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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 08, 2007

And An Unhinged Astronaut Heaves A Sigh Of Relief

A brief respite for the astronaut story as [Anna Nicole Smith dies](#) and the media tries to strike a somber balance while showing images of Anna boogieing on the red carpet and shaking her breasts like a go-go dancer. Yes, it's a story for a day or two (she did take a case all the way to the Supreme Court, had a hit reality show, etc.) but nothing more than that and should it really dominate the news? No.

UPDATE: You can see the absurdly over the top media coverage of the media-generated Anna Nicole Smith. A low point surely was Larry King on The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer:

KING: I've always liked Anna Nicole Smith. I first met her many years ago after the Playmate era, when she was in Playboy, featured in Playboy. She came on the show -- I was doing it out of New York that night -- and liked her right away. She was bouncy, she-- I went through with all the marriage to the elderly gentleman, the weight gains up, the weight gains down. But there was always a special thing about her, even when they spoofed her on Saturday Night Live -- she could easily be made fun of. There was also a genuineness about her. She was an extraordinarily pretty girl. An unusual thing, Wolf, is that she did a painting that we have here in the house. She tried -- she was kind of an amateur painter. I have an oil painting that she has done here.

BLITZER: *It's an amazing story, Larry.* I know that you can bring some unique insight because you actually knew this woman, who was born in very, very humble origins down in Texas and becomes a Playmate, a Playboy Playmate of the Year in 1993, and then marries this very fabulously wealthy 89-year-old man.

KING: *It's a story for the books.* It's a story that will be written about and talked about. I imagine there'll be a major motion picture about it.

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