

# Jose Lopez returns to M's stronger and hitting harder

Sports > C1



# SWEETS TO SIP AND SAVOR

**HAPPY HOUR:**  
Eastside's premier cocktail den

**YOUR WEDNESDAY > B6**

**DESSERT RECIPE:**  
Warm berries with dumplings

**> B7**



**SHOWERS, SUN BREAKS**  
High, 47. Low, 38.  
> B12

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2009

# The Seattle Times



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# Lose your job, they'll pay your mortgage

## NEW NORTHGATE CONDO COMPLEX

Sign of the times:

Project hasn't sold any units, so developers get creative

BY ERIC PRYNE  
Seattle Times business reporter

First cars. Now condos. Thornton Place, a big, new project near Northgate with cinemas and a creek, is offering prospective condo buyers a layoff-protection plan in hopes of spurring sales in this sour market.

Buy a condo, the developers say, and if you lose your job within a year they'll make your mortgage payments for up to six months.

It's a variation on a theme pioneered by automaker Hyundai, which since January has let buyers return new cars if they get

See > CONDOS, A9



THOMAS JAMES HURST / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Developers hope to jump-start Thornton Place sales with their offer of mortgage assistance in case of layoff.

# A bear walks into a 'burb

BUT STATE'S NEW BEAR DOGS WILL SEND THE INTRUDER PACKING



RUSS WEEKS

A black bear is released last June near Rattlesnake Lake, not far from North Bend, after being captured in a residential area. Fish and Wildlife officers Bruce Richards, left, with bear dog Mishka, and Lance Stevens, holding a gun that fires rubber bullets, frighten the bear so it won't want to be near humans. Watershed inspector Lloyd Buster sits on the cage.

BY KATHERINE LONG  
Seattle Times Eastside reporter

Some day this spring, a black bear is going to lumber out of the Cascade foothills in search of food.

The hungry bear is going to wander into someone's backyard, searching for a garbage can with a flimsy lid.

An anxious homeowner is going to call the state wildlife office.

And Mishka, the state's first wildlife service dog, is going to go to work.

Mishka is the first Karelian bear dog to be used in wildlife enforcement in the United States. The medium-size, black-and-white Finnish hunting dog is uniquely suited to combat a growing problem in eastern King County: black bears coming into conflict with rural and suburban homeowners.

See > BEAR DOGS, A8



GREG GILBERT / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Bruce Richards walks with Mishka, the nation's first Karelian bear dog to be used in wildlife enforcement.

## Karelian bear dogs

**About the dogs:** Karelians belong to the spitz family and take their name from a region on the Russia-Finland border. They are medium-size, weigh 44 to 49 pounds, usually black and white and are friendly to humans but fearless around big game. The breed originated in Finland, where they are used to hunt large animals.

Source: Wind River Bear Institute, [Washingtonbeardogs.com](http://Washingtonbeardogs.com)

# ECONOMY'S "MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION"

## OBAMA TIES HOPE FOR RECOVERY TO HIS SPENDING PLAN

President pleads for patience, presses for regulatory power

BY JENNIFER LOVEN  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Obama claimed early gains Tuesday night in his aggressive campaign to lead the nation out of economic chaos and declared that despite obstacles ahead, "we're moving in the right direction."

"We've put in place a comprehensive strategy designed to attack this crisis on all fronts," Obama said. "And we are beginning to see signs of progress."

At the second prime-time news conference of his brief presidency, Obama also toned down his criticism of bonuses to executives at bailed-out AIG and shot back at Republican critics of his budget.

Obama cast his \$3.6 trillion budget — which Congress was planning to cut even as he spoke — as essential if the economy is to recover. The tax and spending plan "is inseparable from this recovery because it is what lays the foundation for a secure and lasting prosperity," he said.

The news conference came at a pivotal, early moment in Obama's 64-day-old presidency. Democrats in Congress are readying budget proposals that will largely determine how much of his first-term agenda will be passed; Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner is churning out near-daily proposals to

See > PRESIDENT, A11



## Topics beyond the economy

**Embryonic stem cells:** Obama called expanded federal funding the "right thing to do and the ethical thing to do."

**Mideast:** Said recent Israeli elections complicate a two-state solution. But, "The status quo is unsustainable."

**Mexican drug violence:** On the day his administration announced tougher border security, Obama pledged to monitor violence that threatens to spill into the U.S. and do more if necessary.

**His race:** The novelty of the first black president lasted only a day. "Right now, the American people are judging me exactly the way I should be judged."

In 2008, state wildlife officials fielded 881 calls about bear sightings in King County alone. That's up from the year before, when officers received 679 calls.



KING-TV  
Shayne Abegg, in a pre-2007 photo.

# \$6 million for starved Everett boy

## STATE, OTHERS WILL PAY

Settlement comes as lawmakers consider overhaul of child-welfare system

BY STEVE MILETICH  
Seattle Times staff reporter

The state and three other parties

have agreed to pay \$6 million to settle a lawsuit brought on behalf of a boy who was intentionally starved by his father and the man's girlfriend.

The settlement, reached early Tuesday during mediation, stemmed from the case of Shayne Abegg, who weighed only 22 pounds at age 4 when authorities rescued him on March 7, 2007, from his Everett home. A year

earlier, when Shayne came to live with his father, he had weighed 38 pounds.

Under the settlement, which requires approval by a judge, the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) agreed to pay \$5 million, with the remainder to be split between state-contracted therapist Brad Simkins and two social-service agencies

See > SETTLEMENT, A10

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