

Intriguing people for February 1, 2010

By **Jay Kernis**, CNN



Sen. Bill Nelson of Florida orbited Earth for six days in the space shuttle Columbia as a payload specialist in 1986.

Editor's note: Every weekday, CNN focuses on a handful of people in the news. This is a chance to find out more about what they've done -- good or bad -- what they've said or what they believe, and why we think they're intriguing.

(CNN) -- Sen. Bill Nelson

President Obama on Monday unveiled his annual budget for fiscal year 2011. Obama is proposing to cancel the Constellation Program that President Bush launched in 2004. Such a move would make it impossible to return to the moon in the next 10 years, although it would extend the mission of the international space station to 2020. There are also incentives for private companies to provide rides for astronauts.

Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of Florida, who spent six days orbiting Earth as a payload specialist aboard the space shuttle Columbia in 1986, disagrees with a proposed cutback of NASA funds. Nelson made this statement on his official Web site: "Based on initial reports about the administration's plan for NASA, they are replacing lost shuttle jobs in Florida too slowly, risking U.S. leadership in space to China and Russia, and relying too heavily on unproven commercial companies. ... We need a plan that provides America with uninterrupted access to space while also funding exploration to expand the boundaries of our knowledge."

On this date in 2003, Columbia returned from 17 days in space and exploded about 15 minutes before its scheduled touchdown at the Kennedy Space Center, resulting in the deaths of all seven crew members: Rick D. Husband, William C. McCool, David Brown, Laurel Blair Salton Clark, Michael P. Anderson, Ilan Ramon and Kalpana Chawla.

[Obama budget would cut moon exploration program](#)

[Office of Sen. Nelson: Biography](#)

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Senator from Florida opposes reported NASA cutbacks

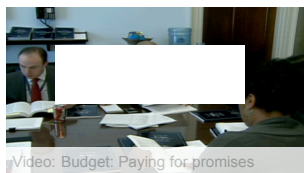
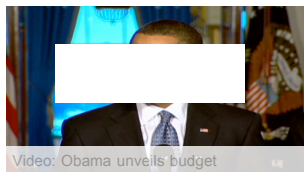
Small-town mayor invites trial of alleged 9/11 planner to local courthouse

Michael Jackson's children accept lifetime achievement Grammy for late father

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Nicholas Valentine

No decision has been made on whether or not to change the plan to hold the [September 11](#) terrorist attack trial in a civilian court in Lower Manhattan, White House officials said Sunday. Last week, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and other politicians expressed concern over the costs and disruption of holding the trial of alleged 9/11 planner Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four accomplices at a New York City courthouse.

Valentine, mayor of the small city of Newburgh -- some 60 miles up the Hudson River from New York -- told CNN on Monday his new state-of-the-art courthouse would be an ideal location, but that all of the costs of the trial "would need to be borne by the federal government." New York

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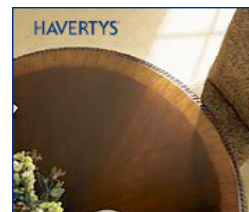
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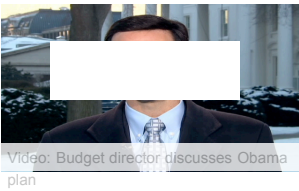
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police estimated the cost to their city would be more than \$200 million per year in a trial that could last years and that 2,000-plus checkpoints would need to be installed around Lower Manhattan.

[CNN: No decision yet on moving 9/11 trial](#)

Stephanie Schriock

The former chief of staff to Sen. Jon Tester, D-Montana, begins her new job Monday as president of EMILY's List. Schriock succeeds Ellen R. Malcolm, who in 1985, founded what has become one of the largest political actions committees in the country.

According to the organization's Web site, it has raised millions of dollars to help elect 15 abortion-rights, Democratic women U.S. senators, 80 U.S. representatives and nine state governors. Schriock also managed the closely watched campaign and recount efforts of Sen. Al Franken, D-Minnesota.

EMILY is an acronym for "Early Money Is Like Yeast," selected by the group because it "makes the dough rise."

Schriock said Sunday that she "couldn't wait to get to work to elect more pro-choice women to office. EMILY's List has really been changing the face of power in Washington, D.C., and around the country for 25 years now and helping women run for office at all levels."

Schriock explained that her work goes beyond the issue of abortion rights. "These campaigns talk about jobs and the economy, and we help women make the case that they should be elected to office. There are now 17 women serving in the U.S. Senate, 13 Democrats. That's out of 100. The doors have been open, but we have a ways to go."

[EMILY's List: About incoming president Stephanie Schriock](#)

Frank Buckles

The last surviving U.S. veteran of [World War I](#) turns 109 on Monday and is still hoping for a national memorial in Washington for his comrades. Buckles, a former corporal, was a soldier in the U.S. Army and drove ambulances for U.S. forces in Europe.

He is expected to deliver remarks during a quiet celebration Monday afternoon at his home in Charles Town, West Virginia. But the old "doughboy" -- as World War I American infantry troops were called -- already has been outspoken in recent years, urging congressional lawmakers to give federal recognition and a facelift to a rundown memorial in an overgrown, wooded area along the National Mall.

In December, Buckles testified on Capitol Hill as lawmakers considered whether to fund renovation and give the site national monument status. But rival legislation seeks the national designation for a 1920s-era memorial in Kansas City, Missouri. Congress has not decided yet on the legislation.

[CNN: Last U.S. veteran of WWI turns 109](#)

Prince Michael

Yes, Beyoncé won a record six awards, but many critics and bloggers write that the most memorable moment of Sunday's 52nd annual [Grammy Awards](#) was the onstage appearance of Michael Jackson's two eldest children who accepted their father's lifetime achievement award to a standing ovation.

"To all his songs, his message was simple, love," 12-year-old Prince Michael said. "Through all his songs his message was simple: love. We will continue to spread his message and help spread the word. Thank you. We love you, Daddy." With a voice that sounded more mature than his age, he also thanked "God for watching over us these last seven months and our grandma and grandpa for their love and support."

Katherine Jackson was granted custody of her son's three children - Prince Michael, Paris and, Prince Michael II, known as Blanket -- soon after Jackson's death last year. She and the children were named beneficiaries, along with unnamed charities, in Jackson's 2002 will.

[CNN: Jackson kids steal show at Grammys](#)

What makes a person intriguing?

There are people who enter the news cycle every day because their actions or decisions are new, important or different. Others are in the news because they are the ones those decisions affect. And there are a number of people who are so famous or controversial that anything they say or do becomes news.

Some of these people do what we expect of them: They run for office, pass legislation, start a business, get hired or fired, commit a crime, make an arrest, get in accidents, hit a home run, overthrow a government, fight wars, sue an opponent, put out fires, prepare for hurricanes and cavort with people other than their spouses. They do make news, but the action is usually more important than who is involved in the story.

But every day, there are a number of people who become fascinating to us -- by virtue of their character, how they reached their decision, how they behaved under pressure or because of the remarkable circumstances surrounding the event they are involved in.

They arouse our curiosity. We hear about them and want to know more. What they have done or said stimulates conversations across the country. At times, there is even a mystery about them. What they have done may be unique, heroic, cowardly or ghastly, but they capture our imaginations. We want to know what makes them tick, why they believe what they do, and why they did what they did. They intrigue us.

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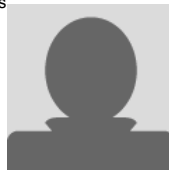
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Guest
moiraesfate Incidentally, that means I'm 33. The wait times are the same in the US honey. I live in Louisiana and have yet to EVER get in to see a doctor in an ER in under 4 hours (my husbands aunt has bouts of terrible migraine headaches every other week).We in Ontario are considered lucky if we ca ...[more](#)
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Guest
moiraesfate Don't give me that. I grew up in Alberta. I've only lived in the US for two years. We pay 5% GST in Canada which basically amounts to almost nothing. The provincial and federal taxes came to about 25% added together for me when I lived in Alberta. If you are from one of the other provinc ...[more](#)

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Guest

Note that the cuts are going to (mostly) impact MANNED programs. Putting a person on a space ship adds very little value to the scientific mission (if any) but results into exponentially increased costs since that person's life cannot be put in jeopardy. Manned space missions (for the time being) ar ...[more](#)

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Soundwave

The main benefit is that by having a human go there you are staking a claim to that land. Sure we can all say the moon is universal to all Earth, but the minute we start drilling it for resources that will change. Also the benefit to having a human is they can try to flip over the rock and stop if it ...[more](#)

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[Guest](#)

Guest

The other guest (no idea why my actual nick is not showing here): Yes, there are experiments that could use a human touch, more serious experiments or simple data collection does not require the human factor. Most of the experiments that require presence of a human are actually focused on measuring ...[more](#)

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Guest

@ Guest (OP): I completely disagree. While some experiments might be able to be conducted with minimal human involvement, I think you're underrating the value of human interaction, human ingenuity, and creativity. A computer follows a set of pre-installed parameters and doesn't go outside that. A ...[more](#)

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Guest

Reply to moiraesfate For gods sakes, Canada has lower taxes than the US does and yet can still provide its people with quality health care. I AM CANADIAN AND THAT STATEMENT IS FALSE!!! We have higher marginal rates of income tax than the U.S. and pay a much higher rate of sales tax on goods and servi ...[more](#)

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moiraesfate

Incidentally, that means I'm 33. The wait times are the same in the US honey. I live in Louisiana and have yet to EVER get in to see a doctor in an ER in under 4 hours (my husbands aunt has bouts of terrible migraine headaches every other week).

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[Guest](#)

Guest

It is disappointing but not surprising that the moon project has been cancelled. But the real concern and one that appears to be overlooked is that NASA will not be in the business of sending humans in space - period! At least not for the next decade or more while China and Indian are ramping up the ...[more](#)

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[wtchkng](#)

wtchkng

@moiraesfate: I'd respectfully disagree with you on one point. We should by all means eventually privatize space flight (albeit with some pretty serious regulation, and I don't mean what your average Republican calls "regulation"). Private companies have to compete with one another to maintain a top ...more
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• [moiraesfate](#)

moiraesfate
Honey, you don't get it. While space flight should NEVER be allowed to become private enterprise, we're already becoming a bunch of greedy Ferengi, this country needs to be spending money on its OWN people, increasing education, increasing availability and quality of health care, etc. It does NOT ne ...more
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• [RichieC](#)

RichieC
We ought to scrap NASA altogether. It is a huge waste of money. Who cares that there is water on the moon, or we can float in space. Such waste this country can no longer afford. Who cares about China going to MARS. take a look at other countries, even russia, they see there is no point in going t ...more
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• [Guest](#)

Guest
Why is it everytime Nasa's budget comes out people like yourself compare that money spent with the poor or homeless as if it is an either or proposition. Have you ever taken into consideration that there 100s of billions of dollars of waste of futile public work projects and agencies that provide I ...more
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• [moiraesfate](#)

moiraesfate
I don't agree in any way. Humanity needs a goal. We always have. It helps give us hope. However, I do agree that manned flights should be temporarily discontinued.
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• [Guest](#)

Guest
So, when government wants to negotiate health insurance coverage for us (public option) it's a bad idea, because U.S. is built on free enterprise and everyone should be responsible for their own well being and we need small government anyway. But it's OK for the government to run something slightly ...more
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• [freedom79](#)

freedom79
Comparing NASA to health care is apples and oranges. By your logic we'd have to choose between keeping the existing military and having Blackwater run our entire defense system. This has nothing to do with Obama, I'd criticize any President who chooses to cut the legs out from under the American spa ...more
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• [bidalah](#)

bidalah
Nelson would have us reject "unproven" commercial companies in favor of the proven managerial incompetence of NASA. As much as I would hate to see the moon missions delayed, I think we need to focus on building a health space industry "ecosystem". Ever since Nixon killed the Apollo program the sto ...more
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• [amigaman25](#)

amigaman25
NASA is coming to and end
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• [Guest](#)

Guest
Well, so much for invigorating science in the US. Just one more step toward "stupid-ing" ourselves to death.
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• [Guest](#)

Guest
WOW !!! has not anyone learned that outsourcing is killing America!!! And this continued shift by Washington to

kill our space programme (by both "Bamies", and "Bushies") is absurd.It is like We entered the Space Race..and cause we were the first to cross the 100 meter mark, we quit.. not wanting t ...more

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Guest

Guest

@guest

MTV, first broadcast August 1, 1981, (lol I still have my Mtv 1st anniversary poster) last manned moon landing Dec 9, 1972

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Guest

Guest

Obama is again proving to be the liar and breaker of campaign promises. He will also destroy the local economy throughout the 37 different states that have space related contracts. Maybe he's writing off the electoral votes of those 37 states already. That's sure to make him a "one & done" prez. ...more

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freedom79

freedom79

The United States just handed the keys to Space over to China. At this rate our astronauts will be hitching rides on Russian rockets at \$20 million a pop to sit in an old space station. Meanwhile China steadily moves forward on its goals to reach the Moon and Mars. The current US government think ...more

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