

The NewsCurrents News Person of the Year



FRAME 5

Michael Jackson got the most votes, followed by President Bush.

BASIC LEVEL

We recently asked you to choose who you thought should be the NewsCurrents News Person of the Year. **Did you and your group take part in this survey? If so, whom did you vote for?** The people you see here came in at number one and number two in our survey. **Can you name the person who is number one?** (Michael Jackson.) Michael Jackson got the most votes in the survey, but it was very close. **Who came in at number two?** (President Bush.) President Bush got only five fewer votes than Michael Jackson did. **Do you think Michael Jackson was a good choice for News Person of the Year? Why or why not? Do you think President Bush was a good choice? Why or why not? Why do you think so many people voted for these two choices?** Let's take a look at some of the other people who got lots of votes. NEXT PICTURE

GENERAL LEVEL

Recently, we asked you to choose who you thought the biggest news maker of the year was. The winner of this vote is this year's NewsCurrents News Person of the Year. **Did you and your group take part in this survey? Who did you choose?** The people you see here came in at number one and number two, only a few votes apart. **Who are they?** (Michael Jackson and President George W. Bush.) Michael Jackson got almost one-fifth of the nearly 2,000 votes in our survey. Jackson was a popular singer and performer in the 1980s and '90s. But in recent years, he has been more famous for his strange behavior than for his music. Now, he is in very serious legal trouble. He is accused of abusing a 13-year-old boy, giving the boy alcohol, and not allowing the boy and his family to leave his home. Jackson's trial is going on right now. **Do you see a lot of Michael Jackson's name in the news? Do you think there has been too much news coverage of this story? Why or why not?**

President Bush got only five fewer votes than Michael Jackson did. **Why do you think so many people chose President Bush as the News Person of the Year?** The president was re-elected in a close race last November. His supporters say he is helping bring freedom to Iraq, and improving the U.S. economy. But others criticize his decision to go to war, and say that the economy is in trouble. He is also having a hard time getting support for his Social Security plans, and polls show his popularity is slipping. **Do you think this year has been more positive or negative for the president? Why?** NEXT PICTURE

ADVANCED LEVEL

Recently, NewsCurrents asked you and your peers to cast your votes in our News Person of the Year poll. Here you see the top two vote-getters in the poll. Coming in at number one by a narrow margin was Michael Jackson, who got close to one-fifth of the nearly 2,000 votes in our survey. In the 1980s and '90s, Jackson was a pop star with a string of chart-topping singles. But in recent years his bizarre behavior, including drastic facial surgery, as well as his ongoing legal problems, have gained him more attention than his musical career. Now, Jackson is on trial for allegedly molesting a 13-year-old boy in 2003, giving the boy alcohol, and conspiring to keep the boy's family captive in his Neverland Ranch. **Have you seen a lot of news coverage of the Michael Jackson case? Why do you think it has gotten so much media attention? Do you think this story has gotten too much coverage? Why or why not?**

President Bush got only five fewer votes than Jackson did in our survey. This past year has been an eventful one for the president. He was re-elected in a close and contentious race in November. Supporters say his efforts in Iraq are helping bring democracy to that nation, and his tax cuts are boosting the U.S. economy. But ongoing violence in Iraq, rising gas prices, and his unpopular proposed Social Security plan have helped erode his popularity in the polls. **Do you think most people chose President Bush in the NewsCurrents survey for positive or negative reasons? Why?** NEXT PICTURE

The NewsCurrents News Person of the Year (continued)



FRAME 6

Other top vote-getters in the News Person of the Year poll included Pope John Paul II, Martha Stewart, and Condoleezza Rice.

BASIC LEVEL

These were the other top vote-getters in the survey. **Can you name the man on the left?** (*Pope John Paul II.*) Millions of Catholics went to Rome for his funeral

last month. John Paul got the third-highest number of votes in the NewsCurrents survey. Number four was Martha Stewart. She is a famous television host and businesswoman who went to prison for lying about a business deal. She was released from prison earlier this year. Coming in at number five was Condoleezza Rice. This year, she became the first African American woman to serve as secretary of state — a very important job in the United States government. In her job, Ms. Rice works with leaders from around the world. **Why do you think these people got lots of votes in the poll? Do you think these were good choices for News Person of the Year? Why or why not? Who do you think is the best choice for News Person of the year?** END OF STORY

GENERAL LEVEL

The man shown here came in third in our NewsCurrents News Person of the Year survey. **Who is he?** (*Pope John Paul II.*) John

Paul was the leader of the Catholic Church for 26 years. His frequent travels to many parts of the world made him very popular with many Catholics. His funeral last month drew millions of mourners to Rome. **Why do you think he got so many votes in our survey?** The woman shown on the right is a famous television host and businesswoman. She was sentenced to prison for lying to people who were investigating a business deal she was involved in. Earlier this year she was released from prison after serving her sentence. **Who is she?** (*Martha Stewart.*) **Why do you think people voted for her?** Coming in at number five in our survey is the woman shown here at the bottom. This year she was named U.S. secretary of state, the first African American woman to hold this important position. As head of the State Department, she represents the U.S. in meetings with world leaders and important officials in other countries. **Who knows her name?** (*Condoleezza Rice.*) **Why do you think people voted for her?**

Some other people who got votes in the NewsCurrents News Person of the Year poll were Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, Oprah Winfrey, and Ray Charles. **Why do you think people voted for each of these people? Do you think these were good selections for News Person of the Year? Why or why not? Who else do you think could have made the list? Why?** END OF STORY

ADVANCED LEVEL

These people were the third, fourth, and fifth top vote-getters in the NewsCurrents News Person of the Year survey. **Who are they?** (*Pope John Paul II, Martha Stewart, and Condoleezza Rice.*) Millions of mourners traveled to Rome following the pope's death last month. His death, and the ceremonies and events surrounding it, dominated the news at the time. **What did you think of the news coverage of the pope's death? Why do you think people voted for him in the NewsCurrents survey?**

Martha Stewart has been in the news a lot over the past year. **What are some of the reasons for this?** (*She served a short prison term after being found guilty of conspiracy, making false statements, and obstruction of justice in the investigation of a stock sale. She was released earlier this year, and has begun plans for new radio and television projects.*) **Why do you think people voted for her in this survey?**

Condoleezza Rice came in fifth in our survey. **Why do you think people voted for her?** (*This year she became the first African American woman to be named secretary of state.*) Other top vote-getters in our poll included Terri Schiavo, Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, Oprah Winfrey, Scott Peterson, and Ray Charles. **Do you think these were good selections for News Person of the Year? Why or why not? Can you think of other important news makers you think should have ranked above the people mentioned here? If so, who?** END OF STORY