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- THE LISTS
- EVENTS
- REGISTRATION
- SUBSCRIBE
- ADVERTISING
- REGIONAL EDITIONS
- ABOUT US
- HELP

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- New Homes
- Urban Living
- Window Shopping
- Luxury Autos
- Wine & Dine
- Investment Properties

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- Retail
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OCBJ Poll

Early pick for president in 2008?

- Barack Obama
- Rudy Giuliani
- John McCain
- Hillary Clinton
- Mitt Romney
- Bill Richardson
- John Edwards
- Tommy Thompson
- Duncan Hunter
- Other

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Posted date: 2/26/2007

OC Tech Guy Helps Matt Damon; Stem Cell Recap

By Rick Reiff
ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL STAFF

At first, Newport Beach businessman Omar Turbi didn't return Matt Damon's calls—didn't know who he was. But Turbi got set straight by a friend, contacted the Hollywood star and the rest is show business. Turbi and son Omar Jr. just returned from three weeks on location in Libya with Oscar-winning director James Moll and the rest of the cast and crew of "Running the Sahara." The film, in production, follows three athletes on a 4,000-mile, 100-day run across the desert (www.runningthesahara.com). The expedition was under way when it ran into a figurative sand wall—nobody could get clearances to enter Libya, the fifth of six countries on the trail to Egypt and the Red Sea. That's when Damon, the film's executive producer and narrator, was put in touch with Turbi, an expert on his native Libya with ties to its strongman Muammar al-Gaddafi. Turbi opened doors and handled logistics, and the run continued. For his efforts, Turbi, who operates semiconductor and aviation company Orbit Systems, said he collected \$1,000 a day—"I was told I had to charge them something or they wouldn't respect me." Plus he gets a film credit and will be portrayed in the documentary. And now he's on a first-name basis with Matt ...



Some folks may be selling, but jocks keep moving into exclusive Shady Canyon. Recent arrivals include the Ducks' Chris Pronger, tennis' Lindsay Davenport and baseball's Jim Edmonds ...

Ironically, some genetic-research advocates at UC Irvine aren't thrilled with the congressional push for more stem cell research. Their reasoning: California voters have approved \$3 billion for such research, so loosening the federal purse strings would diminish California's relative advantage ...

How did UCI fare in the state's first, \$45 million allocation of stem cell grants? OK. With \$3.6 million in funding it placed sixth among the 20 institutions that got awards. Stanford topped the list at \$7 million, but the biggest winner was La Jolla's research cluster, led by the Burnham Institute and UCSD, with \$13.5 million in total grants ...

Congrats to Pacific Symphony's Carl St. Clair for picking up a high-profile supplementary job. Think of it, the Berlin Philharmonic came here for its new conductor ...

FileNet founder Ted Smith keynotes the OCBJ's Entrepreneurship luncheon March 8. Call (949) 833-8373, ext. 209 ...

Gov. Arnold has appointed his able friend Anaheim Mayor Curt Pringle to a couple of big boards—the California High-Speed Rail Authority, the body responsible for a proposed north-south bullet train (envisioned linking to Anaheim and Irvine), and the Public Employee Post-Employment Benefits Commission. But the gov has set back the bullet train timetable by scratching from his budget planning funds for the train and dropping plans for a \$10 billion rail-construction bond measure next year. And the Insider wonders, if Arnold is serious about tackling the government pension mess, why he didn't tap OC Supe John Moorlach.

WEEKLY EDITION

Mar. 5 - 11, 2007



First Hospital Here in Decades Takes Shape
Kaiser Permanente's new hospital in Irvine is the first built here since 1990

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This past week's news from www.ocbj.com and other sources

Advanced Medical Makes Eye Laser Push With Deals

Advanced Medical's pending acquisitions are part of its eye laser push, in the Healthcare column

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