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Gary W. Green, Orlando Sentinel / MCT

Pittsburgh's Santonio Holmes makes the game-winning catch as the Steelers beat the Arizona Cardinals 27-23 in Super Bowl XLIII at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa.

Steelers stun Cardinals

Pittsburgh rallies for victory, sets record with 6th Super Bowl title

By David Haugh
Chicago Tribune

TAMPA, Fla. — When the Pittsburgh Steelers won their fifth Super Bowl three years ago, the franchise dubbed it “one for the thumb.”

Sunday night's 27-23 victory over the Arizona Cardinals in Super Bowl XLIII was one for the ages.

“If I could win any way, it would be like that,” said winning coach Mike Tomlin, 36, the youngest coach to win a Super Bowl. “Steeler football is for 60 minutes. It's never going to be pretty.”

History will remember this Super Bowl as a beauty. Santonio Holmes' 6-yard touchdown catch with

35 seconds remaining capped a furious fourth quarter that included two lead changes, three TDs and a safety in the final 7 minutes 41 seconds.

On the game-winning play, Ben Roethlisberger bought time by shuffling to his right and fired a pass over three defenders to the only spot in the right corner Holmes could catch it. A fully extended Holmes kept both feet on the ground as he reached as far as he could to pull in the catch that instantly went into the Super Bowl time capsule.

It was Holmes' fourth catch on the game-winning eight-play, 78-yard drive, a series that started with the wide receiver making a request of his quarterback in the huddle.

“I said to (Roethlisberger) that I wanted to be the guy to make the play for this team,” said Holmes, named most valuable player.

Holmes was put in the position to play hero only after his wide receiver counterpart, Larry Fitzgerald of the Cardinals, made a rescue necessary.

Arizona created Fitzgerald's opportunity to win the game by forcing a safety with 2:58 left. A holding call on center Justin Hartwig in the end zone for tackling a blitzing Chike Okeafor made it 20-16 and got the ball back for Kurt Warner.

On the Cardinals' second play, from the 36-yard

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Iraqi election has low turnout

By Leila Fadel
McClatchy Newspapers

BAGHDAD — Voter turnout in Iraq's provincial elections Saturday Feb. 1 was the lowest in the nation's short history as a democracy, despite a relative calm across the nation. Only about 7.5 million of more than 14 million registered voters went to the polls.

Interviews suggest that the low voter turnout is an indication of Iraqi disenchantment with a democracy that, so far, has brought them very little.

Since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 and the fall of a brutal dictator, Iraq is witnessed unprecedented violence in their nation and what they believe is humiliation under a foreign occupation. Even on Saturday, U.S. tanks could be spotted across Baghdad on largely empty roads.

Following elections in 2005 Iraq spiraled into a sectarian war. People covered in their homes while others literally killed each other in the streets. Many here feel the people they elected were party to or at least complicit in the violence. The security forces, too, were feared as sectarian death squads; Iraqis believed that American raids or passing U.S. tanks sometimes resulted in innocent civilian deaths.

Many blame the U.S. presence in Iraq for sowing the seeds of sectarianism by bringing back exiles to rule them.

Beyond the disillusionment, thou-

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Stimulus package still awaits refinement

By David Lightman
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate this week will debate the future of the American economy.

Everything's up for discussion and subject to largely unpredictable votes: How to levy taxes, create jobs, help people buy homes, reinvigorate ailing state and local governments.

And because of the Senate's quirky way of doing business — as well as a growing sense that the plan passed by the House last week is flawed — almost any idea could win or lose.

Officially, senators are considering an \$889 billion stimulus package, as economic news grows grimmer. Fresh in their minds is Friday's new data showing the economy shrank 3.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008, its worst quarterly decline in nearly 27 years, and the prospect that January unemployment figures, due out this Friday, will

show more staggering job losses.

Votes on specific proposal are likely to start Tuesday, with final passage by the end of the week. It will be, said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada, “a long, hard slog.”

The Senate will start with a blueprint that includes \$342 billion in tax cuts, some \$67 billion more than the House included in its version last week. The biggest difference is the Senate's inclusion of a break in the alternative minimum tax for an estimated 24 million people this year.

The biggest tax cut, though, is virtually the same as one passed by the House, an effective \$500 per person rebate for most taxpayers in 2009 and 2010. Total cost: An estimated \$142 billion.

That's not enough, though, for many Republicans, who will push to lower tax rates now paid by lower and middle-

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Steelers triumph over Cardinals in Super Bowl XLIII

Continued from Cover

line, Warner took advantage of the respect the Steelers defense was giving Fitzgerald. Before the snap, safety Troy Polamalu lined up 24 yards deep and was in no position to break up the quick slant to Fitzgerald.

Cornerback Ike Taylor had jammed Fitzgerald before releasing the receiver to safeties whose depth made it impossible to make a play. The resulting 64-yard TD gave the Cardinals a 23-20 lead and set up a happy ending so much of America had sought for Warner.

But the Steelers edited the script with a scene less sentimental but more dramatic.

"We're going down in history with one of the greatest games ever played in the Super Bowl," said Holmes, who caught nine passes for 131 yards and a touchdown.

It gave the Steelers franchise its sixth Super Bowl title, more than any other team. To many the victory will validate the Rooney family's surprising choice of Tomlin over in-house candidate Russ Grimm to replace Bill Cowher in 2007.

"I would like to thank President Obama and all of Steeler Nation for supporting us through the year," owner Dan Rooney said.

Warner nearly ruined the night for the Rooneys and all of Pittsburgh. He became the first quarterback in Super Bowl history to have three 300-yard passing games by going 31 of 43 for 377 yards and three TDs.

Taking what the Steelers gave him for the first three quarters, Warner stayed away from the deep passing game that defines the Cardinals. The no-huddle offense that had been good to Warner didn't appear until the Cardinals trailed 20-7 with 11 minutes left in the

game. Then Warner got hot.

He completed all eight of his passes on an 87-yard drive that pulled the Cardinals within 20-14. Then after the safety, Warner hit Fitzgerald in stride for the 64-yard TD that stopped the "Terrible Towels" in the partisan Pittsburgh crowd of 70,774 from waving.

"My whole goal was to make good decisions and I was just going to be patient this game," Warner said. "The unfortunate thing is we made too many mistakes."

The most pivotal one came from Warner himself.

Down 10-7, Arizona had first-and-goal at the 1 with 18 seconds left in the first half and lined up with wide receivers Anquan Boldin and Fitzgerald flanked to the left. Steelers linebacker James Harrison, lined up outside Cardinals left tackle Mike Gandy, faked as if he were rushing the passer before floating to the spot he anticipated Warner would throw. Warner never saw Harrison and threw it right into his hands.

Then the player who nearly quit to become a bus driver after getting cut four times weaved his way 100 yards through Arizona traffic and into the Super Bowl record books. He ran through Warner's tackle attempt, made a nifty cut and raced down the Cardinals sideline untouched until Gandy unsuccessfully tried knocking him out of bounds at the 10. Fitzgerald attempted to strip the ball at the end zone with the help of Steve Breaston, but Harrison prevailed, tumbling over the goal line to make it 17-7.

As Harrison, the NFL defensive player of the year, lay flat on his back after returning an interception 100 yards for a touchdown, Tomlin raced across the field to check on his man of steel.

Super man indeed.

"I would say it was the greatest play in Super Bowl history," defensive coordinator Dick LeBeau, 71, said. "We don't win without (that) play."

— MCT Campus

Economic stimulus plan still under construction

Continued from Cover

income taxpayers.

They say that rebates do not provide enough money to jolt an economy mired in what's likely to be the worst recession since World War II.

When people got rebates from the 2008 stimulus, "they paid down their individual debt . . . but they didn't take the money and go out and buy a car," said Sen. Robert Bennett, R-Utah.

Instead, Republicans will seek to lower the current 15 and 10 percent income tax rates by 5 percentage points each.

Currently, married couples pay a 10 percent tax on income up to \$16,700. Reducing that rate would save about \$500 per couple.

Republicans would also lower the 15 percent rate now levied on couples earning between \$16,700 and \$67,900, saving working couples another \$1,100, according to Republican estimates. Single filers would get similar reductions either way, and, said GOP Senate Leader Mitch McConnell, "everyone who works and pays income tax would see an immediate increase in pay."

Democrats have resisted such cuts, saying the bill already consists of about 30 percent tax cuts.

More likely areas of agreement could involve infrastructure, housing and a corporate tax break.

There's a lot of sentiment to include more for rebuilding roads, bridges and other public works projects. About \$27 billion is devoted to highway projects, \$8.4 billion for public transportation and \$5.5 billion for "competitive grants to state and local governments for transportation investments."

Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., suggested

spending far more, and got some Democratic backing, at least in principle, as Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., plans to offer a proposal that would boost infrastructure spending. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., estimated Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation" that \$20 to \$30 billion more could be proposed.

Republicans are piecing together a housing package that could include a plan for the federal government to guarantee 4 percent mortgages and make them available for a limited amount of time. Current rates are around 5 percent.

GOP lawmakers estimate that the average family would see its monthly mortgage payment drop by \$466 a month, or \$5,600 a year. Over the life of a 30-year loan, that's a savings of \$167,760.

The cost of the program is unclear, but Republican Policy Committee Chairman John Ensign of Nevada is promoting the idea.

"You have to fix housing; otherwise I don't think the economy is going to recover," he said. Schumer had similar thoughts: "I think we'll get some real agreement on the housing part," he said.

The corporate break would involve what's called "repatriation," meaning companies can bring back foreign earnings and have them taxed in this country at a temporarily reduced rate.

The change is seen as a way to prod firms to spend more in this country, and would cost the government about \$40 billion.

Democrats control 58 Senate seats, meaning they need only two Republicans to stop a filibuster, and both sides are talking cooperation. As Senate Assistant Majority Leader Richard Durbin, D-Ill., told Fox News Sunday, "We're open about this."

— MCT Campus

Disillusioned population results in weak Iraqi elections

Continued from Cover

sands of potential voters were unable to cast ballots Saturday because official voter lists did not contain their names. Street protests resulted.

"I didn't participate in this election because I don't trust any list," Yasir Baqir, 28, said on Saturday in Fallujah. "Like any election, we read and see many promises but nothing real (happens) and there is still a crisis, a security crisis, an economic and a services crisis."

Saturday's turnout of about 51 percent was well below the 76 percent turnout who cast ballots in national elections in December 2005 and even below 57 percent who voted for provincial councils and their national assembly in January 2005. On Election Day in January 2005, 44 people were killed. Saturday one person was reported killed in non-election related violence.

"There was a mood of apathy before the elections," said Ali al-Adeeb a Shiite legislator from Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Dawa party. "Many asked themselves what is the good? Why should we vote and for what? The enthusiasm came as the elections got closer."

Despite the turnout, the Independent High Electoral Commission said participation was a positive sign for provincial elections. The commission also characterized voting violations on Election Day as extremely low.

"(The commission) is very pleased with the turn out," said Judge Qassim al-Aboudi. "All these complaints who claimed not to be on a voter registry for a number of reasons were at the wrong center or did not update their information."

Despite that assessment, it seems that tens of thousands of mostly displaced people didn't get to vote. The commission said

this was a mistake on the voters' part. Many didn't check where they were supposed to vote before Election Day.

Most of the confusion seemed to be concentrated in Sunni Arab and Kurdish areas.

On Sunday, al-Maliki's alliance, Coalition of the State of Law, seemed to be the big winner, but preliminary results will not be available until the end of the week. Al-Maliki spent weeks heavily campaigning for the slate of candidates from the Coalition of the State of Law. He was widely criticized by other slates for using government resources to campaign.

The extent of the power of the provincial councils is unclear. They control local security and public facilities, and influence local ministry official appointees. However, their budgets come from the central government. Governors, who are elected by the provincial councils, can be ousted by a vote of the national parliament.

Al-Maliki has strongly advocated for a stronger central government and weaker provinces. If he can fill provinces with his supporters, he may be able to garner further power for the federal government.

Many officials outside of al-Maliki's circle worry he has grown too strong.

He recast himself last year as a nationalist despite heading a Shiite Islamist party. Al-Maliki's crackdown on Shiite militias in the south and in Baghdad, and his support for Arab parties in the Kurdish Arab regions have given him new backing from some Arab Sunni constituents.

Iraqis cast their ballots in 42,000 heavily secured polling stations across the country on Saturday. The electoral commission received the most complaints from Nineveh and Diyala provinces, where Kurds and Arabs rub up against each other and are vying for power.

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Autistic boy, dog connect

By Amy Wilson
McClatchy Newspapers

LEXINGTON, Ky. _ It's early July, and Michael wants nothing to do with the dog. The feeling, if you can judge a new puppy's intent, is not mutual.

Michael is a 5-year-old child, diagnosed within the wide autism syndrome label, who doesn't want to be touched, much less touch the animal in front of him.

Mercury is a 10-week-old black Labrador who wants nothing more than to be touched and played with.

If the goal is to make Mercury responsive to Michael's needs, you first have to get them to acknowledge each other.

And make no mistake, that's the goal. Because if therapists and dog trainers can figure out a way to get Mercury to sense what Michael is doing or about to do, and then disrupt it or comfort him through it, there is fresh reason to think autistic children can be armed with a new and highly effective _ did we mention wet-nosed? _ weapon against a world that doesn't understand them.

But there is a problem here. Autistic children want little or no eye contact with others. Dogs crave it. Autistic children are often non-responsive to verbal cues and praise. Dogs wait for the former and live for the latter. How to get them to speak each other's language is the issue.

The breakthrough that is to come in the months ahead for Michael and Mercury will not be a miracle. It will take weeks of coaxing and more than a little invention. But it will come, when someone gets the bright idea to open a can of shaving cream.

The idea of using animals to help human beings is not new. The idea of using horses to help autistic children with movement and stimulation issues has been around for a while.



Occupational therapist grad student Jaci Durham helps Michael Farthing, a 6-year-old with autism, during an exercise with a black lab named Mercury who had been in training since he was a puppy.

But to use dogs as assistance animals for children with autism is so complicated that what is happening with Michael and Mercury is, though with some precedent, sort of being made up as it goes along.

This is how it works: Two willing and eager parents, Chris and Kim Farthing, explain Michael's behavior and their needs regarding that behavior to experienced dog trainer Jo Brosius. Brosius, in turn, explains what she can do with Mercury to Jaci Durham and Peggy Wittman, an occupational therapy master's candidate and her academic adviser, who then discuss what Michael might accept _ be it closeness, distraction, companionship _ from the dog.

It's a constant communication between each team member about what is working and what isn't. It's invention at every level, sometimes with as simple a goal as to get Michael to

let Mercury sit next to him without incident.

"A lot of people think I'm stretching for a miracle, like I'm trying to make him normal," Kim Farthing says.

She shakes her head no.

Michael, like many children with autism, tends to wander away from home and familiar boundaries. If Mercury can stop that, if he can even just go with Michael when he goes, that will be enough.

"I just want Michael safe."

A good friend had seen a story about autism assistance dogs on a network magazine show in early 2008.

The Farthings had a lot to think about when inviting a new permanent "family member" into their home. They have two other children _ Creed, Michael's twin brother, and Jordan, his 8-year-old sister.

Students join for discussion

By Reese Wallace
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ORLANDO, FL _ Valencia's Get Into Reading program held its first discussion group on Wednesday to talk about Zora Neale Hurston's "Their Eyes Were Watching God." The amount of students who turn out surprised the staff hosting the event.

"It was beyond expectations," said Regina Seguin, a librarian at Valencia's West Campus. Their were 82 students who came to the event and the seats in the room were overflowing causing some students to have to sit on the floor.

The Get Into Reading program on Valencia's West Campus have many classes involved in reading Hurston's novel, which is her most famous work about a young black woman in Florida in the early 20th century.

Students came to the event for a number of reasons, but the most frequent reason that came up was academics. "My teacher is the reason I came," said Corey Cunningham, a Valencia student, "my teacher and extra credit."

After the video the students split into different groups to discuss questions about the book and Hurston's life. The hosting staff thought the discussion got off to a slow start, but a question about the nature of the sexes got the group involved.

"When you bring up contentious issues people really..." said Seguin before lapsing into silence looking for the right word to describe the reaction of the crowd. "That's the point of great literature, tying into important concepts of today."

Seguin thinks the events will only get better as the semester goes on. "People haven't gotten into the book yet," she said, "I think it was a good starting point." The next Get Into Reading discussion event is on Wednesday February 4 at 8:30 a.m.



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Our Voice

Segregation affects gay community

Where there was once a civil rights barrier, a barrier preventing African-Americans opportunity to progress in our societal system, no such barrier now exists; unless of course you've been living under a rock for the last two years.

The election of President Obama eliminated hundreds of years of racial prejudice and segregation; showcasing our country's resolve to push through the wall of hate that has stunted our growth for generations.

However, we still have a long way to go.

Barriers of a racial, idealistic, and sexual nature still exist in many facets of society. Whether it's the persistent gender issues that working, professional, women face on a daily basis who

try to get their fair share in the workplace, or, even more unfortunate in such a "progressive" society, the new segregation of the homosexuals living in our country is present.

On a homosexual friendly blog-site, Queervisions.com, one blogger, by the name of Patrick, states, "...today while flipping channels I came across a black minister decrying the argument which equates today's gay civil rights movement with yesterday's black civil rights movement. He said it was immoral and offensive."

He continues by stating, "Shame on that segment of the black community which falsely believes they alone are entitled to civil rights and the demand for equality under the law. It is even more egregious when leaders of the black community purport to speak on behalf of God and morality. They do not, in fact, speak on behalf of God; rather, they speak on behalf of their own ignorance and poor judgment."

This is a very telling observation, bordering on becoming an oxymoron: blacks condemning gays.

Gay marriage and civil union laws were unanimously denied

in two key states during the last election cycle: California and Florida.

In California, Proposition 8 restricted same-sex marriages, while also solidifying opposite-sex couples their right to marry.

Backed by generous donations from the Mormon Church, as reported by CNN, it appears that the denial of said proposition was at the forefront of the religious movement.

Various religious leaders, proponents of the ban, have very publicly stated their reasoning for the ban, and it includes: "The result [of gay marriage laws being passed] would be in public schools teaching our kids that gay marriage is okay, [and that gays would] redefine marriage for everyone else."

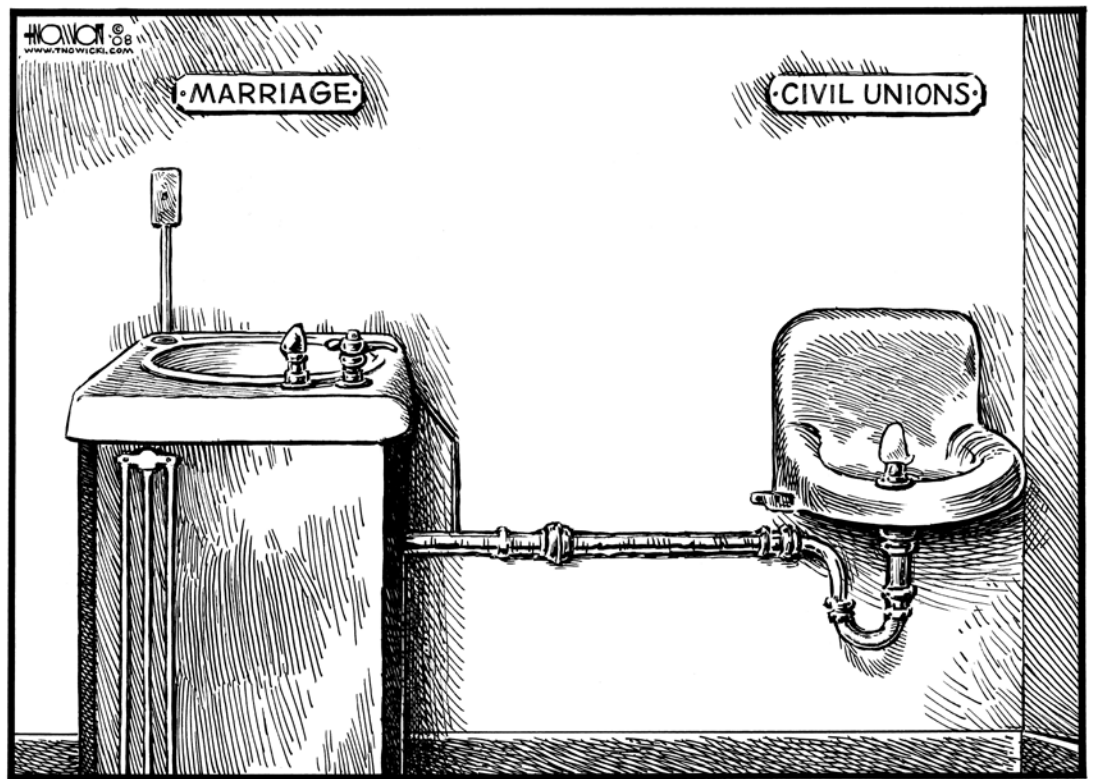
"There are many reasons for bigotry, for supremacist belittling views of gay people. There were many reasons for supporting slavery, Jim Crow. Those reasons were and still are fundamentally based upon aggressive ignorance and dogmatic fear," Patrick writes in his blog.

An interesting stat in the passing of Prop 2 here in the Sunshine State is that, according to the Associated Press, which dove-tails Patrick's view in the beginning of his blog about the black opposition to gay marriage, that 60% of the vote in favor of a ban was from the black community.

Where once a barrier stood against the African-Americans for so long in our society, now has been destroyed and replaced by a new barrier; a barrier preventing homosexuals the same rights as heterosexuals, and anyone else who possesses equal rights after years of segregation.

Make no mistake; we are a stone's throw away from having "gay and straight" water fountains.

Only time will tell if this new barrier takes as long to come crumbling down as the many before it.



MCT Campus

Your Voice

We are all considered equals

By Kenny Wagner

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Homosexuality, a provocative subject and one of great controversy since, oh perhaps the first throws of human existence. The very word causes people to experience a range of complex emotions to go along with the complex condition this world creates around this issue. Even more controversial than homosexuality alone is the issue surrounding gay marriage. It seems that those who have a problem with same-sex marriage are people who have no problem with the gay community, until they want to partake of the same rights as straight couples.

There are many cultural reasons same-sex marriage is condemned as well as exalted and that depends on the region of the country and the percentage of college grads, the percentage of minorities and the overall concentration of people in that region.

Rural areas for example are not all about rainbows and parades. But no matter what the demographics are, perhaps the community that holds the most sway over the gay marriage issue is the church; the Mormon Church for example has reportedly spent more than \$190,000 on the campaign against proposition 8, the bill that effectively banned gay-marriage in California this last election cycle, according to "On Top Magazine."

No matter what the cultural reasons for being in favor or otherwise on the issue of gay marriage,

this much is true; sociologists debate, reverends condemn, politicians fasten themselves onto a political agenda and the people latch onto the rhetoric. With all of this chaos surrounding this hot-button issue how will we actually progress as a society and finally legalize same-sex unions?

Perhaps, to clear the smoke the gay community needs to attach their agenda to another issue that is making headway in America, it worked for the women's suffrage movement in the early 1900's when they attached their cause to the temperance movement. The same needs to happen if we will ever pass lasting legislation making same-sex marriage legal.

The gay community needs to affix its agenda to the schema of promoting the rights of illegal immigrants just as an example. While this might be a tough sell in Washington, it will undoubtedly prove that people are angry, motivated, and have the numbers and most importantly it will show another group is willing to participate in this fight with the gay community. This will make more politicians and community leaders listen and see what these respective communities want to accomplish.

The idea is to add verisimilitude to the gay marriage issue and not let it be painted as a trivial matter full of unmotivated and unorganized interest groups and flippant supporters, standing alone, who mask themselves as champions of progressive thinking but are really just fools making dumb arguments to even dumber politicians.

Your Voice

We are not all created equal

By Adam Fishman

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If you haven't brushed up on your history lately, you might want to. The current state of our society reflects certain situations that occurred not too long ago-civil rights to be exact. What does the civil rights movement have to do with today? Well, everything. Have we really progressed into a nation where prejudice, discrimination, and hate do not exist? Have we come far enough where everyone is treated equal? Unfortunately, we haven't.

Dr. Martin Luther King stated in his "I Have a Dream" speech that, "...one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal."

All men are created equal, but what was present in the 1960's still remains the same today; all men and women are not treated equal. Until hate, discrimination, and prejudice are completely eliminated from our society, it is then, can we truly say everyone in America is treated the same.

One might argue that we have progressed in light years from the civil rights movement. Go back a few weeks in time to see the inauguration of our first African-American president. During the time

of slavery and the civil rights movement, anyone who said there would be a black president in the future would have been laughed at. Now, every person who's ever uttered the thought is laughing at everyone who said it could never happen.

The inauguration of Barack Obama was certainly a milestone and step in the right direction, but we haven't come far enough and still have far to go.

A prime example of discrimination in America today is the rejection of gay marriage. Gays have the same rights as every other human, and if all humans are created equal under God, then we must treat everyone as an equal. By not allowing someone to marry based on sexual preference, we are only committing the same prejudice that Dr. King marched against. As long

as organizations exist such as the KKK, Neo-Nazis, and anti-gay groups like the American Family Association and the Liberty Counsel, America will be hindered from taking any giant leaps toward total equality.

Hopefully, the day comes when America has rid itself of hate, discrimination, and prejudice, then we can say we've come far. Who knows when that time might come! Will our generation even be alive to witness such a profound thing?

VALENCIA VOICE

Opinion:

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CORRECTIONS

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Do you think all people are created equal?

‘Fair pay’ act passed in Congress

Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial

After dancing with President Obama at the presidential inauguration, Lilly M. Ledbetter, headed back to Washington to witness the new president sign his first major piece of legislation—a workplace-rights measure that became a reality due to Ledbetter’s own crusading efforts. Not bad for someone who toiled for years in the auto tire industry. But Ledbetter, 70, turned her personal experience of being paid less than her male Goodyear counterparts into a national reform that should assure more fairness on the job for all Americans. She sued Goodyear over being underpaid. She lost in the U.S. Supreme Court, but the case prompted congressional action to restore a key workers right.

Last Tuesday, Congress approved the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. The legislation signed that Thursday will make it possible for more employees to challenge unlawful pay discrimination based upon gender, race, age and disability.

Congress acted to repair damage done by an egregious error on the part of the conservative majority on the high court in 2007. The court ruled 5-to-4 that, while Ledbetter had been the victim of pay discrimination, she’d failed to make her allegations within 180 days of the first act of discrimination. But a lower court had the right perspective when, earlier, it ordered that Ledbetter be paid more than \$3 million in back pay and damages.

The trouble with requiring a strict timetable for reporting pay discrimination is that it often takes employees years to detect wage disparities. Now, Congress has clarified the law by relaxing the statute of limitations when pay discrimination can be proved. The reform had to await the election of Obama, since former President George W. Bush had vowed to veto it.

—MCT Campus



“Yes , people are cre-
ated equal but not treated
equal. Everyone seems to
get judged based on race
or if you have a disability.
I’m from the Caribbean and
people ask me ignorant
questions like ‘Do you have
a car?’ or ‘Do you know what
McDonald’s is?’ they assume
we have mediocre lifestyles.”
— **Areta Aberdeen**



“No, don’t kid yourself,
everyone we first meet we
judge and rank. No money
no honey!”
— **Christopher Kelly**



“Yes. People are created
equal. People attempt to
treat others equally but it
doesn’t always turn out that
way.”
— **Paul Schmidt**



“Yes people are created
equal but definitely not
treated equally.”
— **Shamarie Haylock**



“Yes. People are created
equal but not treated equal.
People judge based on
ethnic background, race, reli-
gion. People have personal-
ity clashes.”
— **Marcia McMurray**



“Yes, people are created
equal but not treated equal.
People judge your back-
ground and where you’re
from. If your from a lower
class neighborhood you’re
looked down upon.”
— **Kory Graves**



“Yes, people are created
equal but they’re not treated
equal because of factors
such as prejudice against
religion and race.”
— **Adam Villar**



“Yes, people are created
equal, but not treated equal.
You’re discriminated against
because of your race and
sexual preference.”
— **Bernie Cheatum**

Photos by Kenny Wagner/ Valencia Voice

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Maitland Arts Center salutes Hindu god

By Cassie Weinz
cweinz@valenciavoice.com

In the historic town of Maitland, Florida lays the Maitland Art Center, where residents and visitors alike will find an atmosphere of culture and serenity. With its enchanting gardens and moss-covered walks, the antique structure is currently paying tribute to the Hindu god, Ganesha.

The Art of Ganesha will be running until Feb. 22. In the exhibit, guests will find colorful rooms dedicated to the history of this highly worshiped Hindu god. From sculptures and paintings to shrines and stories, the exhibit is a museum of collections honoring and appreciating the Hindu culture.

The Ganesha god is one of the five prime deities of worship in Hindu mythology. The elephant deity is known as the god of knowledge, education, wisdom, and wealth.

The mere image of Ganesha has become one of the most universally recognized fig-

ures associated with Hinduism, which goes without having to mention how highly praised and respected he is among the Hindu culture. Every element and physical feature of Ganesha contains a symbol of great significance to Hinduism.

For instance, it's the elephant head that symbolizes wisdom as well as the soul, or "Atman" as it is commonly referred among the culture.

The Atman is the ultimate center for human existence. Its body represents "Maya", which is the earthly existence for human life and the trunk represents "Om", the symbol of cosmic reality.

The Ganesha has the body of a man and the head of an elephant and there are a couple different stories about how he came to be.

The first of which, is a result of his being slaughtered. Ganesha's mother, the goddess Parvati, decided to create a boy out of the dirt that came off her body while she was bathing. Once he was created she thus

assigned the boy [Ganesha] the responsibility of guarding the bathroom chambers. When Parvati's husband, Shiva, was denied access to enter the chambers by the words of some stranger, he sliced the boy's head off in rage.

With Parvati in distress, Shiva sent out his guard to bring back the head of any sleeping being whose head was facing the direction of the north. When the guard returned, they had brought with them the head of an elephant and then attached the head to the body of the boy.

With restoring his life, Shiva thus bestowed upon Ganesha the authority of his troops and the worship of the people to invoke his name before they underwent any adventure.

The second story of the birth of Ganesha is also one that involves his being slaughtered. Vishnu promised Parvati a son if she were to observe the punyaka vrata (fasting) for a year just to appease him. Parvati fulfilled her obligation and thus bore a son who

all the gods and goddess went to visit and rejoice. The Lord Shani, however, refused to bestow even so much as a glance upon the newborn. When Parvati, who took offense to this, asked him why, Shani told her that his glance would cause harm to the baby.

Only after Parvati's continuous pleading did Shani then look over at the child and without hesitation, the eyes of Shani severed the head of the newborn instantly. To make amends, Vishnu raced over to the river bank, brought back the severed head of an elephant and attached it to the baby's body.

Regardless of how Ganesha came to exist, his presence will forever be a part of the Hindu culture. So much so, there is even a nonstop ten day celebration held annually in honor of him.

The Maitland Art Center has done justice in their honoring of Ganesha and individuals from all cultures who visit the exhibit will be pleased with what they discover about this highly sought after god.



Art of Ganesha

Elegantly constructed sculptures of the Hindu god were presented from areas all over the Middle East throughout the gallery.



Photos by Kayla Hernandez

Above left: At the MAC (Maitland Art Center) Ganesha greets you upon you entrance to his exhibit.

Above: Golden Holographic Ganesha, an inward molded structure that moves with the light.

Left: Original sculpture of Lord Ganesha in ivory fine china and 24 carat gold. Issued in a limited edition of 100 pieces only.

Ornate Ganesha flanked by his two wives Riddhi (Material Riches) and Buddhi (Knowledge).



Kayla Hernandez / Valencia Voice

Artwork by artists Perez 28 (above), Chuck Dinkins (bottom right) and Marcellus ‘Neosoe’ Walker (bottom left) can be viewed throughout the Art Noir exhibit currently running at the CityArts Factory until Feb. 14.

CityArts provides enriching environment

By Piel Thach
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Why not free your imagination and take time to reflect and be inspired by fine visual arts? Take a break from your daily hustle and visit the CityArts Factory, located on 29 South Orange Avenue

Through Feb. 14, the community art center presents the Art Noir. This exhibit showcases local African-American artists displaying an array of genres of paintings and sculptures. The admission is free, so there’s nothing to lose but a good time.

As visitors walk pass the coffee shop, conveniently connected in front of the gallery, it is obvious that they are in for a treat. The CityArts Factory is separated into five different galleries, including a bar and dance floor upstairs.

Each gallery setting is different matching the genre of art being displayed. The first paintings shown are by notable artist, Everett Spruill.

The bright colors of classic jazz figures display the tradition of African-American art. Up for sale for thousands of dollars, his work remains valuable and current. “It seems I’m inspired simply by being alive,” said Spruill.

“My work is a celebration of life. It’s even more inspiring to know people really love my work and knowing I’ve left the world a

thing of beauty that will be enjoyed for generations to come.”

Though he is the key artist of the gallery, the works of other locals are captivating as well.

A vast and dark section of the gallery showcases urban art. It was surprising to see different elements of hip-hop represented in these paintings. Using mostly acrylic and oil, local artist, Tre, displayed vibrant paintings of rappers, DJ’s, graffiti filled brick walls, and other elements that scream hip-hop. It is refreshing to see vocal art being represented by other forms of art.

One painting that catches one’s attention is named, “Underworld” by local artist Marcellus “Nesoe” Walker. “Underworld” takes place in a dark tunnel with bodies of people, some dancing, some on the ground with X’s on their eyes. It seems this contemporary piece depicts how drugs and the nightlife go hand in hand.

The message that was portrayed was striking, but of course, you’ll have to come see for yourself to gain your own interpretation. Manny Ramirez, a 21 year old aspiring artist, states, “I admire the edgy work and it kind of motivates me to be more creative with my own stuff.”

Upstairs provides contemporary African-American art by dozens of artists, both local and national. While looking at the same paintings, Gina Palacios, a 22 year old

downtown resident says, “These paintings are powerful, where I can see the feelings and also the stories they tell behind them.

With African-American Art, there’s a display of struggle with overcoming but also

a celebration of how far they have gotten over the years in America.” Let visual arts expand your horizon because a picture can speak a thousand words. Meet new friends and see fine art at the CityArts Factory.



What's your favorite Super Bowl commercial?

By Omshante Lee
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To sports fans everywhere what can be more entertaining than the NFL's Super-bowl? Two nationally recognized football teams play their hardest to be called the best. This can draw a lot of attention, and millions of fans clear their schedules to make room for this special Sunday. However, there is only one other thing that gets as much buzz as the big game.

With expensive tickets that are almost impossible to get a hold of, most sports fanatics opt for super-bowl parties instead. This way, they can view the game from the comfort of their own home, all while having a front row seat to the real entertainment; the commercials.

Typically advertisements are viewed as an interruption from your favorite television, shows, however during the Super Bowl, commercials are actually looked forward to.

In recent weeks, many channels have actually featured advertisements promoting the commercials that were to be shown during the game.

From a Nation Wide Insurance commercial starring Kevin Federline, that offended the NRA to a Bud Light ad accused of making inappropriate suggestions, Super-bowl commercials have always been at the center of controversy, and this year is no exception.

Even weeks before the big game, news stations everywhere ran the story about the banned PETA commercial. The ad promoted vegetarianism and utilized the well-known technique that "sex sells" in the process. With children being a part of the audience, NBC worried that the risqué promotion would be inappropriate despite its healthy message.

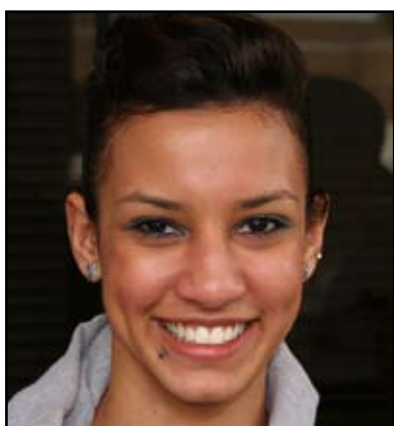
But not all Super Bowl commercials are recognized for their edginess alone. Some are noted for their original humor, or clever concepts. Of all the companies that paid top dollar to run their ads, which was your favorite?



"The 3-D commercial with the dancing monsters."
—**Da Da Arrington**



"The baby commercial."
—**Johanna Miranda**



"The Doritos one. It was so funny."
—**Franchesca Ortiz**



"The Hi-life one that was two seconds long."
—**Brian Nicolson**



"Probably the Doritos one."
—**Donovan Cambell**



"The one with the astronauts. I think it was for Michelob."
—**Avery Sams**



"There were no good commercials this season."
—**Mohaned Al-Sharif**



"The SOBE one with the football players dancing. That was the only one I laughed at."
—**Felisha Grizzle**

Photos by Courtnee Rattigan

Springsteen illuminates Super Bowl XLIII

By Emiliana White
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Perhaps the most anticipated event to occur on Super Bowl Sunday besides the bowl itself is that of the halftime show. Memorable in its nature, this musical section of the show either leaves you wanting more or makes you question what the event planners were thinking.

Fortunately for the most part, the halftime shows of the recent years have left us pumped and hyped for the continuation of the game.

Sunday's halftime segment, which was sponsored by Bridgestone Tires and aired on NBC, took its spot alongside that of the best halftime shows in the history of the game.

With a performance by Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, the show kept the momentum going as every person in the crowd sang along to "The Boss"—every word and pyro shot off into the sky illuminating the night. With never a dull moment, Springsteen rocked on to his hits "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out," "Born To Run," "Working on a Dream" and "Glory Days" ending his set by incorporating elements of the game including a referee throwing up a flag to suggest that the band

was out of bounds with the length of its performance.

Even though this year's halftime show was amazing in its own right, it did have some tough competition from its past line-up to stand up to.

Think back to Super Bowl XXXV's halftime show, produced by MTV. Though disliked by some, it was memorable for combining the old school acts of Aerosmith, Mary J. Blige and Tremors & The Earthquake Horns with the new schoolers N SYNC, Nelly, and Britney Spears. In the pop culture craved times of 2001, this was the perfect combination to keep the Super Bowl franchise up to beat with the celebrity obsessed audience that was being created at the time and there for making music history.

To follow up to the 2001 performance, U2 was commissioned to take the stage for Super Bowl XXXVI. In a performance that ended with the a emotional tribute to the victims of Sept. 11, the Irish band performed their hit "Where the Streets Have No Name" as the names of the victims were presented in the backdrop. This show showed the heart that stood behind the game and made the American people the focus of attention even if only for 12 minutes.

Another memorable performance would be that of Prince at Super Bowl XLI, which was sponsored by Pepsi and took place to the Dolphin Stadium in Miami, Fla. As the musician began to perform his signature song "Purple Rain," his performance was marked with a downpour of rain. Though rain can sometimes ruin a show, its spontaneously dramatic addition simply seemed to have enriched the crowd with enthusiasm.

But perhaps the most memorable performance to date was that of Justin Timberlake and Janet Jackson at 2004's Super Bowl XXXVIII halftime show as produced by MTV and CBS Sports. The show that took place at Reliant Stadium in Houston, Texas went down in history not because of the amazing show that was presented but because of the controversial, second long "nipplegate" that forever changed the acceptance levels as approved by the Federal Communications Commission and putting every halftime show from then on under a thin microscope.

But be it dramatic, controversial, emotional or history making, the Super Bowl halftime show is always a must see event that should never be missed.

Congrats to Springsteen for keeping the momentum going as the Pittsburgh Steelers reigned on to win Super Bowl XLIII.



Mark Cornelison/Lexington Herald-Leader/MCT
Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band perform during halftime at Super Bowl XLIII at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida, Sunday, February 1, 2009.

Afro Samurai slices and dices onto X-box 360

By Frank Tobin
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The old school is the new “new school,” as recent releases seem to suggest (“Mega-Man 9” springs to mind immediately). Game development companies, evidently desperate for fresh ideas, are looking back at old intellectual properties and attempting to cash in on our nostalgia (which, when done well, is most certainly not a bad thing). And sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t.

But the ones that do seem to work the best, are those that retain the old school, no-nonsense, feel of games long past: “Super Mario Galaxy” for the Nintendo Wii, which emulates all the Mario games before it, “Ninja Gaiden Sigma” for the Sony PS3, which expertly blends blistering game play difficulty with eye-popping visuals, and “Gears of War 2” for the XBOX 360, with its attention to cinematic detail and smooth controller interface.

However, the games listed are the exception, and not the rule. The simple fact is that gamers are getting flustered by the empty promises delivered by the majority of multi-million dollar budget games, games that promise only a cinematic experience, while offering nothing new in terms of old school design. All the most simplistic of gamers want is to boot the game and kill some bad dudes, akin to the glorious experiences of the days of Golden Age gaming yore. That’s why “Afro Samurai” is the best game of 2009, and if anyone disagrees, they’re wrong.

Actually, the latter is a touch over-dramatic. But in any case, ‘Afro’ does deliver on its promise to allow you, the gamer, the ability to take up your sword and slice and dice anyone, and anything, in your path for revenge. Blood spews, and pools, around your feet; the vulgar one-liners of your counterpart Ninja-Ninja (the character Afro’s sidekick), encouraging you to press on through the piling body parts, and walls

of the dead you accumulate along the way; and, of course, Samuel L. Jackson reprising his role as both Afro, and Ninja-Ninja, with The Rza (from the fabled Wu-Tang Clan) supplying the best in old school hip-hop beats heard this side of Staten Island New York.

Mixing elements found in the cult-classic Anime, and newer elements written exclusively for this game’s release, ‘Afro’ set out to establish itself as a one-trick-pony type of experience: hack, and invariably, slash.

From a game play standpoint, this game is top-flight entertainment. The combos fly off your fingertips as you deftly move from one poor, doomed, soul to the next. All is not perfect in this futuristic feudal Japan. For one, the enemy types get tedious, and over-worked. Fighting the same straw-hat drone can get a tad tiring after an hour. Also, the platforming sequences not only do an excellent job of completely breaking up the flow of the bloody action, but perform like a dying harp seal trying to jump from rock to rock (see: poorly). However, the simplicity of its sword-play scheme is enough that it would encourage even a younger crowd to take part... if not for the excessive vulgarity and spine-tingling violence; which leads into the audio/visual category.

And here is where the game shines most brightly: the environments are a beautiful mix of high polygons, and cel-shading; the blood effects, and split-screen story-telling, immerse you in the action like few other games can; and the aforementioned music, that still haunts you with its classically melodic hip-hop nature, strikes the perfect chord when you start to get into that killing groove.

If you’re a fan of the Anime, or just a fan of senseless action, then this is the game for you. Just go ahead and walk right past the Wii aisle at your local game store; that section will see less action than Phyllis Diller on an alcohol bender.



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(20th Century Fox / MCT)

Bryan (Liam Neeson) prepares to take extreme measures during his interrogation of a man he suspects of being a key player in the kidnapping of Bryan's daughter.

'Taken' takes the box office

By Olivia Pullinger
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Topping the box office with a weekend gross of \$24,717,037, the newest action flick from director Pierre Morel ("District B13") features Liam Neeson as Bryan Mills, the vengeful father of 17 year old Kim (Maggie Grace), who is spotted at a Paris airport by a kidnapper who is involved with a group of sex slave traffickers.

French filmmaker Luc Besson, who wrote and produced "Taken," is known for creating action movies such as the Taxi series and the Transporter movies. In spite of a somewhat

cliché opening sequence — divorced ex-CIA agent trying to reconnect with the daughter that he basically deserted at the cost of his former career — "Taken" lives up to its advertisement as an action movie, leaving out much of the unnecessary extra stuffing and swiftly cutting to the action.

After his daughter approaches him to sign a consent form allowing her to leave the country to go on vacation with a friend in Paris, Bryan declines, saying he isn't comfortable with her going. To his daughter and

ex-wife, Bryan is overworried and made paranoid by his previous job, which remains a mystery to 17 year old Kim, who is devastated by Bryan's not letting her go. After further consideration, however, Bryan signs the consent form in an attempt to try to bring himself closer to his daughter. Not long after Kim arrives in Paris, Bryan's nightmare is realized as she is abducted by a group of Albanian sex slave traders.

Upon discovering that his daughter has been kidnapped, having been on the phone

with her as she was taken, Mills quickly recedes back into his old persona, wasting no time making her kidnappers aware that he has "a very particular set of skills acquired over a very long career in the shadows, skills that make me a nightmare for people like you. . . . I will look for you, I will find you. And I will kill you." Neeson does a fair job of conveying a somewhat unrealistic character, one who rivals Jet Li in martial arts skills and wipes out his opponents more smoothly than James Bond.

'New in Town' is enjoyable but not unforgettable

By Frank Tobin
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There's always that point in a committed relationship where you begin to make certain sacrifices for your significant other: you buy them gifts instead of buying something for yourself, and you share in each other's interests.

The latter being the subject of "New in Town," a new movie starring Renee Zellweger. And, quite frankly, it doesn't buy the farm, so to speak.

Though its payoff scenes are as predictable as could be, this surprisingly entertaining romantic comedy is an effective vehicle,

sure to please Renee Zellweger fans. Well-timed to a winter release), this modern fable set in a small town in frozen Minnesota is well-photographed on atmospheric Manitoba locations. Zellweger top-lines as the fish out of water, volunteering in her high-profile Miami based conglomerate to head north to makeover a tiny food plant, cut its workforce by half and retool for an automated new product launch. She's the typical jargon-laden, fast-track advancement type, dreaming of CEO-hood and sorely lacking in empathy or any recognizable people-to-people skills.

Strutting around in inappropriate high heels (close-ups of which are a bit overdone

by Danish director Jonas Elmer making his Hollywood debut), she quickly alienates every Minnesotan in sight and looks to be headed for disaster in a hopeless hatchet-woman assignment.

Led by a genuinely warm and funny supporting role by Siobhan Fallon Hogan (who channels the local Minnesotan persona even better than Frances McDormand's Oscar-winning stint in "Fargo"), as her local assistant, a tapioca pudding whiz who spends equal time on scrapping (making scrapbooks) and religiosity, the cutesy cast of hayseeds play off hard-bitten Zellweger quite well in a time-honored clash of city smarts vs. folksy wisdom (you've seen this movie

a million times before, but if it isn't broke, then don't fix it).

Harry Connick Jr. plays the area union chief who is always in view as Renee's romantic interest, and there is also a dynamite turn by J.K. Simmons (fresh from his triumph in Juno) as the plant foreman who runs afoul of Renee's plans.

"New in Town" is not in the league of the great old movies of Robert Riskin and Frank Capra, but is genuinely amusing and a fine platform for Zellweger to display both physical and romantic comedy skills.

The overall product is an enjoyable and entertaining, yet fairly cheesy romantic comedy.

Moviegoers should R.S.V.P to 'The Uninvited'



(Kimberley French / DreamWorks / MCT)

Rachel (Elizabeth Banks, left), is growing tired of Anna's (Emily Browning, right) suspicions in the haunting suspense thriller "The Uninvited."

By Omshante Lee
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"Confused" seemed to be the general consensus describing the feeling by those who viewed the "Uninvited" on opening night. As countless moviegoers slowly filed out of a packed theater, there was that familiar unsettled aura that only accompanies an abrupt ending. But whether it be a bad break-up or a call being dropped in the middle of an important conversation, nothing is more frustrating than the lack of closure resulting from a movie that leaves unanswered questions.

With the same producers as movies like "Disturbia" and the "Ring", this suspense undoubtedly keeps viewers at the edge of their seats. Based on a 2003 Korean horror film by Kim Jee-Woon, this remake combines everything from ruthless murder to the supernatural. However, despite the perfect ingredients for possibly the most entertaining film of the year, its final scene caused it to fall slightly short.

Even as early as the movie's previews, viewers can quickly summarize the story line with a plot that seems to unfold prematurely. The trailer provides a brief outline that appears to reveal too much before it has even reached the big screen. The classic theme of the "evil step mother" is taken to the extreme as two sisters make a startling discovery.

Emily Browning (Ghost Ship), and Ari-

elle Kebbel (The Grudge 2) play the daughters of a widower whose wife has just recently passed due to a freak accident. When their father, played by David Strathairn (The Bourne Ultimatum), gets a new girlfriend, her abnormal behavior leads the sisters to suspect her of murder. With an original plot full of lies and deceit, everything seems to be in place.

However, to those familiar with this producer's work, it is obvious that it cannot be this simple. With the twists and turns present in "Disturbia" and the "Ring", it is apparent from the beginning that viewers should expect the unexpected. But just as the movie reaches its climax and seemingly random scenes begin to make sense, something goes wrong.

Reminiscent of movies like "Gothika" and the "Others", the "Uninvited" possesses a cleverness that can only be captured in a mystery suspense. However as other movies in its genre satisfy the audience's craving for an explanation of the unexpected twists, the "Uninvited" has an attempt of tying it all together that still leaves loose ends.

Despite a believable cast, undeniable originality, and an intriguing story this film still leaves room for improvement. A cliff hanger is perfectly acceptable for directors who already have a sequel in the works. However, there is distinct difference between leaving your audience wanting more, and just leaving them... wondering.