

Shaq-Kobe Highlights Playoff Push Out West

(WSJ.com: The Daily Fix)

Submitted at 2/20/2008 12:45:00 PM

Five games in the standings separate the nine best teams in the NBA's Western Conference, all of which have won more than 60% of their games. Those nine teams are fighting for eight playoff berths, however, making the usually lackadaisical final 30 games of the NBA schedule feel like a truly meaningful regular season.

Shaq smiles as he anticipates making Phil Jackson regret saying his former player's new role would be taking the ball out of bounds. (Associated Press Photo)

Two of the top three West teams meet tonight, several games into respective overhauls through trades. The Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant now plays alongside Pau Gasol; each scored 23 points last night in a 122-93 rout of the Atlanta Hawks — L.A.'s sixth win in seven games since the deal. The Lakers are a game behind the Phoenix Suns, whom they visit tonight. Floor leader Steve Nash no longer is running the court with Shawn Marion, who was shipped to Miami in a multi-player swap that yielded Shaquille O'Neal. Yes, once again, the Fix and all other sports columns are hyping Shaq vs. Kobe.

"Folks here in the Valley of the Sun have always disliked Kobe Bryant, and they're more than happy for Wednesday's visit to coincide with the Suns debut of Shaquille O'Neal, who from all indications will be in the starting lineup, an arrival that has energized not just the team but the entire state of Arizona," Michael Wilbon writes in the Washington Post. "Want to see the game in person? No problem, \$3,800 will get you a ticket on eBay. It feels more like a Game 5 of the playoffs than Game 54 of the regular season." (The Fix agrees about the anticipation, though it found cheaper seats for sale.) Orange County Register columnist Jeff Miller is particularly excited about the rejuvenated Lakers.

"The Lakers didn't have a lot of hope or expectation at one point," Mr. Miller writes. "They have so much now that Pau Gasol used two languages Tuesday in an attempt to express it all. This once near-vacant team again is full of so many things, like the delicious anticipation of Andrew Bynum's return, the emergence of its youth and the postseason potential that reasonably extends to Memorial Day. And beyond? What a difference a complete, staggering overhaul can make."

But Matt McHale says the playoff-like atmosphere shouldn't distract from the real deal, and the prospect of the Lakers without Bryant for the postseason should be enough to convince their star not to postpone surgery on his right pinky. "With surgery, he can return by the first week of April, fine-tune with some games against conference heavyweights New Orleans and San Antonio and be ready for the postseason," Mr. McHale writes in the Los Angeles Daily News. "Stay the course and get hurt again, and the Lakers don't get out of the first round."

But opting for surgery now runs counter to Bryant's

propensity to play — he's started all but seven games for the Lakers over the last three years. His former teammate, O'Neal, has missed about 85 games during that span. The Orange County Register's Kevin Ding reflects on O'Neal's new fragility. "The guy who used to dive gratuitously after balls just for the grand theater of it — the reporter next to me on press row one night in Seattle paid the price when one of O'Neal's size 23s cracked his laptop screen — tried diving for a ball in January, hurt his hip and hasn't played since," Mr. Ding writes. "Dwight Howard, so similar in size and speed to the young Shaq who also started in Orlando, even assumed O'Neal's beloved 'Superman' identity in winning the dunk contest Saturday night."

But Shaq still can help the Suns. Mr. Ding explains: "Keep it fun. The self-proclaimed 'Big Cactus' now expects to hurt and needle people while in the desert, and he needs people around him who don't take things too seriously. Alert the public-relations staffers that he is highly likely to pick them up and throw them into trashcans. Warn the local reporters standing in the locker room that he might well bear-hug them and dance with them ... while he's naked."

Last year the University of Denver's men's basketball team was ranked 335th out of 336 Div. I teams. This year, it's tied for first in the Sun Belt West — making the Pioneers by no means a national powerhouse, but certainly a surprise success. Yet attendance remains paltry, John Henderson writes in the Denver Post. Denver coach Joe Scott "has taken the nation's second-worst ranked team that no one cared about and turned it into a first-place team that no one cares about," Mr. Henderson writes.

In Washington-area girls' high-school basketball over this season and last, 174 games have ended with the losing team down by 40 or more and having scored 20 or less. That's happened just 25 times in boys' games. Why the blowouts? "The bottom line, coaches say, is that even as participation has exploded in the past 20 years, the talent pool of girls is smaller than boys and not big enough to sustain all of the high school teams in the area," Jeff Nelson writes in the Washington Post. But Mr. Nelson adds, "Even on the court, even in a blowout, there are lighter moments."

NFL teams aren't happy with the mushrooming coverage of the sport's annual draft combine, during which prospects attempt to impress scouts and coaches. Philadelphia Daily News columnist Paul Domowitch, who recalls being the only reporter attending the 1987 combine, writes that team officials are "here to gather as much information as they can on the players, and they feel the presence of

a league-run television network that seems to be gaining more and more control over the combine, and hundreds of reporters with never-ending questions, makes it more difficult for them to do their job."

Liverpool continues to confound European soccer fans. Against top continental teams in the Champions League, Liverpool is a perennial force — winners of the club-soccer championship in 2005, runners-up last year and in good position to advance to the quarterfinals this year after winning the first leg of their round-of-16 contest yesterday against Inter Milan, which had been unbeaten in its prior 30 matches. Yet to qualify for Champions League, teams must excel in their domestic leagues, and Liverpool stands in fifth there. Compounding the confusion, the club lost to a team from a lower division in the domestic equivalent of Champions League, thus failing to advance to the quarterfinals. The focus today is on Liverpool's beleaguered coach and his debt-ridden American bosses, who have floated the idea of replacing the coach and are rumored to be selling the team. "It means that Rafael Benitez is, yet again, back from the deepest crisis," James Lawton writes in the Independent. "How, his American owners must now ask, can you fire a man who has just beaten the masters of Italian football?" Before the game, Martin Samuel explained how the owners' cash crunch is putting perverse pressure on Mr. Benitez to step up his team's shoddy Premier League performance. "Benitez, as an intelligent man, will appreciate the viciousness of this circle," Mr. Samuel wrote in the Times of London. "He needs the best players to qualify for the Champions League, but if he does not qualify he will not get the funds to buy the best players."

Bob Howsam, an architect of the Big Red Machine's 1970s baseball dynasty, founder of the Denver Broncos and a founding father of the Colorado Rockies, died yesterday of heart failure. He was 89. As Reds GM, Mr. Howsam pulled off a deal that brought Joe Morgan to Cincinnati — controversial at the time, genius in retrospect. He also hired Sparky Anderson to manage the club, and Mr. Anderson was crushed when he heard the news yesterday from the Cincinnati Enquirer's John Erardi. "As he began to talk about Howsam, Anderson began to cry, gently and not for long, before regaining his composure," Mr. Erardi writes. "Gradually, his voice gained strength as he talked about the beloved former Reds general manager who had hired him." Mr. Anderson credited his former boss with giving him a chance when local headlines asked, "Sparky Who?"

Found a good column from the world of sports? Don't keep it to yourself — write to us at dailyfix@wsj.com and we'll consider your find for inclusion in the Daily Fix.

Pulsar's Explosion May Show Rare Stellar Evolution

(Wired Science)

Submitted at 2/21/2008 10:12:09 AM

Astronomers watching a young neutron star explode with X-rays think they've spotted a phenomenon that will help them better understand the life cycles of these incredibly powerful objects.

Neutron stars are the super-dense cores left behind when a massive star explodes as a supernova. They generally emit regular pulses, produced by a rapid spin, giving them the name of "pulsar."

Many of them have strong magnetic fields as well, but a particular kind called magnetars get their energy from extraordinarily powerful magnetic fields — so strong that they can break the star's crust as it spins, producing "starquakes" that release violent bursts of X-ray energy.

Astronomers don't know how the different types of neutron stars are related. But new observations are giving them some ideas.

Researchers have been studying the youngest-known neutron star, apparently created no more than 884 years ago, which was seen to emit hugely powerful X-ray bursts in May and July of 2006. Although the bursts lasted no more than .14 of a second, they each had the energy of about 75,000 of our Suns.

This seemed to be the behavior of a magnetar, although the star (called PSR1846) had previously been classified as a regular pulsar. Researchers now think the star may be changing from one form to another, or shifting back and forth, showing a previously unseen evolutionary process for these powerful objects.

"We are watching one type of neutron star literally change into another right before our very eyes. This is a long-sought missing link between different types of pulsars," says Fotis Gavriil, of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center.

A paper on the observations was published in the Feb. 21 issue of Science Express. But scientists will be watching closely to see if this, or any other apparently ordinary pulsar, winds up developing these characteristics again.

Powerful Explosions Suggest Neutron Star Missing Link [NASA]

(Image: An image of the supernova remnant Kes 75, taken by the Chandra X-Ray Observatory. The pulsar being studied is in the center of the blue area, top. Credit: NASA/CXC/M. Gonzalez/F. Gavriil/P. Slane)

It's too easy to criticize hope

(Seth's Blog)

Submitted at 2/21/2008 3:22:38 AM

And in the end, cynicism is a lousy strategy.

Pitcher's Apology Is Contrast to Clemens Furor

(WSJ.com: The Daily Fix)

Submitted at 2/15/2008 12:49:00 PM

Roger Clemens grabbed the headlines with his angry denials that he's ever used steroids or HGH, but there's been another theme weaved through baseball's scandal: that of players admitting what they did and why they did it.

Both themes were at work in this week's hearing before a House committee: The Rocket's defense against accusations by former trainer Brian McNamee was complicated by the fact that two former Clemens teammates — Andy Pettitte and Chuck Knoblauch — said Mr. McNamee told the truth when he said he'd injected them with HGH. But with clubs opening spring-training camps in Florida and Arizona, mea culpas have been on display elsewhere as well.

For example, the Los Angeles Dodgers' Gary Bennett, named in the Mitchell Report, said yesterday that he'd indeed taken HGH in 2003 in hopes of speeding his recovery from a knee injury: "Was what I did wrong? Absolutely. Do I regret it? Absolutely." A day before that, Colorado Rockies coach Glenallen Hill said he'd used performance-enhancers while with the Anaheim Angels and apologized. (Mr. Hill had told George Mitchell he'd bought steroids but hadn't used them.)

The Colorado Rockies' Matt Herges. (Associated Press Photo)

And then there was Rockies reliever Matt Herges, who said he was glad his name was in the Mitchell Report, because he knew he had to let go of "a dirty little secret" he said he'd kept from his wife and parents — namely, that he'd used HGH during his time with the San Francisco Giants and Arizona Diamondbacks.

The Fix was hoping some columnist or blogger would have weighed in with a thoughtful examination of Mr. Herges and the soul-searching he's said he went through (holler if you've found one), but the Cirque d'Clemens seems to have squeezed his story off many sports pages. But that's OK, because fortunately we have Mr.

Herges' own words.

"I feel like I've been shown mercy in all of this," Mr. Herges told the Associated Press. "If I'm not standing there naked in front of the world with my big secret, I'd still be holding onto it, hiding it. It would still be eating at me. It's not fun by any stretch holding onto something like that, so secretive, so dirty. I'm grateful it's out there. I'm freed a little bit, a lot actually." Mr. Herges said he'd been unable to sleep before the Mitchell Report came out — but when it finally did appear, he slept like a baby. It strikes the Fix that there's a lesson for baseball in that.

California Democrat Henry Waxman now says he wishes the hearing featuring Clemens and Mr. McNamee hadn't been held, embarrassing both men unnecessarily — and saying the hearing was only held because Clemens and his lawyers insisted on it. (Predictably, volcanic Clemens attorney Rusty Hardin blasted out some verbal magma to the semi-contrary. By the way, look at this picture and tell the Fix Clemens attorney Lanny Breuer isn't a dead ringer for the Blue-Haired Lawyer on "The Simpsons.")

On the Dugout, Jon Bois's examination of the hearing begins with Clemens not knowing what a vegan is (one of the day's few light-hearted moments) before considering the hearing's low point: the discussion of whether Clemens bled through his pants from a needle wound in his buttocks. Asked if he has any recollection of that, the Clemens of the Dugout's alternate reality pulls out a day planner labeled "2001: BUTT-RELATED HAPPENINGS," then admits that "it's possible that for a time I wasn't as diligent in keeping up my rump diary, that was a strange time in my life". But Mr. Bois then has Clemens step out of character to deliver a pointed critique of the hearings, and where baseball and steroids should rank on the roster of things Congress ought to be worried about. Like the best Dugouts, the results are riotously funny, but also sting.

Joe Juneau spent 12 years in the NHL, long enough to earn him an opulent house outside of Quebec City. So what is he doing 800 miles north of there in Kuujuaq, a town of 2,100 in northern Quebec's Nunavik region?

As Sports Illustrated's Michael Farber writes, he's bringing "grassroots hockey to a place where there are no grass roots," in hopes of helping an Inuit region beset by alcoholism and a sagging safety net. "Juneau is not merely teaching hockey to these children, some of whom recently learned to skate by pushing chairs on ice. He is also proselytizing, selling the therapeutic power of pucks as a way to education, nutrition and a healthy lifestyle."

If that doesn't seem like a typical postseason calling for an NHL star, Mr. Farber observes that "in the hockey fraternity, Juneau was always considered a freak. He played drums and read books and pondered the environment at a time when going green in the NHL meant a trip to Hartford to play the Whalers. The son of a forest ranger, he had a love of space that went beyond the 200-by-85-foot parameters of the rink and some of the narrow thinking that envelops the game. ... Juneau took the road less traveled. Now he works at the 58th parallel, in a place where there are no roads other than the streets of Kuujuaq. Except one. Curling past the Forum atop the hill, this road snakes by the occasional home, curls past a dump filled with rusting Ski-Dos and other detritus of northern life, meanders near patches of tamaracks and then, after 15 miles, dead-ends. Just like that. The locals refer to it as The Road to Nowhere, which is where a life here can end if you are not careful."

Life is not very fulfilling right now for the Tampa Bay Lightning, mired in mediocrity without much hope of rescue. In the St. Petersburg Times, Gary Shelton mourns that "the owner will not pay. The front office cannot trade. The minor leagues do not develop. It has been a very long time since an important piece was added, whether through the draft or free agency or just plain luck. And so the

mediocre seasons run together, one after another after another, until the Lightning begins to look like the Groundhog Day all-stars."

That frustration finally boiled over — a bit — this week, when forward Vinny Prospal ripped coach John Tortorella for how long he spent on the team's second line. Which earned Mr. Shelton's sympathy: "Don't you think they feel it, too? Even now, even in the relief of a small hot streak, don't you think that professional athletes, competitive by nature, are as frustrated by the holes in the roster as the rest of us? Of course they are."

Next month ESPN will show "Black Magic," Dan Klores's four-hour exploration of basketball players and coaches at historically black schools during the civil-rights era, commercial-free over two nights. In the Washington Post, Mike Wise walks away from a screening as a big fan — and having enjoyed a night of living history even before the film began.

"A forgotten ballplayer walked into a small reception room last week at the Reagan Building, had the privilege of meeting the famous Earl Monroe — and promptly told the Pearl a story," he writes. "While Monroe was becoming NBA royalty in New York, Perry Wallace played for a pittance in the Eastern League, a basketball minor league, and moonlighted as a math teacher at the Pearl's alma mater, Philadelphia's John Bartram High School. 'And at the same time, Joe Bryant — Kobe's father — attended that school,' Wallace said. 'Isn't that something?' From the Pearl to Perry, to Jellybean Bryant and on to his son, the entire evening became a game of human H-O-R-S-E. They bonded over coincidences and zero degrees of separation, of events of 30, 40 and 50 years ago, all told by living historians before the screening of 'Black Magic.' "

— Tip of the Fix cap to reader Don Hartline. Found a good column from the world of sports? Don't keep it to yourself — write to us at dailyfix@wsj.com and we'll consider your find for inclusion in the Daily Fix.

Samsung files a gaming phone patent... again

(Engadget)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 5:25:00 AM

Filed under: Cellphones, Gaming

If we didn't know better, we'd say Samsung really wants to develop some type of hybrid gaming / phone device. One need only look back on the

plethora of patent applications from the electronics-maker to realize that something game-related is going on over at HQ. Whatever the case may be, the Korean company has applied for another iteration of device, this time taking a more modular approach to the layout of buttons and screen. In this new configuration, a RAZR-like clamshell would

actually house a swiveling screen which allows the unit to flip open, thus placing the display squarely between two "wings." The resulting arrangement would be a symmetrical device that would encourage a more familiar hand position for gamers. Of course, like those other designs, these are just images on paper -- though it does spark the

imagination considerably.

[Via Unwired View]

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Advice for real estate agents (quit now!)

(Seth's Blog)

Submitted at 2/21/2008 7:23:46 PM

I had the good fortune to speak to a large gathering of real estate agents last week. Here's my best advice (everyone knows an agent or two, so feel free to forward this along).

Plan A: You should quit selling real estate. I'm serious.

Quit being an agent. Get a job doing something else. Some of you have been waiting to hear that. My pleasure.

Now, if you're still with me, you'll be glad to know that the competition for attention just got smaller. The agents who built their business on low interest rates, easy money and speculation (the order takers) have left the building.

The ones that are left, that's you, can consider Plan B:

If you're not going to be able to make a living by taking orders, by selling houses the way everyone else does, by using the never-ending rise in real estate prices to make sales, then what are you going to do? Whining is not an option.

In fact, I think this is an extraordinary opportunity for you.

Without a frenzy, without short-term competition, you can actually build assets that will pay off for the long run. I have two in mind:

The first is to become the expert in what you do. Which means micro-specialization. Who is the single-best agent for condos in your zip code? Or for single family homes for large families? Who is the one and the only best person to turn to if you're

looking for investment property in this part of town? As I wrote in The Dip, you're either the best in the world (where 'world' can be a tiny slice of the environment) or you're invisible.

This means being Draconian in your choices. No, you can't also do a little of this or a little of that. Best in your world means burning your other bridges and obsessing.

The kids at Squidoo just built a promotional tool that lets you get started. Mayor of your zip code is a way to start a discussion group/info page about what's happening in your slice of the world. You become the source of information, the watercooler, the person to turn to. Of course, if you spend ten minutes on it and then move on, it'll fail. But, if you spent 30% of your time working on your page (building it, curating it, promoting it), what do you think would show up in Google searches? What sort of interactions would you start having with people thinking about your little part of the world? Even better, what if you built a blog about your town, as good as any local paper, with high school sports and tax controversies and everything... don't you think the right people would read it? "I have no time!"

Of course you have that time available. Remember nine months ago when you were three times as busy with incoming calls as you are now? Invest that time in building up your expertise and becoming the person people who don't even like you turn to for insight.

Or, consider this: Take half your office (the half made vacant by the people following Plan A) and turn it over to local groups. Let the active (and nascent) clubs and organizations meet in your office.

Not once in a while. Regularly. All the time. Become the hub. Because, after all, you're the mayor.

The second asset to build is permission. It turns out (according to the NAR) that 91% of all Realtors never contact the buyer or the seller of a home after the closing. Not once. Wow. Someone just spent a million dollars with you and you don't bother to call or write?

The opportunity during the current pause (and yes, it's a pause) is to find, one by one, the people who would benefit from hearing from you and then earn the right to talk to them. Earn the right to send them a newsletter or a regular update or a subscription to your blog. NOT to talk about what matters to you, but to give them information (real information, not just data) that matters to them. Visit dailycandy.com to see an example of what people like to hear.

The opportunity is to reinvent the way you interact with citizens, with prospects, with the mildly interested and with your past clients. The opportunity, in other words, is to stop waiting around for the phone to ring and instead figure out how to do what you do best... connect buyers and sellers in a way that makes them both confident. Some of you will stick with the standard business card with the standard photo, the standard office and the standard ad strategy and the standard approach to making the phone ring. It's going to be a long haul if that's your route.

I'm betting, though, that the best of you will end up with a business model that will survive, thrive and prosper. Best time to start is right now.

Dr. Rock Positano: Glaucoma: The Thief That Can Rob You Blind

(The Huffington Post Full Blog Feed)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 4:12:00 AM

It is a leading cause of blindness around the globe. Yet more than half of the people who have the disease don't even know they have it. No wonder Glaucoma is known as "the sneak thief of sight." It is a disease characterized by gradual loss of vision resulting from death of the cells in the eye which transmit visual images through the optic nerve to the brain. As the optic nerve becomes increasingly damaged, permanent vision loss and blindness can occur. While early detection is the key to treating and halting the effects of glaucoma, current worldwide estimates reveal that more than 50 percent of glaucoma sufferers in developed countries remain unaware of having the disease. This startling number is as high as 90 percent in many undeveloped nations.

In an effort to fight the disturbing lack of knowledge about this serious health threat, the World Glaucoma Association and the World Glaucoma Patient Organization have announced the first annual World Glaucoma Day, to be observed on March 6, 2008. The day will be marked by awareness and educational events organized by glaucoma institutions and local patient support groups worldwide, as listed on www.wgday.net.

A driving force behind this first annual observance is Robert Ritch, MD. An internationally renowned expert on the nature and treatment of glaucoma, he is a leading member of the World Glaucoma Day committee for the World Glaucoma Association and co-founder of the World Glaucoma Patient Association. Dr. Ritch is also professor and chief of glaucoma services at The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, and has co-authored five textbooks and over 1,000 medical and scientific papers, book chapters, articles and abstracts. He frequently lectures and conducts charitable glaucoma medical programs in a wide range of countries, and has trained nearly 100 clinical and research fellows, many of whom occupy academic positions worldwide.

"Because glaucoma strikes so silently and gradually, it is absolutely crucial to educate people about the value of early detection," said Dr. Ritch. "For a disease that causes permanent blindness, it is truly unacceptable that so many people remain unaware of its impact and consequences. Individuals in our country need to be much more vigilant about glaucoma, especially if they fall into one of the higher risk groups."

Persons at high risk for glaucoma should have their eyes examined for the disease at least every two years by an eye care professional. In the United States, at risk groups include: people with a family history of glaucoma, African-Americans over the age of 40, people who are very nearsighted or farsighted, and all persons over the age of 60. In the early stages of glaucoma, there may be no symptoms and vision can appear to be normal until a large amount has been lost. If undetected and untreated, glaucoma will gradually claim all peripheral vision and move on to cause total blindness. With early detection, glaucoma can be treated with eye drops to lower intraocular pressure. Other standard methods of treatment include laser and operative surgery. Treatment can usually halt the disease, but it cannot reverse the damage that has been done. Glaucoma can develop in one of both eyes.

Vote for the Funniest Protein Names

(Wired Science)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 1:17:48 AM

History may be written by the victors, but proteins are often named by geeky developmental biologists. When they discover a new molecule, some of them jump at the opportunity to inject a little goofy humor into their otherwise dry research projects.

Many of the most appalling titles come belong to the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster*, which is one of the most well-studied organisms on earth. Others can be found in exotic African fruit or even our own bodies.

Please vote for your favorites and add more to the list.

Show proteins that are: appalling | ridiculous | hilarious or submit your own funny enzyme

Submit a Protein

While you can submit as many proteins as you want, you can only submit one every 30 minutes. No HTML allowed.

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Image: Sonic Hedgehog protein from the Wikimedia Commons rendered by Peter Znamenskiy

print it out and read it offline, where interruptions are typically less frequent. Research has shown that reading on paper is 25% faster than reading on screen; and reading comprehension is much higher for reading texts on paper.

About FeedJournal

FeedJournal was founded by Jonas Martinsson and is the original solution provider of personalized newspapers. In 2006, the prototype to what is today FeedJournal Reader won First Prize in Microsoft's "Made In Express Contest". FeedJournal also offers a Publisher version where content providers, such as bloggers or non-printed newspapers, can offer visitors a printable version of their content in newspaper style.

A Valentine Treat from Google

By Eric Case (Official Google Blog)

Submitted at 2/14/2008 8:34:00 AM

Posted by Scott Giambastiani, Executive Chef

This recipe pairs well with Roederer Estate, Anderson Valley Brut sparkling wine for a Valentine's day treat for two.

Ingredients:

Yields about 4 cakes

1 tbsp. butter (You may substitute olive oil.)
 4 shallots, minced
 1/4 cup mayonnaise
 1 fuji apple, peeled and grated on a cheese grater, juice reserved
 1 tsp. lemon juice, fresh
 2 tsp. tarragon, minced
 2 tbsp. parsley, minced
 1 cup Dungeness crab meat, picked free of shells
 1/4 cup breadcrumbs, finely ground
 Tabasco sauce
 kosher salt

cooking oil (rice bran, canola, vegetable, etc.)
 metal heart shaped cookie cutter, large size (About 4 -6 oz)

Roast Pepper Sauce:

8 oz. pimento peppers in the jar (You may substitute with Spanish piquillo peppers,
 or 3 each red bell peppers roasted over an open flame, peeled and seeded), chopped into 1-inch pieces
 2 tbsp. sherry vinegar (You may substitute with any vinegar)
 2 tbsp. water
 2 tbsp. butter (Optional)

Procedure:

In a sauté pan, sweat the shallots in butter over medium-low heat until sweet, but with no color forming. This will take about 5 minutes. When sweet, allow the shallots to cool in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Add the mayonnaise, grated apple with juice, lemon juice, herbs, and picked crab to the mixing bowl.

With a spatula, gently fold the mixture together, so as not to break up any whole crab meat. This will give the cakes a better texture. Fold the mixture just until evenly mixed. Add enough breadcrumbs to bind the cakes. You might need more or less breadcrumbs than stated, depending on the moisture of the crab. Season the cakes with salt and Tabasco to taste. Using a teaspoon, spoon crab mixture into a metal, heart-shaped cookie cutter. Gently press the crab into the

mold. Repeat this process until all cakes are molded. Keep the crab cakes refrigerated until ready for service. Prepare the sauce.

To prepare the sauce, place the prepared peppers into a small non-reactive sauce pan with the vinegar and water. Bring contents to a simmer and transfer to a bar blender. Add the butter to the blender, cover and puree the sauce until it is smooth. Season with salt and pepper.

To finish the crab cake, heat a sauté pan over medium-high heat, add a teaspoon of cooking oil, and sear the crab cake over medium heat until golden brown. This will take 1-2 minutes. Using a spatula, flip the crab cake over and repeat for 1-2 minutes until the crab cake is golden brown on both sides and warm in the center. Piercing the center of the crab cake with a toothpick and feeling the temperature of the toothpick under your lip will give you a good idea how warm the cake's center is.

To plate the crab cake, pour about two heaping spoonfuls of warm pepper sauce over a warmed plate. Place the warm crab cake over the sauce and garnish with baby mixed greens (mâche, upland cress) and/or freshly picked herbs (Italian parsley, chervil, tarragon, chives...). Enjoy!

The First 10 Teams in the Lunar X Prize An Odd Lot

(Wired Science)

Submitted at 2/21/2008 3:16:34 PM

The first 10 teams in Google's \$30 million robotic race to the moon include a Jesus freak, a Linux geek and a guy who recently bought 30 books on space exploration.

Each promised to be the first to send a privately funded rocket to the moon and deploy a rover that will explore that distant hunk of rock. Joining them are heavy hitters in robotics and aeronautics, including the Carnegie Mellon University crew that won the DARPA Challenge and the Romanians who made a run for the money in the Ansari X Prize.

It's only been six months since Google and the X Prize Foundation announced the Lunar challenge, but 567 teams from 53 nations - someone in Kazakhstan made an inquiry just yesterday - have expressed interest in signing up. Ten actually have. "I was floored," Google co-founder Sergey Brin said. "We had no such expectation that just a few months after announcing so ambitious a goal as going to the moon that we'd have so much interest." The 10 teams the X Prize folks introduced Thursday (press release here) represent an eclectic mix of engineers, rocketeers and dreamers so confident of winning they made reaching the moon sound easy. "The risks, costs and requirements of space travel have been systematically overstated," said Richard

Speck, head of the Micro-Space team that also competed in the Ansari X-Prize. Speck rattled off a description of "biopropellant liquid-fuel rockets (and) three near-hover rockets with vectored thrust guidance" before thanking Jesus while holding aloft a picture of a cross. He's named his spacecraft "Crusader" and said the moon is merely the first stop on the way to Mars.

None of the teams offered much detail on how they'll reach the moon and deploy a rover that doesn't shatter into a lot of very small and very expensive parts on impact. The most unusual strategy has to be the "open source" approach of FREDNET, a bunch of systems, software and hardware developers who want to do for space exploration what Linux did for operating systems. "We want to demonstrate that open source is an ideal method of solving complex, real-world problems," team leader Fred Bourgeois said. Everyone involved in the project spoke of space exploration with the wide-eyed wonder of six-year-olds, but none so much as Adil Jafry, the energy industry entrepreneur from Texas who seems to have entered the contest because it sounds like a really cool thing to do. He's named his team "Chandah," which is Sanskrit for "moon."

"I googled the contest and ordered about 30 books on space," he said. "I've been reading up on space and here I am."

It's tough to say which team has the best shot, but some of them clearly have better odds than others based upon their track records.

The Aeronautics and Cosmonautics Romanian Association has already built a rocket and two-stage manned sub-orbital air-launched vehicle. The Astrobotic team led by William "Red" Whittaker of Carnegie Mellon has help from Raytheon and may be second-to-none when it comes to autonomous vehicles. And Quantum3 is led by three guys who together have more than 50 years' experience in the aerospace industry, including stints at NASA. They plan to launch a rocket next year and land on the Sea of Tranquility.

The remaining teams are:

LunaTrex, a consortium with expertise in everything from rocket science to near-space R&D. Some team members competed in the Ansari X Prize.

Odyssey Moon, first team to register. The team is based on the Isle of Man, which team leader Robert Richards called "the next space superpower."

Southern California Selene Group, which promises "an elegantly simple design that is relatively inexpensive to implement."

Team Italia, a collaboration of several Italian universities. The team is currently running a prototype of its and exploring two ideas for a lunar rover - a single big rover or a colony of many robots, light and mobile, with many legs and wheels.

FeedJournal Reader Is Launched

By Jonas Martinsson (Jonas Martinsson - Blog)

Submitted at 2/18/2008 8:51:00 PM

The time has come for FeedJournal Reader to get rid of its private beta scaffoldings. All users are now able to try the free service I've spent many nights on. Welcome in!

I dislike beta tags so I am not sticking that label to FeedJournal Reader, despite it being a young solution. While I consider it to be stable, I will closely monitor how my web hosting provider handles up-scaling the traffic.

The launch doesn't mean that I am planning to start to go to bed early. Far from it, I'm eager to continue working on new features for both the Reader and Publisher services. So please keep those feature requests, bug reports and comments coming. I'm

committed to make FeedJournal a first-grade solution, both in terms of usability and usefulness - and I won't be able to do it without passionate users. A big "Thank You" to the testers for their comments and encouragement!

Here's the press release:

FeedJournal Reader Launches Free Service for Generating Personalized Newspapers

FeedJournal Reader lets web surfers generate a personalized newspaper from any web source, using award-winning technology. The free Internet service allows users to fetch news content from more than 100 million blogs and other news sources worldwide, and print it out in newspaper format. Tel Aviv, ISRAEL - February 19, 2008 - FeedJournal today announced the general availability of FeedJournal Reader, an Internet

service for generating your personal newspaper. Users of the free service can select web feeds from more than 100 million bloggers as well as many other web resources.

"The realization of FeedJournal Reader turns every blogger into a journalist", says Jonas Martinsson, who founded FeedJournal in early 2006, and has since managed the software development based on his original idea. "The long tail of the blogosphere has finally reached printed traditional media. Today's newsrooms cater to a general audience while FeedJournal puts the editorial decisions in the hands of each reader."

FeedJournal Reader accepts all RSS and Atom feeds, and transforms them into a PDF file, in the format of a traditional newspaper. The user can then

A pilot with the Cleveland Clinic for health information access

By *Eric Case (Official Google Blog)*

Submitted at 2/21/2008 7:46:00 AM

Posted by Alan Newberger, Engineering Manager

I suffer from poor eyesight and intense seasonal allergies, but I'm thankful that health issues occupy just a small portion of my life. Even though I'm rather healthy, I sometimes find myself needing access to accurate health information. I can get a long way by searching for health facts online, but I also need to incorporate what I find with my own history of conditions and treatments. I didn't even realize I had allergies until my early twenties -- for more years than I care to admit, I'd forget that the "cold" I came down with in April was suspiciously similar to the one I had at exactly the same time the year before. I've often been overwhelmed when trying to determine or track a condition, because my personal record of health information is either nonexistent, or it's spread on forms and receipts from (at least) a dozen doctors and five insurance companies.

Working as an engineer here on the health team, I've been excited to participate in building tools that will help me and others manage our personal health information more effectively. Many innovators in the healthcare industry have worked hard to make results of doctor visits, prescriptions, tests and procedures available digitally. By using the GData protocol already offered in many Google products, and supporting standards-based medical information formats like the Continuity of Care Record (CCR),

our health efforts will help you access, store and communicate your health information. Above all, health data will remain yours -- private and confidential. Only you have control over when to share it with family members and health providers.

This week, we hit another important milestone. We launched a pilot with a medical institution committed to giving patients access to their own medical records: The Cleveland Clinic. A large academic medical center, Cleveland is one of the first partners to integrate on our platform. Because of their size and reach with patients who already have access to their medical records online, Cleveland has been a great partner for us to test out our data sharing model. Patients participating in the Cleveland pilot give authorization via our AuthSub interface to have their electronic medical records safely and securely imported into a Google account. It's great to see our product getting into the hands of end users, and I look forward to the feedback that the Cleveland patients will provide us.

Cleveland is just the first of many healthcare providers that will securely send medical records and information via Google APIs at your request. We've been hard at work collaborating with a number of insurance plans, medical groups, pharmacies and hospitals. While this pilot is open initially to just a few thousand patients, I see it as an important first step to show how Google can help users get access to their medical records and take charge of their health information.

AdSense for video now in beta

By *Eric Case (Official Google Blog)*

Submitted at 2/21/2008 7:29:00 AM

Posted by Shamim Samadi, Product Manager and Ryan Hayward, Product Marketing Manager

In a very short time, watching videos online has become a common pastime, and the imagination of artists and other content owners continues to fuel this trend. Meanwhile, across the industry, advertisers and video publishers continue to look for the best solution that balances the needs of video fans with the need for video sites to generate the revenue that enables them to continue to be creative as they grow.

Enter, stage left: the AdSense for video beta. This approach takes the same non-intrusive InVideo ad format used on YouTube and extends it across video partner sites on the Google Content Network. This enables advertisers to run a single campaign across the largest network of online video content.

Unique to AdSense for video are text overlay ads contextually targeted to a combination of signals in your videos and on your site. With these overlay ads, the user's experience is not interrupted; users determine how much they want to interact with the ad.

We have two major goals: to make it easier for

Superdelegate layer in Google Earth

By *Eric Case (Official Google Blog)*

Submitted at 2/20/2008 11:01:00 AM

Posted by Rick Klau, Strategic Partner Development Manager and Elections Hipster

I'm a political junkie, and as Super Tuesday neared it seemed likely that the race for Democratic nominee would extend well past that big day at the polls. I started looking around for information about the so-called "superdelegates" (the party leaders and elected officials who make up 20% of the vote at the convention) -- and was disappointed to find no single resource that provided details on who they were, which candidate they'd endorsed (if anyone) and where they are located.

So I went ahead and registered 'superdelegates.org', installed MediaWiki and started populating the site with the info I could find. Thanks to a terrific extension to MediaWiki (KML Export, written by Juliano Ravasi), it's possible to map the wiki pages to a Google Earth layer, which helps to visualize where these delegates are.

FeedJournal Reader Updates

By *Jonas Martinsson (Jonas Martinsson - Blog)*

Submitted at 2/4/2008 1:48:00 PM

Those of you who follow the FeedJournal updates in the discussion forum know that quite a few updates have trickled in lately. The most significant of those is probably the free inclusion of images for all users of FeedJournal Reader. I was initially toying with the idea to try to charge money for image support, but have since come to my senses. The feedback from the private beta testers have been

publishers to monetize video online, and for advertisers to learn how to reach the video community. Towards these ends, today we're also launching a single destination with an overview of various options to expand online video opportunities called Google Video Advertising Solutions. We hope this will be your starting point to understand how to leverage the Google Content Network and YouTube to make the most out of the online video experience. You can also see our overview videos for advertisers and publishers -- because isn't video the best way to experience video?

We've been working with a number of video partners (e.g. popular destinations like BobVila.com, eHow, MyDamnChannel, ExpertVillage, PinkBike, TheNewsRoom, and social video aggregators like Revver, blip.tv, and GodTube). And we're also working with several key video platform solution solutions like Brightcove, Yume, Tremor Media, and Eyespot Network, who have plugged our ads into their platforms.

There are some criteria that publishers have to meet to participate in AdSense for video, which you can learn about on the Inside AdSense blog.

As with many things we do around here, we'll keep testing various ad formats, iterate and expand, so keep an eye on us.

Since the superdelegates site launched two weeks ago, it has been featured on CNN, and tens of thousands of people have stopped by to learn more about superdelegates, understand the process, and add information. Over 60% of the delegates are now on the map and are associated with their endorsed candidate, with more info coming in every day. It's tremendously gratifying to see a community grow around this timely subject- hope you find it useful!

Disclaimer: Since superdelegate endorsements are not binding, we can't ensure that the endorsements listed are indicative of future events. But we're excited that people are engaging in politics online by drawing from a compilation of candidate endorsement lists on Roll Call, CNN's Election Center and other sources to update the site on a daily basis. Other groups and publications may have different superdelegate counts, including candidates' campaigns, the New York Times, and the AP.

very positive and the ride has been surprisingly smooth so far. I expect to launch the service within the coming weeks. The features I want to get in before are:

- Global image switch when generating your newspaper (handy when you want to save ink)
- JavaScript optimizations

So, all in all, we're very close to a launch - crossing my fingers!

preliminary results of their Gigabit Wireless Project. Here's a hint: they were able to transmit gigabits of data -- five of 'em -- per second wirelessly over 60GHz / millimeter-wave CMOS-based transceivers. Of course, range on a system with that high a frequency isn't very far, but feel free to enjoy this moment of fantasy-future news for what it is.

Erica Jong: POLITICS BY ORDEAL

(The Huffington Post Full Blog Feed)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 6:17:18 AM

What is this foolishness? Obama is pure and not a politician and Hillary is "tainted"? Does anyone get to be a presidential candidate in our country without being a politician? Does anyone run for political office--a humiliating and exhilarating marathon--without wanting power more than sleep?

Come on. Get real. You and I could never endure the punishment of debates, of columnists who don't fact-check, of swift-boaters, of dumb pundits and corrupt colleagues, without the lust for power being the overriding emotion in your life.

I do a book tour of six cities and come down with the flu--and I'm pretty strong and healthy. I can hardly imagine what candidates go through. Yes, they fly on private jets. Yes, they don't take their shoes off at the airport, but they don't sleep either. I'm amazed they can even croak a coherent sentence. I once did a lecture tour of Australia and New Zealand with bronchitis and laryngitis. I caught it in Hong Kong, I think, and it lingered for three weeks.

Marketing HR

(Seth's Blog)

Submitted at 2/19/2008 5:23:39 AM

Yesterday's post led to some good email about Human Resources.

Understand that in days of yore, factories consisted of people and machines. The goal was to use more machines, fewer people, and to design processes so that the people were interchangeable, low cost and easily replaced. The more leverage the factory-owner had, the better. Hence Personnel or the even more cruel term: HR. It views people as a natural resource, like lumber.

Like it or not, in most organizations HR has grown up with a forms/clerical/factory focus. Which was fine, I guess, unless your goal was to do something amazing, something that had nothing to do with a factory, something that required amazing programmers, remarkable marketers or insanely talented strategy people.

So, here's my small suggestion, one that will make some uncomfortable.

Change the department name to Talent.

NYT on a Paperless World

(43 Folders -)

Submitted at 2/10/2008 12:44:16 PM

Pushing Paper Out the Door - New York Times

Is it just me, or is the Times tossing softballs for organizational nerds on purpose? Today's story on the ways people are purging paper from their lives gives lots of ink (digital, of course) to our friend, the Fujitsu ScanSnap, and comes with the kind of grand statements that no trend piece should be without:[M]any families may be closer to entering a paperless world than they realize. Paper-reducing technologies have crept into homes and offices, perhaps more for efficiency than for environmentalism; few people will dispute the convenience of online bill-paying and airline e-tickets.

Not that I disagree. I like the way Brewster Kahle, who knows a thing or two about digital archiving, puts it: "Paper is no longer the master copy; the

More from Peter Walsh on clutter, quality of life

(43 Folders -)

Submitted at 2/19/2008 9:26:32 AM

Oprah's Clutter Man: "It's Never About the Stuff"

Clean Sweep's Peter Walsh (previously) has a new book out, and Mediabistro had the chance to chat with him while he was out promoting it.

While I wish Peter had held out for a more crumulent title ("Does This Clutter Make My Butt Look Fat?" Ouch.), I so admire this guy's grip on what clutter does to your mind. Or at least what it does to mine.

Typically swell quote:

Our show was never about the stuff. I told the producers early on that you can only organize so many closets and garages before people lose their minds... We all have stuff. What we had to do was tell people's stories through their stuff, and see them realizing what their relationship to the stuff had become.

Reaction Engines' A2 supersonic jet could easily humble the Concorde

(Engadget)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 4:06:00 AM

Filed under: Transportation

Concorde, schmoncorde. At least that's what we assume Reaction Engines' A2 would utter if it could in fact speak. The supersonic jet, designed by Oxfordshire's own Reaction Engines, could one day shuttle passengers from Europe to Down Under in less than five hours, cruising at up to 4,000 miles-per-hour along the way. Granted, the aircraft is still in concept mode at the moment, but if all goes to

My voice barely functioned. But I spoke anyway. And I signed hundreds of books after every appearance. Once I got home, I took to my bed for two weeks. The jet lag was awful and the bronchitis turned into a resistant infection. No antibiotic worked. I was silenced for six weeks and my vocal chords still have their off days.

How do these candidates do it? I still can't understand. They must be bionic. By the end of a booktour, I'm so sick of answering questions about myself that I start to interview the journalists about what they like to do in their spare time--skiing, sailing, snowboarding, golf? The intensity of being interviewed by hostile reporters is absolutely exhausting. No wonder people misspeak. It's amazing they don't throttle the press. And the public. By the time they get in office they must hate the public. Why do we put them through this torture? Shouldn't they be thinking about governance, coming up with new ideas for the commonwealth rather than being flogged by the press?

This is no way to audition for "the most powerful job on earth." I doubt that the ordeal helps anyone--neither the candidates nor the public.

The reason this makes some people uncomfortable is that it seems like spin, like gratuitous double speak. And, if you don't change what you do, that would be true.

BUT...

What if you started acting like the VP of Talent? Understanding that talent is hard to find and not obvious to manage. The VP of Talent would have to reorganize the department and do things differently all day long (small example: talent shouldn't have to fill out reams of forms and argue with the insurance company... talent is too busy for that... talent has people to help with that.)

Microsoft and Google both have a very healthy focus on finding and recruiting Talent. McDonald's recently announced that they want to hire people who smile more. The first strategy works, the second won't. Talent is too smart to stay long at a company that wants it to be a cog in a machine. Great companies want and need talent, but they have to work for it.

digital version is." That isn't too far removed from what Merlin wrote back in October:When we rely on a paper document as the final, unique destination for information, we create physical and cognitive limitations that seem crazy once you've spent a chunk of your life living on Google. No one disputes that.

Those statements by themselves may make some of you index card shufflers sweaty, but the value that all of us have found in paper isn't as the permanent storage medium to which the Times is delivering last rites; rather, it's in that Platonic scratchpad we all need sometimes to shake out a good idea. As Merlin said, "As an intermediary medium between thinking and a final draft, I still just love what you can do with a stack of index cards and a little spare time." Even when used as part of a trusted system, paper works best when its data storage duties have a limited life span.

and, later:

What is your vision for the life you want to live, and do your life choices reflect that vision? Specifically: Is your home a space for the life you want?

Ours is a culture based on the idea that whenever you run out of space, you should just pull up stakes and move five miles west. Then you can be happy. Is it any wonder that we seek organization rather than deletion as the solution to an overwhelming problem? Yeah, I think this goes well beyond not being able to find a business card in your junk drawer.

Capacity is only worth building when it'll be used in the service of stuff you really want. Whether that's calendar events, your Fabergé eggs, or those crusty Lean Cuisine plates from last summer, the quality of matter that you allow to stay anywhere in your life eventually starts rubbing off on everything it touches.

plan, it could be operational "within 25 years." Reportedly, the 156-yard long jet could maintain a speed of 3,800 miles-per-hour -- over twice that of the famed Concorde -- and could carry 300 guests on each trip. Who knows how much a seat would cost, but we're guessing the sky's the limit.

[Via Engadget Spanish]

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60GHz wireless chip promises 5Gbps of throughput, instant tumors

(Engadget)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 4:33:00 AM

Filed under: WirelessSo this team of über-nerds -- NICTA -- out of Australia's Information and Communications Technology Research Centre of Excellence (or ICTRCoE for "short") announced the

Oh, and NICTA crew -- hate to break it to ya, but your countrymen at CSIRO broke the 10Gbps wireless barrier a couple years ago (as did the U of Essex), might be time to up the ante.

Read | Permalink | Email this | Comments

No user servicable parts inside

(Seth's Blog)

Submitted at 2/19/2008 3:13:00 AM

That's what it says on countless electronic and mechanical devices. "Don't touch this," it says, "you're way too dumb to open it... you'll get hurt" The problem, of course, is that pretty soon you start looking at the entire world that way. Whether it's web design or Google analytics or backing up your hard drive or just talking to the guys in the plant about your new ideas, it's really easy to see the world as a black box.

Here's a simple secret of success: ignore the sticker. Figure out how to use the tools that the most successful people in your field understand innately.

Images Temporarily Disabled in Reader Due To Heavy Traffic

By Jonas Martinsson (Jonas Martinsson - Blog)

Submitted at 2/20/2008 7:27:00 PM

I wasn't prepared for the massive amount of traffic influx that suddenly hit FeedJournal Reader yesterday. I know that some of you ran into errors due to the heavy load, and I apologize for that. As a temporary measure I disabled image support in FeedJournal Reader. But don't worry, images will return soon! I am working hard to find a new and better scalable solution.