

# JANUARY 2012

## WORLD

- **Protests Intensify in Syria (Jan. 1):** An 88-member Arab Parliament calls for the immediate withdrawal of Arab League monitors in [Syria](#) because the government continues to crackdown on opponents, despite the monitors being in the country. **(Jan. 6):** A bomb explodes in Damascus, killing 25 people and injuring dozens more. It is the second attack in the capital in the last two weeks. **(Jan. 11):** President Bashar al-Assad appears in public for the first time since the uprising began, thanking the crowd for supporting him. Meanwhile, a French journalist is killed during an attack at a pro-government rally in Homs.
- **European Union Agrees to Impose Oil Embargo on Iran (Jan. 4):** The countries within the European Union agree to impose an embargo on Iranian oil. [France](#) stresses the importance for sanctions and an embargo as a way to get [Iran](#) to halt uranium enrichment and end its nuclear weapon efforts. Any new sanctions and embargo will come in stages and a final decision by the European Union will not be made until the end of the month. Since December 2011, Iran has responded to talk of new sanctions from Europe and the U.S. by threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz, test-firing new missiles, announcing its first nuclear-fuel rod, and warning a U.S. aircraft carrier not to return to the Persian Gulf.
- **Iran Blames U.S. and Israel for Death of Nuclear Scientist (Jan. 11):** A bomber on a motorcycle kills nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan in Tehran during the morning commute, according to Iranian media. It is the fourth attack on an Iranian nuclear specialist in two years. Immediately following the attack, Iran accuses the [United States](#) and [Israel](#). The White House responds by denying any responsibility and condemning the attack.
- **Azarenka, Djokovic Win Australian Open (Jan. 28–29):** Victoria Azarenka from [Belarus](#) defeats [Maria Sharapova](#) of [Russia](#), 6–3, 6–0, to win the Australian Open Women's Singles Championship. [Serbia's Novak Djokovic](#) beats [Rafael Nadal](#) of [Spain](#), 5-7, 6-4, 6-2, 6-7, 7-5, to take the Men's Singles Championship. Djokovic and Nadal's five set match lasts 5 hours and 53 minutes, setting a new record for the longest grand slam singles final in the Open Era.

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **Economy Adds 200,000 Jobs in December; Unemployment falls to 8.5% (Jan. 6):** The U.S. economy added 200,000 new jobs in the month of December 2011, while the unemployment fell just slightly, to 8.5% from a revised 8.7% in November. The number of new jobs added in November has also been revised by the Labor Department from 120,000 to 100,000.

## US

- **Iowa Caucus Kicks off U.S. Presidential Election Process (Jan. 3):** In the 2012 Iowa caucuses, President [Barack Obama](#) goes uncontested in the Democratic caucus. In the Republican caucus, at first, [Mitt Romney](#) is declared the winner over [Rick Santorum](#) by eight votes. [Ron Paul](#) comes in third with 21% of the vote, followed by [Newt Gingrich](#) (13%), [Rick Perry](#) (10%), [Michele Bachmann](#) (5%), and [Jon Huntsman](#) (0.6%). Romney receives 25% of the vote, the same percentage he received in the 2008 Iowa caucus. The [Iowa](#) caucuses are the first major event in the U.S. presidential election. The 2012 Iowa caucus results will be revised later in the month. **(Jan. 4):** The day after coming in sixth in the Iowa Republican caucus, Michele Bachmann ends her campaign for the presidential nomination. At a news conference in West Des Moines, Bachmann says, "Last night, the people of Iowa spoke with a very clear voice, and so I have decided to stand aside." Bachmann's sixth place finish is a big disappointment, especially since Iowa is her home state. **(Jan. 10):** Romney easily wins the [New Hampshire](#) primary. Romney receives 39.3% of the vote. Ron Paul comes in second with 22.9%, followed by Jon Huntsman (16.9%), Newt Gingrich (9.4%), Rick Santorum (9.4%), and Rick Perry (0.7%). **(Jan. 15):** Jon Huntsman ends his bid for the Republican presidential nomination and endorses Mitt Romney.

**(Jan. 19):** Gov. Rick Perry of Texas drops out of the Republican presidential race and endorses Newt Gingrich. Meanwhile, in an interview with ABC News, Marianne Gingrich, the second wife of Newt Gingrich, says that he asked her for an open marriage while informing her of an affair he was having with Callista Bisek, who became his third wife in 2000. **(Jan. 21):** Newt Gingrich wins the [South Carolina](#) primary with 40.4% of the vote. Romney is a distant second (27.8%) followed by Rick Santorum (17.0%) and Ron Paul (13.0%). Meanwhile, certified results in Iowa show that Rick Santorum narrowly beat Romney by 34 votes in the Jan. 3 caucus. However, since results from eight precincts could not be located for certification, Santorum and Romney officially tie and split Iowa's delegates. **(Jan. 31):** Romney wins the Florida primary by a comfortable margin, receiving 46.4% of the vote. Gingrich comes in second with 31.9%, followed by Rick Santorum (13.4%) and Ron Paul (7.0%).

- **Obama Unveils Plan for a Leaner Military (Jan. 5):** President Obama makes a rare appearance at the Pentagon briefing room to outline a new national defense strategy. The new strategy takes into account the Pentagon budget cuts, the end to the war in [Iraq](#) as well as new threats from [Iran](#) and [China](#). In discussing the new strategy, Obama stresses a leaner military, but not a weaker one.
- **Internet Protests Hurt Piracy Bills (Jan. 18):** A major protest online shakes up Congressional support for anti-Web piracy measures. The protest, including a 24-hour shutdown of the English-language Wikipedia site, is over two bills, the Stop Online Piracy Act in the House and the Protect IP Act in the Senate. The main goal of both bills is to stop illegal downloading and streaming of TV shows and movies online. The tech industry is concerned that the bills will give media companies too much power to shut down websites. During the internet protests, Republican Senator [Marco Rubio](#) of Florida, a co-sponsor of the anti-Internet piracy legislation, changes his position, announcing that he will no longer back it. Republican Senator [John Cornyn](#) of Texas urges Congress to take more time before voting.
- **Giffords Steps Down from Congress (Jan. 22):** Representative [Gabrielle Giffords](#), still recovering from last year's assassination attempt, announces that she is vacating her seat in the House of Representatives. Giffords, whose recovery from a gunshot wound in the head has inspired the nation, feels she cannot continue to focus on her recovery and still serve in Congress.
- **President Obama Provides Economic Blueprint in State of the Union Address (Jan. 24):** In his election-year State of the Union address, President Obama argues that the government should strive to bridge the gap between rich Americans and the rest of the U.S. by changing the tax code and other policies. In his speech, he says: "We can either settle for a country where a shrinking number of people do really well, while a growing number of Americans barely get by, or we can restore an economy where everyone gets a fair shot."

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **Cruise Ship Capsizes off Italian Coast (Jan. 13):** The Costa Concordia, a cruise ship, slams into a rock and capsizes near the island of Giglio, which is off the coast of [Italy](#). The accident causes the cruise industry's safety issues to fall under global scrutiny. At least 11 people are killed and 22 remain missing. Francesco Schettino, the ship's captain, is accused of moving the ship off its fixed course and may face criminal charges of manslaughter, failure to offer assistance, and abandonment of the ship.
- **Thousands Flee Nevada Wildfire (Jan. 20):** More than 10,000 people are forced to evacuate when a fast-moving brush fire breaks out near Reno, [Nevada](#). One person is dead and at least 26 homes have been destroyed.

# FEBRUARY 2012

## WORLD

- **Riot at Soccer Match Causes Turmoil in Egypt (Feb. 1):** At least 73 people are killed in a fight between fans of rival teams at a soccer match in Port Said, [Egypt](#). Security at the gates is questioned as fans used knives, clubs, and other weapons in the brawl. **(Feb. 2):** Thousands protest against authorities in Cairo and other cities over the deaths caused by the soccer match riot. **(Feb. 3):** Four protestors are killed and over 600 injured due to stampeding crowds and tear gas. On a bus in the Sinai Peninsula, Bedouin gunmen take two American tourists and an Egyptian tour guide hostage. After several hours, the hostages are released to the Egyptian police. **(Feb. 4):** The third night in a row of street fighting in Cairo between the police and protestors leads to the death of 12 people. Questions about the legitimacy of the military-led government intensify as they are unable to stop the fighting. **(Feb. 5):** The military-led government announces it will put 19 Americans as well as 24 others on trial in a criminal investigation involving the foreign financing of nonprofit groups. The investigation could impact American aid to Egypt. **(Feb. 9):** The Muslim Brotherhood demands that the current prime minister and cabinet resign and be replaced with a new coalition government formed by parliament.
- **Russia and China Prevent U.N. Action in Syria (Feb. 4):** [Russia](#) and [China](#) veto an effort by the United Nations Security Council to end the violence in [Syria](#). The veto happens just hours after the Syrian military launch an assault on the city of Homs. The Security Council votes 13 to 2 for a resolution backing an Arab League peace plan for Syria. China and Russia vote against the resolution, seeing it as a violation of Syria's sovereignty. So far, Syria's 11-month uprising has caused more than 5,000 casualties.
- **Protests Turn Violent over Austerity Measures in Greece (Feb. 12):** Demonstrations in Athens turn violent the day before Parliament is set to approve [Greece's](#) new austerity measures. At least 80,000 people protest. Demonstrators throw rocks at the police. By nightfall, protestors use Molotov cocktails. More than 40 buildings are set on fire. **(Feb. 13):** The Greek Parliament votes and approves the harsh, new austerity measures. The measures are the only way foreign lenders will loan Greece the money it needs to keep the country from defaulting on its debt.
- **A Series of Attacks Increase Tension between Israel and Iran (Feb. 13):** Israeli Embassy personnel are the targets of bombers in the capitals of Georgia and India. The wife of an Israeli diplomat and a driver are injured. The attacks are similar to those recently used on Iranian nuclear scientists, attacks [Iran](#) has blamed on [Israel](#). **(Feb. 14):** A residential neighborhood in Bangkok is the site of a series of explosions. Several people are wounded. Thai authorities arrest two men with Iranian passports and find bombs in a rented house. Israel says the attacks are not significant enough to warrant a counterattack. **(Feb. 15):** Reacting to international sanctions against its nuclear program, Iran warns six European countries that it might cut them off from Iranian oil. The threat is made to the ambassadors of Italy, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Greece and Portugal at the Foreign Ministry in Tehran. Meanwhile, Iran announces advances to its nuclear program on state television. Iran says the nuclear program is for civilian use. Israel believes Iran's goal is to build nuclear weapons and has called on other nations, including the U.S., to help prevent Iran from doing so.
- **Report Exposes Assassination Plot against Putin (Feb. 26):** Russian television reports that an assassination plot against Vladimir Putin has been stopped. The report says that Russian and Ukrainian intelligence worked together and arrested two men after an apartment explosion in Odessa, the third largest city in Ukraine. A third would-be assassin is killed in the explosion. The report also says that the three men were sent by Chechen terrorist leader, Doku Umarov. The report is released one week before the presidential election on March 4. Putin is expected to win the election, despite his fading popularity and the recent protests. Also on February 26, thousands of demonstrators protest in downtown Moscow. The activists hold hands and wear white ribbons to express their frustration with Putin.

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **U.S. Economy Adds 243,000 Jobs in January; Unemployment falls to 8.3% (Feb. 3):** The U.S. economy adds 243,000 new jobs in January 2012, while unemployment fell to 8.3%, the lowest in three years. January is the second consecutive month that employment numbers are better than expected.
- **Komen Reverses Decision to Cut Off Planned Parenthood (Feb. 3):** After outrage and online protesting, the Susan G. Komen for the Cure foundation reverses its December 2011 decision to cut funding to Planned Parenthood. Komen announces they will restore their relationship with Planned Parenthood, which uses the funding to provide low-income women with breast cancer screenings. "We want to apologize to the American public for recent decisions that cast doubt upon our commitment to our mission of saving women's lives," Nancy G. Brinker, the founder of Komen, says in a statement.

## US

- **Romney Easily Wins Nevada Caucus (Feb. 4):** Four days after his first-place finish in the Florida primary, [Mitt Romney](#) wins the Nevada caucus by 50.1%. [Newt Gingrich](#) comes in second with 21.1%, followed by [Ron Paul](#) (18.8%) and [Rick Santorum](#) (10.0%). Nevada is Romney's third win, also having won New Hampshire and Florida. **(Feb. 7):** Rick Santorum wins the Minnesota and Colorado caucuses along with a nonbinding Missouri primary. The trifecta of victories is a surprise and raises more questions about Romney's ability to represent the Republican Party in the 2012 presidential election. In Colorado, Santorum wins 40.3% of the vote, followed by Romney (34.9%), Gingrich (12.8%), and Paul (11.8%). In Minnesota, Santorum wins with 44.9%, followed by Paul (27.1%), Romney (16.9%), Gingrich (10.8%). **(Feb.11):** Mitt Romney wins the Maine Republican Caucuses, receiving 39.2% of the vote. Ron Paul places a strong second with 35.7%, followed by Rick Santorum (17.7%) and Newt Gingrich (6.2%). Maine's caucuses were held over a one week period. **(Feb.28):** Mitt Romney wins the last two primaries of the month. In Arizona, he receives 47.3% of the vote. Rick Santorum comes in second with 26.6%, followed by Newt Gingrich (16.2%) and Ron Paul (8.4%). Romney wins his home state of Michigan by a much smaller margin. He receives 41.1% of the vote to Santorum's 37.9%, followed by Paul (11.6%) and Gingrich (6.5%).
- **Giants Beat Patriots in Super Bowl XLVI (Feb. 5):** In a rematch of the 2008 Super Bowl, the New York Giants beat the New England Patriots 21–17. An estimated 111.3 million people tune in to see quarterback [Eli Manning](#) lead the Giants to their second Super Bowl victory over [Tom Brady](#) and the Patriots in five years. The game edges out last year's Super Bowl (111.0 Million) to become the most-watched television show in U.S. history.
- **California Court Overturns Ban on Gay Marriage (Feb. 7):** A federal appeals court in [California](#) rejects the voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage passed in 2008. The court rules that the ban, known as Proposition 8, violates the constitution rights of gay men and lesbians in California. Both those against and supporters of the ban vow to take the case before the Supreme Court.
- **Military Allows Women Closer to Combat (Feb. 9):** After a yearlong review, the Pentagon announces that women will now be permanently assigned to battalions. In these ground units, women will be assigned such critical jobs as radio operators, medics, and tank mechanics. However, many women already serve in those jobs, in temporary status, due to demand in [Iraq](#) and [Afghanistan](#). The Pentagon's new ruling only makes these job assignments official and upholds the ban on women serving in combat tank units, Special Operations commando units and the infantry.
- **Obama Compromises on Contraception (Feb. 10):** [President Obama](#) announces a change to a recent rule requiring all health insurance plans, including those offered by Roman Catholic institutions, provide birth control coverage to female employees. The revision, an accommodation to calm furor over the new rule, will require that insurance companies, not religious institutions, offer free contraceptive coverage.
- **Pop Superstar Whitney Houston Dies at Age 48 (Feb. 11):** One of the biggest pop singing sensations of all-time, [Whitney Houston](#), is found dead in her room at the Beverly Hills Hilton. Her

death comes on the eve of the Grammy Awards and while a pre-Grammy party is being held downstairs at the hotel. The cause of Houston's death is not immediately known. One of the world's best-selling artists from the mid80s through the late 1990s, Houston is also known for her film work, including *The Bodyguard* (1992) with Kevin Costner. The film's soundtrack has sold more than 42 million copies in the world and includes "I Will Always Love You," arguably Houston's best loved song.

- **Washington State Legalizes Gay Marriage (Feb. 13):** [Washington](#) becomes the seventh state to legalize same-sex marriage as Gov. Christine Gregoire signs the legislation. Opponents are already working to block the bill and put the issue before voters in a referendum.
- **Obama Announces 2013 Budget Plan (Feb. 13):** President Obama issues a budget plan for 2013. The plan includes job-creation initiatives for infrastructure as well as job-training. To pay for the new jobs, Obama's plan calls for raising \$1.5 trillion over ten years from wealthy taxpayers and closing some corporate tax breaks, especially for gas and oil companies. The proposal comes up short as far as Obama's goal to cut the deficit in half by 2013. Republicans seize on this, calling it a broken promise in deficit reduction. With such strong opposition, especially on the issue of a higher tax for the wealthiest taxpayers, it is unlikely that major parts of Obama's budget will pass.

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **Fire Kills Hundreds at Prison in Honduras (Feb. 14):** Over 300 people are killed at a prison in [Honduras](#) when an inmate sets fire to his mattress. The fire quickly spreads. Most of the victims die in their cells, awaiting rescue. Some inmates, now fugitives, escape through the roof. Relatives, attempting to rescue loved ones, clash with police at the prison gate.

## MARCH 2012

## WORLD

- **Putin Wins Presidential Election in Russia (Mar. 4):** [Vladimir Putin](#) wins the presidential election in [Russia](#), claiming 64% of the vote. **(Mar. 5):** Observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe challenge the election, saying Putin won because he had no competition and government spending at his disposal. The United States and the European Union call for an investigation into fraud allegations. Meanwhile, thousands of demonstrators in Moscow hit the streets, chanting, "Russia without Putin." A similar demonstration happens in St. Petersburg. When protestors refuse to leave, police arrest them. In Moscow, 250 people are arrested. In St. Petersburg, 300 demonstrators are detained.
- **Netanyahu Travels to the U.S. for Crucial Meeting with Obama (Mar. 5):** Israel's Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) travels to Washington to discuss Iran with President [Obama](#). During the meeting, Obama encourages Netanyahu to give diplomacy and the European Union's oil sanctions a chance before taking military action. The two leaders fail to agree on a solution in dealing with Iran's nuclear threat; however, they do agree to attempt to diffuse the heated debate about [Iran](#) in the [U.S.](#) and [Israel](#). A White House official describes the meeting as "friendly, straightforward, and serious."
- **U.S. Soldier Kills 16 Afghan Civilians (Mar. 10):** A U.S. soldier goes on a door-to-door rampage, brutally killing 17 Afghan civilians, including nine children. The events immediately spark nationwide anti-U.S. protests in [Afghanistan](#). U.S. officials fear a resurgence of the Taliban and renewed support of the [Taliban](#) by Afghan citizens. The attack threatens to derail talks between the Karzai government, members of the Taliban, and U.S. officials that had recently begun. **(Mar. 15):** The Taliban announces they are suspending peace talks with the U.S. and the Karzai government. Meanwhile, President Karzai demands that the U.S. limit its troops to major bases by 2013. **(Mar. 23):** The U.S. military announces that Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales has been charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder. Bales is the soldier accused of killing the 16 Afghan civilians.

- **Man Kills Four at Jewish School in France (Mar. 19):** Mohammed Merah, a French man of Algerian descent, shoots and kills a rabbi, two of his children, and another child at a Jewish school in Toulouse, [France](#). Police believe Merah had earlier shot and killed three paratroopers. Merah claims to be a member of Al Qaeda and says he is seeking revenge for the killing of Palestinian children. **(Mar. 22):** After a 30-hour standoff, Merah is killed during a shootout with the French police in an apartment building in Toulouse.
- **Assad Agrees to Cease-Fire (Mar. 21):** The UN Security Council issues a presidential statement backing a plan outlined by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan that largely mirrors the proposal brokered in Nov. 2011 by the Arab League. The plan calls on the Syrian government to stop killing civilians, engage in talks with the opposition, withdraw forces from the streets, and begin a transition to a democratic, political system. Russia and [China](#), which had previously vetoed resolutions condemning [Bashar al-Assad](#), endorses the document. Assad accepts the statement and agrees to a cease-fire. He later says he will withdraw troops from cities by April 10. Many observers are skeptical, however, that he will make good on his promises. The UN estimates that about 9,000 people have been killed in the fighting up to this point in [Syria](#).

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **U.S. Economy Holds Steady in February (Mar. 9):** The U.S. economy adds 227,000 new jobs in February 2012. This marks the third consecutive month of job gains over 200,000. The unemployment holds steady at 8.3 percent, the same percentage as January. The report is seen as a sign that the economy in the U.S. is stable and continuing to recover from the recession.
- **Goldman Sachs Executive Resigns and Writes Scathing Editorial (Mar. 14):** Greg Smith, a Goldman Sachs executive director of equity derivatives, resigns from the company. On the same day, his resignation letter is published in the *New York Times* as an Op-Ed piece. In the letter, entitled "Why I Am Leaving Goldman Sachs", Smith describes the company as a place where profits come before the interests of clients. Smith, who lives in London, blames top management for what he describes as a culture of greed within the company.

## US

- **Super Tuesday Still Provides No Clear GOP Winner (Mar. 6):** In the Super Tuesday primaries, [Mitt Romney](#) wins six states, including a crucial victory in Ohio, [Rick Santorum](#) takes four states and [Newt Gingrich](#) wins one. Romney leads in delegates, but still does not have the commanding front-runner status which usually comes with Super Tuesday. In the general election battleground state of Ohio, Romney narrowly wins, getting 37.9 percent of the vote to Santorum's 37.1 percent. After strong showings in Virginia and North Dakota, [Ron Paul](#) is remains in the race. With his big win in Georgia and more southern primaries coming up, Gingrich vows to stay in the race as well. **(Mar. 10):** Santorum has a big win in the Kansas primary, receiving 51.2 percent of the vote. Romney comes in second (20.9), Gingrich third (14.4) and Paul fourth (12.6). Romney easily wins primaries in the Virgin Islands, Northern Marianas Islands and Guam. **(Mar. 13):** Santorum wins two big states, Alabama and Mississippi, which supports his argument that the GOP presidential nomination is now a two-man race. In Alabama, Santorum receives 35 percent of the vote, Romney and Gingrich tie for second with 29 percent, Paul comes in last with 5 percent. In Mississippi, Santorum gets 33 percent of the vote. Gingrich comes in second (31), Romney third (30), and Paul fourth (4). Romney wins Hawaii easily, receiving 45 percent of the vote. Santorum comes in second (25), Paul third (18), and Gingrich fourth (11). **(Mar. 18):** Mitt Romney easily wins the primary in Puerto Rico with 88 percent of the vote. Santorum comes in a distant second (8.5), followed by Newt Gingrich (2.2) and Ron Paul (1.3). **(Mar. 20):** Mitt Romney scores a commanding win in the Illinois primary, receiving 46.7 percent of the vote. Santorum comes in second (35.0), followed by Paul (9.3) and Gingrich (8.0). **(Mar. 24):** Rick Santorum wins the Louisiana primary with 49.0 percent of the vote. Romney is a distant second with 26.7 percent, followed by Newt Gingrich (15.9) and Ron Paul (6.1).

- **Fired Teacher Kills Headmistress (Mar. 6):** Shane Schumerth, a 28-year-old teacher at Episcopal High School in Jacksonville, Florida, returns to the campus after being fired and shoots and kills the headmistress, Dale Regan, with an assault rifle.
- **Florida Police Chief Steps Down as Protests over the Trayvon Martin Case Continue (Mar. 22):** Bill Lee Jr., the chief of police in Sanford, [Florida](#), announces he is stepping down. Lee has been overseeing the investigation into the fatal shooting of 17-year-old [Trayvon Martin](#), a case which has captured national attention. One the same day, thousands gather at a rally in Sanford to protest the way the police department has handled the case. The protest is streamed live on the internet. Other rallies are scheduled around the country via Facebook and Twitter as people continue to call for the arrest of George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer who claims he shot Martin in self-defense.
- **U.S. Supreme Court Reviews the Affordable Health Care Act (Mar. 26):** The U.S. Supreme Court begins reviewing the constitutionality of the Affordable Health Care Act, President Obama's health care law. **(Mar. 27):** The Supreme Court suggests that Obama's health care law may be unconstitutional. **(Mar. 28):** The judges reach a decision on a ruling over the Affordable Health Care Act, but the verdict will not be known until June 2012.

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **Tornadoes Rip through the South and the Midwest (Mar. 2):** Several tornadoes and severe thunderstorms hit 17 states, causing at least 27 deaths and injuring hundreds. Southern [Indiana](#), northern [Alabama](#), [Kentucky](#), [Tennessee](#), and southern [Ohio](#) are among the hardest areas hit. The tornadoes and storms are caused by a warm, unseasonable air mass mixing with colder air.
- **Mysterious Noises Shake up Wisconsin Town (Mar. 21):** Around 400 people attend a meeting in Clintonville, [Wisconsin](#), to express their concerns over mysterious night noises that appear to be coming from underground. Police receive hundreds of calls about the noises, which started on Sunday, March 18. Citizens describe the noises as loud booms, as if someone is beating on a pipe underground. According to some, the booms are so loud that at times the ground shakes and windows rattle. Authorities have no source or explanation for the noises. **(Mar. 22):** Authorities are now saying the cause of the ongoing noise is coming from minor earthquakes. Seismic monitors are picking them up, including one which had a magnitude of 1.5 in the Clintonville area on Tuesday night. Authorities say the minor earthquakes are amplified by the underground bedrock in the area of Wisconsin. Addressing Clintonville residents, city administrator Lisa Kuss explains, "In other places in the United States, a 1.5 earthquake would not be felt. But the type of rock that Wisconsin has transmits seismic energy very well."

## APRIL 2012

### WORLD

- **Aung San Suu Kyi Wins Seat in Myanmar Parliament (April 1):** In [Myanmar's](#) 2012 elections, [Aung San Suu Kyi](#), who in October 2010 was released after spending nearly 20 years under house arrest, wins a seat in the parliament. Overall, the opposition dominates the parliamentary election. The National League of Democracy prevails in 43 out of 45 districts that held races, including the capital, Naypyidaw. It is a stunning victory for the opposition-and an equally symbolic defeat for the military. Observers speculate that the opposition's victory will either prompt military rulers to respond to the will of the people and enact change or view the victory as a threat to its power.
- **North Korea Prepares to Launch Missile despite International Disapproval (April 11):** [North Korea](#) prepares to launch a ballistic missile, insisting that the launch is only for the purpose of sending a satellite into orbit. However, the missile launch is seen by the international community as a violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, which insist that North Korea does not use ballistic missile technology. The launch also comes just weeks after North Korea signed

an accord with the [United States](#) to limit its nuclear activities. **(Apr. 12):** The country attempts to launch the rocket carrying a satellite into orbit, but the rocket blows up seconds after the launch. The failure is an embarrassment to Kim Jong-un, who had days earlier been elevated to the position as leader of the national defense commission—the nation's most powerful government agency. The launch coincides with the celebration of the 100th birthday of North Korea's founder and Kim Jong-un's grandfather, Kim Il-sung. In response to the attempt, the U.S. suspends 240,000 tons of food aid to North Korea.

- **Uncertain Cease-Fire Begins in Syria (April 12):** A United Nations backed cease-fire begins in [Syria](#). No attacks by government forces are reported. **(Apr. 13):** Thousands of Syrians protest across the country. The demonstrations are seen as a test for the day-old cease-fire. **(Apr. 18):** While United Nations representatives attempt to reach an agreement with the Syria on how to monitor the cease-fire, government forces attack the city of Homs. **(Apr. 19):** Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, writes in a letter to the Security Council that Syria has not implemented all the steps of the cease-fire.
- **Blind Dissident Seeks Refuge at American Embassy (April 22):** Chen Guangcheng, a blind lawyer and one of [China](#)'s most well-known dissidents, escapes from his rural home where he had been under house arrest since 2010. Chen goes to the American Embassy in Beijing where he asks U.S. officials for help

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **Yahoo Cuts 2,000 Jobs (Apr. 4):** Yahoo announces it is laying off 2,000 employees, 14% of its staff, as part of a reorganization plan. The reorganizing is a plan from new chief executive, Scott Thompson. In a press release, Thompson explains, "Our goal is to get back to our core purpose — putting our users and advertisers first — and we are moving aggressively to achieve that goal."
- **Jobs Recovery Slows in March (Apr. 6):** The U.S economic recovery slows down in March, adding only 120,000 new jobs. The news is disappointing even though the unemployment rate falls to 8.2 percent, a three-year low. March's jobs increase is the smallest since [October 2011](#). **(Apr. 27):** The U.S. economy grows at an annual rate of 2.2 percent, according to 2012's first quarter report. The growth is largely due to consumer spending and a rise in construction on residential buildings due to the unseasonably warm weather. The growth is good news, but it is slower than the previous quarter's 3 percent.

## US

- **Seven Die in California School Shooting (Apr. 2):** One Goh, a 43-year-old former student at Oikos University, a Christian school in Oakland, Calif., opens fire on the campus, killing seven people and wounding several others.
- **Romney Edges Closer to the GOP Nomination (Apr. 3):** [Mitt Romney](#) takes three more primaries, inching closer to the nomination. Romney wins Wisconsin with 42.5 percent of the vote, followed by [Rick Santorum](#) with 37.6 percent, [Ron Paul](#) with 11.7 percent, and [Newt Gingrich](#) with 6.1 percent. In Maryland, Romney wins by a wider margin. He receives 49.1 percent of the vote, followed by Santorum (28.9), Gingrich (10.9) and Paul (9.5). Romney's biggest victory comes in the District of Columbia where his main rival, Rick Santorum, is not on the ballot. Romney wins 70.2 percent of the vote, followed by Paul (12.0%) and Gingrich (10.7%). **(Apr. 10):** Rick Santorum announces his decision to end his campaign for the Republican nomination. His decision comes after taking Easter weekend off from the campaign and after his youngest daughter, who suffers from a chromosomal disorder, was hospitalized again.
- **Secret Service Agents Fired over Misconduct in Colombia (Apr. 14):** Eleven Secret Service agents are let go after accusations of misconduct while in [Colombia](#) preparing for President Obama's visit. The misconduct occurs before Obama arrived to attend the Summit of the Americas. The accusations of misconduct include prostitution, which is legal in Colombia.



## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **Tornadoes Rip Through Dallas-Fort Worth (Apr. 4):** Two large tornadoes hit the [Dallas-Fort Worth](#) area, knocking down houses, power lines, and tractor-trailers, injuring at least a dozen people. More than 6.3 million people live in Dallas-Fort Worth, which is the fourth largest metropolitan area in the United States.
- **Earthquakes Trigger Tsunami Warnings in Indonesia (Apr. 11):** Two earthquakes hit off the coast of [Indonesia](#), triggering tsunami warnings. The first quake strikes with a magnitude of 8.6, sending tremors through [India](#), [Malaysia](#), [Singapore](#) and [Thailand](#). A second quake, the largest of many aftershocks, hits with the magnitude of 8.2, but there is no tsunami and no serious damage.

## MAY 2012

## WORLD

- **President Obama and Karzai Sign Agreement (May 1):** On the first anniversary of the killing of [Osama bin Laden](#), [President Obama](#) makes a surprise visit to Afghanistan. During his visit, Obama signs an agreement with [President Karzai](#) that promises the U.S. will provide [Afghanistan](#) development assistance for 10 years after troops withdraw in 2013. From Afghanistan, Obama gives a speech, addressing Americans directly, saying, "The goal that I set, to defeat Al Qaeda and deny it the chance to rebuild, is now within our reach. We have a clear path to fulfill our mission in Afghanistan."
- **Blind Dissident Sparks Diplomatic Crisis (May 2):** Chinese dissident Chen Guangcheng leaves the U.S embassy to receive medical treatment at a hospital in Beijing for an injured foot. The Chinese government agrees to relocate him away from Shandong Province, his hometown, where Chen's family had been attacked. The government also promises that Chen will be allowed to pursue his law studies at a university. Chen's friends question the validity of the government's promises. At the hospital, Chen admits he left the U.S. embassy in part because the Chinese government officials threatened his wife's life if he remained there and, despite previous reports, he desires to leave to [China](#). **(May 4):** Chen requests help from Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is in China for meetings on economic and security issues. Chen revises his request, asking if he and his family can go to the U.S. temporarily instead of receiving permanent asylum. Clinton and the Obama administration work quickly to negotiate with Chinese officials to avoid any increase in tension between the two governments. During her visit, Clinton says that progress is being made "to help him have the future that he wants." **(May 5):** China agrees to allow Chen to apply to study at a university in the United States, a move which is quickly praised by Clinton. **(May 19):** Chen arrives in New York City after leaving Beijing with his wife and two children. He speaks at a press conference where he says he is grateful to the American Embassy. He also thanks Chinese officials for "dealing with the situation with restraint and calm." Chen will attend New York University.
- **François Hollande Becomes President of France (May 6):** [François Hollande](#) defeats [Nicolas Sarkozy](#) to become President of France. With the victory, Hollande becomes the first Socialist president since [François Mitterrand](#)'s term ended in 1995. Hollande's victory is seen as a sign that France has grown weary of Germany's dominance with the economic austerity policy in the euro zone.
- **Putin Becomes President of Russia for the Third Time (May 6):** The day before [Vladimir Putin](#)'s third inauguration as [Russia](#)'s president, demonstrations turn violent with 20,000 antigovernment demonstrators battling police near the Kremlin. The fighting includes smoke bombs, bottles, and sticks. **(May 7):** While Putin officially takes office, the protests continue and police arrest 120 people. The violence is a dramatic shift because even though antigovernment protests have been going on for months, the demonstrations had been peaceful until now. Dressed in riot gear, police search cafes and restaurants for protesters. The demonstrators taken into police custody are sent to military draft offices.

- **Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu Calls for Early Elections (May 6):** During a speech, Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) calls for early elections in [Israel](#). In his speech, Netanyahu vows to "form the broadest government that is possible." The official reason for early elections is the upcoming expiration of the Tal Law, which exempts ultra-Orthodox Jews from Israeli Army service. However, some election analysts believe that Netanyahu wants to act swiftly while his Likud Party is polling strongly. **(May 8):** Two days after the call for early elections, Netanyahu forms a unity government with Shaul Mofaz, the newly elected chief of Kadima, the opposition party. The new coalition gives Netanyahu a very large legislative majority. It also ends the need for early elections. Mofaz is made deputy prime minister under the terms of the agreement. Some see the new coalition as a way for Netanyahu to gain even more political power. More than 1,000 people march in Tel Aviv to protest the alliance. Among the demonstrators is former Kadima chief, [Tzipi Livni](#). The new coalition is one of the largest in Israel's history. Netanyahu promises that the coalition will rewrite the Tal Law, pass a budget, revise the electoral process and move forward on the peace process.
- **Attack in Syria Kills Dozens of Children (May 26):** Thirty-two children under age ten are killed when the Syrian government attacks the village of Houla. The United Nations blames the deaths on government tanks and artillery, saying many of the victims were executed in their homes. [President Assad](#), however, claims terrorists carried out the attack. Eleven nations, including the U.S., expel Syrian diplomats, and the UN Security Council unanimously criticizes the "outrageous use of force" against residents and the government's role in the attack. Russia, typically protective of [Syria](#) and reluctant to criticize the government, signs on to the UN statement.

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **Jobs Recovery Still Slow in April (May 4):** April is another slow month for job growth. Only 115,000 jobs are added in April, less than economists' predictions. The unemployment rate does decrease from March's 8.2 percent to 8.1 percent in April, but this is not because more jobs are created. The decrease in unemployment is due to 342,000 workers leaving the labor force.
- **JPMorgan Chase Announces Two Billion Dollar Loss (May 10):** JPMorgan Chase, the largest bank in the U.S., announces it has lost more than two billion dollars in trading. In a statement, Chief Executive Jamie Dimon blames the loss on "errors, sloppiness and bad judgment." Dimon also says that the losses can "easily get worse." **(May 14):** Ina Drew retires from JPMorgan Chase. Drew is the chief investment officer responsible for the trading that led to the two billion dollar loss of the bank's own money. The bank announces that it will form a team of senior executives to investigate the loss.
- **Facebook Shares Go Public to Disappointing Results (May 17):** Facebook becomes a public company, raising \$14 billion in its initial public offering, at \$38 a share, which gives the company a value of \$104 billion. This makes Facebook the third-largest public offering in the history of the U.S., behind General Motors and Visa. **(May 18):** Facebook shares start selling at \$42.05, but close at \$38.23, only 0.6 percent above the I.P.O. price, a disappointing start to going public.

## US

- **Gingrich Ends GOP Nomination Campaign (May 2):** [Newt Gingrich](#) official ends his campaign for the GOP nomination. Gingrich makes the announcement during an appearance in Arlington, Virginia. In the speech, Gingrich says, "Suspending the campaign does not mean suspending citizenship." He throws his weight behind Romney, saying there is no choice between Romney and Obama who he calls, "the most radical American president in history."
- **North Carolina Votes to Ban Gay Marriage (May 8):** North Carolina passes an amendment to ban gay marriage by a margin of more than twenty percent. By doing so, [North Carolina](#) becomes the 30th state in the U.S. to include an anti-gay marriage amendment in its constitution.
- **President Obama Declares Support for Gay Marriage (May 9):** During an interview at the White House with ABC's Robin Roberts, [President Obama](#) declares his support for gay marriage for the first time. Regarding the issue, he says, "I've just concluded that for me personally, it is

important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married." With the declaration, Obama becomes the first U.S. president to back gay marriage while in office.

- **White Births Are No Longer the Majority (May 17):** The Census Bureau [releases data](#) stating that over a 12-month period, which ended in July 2011, Asians, blacks, Hispanics and mixed races made up 50.4 percent of all births, becoming a majority for the first time in the history of the United States. The largest single share of total births still belongs to whites with 49.6 percent. Also, according to the Census Bureau, whites remain the majority in the overall U.S. population at 63.4 percent.

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **6.0 Magnitude Earthquake Strikes Northern Italy (May 20):** A 6.0 magnitude earthquake hits the northern region of Emilia Romagna, killing at least five people. Dozens more are injured and many historic buildings are damaged. At least 3,000 people are left homeless. A 5.1 magnitude aftershock causes further damage to the region.
- **New Data Finds Prostate Cancer Screenings Harmful (May 21):** A government task force concludes that the prostate specific antigen blood test, also called the P.S.A. test, is more harmful than beneficial. The task force reports that one man in every 1,000 who takes the P.S.A. test may avoid death due to the screening, but one man for every 3,000 will die prematurely due to complications from prostate cancer treatment. The findings are met with resistance, especially from various medical groups, especially prostate cancer advocacy groups.

## JUNE 2012

## WORLD

- **Mubarak Sentenced to Life in Prison (June 2):** Former President of Egypt, [Hosni Mubarak](#), is sentenced to life in prison for being an accomplice in the killing of unarmed protestors during the January 2011 demonstrations. The Judge dismisses corruption charges against Mubarak because the statute of limitations has run out. Lower level officials are acquitted. Angry over the verdict, thousands of demonstrators hit the streets in Cairo and other cities. [Egypt's](#) military-led government announces it will appeal the verdict.
- **United Nations Declares Civil War in Syria (June 8):** United Nation monitors find evidence of mass atrocity in the small village of Qubeir. The monitors post footage online, providing the first visual evidence from a neutral source of the crimes occurring in [Syria](#). **(June 9):** Troops clash with rebel fighters in Dara'a. At least 17 people are killed, including women and children. **(June 10):** At least 38 people are killed in Homs as government forces attempt to regain control of rebel-held areas. **(June 12):** After being attacked and fired on by a mob, the United Nation monitors leave their fact-finding mission in Syria. A United Nations official declares that Syria is in a state of civil war. U.S. Secretary of State [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) accuses Russia of giving the Syrian government attack helicopters to use against the rebels. **(June 23):** Syria confirms that its military forces shot down a Turkish military jet the day before. President Abdullah Gul of [Turkey](#) responds by saying that his country will do "whatever is necessary" in retaliation. The incident increases tension between the two countries. Turkey already supports the Syrian rebels' attempt to overthrow the government.
- **Maria Sharapova and Rafael Nadal Win French Open (June 11):** [Maria Sharapova](#), the 25-year-old tennis superstar, wins her first French Open women's championship. She beat first time finalist, Sara Errani, 6-3, 6-2. With the win, Sharapova achieves a career Grand Slam, winning all four majors in her still young career. She becomes only the tenth woman to complete the career grand slam, joining such elite company as [Steffi Graf](#), [Margaret Court](#), [Martina Navratilova](#), [Chris Evert](#), and [Serena Williams](#). By reaching the final, Sharapova also recaptures the number one world ranking. The win and return to the number one ranking are seen as an improbable, but gutsy comeback after Sharapova suffered a career-threatening shoulder injury in 2007. [Rafael](#)

[Nadal](#), of Spain, beat [Novak Djokovic](#) 6-4, 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 to take the men's crown for a record seventh time. In doing so, Nadal breaks the record held by [Bjorn Borg](#) for most French Open men's singles championships.

- **A New Government Forms in Greece (June 17):** The Center-right New Democracy party prevails in [Greece's](#) parliamentary elections, winning 29.7 percent of the vote. The far-left Syriza party, which strongly opposed the terms of the EU bailout, takes 26.9 percent, and Pasok, the Greek Socialist party, places well behind with 12.3 percent. **(June 20):** New Democracy quickly forms a coalition with Pasok and the Democratic Left, and Antonis Samaras, the leader of New Democracy, is sworn in as prime minister. Samaras, who has been cool to the austerity measures and has advocated a course of growth rather than cuts, says he plans to renegotiate some of the terms of the country's bail-out packages.
- **Morsi Declared President of Egypt (June 24):** Election regulators declare the Muslim Brotherhood Candidate Mohamed Morsi the winner of [Egypt's](#) first competitive presidential election. Morsi becomes the country's fifth president and first from outside the military. Morsi, who won with 51.7 percent of the vote, is also the first Islamist elected leader of an Arab state.

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **U.S. Adds Fewest Jobs in a Year (June 1):** Only 69,000 jobs are added in May, the fewest in a year. Also, the unemployment rate rises from April's 8.1 percent to 8.2 percent in May, the first increase in 11 months. The bad news also extends to the Dow Jones industrial average which fell 274 points and erased most of the 2012 gains.

## US

- **Scott Walker Wins Recall Election in Wisconsin (June 5):** [Wisconsin](#) Gov. [Scott Walker](#) easily wins a recall election against his 2010 opponent, Tom Barrett. Receiving 53 percent of the vote, Walker becomes the first governor in U.S. history to win a recall election. The win is a huge loss for Democrats and labor unions. Walker has been in the national spotlight since he took office in January 2011 for his ongoing battle with unions over his plan to trim the state budget by decreasing collective bargaining rights and benefits for public workers.
- **Giffords's Chosen Successor Wins Special Election (June 12):** One of [Gabrielle Giffords's](#) top aides, Ron Barber, wins a special election to replace her in Congress. Also wounded in the 2011 shooting and Giffords's choice to succeed her, Barber defeats Republican rival Jesse Kelly. In the closely watched special election, Barber receives 52.2 percent of the vote to Kelly's 45.5 percent.
- **Miami Beats Oklahoma City for NBA Title (June 21):** The Miami Heat win their second NBA championship in franchise history, beating the Oklahoma City Thunder 121–106 in Game 5. The win is the first championship for NBA star [LeBron James](#). It is the second championship for [Dwyane Wade](#).
- **Supreme Court Reaches Landmark Decision on Arizona's Immigration Law (June 25):** The United States Supreme Court rules against all but one provision in Arizona's 2010 immigration law. The court finds that several provisions conflict with federal laws, including making arrests without warrants. The one provision the Supreme Court upholds is the one which allows the [Arizona](#) police to check the immigration status for any person they arrest. The decision is seen as a partial victory for the Obama administration which had sued to block the law.
- **Supreme Court Upholds Obama's Individual Health Care Mandate (June 28):** The Supreme Court [upholds the individual mandate](#) in President Obama's health care law. The ruling is a victory for [President Obama](#) and a loss for the twenty six states that sued over the individual mandate, which requires that individuals buy health insurance by 2014 or face a fine. The Supreme Court rules to uphold the individual mandate as a tax.

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **Wildfires Spread in New Mexico and Colorado (June 1):** A massive wildfire continues to spread in [New Mexico](#). The fire is burning through 190,000 acres of the Gila National Forest. More than 1,200 firefighters are on hand, trying to battle the wildfire, already the largest in the state's history. **(June 11):** A wildfire burns across 60 square miles in the [Colorado](#) mountains, 15 miles west of Fort Collins. The fire destroys more than 100 buildings and houses. The body of a 62-year-old woman is found among the damage caused by the fire. In New Mexico, hundreds of people flee a wildfire burning near Ruidoso. The fire burns 54 square miles wide. Meanwhile, the largest fire New Mexico's history continues to burn through the Gila National Forest. According to officials that fire is raging across 434 square miles and is only 37 percent contained. **(June 27):** At least 32,000 people are evacuated in Colorado as a wildfire burns close to Colorado Springs. The fire is one of nearly a dozen burning in Colorado. Military aircraft tankers are called in to help battle the fires. Surveying the fire near Colorado Springs from the air, Gov. John Hickenlooper says, "This is the worse fire season in the history of Colorado."
- **Plane Crash in Nigeria Kills More Than 150 People (June 3):** A plane goes down in a crowded neighborhood in Lagos, [Nigeria](#). The pilot reports engine trouble right before the plane crashes. All of the 153 passengers are killed as well as an unknown number of people on the ground

## JULY 2012

### WORLD

- **Unrest Continues in Syria as Soldiers Defect (July 2):** In one of the largest military defections since the uprising in [Syria](#) began, eighty-five Syrian soldiers flee to southern [Turkey](#). The defecting soldiers include one general and over a dozen lower-ranking officers. **(July 3):** Syrian President [Bashar al-Assad](#) tries to diffuse tension with Turkey by expressing regret over the Turkish warplane that his forces shot down last month. The Cumhuriyet, a Turkish newspaper, reports that Assad said his men believed it was an Israeli jet and that he won't allow tensions between Syria and Turkey to deteriorate into an "armed conflict." **(July 11):** Syrian ambassador to Iraq, Nawaf Fares, defects from Baghdad. In doing so, Fares becomes the first prominent figure to publicly denounce the Syrian government. **(July 12):** According to opposition activists, more than 200 people are killed by Syrian government forces in Tremseh, a Sunni village near Hama. **(July 18):** In Damascus, a suicide bomber attacks a meeting of senior ministers and security officials. Syrian's defense minister and President Bashar al-Assad's brother-in-law are killed in the attack. **(July 19):** Fighting becomes more violent in [Damascus](#) between the Army and opposition forces. Residents begin to flee the capital.
- **Roger Federer and Serena Williams Reclaim Wimbledon Titles (July 7–8):** [Serena Williams](#) beat first time finalist, Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska 6-1, 5-7, 6-2 to win her fifth Wimbledon women's singles title. Later in the same day, Serena and her sister [Venus Williams](#) win the women's doubles championship for the fifth time. [Roger Federer](#) breaks the heart of all Brits, including Scotland's Andy Murray when he defeats Murray 4-6, 7-5, 6-3, 6-4 in the men's singles championship. With the win, Federer claims his seventh Wimbledon singles title, tying the record shared by [Pete Sampras](#) and William Renshaw. The win also means Federer will once again be the #1 ranked player in the world. Great Britain hasn't had a men's singles champion since [Fred Perry](#) in 1936.

- **Libya Holds First National Election Since Qaddafi (July 7):** For the first time since [Col. Muammar Qaddafi](#) was ousted, Libyans vote in a national election. At least two people are killed due to armed assaults on voting centers. In the city of Kufur, some voting centers close due to an ongoing battle between tribes. Despite these obstacles, turnout is over 60 percent. **(July 8):** Early election results show a coalition led by Mahmoud Jibril is ahead of Islamist parties in votes. Jibril is a Western-educated political scientist. His coalition's lead is a sign that [Libya](#), unlike [Egypt](#) and [Tunisia](#), is not trending toward Islamist rule.
- **Hezbollah Is Accused for Attack on Israeli Tourists (July 18):** Outside a Bulgarian airport, a suicide bomber attacks a tour bus of Israelis passengers who were in [Bulgaria](#) on vacation. Along with the bomber, five Israelis and the Bulgarian driver are killed. Dozens more passengers are injured. Immediately following the attack, [Israel](#) blames Iran-backed militia, [Hezbollah](#), and promises to retaliate. Of the attack, Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) says in a statement, "All the signs lead to Iran. Only in the past few months we have seen Iranian attempts to attack Israelis in Thailand, India, Georgia, Kenya, Cyprus and other places. Eighteen years exactly after the blast at the Jewish community center in Argentina, murderous Iranian terror continues to hit innocent people. This is an Iranian terror attack that is spreading throughout the entire world. Israel will react powerfully against Iranian terror."
- **Russia and China Veto U. N. Sanctions on Syria (July 19):** [Russia](#) and [China](#) veto a United Nations Security Council resolution to impose sanctions on the Syrian government. The proposed U.N. sanctions are intended to push Syria into putting a peace plan into action and ending its 17-month-old conflict. The resolution is proposed by Britain and backed by ten other council members, including France and the United States. Russian ambassador Vitaly I. Churkin explains the Russian veto to the council, "We simply cannot accept a document which would open the path for pressure of sanctions and further to external military involvement in Syrian domestic affairs."
- **2012 Summer Games Open with an Unconventional Ceremony (July 27):** Some 80,000 people in Olympic Stadium and billions worldwide watch as Britain celebrates its milestones and points of pride, from the Industrial Revolution to its National Health System to Harry Potter in a high-tech ceremony directed by filmmaker Danny Boyle. One of the most talked about events featured stunt doubles for James Bond actor Daniel Craig and Queen Elizabeth jumping from an airplane and parachuting into the stadium. (July 31): Michael Phelps wins his 19th Olympic medal, becoming the winningest Olympic athlete of all time. He surpassed the record held by Russian gymnast Larisa Latynina.
- **India Hit By Massive Power Failure (July 30):** More than half of India's population—700 million people living in 22 out of the country's 28 states—loses power. The cause of the power failure is not determined. For the most part, Indians take the blackout in stride, as such events are not unusual in a country whose power grid is still in development.

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **European Central Bank Cuts Lending Rates to a Record Low (July 5):** In an effort to prevent further deterioration of the euro zone crisis, the European Central Bank cut its benchmark rate

from 1 percent to 0.75 percent. The cut brings the bank's lending rate to its lowest point ever. The hope is that the move will unblock the flow of credit.

- **Another Weak Month for U.S. Economy (July 6):** Only 80,000 jobs are added to the U.S. economy in June. The unemployment rate remains at 8.2, the same as the month before. The bleak report causes the Dow Jones industrial average to drop 124 points.

## US

- **George Zimmerman's Bail Set at \$1 Million (July 5):** Bail has been set at \$1 million for George Zimmerman, the neighborhood watch volunteer who killed [Trayvon Martin](#) earlier this year. Zimmerman is in jail, awaiting trial for second-degree murder. This is the second time bail has been set for Zimmerman after a judge revoked Zimmerman's \$150,000 bond last month because Zimmerman and his wife misled the court about how much money they had during a hearing.
- **At Least 12 Killed in Colorado Theater Shooting (July 20):** During a midnight screening of *The Dark Knight Rises*, a gunman opens fire on the crowded theater in a Denver suburb. At least 12 people are killed and 38 others are wounded. James Holmes set off a smoke device in the front of the theater before opening fire. Directly after the incident, Holmes, age 24, is arrested in a parking lot behind the theater. (July 30): Holmes is arraigned by Colorado prosecutors and charged with 142 counts, including first degree murder, attempted murder, and possession of explosives.

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **Physicists Find Elusive Key to Universe Particle (July 4):** Ending what has become the most expensive and longest search in science, physicists discover a new subatomic particle. The particle appears to be the [Higgs boson](#), the elusive last key to understanding why we have life and diversity in the universe. The Higgs boson is the missing part of the [Standard Model](#), equations that have stood as law of the cosmos for thirty-five years. The announcement comes from physicists at CERN, the world's largest particle physics laboratory, located outside Geneva, [Switzerland](#).
- **More Than One Hundred Die in Russia Due to Floods (July 7):** A major rainstorm creates massive flooding and kills at least 104 people. One of the worst weather-related disasters to hit [Russia](#) in years, the storm unleashes 11 inches of rain on Russia's Black Sea coast. State television reports that it is one of the country's worst weather-related disasters in years.

## AUGUST 2012

## WORLD

- **Syria Sinks Further into Civil War (August):** Kofi Annan resigns as UN special envoy to [Syria](#), citing the Syrian government's refusal to implement his peace plan, intensifying violence by rebels, and discord within the Security Council. He says "without serious, purposeful and united international pressure, including from the powers of the region, it is impossible for me, or anyone, to compel the Syrian government in the first place, and also the opposition, to take the steps necessary to begin a political process." He also says it is imperative that President [Bashar al-Assad](#) step down. **(August 6):** Prime Minister Riyad Farid Hijab and at least two other ministers defect to Jordan and announce that they would support the opposition. They are the highest-level defections to date and are clear signs that Assad's hold on power is dwindling. **(Aug. 15):** The crisis in Syria spills into [Lebanon](#) when more than 20 Syrians are kidnapped in Lebanese territory. **(Aug. 16):** The United Nations Security Council terminates its observer mission in Syria due to the increasing violence. **(Aug. 20):** [President Obama](#) vows military action against the Syrian

government if biological or chemical weapons in Syria are moved. It is the biggest threat of U.S. intervention so far. **(Aug. 26):** In Daraya, a suburb of Damascus, mass burials are discovered. The Local Coordination Committees reports that at least 630 residents of Daraya have been killed in the last week. Residents say that the Syrian army closed off the city before pounding it with gunfire and pulling residents from their houses.

- **Egypt Launches Airstrike in Sinai Peninsula (Aug. 8):** [Egypt](#) launches its first airstrike in years in the Sinai Peninsula. Attack helicopters strike at gunmen in retaliation after 16 soldiers were shot and killed on August 5 at an Egyptian Army checkpoint. The attack on the Egyptian soldiers is President [Mohammed Morsi](#)'s first crisis. Morsi orders an airstrike on the Sinai, which kills about 20 militants. **(Aug. 12):** Morsi reassigns several senior generals and the heads of each service branch of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), an influential force in Egypt that has effectively been in control since the fall of [Hosni Mubarak](#) and recently has been in a power struggle with the new civilian government. Defense minister Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, a power broker in Egypt, is among the leaders Morsi stripped of his position. Morsi also voids a constitutional declaration imposed by the military that limited the role of the president, and implements a new order that vastly expands his power and that of the legislature. The bold move sends a clear message that the civilian government has taken back control of the country.
- **Ecuador Grants Asylum to Julian Assange (Aug. 16):** Ecuador announces that it is granting political asylum to WikiLeaks founder [Julian Assange](#). Assange has been staying at the country's Embassy in London while waiting for the decision. The decision further strains relations between [Ecuador](#) and [Great Britain](#). Foreign Minister Ricardo Patiño announces the asylum at a news conference, where he says, "The government of Ecuador, faithful to its tradition of protecting those who seek refuge in its territory or in its diplomatic missions, has decided to grant diplomatic asylum to Julian Assange." Patiño adds that Assange might face the death penalty if tried in the [United States](#). Britain continues to reject the request for Assange to be moved from the embassy in London to Ecuador. Britain maintains its legal obligation to extradite Assange to [Sweden](#) where he is still wanted for questioning over accusations of sexual assault.
- **Punk Band Is Convicted of Hooliganism in Russia (Aug. 17):** The three members of the all-female punk band Pussy Riot are convicted of hooliganism and sentenced to two years in a penal colony for performing an anti-Putin song on the altar of Moscow's main Orthodox cathedral. At the sentencing of one of the most high-profile trials that [Russia](#) has seen in years, activists outside of the courthouse protest, chanting "Free Pussy Riot!" Police arrest dozens of protestors. Rallies supporting the three women are held in cities around the world, including London, New York and Paris. Immediately following the verdict, the United States, other governments, and human rights groups criticize the decision, calling the sentence severe. The women's lawyers say they will appeal the decision.
- **U.S. Military Death Toll Reaches Two Thousand in Afghanistan (Aug. 21):** The United States military reaches 2,000 deaths in [Afghanistan](#), based on The New York Times of Department of Defense records. It is an unfortunate milestone in the nearly 11-year-old war.
- **Russia enters the World Trade Organization (Aug. 22):** After 19 years of negotiations, [Russia](#) becomes the newest member of the [World Trade Organization](#). Russia has cut tariffs on imports and set limits on export duties as part of a series of reforms enacted to qualify for entry into the international trading arena. Expectations of membership include an increase of 3% in the Russian GDP, more foreign investment, and a doubling of U.S. exports to Russia-as long as trade relations are normalized through the lifting of the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment.

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **Another Weak Month for U.S. Economy (Aug. 3):** After three months of stagnant hiring, U.S. employers add 163,000 jobs in July. However, the unemployment rate rises from 8.2 in June to 8.3 in July. Still, the increase in jobs is seen as a positive sign that the U.S. economy might bounce back from its midyear slump. The Dow Jones industrial average rises 247 points after the report is released.



## US

- **Six People Are Killed in Wisconsin Sikh Temple Shooting (Aug. 5):** Wade Michael Page, age 40, opens fire in a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, [Wisconsin](#), killing six people and wounding three others. Police shoot and kill Page, an Army veteran who had ties to the white supremacist movement.
- **Romney Chooses Ryan as His Running Mate (Aug. 11):** [Mitt Romney](#) introduces Wisconsin Representative [Paul D. Ryan](#) as his presidential running mate during an appearance in Norfolk, Virginia. The announcement immediately energizes Romney's campaign, which raises \$1.2 million dollars in just four hours after the announcement. When introducing Ryan, Romney says, "Paul Ryan has become an intellectual leader of the Republican Party. He understands the fiscal challenges facing America."
- **Bad Weather Delays the Republican National Convention (Aug. 28):** Due to [Hurricane Isaac](#), major events at the Republican National Convention begin a day late. Held in Tampa, [Florida](#), convention highlights include a keynote speech from Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey and a personal address from Ann Romney who assured female voters that they can trust her husband. In her speech, she says, "This man will not fail. This man will not let us down. This man will lift up America." Mitt Romney is nominated as the [Republican Party's](#) choice for the 45th president of the United States

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **rover Lands on Mars (Aug. 5):** A plutonium-powered rover named [Curiosity](#) successfully lands on [Mars](#). Larger than earlier rovers, Curiosity will spend two years examining the land, looking for evidence that conditions on Mars are fit for life. NASA celebrates the mission with a post-landing news conference. Associate Administrator for NASA's science mission directorate, John M. Grunsfeld says, "There are many out in the community who say NASA has lost its way, that we don't know how to explore. I want you to look around tonight, at those folks with the blue shirts and think about what we've achieved."
- **Floods Submerge Manila (Aug. 7):** Floods from torrential rains submerge Manila, capital of [the Philippines](#), and its suburbs. More than 50 people are killed in the storms and flooding. At least 250,000 are evacuated in the worst flood the area has seen since 2009 when two storms killed more than 900 people.
- **West Nile Claims Lives of Nearly Two Dozen (Aug. 24):** Health officials in [Texas](#) confirm that 640 people have been infected with West Nile. Twenty three people have died from the virus. The outbreak is most severe in Dallas County, but the virus has spread across Texas and into other parts of the country. With ten deaths and over 200 people sick, Dallas County now has more West Nile-related infections and deaths than any other county in the United States. The mayor of [Dallas](#) has declared a state of emergency. To combat the outbreak, low-flying planes and trucks have sprayed pesticides throughout Dallas to kill adult mosquitos.
- **Hurricane Isaac Hits the Gulf Coast (Aug. 29):** Exactly seven years after [Katrina](#) battered the Gulf Coast, Hurricane Isaac hits the same area. Declared a Category 1, Isaac's winds roar at 80 miles per hour and the hurricane moves slowly across the region, but it lacks the strength of Katrina. Around 3,000 people evacuate Plaquemines Parish, an area 95 miles from New Orleans. In [Louisiana](#), more than 600,000 residents lose power, but the city of [New Orleans](#) avoids any major damage.

# SEPTEMBER 2012

## WORLD

- **Violence Continues in Syria (September 1):** Opposition fighters seize an air base in Deir el-Zour. Along with the base, they capture 16 Syrian soldiers, weapons, and ammunition. **(Sept. 4):** The United Nations reports that more than 100,000 people fled [Syria](#) in August. The surge accounts for 40 percent of the 234,000 people who have registered with the United Nations for assistance since the fighting in Syria began. The surge of refugees coincides with President [Bashar al-Assad](#)'s government increase in attacks on areas in Syria where the opposition is strong. **(Sept. 5):** [Iran](#) resumes sending military equipment to Syria to aid the government in its fight against the opposition. Iran is using [Iraq](#)'s airspace to send the supplies. Iraq's role in the operation shows what little influence the United States has over them. The Obama administration has pressed Iraq to shut down the air corridor that Iran uses to ship the supplies to Syria.
- **Gunmen Storm U.S. Embassy in Libya (September 11):** Armed gunmen storm the American consulate in Benghazi and shoot and kill U.S. ambassador to [Libya](#) Christopher Stevens and three other embassy officials. Stevens, a widely praised diplomat who was an advocate for the opposition in Libya, is the first U.S. ambassador to be killed in the line of duty since 1979. The attack coincides with violent protests at the U.S. embassy in Cairo over the release of a YouTube film, *Innocence of Muslims*, produced in the U.S., that insulted the Prophet Muhammad and criticized [Islam](#). U.S. officials say they believe that given the weapons used-antiaircraft weapons and rocket-propelled grenades-the attack had been orchestrated in advance. In response to the assault, the U.S. sends 50 marines to protect the embassy in Tripoli. **(Sept. 14):** Libyan authorities arrest four people who are suspects in the U.S. embassy attack in Benghazi. U.S. officials believe the attack may have been planned in advance. [President Obama](#) vows to bring those responsible for the attack to justice.
- **More U.S. Embassies Attacked over YouTube film (September 13):** The U.S. embassies in [Egypt](#) and [Yemen](#) are attacked in protest over a film which demonstrators feel insults Islam. At least 15 people are injured, some by gunfire, at the U.S. embassy in Sanaá, Yemen. In Cairo, demonstrators climb into the U.S. embassy compound and rip down the American Flag. At least 200 protestors gather at the U.S. embassy in [Kuwait](#). Demonstrations are also held at U.S. missions in [Morocco](#), [Sudan](#) and [Tunisia](#). At the U.S. consulate in Berlin, [Germany](#) an employee becomes ill after opening a mysterious envelope. Afterwards, the consulate is partially evacuated. **(Sept. 14):** Attacks spread throughout the Middle East as protesters attack the German Embassy in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and climb into the U.S. Embassy compound in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia. In Tripoli, one protestor is killed in a clash with security forces after demonstrators set fire to an Arby's and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Protests even spread to [Indonesia](#) and [Pakistan](#) where hundreds carry banners criticizing the United States and the filmmakers.

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **Hiring Slows in the U.S. (Sept. 7):** Employers in the U.S. hire less people in August than the month before. The U.S. adds 96,000 jobs in August, compared to 141,000 in July and far below the 125,000 which economists expected. The unemployment rate falls from 8.3 in July to 8.1 in August, but that is largely due to more people leaving the work force. The percentage of people in the labor force falls to 63.5 percent, which is the lowest since September 1981.

## US

- **Democratic National Convention Opens in Charlotte, N.C. (Sept. 4):** Held in [Charlotte](#), North Carolina, the Democratic National Convention opening night highlights include speeches from First Lady [Michelle Obama](#), and San Antonio Mayor Julián Castro. In his keynote address, Castro says of the Republican Party, "Their theory has been tested. It failed. Our economy failed. The

middle class paid the price. Your family paid the price. Mitt Romney just doesn't get it." **(Sept. 5):** Former U.S. President [Bill Clinton](#) gives a rousing speech which brings the convention to its feet as he officially nominates [Barack Obama](#) as the 2012 Democratic candidate for president. Like the Republican National Convention, the DNC has to work around bad weather. Due to severe thunderstorms in the forecast, the convention is moved indoors, including President Obama's speech later in the week.

- **Andy Murray and Serena Williams Win the U.S. Open (Sept. 10):** Fresh off his Olympic gold medal win, Andy Murray beats [Novak Djokovic](#) in an intense five hour, five set match (7–6, 7–5, 2–6, 3–6, 6–2) and wins the U.S. Open Men's Singles Championship, his first major. [Serena Williams](#) wins a tough three set match (6–2, 2–6, 7–5) against Victoria Azarenka for the U.S. Open Women's Championship. It is Serena's fifteenth major singles title.
- **Chicago Teachers Strike (Sept. 10):** Twenty-six thousand public school teachers go on strike in [Chicago](#) to protest against proposed changes. President Obama's former chief of staff, Chicago Mayor [Rahm Emanuel](#), has proposed a number of concessions, including that the school board revoke a promised four percent raise and that student test scores count more toward whether teachers receive tenure or not. The strike gains national attention and may affect teachers' unions nationwide as well as the upcoming [November election](#). Chicago is Obama's hometown and the outcome of the strike may influence which way teachers, who largely vote democrat, go in the election. **(Sept. 18):** The teachers strike ends and students in the country's third-largest school system return to school after seven days. The strike ends when 800 union delegates vote to suspend the strike and agree on a contract. Both sides get some victories in the contract, which still needs to be ratified by all of the union's 26,000 members. The contract gives annual raises to teachers, but evaluates them, in part, on student test scores. The contract also makes the school day longer.
- **Occupy Wall Street Marks Its One-Year Anniversary (Sept. 17):** [Occupy Wall Street](#) marks its one-year anniversary with a demonstration at the New York Stock Exchange. Protesters attempt to block access to the New York Stock Exchange and 185 arrests are made. Rallies are also held in other parts of New York City and in more than 30 cities around the world.

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **New DNA Discovery Provides Crucial Data on Complex Diseases (Sept. 5):** Scientists discovered that gene switches, once thought of as junk in DNA, actually play vital roles in how cells, organs, and tissues behave. The discovery is considered a major scientific breakthrough. Many diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure appear to be caused by tiny changes within these gene switches. The discovery will also provide clues to how the environment affects disease risk and how one identical twin gets a disease like cancer while the other remains healthy.
- **West Nile Death Toll Continues to Rise (Sept. 5):** [Texas](#) state health officials report that the death toll from the West Nile virus continues to rise. In Texas, there have been 1,113 cases so far, including 40 deaths, the most of any state. Nationally, there have been 1,993 cases reported, including 87 deaths, a 25 percent increase from the previous week. However, there is evidence to suggest that the virus is on the decline in and around the [Dallas](#) area. Officials report that insects were reduced by 93 percent in Dallas areas that were sprayed two nights in a row.

## OCTOBER 2012

### WORLD

- **U.S. Begins Retaliatory Action against Embassy Attack in Libya (Oct. 2):** The U.S. Special Operations Command prepares data to use in the capture of the militants suspected in the attack on its embassy last month in [Libya](#). The suspects include members of Ansar al-Shariah, an Islamist militia group, and other militants with ties to [Al-Qaeda](#). The suspects are wanted for the September 11, 2012 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi, which resulted in the deaths of

American ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other embassy officials. **(Oct. 15):** During an interview with CNN, Secretary of State [Hillary Clinton](#) takes responsibility for the security situation in the Libyan embassy attack last month. Clinton points out that she makes the final call on diplomatic security overseas, not [President Obama](#) or [Vice President Biden](#). Clinton's interview comes one day before Obama's second debate with [Mitt Romney](#). Clinton vows to improve security for diplomats, but also says, "We can't not engage."

- **Turkey Retaliates Against Syria (Oct. 3):** [Turkey](#) hits four targets within [Syria](#) in retaliation over the mortar attack in Akcakale, Turkey, which killed five civilians, including three children. **(Oct. 4):** The Turkish Parliament authorizes further military action against Syria. Turkey continues to fire artillery into Syria. **(Oct. 9):** The U.S. military sends a task force to [Jordan](#) to assist armed forces with Syrian refugees and to be on hand in case the Syrian conflict continues to expand. **(Oct. 10):** Turkish warplanes force a Syrian passenger jet to land under suspicion that it is carrying military cargo. En route from Moscow to Damascus, the jet is forced down in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. Turkish television reports that inspectors find parts of a missile on board, but authorities in Turkey decline to comment on exactly what is found. Turkish civilian airplanes begin avoiding Syrian airspace. Both countries continue to fire artillery across the border. **(Oct. 13):** Syria bans Turkish flights from its airspace. [Russia](#) denies that any weapons were onboard the intercepted Syrian passenger jet. Meanwhile, the fighting in Syria continues. Human rights activists report that Syrian rebels are making progress in the Idlib district. **(Oct. 14):** Officials from the U.S. and the Middle East report that most of the arms shipped from [Saudi Arabia](#) and [Qatar](#) to Syrian rebels are falling into the hands of Islamic jihadists.
- **Hugo Chávez Wins Third Term (Oct. 7):** [Hugo Chávez](#) wins the presidential election in [Venezuela](#). He receives 54 percent of the vote. His opponent, Henrique Capriles Radonski, receives 45 percent. Even though it is the narrowest margin of victory, Chávez still wins easily. This will be Chávez's third six-year term as president.
- **Taliban Gun Down 14-Year-Old Girl Who Defied Them (Oct. 9):** In [Pakistan](#), Taliban members shoot 14-year-old Malala Yousafzai in the head and neck. The shooting occurs while Yousafzai is on her way home on a school bus filled with children. Two other girls are wounded. All three girls survive, but Yousafzai is in a Peshawar hospital in critical condition. Ehsanullah Ehsan, a [Taliban](#) spokesman, confirms that Yousafzai was the target due to her outspokenness against the Taliban and her determination to get an education. Ehsan says, "She has become a symbol of Western culture in the area; she was openly propagating it. Let this be a lesson." **(Oct. 11):** Yousafzai is transferred by air to an army hospital in Rawalpindi. The hospital is near the Pakistani Army Headquarters. **(Oct. 15):** Yousafzai is flown to Birmingham, [Great Britain](#) for specialized treatment to her skull which was fractured when the bullet passed through her head. She will also receive long-term rehabilitation there.
- **One Member of Russian Punk Band Goes Free (Oct. 10):** A court in Moscow frees one of the three members of Pussy Riot, the punk band convicted of hooliganism for protesting in a cathedral last February. Yekaterina Samutsevich is released after judges accept her new lawyer's argument that she played less of a role in the cathedral protest performance that landed her in jail with her band mates. The latest ruling maintains the guilty verdict against all three women on charges of hooliganism, but the judges order Samutsevich's release on the grounds that she had less of a role in the incident. The case continues to draw international attention and condemnation of [Russia](#).
- **Lebanon Is Dragged into War in Syria (Oct. 19):** A bomb explodes in Beirut's Christian section. Eight people are killed and at least 80 are wounded. The explosion kills intelligence chief Brig. Gen. Wissam al-Hassan, a top security official and an ally of the slain Prime Minister [Rafik Hariri](#). Hassan, a foe of Syria, had been a driving force behind the arrest of Michel Samaha, Lebanon's former information minister who had close ties to Syria, on charges of orchestrating attacks and assassinations of Sunnis in [Lebanon](#).
- **Truce Announced in Syria for Muslim Holiday (Oct. 24):** Lakhdar Brahimi, the Algerian envoy attempting to negotiate a peace deal in Syria, announces a cease-fire between the Syrian army and rebels during Id al-Adha, the most important Muslim holiday of the year. **(Oct. 25):** The Syrian Army agrees to cease all military operations from Oct. 26 to Oct. 29, during the holiday. **(Oct. 26):** A bombing in Damascus near a children's playground proves that the cease-fire is not

being upheld. **(Oct. 27):** Each side accuses the other of breaking the cease-fire as fighting resumes in all major battlegrounds.

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **U.S. Unemployment Rate Drops to Lowest Point Since 2009 (Oct. 5):** The U.S. unemployment rate falls to 7.8 percent in September. That makes September 2012 the lowest month for unemployment in 44 months. It is a positive sign for a struggling economy. It may also give Obama a boost in the upcoming election. There are now 12.1 million unemployed Americans. That is the fewest number of unemployed since January 2009.

## US

- **First 2012 Presidential Debate Brings Boost for Romney (Oct. 3):** [President Obama](#) and [Mitt Romney](#) square off in the first of three president debates. Held in [Denver](#), Colorado, the focus of the first debate is domestic issues. Romney and Obama come out aggressive on issues such as the tax policy, budget deficit, and the role of government. Each candidate accuses the other of misleading voters and not providing specific answers. During the debate, Romney presents himself as the man with solutions to all of the problems Obama hasn't been able to resolve. Romney's energetic performance provides a much needed boost to his campaign.
- **Sandusky Receives Sentence in Sex Abuse Case (Oct. 9):** [Jerry Sandusky](#), the former [Penn State football coach](#), is sentenced to 30 to 60 years in prison for molesting young boys. The sentencing guarantees that Sandusky, 68, will die in prison. The ruling comes three and a half months after he was found guilty on 45 counts of sexually abusing boys.
- **The Gloves Come Off in Second 2012 Presidential Debate (Oct. 16):** The second presidential debate is held at Hofstra University in Hempstead, [New York](#). Both candidates are aggressive during the intense debate, often interrupting each other with accusations of lying. After a lifeless performance in the first debate, President Obama takes charge of the tone and terms of this debate with observations such as, "When he said behind closed doors that 47 percent of the country considers themselves victims who refuse personal responsibility — think about who he was talking about." For his part, Romney matches Obama's aggressive tone and even seems to enjoy the challenge.
- **Third and Final 2012 Presidential Debate Shifts from Foreign Policy to Domestic issues (Oct. 22):** The third presidential debate is held in Boca Raton, [Florida](#). The focus of the debate is supposed to be foreign policy, but both candidates steer their answers toward jobs and the economy. At one point, Bob Schieffer, the debate moderator, attempts to refocus the debate by saying, "Let me get back to foreign policy." Like the second debate, President Obama is aggressive. In response to Romney's comment about downsizing the U.S. military, Obama says, "You mentioned that we have fewer ships than we did in 1916. Well, Governor, we also have fewer horses and bayonets, because the nature of our military's changed. And so the question is not a game of Battleship, where we're counting ships."
- **Giants Win Second World Series in Three Years (Oct. 28):** The San Francisco Giants defeat the Detroit Tigers in a four game sweep to win their second World Series title in three years. In the fourth and final game of the series, the Giants beat the Tigers 4-3 in ten intense innings. Third baseman Pablo Sandoval is the series MVP. Sandoval hit a record-tying three home runs in game one.

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **Meningitis Outbreak Spreads throughout the U. S. (Oct. 4):** An outbreak of [meningitis](#) has killed five people in the United States. In addition, 30 people have meningitis in six states. The outbreak has been linked to a contaminated steroid drug. The drug is administered to patients as a spinal injection for back pain and has been recalled. **(Oct. 8):** The meningitis outbreak continues to spread. The number of people who have died rises to eight while 97 others are sick

in 23 states. It is estimated that around 13,000 people have been exposed to the contaminated steroid. The steroid has been traced back to the New England Compounding Center in Framingham, Mass., which has shut down. The center has not only recalled the contaminated steroid, but all of its products. **(Oct. 13):** Another death is reported from meningitis linked to the contaminated steroid drug. This brings the death toll to 15. Currently, 197 people are ill in the outbreak, which has become a major health concern in the [United States](#). **(Oct. 25):** The death toll from the fungal meningitis outbreak due to the tainted steroid injections has increased to 24. The number of meningitis cases linked to the steroid has also increased to 312 in 17 states, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Five joint infections caused by the same contaminated steroid have also been reported. **(Oct. 28):** Massachusetts shuts down another pharmacy, Infusion Resource, after an inspection finds shaky conditions on the sterility of its products. Located in Waltham, Infusion Resource voluntarily surrenders its license after the inspection. So far, 25 people have died and 344 others have become ill in the nationwide meningitis outbreak.

- **Hurricane Sandy Wreaks Havoc (Oct. 24):** Sandy, which blew into the Caribbean as a tropical storm, is upgraded to hurricane status as it hits [Cuba](#), [Haiti](#) and [Jamaica](#). A category 2 hurricane, Sandy leaves 44 dead in the region. **(Oct. 26):** Hurricane Sandy blows through the [Bahamas](#). As it approaches Florida and the east coast of the U.S., it is downgraded to a category 1. **(Oct. 27):** Although it is downgraded, the storm actually picks up energy when it collides with a midlatitude trough (a storm system that causes severe winter weather). The storm system grows as it barrels up the East Coast, spreading to some 1,000 miles wide. **(Oct. 29):** Hurricane Sandy makes landfall in Atlantic City, N.J., and is re-classified as a post-tropical cyclone. New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut are hardest hit by Sandy, and about 8 million people lose power as a result of the storm. So far Sandy has caused at least 100 deaths and an estimated \$30 billion in damages, making it the second costliest [hurricane](#) in the United States, behind Katrina.

## NOVEMBER 2012

### WORLD

- **New Proposal Presented to End Conflict in Syria (Nov. 1):** [China](#), one of the Syrian government's main allies, presents a new proposal to end the conflict in [Syria](#). The plan calls on stronger international support for refugees and a truce brought about in phases. The proposal does not call for President [Bashar al-Assad](#) to step down. **(Nov. 11):** Syria's opposition groups agree to form a new governing body that will unify the many rebel groups under one umbrella. The 50-person body, the Syrian National Initiative, will replace the Syrian National Council, which has come under fire for being largely ineffective and having few leaders living in Syria. The new organization will include younger leaders and will have strong representation inside the country. It will also oversee the opposition's military and will manage the distribution of weapons and funds. The group's leader, Sheikh Ahmad Moaz al-Khatib, says he hopes the new body will be viewed with legitimacy and receive financial assistance and weapons from the international community. **(Nov. 12):** Tanks from Israel fire on Syrian artillery units in response to mortar fire near an army post in the Israeli-held [Golan Heights](#). **(Nov. 13):** [France](#) becomes the first Western country to officially recognize the new Syrian rebel coalition. **(Nov. 14):** The government in Syria calls France's recognition of the Syrian rebel coalition an "immoral" act. Meanwhile, for the third day in a row, Syrian authorities order airstrikes on the area near their border with [Turkey](#).
- **Israel Kills Hamas Commander in Gaza Attack (Nov. 14):** In one of its biggest attacks on [Gaza](#) since the invasion four years ago, [Israel](#) launches an aerial attack and hits at least 20 targets. One of those targets is a [Hamas](#) military commander, Ahmed al-Jabari. He is killed while traveling through Gaze in a car. The airstrikes are in response to recent, repeated rocket attacks by Palestinian militants located in Gaza. **(Nov. 15):** Israel continues a second day of airstrikes on Gaza and the Palestinian death toll rises to 11. Meanwhile, Hamas fires rockets into southern Israel, killing three civilians. The Israeli deaths will likely lead to Israel increasing its military offensive in Gaza. In a nationally televised address, Egyptian President [Mohamed Morsi](#) says that

his country will stand by the Palestinians, "The Egyptian people, the Egyptian leadership, the Egyptian government, and all of [Egypt](#) is standing with all its resources to stop this assault, to prevent the killing and the bloodshed of Palestinians." **(Nov. 18):** Israel continues to target members of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza, and Hamas launches several hundred rockets, with some hitting Tel Aviv. Egypt, while a staunch supporter of Hamas, attempts to broker a peace agreement between Hamas and Israel to prevent the conflict from further destabilizing the region. **(Nov. 21):** Egypt's foreign minister, Mohamed Kamel Amr, and U.S. secretary of state [Hillary Clinton](#) announce that a cease-fire has been signed. Both sides agree to end hostilities toward each other and Israel says it will open Gaza border crossings, allowing the flow of products and people into Gaza, potentially lifting the 5-year blockade that has caused much hardship to those living in the region.

- **Morsi Declares Authority over Courts (Nov. 22):** Egyptian President [Mohamed Morsi](#) announces a brazen power grab when he declares authority over the courts, thereby removing any check on his actions by the courts. He says the move is necessary because the judiciary, made up of [Hosni Mubarak](#) appointees, is threatening to suspend the constitutional assembly before it completes the task of drafting a new constitution. Progress on writing a new constitution has been stalled by members of the opposition on the committee. Morsi also says the edict would bring "political, social and economic stability" and remove barriers to a smooth transition of power. The decree is met with large protests in Tahrir Square, the scene of the uprising against Mubarak, and international condemnation. It also fuels accusations that one autocrat has succeeded another. **(Nov. 26):** Morsi seems to be backtracking in response to the outpouring of rage, saying only "acts of sovereignty" will be exempt from judicial oversight. The clarification does little to placate his opponents. **(Nov. 29):** Under threat of being suspended by the courts, the constitutional assembly hastily approves a draft document, which is widely criticized for its ambiguity and lack of depth and originality. The draft constitution passes because Morsi's opponents on the committee from secular groups and Coptic Christians boycott the vote. Morsi says he will hold a referendum on the constitution as soon as possible.
- **UN Approves Non-Member State Status for Palestine (Nov. 29):** The United Nations General Assembly approves an upgrade from the Palestinian Authority's current observer status to that of a non-member state. The vote comes after Palestinian President [Mahmoud Abbas](#) speaks to the General Assembly and asks for a "birth certificate" for his country. Of the 193 nations in the General Assembly, 138 vote in favor of the upgrade in status. While the vote is a victory for [Palestine](#), it is a diplomatic setback for the U.S. and Israel. Having the title of "non-member observer state" will allow Palestine access to international organizations such as the International Criminal Court (ICC). If they join the ICC, Palestine can file complaints of war crimes against Israel. In response to the UN vote, Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) announces that Israel will not transfer about \$100 million in much-needed tax revenue owed to the struggling Palestinian Authority and will resume plans to build 3,000-unit settlement in an area that divides the north and the south parts of the West Bank, thereby denying the Palestinians any chance for having a contiguous state.

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **The Economy Holds Steady in October (Nov. 2):** The U.S. adds 171,000 jobs in October, showing steady, consistent economic growth. The unemployment rate climbs slightly higher from 7.8 percent in September to 7.9 percent in October, but this is because more workers joined the labor force. Economy analysts say even though the outlook is positive, the report will not be a heavy influence on the rapidly approaching election.
- **BP Agrees to Pay Over \$4 Billion (Nov. 15):** The British oil company, BP, agrees to a guilty plea on 14 criminal charges involving the rig explosion in 2010 that caused a giant [oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico](#) and killed 11 people. BP also agrees to pay \$4.5 billion in fines and penalties. In addition, the company's safety practices and ethics will also be monitored by the U.S. government for the next four years. At a news conference to announce the settlement, Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr. says, "This is unprecedented, both with regard to the amounts of

money, the fact that a company has been criminally charged and that individuals have been charged as well."

US

- **Barack Obama Wins Re-Election (Nov. 6):** [President Obama](#) is re-elected, narrowly defeating Republican nominee [Mitt Romney](#). Obama prevails in both the electoral college (303 to 206) and the popular vote (50% to 48%), buoyed largely by taking several crucial battle states, including Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, New Hampshire, Virginia, and Wisconsin. **(Nov. 7):** Shortly before 1 a.m., Romney delivers his concession speech. In the speech, he says, "This is a time of great challenges for America, and I pray that the president will be successful in guiding our nation. The nation, as you know, is at a critical point. At a time like this, we can't risk partisan bickering and political posturing. Our leaders have to reach across the aisle to do the people's work. And we citizens also have to rise to the occasion."
- **Congress Remains Divided After 2012 Election (Nov. 6):** In the 2012 election, Democrats keep their majority in the Senate. Democrats take Republican Senate seats in Massachusetts and Indiana. The Democrats also avoid defeat in close Missouri race. Even with races in North Dakota, Nevada, Montana still too close to call, it becomes clear on election night that the Democrats will hold their Senate majority and possibly add to it. The night ends with the Democrats having 53 seats to 45 for the Republicans. Key victories for the Democrats include Tammy Baldwin's win in Wisconsin. Her victory makes her the first openly gay candidate to capture a seat in the Senate. In Massachusetts, Harvard professor Elizabeth Warren defeats Republican [Scott Brown](#) for the seat formally held by longtime Senator [Ted Kennedy](#). As predicted, the Republicans keep the majority in the House of Representatives with 232 seats to 191 for the Democrats. Democrats make some gains, most notably in Illinois where they take four seats from Republicans.
- **Petraeus Resigns as CIA Director (Nov. 9):** Former four-star general [David Petraeus](#) resigns as CIA director after the FBI uncovers evidence that he had an extramarital affair. President Obama accepts his resignation. Petraeus issues a statement acknowledging the affair. In the statement, he says, "After being married for over 37 years, I showed extremely poor judgment by engaging in an extramarital affair. Such behavior is unacceptable, both as a husband and as the leader of an organization such as ours." [Paula Broadwell](#) is the woman with whom Petraeus had the affair. Broadwell is the author of "All In: The Education of General David Petraeus", a biography published in 2012. The FBI reports that the investigation started when [Jill Kelley](#), a friend of the Petraeus family, received harassing emails, which turned out to be from Broadwell. Officials say during the investigation they uncovered emails between Broadwell and Petraeus that proved they were having an affair. **(Nov. 13):** A Washington D.C. senior law enforcement official says that the top American and NATO commander in Afghanistan, [Gen. John R. Allen](#), is also being investigated for "inappropriate communication" with Jill Kelley. The FBI reports that during the investigation of the harassing emails to Kelley, they also uncovered an inappropriate email correspondence between Kelley and Allen.
- **The U.S Economy Approaches Possible Fiscal Cliff (Nov. 29):** After [President Obama's](#) re-election, the focus in Washington shifts quickly toward the Federal Budget and a possible approaching fiscal cliff. The lame duck session of Congress begins in late November 2012 and faces the Bush-era tax cuts as well as Obama's stimulus measures expiring on December 31, 2012. These measures and cuts are set to expire just as the government plans to severely cut federal spending. The Congressional Budget Office predicts that the economy will fall back into a recession if the planned \$500 billion in spending cuts are taken out of a still struggling economy at the same time that stimulus measures expire, thus sending the U.S. economy over a fiscal cliff. Treasury Secretary [Timothy F. Geithner](#) presents Obama's deficit reduction proposal in a meeting with Speaker of the House [John Boehner](#). Obama's proposal asks for a \$1.6 trillion tax increase over ten years, refinancing of home mortgages, an end to Congressional control over statutory borrowing limits, and \$50 billion for immediate stimulus spending. If Republicans agree to his proposal, Obama will in return work to save \$400 billion from Medicare and other domestic



programs, but with no guarantees. Republicans react immediately to Obama's proposal with very strong resistance.

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **Aftermath of the Meningitis Outbreak Continues (Nov. 14):** The case count for the [meningitis outbreak](#) continues to rise in the United States. Thirty-two people have died. More than 400 have been infected while 14,000 may have been exposed. Michigan is the state with the most cases at 112. Tennessee has the second most with 78. Officials believe it may be months before the disease's incubation period has passed.

## DECEMBER 2012

### WORLD

- **Egypt's New Constitution Continues to Cause Unrest (Dec. 1):** While the Muslim Brotherhood organize hundreds of thousands of supporters for Egyptian President [Mohamed Morsi](#) at Cairo University, several thousand protestors rally in Tahrir Square to oppose the new constitution. Despite the unrest, Morsi continues to move forward with the new constitution, setting December 15th as the date for the national referendum on it.
- **As Fighting Continues, Syrian Merchants Attempt Peaceful Protest (Dec. 2):** Throughout the country Syrian merchants close their shops as part of a nonviolent protest movement called "Strike of Pride." Meanwhile, a car bomb in central [Syria](#) kills at least 15 people and fighting in and around Damascus continues. **(Dec. 5):** The U.S. confirms its support of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces when Secretary of State [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) speaks at a news conference in Brussels. She says, "Now that there is a new opposition formed, we are going to be doing what we can to support that opposition."
- **The World Reacts to Royal Baby News (Dec. 3):** [Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge](#), is hospitalized for a severe case of morning sickness. As soon as the news spreads that the world's favorite royal couple is expecting [much speculation](#) begins over the unborn child who will one day most likely ascend to the throne of England. During Kate Middleton's hospital stay, two Australian radio disc jockeys make a prank call to the hospital pretending to be [Queen Elizabeth](#) and [Prince Charles](#). The call is broadcast on the radio in [Australia](#) and later around the world. **(Dec. 6):** Kate Middleton is released from the hospital. She returns home to rest. The prank by the Australian D.J.'s turns tragic when Jacintha Saldanha, the nurse who took the call, commits suicide. The police announce her death as "being treated as unexplained." However, the two D.J.'s are blamed on social media.
- **North Korea Successfully Launches Rocket (Dec. 12):** [North Korea's](#) next attempt to put a satellite into orbit is not a failure. The successful launch of the rocket indicates that the country is inching closer toward developing the expertise to build an intercontinental ballistic missile. It also boosts [Kim Jong-un's](#) credibility both domestically and internationally, illustrating his seriousness in advancing the country's military capabilities. The launch takes the world by surprise and prompts a call for another round of sanctions.

## BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

- **U.S. Economy Continues to Show Consistent Growth (Dec. 7):** The U.S. adds 146,000 jobs in November and the unemployment rate falls to 7.8 percent from 7.9 percent in October. It is the lowest unemployment rate in nearly four years.

## US

- **Republicans Counter Obama's Deficit Reduction Proposal (Dec. 3):** Republicans respond to [President Obama's](#) deficit reduction proposal with a plan of their own. Their proposal is for a \$2.2 trillion deficit decrease over the next ten years by cutting \$1.2 trillion in spending and raising \$800 billion in revenue. The revenue will come by limiting deductions. Republicans also propose saving another \$200 billion by changing the way inflation is calculated. This will slow down benefit increases for social programs like Medicare. **(Dec. 4):** President Obama rejects the Republicans' proposal to avoid the rapidly approaching fiscal cliff. He tells them he will not agree to any proposal that does not include increases on tax rates for the wealthy. **(Dec. 9):** President Obama meets privately with House Speaker [John Boehner](#) in an attempt to hammer out a deal and avert a fiscal crisis. Meanwhile, Republican Senator [Bob Corker](#), of Tennessee, says in a TV interview that a growing number of Republicans are open to compromising on tax rates. **(Dec. 30)** With the deadline quickly approaching, Republicans in the Senate back off on their demand that the deal has to include new inflation calculations for Social Security and other programs. Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell works with Vice President Joe Biden into the late hours of the night finalizing a deal.
- **U.S. Supreme Court Will Hear Two Same-Sex Marriage Cases (Dec. 7):** The U.S. Supreme Court agrees to hear two cases that challenge federal and state laws over the issue that marriage is defined only as a union between a man and a woman. One case, from New York, tackles the federal law that requires the U.S. government to deny all benefits to lesbian and gay couples who are married in states that allow same-sex unions. The second case is from California and the outcome will either reject or reaffirm the constitutional right to same-sex marriage. Decisions on both cases are expected no later than June 2013.
- **Gunman Kills 26 at Elementary School (Dec. 14):** Adam Lanza, age 20, forces his way into Sandy Hook Elementary School, in Newtown, [Connecticut](#), and kills 26 people. The victims include 20 children between the ages of six and seven. Then Lanza takes his own life while still inside the school. Before going to the school, Lanza shoots and kills his mother, Nancy Lanza, in the home they shared. **(Dec. 16):** [President Obama](#) travels to Newtown. In a speech at the memorial service he says, "No single law, no set of laws can eliminate evil from the world or prevent every senseless act of violence in our society, but that can't be an excuse for inaction."

## SCIENCE AND DISASTERS

- **World Experiences Worst Helium Shortage in Decades (Dec. 19):** [Helium](#), second only to [hydrogen](#) as the most abundant element in the universe, has become scarce. There have been shortages of helium in years past, like in 1958 when the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloons had to be filled with air instead of helium. However, industry experts and physicists say that this year's helium shortage has been one of the worst because it's lasting longer. "The shortage is due to demand exceeding our ability to produce helium. Typically in the past, there's been enough helium in the distribution system that the end consumer never saw the problem. This has been an extended shortage, and all of the helium that's been in the supply chain has been expended," says Sam Burton, assistant field manager for the Bureau of Land Management, which operates a helium reserve in Amarillo, [Texas](#). The reserve in Amarillo produces around 30 percent of the world's helium.