Poly graduate earns test pilots' highest honor

Siebold advances goal of space tourism

Will Taylor
MUSTANG DAILY

A Cal Poly aerospace engineering graduate and flight test pilot earned an international award last fall for his role in developing aircraft for the fledgling space tourism industry. The award put him in a select group that includes famous pilots John Glenn and Neil Armstrong.

Peter Siebold, who completed his degree in 2001, received the Boeing C. Kenneth award at the 53rd Annual Symposium for the International Society of Experimental Test Pilots. The award is given after aeronautical companies nominate pilots whom they think have made a significant contribution to flight test through development, performance and testing.

"It's without a question the most prestigious award a test pilot can receive in his career," Douglas Shume, president of Scaled Composites and Siebold's boss, said. "It's likened to a Heisman Trophy in football.''

Siebold won the yearly award specifically for his role as chief test pilot and on the Model 345 WhiteKnightTwo plane, from the first flight through subsequent testing and modification processes.

"I'm humbled to be in the company of significant contributors to flight testing," Siebold said. "It's hard to see yourself as equal to some of those folks that have received the honor previously.''

Siebold may feel humble, but his work speaks for itself. WhiteKnightTwo is part of billionaire Sir Richard Branson's dream for the potential space tourism industry. WhiteKnightTwo would act as the carrier and take-off platform for Virgin Galactic's spaceplanes at an elevation of 50,000 feet, Siebold said. Basically, WhiteKnightTwo would fly with a space ship attached, get to the appropriate altitude and then act as the take-off platform.

"Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo is three times the size of any aircraft Scaled Composites had ever designed or built, but the largest he has flown, Siebold said. Despite the size and scale of the project, he said it continues to exceed expectations.

"Siebold's confidence and success with WhiteKnightTwo might be attributed to his experience and versatility. He flew his first solo flight, gaining his pilot's license at 16, the youngest age that a person can do so. He later taught flight classes at the San Luis Obispo Airport, while a student at Cal Poly and has now logged about 2,500 hours of flight time in 40 different types of fixed-wing aircraft. 

Siedbold is not only an experienced pilot, but also a capable engineer. "Engineer and pilot are a perfect combo of those two interests," he said. "As a test pilot, you need to understand the engineering as well as how things work."

Siebold said employees of Scaled Composites are encouraged to be multi-talented and work in different areas. Siebold has, for instance, worked with computer managers managing avionics and simulation developments. The mid-size company focuses on innovative designs and technology within the industry.

By Howard Mintz
SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

SAN JOSE, Calif. — As Israel Gonzalez-Reyes recently stood before a San Jose judge for sentencing, his case had all the ingredients of the most common crime in the nation's federal courts over the past year.

The 39-year-old defendant had been deported to his native Mexico on eight separate occasions, repeatedly returning to the United States before winding up in jail usually charged with a variety of state crimes ranging from burglary to drunken driving. Federal prosecutors had had enough — this time around, Gonzalez-Reyes was charged under immigration laws forbidding the illegal reentry of a deported alien back into the United States.

More than ever, federal prosecutors are using such felony charges and the threat of serious federal prison time to make lawbreakers think twice before making another trip across the border. In 2009, the U.S. Justice Department filed nearly 92,000 immigration-related criminal cases in the federal courts. The record-breaking trend accounted for more than half of all new federal prosecutions in the country, according to Justice Department data maintained at Syracuse University.

Spurred by the relentless surge of illegal immigration in border states such as Texas and Arizona, where immigration prosecutions total in the thousands, the federal government has concluded that simple deportation is no longer an adequate response to repeat offenders with criminal records. Experts attribute the ready rise in prosecutions to several factors, including an
**Slums are front lines in Mexican drug war**

**Alfredo Corchado**

*The Dallas Morning News*

**Dianisima Villalobos Jacques, a resident of the Barrio Anáhuac neighborhood of Juárez, Mexico, shows a picture of her 16-year-old son, who was killed during an attack on a rehab center in September 2009.**

Alfredo Corchado

**News editor: Kate McBrayer**  
**mustgdailynews@gmail.com**

Thursday, January 7, 2010

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WORD ON THE STREET

“If you could travel anywhere in space, where would you go?”

“The Milky Way would be cool to go in and see, or Pluto.”
—Linsey Stahowski, psychology senior

“Probably Neptune, because it’s as far as we know out there.”
—Kurtis Kobara, agribusiness senior

“My answer would be somewhere in space or maybe the Moon in [unintelligible].
—Steven Thomas and David Lightman

WASHINGTON — What a difference a year makes.

Last January, Democrats — now streaming into Washington eager to celebrate not just the inauguration of Barack Obama as president, but also their party’s ascendency from coast to coast.

They’d gained ground in once-Republican turf such as the Mountain West and the Border South, added to their majorities in Congress and topped it all by seizing the presidency. "Yes we can," a triumphant Obama trumpeted, and the country seemed to cheer in agreement.

Now, the country seems to be saying back, "No, you can’t," putting the Democrats on the defensive heading into this year’s elections, when the entire House of Representatives, 37 seats in the Senate and 39 governor’s offices, are up for election.

The president’s poll numbers have dropped. The party’s top domestic agenda item, health care, is unpopular. Its candidates lost key statewide races in New Jersey and Virginia in November, and now high-profile Democrats such as Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter and Connecticut Sen. Christopher Dodd say they’ll retire rather than risk losing in the fall.

Whether it’s caused by a backlash against the Democratic agenda or the natural swing of the pendulum against the party that’s in power at a time of economic struggle, the result is the same: trouble for the Democrats.

"The fact that we’re seeing Democrats bailing in an election year, suggests maybe it’s a tide that’s turning," said Gary Rose, a professor of politics at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Conn. "People are starting to feel pressure were not fulfilled. Expectations were high, but what have we really seen?"

Clifford Young, a pollster for Ipsos Public Affairs, sees a normal turn against the party in power, saying the Democrats overstated the significance of the 2008 election results.

"It was basically an election for change, so it favored the party out of power," Young said. "But it didn’t say anything about a major shift in values. We didn’t see a huge shift in values that would favor the Democrats in the long term."

Either way, the Democratic Party’s push to build a durable political majority is stalling. That’s evident in national polls, such as a recent Gallup survey that found an average of 49 percent of Americans calling themselves Democrats last year, the first time in four years that the party has dropped below the majority level. That was still better than the Republicans, but the Democratic edge was shrinking, not growing.

It’s also clear in battleground states. Colorado, for example, was one of the places Democrats highlighted as proof that they were gaining support in swing states, as well as in regions such as the Mountain West, that once were friendlier to Repub-"
Judge favors broadcasting upcoming federal trial over same-sex marriage

Maura Dolan
LOS ANGELES TIMES

SAN FRANCISCO — A federal judge in San Francisco said Wednesday that he wants the federal trial over the constitutionality of California's Proposition 8 to be videotaped and distributed over the Internet.

"This certainly is a case that has sparked widespread interest," U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn R. Walker said during a hearing Wednesday. The nature of the case and its importance warranted "widespread distribution," he said. If Walker's view is endorsed, as expected, by the chief judge of 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, the legal battle over same-sex marriage will become the first federal trial in nine Western states to be videotaped in its entirety for public viewing, according to Thomas Burke, a media attorney.

"It is a rare day and a lot of decades in coming that a federal court allows cameras in the court — even its own cameras," Burke said.

In addition to running the entire proceedings, on YouTube hours after they occur, the court videotape would be broadcast live at several other federal courthouses, Walker said.

Supporters of Proposition 8 opposed public dissemination of the trial video and argued that witnesses would be intimidated by having their testimony watched by millions of people. The Proposition 8 campaign also objected to live feeds at other courthouses.

Walker noted many of the campaign's experts who will testify are "academics — people who stand up before classrooms all the time."

"But Michael Kirk, representing the campaign, said a classroom talk was substantially different from being asked "to testify across the county and across the world" in a "contentious and highly politicized" case. Kirk said that supporters of Proposition 8 have been harassed.

"The risk is just unacceptable," he said. Kirk later refused to say whether the campaign would ask a higher court to overturn Walker's decision.

Opponents of Proposition 8 favored courtroom cameras. Theodore Boutrous, a lawyer for two same-sex couples who have challenged the law, said it was important for the "public to see and hear what transpires in the courtroom."

"We hope that being able to see what transpires in the courtroom will lead to a better public understanding of our judicial processes and enhanced confidence in the rule of law," 9th Circuit Chief Alex Kozinski said when he announced the project.

RNC chairman criticized for remark

Republican National Committee (RNC) chairman Michael Steele attends a post-election news conference in Washington on November 4, 2009. He has come under fire for his use of the word 'injun.'

Dawn Turner Trice
CHICAGO

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Dawn Turner Trice
CHICAGO

"Our platform is one of the best political documents that's been written in the last 25 years," Steele told Hannity. "Honest injun on that. It speaks to some core conservative principles on the value of family, faith, life, economics. Those principles don't change."

Susan Power, 85, the last living founding member of Chicago's American Indian Center and the was offended by Steele's comment.

see Remark, page 5
Suicide bombing in Russia's Dagestan kills 5 police officers

Megan K. Stack
LOUISIANA TIMES

MOSCOW — A suicide bomber targeted a traffic police headquarters in the restive northern Russian province of Dagestan on Wednesday morning, killing five officers, officials said.

As the Russian-Made SUV careened toward the building at about 8 a.m. a team of police rammed their truck into the bomber’s vehicle. The explosions went off on impact, killing all of the policemen in the truck but preventing the bomber from reaching his target.

The death toll would have been much higher had the officers not intervened, officials in Dagestan said. The bomber was reported to have been a hero.

He was "stopping by a special operations group at the last minute," an official told the Interfax news agency. "The measures taken by these police officers stopped the terrorist from reaching his target."

The bomber struck just a 50 traffic police officers with a higher death toll at the last minute of a polices headquarters in Ingushetia, another Russian republic threatened by insurgent violence. That attack killed 24 people.

"They managed to prevent a terror attack by preventing their death toll at the cost of their own lives," the spokesman said.

Dagestan, a mountainous republic tucked on the western edge of the Caspian Sea, is an ethnically diverse region where 30% of the population has been rent by tensions from rising Islamist and clan power struggles.

Wednesday’s explosions shattered windows and damaged much more than a mile around. Investigators por-

ing over the bomb crater concluded that the assaulter had been carrying artillery shells equivalent to more than 200 pounds of TNT.

“When I woke up, ‘Bam! Bam!’” neighbor Patmir Ayvaz told Rus-

sia 1 television, imitating the sound of the blast. “I couldn’t find my children. They were screaming, ‘Mama. But I didn’t see them because the house is filled with dust and there’s glass under my feet.”

Mukhtar Ayvaz, the president of the small republic, ordered budget funds set aside to compensate the families of the slain police. He also ordered the purchase of 15 new police vehicles.

Escalating bloodshed in the Cas-

caus has remained a soft and vola-

tile underbelly to Russian efforts to portray the country as a stable, cen-

trally controlled hub of investment and tranquility. Russian officials have threatened, denied and fired officials and vowed to do better in response to the string of attacks — but the bloodshed keeps coming.

A flare of shrapnel and kill-

ings in Chechnya, which suffered through two wars between 1994 and the early 2000s, and a swelling Islamist insurgency in Ingushetia and Dagestan all threaten to destabilize Russia.

The threat appeared particularly acute in November, when a bomb detonated a train on a popular route running between Moscow and St. Petersburg, killing 20 people and rais-

ing the possibility that violence would spill deep into the heart of Russia.

"I don’t think he did it on pur-

pose," she said. "But now that he does know, he should apologize." The Democratic National Committee did not respond Wednesday to the Chicago Tribune’s inquiries about Steele’s comment.

Democrats continued from page 3

won both U.S. Senate seats in re-

cent years and then took the state in the presidential race for the first time in 2008. It’s not clear whether there will be a backlash against the health care law, which foes have said is likely to cost thousands.

"When I woke up,'Ham! Ham!'” said Power, a longtime activist and

associate director and staff attorney in a press release.

The city has a permit to put about 9 million gallons of effluent it treats near the sewage service facility into the strait in one of the few places in the state with a permit to discharge into an estuary.

MOMIOM (MCT) — It was a landmark year, good and bad, for Florida marines.

The endangered marines suffered the deadliest year on record in 2009 as state wildlife biologists documented 429 fatalities, a mark boosted by a trio of all-time highs for heat stress (97) and cold stress (56).

The totals, announced by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on Wednesday, ended a year that started bright with an annual aerial survey tallying 1,807 marines, which topped the previous all-time high by 500.

Democrats in New Jersey

If health care hurts Democrats in Colorado, it also could damage several Democratic senators elsewhere.

In at least seven states in which Democratic senators now hold seats, opponents of the Democratic health care proposals tend to out-

number supporters.

Becky Hollinger, a Democrat in Colorado, won her seat in November largely because independent voters flocked to the polls to back her. In Colorado, it also could damage the last, crucial vote needed to allow senators to con-

tinue the health care debate this fall.

"Arkansas are not yet sold on the need for health care reform," warned Janine Parry, the director of the Arkansas Poll. While unim-

pressed people are interested in the issue, she said,""The rest of us, appar-

ently are afraid of losing what we’ve got.”

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MUSTANG DAILY NEWS

Thursday, January 7, 2010
www.mustangdaily.net
Veritas Forum comes to campus searching for truth

Zach Laniz

The Veritas Forum returns to Cal Poly next week, event organizers said the event will inspire discussion around issues like truth, life and religion.

The annual event has been at Cal Poly since 2007. The Veritas Forum, which gets its name from the Latin word for truth, brings in educated speakers from all walks of life to pose their theories and questions to students to be scrutinized and examined.

Aerospace junior and Veritas Forum club president Josh Cecarelli said that Veritas has earned an honest reputation when it comes to life's deepest questions.

"Students from any worldview and any kind of background in general can just come and have discussions on what it means to live a true life and gives them the chance to pursue some of that knowledge," he said. "There are so many difficult questions out there and (at Veritas Forum) those questions can be discussed in a safe, intelligent environment."

Discussion topics will range from an art exhibit to an origin of life debate, and will also include a documentary on modern-day slavery.

After each event, audience members will have the opportunity to learn more in a 45-minute question-and-answer period. Cecarelli said this would ensure fair opportunity for the back-row students.

The event begins on Monday and lasts all week.

Photographer Name: Meghan Daily

Veritas Forum volunteers pass out flyers Wednesday on Dexter Lawn. The event begins on Monday and lasts all week.

Theater performance portrays hardships of job-searching

Daniel Triassi

Sitting behind a nondescript office desk, the actress sighs. "Last count, I've had 64 jobs. Now, I'm not 236 years old, so obviously some of them were for unusually short durations."

So begins the opening scene of Melanie Marshall's senior project performance of "Blown Sideways Through Life," an autobiographical play by Claudia Shear, which debuts tonight in room 212 of the H.P. Davidson Music Center.

"Blown Sideways Through Life," chronicles Shear's life as an unstable employee. Shear's resume includes being an artist's model, receptionist at a warehouse, Bloomington's sales associate and waitress at a restaurant called Bar Louie, all in search for an identity more sincere than any job description.

"I think that something this show really says is that you should find what you like to do, but you need to do it in a successful way," she said. "(People would call asking for) 'students for the background' and I was like, 'I'm in'"

Although Marshall realized her passion for theatre early on, many Cal Poly students aren't as fortunate. Students end up switching majors because they must declare their intent when they are 18.

"I think that something this show really says is that you should find what you like to do, but you need to do it in a successful way," she said. "I think that something this show really says is that you should find what you like to do, but you need to do it in a successful way."

Melanie Marshall plays Claudia Shear in the autobiographical one-woman-play "Blown Sideways Through Life."
Last year saw record music sales in U.S.

Todd Martens
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Overall U.S. music purchases hit an all-time-high in 2009, as sales of albums, singles, digital tracks and music videos topped 1.5 billion for the second consecutive year, according to year-end data released today from Nielsen SoundScan. Total music sales were up 2.1% over those of 2008, but the figures capture an industry still in transition.

Album sales took another double-digit drop in 2009, down 12.7% to 373.9 million. Meanwhile, digital track sales reached another milestone, up 8.3% from 2008 to more than 1.1 billion in 2009.

What's more, Nielsen SoundScan reports that 89 digital songs exceeded the 1 million sales mark in 2009, compared with 71 songs in 2008, and 2009 marked the first time a song broke the 4 million sales mark in a single year. The latter was achieved by four singles — "Poker Face" by Lady Gaga, "Got a Feeling" by Black Eyed Peas and two songs by "Boom Boom Pow" and "I Got a Feeling" that broke 4 million sales in a single year.

2009 was a banner year for music, according to year-end ceremonies in all music formats. For example, vinyl sales experienced a 27% increase from 2008 to more than 1.1 billion in 2009. Vinyl continued to be an industry bright spot, although overall vinyl sales are minuscule in the grand scheme of the industry. Sales of vinyl were up 33% in 2009 to 2.5 million, a new vinyl record. Although vinyl has seen a resurgence in recent years, there are signs that even that market is maturing. For instance, vinyl sales experienced a nearly 90% increase in 2008.

Lagers are crisper and lighter than ales and encompass most of the more popular U.S. beers, such as those produced by Budweiser, Miller, Coors and if I must mention it, Pabst Blue Ribbon. Ales are more often local-style, such as those produced by Firestone, almost any local brewery and most beers by Sierra Nevada. Speaking of which, this week's beer selection is Sierra Nevada's Celebration Ale. According to Sierra Nevada's site, the Celebration Ale is "Wonderfully robust and rich... dry hopped for a fresh, intense flavor." It is extremely hoppy and if you enjoy a flavorful beer, I highly recommend it.

5. I heard once on TV that the American people will elect the presidential candidate that can "sit down and have a beer with" (just like Nixon, oh, wait as this, how could it be at all important?

6. You may have been convinced with the help of beer (it doesn't mean they don't love you).
7. Beer makers were among the first to feature minorities in their television commercials (Making truth for equality).
These don't convince you that they don't love you).
Beer
continued from page 7
all seasonal beers to go out and try. And if you like it, look for other IPAs, like Firestone's Union Jack IPA or the many, many others that can be found at our local liquor stores.

Next week, along with the general beer talk, I'll be sampling an undetermined pilsner, a pale lager style beer, for those of you who prefer to stay away from the ales and darker beers. From there, I'll make my way to the darker side of beers, ending with a porter, which happens to be my favorite style of beer.

If you too are a lover of beer, which you must be if you made it this far, I encourage you to try the beers I do and let me know what you think by commenting on the posted article at mustangdaily.net.

Well, as we near the end of the beginning, I want to leave you with a few final thoughts. I would like to thank the Internet, Wikipedia, org specifically, for furthering my knowledge about beer.

Also, as Montell Jordan does on Friday nights when he feels alright, and I turn it up, designate a driver and take the keys to my truck.

And a few final thoughts. I want to leave you with a few final thoughts. I would like to thank the Internet, Wikipedia, org specifically, for furthering my knowledge about beer.

Muschell.

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Music
continued from page 7
29% of all album sales, compared with 33% in 2006, and independent retailers amounted to 6% of overall album sales, down 1% from in 2006.

Customers also stuck with the familiar. The top-selling albums of 2009, Taylor Swift's "Fearless," was one that was released in 2008. Of 2009's top five sellers, only Susan Boyle and Andrea Bocelli released their albums in 2009, and both benefited from holiday-related release dates.

Though Swift's "Fearless" was 2009's top-seller, it didn't take by much. The album tallied 3.2 million sales, just 100,000 more than Susan Boyle's "I Dreamed a Dream." Boyle can boast that her "Dream" was the best-selling album that was released in 2009, and was the year's top-selling "Internet album." The latter denotes that it sold the most physical copies from digital retailers (405,000), as opposed to digital downloads.

Swift was 2009's top-selling singer, and she would have repeated this year were it not for the sudden death of Michael Jackson. The King of Pop packed up a total of 8.2 million album sales in 2009, more than Swift's 4.6 million. But Swift was still on the rise. Last year, she sold slightly more than 4 million copies.

Jackson's "Number Ones" was the year's third-best album with 5.6 million, more than Swift's 4.6 million. But Swift was still on the rise. Last year, she sold slightly more than 4 million copies.

"Love Story" by 1 million.

Show
continued from page 8
"My Chemical Romance" (2.2 million), "Hannah Montana: The Movie" soundtrack (1.8 million), Black Eyed Peas' "The E.N.D." (1.78 million), Eminem's "Relapse" (1.73 million), Jay-Z's "The Blueprint 3" (1.5 million), Lady Gaga (2.8 million), Bocelli (2.6 million), Michael Buble (2.28 million), Eminem (2.1 million), Carrie Underwood (1.8 million) and the Black Eyed Peas (1.88 million).

"Love Story" was the year's top-selling digital album of the year, moving 461,000 downloads.

On the airplay front, Swift's "You Belong to Me" was also the most streamed song on the Internet, accruing more than 10 million listerings. But Kanye West may be pleased to know that Beyonce's "Single Ladies" (Put a Ring on It) was also the most-streamed video of the stage (3.2 million), topping Swift's "Love Story" by 1 million.

Per the expectations to run long past the allotted time on that topic, he added, "It's a novelty question that's been going on for centuries." As events are open to the public, priority will be given to students.

"The simplicity and bareness of the stage enables a stronger audience experience, focusing your attention more on her words than the scenery," Merchak said.

On stage, Marshall empha­sizes self-empowerment. Through Shear's voice, she finds joy in her everyday jobs.

Theater assistant professor Vir­ginia Anderson agrees the message is less about the visual aspects of the play and more about finding yourself through what you do and despite what you do.

"The show is a wonderful opportunity to share in the work of someone who, even in the thick of the college experience, allows us to genuinely celebrate what comes next," Anderson said.

Marshall holds the stage, and her attention, for 45 minutes, and her energy and commitment to Shear's storyline never wanes.

"Blows Sideways Through Life" will begin at 7 p.m. tonight and will run until Saturday. Tickets are available for $5 by phone: (916) 803-4530, email: mkmar­sha@calpoly.edu and a select few at the door.

Show
continued from page 8
You're not expected to know that what is right away," she said.

"That's it okay to try things that don't work out and fail.""Blows Sideways Through Life" is also an honest look at the life of many of us live. During and after college, many people have jobs, not careers, working to make money necessary to live. A job has minimal impact on a future work life, while a career provides experience and learning to fuel one's future. Shear makes no apologies for the meandering work path she has chosen. Marshall instead retells Shear's seemingly trivial jobs with dignity and insightful humor.

"We all need jobs, and they're not there. I think this play explores what we are willing to sacrifice to keep the job we need. How much of yourself are we willing to put away and smile with sad and sh}t in your mouth to have this job that sustains your livelihood and when is it just not worth it?" Marshall said.

One lesson the playwright has learned from all those dead-end jobs is that nobody is just a bus­boy or just a cashier; everyone has "at least one story that will stop your heart."

Following the play's rehearsal, senior theater major Ashley Mer­chak was drawn to the minimal­ism and the strong word choice for a monologue.

"The simplicity and bareness of the stage enables a stronger au­dience experience, focusing your attention more on her words than the scenery," Merchak said.

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"The simplicity and bareness of the stage enables a stronger au­dience experience, focusing your attention more on her words than the scenery," Merchak said.

Says Merchak, "not too much more!"

Veritas
continued from page 6
at different universities, the fo­rum's organizers wanted to feature people of similar scientific back­grounds and intellectual levels.

The forumary titled "Call and Response" will be shown in Chum­ash Auditorium at 8-45 p.m. Thursday. The documentary aims to remind us that there are no slaves today than even in human history" according to the Veritas Web site. The documentary spans from India to Cambodia portray­ing modern-day slavery like child brothel and slave brick kilns.

"A lot of people will say this shouldn't be happening, but then it's like what do we do about it?" Ceccarelli said.

The last presentation of the week is a speech is titled "Why Does a Good God Allow Suffer­ing?" that will be given by Greg Jewson, Ph.D.

Computer engineering senior and Cal Poly Brights club pres­i­dent Nichola Urschig said that students will probably want to de­bate the topic all night.

"It's a lot of fun, and that's al­ways a good debating topic, and I expect the questions to run long past the allotted time on that topic," he added. "It's a novel ques­tion that's been going on for cen­turies." As events are open to the public, priority will be given to students.

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Democrats need to adjust strategy to win in 2010

It's been almost a year since President Obama took office, and almost a quarter of his first term has passed. But for better or worse, we also wave goodbye to a decade. Some are calling it "The Decade from Hell" — and perhaps rightly so. Whatever your politics, the period from 2000-2009 was certainly littered with difficult issues and controversies, which will flow into the upcoming election season. The beginning of the previous decade and the Bush administration brought a new economic policy of trickle-down economics and deregulation, which led to the financial crisis we face today. Arguably, as a result of the Republican mishandling of the recession and deregulation, which led to the economic crisis, the Democratic Party took over, and the government passed several pieces of stimulus legislation, which stands in ideological contrast to their agenda of limited government. What they don't understand is that the reason they lost the 2008 election is that Americans correctly identified those same conservative principles as the cause of the recession.

However, Democrats may lose the 2010 midterm elections for the opposite reason. If Democrats fail to adhere to their agenda of real health care reform including the public option, and if they do nothing to significantly lower the unemployment rate which is currently around 10 percent (new numbers, which are projected to be more hopeful come out Fri­day, they deserve to lose Senate and House seats. Referring to the pundit and media response to the attempted Fort Hood attack on Christmas Day, New York Times columnist David Brooks said last Friday on PBS's News Hour, "We should have some sort of steady, level-headed response. That is the sign of a resilient nation. We don't have it. We have had the last week of the whole country going — or at least the punditocracy going — in and out of semi-hysteria over this. And it's just not the sign of a serious country."

I think, David Brooks.

The election of the first black President may not have changed the treatment of every minority in the United States or changed the hearts of racists, but the clear departure from the strain of discrimination on American history is certainly a milestone.

However, when I reflect on 2009, which brought so much hope and promise in the sweeping, ambitious agenda of Barack Obama, I don't see it as the year of change that I thought I would. Nor do I view the actions of the Democratic Party — health care reform included — as reasons to celebrate.

2009 was dominated by the voices of the far right, despite the fact that Democrats currently control all three branches of government. This is mostly because, as Washington Post's Harold Meyerson said in his Wednesday opinion piece, the conservatives managed to scrape together something liberals weren't able to as a social movement. The Tea Party, led by FOX News's Glenn Beck and Sean Hannity, as well as Rush Limbaugh, are doing their voters' work to deconstruct the previously untouchable image of President Obama, and paint the Democrats as weak.

And, to some extent, I agree with that assessment of Democrats. The Democratic Party — health care reform included — is reason to celebrate.

Limited government. What they don't understand is that the reason they lost the 2008 election is that Americans correctly identified those same conservative principles as the cause of the recession. However, Democrats may lose the 2010 midterm elections for the opposite reason. If Democrats fail to adhere to their agenda of real health care reform including the public option, and if they do nothing to significantly lower the unemployment rate which is currently around 10 percent (new numbers, which are projected to be more hopeful come out Friday, they deserve to lose Senate and House seats.

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It was on this stage, 20 years ago where the Longhorns came of age as a program. Brown said Texas victory over Michigan in the 2005 Rose Bowl game "validated that we were going to be around awhile."

Alabama (13-0) will win the national championship because it's the better team, and anyone who thinks fate is involved probably believes in flying saucers and sorcery.

Football games aren't won with inspiring pregame speeches or because "wouldn't it be neat if Colt McCoy won four years after Vince Young?"

Football games are won when gigante men and serious coaches implement meticulous plans.

Alabama Coach Nick Saban is king of "you've got to go through your checklist." Saban doesn't care if you like him, he may not fancy himself.

Disneyland to him is "clutter," and that goes for three of the seven dwarfs.

Saban's idea of fun would be putting barbed wire up around the practice field.

High-strung Urban Meyer very briefly resigned from Florida to take care of his health and spend more quality time at home.

Saban fits the mock headline once suggested for workaholic lom Coughlin: "Coach quits family to spend more time with team."

What Saban has done successfully in Tuscaloosa is what he didn't do for the Miami Dolphins: make the NFL blueprint work.

Alabama is an NFL team without a salary cap. It was built from scratch, on a cinder block. The Tide rolls by running the ball and stopping the run. The Tide won three games this year without quarterback Greg McElroy throwing for a touchdown.

"You want to make things simple for the players," Saban said Wednesday.

Ask Alabama senior nose guard Terrence Cody what it's like to allow an opposing runner 100 yards and he couldn't tell you, it hasn't happened in his two seasons.

Alabama vowed it would never happen again.

Texas or Alabama, so which is it going to be?

The odds favor Alabama and a kicker being named MVP. The big fear is the two offenses won't combine for 100+ yards.

When you crunch all the back-of-jersey numbers, what gives?

Texas has some nerve taking that shaky running game against an Alabama defense that tolerates 11 points a game. Moving Alabama's defensive front is as tough as airlifting an elephant.

Nebraska's Ndamukong Suh, by himself, blew up Texas' offensive game plan in the Big 12 title game, and Alabama's defense is probably better.

So what are we looking at here: ... 3-0?

Probably not, because crazy things can happen, interceptions, fumbles, kick returns, safeties.

OK, let's make it 16-13, or 18-17 or 21-19. Let's say Texas wins but not believe it.

Mayb fate can carry the night for Texas. Or maybe it will be Alabama, as a matter of fact.
Mustangs hope to stay undefeated in conference

The Mustangs have 19 wins to show for their past two seasons. Last season alone, Pacific notchcd 21 wins en route to the Big West conference tournament championship — a milestone Cal Poly hasn’t reached since the 2005-2006 season.

Cal Poly has reached the championship twice but hasn’t tasted a Big West championship victory in its 13 years in the conference.

This Friday, Cal Poly (4-8, 1-0 Big West) will host Pacific (8-5, 1-0 Big West) in a Big West hardwood showdown in Mott Gym.

The Mustangs look to build off their first Big West win and Pacific looks to build off a career performance by senior forward Joe Ford, in a 52-43 win against Cal State Northridge to open its conference schedule. But Cal Poly senior guard Lorenzo Keeler is coming off the game of his life as well, putting up 38 to lift the Mustangs over UC Irvine, 95-81. Monday night. His backcourt teammate Kyle Odister added 23 points, a season high for the freshman.

In their first season under new head coach Joe Callero, the Mustangs posted a 0-5 record to start the season on a five-game road trip. Cal Poly streaked with three-consecutive wins following the winless drought, but was defeated by an other skid, losing three games that started with a 90-62 loss to Big Ten powerhouse Wisconsin.

Big West conference play is its first Big West win and Pacific will battle a 3-8 record in its early season schedule. Cal Poly kicked off conference play with a win against UC Irvine. The Mustangs will play conference games against Pacific and UC Davis this weekend.

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At the end of the day, the national title game is up for grabs

Chris Dufresne

LOS ANGELES — Texas will win the national championship because, in La-La land, people like scripts that come full circle, having their fortunes told and Jupiter shining their fortunes told and Jupiter

even though he may not have expected it to be there.

The Wooden Award Watch List was released Monday, and Texas junior forward Markieff Morris is one of 50 players who make the cut. Morris is coming off a career game in the Huskers’ 82-60 loss to the Mustangs on Thursday night, a game in which he scored 26 points, pulled down 13 rebounds and added three assists.

With the win, the Mustangs improved to 3-8 on the season and 1-0 in Big West play, while Texas fell to 4-8 and 0-1 in Big 12 competition.

Kevin McMillan

On the court, the Mustangs continue to show improvements.

Sophomore forward Joe Odister, who was not in the lineup against UC Irvine, lead the team in rebounds with 11.8 and blocks with 14.7.

Sophomore center Will Do­

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