

2008 in the United States

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Events from the year **2008 in the United States**.

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Incumbents

Federal Government

- President: George W. Bush (R-Texas)
- Vice President: Dick Cheney (R-Wyoming)
- Chief Justice: John Roberts (New York) ^[1]
- Speaker of the House of Representatives: Nancy Pelosi (D–California)
- Senate Majority Leader: Harry Reid (D–Nevada)
- Congress: 110th

Governors and Lieutenant Governors

Governors

- Governor of Alabama: Bob Riley (Republican)
- Governor of Alaska: Sarah Palin (Republican)
- Governor of Arizona: Janet Napolitano (Democratic)
- Governor of Arkansas: Mike Beebe (Democratic)
- Governor of California: Arnold Schwarzenegger (Republican)
- Governor of Colorado: Bill Ritter (Democratic)
- Governor of Connecticut: Jodi Rell (Republican)
- Governor of Delaware: Ruth Ann Minner (Democratic)
- Governor of Florida: Charlie Crist (Republican)/(Independent)
- Governor of Georgia: Sonny Perdue (Republican)
- Governor of Hawaii: Linda Lingle (Republican)
- Governor of Idaho: Butch Otter (Republican)
- Governor of Illinois: Rod Blagojevich (Democratic)
- Governor of Indiana: Mitch Daniels (Republican)
- Governor of Iowa: Chet Culver (Democratic)
- Governor of Kansas: Kathleen Sebelius (Democratic)
- Governor of Kentucky: Steve Beshear (Democratic)
- Governor of Louisiana: Kathleen Blanco (Democratic) (until January 14), Bobby Jindal (Republican) (starting January 14)
- Governor of Maine: John Baldacci (Democratic)
- Governor of Maryland: Martin O'Malley (Democratic)
- Governor of Massachusetts: Deval Patrick (Democratic)
- Governor of Michigan: Jennifer Granholm (Democratic)
- Governor of Minnesota: Tim Pawlenty (Republican)
- Governor of Mississippi: Haley Barbour (Republican)
- Governor of Missouri: Matt Blunt (Republican)
- Governor of Montana: Brian Schweitzer (Democratic)
- Governor of Nebraska: Dave Heineman (Republican)
- Governor of Nevada: Jim Gibbons (Republican)
- Governor of New Hampshire: John Lynch (Democratic)
- Governor of New Jersey: Jon Corzine (Democratic)
- Governor of New Mexico: Bill Richardson (Democratic)
- Governor of New York: Eliot Spitzer (Democratic) (until March 17), David Paterson (Democratic) (starting March 17)
- Governor of North Carolina: Mike Easley (Democratic)
- Governor of North Dakota: John Hoeven (Republican)
- Governor of Ohio: Ted Strickland (Democratic)
- Governor of Oklahoma: Brad Henry (Democratic)
- Governor of Oregon: Ted Kulongoski (Democratic)
- Governor of Pennsylvania: Ed Rendell (Democratic)
- Governor of Rhode Island: Donald Carcieri (Republican)
- Governor of South Carolina: Mark Sanford (Republican)
- Governor of South Dakota: Mike Rounds (Republican)
- Governor of Tennessee: Phil Bredesen (Democratic)
- Governor of Texas: Rick Perry (Republican)
- Governor of Utah: Jon Huntsman, Jr. (Republican)
- Governor of Vermont: Jim Douglas (Republican)
- Governor of Virginia: Tim Kaine (Democratic)

- Governor of Washington: Christine Gregoire (Democratic)
- Governor of West Virginia: Joe Manchin (Democratic)
- Governor of Wisconsin: Jim Doyle (Democratic)
- Governor of Wyoming: Dave Freudenthal (Democratic)

Lieutenant Governors

- Lieutenant Governor of Alabama: Jim Folsom, Jr. (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Alaska: Sean Parnell (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas: Bill Halter (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of California: John Garamendi (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Colorado: Barbara O'Brien (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut: Michael Fedele (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Delaware: John Carney (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Florida: Jeff Kottkamp (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Georgia: Casey Cagle (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Hawaii: Duke Aiona (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Idaho: Jim Risch (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Illinois: Pat Quinn (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Indiana: Becky Skillman (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Iowa: Patty Judge (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kansas: Mark Parkinson (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky: Daniel Mongiardo (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana: Mitch Landrieu (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Maryland: Anthony G. Brown (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts: Tim Murray (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Michigan: John D. Cherry (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota: Carol Molnau (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi: Amy Tuck (Republican) (until January 10), Phil Bryant (Republican) (starting January 10)
- Lieutenant Governor of Missouri: Peter Kinder (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Montana: John Bohlinger (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska: Rick Sheehy (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nevada: Brian Krolicki (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico: Diane Denish (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of New York: David Paterson (Democratic) (until March 17), vacant (starting March 17)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina: Bev Perdue (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota: Jack Dalrymple (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Ohio: Lee Fisher (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Oklahoma: Jari Askins (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania:
 - until November 12: Catherine Baker Knoll (Democratic)
 - November 12-December 3: vacant
 - starting December 3: Joseph B. Scarnati (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island: Elizabeth H. Roberts (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina: André Bauer (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Dakota: Dennis Daugaard (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Tennessee: Ron Ramsey (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Texas: David Dewhurst (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Utah: Gary Herbert (Republican)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lieutenant Governor of Vermont: Brian Dubie (Republican) ▪ Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: Bill Bolling (Republican) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lieutenant Governor of Washington: Brad Owen (Democratic) ▪ Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin: Barbara Lawton (Democratic) |
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Events

January

- January 3 – Joe Biden drops out of the 2008 U.S. presidential election.
- January 5 – A levee bursts in Fernley, Nevada, flooding a large portion of the town and forcing the evacuations of 3,500 residents.
- January 7 – January 11 – A tornado outbreak passes through eastern North America, producing at least 75 tornadoes across the mideastern United States and record-breaking temperatures in eastern Canada. Four fatalities are reported.
- January 7 – NBC announces the 2008 Golden Globe Awards Ceremony will be canceled due to the Writers Guild of America strike. The network announces the winners in a 1-hour news conference.
- January 9 – President George W. Bush begins a tour of the Middle East with a stop in Israel. Other destinations include Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian Authority, and Egypt.
- January 10 – Bill Richardson drops out of the U.S. presidential election due to shortage of money.
- January 15 – The Food and Drug Administration declares that food from cloned cattle, swine, goats, and their progeny is safe to eat.^[2]
- January 18 – President George W. Bush announces an economic stimulus package, proposing \$800 per individual and \$1600 per couple in tax refunds.
- January 21 – Stock markets around the world plunge amid growing fears of a U.S. recession, fueled by the 2007 subprime mortgage crisis.^[3]
- January 25 – In Las Vegas, the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino catches fire.
- January 27 – The 2008 NHL All-Star Game occurs in Atlanta.
- January 28 – President George W. Bush delivers his final State of the Union address.^[4]
- January 30 – U.S. presidential candidates Rudy Giuliani and John Edwards drop out of the race.

February

- February 1 – The Food and Drug Administration issues a Public Health Advisory on Chantix, an anti-smoking medication, due to a possible "association between Chantix and serious neuropsychiatric symptoms."^[5]
- February 2 – The military accidentally kills nine civilians in a raid in Iraq.^[6]
- February 3 – The New York Giants defeat the heavily favored New England Patriots 17 – 14 in Super Bowl XLII, played at the University of Phoenix in Glendale, Arizona.^[7]
- February 5 – February 6 – Super Tuesday tornado outbreak: A tornado outbreak, the deadliest in 23 years, kills 58 in the Southern United States.^[8]
- February 5
 - U.S. stock market indices plunge more than 3% after a Non-Manufacturing ISM Report on Business shows signs of economic recession in the service sector. The S&P 500 fall 3.2%, The Dow Jones Industrial Average 370 points.^[9]



February 5 –
February 6: Super
Tuesday tornado
outbreak

- A series of deadly tornadoes sweeps across Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, and Illinois, reportedly killing at least 59 people and injuring more than 100.
- February 7
 - STS-122: Space Shuttle *Atlantis* launches to deliver the European-built Columbus science laboratory to the International Space Station.^[10]
 - The Senate passes a \$170 billion economic stimulus package by a margin of 81 – 16.
 - Charles Lee "Cookie" Thornton kills five and wounds two people at city hall before being shot and killed by police in Kirkwood, Missouri.^[11]
 - Mitt Romney suspends his campaign of the Republican Party nomination for the U.S. presidency.^[12]
- February 8 – the Kansas Jayhawks beat the Memphis Tigers, 75 – 68 OT for the NCAA Basketball Championship.
- February 10
 - The 50th Annual Grammy Awards takes place at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California.
 - Maine holds its Democratic primary in U.S. presidential election.
- February 11 – A marine is arrested on suspicion of raping a fourteen-year-old Japanese girl in Okinawa, Okinawa, Japan. Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda calls this "grave case" "unforgivable".^[13] Ambassador Tom Schieffer later offers a personal apology.^[14]
- February 11 – A former Boeing engineer and Defense Department analyst were arrested and charged with espionage for allegedly passing information to the Chinese government.^[15]
- February 12
 - The 2007–2008 Writers Guild of America strike ends effectively at 6:51pm PST (02:51 UTC, February 13) as members vote to stop picket lines in response to a tentative deal reached by the WGA and the AMPTP three days earlier.^[16]
 - Lawrence "Larry" King, a 15-year-old 8th grade student at E.O. Green Junior High School, is shot to death by 14-year-old student Brandon McInerney, for being gay.
- February 14 – Steven Kazmierczak opens fire, killing 5 and wounding 18 before fatally shooting himself at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois.^[17]
- February 17 – USDA recalls 143 million pounds of frozen beef from a California slaughterhouse^[18]
- February 20 – The United States Navy destroys an American spy satellite, USA 193, with a missile, prompting international speculation that it is testing its capability to destroy the satellites of other countries.^[19]
- February 24 – The 80th Academy Awards, hosted by Jon Stewart, takes place at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California,^[20] with *No Country for Old Men* winning Best Picture.^[21]

March

- March 4 – John McCain secures the 2008 U.S. Republican Party presidential nomination after winning primary elections in Texas, Vermont, Ohio, and Rhode Island.
- March 6 – During the early hours of the morning, a small bomb explodes at an unoccupied military recruiting station in Times Square, New York City. No one is injured.
- March 12 – New York Governor Eliot Spitzer announces his resignation (effective March 17) days after being linked to a high-priced prostitution ring. Lieutenant Governor David Paterson succeeds the governorship of New York.
- March 13 – The colorized \$5 bill is released, with nearly all of the features of the earlier colorized currency (the color-shifting numeral was not added).
- March 15 – A construction crane falls on a residential building in Manhattan, killing four people and injuring at least 17.^[22]

- March 18 – The Federal Reserve System cuts the federal funds rate by 75 basis points to 2.25%.^[23]
- March 24 – Relatives of victims of the Virginia Tech massacre report that the government of Virginia will offer victims compensation of \$100,000 to forestall lawsuits.
- March 26 – Former First Lady of the United States Nancy Reagan endorses John McCain for the presidency.^[24]

April

- April 11 – Newseum opens in Washington, D.C..
- April 15 – April 20 – Pope Benedict XVI visits the United States. Among his destinations are the White House, The Catholic University of America, the United Nations General Assembly, and the site of the fallen World Trade Center. Benedict XVI also celebrated Mass at Nationals Park and Yankee Stadium.
- April 18 – A magnitude 5.2 earthquake occurs in Illinois. Effects are felt in many Midwestern states such as Illinois and Indiana.
- April 22 – Senator Hillary Clinton wins the Pennsylvania Democratic Primary.
- April 28 – General Motors announces that it will cut production of pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles in three plants in Michigan and one in Oshawa, Ontario and negotiate layoffs with the United Auto Workers and Canadian Auto Workers.

May

- May 6 – Senator Barack Obama wins the North Carolina Democratic Primary. Senator Hillary Clinton narrowly wins Indiana Democratic Primary.
- May 7 – May 15 – Several tornadoes cause substantial damage in the Midwestern United States.
- May 14 – NASA announces the discovery of Supernova remnant G1.9+0.3.
- May 15 – California becomes the second state after Massachusetts in 2004 to legalize same-sex marriage after the state's own Supreme Court rules a previous ban unconstitutional.
- May 20 – Senator Hillary Clinton wins the Kentucky Democratic primary while Senator Barack Obama wins the Oregon Democratic primary.
- May 25 – NASA's Phoenix spacecraft becomes the first to land on the northern polar region of Mars.^[25]

June

- June 1
 - A large fire engulfs parts of Universal Studios in Universal City, California.
 - Landmark Broadway musical *Rent* ends its run after 12 years and more than 4,300 shows.
- June 3 – Barack Obama secures the 2008 U.S. Democratic Party presidential nomination becoming the first African American presumptive presidential candidate for a major political party.
- June 4
 - Travis Alexander stabbed multiple times then shot in the forehead by his former girlfriend Jodi Arias in Mesa, Arizona. The murder and subsequent trial received widespread media attention.^{[26][27]}
 - The Detroit Red Wings win their 11th Stanley Cup, defeating the Pittsburgh Penguins.
- June 7 – Big Brown, previously undefeated, fails to become the first winner of the Triple Crown since 1978, finishing last at the 2008 Belmont Stakes.
- June 17 – The Boston Celtics earn their 17th NBA championship by defeating the Los Angeles Lakers.

- June 18 – Tiger Woods announces he will undergo ACL surgery and won't play golf again until 2009.
- June 25 – Gunman Wesley Higdson opens fire in a plastics factory in Kentucky, murdering 5 before committing suicide.
- June 27 – After three decades as the Chairman of Microsoft Corporation, Bill Gates steps down from daily duties to concentrate on the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.^{[28][29]}

July

- July 10 – The 2008 Major League Baseball All-Star Game takes place at Yankee Stadium.^[30]
- July 25 – The Avenue of the Saints expressway project, linking St. Louis, Missouri and St. Paul, Minnesota, is finally completed with a ribbon cutting ceremony near Wayland, Missouri.^[31]
- July 29 – The 2008 Chino Hills earthquake, a 5.4 magnitude earthquake with an epicenter approximately 28 miles (45 km) southeast of downtown Los Angeles, felt as far away as Las Vegas, Nevada. No injuries reported.

August

- August 8 – August 12 – The United States compete at the Summer Olympics in Beijing, China and win 36 gold, 38 silver, and 36 bronze medals.
- August 24 – An aircraft crashes in Guatemala, killing 10, including four Americans on a humanitarian mission.^[32]
- August 25 – August 28 – Barack Obama and Joe Biden are declared the Democratic presidential and vice presidential candidates at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado.
- August 26 – September 1 – Hurricane Gustav makes landfall on Louisiana as Category 2 and kills seven in the United States, after making landfall on western Cuba as Category 4, and killing 66 in Haiti, eight in the Dominican Republic, and 11 in Jamaica.^{[33][34]}
- August 28 – September 7 – Hurricane Hanna kills seven in the United States, and 529 in Haiti, mostly due to floods and mudslides.^[35]
- August 29 – Republican presidential candidate John McCain chooses Sarah Palin as his running mate.

September

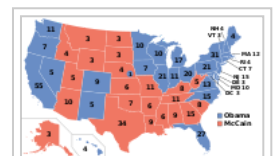
- September 1 – September 14 – Hurricane Ike makes landfall on Texas as Category 2 and kills 27 in the United States, after killing four in Cuba, one in the Dominican Republic, and 75 in Haiti.^{[36][37]}
- September 1 – September 4 – John McCain and Sarah Palin are declared the Republican presidential and vice presidential candidates at the 2008 Republican National Convention in Saint Paul, Minnesota.
- September 7 – The US Government takes control of the two largest mortgage financing companies in the US, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.^[38]
- September 12 – A Metrolink train collides head-on into a freight train in Los Angeles, California, killing 25 and injuring 130.^[39]
- September 15 – Wall Street investment bank Lehman Brothers files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.^[40]
- September 21 – The 60th Primetime Emmy Awards are presented.^[41]
- September 28 – SpaceX Falcon 1 becomes the world's first privately developed space launch vehicle to successfully make orbit.^{[42][43]}
- September 29 – the Dow Jones Industrial Average falls 777 points due to the financial panic.

October

- October 3 – Global financial crisis: U.S. President George W. Bush signs the revised Emergency Economic Stabilization Act into law, creating a 700 billion dollar Treasury fund to purchase failing bank assets.^[44]
- October 6 – NASA's MESSENGER spacecraft makes its second of three flybys of Mercury, decreasing the velocity for orbital insertion on March 18, 2011.^{[45][46]}
- October 15 – Presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama meet in their third and final televised debate at Hofstra University.
- October 29
 - Delta Air Lines merges with Northwest Airlines, forming the world's largest commercial carrier.^{[47][48]}
 - The Philadelphia Phillies beat the Tampa Bay Rays in the 2008 World Series. The series score was 4 – 1.

November

- November 4 – United States presidential election, 2008: Democratic U. S. Senator Barack Obama is elected as the 44th President of the United States and U. S. Senator Joe Biden is elected the 47th Vice President. Barack Obama becomes the first African-American President-elect.^{[49][50][51]}
- November 14 – STS-126: Space Shuttle *Endeavour* uses the MPLM Leonardo to deliver experiment and storage racks to the International Space Station. There will be only three more launches of *Endeavour* after this mission.^[52]



November 4:
Barack Obama is
elected President

December

- December – The Unemployment Rate soars to 7.3%, the highest since December 1992.
- December 1 – The Dow Jones Industrial Average drops 680 points, its fourth worst drop in its history, after the National Bureau of Economic Research declared on the same day that the United States economy officially entered a recession in December 2008.
- December 24 – December 25 – Bruce Pardo, while wearing a Santa suit, kills 9 people during a Christmas Eve party and burns down the house during the Covina, California massacre.

Ongoing

- War in Afghanistan (2001 – present)
- Iraq War (2003 – 2011)
- Late-2000s recession (2007 – 2009)

Births

- September 17 – Mia Talerico, actress
- October 9 – Bo, notable canine pet of Barack Obama

Deaths

January

- January 1 – Salvatore Bonanno, leader of organized crime (b. 1932)
- January 7
 - Philip Agee, spy and writer, died in Cuba (b. 1935)
 - Edward "Buddy" LeRoux, businessman and American baseball executive (b. 1930)
- January 10
 - Christopher Bowman, figure skater (b. 1967)
 - Maila Nurmi, Finnish-born American actress and television personality (b. 1922)
- January 11 – Carl Karcher, businessman (b. 1917)
- January 13 – Johnny Podres, American baseball player (b. 1932)
- January 15 – Brad Renfro, actor (b. 1982)
- January 17
 - Bobby Fischer, American-born Icelandic chess grandmaster (b. 1943)
 - Ernie Holmes, American football player (b. 1948)
 - Allan Melvin, actor (b. 1923)
- January 18
 - Georgia Frontiere, American football team owner, entertainer, and philanthropist (b. 1927)
 - Lois Nettleton, actress (b. 1927)
- January 19
 - Frances Lewine, journalist (b. 1921)
 - Suzanne Pleshette, actress (b. 1937)
 - John Stewart, singer and songwriter (b. 1939)
- January 22
 - Roberto Gari, actor (b. 1920)
 - Miles Lerman, Polish-born American activist and museum administrator (b. 1920)
 - Heath Ledger, Australian actor and director, died in New York City (b. 1979)
- January 24 – Randy Salerno, television journalist (b. 1963)
- January 27 – Gordon B. Hinckley, minister and executive (b. 1910)

- January 29
 - Raymond Jacobs, marine, member of the Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima (b. 1925)
 - Margaret Truman, singer, writer, historian, and daughter of Harry S. Truman (b. 1924)

February

- February 1 – Shell Kepler, actress (b. 1958)
- February 2
 - Earl Butz, 18th United States Secretary of Agriculture from 1971 till 1976. (b. 1909)
 - Joshua Lederberg, Nobel molecular biologist and college administrator (b. 1925)
- February 4
 - Harry Richard Landis, World War I soldier (b. 1899)
 - Sheldon Brown, bicycle mechanic and writer (b. 1944)
- February 6 – John McWethy, journalist (b. 1947)
- February 8 – Phyllis A. Whitney, Japanese-born American writer (b. 1903)
- February 10
 - Ron Leavitt, television writer and producer (b. 1947)
 - Roy Scheider, actor and boxer (b. 1932)
- February 11 – Tom Lantos, Hungarian-born American United States Representative from California from 1981 till 2008. (b. 1928)
- February 12 – Oscar Brodney, screenwriter and lawyer (b. 1907)
- February 13 – Roger Voisin, French-born American musician (b. 1918)
- February 15
 - Steve Fossett, businessman, aviator, and sailer, missing person declared-dead *in absentia* (b. 1944)
 - Johnny Weaver, wrestler and sportscaster (b. 1935)
- February 21 – Ben Chapman, actor (b. 1928)
- February 24 – Larry Norman, musician, singer, songwriter, record label owner, and record producer (b. 1947)
- February 26 – Buddy Miles, musician (b. 1947)

- February 27
 - William F. Buckley, Jr., writer and commentator (b. 1925)
 - Boyd Coddington, automobile producer and television host (b. 1944)
 - Myron Cope, American football sportscaster (b. 1929)
- February 28 – Joseph M. Juran, Romanian-born American management consultant and engineer (b. 1904)

March

- March 4 – Gary Gygax, writer and game designer (b. 1938)
- March 5 – Joseph Weizenbaum, German writer and computer scientist, died in Ludwigsfelde-Gröben (b. 1923)
- March 9 – Gus Giordano, dancer (b. 1923)
- March 12 – Howard Metzenbaum, Senator from Ohio in 1974 and from 1976 till 1995. (b. 1917)
- March 15 – Vicki Van Meter, aviator (b. 1982)
- March 16
 - Ivan Dixon, actor, director, and producer (b. 1931)
 - Gary Hart, wrestler and wrestling manager (b. 1942)
- March 20 – Abigail Rose Taylor, notable accident victim (b. 2001)
- March 22 – Cachao López, Cuban musician, died in Coral Gables, Florida (b. 1918)
- March 23 – Al Copeland, entrepreneur, died in Munich, Germany (b. 1944)
- March 24 – Richard Widmark, actor (b. 1914)
- March 28
 - Herb Rich, American football player (b. 1928)
 - Ron Slinker, wrestler (b. 1945)
 - Helen Yglesias, writer (b. 1915)
- March 30
 - Douglas Kent Hall, American writer and photographer (b. 1938)
 - Dith Pran, Cambodian-born American photojournalist (b. 1942)
- March 31 – Jules Dassin, film director, screenwriter, actor, producer, and husband of Melina Mercouri, died in Athens, Greece (b. 1911)

April

- April 2 – Ray Poole, American football player and coach (b. 1921)
- April 5 – Charlton Heston, actor (b. 1923)
- April 8 – Stanley Kamel, actor (b. 1943)
- April 11 – Merlin German, soldier, charity founder, and murder victim (b. 1985)
- April 12 – Barbara McDermott, last American survivor of the sinking of the RMS Lusitania (b. 1912)
- April 13 – John Archibald Wheeler, physicist (b. 1911)
- April 14 – Ollie Johnston, animator (b. 1912)
- April 16
 - Joe Feeney, tenor (b. 1931)
 - Edward Norton Lorenz, mathematician and meteorologist (b. 1917)
 - Joseph Solman, painter (b. 1909)
- April 17 – Danny Federici, musician (b. 1950)
- April 21 – Al Wilson, singer (b. 1939)
- April 22 – Paul Davis, singer, songwriter, and musician (b. 1948)

May

- May 2 – Beverlee McKinsey, actress (b. 1935)
- May 4 – Fredric J. Baur, chemist and inventor (b. 1918)
- May 5 – Irv Robbins, Canadian-born American entrepreneur (b. 1917)
- May 8 – Eddy Arnold, singer, songwriter, and musician (b. 1918)
- May 11 – Dottie Rambo, singer, songwriter, and musician (b. 1934)
- May 12 – Robert Rauschenberg, artist (b. 1925)
- May 13 – John Phillip Law, actor (b. 1937)
- May 15
 - Alexander Courage, composer (b. 1919)
 - Willis Lamb, Nobel physicist (b. 1913)
- May 16 – Robert Mondavi, winemaker (b. 1913)
- May 18 – Joseph Pevney, film and television director (b. 1911)
- May 20 – Hamilton Jordan, 8th White House Chief of Staff from 1979 till 1980. (b. 1944)
- May 22 – Robert Asprin, writer (b. 1946)
- May 24 – Dick Martin, comedian, television director, actor, and producer (b. 1922)

- May 26
 - Earle Hagen, composer (b. 1919)
 - Sydney Pollack, actor, director, and producer (b. 1934)
- May 28 – Robert Justman, television producer and director (b. 1926)
- May 29 – Harvey Korman, actor and director (b. 1927)

June

- June 2
 - Bo Diddley, singer, songwriter, and musician (b. 1928)
 - Mel Ferrer, actor, director, producer, and husband of Audrey Hepburn (b. 1917)
- June 6 – Dwight White, American football player (b. 1949)
- June 7 – Jim McKay, television sports journalist (b. 1921)
- June 9 – Algis Budrys, Lithuanian-born American writer (b. 1931)
- June 10 – John Rauch, American football player and coach (b. 1927)
- June 12 – Charlie Jones, television sportscaster and actor (b. 1930)
- June 13 – Tim Russert, television journalist and lawyer (b. 1950)
- June 15
 - Johnathan Goddard, American football player (b. 1981)
 - Stan Winston, film and television special effects and makeup artist (b. 1946)
- June 16 – Caylee Anthony, alleged murder victim (b. 2005)
- June 17 – Cyd Charisse, actress, dancer, and wife of Tony Martin (b. 1922)
- June 21
 - Scott Kalitta, race car driver (b. 1962)
 - Kermit Love, puppeteer and costume designer (b. 1916)
- June 22
 - George Carlin, writer, actor, comedian, and obscenity law central figure (b. 1937)
 - Dody Goodman, actress (b. 1914)
- June 24 – Leonid Hurwicz, Russian-born American Nobel economist and mathematician (b. 1917)

- June 27
 - Polk Robison, American basketball coach (b. 1912)
 - Michael Turner, comic book artist (b. 1971)
- June 29 – Don S. Davis, actor and soldier, died in Gibsons, British Columbia, Canada (b. 1942)

July

- July 1
 - John Pont, American football coach (b. 1927)
 - Mark Dean Schwab, murderer (b. 1968)
- July 3 – Larry Harmon, clown (b. 1925)
- July 4
 - Jesse Helms, Senator from North Carolina from 1973 till 2003. (b. 1921)
 - Evelyn Keyes, actress and wife of John Huston and Artie Shaw (b. 1916)
 - Terrence Kiel, American football player (b. 1980)
- July 6 – Bobby Durham, jazz drummer (b. 1937)
- July 11 – Michael E. DeBakey, surgeon and inventor (b. 1908)
- July 12 – Tony Snow, journalist and 26th White House Press Secretary from 2006 till 2007. (b. 1955)
- July 22 – Estelle Getty, actress (b. 1923)
- July 25 – Randy Pausch, writer and computer scientist (b. 1960)

August

- August 3 – Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Russian Nobel writer, died in Moscow, Russia (b. 1918)
- August 9 – Bernie Mac, actor and comedian (b. 1957)
- August 10 – Isaac Hayes, singer, songwriter, musician, and actor (b. 1942)
- August 15 – Jerry Wexler, music producer and journalist (b. 1917)
- August 19
 - Julius Carry, actor (b. 1952)
 - LeRoi Moore, musician (b. 1961)

September

- September 1
 - Don LaFontaine, television show and advertisement announcer (b. 1940)
 - Jerry Reed, singer, songwriter, actor, and guitarist (b. 1937)
- September 6 – Anita Page, actress (b. 1910)
- September 12 – David Foster Wallace, writer and columnist (b. 1962)
- September 26 – Paul Newman, actor, film director, entrepreneur, humanitarian, race car driver, auto racing team owner, and husband of Joanne Woodward (b. 1925)

October

- October 15 – Edie Adams, actress, singer, comedian, businesswoman, and wife of Ernie Kovacs (b. 1927)
- October 17 – Levi Stubbs, singer and actor (b. 1936)
- October 19
 - Mr. Blackwell, actor, fashion designer and critic (b. 1922)
 - Rudy Ray Moore, actor, musician, and comedian (b. 1927)
- October 26 – Tony Hillerman, writer (b. 1925)
- October 31 – Studs Terkel, writer, broadcaster, and historian (b. 1912)

November

- November 1 – Tiffany Sloan, model (b. 1973)
- November 4
 - Michael Crichton, physician, writer, screenwriter, film and television director and producer (b. 1942)
 - Mordechai Dov Brody, notable euthanasia patient (b. 1996)
- November 10 – Miriam Makeba, South African singer, died in Castel Volturno, Italy (b. 1932)
- November 12
 - Catherine Baker Knoll, educator and politician, 30th Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania (b. 1930)
 - Mitch Mitchell, British musician, died in Portland, Oregon (b. 1947)
- November 13 – Jules Archer, historian and author (b. 1915)

- November 21 – Brenden Foster, murder victim (b. 1997)
- November 22 – MC Breed, rapper (b. 1971)

December

- December 1 – Paul Benedict, actor (b. 1938)
- December 2
 - Kathleen Baskin-Ball, minister (b. 1958)
 - Odetta, singer, songwriter, musician, actress, and civil rights activist (b. 1930)
- December 4 – Forrest J. Ackerman, writer, columnist, actor, and science-fiction collector of genre books and movie memorabilia (b. 1916)
- December 5
 - Nina Foch, Dutch-born American actress, wife of James Lipton (b. 1924)
 - Beverly Garland, actress and businesswoman (b. 1926)
- December 6 – Sunny von Bülow, socialite and alleged murder victim, wife of Claus von Bülow (b. 1931)
- December 8 – Robert Prosky, actor (b. 1930)
- December 11
 - Maddie Blaustein, actress (b. 1960)
 - Bettie Page, model and actress (b. 1923)
- December 12 – Van Johnson, actor (b. 1916)
- December 16 – Sam Bottoms, actor (b. 1955)
- December 17 – Sammy Baugh, American football player and coach (b. 1914)
- December 18
 - Majel Barrett-Roddenberry, actress, producer, and wife of Gene Roddenberry (b. 1932)
 - W. Mark Felt, FBI agent also known as "Deep Throat" from Watergate scandal (b. 1913)
- December 19 – James Bevel, minister and civil rights activist (b. 1936)
- December 20 – Robert Mulligan, film and television director and brother of Richard Mulligan (b. 1925)
- December 24 – Harold Pinter, British Nobel writer, screenwriter, director, and actor, died in London, United Kingdom (b. 1930)
- December 25 – Eartha Kitt, actress and singer (b. 1927)

- December 29 – Freddie Hubbard, musician (b. 1938)
- December 31 – Donald E. Westlake, writer and screenwriter (b. 1933)

See also

- 2008 in American television
- List of American films of 2008

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