

‘Next Day Air’ set to hit theaters with a bang

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Mark Miller, 41, left, is congratulated by his doctor Nora Wu, right, after receiving two vaccines to help fight the reoccurrence of his brain tumor, called glioblastoma, at Sutter's Cancer Center in Sacramento, California, Wednesday, April 1, 2009. He is the first patient at the hospital to undergo the experimental treatment.

Renee C. Byer, Sacramento Bee / MCT Campus

## Cancer vaccination gives patients hope

By Carrie Peyton Dahlberg  
McClatchy Newspapers

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — In a compact examining room at Sutter's Cancer Center, so much hope was riding on two brief pinpricks.

Mark Miller's hope that his youngest son will know him from more than a video.

Rachael Miller's hope that her husband's brain tumor isn't too far along to be slowed by an experimental vaccine.

Dr. Nora Wu's hope that a recession-battered

biotech company will be able to expand its clinical trial, with Miller paving the way.

One stick of a needle, and then the next, delivered two batches of Miller's own immune cells back into his body earlier this month, in the first round of what could be years of injections.

They weren't the same cells that had been extracted in January.

They had been to what amounts to an immune cell boot camp, multiplied and trained into lethal scouts for a killing machine that—if everyone's hopes come true—will track down and eradicate

cancer cells, at least for a while.

Miller, 41, was receiving one of a legion of potential vaccines being studied and tested around the country to treat brain, lung, skin, kidney and other cancers. Unlike vaccines meant to prevent a virus that can cause cancer, these are therapeutic vaccines, designed for treatment after someone is diagnosed.

Such vaccines might help the immune system ram through a tumor's devious defenses, and very early results suggest that for some people, they can extend lives.

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## China seeks control of reserve currency issuers

By Lisa Twaronite  
MarketWatch

SAN FRANCISCO — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao called for more surveillance of countries that issue major reserve currencies, according to published reports Saturday.

Wen did not specify the United States in his remarks at the Boao Forum for Asia in China's Hainan Province. But Chinese officials have recently expressed their concern about their country's investments in dollar-denominated assets.

"We should advance reform of the international financial system, increase the representation and voice of emerging markets and developing countries, strengthen surveillance of the macro-economic policies of major reserve currency issuing economies, and develop a more diversified international monetary system," Wen said, according to China's official Xinhua news agency.

Wen said China would seek to expand currency swap agreements that are seen as a step toward even-

tually making the yuan more of a global reserve asset.

"We should give full play to bilateral currency swap agreements and will study expanding currency swaps in scale and to more countries," Wen was quoted as saying.

China's central bank has signed six such swap deals since late 2008, totaling 650 billion yuan (\$95 billion).

China will set up a \$10 billion cooperation fund to support infrastructure projects in countries in the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations, Wen said. The plan was announced earlier this month by Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi. Read more on China's fund for ASEAN.

ASEAN's other member countries are Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

"We should make greater efforts to promote free trade and expand intra-regional trade," Wen said, according to Xinhua.

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## Iraqi parliament elects new speaker

By Corinne Reilly and Sahar Issa  
McClatchy Newspapers

BAGHDAD — After months of infighting, Iraq's parliament Sunday elected a prominent Sunni Arab Islamist as its new speaker.

Ayad al-Samarrai, who heads the parliament's main Sunni bloc, won by a comfortable margin. The leading contender before Sunday's secret ballot vote, al-Samarrai has been a vocal critic of Iraq's Shiite Muslim prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, who recently rebranded himself as a secularist.

Samarrai's election, coming as the Obama administration prepares to begin drawing down American forces in Iraq, could aggravate ethnic and sectarian tensions that appear to be rising again, or it could prove to be a major step toward easing the longstanding friction between Sunni and Shiite Arabs.

There had been widespread speculation that al-Samarrai's election might increase the likelihood of a parliamentary no-confidence vote against the U.S.-backed al-Maliki, whose removal would prompt a major shake-up in Iraq's fledgling, Shiite-dominated government.

After his election Sunday, however, al-Samarrai dismissed the notion his Iraqi Islamic Party is considering such a move.

"It is not and it has never been in the program of the IIP to bring down the government," al-Samarrai said in an interview with McClatchy. "We will only use our position to pressure the government and parliament into doing a better job."

Other Islamic Party members also said Sunday a no-confidence vote isn't on their agenda.

"We don't have any will to remove Maliki," said Alaa Makki, an Islamic Party member. "We don't think that would be productive at this point. We need to build up our government, not take it apart."

Makki said the parliament has been largely dysfunctional for the past three years, and al-Samarrai's election will help change that. "We have been paralyzed by bad leadership," he said. "We need this reform."

The parliament's last speaker, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, also a Sunni Arab, stepped down in De-

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Mark Miller worries financially about taking care of his wife, Rachael, a stay at home mom. Mark was diagnosed with a brain tumor and is undergoing an experimental treatment in hopes of gaining more time on his life.

Renee C. Byer, Sacramento Bee / MCT Campus

## New hope for cancer patients

### Continued from cover

“The problem with immunotherapy is, when it works, it works really well. It just doesn’t work all the time,” said Robert Prins, a neurosurgery professor at UCLA who helped develop the vaccine being used on Miller.

In the UCLA team’s early tests, only six of the 16 people given their own personalized vaccine after being newly diagnosed with glioblastoma, an especially aggressive brain tumor, are still alive, Prins said.

But those six have survived for a median of nearly three years, and some have lived longer than five—breathtakingly precious time for someone with a cancer that commonly kills in 12 to 18 months.

So far, it’s hard to tell whether vaccines will help large groups of people or only a scattered few, said Dr. Rudolph Schrot, a University of California-Davis neurosurgeon who focuses on brain tumors. He expects that doctors will know more in the next year or two as results from ongoing studies are published. Still, he encourages his own patients to try any therapy that seems reasonable.

“With the devastating nature of this disease, patients don’t have a lot to lose for trying something new, even if it’s not yet proven,” he said.

Glioblastoma, Miller said, “is the great white shark of brain tumors.” Diagnosed in roughly 10,000 Americans annually—among them Sen. Edward Kennedy—it is so lethal partly because it is diffuse.

Surgeons can remove visible parts of a glioblastoma if they can reach it safely, but like a weed, the tumor leaves behind unreachable roots and tendrils that almost invariably regrow.

Therapeutic vaccines aim to train the immune system to recognize the remaining cancer cells for the enemy they are — but there are different ways to do that.

One vaccine targets a protein common in nearly a third of all glioblastomas. It doesn’t need to be tailored to each patient, but the tumor has to be the right type.

Several other vaccines are made by extracting a patient’s immune cells and then exposing them in a lab to one or more of the proteins common in that patient’s tumor.

When the exposed cells are injected just under the person’s skin, they enter the lymph system and help other immune cells recognize and attack the cancer.

The vaccine that Mark Miller is getting is a variation on that theme. Instead of exposing the patient’s immune cells to a just a protein or two, they are exposed to a solution made from the patient’s entire tumor. The hope is that this way, the immune system will be able to destroy cancer cells even if they mutate in ways that might remove a single protein target.

“That is a brilliant strategy ... a level of specificity that is unparal-

leled,” said Dr. Edie Zusman, director of adult neurosurgery for the Sutter Neuroscience Institute and the surgeon who removed as much as she safely could of Miller’s tumor.

Zusman and Wu, Miller’s neuro-oncologist, opted for this vaccine partly because it has good early results, and partly because it’s being tested relatively nearby, in Los Angeles.

Although Miller didn’t meet the research criteria, Zusman was able to persuade the vaccine’s maker, Northwest Biotherapeutics, to prepare his personal vaccine for “compassionate use”—another way to get an experimental drug before it has been federally approved.

That option needed agreement from federal regulators, from a Sutter panel that oversees experimental treatments, and from the company—which hopes one day to charge \$50,000 to \$150,000 annually for a personalized glioblastoma vaccine called DCVax.

It helped that Northwest Biotherapeutics wants to expand its clinical trial to more sites, including Sutter, if it can raise more money. The company hopes to enroll more patients that way and get results sooner.

For Miller, the vaccine is just the latest round in a cancer battle that started nearly 2 years ago when he first noticed something odd—a slight droop on one side of his face.

He was a young father and computer specialist who had just moved to Rocklin to be closer to his wife’s parents. By mid-2007, when the tumor was diagnosed, their first son was 4 and Rachael Miller was pregnant with their second.

“You go through this foggy terror” after a brain tumor diagnosis, she said. The doctors were blunt. At every visit, they drilled it in again—this was a death sentence. Over time, she said, “you feel kind of emptied out, emotionally.”

Miller has been through two surgeries, radiation and rounds of drugs. His tumor has recurred and is growing again.

Rachael Miller wants to hope, but she wants to be realistic, too. They’ve done their estate planning. He is making a video for his sons to watch.

He tries to surrender his fate to God. The experimental vaccine “is just a blessing for me,” he said.

Doctors will know Miller is improving if they see on brain scans that the tumor is shrinking. They’ll never know for sure whether the vaccine was responsible, though, because Miller is also receiving a range of other treatments.

After his most recent surgery in October, enough tumor was removed to produce a three-year supply of his own, personal cancer vaccine. He will get twin injections every 10 days initially, then less often as time goes on.

The first shots came on April 1, and the next round was on April 10—just 10 days before the Millers’ eighth wedding anniversary.

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## New Iraqi parliament speaker elected

### Continued from cover

member after lawmakers criticized what they called his erratic behavior. The speakership has been vacant since his departure.

Under a system that splits the top positions among Iraq’s major ethnic and religious groups, al-Mashhadani’s successor was expected to be a Sunni Arab.

However, parliament’s main Sunni bloc, called the Iraqi Accordance front, was unable to agree on a replacement until Sunday.

In a February vote, al-Samarrai won approval from the majority of lawmakers who were present. His critics, however, claimed that wasn’t enough, and argued any winner must gain the approval of at least 138 lawmakers, or half of parliament’s total membership, plus one. (At any given session, dozens of lawmakers usually are absent.)

Parliament recently appealed to Iraq’s highest court to decide how many votes a winner must garner, but the court hadn’t issued an opinion by Sunday. That didn’t matter, though, because this time, al-Samarrai got 154 votes, enough to win no matter what the court might have decided.

Parliament’s delay in selecting a new speaker has held up several important pieces of legislation, including amendments to Iraq’s constitution and a law that would spell out how the country’s oil revenue should be shared. Sunni Kurds have wrested control of most of Iraq’s northern oil fields from Sunni Arabs, and Shiite Arabs control the Rumailah fields in southern Iraq, as well as Iraq’s access to the Persian Gulf.

Samarrai, 63, is a leader in the Iraqi Islamic Party, the first Sunni party to enter mainstream politics after Iraq’s democracy replaced Saddam Hussein’s secular, but Sunni-dominated, Baath Party dictatorship. It’s the biggest party in the Accordance Front, the Sunni bloc that al-Samarrai heads.

Saddam’s Baathists persecuted al-Samarrai, an engineer by trade, according to the Islamic Party’s Web site, and he spent much of Saddam’s rule living outside Iraq, most recently in Britain. He has dual Iraqi-British citizenship.

He will remain as speaker until Iraq holds national elections, which are slated for the end of this year.

“Dr. Samarrai is a very responsible man, and he has a long history in the opposition against Saddam Hussein,” said Falih Fayadh, a member of al-Maliki’s Shiite Dawa Party who didn’t vote for al-Samarrai. “There was a desire to end this matter today, so coalitions (emerged).”

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## China looks to oversee reserve currency issuers

### Continued from cover

“We should accommodate each other’s concern to the greatest extent possible, build consensus and establish a regional reserve pool as early as possible so as to better protect our region from financial risks,” Wen reportedly said.

Also at the Boao Forum, Zhou Xiaochuan, head of the People’s Bank of China, said at a panel discussion that the International Monetary Fund failed to give alarm or diagnosis, let alone remedies when problems occurred in developed countries, according to Xinhua.

“International financial institutions need reform, and have many weak points,” said Zhou. He added that the combination of international and regional organizations such as the Asian Development Bank would be a good option, Xinhua said.

Zhou reportedly said he understood that it might be

harder for the IMF, a global organization, to make decisions.

Last month, Zhou proposed the creation a new international reserve currency in an essay published on the central bank’s Web site. Read more on China currency proposal.

Zhou suggested that the IMF’s Special Drawing Right (SDR) should be given a greater role. The SDR is an international reserve asset, created by the IMF in 1969 to support the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate system. Its value is based on a basket of key international currencies.

“The desirable goal of reforming the international monetary system, therefore, is to create an international reserve currency that is disconnected from individual nations and is able to remain stable in the long run, thus

removing the inherent deficiencies caused by using credit-based national currencies,” Zhou wrote in the essay.

Also at the Boao Forum, the chairman of China’s sovereign wealth fund said that the fund plans to expand its international investments this year, including those in European nations it shunned after they set limits on its investments.

China Investment Corp. Chairman Lou Jiwei said that due to financial protectionism limiting his fund’s stakes and voting rights, it “didn’t invest a single cent in Europe,” according to a report in the Wall Street Journal.

But since last year, Lou said, “there has been a change,” and “Europe is now very welcoming to us, and isn’t talking about such conditions anymore.”

The newspaper report cited Lou as saying, “People suddenly look at us as a lovable force.”

— MCT Campus



# Staying green after Earth Day

By Claudia Buck  
McClatchy Newspapers

If only cash sprouted as easily as backyard weeds, we'd all be cheering. But greening up your wallet is still doable.

In homage to Earth Day on this month's calendar, we've harvested some Earth-friendly money habits you might want to adopt.

—Green donations

It's grown from a Bay Area brainstorm into a global campaign to get businesses into the spirit of environmentalism. Buy a shirt, a chocolate bar, a beer \_ even fencing supplies or legal services \_ and 1 percent of the company's gross sales are pledged to environmental nonprofit groups.

Since launching from a California Patagonia store in 2002, the One Percent for the Planet \_ or 1% FTP \_ program has now spread to some 1,138 businesses in 38 countries, said Terry Kellogg, the Vermont-based CEO of 1% FTP.

"It's a very tangible way to make a very discrete impact. If I make this purchase, I know that X amount of dollars will go to a cause I care about," said Kellogg.

The participating companies range from big retailers like Sony to independent jewelry sellers. The recipients run from high-profile nonprofits like the Sierra Club to tiny grassroots groups. Based on company audits, Kellogg said more than \$42 million has been contributed to environmental causes in the past six years.

For details, go to [www.onepercentfortheplanet.org](http://www.onepercentfortheplanet.org).

—Green funds

One way to feel environmentally good about your investing dollars is with so-called "green mutual funds."

The GreenMoney Journal recently released its new Top 10 list of mutual funds

that invest in companies devoted to alternative energy, clean water, organic products and those that avoid alcohol, tobacco, gambling or weapons.

The annual list is a mix of new funds and those that have changed or enhanced their investment mix to be more environmentally conscious, said Cliff Feigenbaum, founder and president of the Green Money Journal, based in Santa Fe, N.M.

"The funds represent different ways people can align their money with their values," said Feigenbaum, who has published the journal since 1992. "Our goal is to make money and make a difference."

His list of mutual funds that are "greening it up": Appleseed Fund, Integrity Growth & Income Fund, Wells Fargo Advantage Social Sustainability Fund, Dreyfus Global Sustainability Fund, Calvert Large Cap Value Fund, Calvert Global Water Fund, Pax World Global Green Fund, Pax World International Fund, Pax World Small Cap Fund and Firsthand Alternative Energy Fund.

For more details, go to [www.greenmoney.com](http://www.greenmoney.com).

—Green banking

All kinds of companies, from banks to your local utility, are urging customers to switch to electronic billing, statements and payments. The notion: Pay online, save a tree. Or two.

(It also saves companies the payroll and overhead costs spent processing paper accounts by mail.)

PayItGreen is a coalition of financial services companies that promotes electronic billing. According to the coalition, if the average U.S. household switched to electronic payments, it would annually:

—Save 6.6 pounds of paper.

—Save 0.079 trees (not a whole tree, evidently).

—Eliminate 4.5 gallons of gasoline (consumed by mailing and delivering all those paper payments).

—Prevent 63 gallons of wastewater released.

—Eliminate 171 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions (the equivalent of 169 miles of driving or conserving 24 square feet of forestland).

A handy calculator at [www.payitgreen.org](http://www.payitgreen.org) lets you compute your "financial paper footprint." Type in how many checks you write and how many bills you pay by mail each month and it'll add up how much you'd save the planet by switching to electronic payments.

Another proponent, eBill Place ([www.ebillplace.com](http://www.ebillplace.com)), puts it more personally. By its "Cash & Time" calculation, the average family would save \$50 a year in postage and five hours of time spent writing and stuffing checks into envelopes.

—Green plastic

If your wallet is weighed down by plastic gift cards, credit cards, gasoline cards and such, maybe it's time for some pruning. As we all know, clipping up or paying down costly credit cards can be a huge lift to your bank account.

But don't just snip and toss that plastic.

If it's a used-up gift card, ask to have it reloaded with cash (your local merchant will love you). If it's a no-longer-needed credit card, hotel key or other plastic, toss it in your recycling bin.

But check to be sure it's actually recyclable; some companies are converting to biodegradable materials. The Sacramento, Calif., landfill says most aren't suitable for recycle.

A greener solution? Pop it in the mail to Earthworks System, a company in Solon, Ohio, that's on a crusade to rid the world's landfills of those tiny rectangles of credit.

Founder and president Rodd Gilbert, a plastics broker who started Earthworks as a business sideline, says 75 million pounds of PVC cards go into landfills each year.

"That's what we're trying to prevent," he says. "My goal is to keep it out of the earth."

His company gathers up millions of pounds a year of scrap PVC card plastic and reprocesses it into "100 percent recycled sheets" that are sold back to credit card manufacturers.

Most of his material comes from "skeletons, overruns and obsolete" stock left over from plastic card manufacturers. Other contributors are retailers like Rite-Aid, GAP, Applebee's and Whole Foods, as well as movie theaters, hotel chains, even universities that ship him leftover student IDs.

But what warms his heart are the "little soldiers," like the Ace hardware employee in Sacramento who sends an envelope stuffed with plastic cards every so often. Or the Arlington, Va., mom who was selling plastic scrip at her kids' school and couldn't stand the thought of all those used-up cards going into the local landfill. Her solution: She set up recycling boxes for used cards at her favorite retailers, then sends them to Earthworks.

"From a business level, I deal in dollars and cents all day," said Gilbert. "But when I talk to these people, it's just people who genuinely care."

For more information on Earthworks, go to [www.earthworkssystem.com](http://www.earthworkssystem.com).

Looking for more creative uses for outdated plastic? Lots of crafty types are turning them into earrings, guitar picks, kids' toys, trivets and artwork.

To see some examples, go to: [www.treehugger.com](http://www.treehugger.com) or [www.creditcards.com](http://www.creditcards.com) (search for credit card crafts).

—MCT Campus

## Students weigh in on new safety alert aystem

By Jessica Frelow  
[jfrelow@valenciavoice.com](mailto:jfrelow@valenciavoice.com)

Stay informed with Valencia Alert! Valencia Alert is a free emergency messaging system used to notify students when there is an incident. Receiving these notices can assist in keeping students and faculty safe while on campus or keep one from accessing the campus.

"They should notify people in as many ways as possible," said Bill Bobaggins, "A serious event requires you to alert as many people as possible."

Alerts are sent out when any campus at Valencia is being evacuated.

ated, closed due to weather, or any other crisis that involves safety. Some students feel that the alerts were really helpful in getting the word out to students about any type of eminent dangers at Valencia. Kristin Hanson was one of several who thought the Valencia alert was a good idea to promote campus safety.

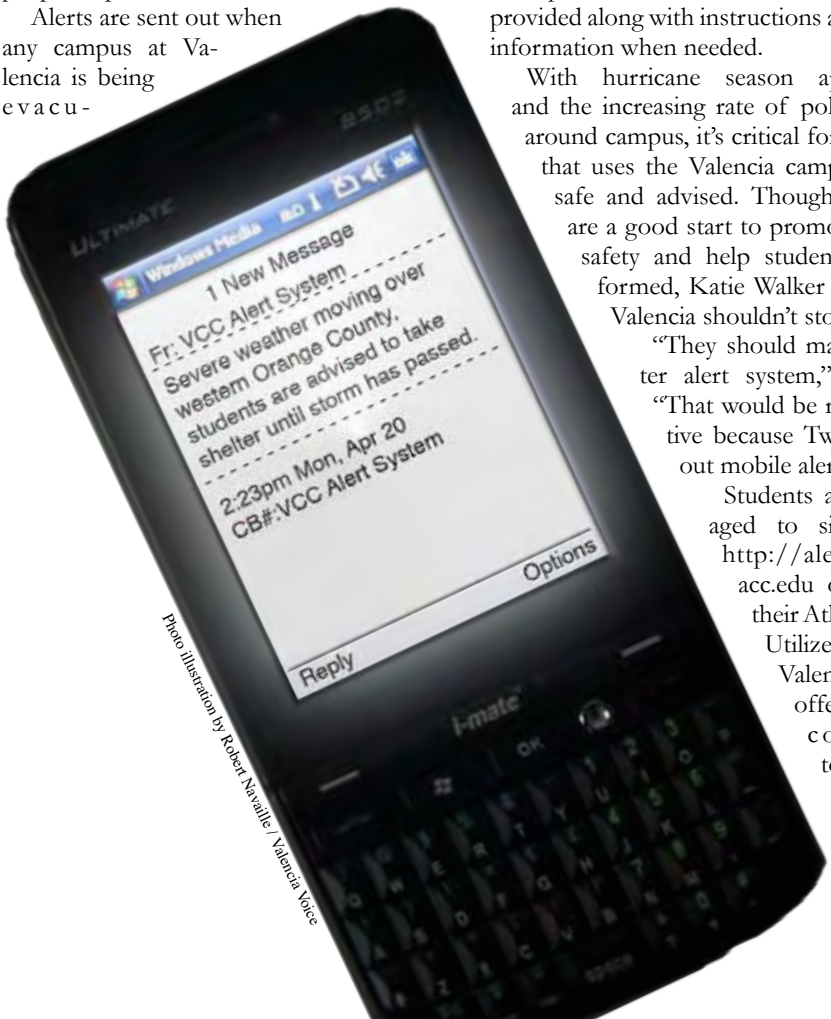
"I love the idea," said Hanson, "I don't watch the news very often so anything would help."

Upon registration to the system, students can receive alerts via email, cell phone, pager, smartphone or PDA. Real-time updates are provided along with instructions and contact information when needed.

With hurricane season approaching and the increasing rate of police activity around campus, it's critical for every one that uses the Valencia campus to stay safe and advised. Though the alerts are a good start to promote campus safety and help students stay informed, Katie Walker thinks that Valencia shouldn't stop there.

"They should make a Twitter alert system," she said, "That would be really effective because Twitter sends out mobile alerts."

Students are encouraged to sign up at <http://alert.valenciaacc.edu> or through their Atlas account. Utilize all that Valencia has to offer and stay connected to the activities on campus.



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# Obama looks to renew relations with Cuba

By Frances Robles  
McClatchy Newspapers

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad — President Barack Obama is ready to start a new era of engagement with Cuba, he assured his regional counterparts Friday.

“The United States seeks a new beginning with Cuba,” Obama said at his opening remarks at the Fifth Summit of the Americas. “Let me be clear: I am not interested in talking for the sake of talking. But I do believe that we can move U.S.-Cuban relations in a new direction.”

His remarks followed a barrage of criticisms—before and during the 34-nation summit—over the decades-old U.S. sanctions against Cuba and the communist nation’s suspension as a member of the Organization of American States.

Pre-summit gatherings focused heavily on building consensus on the U.S.-Cuba issue and four other leaders who also addressed the region’s most important gathering called for a diplomatic truce between Washington and Havana.

The representative of the Caribbean Community said the 14-member organization “stand ready to assist ... reversing 50 years of non-engagement,” said Belize Prime Minister Dean Barrow.

Obama acknowledged that it would take time to repair a history of mistrust but said, “there are critical steps we can take toward a new day.

“I have already changed a Cuba policy that has failed to advance liberty or opportunity for the Cuban people,” he said. “ ... Over the past two years, I have indicated—and I repeat today—that I am prepared to have my administration engage with the Cuban government on a wide range of issues—from human rights, free speech, and democratic reform to drugs, migration, and economic issues.”

During his 16-minute speech, Obama also outlined three priorities for the region: economic assistance; energy and climate partnerships and security cooperation. He reiterated his request of \$448 million to help victims of the economic recession outside the U.S. shores, announced a new Microfinance Growth Fund for the region and promised to spend \$30 million to strengthen

## Cuba travel restrictions

On April 13, the Obama administration lifted travel and gift restrictions for Cuban-Americans, allowing them to freely visit the island and send additional financial help to family members.

<b>1960s</b> <b>1962-63</b> President John F. Kennedy imposes economic embargo on Cuba because of its ties to Soviet Union, essentially banning all U.S. travel to the island	<b>1970s</b> <b>1977</b> President Jimmy Carter lifts Kennedy's travel restrictions, allowing direct charter flights from Miami
<b>1980s</b> <b>1982</b> In effort to reduce Cuba's profits from U.S. travelers, President Ronald Reagan reestablishes travel restrictions, which are unsuccessfully challenged in U.S. Supreme Court	<b>1988</b> New requirements established for those providing Cuba-related travel service, including travel agents, tour operators, ticket agents and remittance-forwarding services
<b>1990s</b> <b>1992</b> Cuban Democracy Act imposes fines against those who illegally travel to the island via a third country	<b>1989</b> Those granted travel licenses, restricted to spending \$100 a day during visit
<b>1993</b> Clinton administration amends restrictions on U.S. travel; allows religious, educational and human rights groups with special licensing <b>1994</b> After Cuban rafters crisis, President Bill Clinton tightens family travel restrictions <b>1995</b> Clinton reverses restrictions in an effort to promote democracy in Cuba; rules authorize one family trip per year	<b>1996</b> Shoot-down of two Brothers to the Rescue planes by Cuban MiGs prompts Clinton to stop all direct flights between U.S. and Cuba; only way to reach island is through a third country <b>1998</b> Following Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba in January, Clinton restores licensing for direct charter flights transporting religious pilgrims
<b>2000s</b> <b>2001</b> President George W. Bush announces additional travel restrictions; asks Treasury to expand enforcement powers <b>2003</b> Treasury eases some rules for Cuban-Americans visiting relatives and travel is no longer limited to humanitarian need; amount of money travelers may carry is raised to \$3,000; restricted educational travel	<b>1999</b> In support of the Cuban people, Clinton announces a policy for increased people-to-people contacts <b>2004</b> Bush administration announces travel is limited to once every three years for Cuban-Americans; amount of money is reduced to \$300 quarterly to a specific relative, definition of a relative is more restrictive and amount of money spent on the island daily drops to \$50 <b>2005</b> Religious travel to Cuba is reduced to once a year, for groups of up to 25 individuals
<b>Under Bush administration travel to Cuba for "tourist activities" ends</b>	<b>2009</b> In March, Congress passes spending bill that removes Treasury's funding to enforce Cuban-American family travel restrictions; Obama administration responds by changing regulations to allow Cuban Americans to visit relatives once a year

Source: Miami Herald Research      Graphic: Miami Herald      © 2009 MCT

security cooperation.

“I didn’t come here to debate the past—I came here to deal with the future,” he said. “As neighbors, we have a responsibility to each other and to our citizens. And by working together, we can take important steps forward to advance prosperity, security, and liberty.”

But Cuba continued on the summit front-burner, a day after Cuban President Raul Castro gave an uncharacteristically fiery speech more befitting of his brother Fidel, saying he was willing to talk with Washington—and swap spies for political prisoners.

In a speech Thursday night, Cuba’s Raul Castro said he’s willing to talk to Washington about topics long considered taboo.

The text of Castro’s message was not new: Cuba has long said it would negotiate as long as there were no preconditions and its sovereignty was “respected.” But Castro knows this time is different, because now someone may actually be listening.

Experts say Castro’s latest salvo offering to trade

political prisoners jailed in Cuba for five convicted Cuban intelligence agents serving time in U.S. prisons puts Obama in a difficult spot. On the one hand, Obama could have the chance to help free 200 people who are jailed for offenses that vary from independent journalism to planting bombs in a quest to destabilize the state.

But many Cuba-watchers say Obama would be ill-advised to equate political prisoners with convicted spies.

“President Obama has to be very careful—he could wind up negotiating with himself or playing chicken with himself,” said former U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez, one of the architects of President George W. Bush’s Cuba policy. “The president has gone down a path that other presidents also chose. The president would be wise to study history.”

Gutierrez was taking a thinly-veiled shot at President Jimmy Carter, who 30 years ago negotiated with Cuba to release political prisoners, only to later see Castro unleash prisoners and mental patients on the Mariel boat lift.

But Carter’s chief negotiator said that while a prisoner swap is not realistic “at this time,” Obama can’t dismiss the opportunity to get wrongly convicted people freed.

“I hope Obama tries to learn some of the history before he embarks on it,” said former White House official Robert Pastor, now a professor of international affairs at American University.

Pastor was the director of Latin America for the National Security Council under Carter, and negotiated directly with Fidel Castro. During his administration, 3,900 prisoners were freed from Cuban prisons, Pastor said.

“This is a moment very much like what we faced in 1978,” Pastor said.

In Cuba, the news that Castro was offering deals was not welcomed by the Ladies in White, a dissident group of wives and mothers of political prisoners.

“Our husbands are ready to serve their sentences rather than be traded for spies, because they are not spies,” said Ladies in White leader Laura Pollan, whose husband Hector Maseda was sentenced to 20 years for being an opposition journalist.

“We are not objects that can be bartered.”

— MCT Campus

# Israel rejects U.S. plan for independent Palestinian state

By Dion Nissenbaum  
McClatchy Newspapers

JERUSALEM — In a direct challenge to President Barack Obama’s commitment to rejuvenate moribund Mideast peace talks, Israel on Thursday dismissed American-led efforts to establish a Palestinian state and laid out new conditions for renewed negotiations.

Leaders of Israel’s hawkish new government told former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, the special U.S. envoy, that they aren’t going to rush into peace talks with their Palestinian neighbors.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he would require Palestinians to accept Israel as a Jewish state in any future negotiations—a demand that Palestinians have up to now rejected, Israeli government officials said.

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman told Obama’s envoy that past Israeli concessions led to war, not peace.

These were Mitchell’s first meetings with Israeli leaders since Netanyahu’s center-right government took power two weeks ago.

Palestinian leaders have said they won’t open peace talks with Netanyahu’s government until it agrees in principle to the idea of a two-state solution and imposes a freeze on building Jewish housing in the West Bank.

As expected, Mitchell made it clear that the Obama administration sees the two-state solution as the foundation for future talks.

“U.S. policy favors—with the respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—a two-state solution, which would have a Palestinian state living in peace alongside the Jewish state of Israel,” Mitchell said before meeting with Lieberman.

Netanyahu has refused to embrace that formula and has instead floated the idea

of offering Palestinians limited rights that would fall short of independence.

Netanyahu reiterated his stand in his meeting with Mitchell, said one Israeli government official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he wasn’t authorized to publicly discuss the details of the conversation.

Netanyahu also indicated that Palestinians would have to accept Israel as a Jewish state in negotiations.

“For us, this is a crucial element,” the official said. “It’s a fundamental element in peace talks.”

In recent years, Israeli leaders have been pushing this demand as a way to ensure that the nation retains its Jewish identity.

However, compelling Palestinians to accept the idea would all but require them to abandon their demands that Palestinian refugees be allowed to return to homes they abandoned when Israel was established in 1948.

Yossi Alpher, a former official with Israel’s Mossad spy agency and a co-founder of the bitterlemons.org Middle East political Web site, said that Netanyahu’s conditions could be a poison pill that prevents any peace talks from getting under way.

“The position he took today cannot in any way generate a peace process,” Alpher said. “The Palestinians are not going to offer him this recognition. It could be a deal-breaker, but it could be an opening gambit. It’s too early in this whole new process to tell.”

Mitchell also faced resistance from Lieberman, an ultranationalist

Israeli leader who began his tenure as foreign minister by declaring the death of the U.S.-led peace talks that then-President George W. Bush launched in November 2007.

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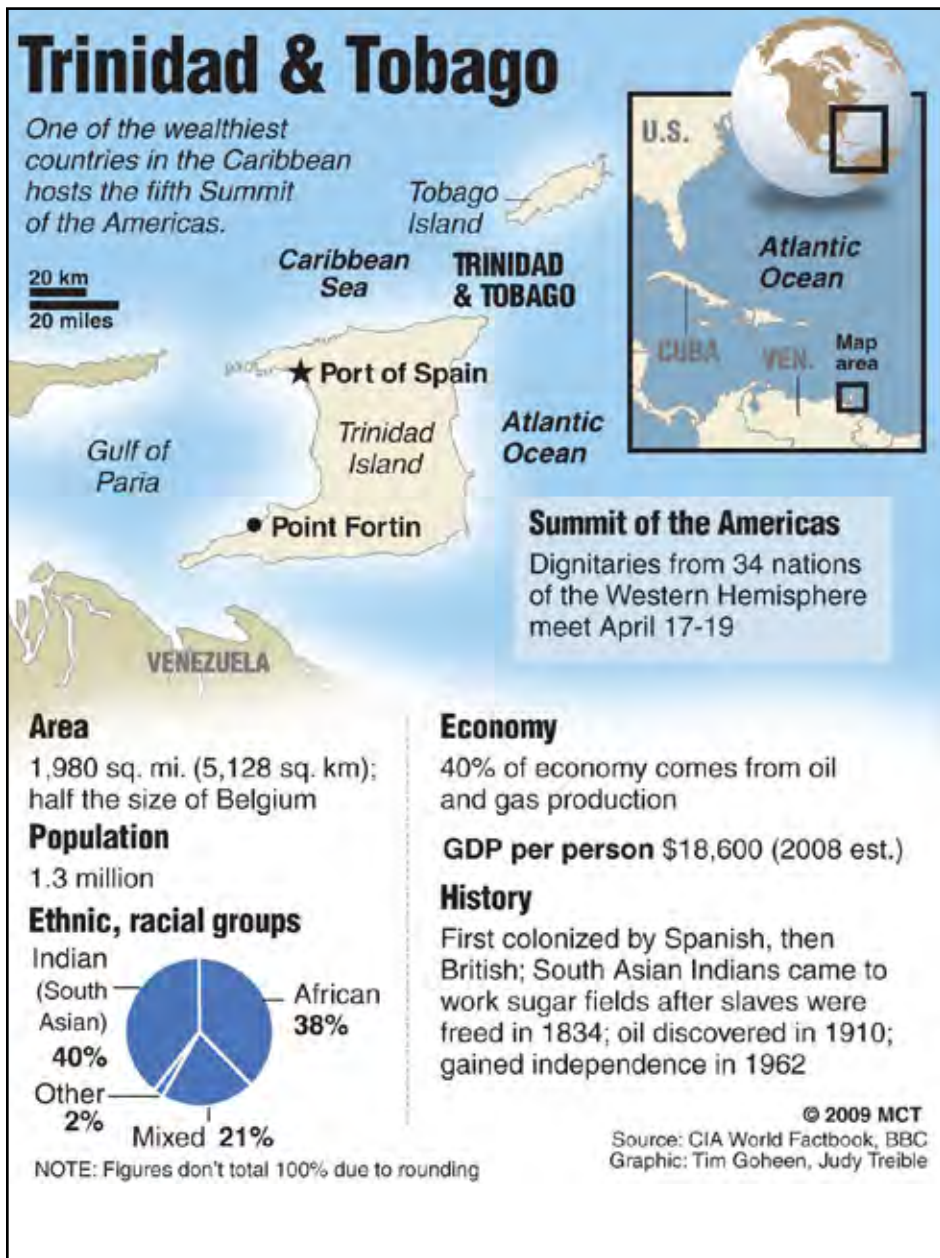
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# Obama touts benefits of diplomacy at summit



By Peter Nicholas  
Chicago Tribune

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad —Rebuffing criticism of the warm greetings he exchanged with Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez, President Barack Obama said Sunday the United States, with its overwhelming military superiority and need to improve its global image, can afford to extend such diplomatic “courtesy.”

Obama, in a news conference capping a three-day meeting of leaders from the Western Hemisphere, also said the U.S. must engage other countries through humanitarian gestures, not simply through military intervention.

Obama said it would be a mistake to measure the Summit of the Americas by specific agreements reached.

But by listening to his counterparts and eschewing heavy-handed diplomacy, he said he was creating an atmosphere in which, “at the margins,” foreign leaders are “more likely to want to cooperate than not cooperate.”

A running theme of the summit was Obama’s cordial dealings with Chavez, who once called former President George W. Bush the “devil” and who just last month dismissed Obama as an “ignoramus.” The two were photographed smiling and clasping hands.

At one meeting, Chavez made a show of walking around the table and handing Obama a copy of “The Open Veins of Latin America,” a 1971 book by Eduardo Galeano chronicling U.S. and European imperialism in the region.

Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., told CNN Sunday it was “irresponsible” for Obama to be seen “laughing and joking” with the Venezuelan president.

Obama dismissed such concerns. He said the 2008 campaign proved that American voters want the president to engage his counterparts, whether they are avowed friends of the U.S. or not.

Obama said it “was a nice gesture to give me a book. I’m a reader.” He added

the election was a referendum of sorts on the argument that U.S. solicitude toward foreign leaders could be seen as a “weakness.”

“The American people didn’t buy it,” the president said. “And there’s a good reason the American people didn’t buy it —because it doesn’t make sense.”

The U.S. has nothing to fear from Venezuela, a large supplier of crude oil to the U.S., Obama said.

“Its defense budget is probably 1/600th of the U.S.,” he said. “They own (the oil company) Citgo.”

“It’s unlikely that as a consequence of me shaking hands or having a polite conversation with Mr. Chavez, that we are endangering the strategic interests of the United States.”

That said, Obama aides were not so charitable toward Chavez. In a background briefing earlier, one senior official accused Chavez of performing for the cameras.

Impressed with Obama, Chavez seemed ready to re-evaluate relations with the U.S. He announced he was considering appointing an ambassador to Washington, D.C., an idea he discussed over the weekend with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The two countries expelled each other’s ambassadors last year.

Although Cuba’s fate was not part of the official agenda of the summit, many Latin American leaders pressed Obama to lift the 47-year-old trade embargo and to normalize relations with the island nation.

Obama resisted.

His administration has loosened travel restrictions on Cuban-Americans wishing to visit family, but Obama called upon Cuban leader Raul Castro to move toward a more open and democratic form of government.

— MCT Campus

## Summit shows progress for Cuban, U.S. relations

By Frances Robles  
McClatchy Newspapers

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad—President Barack Obama sent a clear message to Cuban leader Raul Castro Sunday: It’s your turn.

If Castro wants to start dialogue with the United States, he should start by releasing political prisoners and lowering the steep fees the Cuban government charges on money sent from abroad, Obama said.

In the meantime, his administration will examine what other steps can be taken toward ending decades of isolation between Washington and the hemisphere’s last communist nation.

“The fact that you had Raul Castro say he’s willing to have his government discuss with ours not just issues of lifting the embargo, but issues of human rights, political prisoners, that’s a sign of progress,” Obama said Sunday at a press conference wrapping up the Fifth Summit of the Americas. “And so we’re going to explore and see if we can make some further steps. ... There are some things that the Cuban government could do.”

Obama spoke to reporters on a sweltering hotel rooftop with a stunning mountainous backdrop, where he defended his policy of courtesy over antagonism and underscored that his administration was not behind an alleged plot to assassinate President Evo Morales of Bolivia.

Obama is under fire for appearing too cozy at the summit with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who was part of a diplomatic full-court press here to urge a

change in Cuba policy.

After meeting most of his fellow 33 heads of government who make up the Organization of American States, Obama said strides had been made, particularly with Venezuela and Cuba.

Now, he said, there must be additional actions if Castro is serious about improving relations with Washington.

“They could release political prisoners. They could reduce charges on remittances... It turns out that Cuba charges an awful lot; they take a lot off the top,” Obama said, referring to a total of 20 percent in fees. “That would be an example of cooperation where both governments are working to help Cuban families and raise standards of living in Cuba.”

Obama noted he was struck by how many of the leaders at the summit deeply appreciate Cuba’s overseas medical brigades. The United States, he said, does not serve its own interests if its only contact with foreign nations is through military and drug interdictions.

“I think that’s why it’s so important that in our interactions not just here in the hemisphere but around the world, that we recognize that our military power is just one arm of our power, and that we have to use our diplomatic and development aid in more intelligent ways so that people can see very practical, concrete improvements in the lives of ordinary persons as a consequence of U.S. foreign policy.”

—MCT Campus



The official logo for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, which took place from April 17-19 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

MCT Campus



# Columbine massacre 10 years later

## Schools take safety more seriously

By Kristen A. Graham and Bonnie L. Cook  
The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — Some schools have banned backpacks. Others have locked doors, installed cameras, bought metal detectors, and started disaster drills.

Ten years ago Monday, two teenagers killed 13 people and wounded 23 others inside their suburban high school in Columbine, Colo., a massacre that forever altered the nation's school-security landscape.

"We used to just worry about drugs and alcohol, but now we're all overwhelmed by this fear that our children aren't safe in schools," said Al Hall, director of security for the Hatboro-Horsham School District outside Philadelphia.

While some national experts say that schools are no safer now than they were a decade ago, educators from around the region point to new efforts to keep students out of harm's way. Among other things, they're training staffers, attending safety conferences, putting cameras on buses, and setting up emergency-notification systems.

Like many regional districts, Hatboro-Horsham has never had tragedy, but it has opted for a proactive approach — just in case. Hall's position is new, and the district also stresses security in small and large ways.

Visitors must now surrender IDs when they enter schools. Emergency plans are updated frequently. Students drill for specific events — a suspicious package found, an intruder inside the building. There's a hotline to report worrisome activity, and reminders for school staff to keep an eye out for troubled students.

"We're constantly monitoring. What are our students drawing in art class? Are they drawing a stick person with a knife stuck in, or are they drawing flowers in a field?" Hall said.

Last week, dozens of school staffers from around Montgomery County, Pa., gathered in a King of Prussia conference room to hear security expert Kenneth Trump talk about the post-Columbine security landscape and answer questions about lockdown drills, safety fixes on a tight budget, and cyberbullying.

"Some people are dealing with communities that still have the philosophy 'It can't happen here,'" Trump told the educators. "There are glaring gaps, and lots of work remaining."

Just after Columbine, school safety was the hot topic, with awareness at an all-time high and money readily available. Then came 9-11, and the nation's focus shifted to terrorism, Trump said.

These days, school security is a mixed bag, he said. Some schools fall short, mostly at keeping safety plans updated and well-practiced, and at investing in training. It's easy to slip on the basics — failing to enforce a universal ID policy, allowing visitors to enter a building without signing in, leaving a door unlocked by mistake.

Steven Beck, school-safety coordinator with the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety, sees that firsthand. "At times, I still have to go out and convince school personnel that this is important, that there isn't a guarantee it won't happen in your particular location," Beck said.

But in general, Beck said, school shootings and narrow misses elsewhere have served as wake-up calls.

In the Philadelphia area, in 2006, a multi-student plot was averted in Winslow, and a Springfield Township student killed himself at school with an AK-47. In 2007, a plot by a home-



Chuck Kennedy, KRT Washington / MCT Campus  
Coloradans held a "We are Columbine" banner in remembrance of the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado as participants to the Million Mom March gathered in Washington D.C. Sunday, May 14, 2000.

schooled student to kill people at Plymouth-Whitmarsh High School was thwarted, and last year, a student's plan to kill individuals he did not like at Pottstown High also was averted.

Now, there's much better communication among schools and police and fire departments, Beck said. Students are kept aware of the importance of a safe school environment and warned of tough stances on bullying.

In Radnor, Pa., Leo Bernabei, the school district's director of operations, has seen a sea change in the 30 years he has been around. Gone is the custodian with the overflowing key ring to secure buildings; now, codes are digital. Professional security consultants are hired.

"As a parent, I would say hi to the secretary and walk right to my child's classroom," Bernabei said.

"Not anymore. You have to have a background check to go deep in the building."

In Cherry Hill, N.J., staff members are reminded to be on the lookout for mental-health issues, and students are schooled in stopping bullying before it starts, said Michael Nuzzo, director of security for the district. New to the district this year is an emergency parent-notification system — should a school be locked down or evacuated, for instance, parents would get the message automatically.

"A lot of school districts are moving in that direction," Nuzzo said. "The mind-set has changed. We know a tragedy can happen any time, any place."

Urban districts have their own set of safety challenges — violence in school communities, huge buildings with dozens of doors — but Columbine still jarred Philadelphia into beefing up security measures.

"And every year, the anniversary of the event is a poignant reminder for us to focus on school safety," said James Golden, who heads that department for the Philadelphia School District.

Before Columbine, the district had metal detectors in some schools. Afterward, it went to universal metal detection in high schools. With cameras, locked doors, and IDs, it has adopted the same strategies most suburban schools are using, Golden said.

Golden also said the district had sent more than 1,000 administrators and staff to federal emergency-preparedness training.

"They go through training as if they're first responders," he said. In Washington Township, N.J., where voters endorsed a tax hike in 2004 for upgrades to school safety, including cameras for buses and high school hallways, Superintendent Cheryl Simone said safety was "foremost."

"Securing the building, securing the kids, is your number-one job," Simone said. "You have to do that before you can attend to your primary mission, educating kids."

School shootings during the last 10 years also have "upped the ante for the severity of discipline."

Now, zero-tolerance policies mean that a penknife on a key chain or a pair of scissors in a kindergartner's backpack equal an automatic suspension.

"It's a very different perspective," Simone said. "We do take these things seriously, at all grade levels." Jim White, who handles security for Bristol Township, Pa., schools, has seen "drastic changes" since Columbine.

From ID badges and surveillance cameras to a portable metal detector and more regular locker checks, it's a new world order, White said, with staff required to be on alert about safety.

"Teachers, the custodial staff, are constantly looking for something out of place," White said. "The guidance counselors are trying to get students to say, 'Hey, this person is a threat.'"

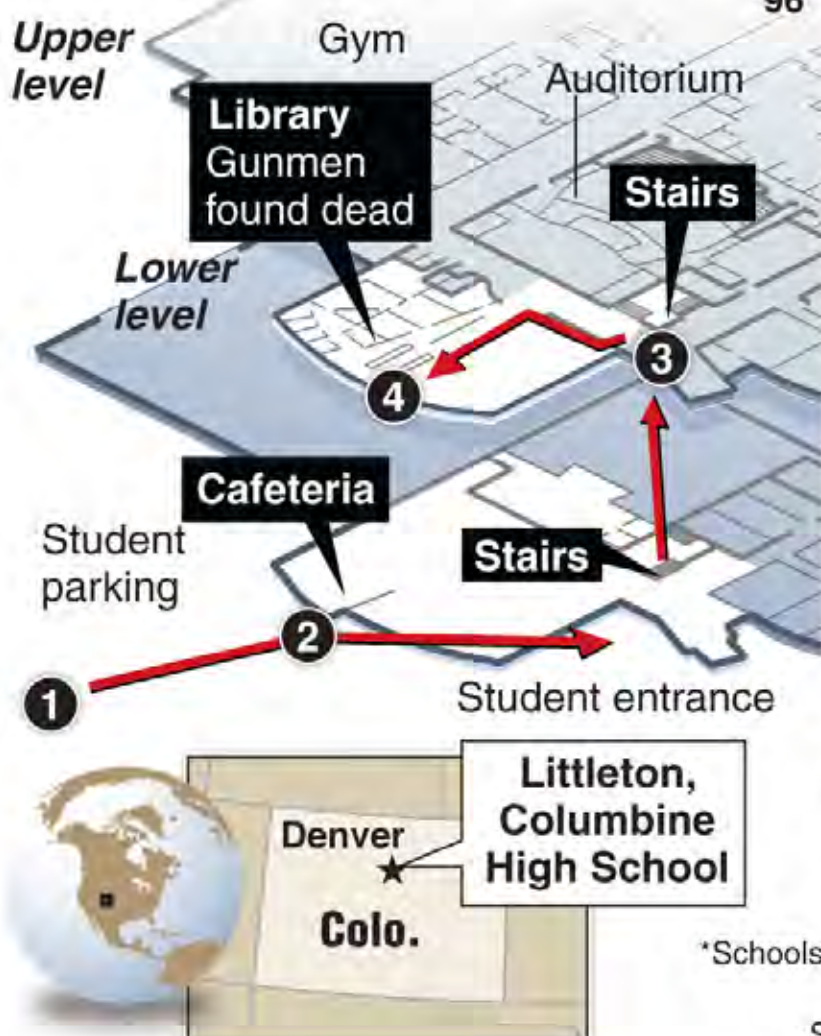
Children are different, too, White said — no longer innocent about the danger that's out there. And though there was some initial parent pushback on stepped-up security measures, White said, that has faded. "People appreciate your trying to protect their kids," he said.

—MCT Campus

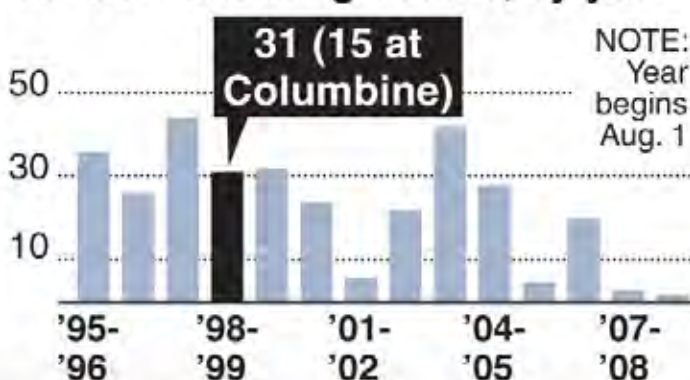
## Looking back

April 20 is the 10-year anniversary of the shootings at Columbine High School.

### Columbine High School



### School\* shooting deaths, by year



NOTE:  
Year  
begins  
Aug. 1

- 1 Gunmen, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, open fire in parking lot
- 2 Enter cafeteria, shooting as they walk in
- 3 Climb stairs to library, continue shooting
- 4 Enter library, shooting; return briefly to cafeteria before committing suicide in the library

SWAT teams entered school 47 minutes after attack began

- 12 students, one teacher, (both gunmen) killed
- More than 20 people injured

\*Schools, grades K-12, includes private and public

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Source: AP, National School Safety Center

MCT Campus



# Breeders fear explosion of interest

## Bo Obama could be the worst addition to society

By Stacy St. Clair  
Chicago Tribune

With his playful demeanor and tuxedo-like coat, Bo Obama could be the worst thing that ever happened to Portuguese water dogs. Portie enthusiasts expressed concerns Monday that the first family's new pet will spark heightened interest in the breed, giving way to puppy mills and irresponsible owners.

"The fear is that people are going to run right out and get one without doing their homework," said Stu Freeman, president of the Portuguese Water Dog Club of America. "If the demand is there, we worry that someone we don't like is going to be there to meet it."

The first images of Bo released by the White House show the 6-month-old puppy wearing a colorful Hawaiian lei and running merrily alongside the president. He'll make his public debut Tuesday in a photo-op that's sure to win plenty of TV airtime, Internet hits and newspaper ink.

Animal advocates fear the first pooch's popularity could make Porties the new must-have dog, forcing them down the same path Dalmatians took after Disney produced a live-action version of "101 Dalmatians" in 1996.

In the years after the movie's release, disreputable breeders cashed in on the spotted dog's popularity and began breeding in large numbers with little regard for the health or



The identity of the first puppy, a six-month-old Portuguese water dog, leaked out Saturday, despite White House efforts to delay the news until the big debut planned for Tuesday. Bo was given to the Obama girls as a gift by Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts.

quality of the puppies produced.

At the same time, many Dalmatian enthusiasts adopted the dogs without educating themselves on their erratic temperament and high-energy demands. As a result, shelters and rescue groups reported a marked increase in

the number of abandoned Dalmatians.

"We see faddism when it comes to pet-keeping in the movies, and we may see that scenario play out in the case with the first family's selection of a Portuguese water dog," said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of the U.S. Humane Society.

"Sadly we expect disreputable puppy mill operators to start producing them as well, intent on cashing in on the heightened awareness of this breed."

Currently only the 64th-most popular breed in the United States, Portuguese water dogs typically enjoy a close-knit community of breeders and owners.

Breeders recognized by the Portuguese Water Dog Club must agree to take unwanted puppies back and face fines if the dogs knowingly end up in shelters.

The majority also conducts genetic tests on the sire and dam to minimize health issues such as progressive renal atrophy and hip dysplasia.

Given the strict controls and the relatively small Portie population, the breed rarely shows up at animal shelters. The Portuguese Water Dog Club of Greater Chicagoland, for example, performs a rescue only once every two or three months.

Susan Kessler, who heads the group's rescue efforts, fears that number will increase dramatically unless would-be owners educate themselves on the breed's energetic personality and constant desire to be around people.

"It's terrifying for us," said Kessler, who owns four Porties. "We basically face a responsibility as breeders to make sure these puppies go to the right families."

—LATWP News Service

# Introducing Bo Obama

## Nobody knows Bo Obama like geneticists do

By Trine Tsouderos  
Chicago Tribune

The Obamas may have accepted Bo the Portuguese water dog as first puppy because of the breed's hypoallergenic coat, but the dogs are also the most genetically studied breed in the world.

Thanks to their unique history, the dogs have been the source of key insights into the function of certain canine genes, including determining a dog's size and whether it is susceptible to a devastating disease. Those insights have offered clues to researchers looking into human disease, too, from cancer to dwarfism.

"Dogs have many of the same diseases that humans have. There is great hope these (findings) will translate to humans," said Kevin Chase, senior researcher at The Georgie Project at the University of Utah, which studies Portuguese water dog genetics. (Georgie was a water dog belonging to the project's founder.)

A series of lucky breaks have made the breed ideal for genetic research. First, all American Kennel Club-registered water dogs came from a tiny founding group of about 30 animals starting in the 1930s. That means the amount of genetic variation from animal to animal is small compared with breeds that have many founding "Adams" and "Eves."

That variety allows geneticists to look at the genomes of big water dogs vs. small ones, seeking out regions where genetic patterns differ. When they find genes that seem to have something to do with size, researchers can apply that idea to other breeds, from mastiffs to toy poodles, and see if the patterns holds.

Doing just that, geneticists found that small dogs shared a snippet of DNA near the IGF1 gene, which helps control growth,

on chromosome 15. They think that snippet suppresses the IGF1 gene, which keeps dogs small.

The next step was to look in that area for genes affecting diseases of growth regulation, such as cancer, said geneticist and cancer researcher Elaine Ostrander, head of the Dog Genome Project at the National Human Genome Research Institute in Bethesda, Md. "The genes we have found are generally responsible for diseases in humans," she said.

The third lucky break also traces back to



The Obama family gets to know their Portuguese water dog, which daughters Sasha and Malia have named Bo. The Obamas take their new dog, Bo, for a walk.

those original 30 or so dogs. Owners have worked hard to breed out disease and keep the population going, said Susan Becker, president of the Portuguese Water Dog Club of Greater Chicagoland.

When The Georgie Project started asking water dog owners to provide blood samples, pedigree lines, X-rays and even, more recently, to ship their dead pets to Utah for autopsies, many owners agreed to do it, Chase said. So far, the project has looked at the ge-

nomes of more than 1,000 water dogs, has X-rays from 600 and has conducted more than 150 autopsies.

The whole idea to use the Portuguese water dog for genetic research actually came from a breeder, not a scientist, according to Chase. About a dozen years ago, University of Utah soybean geneticist Gordon Lark contacted breeder Karen Miller after his water dog, Georgie, died. Miller, who now lives in Maine, sent Lark a puppy for free and urged Lark to study the genetics of Addison's disease, a form of which strikes both

# Statistics of the first dog

## Breeds and quantity vary throughout the different presidencies





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## Our Voice

# Criminals, fearless of death penalty

Murder is the unlawful killing of another human being with criminal intent. In today's world, terrible crimes are being committed daily. Many believe that these criminals deserve one fate: death. Capital punishment, the death penalty, is the maximum sentence used in punishing people who kill another human being - and is a very controversial method of punishment.

In most states, a person convicted of first degree murder has the potential to be given the death penalty. Capital punishment is a subject that can be counted upon to stir up emotional reactions, and controversy. The very concept provokes a profusion of valid questions and opinions. Today's daily world of crime and violence calls for punishment of a severe nature, and many citizens argue that the punishment necessary is the death penalty. These people quote passages such as the "an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" concept from the Old Testament of the Judeo-Christian Bible. Some people take the neutral position that there is no right or wrong answer, that each opinion on capital punishment is valid in its own way.

Opponents of the death penalty claim that sentencing a person to death does not change the reality of the situation; the harm already done simply cannot be fixed from a vengeance standpoint. You cannot bring the murdered person back by taking the prisoner's life.

Proponents of capital punishment tend to defend their opinion mainly on two grounds: death is a fitting punishment for murder and executions maximize public safety through incapacitation and deterrence.

The view of proponents of the death penalty in reference to the "let the punishment fit the crime" ideal is that, in the eyes of many law officials and citizens of the United States, if a crime is so serious that it causes irreversible dam-

age or the loss of human life, then the only penalty for said crimes would be death for the individual that committed this act.

Many also feel that if an individual can possess the strength and will to take the life of another human being in a planned manner, then they must also in turn be able to face their punishment which could only be a punishment of the same magnitude as the crime they have committed; that being for their life to be ended for the common good. These people feel that, while it is the cruelest punishment, it is the best way to penalize heartless, cold-blooded killers.

The ideal of executions maximizing public safety through incapacitation and deterrence explains that such a punishment as the death penalty would keep callous and dangerous murderers from roaming the streets of our children and

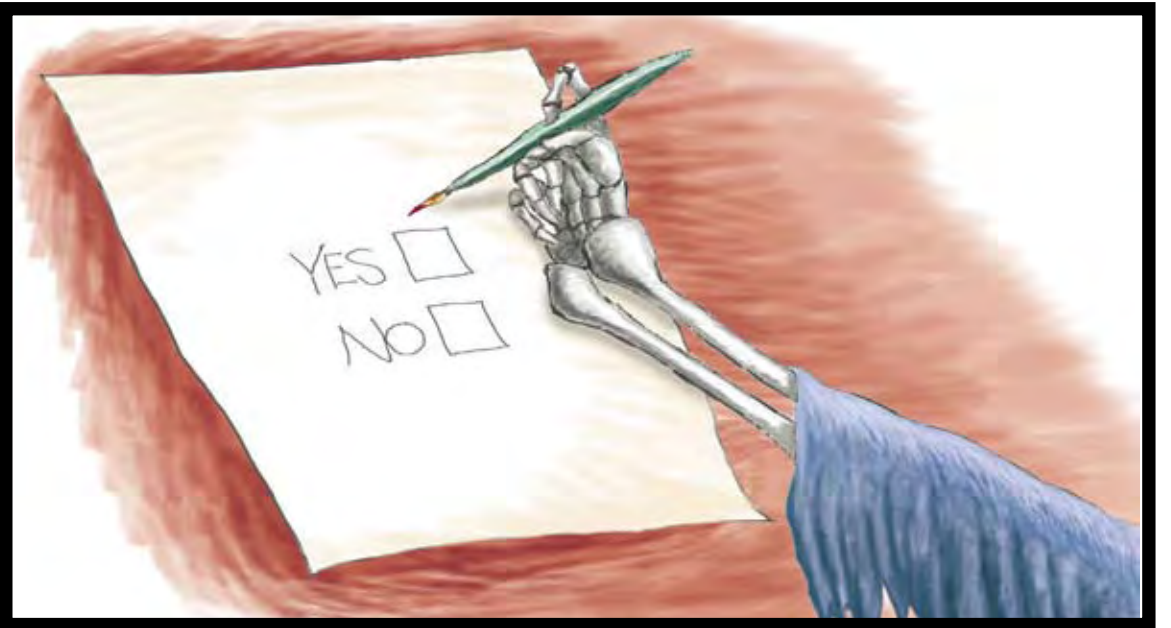
innocents. In fact, this opinion is backed by statistical data collected by the AP, in that the homicide rate in

**The homicide rate in those states with the death penalty is almost double the rate in states without the death penalty**

those states with the death penalty is almost double the rate in states without the death penalty.

It would serve to "scare" criminals into not committing their crime for fear of the ultimate punishment. It seems rational to think that if potential killers are aware that if they commit serious crimes they could be put to death for it, they are less likely to commit these crimes.

Another strong point of this concept is the retribution and justice bestowed to society. The community demands a sense of closure, that justice be served. This is imperative for peace to be maintained. If criminals were allowed to get away with such a serious crime as the taking of human life, fear and chaos would rule. A sentence of life in prison is not substantial enough. The government must be trusted to permanently protect its innocent citizens from further crime.



Gary Markstein, Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel / MCT Campus

## Your Voice

# Inmates sabotage the system, lawyers help

By Adam Fishman  
afishman@valenciavoiced.com

Pretend the death penalty is a toaster that is tested for 10 years, in numerous inspections by an army of toaster testers to make sure nobody gets electrocuted by mistake. Sound safe enough? Well, not to opponents of capital punishment. Their new argument is that we should unplug every toaster because some did not pass inspection.

The shattered victims and families left behind by murderers, rapists, and violent criminals in general, is enough to justify capital punishment. The best case against it is morals, but the worst opponents are not ethical.

They ignore victims and make martyrs of murderers. They sabotage the system at taxpayer expense, then say executions are too costly. Defense lawyers salt the record with deliberate mistakes, then say the killer had a lousy defense.

The latest twist looks like more of the same. Many are trying, by creating the impression that innocent men are getting toasted. According to a recent study by the Chicago Tribune, 93 percent of death penalty "reversals" were still found guilty. The rest were not innocent, but escaped execution because of procedural errors by judges, prosecutors, police and most often, their own lawyers.

**They ignore victims and make martyrs of murderers. They sabotage the system at taxpayer expense, then say executions are too costly.**

It is reasonable to assume that the problem is related to the absence of professional standards and the limited availability of defense resources in capital cases. By contrast, in Ohio, capital trial attorneys are certified by court rule and have the benefit of services and assistance from the state public defender's office. More reversals in Ohio mean less risk of executing the innocent.

Nationally, a handful of death-row inmates have been found innocent by DNA testing. There are strong arguments for capital punishment criminals sitting on death row, bring on the DNA tests. They will prove that an innocent person is less likely to get killed by the death penalty than by opponents who spring condemned killers to block executions.

We certainly don't need a study to assess the cost of the death penalty. We can all agree that it does cost more. But because it does, many people argue that the execution of criminals should be stopped. That is not a compelling enough reason.

As each criminal act becomes more violent and repulsive to society, the trial will always cost more. It costs much more to try a defendant for burglary or armed robbery than for shoplifting. Just like it will always cost more to try a defendant in a death penalty case than for vehicular manslaughter or second-degree murder.

## Your Voice

# U.S. places 4th in executions

By Kenny Wagner  
kwagner@valenciavoiced.com

How is it that the United States has one of the largest numbers of criminal executions in the world? How did we get to the point where we are supposedly the freest nation on Earth, yet we still condemn citizens to death?

Honestly, what other industrialized nation has the death penalty and utilizes it in the same way as our country? Britain, nope don't think so, the UK abolished the death penalty years ago and the same goes for the rest of Europe.

In fact, most of the countries that still have capital punishment laws on their books are mostly located in Asia. Asian countries also get credit for being the most ruthless among countries with the death penalty.

China alone executed over 1,700 people in 2008. But the good ol' US of A isn't off the hook, sure China's number is pretty high but in the terms of their population it's really only .00000017% of their population. The United States, however executed 37 people in 2008, .00000012% of our population, pretty small percentage but just about as bad as China.

In Fact the US has earned its place as one of the highest execution rates in the world. Of the 59 countries that still use the death penalty the top five with the most executions in 2008 are in order from most to least: China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, The United States, and Pakistan.

Yep, there we are in between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and among some of the countries that we despise the most and consider the most brutal.

How can we tell these countries that what they do to their citizens is despicable and wrong, specifically Iran and China, when we're still in the practice of killing our own citizens? Of course this type of hypocrisy is not new to the U.S. government, (see: U.S. foreign policy and Latin America).

But, the time has come to end this ridiculous practice that only serves to venerate absurd arguments from rash politicians that like to promote capital punishment is a deterrent even though it's not.

It has become a political crutch instead of a means of punishment. And when people are losing their lives over political campaigns no matter who the person is or how despicable they might be, it is wrong.

## VALENCIA VOICE

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# Do you support the death penalty?

## Religion has no place in the jury room

By Linsa P. Campbell  
McClatchy Newspapers

Despite his given name, Khristian Oliver was not heartened to learn that jurors in Nacogdoches, TX consulted their Bibles in the room where they decided to sentence him to death.

It might be easy to say that Oliver deserved Death Row for shooting Joe Collins in the course of a 1998 home robbery then smashing his head with a rifle butt while he lay in his front yard.

Trouble is, what the Scripture-reading jurors did by bringing their Bibles into the deliberations violated the Constitution.

Juries are supposed to base their verdict solely on the evidence presented in court and the law as provided by the judge, without outside influence. That's part of the Sixth Amendment's "impartial jury" guarantee.

It's mystifying then that the appellate court upheld Oliver's sentence, citing the trial judge's conclusion that "a conscientious, and dedicated jury" had reached its verdict "uninfluenced by any outside influence of any kind."

How could that be, when they were reading their Bibles in the jury room? Oliver's lawyers have asked the Supreme Court to set the lower courts right on Bibles in the jury room. And it's time the justices did.

In an exercise in twisted logic, the Texas attorney general's office wants the high court to reject Oliver's petition precisely because the appeals courts aren't all on the same page about whether jurors consulting Scripture violates the Constitution.

Besides that, the state contends, the court should wait for a case where its ruling would make a difference.

In other words, the Attorney General believes that Oliver would have been convicted and sentenced to death even if the jurors hadn't brought in extraneous material, so even a constitutional violation doesn't matter.

There's no denying that Oliver did a stupid, senseless, vicious thing. But if Texas wants to kill him for it, the state and its representatives should have to follow the most fundamental constitutional rules, not just the ones they like.

—MCT Campus



"If someone is sentenced to the death penalty, meaning they killed someone else, they are getting what they deserve."

— Marissa McDole



"I don't support it at all. Everyone should have a chance. They should show some mercy."

—Raul Alicea



"It depends, I think life in prison if it is good enough, but if it is really severe, they deserve the death penalty."

— Ashley Kitzman



"I believe if you can invoke so much wrath on someone that you kill them, then the state should be able to execute you. It's what you deserve."

— Vince Mullins



"I absolutely support it, if what you did was that bad, then yeah you should be gone, I think that's moral."

— Sarah Lucas



"I support it, definitely, some people should go away for what they've done."

—Robert Asonso



"In certain situations I do, if they're a repeated offender then obviously they are not going to learn their lesson and they deserve it, they're not going to change."

—Tuillicia Williams



"I think it's wrong, two wrongs don't make a right."

— Jeff Chery

Kenny Wagner , Adam Fishman/ Valencia Voice

## Tight regulations placed on Maryland cases

By Julie Bykowicz  
The Baltimore Sun

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The House of Delegates on Thursday approved new restrictions on the death penalty in Maryland.

They will send the proposal directly to the state's anti-capital punishment governor, who has said he will sign it.

The evidentiary limitations are the strictest of any of the 35 states that have capital punishment.

New Mexico abolished the death penalty this year.

Gov. Martin O'Malley, a Democrat,

sought a repeal in Maryland, but the closely divided Senate instead chose to restrict the kinds of evidence needed for capital cases.

Prosecutors now will only be able to seek the death penalty when they have DNA or biological evidence, a videotape of the crime or a video-recorded confession by the killer.

Some death penalty supporters, including Maryland Attorney General Douglas F. Gansler, have said the new plan will "nullify" capital punishment because it is so restrictive.

Some senators are planning a separate bill this year that would add fingerprints

to the list of evidence acceptable in capital cases.

But, death penalty opponents are urging lawmakers to reject that proposal, pointing to recent studies that call prints unreliable.

Delegates originally appeared poised to approve a full repeal, but they switched gears at the governor's urging because a slim majority of senators support the death penalty meaning, the legislation would fail in that chamber.

But the 47-member Senate did overwhelmingly support death penalty reform.

—LATWP News Service

## Letter to the Editors

### Reader offers encouragement

This e-mail is for anyone associated with the Valencia Voice, including your Faculty Sponsor. I just reviewed your online Valencia Voice, It's exceptional, except for more than a few grammatical errors, congratulations! What I deeply regret, however, is that a hard copy of the Voice is no longer available on campus college wide. What a pity! Keep up your good work! I really like the articles related to diverse issues of import, stay on that 'page'.

John Scolaro, Professor of Humanities  
West Campus.





Courtesy of Summit Productions

Left: Donald Faison (*Clueless*, *Scrubs*) and Mos Def (*The Italian Job*) play characters Leo and Eric. Right: Actor Mike Epps (*Next Friday*, *The Honeymooners*) plays Brody in this action packed comedy.

## Cast of 'Next Day Air' prepares for delivery

By Ashley Bland  
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Comedian and actor, Mike Epps, as well as actor, Wood Harris engaged in a conference interview based on their involvement in the upcoming comedy, "Next Day Air" on Tuesday, April 13.

"I feel like Ice Cube has really helped me and he's shown me the ropes without showing me the ropes, you know what I'm saying? It's been such a learning process for me, and I've been soaking it up and using it," said Epps when asked who was his favorite person to work with and why.

Gangster rapper Ice Cube, also known for his triumphs as an actor, screenwriter, and producer, has placed Epps in leading roles in popular urban films such as "Next Friday," "All About the Benjamins," and "Friday After Next."

Harris, who portrays the character Guch in the film, had this to say when asked about the similarities in between his role in the film and that of his character Avon Barksdale on HBO's "The Wire," "It's like reading a science fiction book and then you're reading a history book, those are two different things so you can't expect the same things out of them."

"So I get a lot of consideration for

those 'bad guy' roles but this was a labor of love, I know the writers and I'm one of the producers' friends. A lot of the cast are people I know."

In Epps' case, his role in the film holds a sense of an entertaining thrill. He said, "I play the role of Brody and I'm playing a guy who is a down guy, I'm down with everything. You know, robbery, murder, selling drugs, but at the same time I don't have a lot of sense."

Donald Faison also contributed to the film portraying the character Leo and although he took part in the phone conference he was not available to be interviewed.

The three have had a great deal of history working together.

When asked if there was any healthy competition during the filming process Harris said, "Nah man, you know, the set for "Next Day Air" was like a basketball game. We came with a team that worked well together; everyone came in wanting to win the game fair. It was one of my best experiences."

"It's not healthy to have competitive actors but occasionally, people who you work with for some reason, try to steal the scene. I think we should make the best scene we can make."

When asked what the most challeng-

ing aspect of their character was and their favorite scene in which they participated in the film both actors. Epps and Harris had this to say:

"Nothing about my role was really hard because I've always had those skills anyway so I have been just looking for the opportunity to do it. My favorite part of the movie is the stand-off because nobody knew it was going to happen and when we all got there it was tensed," said Epps.

"You know to be honest with you, I come from Chicago, Illinois, so I guess I come from a humble background. I can relate to the urban market rather easily," said Harris.

"That doesn't mean that there's not a lot of homework to do but it does mean a lot of homework has been done in my experiences. I don't have to mock it so I'm not going to fake it. I'm going to draw from experiences as much as I can whether they're mine or someone else's."

"The thing that struck me the most was the scene where we go into the bank and make our request which was day one of shooting. I had the most fun working with Mike Epps though, everyday."

Epps has been playing comedic roles since 1997 when he made is debut performance as Mike in the film "Straits."

Out of the 28 different projects that he has worked on, three of those roles are ones in which he portrayed a character named Reggie.

"That was my step-father's name, I don't know why they keep giving me that name. But it's what I do, I live to make movies and I love to make people happy and laugh," said Epps.

Harris who is currently pursuing a Doctrine in Natural Patenting Medicine and is an ambassador for Healthier, a fundraising organization for medicine targeting the Latin and black community continues to expand his repertoire saying, "I also have a lot of opportunity in music, so I'm currently weighing those opportunities. I'm looking forward to see what comes of these things in the future."

Harris also hopes to start some filming on the "college circuit" so that students will be able to get to know him better as an activist for the youth.

As for Epps, he mentioned producing his own film and hopes of working with Denzel Washington in the future.

The comedy, "Next Day Air", directed by acclaimed music video director Benny Boom and starring Epps, Harris, Faison as well as Emmy nominated Mos Def and Golden Globe winner Debbie Allen, will be in theatres May, 8, 2009.

## 'The Informers' poorly brings back the eighties

By Roger Moore  
The Orlando Sentinel

Thanks to Brett Easton Ellis, nobody can ever tell you "You had to be there" when talking about the '80s.

Ellis lets us re-live those halcyon days of cheap coke, "Miami Vice" fashions and the rise of AIDS.

Occasionally, some fool gets the idea that his literary wretched excess would make for a good film.

"The Informers" is another "Less than Zero"-style riff on those years, only this time it's a period piece.

In Ellis' universe, the '80s were one big "Love Shack." Everybody's grooving. Ev-

erbody's high. Everybody's bisexual.

Well, everybody who matters, namely the scion of the rich and studio-connected in L.A. Graham (Jon Foster) is caught up in this whirl. Graham has lots of great sex with his girlfriend (Amber Heard).

Martin, who directs music videos, sleeps and snorts with them both. Graham's studio-exec dad (Billy Bob Thornton) is leaving his TV anchor girlfriend (Winona Ryder) to get back with Graham's drunken mom (Kim Basinger).

No wonder this college boy is confused.

"I need something more than this," Graham confesses. "I need someone to tell me what is good and tell me what is

bad."

Let's see: coke? "Bad." Unprotected sex? "Bad."

An English rocker (Mel Raido) staggers from concerts to hotel rooms with underage girls and boys. Graham's pal, bi-curious Tim (Lou Taylor Pucci) vacations with his skirt-chasing drunk of a dad (Chris Isaak) who tries to man the boy up.

And, in an unrelated story, desk clerk Jack (Brad Renfro) is in a pickle when his underworld uncle (Mickey Rourke) shows up and kidnaps a small boy.

It's a terrible muddle unless you take it as a satire on the Age of Ellis, the Jacqueline Susann for that Flock of Seagulls era.

That way, the unintentional laughs seem almost ironic.

The author of "American Psycho" may have something to say about that epoch, but director Gregor Jordan (Ellis co-wrote the script) has concocted a brew so retro that you find yourself asking "Where's Andrew McCarthy?"

Jordan ("Buffalo Soldiers") wallows in it all, treating himself to as many shots of a topless Amber Heard as he can manage.

The Aussie Jordan didn't exactly miss the '80s; he just missed out on them in L.A. Recreating them for "The Informers," he misses them again — by a mile.

—MCT Campus





Courtesy of Crank.com  
Actor Jason Statham returns as Chev Chelios in the second installment of the super charged Crank. Produced by Lions Gate and directed by Mark Neveldine and Brian Taylor the film has raised \$6,510,000.

# ‘Crank 2: High Voltage’ gets you charged

By Frank Tobin  
ftobin@valenciavoice.com

Let’s face it - with “Crank” you already had to suspend disbelief.

But with “Crank 2: High Voltage” you’ll need to put your disbelief in a microwave and cook it until it’s about ready to jump out and kick the ever-loving stuffing out of you.

This movie not only doesn’t follow logic or laws of physics or biology, it flips the finger and goes along its way like the best videogame your friend ever got that he wont let you play.

This movie practically begs to be passionately loathed by absolutely everyone, with the notable exception of antisocial teenage boys.

Its rank, nihilistic tone is relentless and exhausting. The misogyny is benchmark horrendous. The acts of violence are brutal, frequent and often blatantly homoerotic. It’s flippant. It’s homophobic. It’s vulgar.

And it feels as much seething contempt for its own narrative coherence as it does for its few prominent female characters.

But there is something bracingly brilliant about it.

Films this fearlessly unhinged simply do not get made any more, and thirty years ago this would’ve played, late at night, to packed houses for years on end, perhaps aptly bundled with the likes of John Water’s “Pink Flamingos.”

One fact that was suggested by the first

“Crank” is set heroically in stone barely five minutes into its sequel - that directors Mark Neveldine and Brian Taylor appear to be completely obsessed with pornography.

There is a truly jaw-dropping amount of flesh on constant display, and the film’s only female speaking parts belong to a prostitute and a stripper.

This lends the film an air of uncomfortable, almost smutty bathroom sleaziness, until a bunch of actual pornstars turn up in the middle of a scene, starring as a bunch of disgruntled, well, pornstars striking for better pay.

Although it hardly passes as satire, it does seem like a sly dig in the direction of the producers that populate the Hollywood main-

stream, who’d surely relish the opportunity to make films like this if only the corporate machine would let them.

All-out exploitation it may be, but if any film lives up to cinema’s ancient adage of providing its audience with relentless sex and violence, this is it.

The second half of the film is where it really flies, and chooses to disregard not only its own plot, but any care for the patience or expectations of its audience. It goes, essentially, mad.

And for something that was clearly deranged in the first place, it’d be foolish not to offer up the only advice that will enable you to see exactly what it means:

Go and see it. Today.



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# 'Chinatown Wars' has pint-sized GTA action

By Frank Tobin  
ftobin@valenciavoice.com

Last year, Nintendo announced that Rockstar intended to de-virginize (sic) its DS with "Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars," a new adventure that would continue the series' cop-murdering, civilian splattering antics.

While that filled gamers with homicidal glee, they had natural concerns about the technology.

Well "Chinatown Wars" is here, it's amazing and most importantly, you can sell heroin.

Taking place in GTA's stomping grounds, Liberty City, "Chinatown Wars" tells the story of Huang Lee, a snobby rich kid who flies in from China to present an ancient sword to his Uncle Kenny.

Within seconds of hitting the airport, thugs assault Huang, steal the sword and leave him for dead.

Barely surviving, he reaches his uncle and immediately sets off to complete missions that'll eventually lead him to his attackers.

It's an interesting story that'll keep you entertained in between all the killing.

As expected, the game plays almost exactly like every "Grand Theft Auto" before it.

You'll carjack vehicles, run over pedestrians, tick off cops and perform a plethora of familiar missions that challenge you to deliver cars within a set amount of time, murder rival gang members and even win street races.

There's also a healthy amount of weapons, a list that includes a chainsaw, revolver, rocket launcher, sniper rifle, flamethrower, sword and double pistols,

among others.

Various mini-games, however, set it apart from its predecessors.

When you get into some cars, for example, you'll need to complete fun mini-games to hot wire them.

One in particular forces you to remove screws by drawing circles on the bottom screen, then connect two wires.

You'll experience several of these mini challenges and each one never gets old.

You'll also become one of Liberty City's most notorious drug dealers.

Various missions allow you to sell cocaine, weed, acid and other narcotics for profit.

Naturally, you'll have to keep this side business on the down low to avoid the fuzz.

Speaking of police, they're significantly more insane than in other GTA games.

Simply tapping a cruiser will earn you a wanted star and bring a ton of heat.

While we realize the LCPD needs to do its job, this proves frustrating because you can't see what lies ahead until you're right on top of it.

You'll actually lose a mission numerous times because you'll keep smacking into cops.

This leads to the camera.

In order to fit the game onto the DS, Rockstar went with a top down perspective reminiscent of the first "Grand Theft Auto" on the PS1.

That said, "Chinatown Wars" still features 3-D graphics.

Actually, the game's quite impressive looking, with towering skyscrapers, numerous cars/people on screen and plenty of mayhem.

Other cool touches, like elevated trains,



Courtesy of Rockstargames.com

Thirteenth in the series, "Chinatown Wars" continues on with GTA's violent antics.

the ability to get a car on two wheels and explosions only add to the eye candy.

We just wish the characters sported more detail.

Rockstar dressed police in blue, but sometimes we mistake a civilian for a cop. That never ends well.

Unless you despise GTA, "Chinatown Wars" is an essential purchase.

Rockstar did an excellent job transferring the mayhem to the DS, and it's suggested you run out and buy a copy ASAP.

The game's drug lords command it.

# 'Blood on the Sand' mimics other violent video games

By Billy O'Keefe  
McClatchy-Tribune

In "50 Cent: Blood on the Sand," you are 50 Cent, and your objective is to fight your way through a fictional Middle Eastern country and recover a diamond-encrusted skull that was promised to and subsequently stolen from you after concert promoters stiffed you out of \$10 million for your just-concluded USO gig.

No, really. That's what happens.

Conceptually, "Sand" approaches the zenith of celebrity-fronted gaming ridiculousness — rare territory reserved for the likes of Shaquille O'Neal's "Shaq Fu" and "Michael Jackson's Moonwalker."

Had Swordfish attempted to sell this idea to us with a straight face, we'd be hard-pressed to play it with one.

But Swordfish gets the joke, and it's got the game to prove it.

"Sand" very overtly borrows chunks of "Gears of War" (third-person shooting, cover mechanics), "Army of Two" (co-op-friendly objectives and environments) and "The Club" (combos and bonuses for stylish and consecutive kills), but it blends those pieces together with a uniquely maniacal sense of energy and with tongue planted deep in cheek.

The best news? It plays nicely. "Sand's" cover mechanic occasionally falls prone to stickiness in tight corridors, but it generally functions like it should.

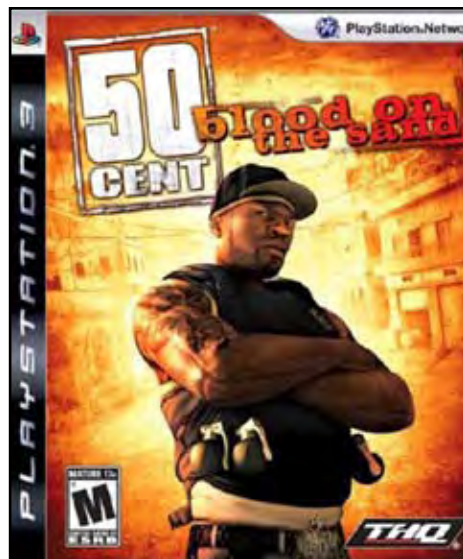
The weapons feel appropriately powerful and are fun to use.

"Sand" even does "The Club" better than "The Club" itself did, making it a blast to complete mini-scenarios on the fly and rack up combo points for excessive skill or bravery.

The missions don't exactly reek of variety, but the game throws objectives at you so rapidly that it's hard to be bothered.

"Sand's" co-op elements (two players, online only) also work as promised.

The storyline unfolds identically regardless of



Handout / MCT Campus

"50 Cent: Blood on the Sand" is rated M and is for Playstation 3 and Xbox 360.

whether you play alone or partner up, and your friends (or, if you wish, total strangers) are free to drop in and out of your game at any time.

"Sand" gives you a respectably capable A.I. partner (portraying one of three G-Unit side-kicks) when you play alone, but the sheer ridiculousness of the story remains best enjoyed with a friend laughing along.

(In a weird twist on convention, the second player actually gets the better of "Sand's" driving missions. If you want to man the turret instead of drive the Humvee, you'll have to latch on to someone else's game instead of start your own.)

Frankly, no reason exists not to have it both ways.

"Sand" lacks any kind of competitive multiplayer mode, but the campaign is one of those fast, arcade-style blasts that is fun to replay simply for fun's sake.

Unlocking all the available weapons and taunts provides extra motivation to go back, but it's almost unnecessary.

—MCT Campus

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# ‘State of Play’ sticking to the facts

By R.B. Brenner  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Russell Crowe trusts his instincts, and right now he’s almost certain they are dead-on. He just needs confirmation. So he darts his piercing eyes toward me.

Five days earlier I was in the Washington Post newsroom, editing articles for the Metro section. Now I’m in Crowe’s Beverly Hills hotel suite, along with director Kevin Macdonald and actresses Helen Mirren and Rachel McAdams. Three Academy Award winners. A magnetic young star. And a newspaper guy you’ve never heard of, still wondering how he got here.

We’re dissecting the script for “State of Play,” a big-screen thriller that revolves around the friendship-rivalry between a politician and a reporter. It’s Jan. 6, 2008, the eve of three months of filming.

I’ve known him less than 48 hours. Certainly not long enough to calculate whether the answer I’m about to give will earn me an icy glare or a nod of respect.

My new, surreal role as a pampered movie consultant is quite agreeable: hanging out with A-list celebrities, traveling first-class, staying near the beach in Santa Monica, fattening up on catered meals. It would be nice to stick around. It also would be nice to leave with some integrity intact.

“In most situations, you’re right,” I begin, making eye contact while building the courage to drop a big “however” on Crowe, who plays the reporter. He’s our meal ticket, the guy who rescued the movie six weeks earlier after Brad Pitt abruptly dropped out amid the Hollywood writers’ strike. If he gives the word, I’m probably on the red-eye back to Washington.

After explaining why reporters often have adversarial relations with police and protect confidential documents at all costs, I outline a very narrow window of exception. If lives are in peril, then your duties as a citizen trump your principles as a journalist.

Crowe pivots toward Macdonald, who had cautioned me that his leading man doesn’t necessarily see the noble side of my profession. I brace for the worst. Instead, an articulate ally emerges. The exchange we just had, he tells Macdonald, needs to find its way into the scene.

“That was fun, man,” Crowe says to me later,



Ricky Carioti, Washington Post / LATWP News Service

**Russell Crowe at Ben’s Chili Bowl in Washington with R.B. Brenner, a Washington Post Metro editor who served as a consultant for the big-screen thriller about politics and journalism.**

after we spar a few more rounds over the script

My fun would stretch from Los Angeles back to Washington, where most of the exteriors were filmed. And before the cinematic circus left me behind, this would happen:

I would end up with a two-line role in the movie opposite Mirren, who’d make me laugh and blush by whispering a slightly risqué congratulation (it had to do with losing my acting virginity). I’d become a card-carrying member of the Screen Actors Guild; take home a per-

sonalized director’s chair; accompany McAdams to a play and get swarmed by her adoring teenage fans during intermission; and fly on a private jet with producer Andrew Hauptman, who became a good friend, to watch the professional soccer team he owns play a home game in Chicago. Oh, and I’d get man-hugged by Crowe.

I hardly had the resume to dazzle Hollywood. After working for two decades as a news reporter and editor on both coasts, I joined The Post in 2002 as an assistant Maryland editor and

worked my way up to Metro editor. But perhaps Macdonald saw in my eyes that his project married two of my lifelong passions, journalism and movies.

Macdonald and his team had me e-mail photos of the clothes and shoes that reporters wear. They needed to know what brands of pens we favor. They found binders like those we use to store old newspapers and then stained the covers with dirt and coffee to age them appropriately.

They arranged for me to lead a “boot camp” for scores of extras, coaching the background actors on how to pantomime phone interviews and type on their computers. How’s that for action-packed drama?

Mirren asked me for a list of newspaper terms, which she jotted on a legal pad and drew from to sprinkle into her dialogue.

When it was finished, the massive Globe newsroom, built on a Culver City soundstage and decorated in painstaking detail, was so realistic that you could have put out a paper if the computers really worked.

But on the macro level, my crusade for authenticity bumped into unyielding walls at times. When I repeatedly objected to the illicit-video-taping scene, Macdonald politely made clear that in the end, plot rules. He was trying to tell a dramatic story, a political whodunit, and didn’t want the audience bogged down in a journalism ethics lesson. I kept arguing that if he aspired to elevate the film above mere thriller, then accurately portraying my profession’s code of conduct should matter more.

Likewise, I fought for a year and a half to avoid the impression that a reputable Washington reporter would ever consider paying for information. Yet three times in the script, reporters are asked to do just that.

Like Crowe’s flawed reporter, whose friendship with the politician is self-destructive, my ability to write about “State of Play” was compromised from the start. I was paid to be a consultant. Then I became friends with many of the cast and crew. I overheard things that would make for fantastic copy, but I’ll never report them. To do so would make me the worst kind of hypocrite.

So is this the full story?

Not even close.

—LATWP News Service

## Movie pays homage to print journalism

By Rachel Abramowitz  
Los Angeles Times

HOLLYWOOD — “What happens when journalists aren’t there to ask the difficult questions of politicians?”

That’s just one concern Kevin Macdonald, the 41-year-old Scottish documentary filmmaker turned director, is raising with his new political thriller, “State of Play.”

The movie, which stars Russell Crowe, Ben Affleck, Helen Mirren and Rachel McAdams, is set during these tumultuous times for the fourth estate. The backdrop for this tale of inside-the-Beltway conspiracy and intrigue is a Washington, D.C., newspaper, similar to The Washington Post, except without the benevolent Graham family as the owners, and it does capture the feeling of an industry in transition, perpetually under economic pressures from the outside, while inside a battle for supremacy reigns between the brash but unseasoned young bloggers and the traditional hard-charging gumshoe reporters.

Affleck, who plays an ambitious up-and-coming politician, and Macdonald tend to banter jocularly with talking about the seismic shifts in the media landscape, but they didn’t make the film to dance on the grave of any institution. This is the kind of movie where the closing shot is a loving pan to newspapers traveling through the printing plant. “It’s the last hurrah for this analog technology. You look at it and it feels like

this noble beast, the last lion in the wilderness,” Macdonald says.

Over a lunch, on a windy day, at the otherwise completely deserted poolside of the Four Seasons Hotel, Affleck and Macdonald — who speak with exuberance and authority about what they see as the responsibilities and shortcomings of news-gathering organizations — resemble the dynamic between the film’s main characters: Crowe’s disheveled but tenacious reporter, Cal McAffrey, and Affleck’s shiny bright congressman, Stephen Collins — old college pals who have grown apart while working for the public trust (albeit in different capacities) in the nation’s capital.

The film, based on the gripping 2003 six-hour British miniseries of the same name, begins with what seem to be unrelated events. A street kid is gunned down in an alley. A beautiful, young woman working on the Hill dies in a subway accident. While investigating the shooting for his newspaper, Crowe’s journalist uncovers connections between the deaths — and what may be a larger government conspiracy involving a private, Halliburton-like military contractor — that could derail the career of his old buddy the congressman.

Making matters even more complicated, Crowe’s character has had an affair with the congressman’s wife, played by Robin Wright Penn. In a departure — and updating from the miniseries — McAdams plays a newbie blogger, more accustomed to pontificating than report-



Ken Hively, Los Angeles Times / LATWP News Service

**With the help of Ben Affleck’s conflicted congressman, director Kevin Macdonald, left, explores the watchdog role of newspapers in the upcoming movie, “State of Play.”**

ing, who finds herself paired with Crowe, who has major conflict-of-interest issues as the investigation delves deeper into his friend’s past. Mirren plays the paper’s acerbic top editor, caught between the financial demands of the paper and her desire to break big news and speak truth to power.

Crowe wasn’t the original choice to play McAffrey. Brad Pitt initially was cast as the conflicted but dogged newsman and even made a dashing research visit to the Washington Post.

“It was the biggest thing that ever happened there,” Macdonald says wryly.

“The biggest thing that happened at The Washington Post was that Brad Pitt went through?” Affleck asks. “Wow.”

Macdonald is circumspect about what happened to Pitt, who dropped out a week before shooting was to commence in November 2007, which in turn led to Edward Norton, who was supposed to play the congressman, also leaving the project. Pitt was unhappy with the script and wanted to push until after the writers strike to allow for more rewrites. Universal threatened to sue the superstar for violating a pay-or-play deal, unless an appropriate replacement could be found.

Indeed, a portly Crowe appears in the film — a character choice that might be spot-on for depicting a slovenly journalist but not always the way movie fans like to see a leading man.

—MCT Campus





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# Sixers steal first game from Magic

By Kate Fagan  
The Philadelphia Inquirer

ORLANDO, Fla. — As disappointment filled Amway Arena, Andre Iguodala looked defiant.

He looked like a man who had been counted out, told that he could not get it done.

But he also looked like a man who had gotten it done.

In that moment, Iguodala seemed to represent his entire team. Few had sided with these 76ers, few had predicted a come-from-behind 100-98 victory in Game 1 of their first-round playoff series against the Orlando Magic.

But Sunday night, that's what happened: The Sixers trailed by 18 in the second half. And won.

A minute before Iguodala stood, arms crossed, waiting for his teammates to join him in celebration, he lifted the high-arching game-winner with 2.2 seconds remaining.

His shot, defended by Hedo Turkoglu, slipped through the rim. They were the game's final points. On the final possession, Iguodala defended Turkoglu, whose 28-footer looked bad from the start.

But Iguodala's postgame countenance was not just defiance; there was a hint of a smile there, too. As if he knew all along — even if you didn't — that he would make it.

That the Sixers would win.

Iguodala had missed two free throws with 1 minute, 7 seconds remaining that would have given his team a one-point lead. He had earned his second chance on the shoulders of reserve forward Donyell Marshall, whose three-pointer with 34.8 seconds left tied the score at 98.

"I think my teammates expect me to make big plays, and I have to make them for me to be a leader on this team," said Iguodala, who finished with 20 points.

Iguodala said that after he missed those free

throws, Thaddeus Young looked at him and said, "We're going to get them back."

When point guard Andre Miller grabbed a defensive rebound, giving the Sixers the final possession, Iguodala said his teammates gave him another chance to win the game.

"I think that game today typifies our team," said Sixers coach Tony DiLeo. "We didn't hang our heads when we got down, we fought back, and we won in dramatic fashion. The team always had confidence we could win."

This game looked like a runaway victory for Orlando. In the third quarter, the Sixers trailed by 18 points. Starting the fourth, they trailed by 14.

On more than one occasion in the third quarter, the Sixers wore a "here we go again" look on their faces. They had ended the season losing six of seven, looking little like a playoff team.

But here we didn't go again.

At the start of the fourth quarter, Marshall checked into the game. He brought with him his precision outside shooting: He scored 11 points and finished 3 for 4 on three-pointers.

"It's easy," Marshall said of his job. "I have no conscience."

"Their bench — even Theo Ratliff — their bench was the key to the game," said Orlando coach Stan Van Gundy.

Ratliff played 24 minutes and absorbed the bulk of the punishment from Orlando center Dwight Howard, who finished with 31 points and 16 rebounds. Sixers guard Lou Williams shot 3 for 3 from the three-point line, scoring 18 points.

"If we're going to get outshot on the perimeter by Philadelphia, it's going to be a long series," said Van Gundy, whose Magic made two fewer three-pointers than the Sixers, who made seven.

Behind that outside shooting, Orlando's lead dwindled in the final quarter, when the



Gary W. Green , Orlando Sentinel / MCT Campus

Thaddeus Young of the 76'ers drives against Rashard Lewis on Monday night.

Sixers outscored their hosts, 35-19. Then the teams were tied.

And the 17,461 inside Amway Arena — not an empty seat in the joint — seemed genuinely surprised.

"Our team has confidence and they want to win the series," DiLeo said. "We won't back down; we'll come back as hard as we did to-

night."

The Sixers have been here before. Last season they stole Game 1 against the Detroit Pistons, but eventually lost the series in six games.

Howard still seemed relaxed.

"There is no need to panic," said Howard. "It's just the first game."



Ron Cortes, Philadelphia Inquirer / MCT Campus

Philadelphia 76ers' forward Andre Iguodala dunks against the Orlando Magic during the first half in Game 1 at Amway Arena.



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# 2009 NFL mock draft

By Alex Barrett  
abarrett@valenciacc.edu

As the NFL draft approaches on April 25th, tons of angry Jets fans will pack into the Radio City Music Hall in New York to boo their team's selections. The rest of the leagues' fans will wait in anticipation to see if their team will properly address the needs they feel the squad has through the young talent available in the draft. What used to be a program that shadowed rounds two on

for the first round, the draft is now famous for finding golden players just as often in the later rounds as are found in the first pics. This year, there are a plethora of teams that have needs to be filled by collegiate players waiting to get their share of NFL money, while still some teams will just look to better themselves with players they feel are the best available on the board.

This year, your Valencia Voice team has gotten into the 'War Room' and established a number of ways the teams could go in the first

round. There are sleepers out there to be found, and many teams who have huge voids to fill; and there are still the joke teams that couldn't win if they had every first round pick (Ahem, Lions fans.)

Conducting the possible picks for the first round of the NFL draft this year for The Voice are sports editor Alex Barrett, and sports reporters Tim Bee and Reese Wallace, who will offer up their choices for the players who will be expected to change their teams, for better or worse.



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TEAM	ALEX	TIM	REESE
1 	Jason Smith OT - Baylor	Matthew Stafford - QB - Georgia	Jason Smith OT - Baylor
2 	Eugene Monroe - OT - Virginia	Jason Smith OT - Baylor	Eugene Monroe - OT - Virginia
3 	Aaron Curry - OLB - Wake Forest	Brian Orakpo - DE - Texas	Aaron Curry - OLB - Wake Forest
4 	Matthew Stafford - QB - Georgia	Eugene Monroe - OT - Virginia	Matthew Stafford - QB - Georgia
5 	Brian Orakpo - DE - Texas	Aaron Curry - OLB - Wake Forest	Brian Orakpo - DE - Texas
6 	Andre Smith - OT - Alabama	Michael Crabtree - WR - Texas Tech	B.J. Raji - DT - Boston College
7 	Michael Crabtree - WR - Texas Tech	Andre Smith - OT - Alabama	Michael Crabtree - WR - Texas Tech
8 	B.J. Raji - DT - Boston College	Jeremy Maclin - WR - Missouri	Jeremy Maclin - WR - Missouri
9 	Malcom Jenkins - CB - Ohio State	B.J. Raji - DT - Boston College	Aaron Maybin - DE - Penn State
10 	Mark Sanchez - QB - USC	Mark Sanchez - QB - USC	Andre Smith - OT - Alabama
11 	Robert Ayers - DE - Tennessee	Everette Brown - DE - Florida State	Everette Brown - DE - Florida State
12 	Brian Cushing - ILB - USC	Aaron Maybin - DE - Penn State	Mark Sanchez - QB - USC
13 	Tyson Jackson - DE - LSU	Michael Oher - G - Mississippi	Michael Oher - G - Mississippi
14 	Chris Wells - RB - Ohio State	Malcom Jenkins - CB - Ohio State	Malcom Jenkins - CB - Ohio State
15 	Rey Maualuga - LB - USC	Brian Cushing - ILB - USC	Brian Cushing - ILB - USC
16 	Everette Brown - DE - Florida State	Rey Maualuga - LB - USC	Rey Maualuga - LB - USC
17 	Josh Freeman - QB - Kansas State	Knowshon Moreno - RB - Georgia	Percy Harvin - WR - Florida
18 	Michael Oher - G - Mississippi	James Laurinitis - ILB - Ohio State	Tyson Jackson - DE - LSU
19 	Peria Jerry - DT - Mississippi	Josh Freeman - QB - Kansas State	Josh Freeman - QB - Kansas State
20 	Vontae Davis - CB - Illinois	Eben Britton - OT - Arizona	James Laurinitis - ILB - Ohio State
21 	Knowshon Moreno - RB - Georgia	Chris Wells - RB - Ohio State	Knowshon Moreno - RB - Georgia
22 	Jeremy Maclin - WR - Missouri	Vontae Davis - CB - Illinois	Hakeem Nicks - WR - North Carolina
23 	Patriots - Clay Matthews - OLB - USC	Patriots - Clay Matthews - OLB - USC	Patriots - Clay Matthews - OLB - USC
24 	Evander Hood - DT - Missouri	Tyson Jackson - DE - LSU	Brandon Pettigrew - TE - Oklahoma State
25 	Brandon Pettigrew - TE - Oklahoma State	Percy Harvin - WR - Florida	Vontae Davis - CB - Illinois
26 	Darrius Heyward-Bey - WR - Maryland	Hakeem Nicks - WR - North Carolina	Darrius Heyward-Bey - WR - Maryland
27 	James Laurinitis - ILB - Ohio State	Peria Jerry - DT - Mississippi	Peria Jerry - DT - Mississippi
28 	Eben Britton - OT - Arizona	Alex Mack - C - California	Eben Britton - OT - Arizona
29 	Hakeem Nicks - WR - North Carolina	Darrius Heyward-Bey - WR - Maryland	Kenny Britt - WR - Rutgers
30 	Percy Harvin - WR - Florida	Robert Ayers - DE - Tennessee	Robert Ayers - DE - Tennessee
31 	LeSean McCoy - RB - Pittsburgh	Shonn Greene - RB - Iowa	Chris Wells - RB - Ohio State
32 	Max Unger - OT - Oregon	D.J. Moore - CB - Vanderbilt	Darius Butler - CB - Connecticut