOINS POLITICS

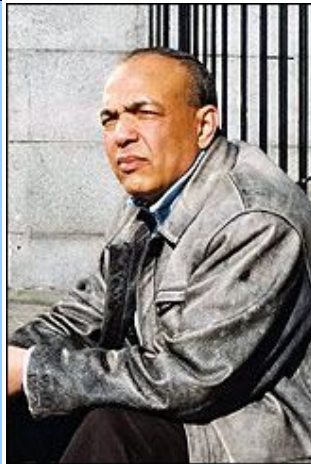
Using fame to climb to the top

A Canadian who helped save the life of French President Jacques Chirac two years ago has now chosen to enter politics himself. Moh Chelali, a teacher, won the New Democratic Party nomination this week to represent a Vancouver suburb in an upcoming provincial election.

In July, 2002, Chalali and two others subdued a gun-wielding would-be assassin during a Bastille Day parade in Paris while on vacation with his family.

His opponents accuse him of using his celebrity to win votes. Chelali denies this saying he only wants to be of service to the people. But if that does not satisfy sceptics, rubbing shoulders with politicians during the past two years, including Canada's former Prime Minister Jean Chretien and an appreciative Chirac, Chelali has learned to speak like a politician.

He has echoed his party's campaign rhetoric about fighting for children, seniors and small businesspeople and accused the current government of making harsh financial decisions that destroyed public health care and education.



Otherwise, his life has changed little since being labelled a hero. People recognize him on the street and ask him to speak for various causes. Chirac sends him Christmas cards.

Being a hero and having a small claim to fame definitely helps his campaign. But he says he is genuinely out there for the good of the people and hopes to win the election on May 17th.

## Exercise

**Put the following sentences a logical order. Then check your answers by reading the article.**

1. Moh Chelali learned quickly how to speak like a politician.
2. Chelali went on a family vacation to France.
3. The French President sends Chelali Christmas cards.
4. Chelali decides to become a politician.
5. Chelali is campaigning for children and seniors.
6. Chelali saved Jacques Chirac's life.
7. Chelali wins the New Democratic Party nomination.

2005-02-28

## VIOLENCE AT FA CUP

Thirty-three arrested

Five police officers were injured and 33 arrests were made after groups of supporters clashed after the Everton versus Manchester United FA Cup tie.

Police tried to break up groups of fighting supporters from both teams who then turned on the officers, Merseyside Police said. A police spokesman said the arrests were for public order offences or for being drunk and disorderly.

A large-scale police presence was required to escort the away supporters from Everton's Goodison Park stadium through the city centre to the Lime Street train station so they could make their way home safely.

Earlier, the match had been marred when a missile was thrown from the crowd and felled Manchester United goalkeeper Roy Carroll. A police officer recovered a mobile phone from the pitch and detectives will examine it to find who it belongs to. It is not known if this was the object which hit the player.

Ian Ross, Everton's director of communications, branded the



fan responsible as a "mindless moron". The FA announced that they would be working closely with the media and police to find the culprit who caused the incident.

Ross added, "One mindless moron spoilt things for everyone else. There is no place for that sort of thing at Goodison Park and when we discover the culprit he will be banned for life."

## Exercise

**Read the text and answer the following questions.**

1. What happened at the Everton versus Manchester match?
2. How do you think the culprit should be punished? What consequences would you suggest to deter hooligans at football matches?
3. Think of three things that police could do before each match to help create a safe environment for the athletes and the spectators?