

# FACES AND PLACES

## Leon Panetta

President-elect Barack Obama has tapped a former Clinton administration insider, Leon Panetta, to be the director of the CIA. The news surprised some, because Panetta has no direct experience in intelligence or counterterrorism, except for overseeing the budgets of all federal agencies. He does, however, have a long history of public service. Now 70, Panetta served as budget director and White House chief of staff during the Clinton administration, and more recently, he was part of the Iraq Study Group. Before that, he served in Congress for 16 years, representing a district in California. **Do you think Panetta's lack of intelligence experience will be a hindrance for him?**

## Winnie the Pooh

The world's beloved "bear of very little brain" is back. The estate of author A.A. Milne, who published "Winnie-the-Pooh" and "The House at Pooh Corner" in the 1920s, has authorized a sequel. "Return to the Hundred Acre Wood," written by author David Benedictus and illustrated by Mark Burgess, will be published in October 2009. Milne's books centered on sole human character Christopher Robin, named after Milne's son, and a cast of animal characters, including Pooh, Piglet, Eeyore, and the other inhabitants of the "Hundred Acre Wood." The stories' gentle whimsy has captured the imagination of millions of children through the years and Milne's books have been translated into more than 50 languages. **Are you or were you a fan of the "Pooh" books?**



## Russia

A payment dispute between Russia and neighboring Ukraine has left hundreds of thousands of people in Eastern Europe without heat for more than a week. Earlier this month Russia shut off natural gas supplies that are routed through Ukraine. More than a dozen European countries depend on these gas supplies. The situation was becoming increasingly urgent; some countries have had to close schools and public buildings. The European Union has warned Russian and Ukrainian gas companies that it will take legal action if the issue is not resolved. Diplomatic pressure was growing; the prime ministers of Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Moldova held talks in Moscow and Kiev. **From your news reading, has this situation been resolved?**

## Texas

This state is ready to become home again to a very high-profile native: outgoing President George W. Bush. George and Laura Bush have bought a \$2.1 million home in Preston Hollow, one of the wealthiest areas of Dallas. They lived in Dallas between December 1988 and January 1995 before moving to the Texas governor's mansion in Austin. The Bushes plan to spend weekends at their ranch in Crawford. Bush said he will spend his time raising funds for his presidential library and writing his memoir. The Bushes also plan to build a "Freedom Institute" at Laura Bush's alma mater, Southern Methodist University. **How do you think history will judge Bush's presidency?**