



HUMAN INTEREST

Monday, April 5, 2010

Google Fiber inspires WTF film festival



YouTube videos cataloging just how zany a town can be. But that's what Google got — a veritable film festival revealing the many ways a municipality could prostrate itself before the Great and Powerful Oz. Entries ranged from freaky to unfathomable — with a whole lot of “um, what?” in between. Not all of the 1,100-plus communities included an entry in what history will call the “Google Fiber WTF Film Festival.” Those who did include videos offer a glimpse of just how clueless community leaders are about the Internet. (Google will announce its decision near the end of the year.) Here's a review of just a few... [FULL STORY](#)

Student who was arrested for doodling on school desk sues city for excessive force



NEW YORK, NY – The 12-year-old schoolgirl handcuffed and arrested in February for doodling on her desk plans to sue the city. A lawyer for Alexa Gonzalez and her mother officially notified the city that they'll seek \$1 million in damages for the alarming incident inside Junior High School 190 in Queens. The legal papers describe Alexa's ordeal as an excessive use of force and a violation of her rights. "We want to stop this from happening to other young children in the future," said the family's lawyer, Joseph Rosenthal. Using an erasable lime-green marker, Alexa scribbled the message "I love my friends Abby and Faith," Alexa's mom, Moraima Camacho, told the Daily News in February. "The whole situation has

been a nightmare." The notice filed against the city education department and the NYPD reveals Alexa was subjected to harsh treatment even before her arrest. She was "physically dragged by a teacher and an assistant principal" to the dean's office, the legal papers claim. School safety officers searched her by placing "their hands inside the rear and front pockets of her jeans." Despite the fact that officers "knew, or should have known that it was a soluble, erasable marker," police officers were summoned to arrest her, the papers note. Alexa was perp-walked out of the school in front of her classmates with her hands locked in metal handcuffs behind her back. Alexa's mother pleaded with the officers to accompany her daughter to the police precinct, but Camacho was told to go home and wait for a call. Officers placed Alexa in "an enclosed room" at the precinct and handcuffed her to a pole for more than two hours, the papers note. City lawyers declined to comment, but city officials acknowledged in February the arrest was a mistake. Alexa is not the first kid to seek justice for excessive force. The

family of Chelsea Fraser, then 13, sued the city too after she was arrested for writing "okay" on her desk at Brooklyn's Intermediate School 201. After then-5-year-old Dennis Rivera was handcuffed for throwing a fit in kindergarten, his family sued for \$15 million in damages. Their lawsuit is ongoing, as is a class-action lawsuit filed by the New York Civil Liberties Union in January on behalf of city middle- and high-school students.

16-Year-Old Italian Is Set to Make History at the Masters

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Matteo Manassero found himself in a hazardous place among the pine needles behind the second green at the Golf Club of Georgia. His predicament raised a couple of questions: Are there pine trees in Italy? Could he play under pressure, as well as under pine trees? His coach, Alberto Binaghi, smiled and said: "He has done this before, yes, from pine needles. He likes to play under this pressure."

Sure enough, Manassero, a 16-year-old from Italy who is set to become the youngest player to compete in the Masters, looked the part of the seasoned player with his next swipe of the iron. He



flipped the ball to the green, and it stuck there. He then rolled in a 35-foot putt on a razor-cut surface that was smoking fast, stimping a Masters-like 13 ½ feet, and had himself a nifty par. Manassero walked to the third tee, acting as if he had been to the edge of a disastrous hole before and recovered. "Absolutely, this is unusual, he does not act like he is 16," said Edoardo Molinari, an Italian professional who was in the gallery last week when Manassero played the United States Amateur champion Byeong-Hun An, 18, in the Georgia Cup. "This is why he is good at 16 — the mental part," Molinari said. Manassero has chipped out of pine needles, but he has also played in the swelter of Dubai, the wind of Scotland and the humidity of Florida. He has smacked golf balls across France and Spain. The top-ranked amateur in the world, he has skipped from time zone to time zone and custom to custom. He knows what it is like to get off a jet and play golf. Compared with Manassero, who is from Verona, in northern Italy, junior golfers in the United States take modest trips. This may explain how Manassero can play with such aplomb and does not seem unnerved by playing in the Masters, which begins Thursday. [FULL STORY](#)



Pick of the Peeps: Peeps dioramas serve up a candy-colored take on pop culture

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Washington Post's annual Peeps diorama contest is a cultural barometer -- a three-dimensional essay on the state of the nation's collective consciousness, a sticky finger on the pulse of what's popular. This year's 1,100-plus entries told what's on everyone's minds once again, and the Washington Post sifted through that flood of submissions, painstakingly narrowing the contenders in their fourth annual contest. Dozens of dioramas showcased Shaun White's Olympic conquests, while

other tiny scenes took their competitive cues from curling and hockey. A slew of dioramas captured the nonathletic exploits of Tiger Woods and Gilbert Arenas. And there was plenty of localized fodder, as well: The Salahis, the record snowfall and the departure of Tai Shan all warranted the Peeps treatment. Even the gun-toting police officer from the 14th and U streets snowball fight got to live on in sweet infamy. Lest you think the little competition is lowbrow, consider the metaphysical implications of a diorama of two Peeps making a diorama, or one in which a group of Peeps visits an exhibition of Peeps dioramas. A handful of pop culture devotees used the marshmallow medium to remember some recently deceased icons, including Michael Jackson, Patrick Swayze and J.D. Salinger -- not one but two entries memorialized the author of "The Catcher in the Rye." But we had to choose a winner, and after much thought, debate and up-close-and-personal inspection, the Magazine staff was won over by the impressive craftsmanship that went into a representation of the Oscar-winning animated flick "Up." [FULL STORY](#) | [Gallery](#)

Robert Pattinson created from chocolate



The Twilight star was immortalised in an 18 kilo, solid chocolate bust after being voted Hollywood's tastiest actor. It took food artist Prudence Staite two weeks to complete the Belgian chocolate sculpture in the likeness of the actor's hit vampire character Edward Cullen. Pattinson, 23, was crowned Hollywood's hottest man with 16 per cent of the vote in a poll of more than 2,500 movie fans by DVD rental firm Lovefilm. Pirates of the Caribbean star Johnny Depp, 46, came second with 15 per cent while Gerard Butler, who starred in The Bounty Hunter with Jennifer Aniston,

was third with 11 per cent. George Clooney, 48, came fourth with nine per cent, followed by Brokeback Mountain star Jake Gyllenhaal (eight per cent) and The Hangover's Bradley Cooper (six per cent). Brad Pitt, 46, was seventh with five per cent, ahead of Ryan Reynolds (four per cent), Hugh Jackman (two per cent) and Jamie Foxx (one per cent). One lucky fan will get the chance to sink their teeth into the chocolate incarnation of Pattinson by entering a draw [through this link](#). Fliss White, of Lovefilm, said: "We were inundated with requests from fans looking to win and even some asking to buy the chocolate head outright. "We'd heard that fans always ask him to "bite" them but now it seems they are more than willing to turn the tables."