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## Obama proposes scorecard

Three methods offered for comparing colleges

REANNE ROGERS  
DAILY SUNDIAL

**A** "College Scorecard" where parents and students can compare schools as well as reforms to the Higher Education Act were some of the changes discussed during President Barack Obama's State of the Union address, Tuesday.

The reform of the Higher Education Act would include altering factors that determine which colleges receive certain types of federal aid, adding affordability and value as factors.

"Through tax credits, grants, and better loans, we have made college more affordable for millions of students and families over the last few years," Obama said.

"The sooner a child begins learning, the better he or she does down the road," Obama said.

The "College Scorecard" would allow parents and students who are choosing colleges to attend to be able to compare colleges.



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# STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS



Senators reintroduce legislation for bankruptcy discharge of student loans

JASON GALLAHER  
DAILY SUNDIAL

**S**ix senators from the Midwest and East Coast have reintroduced legislation to forgive private student loan debt when an individual files for bankruptcy protection.

The Fairness for Struggling Students Act of 2013 was reintroduced Jan. 23, aiming to reverse legislation

enacted in 2005 that allows private student loans to get the same treatment in bankruptcy as federal loans.

Current laws do not allow federal or private student loans to be forgiven, or discharged, with bankruptcy protection.

The legislation would affect Chapters 7, 11 and 13 of the Bankruptcy Code, which are the three main types of bankruptcy that are applicable to individuals.

On Feb. 4, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) signed on as a co-sponsor. Student loan debt surpassing \$1

trillion was a major impetus in reintroducing the act, Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) said in a statement.

"Young Americans are being hamstrung by record debt levels," Durbin said. "Unless we take action to protect borrowers, student loan debt will be the next mortgage crisis."

Being burdened by student loan debt affects students' ability to stimulate the economy through major purchases such as buying a home, he said.

Durbin first introduced the act in

See **Bankruptcy**, page 4



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# Obama, Senate propose reform bill

Members of Congress announce comprehensive reform plans for more than 11 million undocumented immigrants

**LUIS RIVAS**  
SENIOR REPORTER

**A**s a sign of bipartisanship, the Senate announced the two-party proposal on comprehensive immigration reform in

January, which could pave a path to citizenship for an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

Eight senators outlined the plan, which was presented at Capitol Hill on Jan. 28.

The group comprises Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Sen. John McCain

(R-Ariz.), Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.), Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) and Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.).

President Obama praised the Senate for its proposal and the following day he

revealed his own proposal on immigration reform during a speech at a Las Vegas high school.

“(We need) smarter enforcement, a pathway to earned citizenship, improvements in the legal immigration system so that we continue to be a magnet for the best and brightest all around the world. It’s pretty straightforward,” Obama said during his speech.

The president briefly outlined his four-part proposal, which includes strengthening border security and a crackdown on employers who hire undocumented immigrants.

Undocumented immigrants would be required to pass national security and criminal background checks, pay a penalty and learn English to qualify for citizenship therefore simplifying and streamlining the current immigration system.

In the 2012 presidential election, Latinos supported the president by 71 percent, making them 10 percent of the electorate, a steady increase since the previous two presidential elections, according to the Pew His-

panic Research Center.

Additionally, the number of registered Latino voters has increased by 26 percent (12.2 million) in the last four years, according to the National Association of Latinos Elected and Appointed.

with 77 percent of Latinos who voted saying undocumented immigrants should be offered a chance to apply for legal status, according to the Pew Hispanic Research Center.

Seeing the changing landscape of voting by a fast-growing Latino base, many see both the Democratic and Republican Party as needing to involve more Latino issues, such as immigration reform.

Undocumented student and former upper division Senator for Associated Students Juan Quevedo, 26, political science major, is a graduating senior who is part of the CSUN club Dreams to be Heard, an immigrant rights and undocumented student support group.

Quevedo said he sees the Republican Party’s willingness to collaborate on immigration reform as a conscious effort to change its at-times controversial image and the need to reach out to Latino voters.

“I know there have been several Republican Party members in the past that

**“Both r epublicans and Democrats agree on what should happen. I’m not taking that based on their rhetoric; I’m taking that based on their actions.”**

—ga Br lel gut lerrez  
Chicano/a studies professor

Although the majority of Latinos in the last election said that the economy was the most important issue, immigration reform has always been a vital subject,

See **Imm Igra t ion**, page 3

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## Immigration

Continued from page 2

have wanted to support things like (comprehensive immigration reform), but their general party didn't want to support it." Quevedo said. "They kind of went down the rabbit hole. Once they got so far in, they couldn't back out. I think that's where they found themselves and finally they said, 'Hey, we gotta do something about it.'"

The Senate's immigration reform proposal has not been unanimously supported by the GOP. Many key Republicans have expressed dissatisfaction with it, such as Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas).

Both Lee and Smith see weaknesses in their colleague's bipartisan proposal, expressing concern that undocumented immigrants will be rewarded for living in the country illegally by giving them the chance to apply for citizenship.

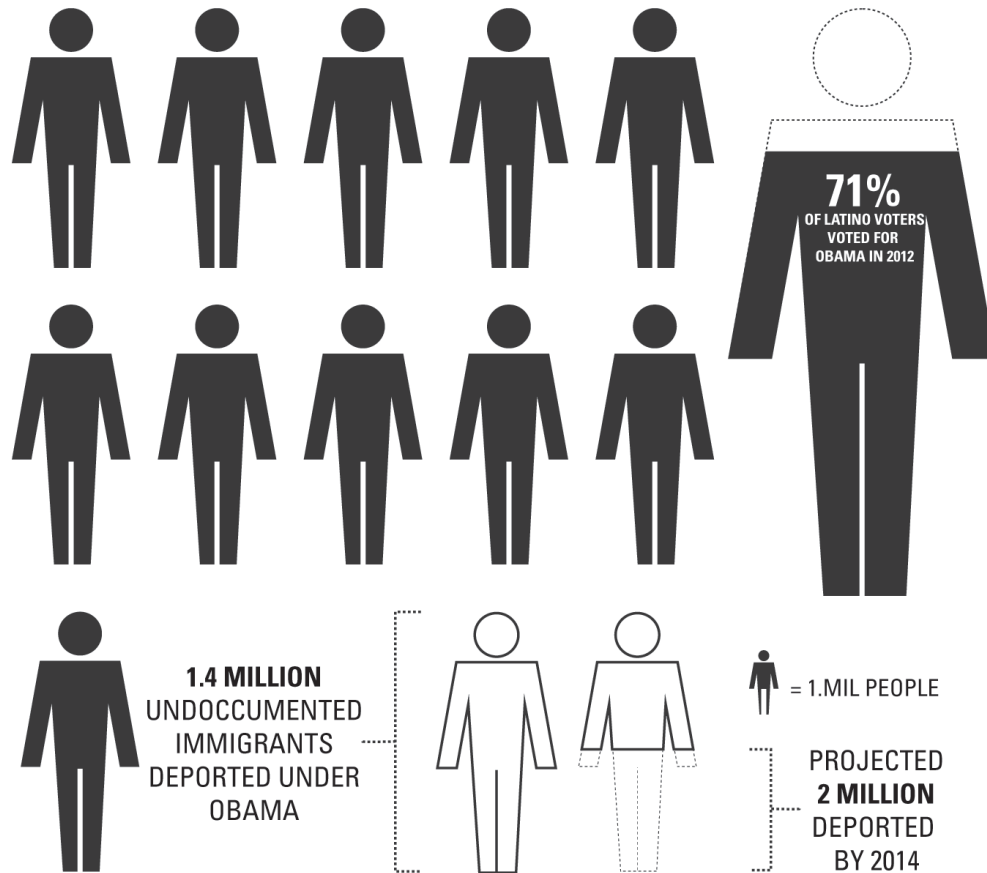
"These guidelines contemplate a policy that will grant special benefits to illegal immigrants based on their unlawful presence in the country," Lee said in a press release. "Reforms to our complex and dysfunctional immigration system should not in any way favor those who came here illegally over the millions

**77 percent**  
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**11 MILLION**  
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LATINOS MAKE UP  
**10 percent**  
OF THE ELECTORATE

data Courtesy of:  
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infographi C by jennifer luxton/ visual editor

of applicants who seek to come here lawfully."

Gabriel Gutierrez, Chicano/a studies professor and director of the Center for the Study of the Peoples of the Americas, said she doubts that the Republican Party can successfully win over the Latino population.

"The Latino electorate that came out really hurt

the GOP because of their extremist views on things like immigration," Gutierrez said. "All you need to do is look back at Pete Wilson, former governor of California, who did the Republicans in by adapting the same extremist policy agenda, pushing (Proposition) 187 and all these other propositions."

But border security as well as deportations have been part of the immigration reform debate for some time now, Gutierrez said.

Members of the San Fernando Valley Republicans, the Republican Party of Los Angeles and the Lincoln Club of Orange County did not respond to emails or phone calls.

Republicans are not the only ones that can bolster a strong restrictive approach to immigration. Obama has deported a record number of people in his first two years in office.

According to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, under the Obama administration there have been 1.4 million people

deported. If the deportations continue at this rate, Obama could reach the 2 million mark by 2014, according to a study by the University of California, Merced.

"In that regard, immigration is already a bipartisan issue," Gutierrez said. "Both Republicans and Democrats agree on what should happen. I'm not taking that based on their rhetoric; I'm taking that based on their actions."

Despite the high-level of deportation and call for more border enforcement, people are still optimistic on a comprehensive immigration reform bill in the near future.

Jesus Rios, associate justice with the Associated Students judicial court, 22, is also a member of Dreams to be Heard. Rios sees the political debate surrounding immigration reform as a good thing, no matter which side of the political spectrum it comes from.

"You're getting support from both parties and they're competing to get the vote," said Rios, a senior sociology major. "If both parties want to go at it and try to make the best immigration reform, that's fantastic. Because in the end, a lot of undocumented students that come from another country will become U.S. citizens and will help their parents be able to have a better life."

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## Bankruptcy

*Continued from page 1*

2010 and again in 2011.

If passed, hundreds of CSUN students would have the option to discharge some of their student loan debt.

"As of the 2011 Annual Report, 459 students have private loans," said Armenka Khashmany, assistant director of counseling and customer service in the financial aid department. "This amounts to almost \$4 million in loans."

Some students feel discharging student loans in bankruptcy would be an escape from paying down the loan.

"I think this would help a lot of people," said Verence Ramirez, senior psychology and child development major. "Are there even any jobs for us after we graduate to pay student loans with? It would be nice to get done with school with a fresh start."

Dr. G. Michael Phillips, professor of finance and the director of the Center for Financial Planning and Investment, said bankruptcy protection of private student loan debt would have greater consequences than making students pay back those loans.

"You want to see a major financial catastrophe, tell banks all those student loans aren't collectible," Phillips said. "What bank would loan money if they thought there was no chance to get paid back?"

The act would make the financial situation of college students far worse in years to come, he said. This is because requirements to be eligible for a loan would be so strict that most students wouldn't qualify.

If this act passes, disparities in which students get private loans could also occur based on a student's field of study, he said.

"Communications majors don't make as much money immediately after graduation as engineering majors," Phillips said. "Banks could begin to loan (money) only to students with majors that will earn higher salaries."

Phillips said the act could be politically motivated.

"This is politically very appealing," he said. "The act treats symptoms today, but it doesn't look beyond the surface."

Dr. Linda Bradley, assistant professor of consumer affairs, said any student should be wary of filing for bankruptcy regardless of whether this act passes.

"Bankruptcy is a double-edged sword," she said. "It puts a negative mark on your credit, and employers do credit checks. How would an employer feel about hiring a student who has filed for bankruptcy?"

Filing for bankruptcy impacts a person's credit for seven to 10 years depending on the type of bankruptcy one files, she said. This means bankruptcy protec-

tion will still postpone one's ability to contribute to the economy.

Christina Mulka, deputy communications director for Durbin, said filing for bankruptcy protection of private student loans should not affect someone's ability to make major purchases.

"We've heard the argument that it will be more difficult to take out loans if you file for (student loan bankruptcy protection), but before 2005, this wasn't the case," she said.

CSUN students have mixed opinions on whether or not this act should be passed.

"What if people start taking loans because they know they'd be discharged?" asked Hetty Diep, junior art major. "People should have to take extra steps to prove they really need the loans."

Phillips said there are much better solutions to solving student financial issues than bankruptcy protection.

"The major sufferers from loan repayment are students who drop out of college without a degree because of financial issues," he said. "Students who take Finance 102, Financial Literacy, and 302 and Personal Finance have been better prepared to manage their (loans and spending)."

"I consistently get fan mail from students who took 302," he said. "They say they are saving a lot of money."

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FEBRUARY 13, 2013

# Opinion

OPINION@SUNDIAL.CSUN.EDU

## State of the Union: round 5



President Obama addresses Congress in the 2012 State of the Union speech.

courtesy of MCT

**NATHAN MCMAHON**  
OPINION EDITOR

Each year, the president takes center stage in the chamber for the House of Representatives and addresses a joint session of Congress as well as the nation. President Obama's speech Wednesday night addressed a number of initiatives. Yet, the ceremony itself is usually a gross display of grandstanding. Bob Schieffer laid it out best during the CBS pre-speech analysis when he compared the president walking down the aisle to the podium as the "greatest ego trip." And what a trip it was. A cadre of people reaching out to grasp Obama's hand. A parade of slathering fools hoping for a bit of charm to ooze all over them. The general back-slapping and glad-handing with ooh-rah cheerleading. When watching it, it's hard to be anything, but cynical as the display is a grotesque glimpse into the greasy world of politics.

Seeing as the whole affair reeks of political gamesmanship, let's at least have some fun analyzing and breaking down the various points laid out during his speech:

### Climate change and energy reform

This is actually an outstanding idea and needs to be driven home more often. The idea of continuing to bury our heads on an issue that affects each and every one of us is an absurdity. The majority of the scientific community has spoken and anything else is just lazy contempt. The fact that we can tie this changing climate to energy initiatives that will be both beneficial to our planet's health as well as beneficial to our growing economy is what should be the main drive to accomplish that change. If we fail to do anything, other countries will take up the lead and our flagging industry will be left in the dust.

### Establishing a national referendum on high quality pre-school education

This is a no-brainer. Our education system is desperately falling behind. With more and more students failing to even

graduate, setting them up for a brighter future by initiating education earlier in their development is a worthy goal. Education is a right, not an option. According to Obama, every \$1 spent will save \$7 in the long run. This plan is both financially feasible and is an investment in our kids futures as well as in our countries economic and social growth.

### Higher education

Obama's Administration is introducing the "College Scorecard" program. According to Obama, it should allow prospective students and their parents to figure out "where they can get the most bang for their buck." While this is a nice idea, the lack of any plan outlined in his speech really just relegates this to the realm of nice platitudes. Maybe we'll see more in the upcoming days and months, but for now, it's a weak and insubstantial plan for a program.

### The drawdown in Afghanistan

I have to start off and say I'm always skeptical about how we will continue to engage our apparent enemies abroad. Obama laid out the additional

removal of 34,000 troops from the Afghan conflict by the end of 2013. He also re-affirmed that we will be done in that country by the end of 2014, but there is a serious lack of confidence in this regard. Just because we will be completely out of Afghanistan doesn't necessarily mean we will be done in that region. His commitment to the awful drone program really doesn't inspire any confidence that our meddling is over.

### A commitment to better cyber-security

The irony of an administration that is concerned about cyber-security, while simultaneously using their own citizens private correspondence and shrouding their intelligence gathering programs in the utmost secrecy is a level of disconnect that only a politician could achieve.

### Improve the voting experience

Obama announced a plan to address this growing problem but the solution is simple. Election day should be a mandatory paid holiday for everybody. If we can shut-down our country for Christmas, then we can shut down our country for arguably

the most important cultural and political day of the year. Elections are the life-blood of our country. That right needs to be protected above all else.

### Gun Control

According to CBS, this volatile issue hadn't been mentioned in any State of the Union since President Clinton's term in office. After the Sandy Hook school shooting, we can't ignore the issue any longer. Obama pointed out since that shooting "more than a thousand birthdays, graduations, and anniversaries have been stolen from our lives by a bullet from a gun." It's a damn-cold sobering statistic. Unfortunately, I have no faith that anything substantial can be passed in this current climate. The left and right are at two entirely different ends of the spectrums. Obama had it right when he said all of those dead people deserve each and every member of Congress to put their vote on the line whether it's a yes or a no. At least we can get the ball moving and see who is against anything sensible.

### The economy

It's the single most pressing issue we face. We are in a recovery, but we are still

walking a fine line between crisis and stabilization. His biggest push for trying to improve the status quo was the announcement that he would seek to raise the federal minimum wage from its current \$7.25 an hour to \$9. It's a bold move but there is an even bolder one. He pointed out in his speech both he and Mitt Romney agreed during the election that the minimum wage should be tied to the current cost of living. Instead of using an arbitrary number people should have wages that allow them to thrive and not stagnate. If it works for CEO's and the top 1 percent then it should work for the middle and lower class. Also, to build a reduction in the deficit, we need to cut both extraneous expenses like a ridiculously bloated military budget as well as raising revenue through higher taxes for everybody. Not just the super wealthy, but everybody. Unfortunately for us, we have a costly series of conflicts to pay for and we can't pass that along any longer. Someone has to pay for it and that someone is all of us.

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# Athletic director forum welcomes another candidate



Ken Scarboro / Senior Photographer

Athletic director candidate Michael Chisholm addresses faculty and staff at his open forum.

**JASON GALLAHER**  
DAILY SUNDIAL

**N**orthridge faculty and staff held the fourth athletic director open forum Monday afternoon with Michael 'Torre' Chisholm, Portland State University's director of athletics, answering questions regarding his suitability for the position.

Chisholm is the fourth of five candidates for the position to be interviewed.

Growing up in Southern California, Chisholm graduated from UC Santa Barbara. He said his love of the area is what led him to look

for a job away from Oregon.

"While I love my work at Portland State, I'm a Southern California boy at heart," he said.

Chisholm's career in athletics started at UC Santa Barbara, where he served as assistant athletic director for marketing and promotions for five years. From there he moved to UC Irvine as associate athletic director for development and marketing for six years, before moving into his current position at Portland State in 2007.

It was in these positions that he gained valuable experience in fundraising that allowed him to make targeted investments in athletic programs, Chisholm said.

"I was able to raise (Portland State's) scholarship budget from \$2.7 million to \$4.3 million to

recruit from out of state and build competitive teams," he said.

Chisholm also secured multi-million dollar gifts to go toward the Viking Pavilion, a Portland State project that includes a 5,000 seat arena and 20,000 square feet of academic space.

Academic success for student athletes is a main area of concern for Chisholm. At Portland State, Chisholm helped athletes by providing academic advisors and summer school programs to improve grade performance.

"Academic support space at CSUN could be improved," Chisholm said.

Chisholm also addressed ways to make CSUN stand out in the Los Angeles area, where UCLA and USC dominate.

"We would have to make CSUN outreach as locally-oriented as possible," Chisholm said. "We should utilize online and social media outlets to get students more involved in supporting our teams. We have to create a vibrant experience that invites students and the community to be a part of it. We should have spirit-based student groups and create inviting and enticing spaces for fans to come watch our games."

Ultimately, Chisholm said he sees potential in CSUN to become nationally recognized as a standout school for sports.

"CSUN can become nationally competitive because it has the potential for facilities, the ability to draw students, and national championships in baseball, soccer and volleyball," he said.

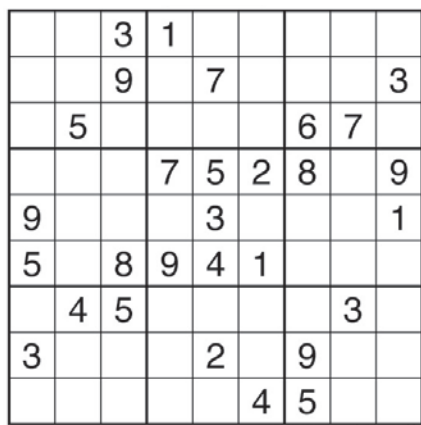
## Classified Ads

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

help with creating a monetized website to link to PayPal.  
818-906-7079,  
Email drjaffe1@aol.com

### EMPLOYMENT

**Student Sales Representative**  
• Must have excellent verbal and written skills  
• Previous Sales experience a plus  
• Will coordinate work schedule with school schedule  
Please send resume to sundialinfo@csun.edu with the words "Sales Position" in the subject.



### sudoku

**How to play:** Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

**Solution in tomorrow's issue.**

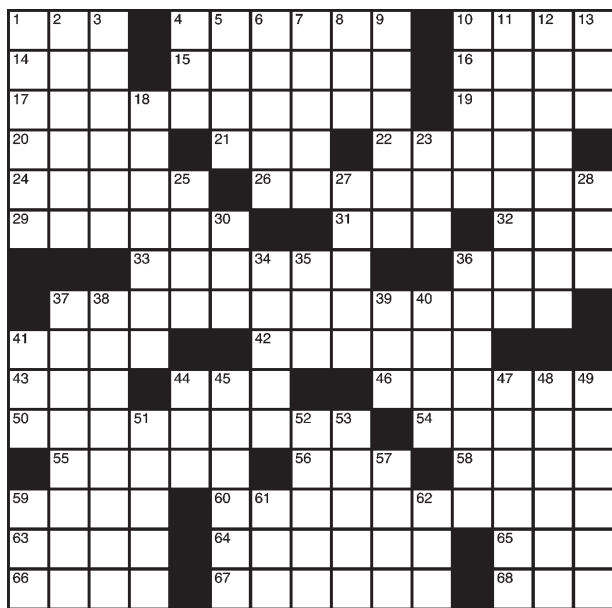
Puzzle number : 31973677

### Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

#### ACROSS

- 1 Medical amts.
- 4 Be accountable (for)
- 10 Remove, as coupons
- 14 Ernst collaborator
- 15 Electronic music genre
- 16 Spherical opening?
- 17 Titanic compartment on the lowest level
- 19 "All \_\_\_": 1931 tune
- 20 Height: Pref.
- 21 Lord's Prayer opener
- 22 Arterial trunk
- 24 \_\_\_ León: Monterrey's state
- 26 Setup of a sort
- 29 Okay
- 31 Okay
- 32 Project, with "out"
- 33 Mediterranean capital
- 36 Farm female
- 37 Drive-in offering, and what 17-, 26-, 50- or 60-Across has, in more ways than one
- 41 1% of a cool mil
- 42 Lethargic
- 43 Stein filler
- 44 Poet's contraction
- 46 Discography entries
- 50 Country kitchen design option
- 54 Wash softly against
- 55 Words after "What a coincidence!"
- 56 Muppet friend of Elmo
- 58 Poet's preposition
- 59 Italian carmaker
- 60 Verify
- 63 "Poppycock!"
- 64 Find, as a frequency
- 65 Whopper, e.g.
- 66 Very dark
- 67 It has its ups and downs
- 68 Family guy



By Janice Luttrell and Patti Varol

2/13/13

#### DOWN

- 1 Poolside structure
- 2 Springtime bloomer
- 3 Tapering tops
- 4 Wore (away)
- 5 Fiery emperor?
- 6 Clean with effort
- 7 Fingerprint ridge
- 8 Ambient music pioneer Brian
- 9 Parmesan alternative
- 10 A minor, for one
- 11 Didn't quite close
- 12 Childish
- 13 Slapstick prop
- 18 Film Volkswagen with "53" painted on it
- 23 Singular
- 25 Mark on an otherwise perfect record?
- 27 Place in the earth
- 28 Hot time in France
- 30 Dawn-dusk link
- 34 Like the '80s look, now
- 35 Tabloid subj.
- 36 Spa treatment

#### Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



(c)2013 Tribune Media Services, Inc. 2/13/13

- 37 Aspect of paranoia
- 38 Person in the know
- 39 Therapists' org.
- 40 Cultivate
- 41 Smidge
- 44 Unit of resistance
- 45 Official orders
- 47 Defended, as family honor
- 48 Brady Bunch girl
- 49 Fed the fire
- 51 Cartoonist Guiswite or her title character
- 52 Depleted layer
- 53 Blooms for lovers
- 57 "¿Cómo \_\_\_?"
- 59 Justice Dept. division
- 61 Wish one hadn't
- 62 Udder woman?



File Photo / Daily Sun Dial

Senior outfielder Nathan Ring is expected to help lead the Matadors in the 2013 season.

## Matadors look for turnaround season

**JOELL GRAGER**  
DAILY SUNDIAL

**T**he Matadors are looking to start the 2013 season with a new vibe, and will have plenty of new faces to make that happen, with 11 freshmen and a handful of transfers.

Head coach Matt Curtis, in his third season, is looking forward to seeing how his team comes together throughout the year.

"That's a challenge when you've got a lot of new guys joining the team, how to integrate them with the guys who've been here," Curtis said. "But we have had a lot of time together in the fall, and a little bit of time in January to get going, and I really think we're in a good place for that."

The Matadors went 23-30 last season, 10-14 in the Big West Conference, and are looking to make a bigger impact with their new teammates. The team has their eyes set on contending for the championship.

Senior outfielder Nathan Ring, second on the team last season with 24 runs and a .267 batting average, said the vets are taking younger players under their wings and helping

them adapt to college baseball.

"I think this is the best team that I've seen here in my four years," Ring said. "So we're really excited to get this underway. I think that we really have a complete team this year. We've got pitching top to bottom, good starting pitchers at the front end and we've got good relievers and then speed and outfield this year."

Senior utility player Cal Vogelsang, returns as one of CSUN's top threats. In 2012, Vogelsang hit .278 and led the team with 11 doubles.

"Most of our returning guys are position players," Vogelsang said. "We brought a lot of new pitchers in which is what we needed after last season. I think last year we finished with like six pitchers, so we brought in about 12 new pitchers."

Curtis is hoping that the younger pitchers will take a chapter out of sophomore pitcher Jerry Keel's book, the ability to keep their poise and a level head with the stress of the game around them.

As a freshman pitcher in 2012, Keel led the team with a 2.07 ERA, six wins, 91.1 innings and 48 strikeouts.

He was named Big West Freshman Pitcher of the Year, Louisville Slugger Freshman All-American honors in 2012 and a 2013 preseason All-

Big West Conference Second Team.

"I think more than anything else, he does some things with his command, and with mixing speeds," Curtis said. "He's not a power pitcher, but it's his location, being able to identify a hitter's weakness and attacking it...he leads by example."

Keel is anticipating a good result from the incoming pitchers and hopes that they may learn from his strategies, as well as the new pitching coach.

Besides a new pitching coach, Northridge added assistant coach Sergio Brown, who will focus on the infield, base running and hitting.

"And that's a coordinated effort with the pitchers and the infielders, particularly when there are runners at second," Curtis said. "Coach Brown has brought a lot to us with his experiences. We tried new techniques...and I'm excited to see how that plays out."

Curtis is anticipating much of their new running game strategy to fall upon sophomore catcher Alexis Mercado having a good season.

"I think we've got an opportunity to compete for our conference championship and that's something that hasn't happened in our sport for a number of years," Curtis said. "And I think we have the ability to do that."





## COLUMN

# Daily Sundial's first all-nba team

BOB GARCIA  
KEVIN KIANI  
DAILY SUNDIAL

## Point Guard

**T**his season, Chris Paul has led the historically-awful Clippers to one of the best records in the NBA. He is averaging 9.5 assists per game, which ranks him second in the NBA behind the injured Rajon Rondo. What separates Paul's value from the rest of the NBA's point guards is his uncanny leadership ability.

He is a transcendent player who has transformed the Clippers from one of the bottom-dwelling teams in the Western Conference to a legitimate contender. He has changed the culture of the Clippers by bringing a winning attitude to the franchise.

Last season — Paul's first with the Clippers — saw the team clinch a playoff berth and earn a first round victory over the Memphis Grizzlies, after a grueling seven game series. This was the first time since the 2005-2006 season they saw postseason play.

Not only is he a great leader, passer and scorer, he is a gritty two-time all-defensive first team player, who leads the NBA with 2.5 steals per game. Paul has all the necessary tools to be stand unchallenged as the league's best point guard.



Courtesy of mct

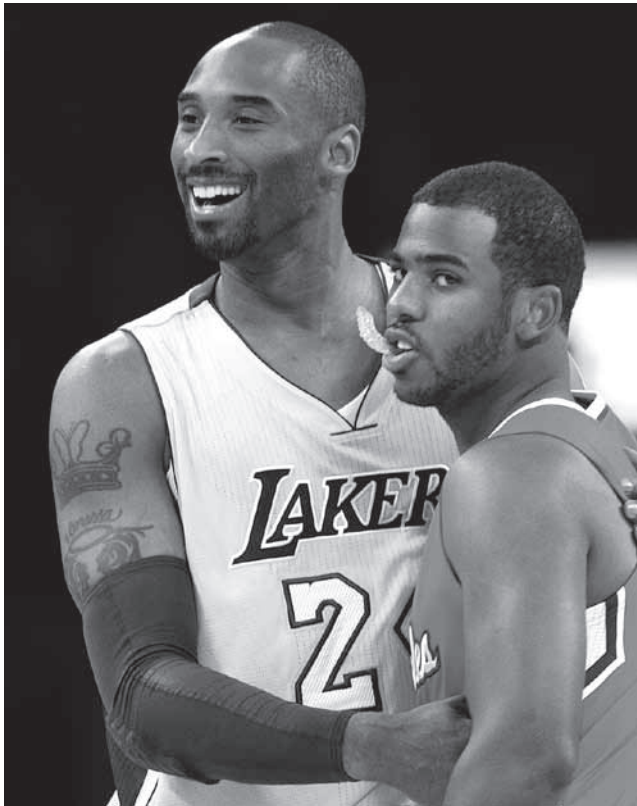
Small forward LeBron James is part of the Big Three in Miami, but still sticks out from his teammates with his scoring and play.

## Small Forward

**L**eBron James is having another career year for the Miami Heat as they sit atop the Eastern Conference with a 31-14 record. He is averaging a ridiculous 26.7 points, eight rebounds, and seven assists per game, as he routinely terrorizes and creates match-up nightmares for opposing teams.

He is built like a tank and runs like a gazelle. He can guard small and quick players like Russell Westbrook and can step down into the post to guard bigger, stronger players like Carlos Boozer. James is also shooting a career best 55 percent from the field. He is in the middle of a five-game streak of 30 points per game with a minimum 60 percent shooting percentage.

He is the best play maker at his position, and is often tasked with facilitating and ball handling from the 'point forward' position. A very strong case could be made for Kevin Durant, as he too is having the best year of his young career, but James gets the edge for his defense and versatility. Not that James wasn't unstoppable before, but him adding post moves to his arsenal as well as his new found ability to step up during crunch time, has made him even tougher to guard. James is not only the best small forward in the NBA, he is the best basketball player on the planet, and in my opinion, a top ten player of all time.



Courtesy of mct

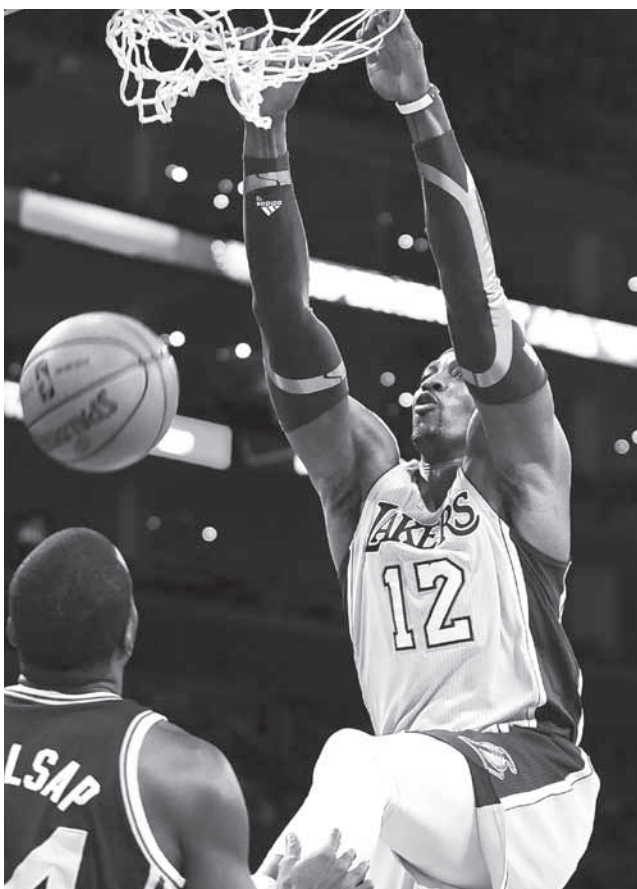
Nearly teammates last offseason, Chris Paul and Kobe Bryant are both the leaders of their respective Los Angeles teams.

## center

**D**espite a rocky season for the Los Angeles Lakers, to say the least, Dwight Howard is still the best center in the NBA. There is something to be said about a player who can average 16.5 points, 11.9 rebounds and 2.4 blocks and still have fans frustrated about how bad he is playing.

Howard is fighting through back and shoulder problems while also receiving less touches, courtesy of the Black Hole...I mean Black Mamba. Despite all this, Howard is still dominating defensively and is one of the best athletes in the NBA, this side of LeBron James. However, he may be the best center in the NBA by default because centers are a dying breed. They have turned into soft, jump shooters who are allergic to the paint.

Dwight Howard may be the last of the paint-dominating centers we have grown accustomed to, and with the Lakers recently surging for that eighth spot in the West, we may see the real Dwight. You know, the one that goes into a phone booth with a suit and comes out with a red cape. It's a bird, it's a plane, it's the best center in the NBA for years to come.



Courtesy of mct

Los Angeles center Dwight Howard has suffered through a tumultuous first season with the Lakers, but is still considered a top center.

## Shooting Guard

**K**obe Bryant once again finds himself in the top-tier of scorers in the NBA with his 27.4 point per game average. This ranks him third overall and first among shooting guards. His ability to continue to play at such a high level in his 17th year in the league at the age of 34 is nothing short of remarkable.

Bryant can score at will and take over a game at any moment. He is one of the toughest players in the league to guard with his arsenal of offensive moves. He can pull up for the jumper, jab step and nail a fade away in the opponents face or drive to the basket.

Bryant is regarded by many other NBA players as the best shooting guard in the league. His intensity, commitment and dedication to the game are matched by no other player and have pushed him to being one of the best shooting guards ever. Bryant ranks fifth all-time in points scored and is the all-time leading scorer for the Lakers' franchise. He has been selected to 15 all-star games, which is tied for second all-time.

If the game is on the line with just seconds remaining, which player would you want to take the shot? There is no question that player is Bryant. You want the ball in his hands because he has made numerous game-winning shots throughout his NBA career. Bryant is the player you want as your starting shooting guard.



Courtesy of mct

Coming from a team not known for making waves in the Western Conference, power forward David Lee helps lead the Warriors.

## Power Forward

**D**avid Lee has been having a terrific season and is one of the main reasons the Golden State Warriors have enjoyed so much success. They have surprised a lot of people. He is second among power forwards in scoring with 19.2 points per game and third in rebounds at 11.

Lee is a very crafty player who is used in a multitude of offensive sets, but is most effective in pick and roll situations because he can finish with both hands and has the ability to pull up for a jump shot. In terms of NBA efficiency, David Lee is fourth in the league behind Kevin Durant, LeBron James and Anderson Varejao. He leads the NBA in double-doubles and because of his adept passing, frequently flirts with triple-doubles.

Recently voted to his second All-Star game this year, and with the Warriors in the thick of the Western Conference playoff hunt, Oracle Arena will be rocking once again. Lee is the most underrated and under-appreciated player in the league, but has proven to be the best player at his position. He may not make you press rewind on your DVR, but his hard work and relentlessness should earn the respect of anyone that calls themselves a basketball fan.