

CALENDAR

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TINA FERRARO FOR THE TIMES
CONNELLY: Jack McEvoy returns in his new book.

BOOK REVIEW

Murder for our Times

TIM RUTTEN

The Scarecrow

A Novel
Michael Connelly
Little, Brown: 426 pp., \$27.99

The novels and short stories we conveniently pigeonhole as "genre fiction" often are the tripwires of our literature's social consciousness.

It's unsurprising, therefore, that the first fictional work to take the newspaper industry's agonizing decline as its backdrop is a mystery, nor that its author, Michael Connelly, is a onetime crime reporter who spent the last years of his print career at the Los Angeles Times. He's one of the masters of contemporary crime fiction with a Stakhanovite work ethic that must have delighted his city room editors as much as it now does his legions of fans. "The Scarecrow" is his 20th novel and 21st book since 1993. It's also his best work since "The Poet" 13 years ago and revives that bestselling novel's main character, newspaper police reporter Jack McEvoy.

Back then, McEvoy was toiling for Denver's Rocky Mountain News — now closed, as this new book acknowledges — and since has published a bestselling true crime book and been hired onto the staff of the Los Angeles Times at a big salary. These days, that's like having a large target painted on your back, and "The Scarecrow" opens with McEvoy being called into a supercilious assistant managing editor's office and given notice that he's being laid off — with a two-week grace period to train his replacement, a newly minted J-school grad with dewy cheeks and an ability to file with equal superficiality to every online, broadcast and hand-held "platform" imaginable.

McEvoy agrees to the arrangement, partly because he needs the checks and partly because he hopes to convey to his

[See Connelly, Page D5]



There's a bite to this HBO show

Anna Paquin's "True Blood" is one of the new shows Emmy may admire. **THE ENVELOPE**

Seeking a liberal dose of comedy

"The Goode Family" presents a clan that asks itself, "What would Al Gore do?" **D3**

Goth-metal introspection

Marilyn Manson seems to have more on his mind than his public-enemy persona. **D6**

- Ask Amy **D9**
- Bridge **D12**
- Comics **D12-13**
- The Guide **D2**
- TV grid **D14**



LISA JACK M+B

IN 1980: Barack Obama, an Occidental College student, brought the hat and cigarette as props for the photos.

Freshman year

He's president now. Then, he was just trying to be cool.

BY MIKE BOEHM >>> A public that wants to know everything about Barack Obama can thank Lisa Jack for a glimpse of what the future president was like when he was just another college freshman trying to cut a figure in this world — with a partly unbuttoned Oxford shirt, a big Panama hat and puffs of cigarette smoke as his props of choice for projecting that coveted aura of post-adolescent confidence and cool. ¶ Obama can thank Jack for keeping the roll of photographs she took of him in 1980 out of circulation until he was elected. Nine were first published in Time magazine's December "Person of the Year" spread on Obama; now 21 of the 36 photos, plus a blow-up of her original contact sheet, make up "Barack Obama: The Freshman," an exhibition opening Thursday at M+B Gallery in West Hollywood. ¶ Jack rummaged for the long-ignored negatives in her Minneapolis basement early in 2008, after it became clear Obama was a serious contender for the presidency. The callow kid kicking back on a couch in a living room near L.A.'s Occidental College, where he and Jack were students, may not have been the image the Obama campaign wanted to project. "I'm sure Hillary would have paid a fortune for them: 'Is [See Photos, Page D8]



LAWRENCE K. HO/LOS ANGELES TIMES

'I'm sure Hillary would have paid a fortune for them: "Is this who you want picking up the phone at 3 a.m.?"'

— LISA JACK, whose photos of a young Barack Obama are at M+B Gallery

CAUSE CÉLÈBRE

Obama follows money to L.A.

TINA DAUNT

If there are two things folks in Hollywood know, it's (a) how to run a fundraiser and (b) how to make a deal.



Both skills will come into focus tonight when President Obama arrives in L.A. for a huge fundraiser on behalf of the Democratic Party, with many of the industry's heavy hitters in attendance. For those not at the top of the food chain, there will be tickets available in a range of prices for the event at the Beverly Hilton — some of them even less than Lakers floor seats.

Yes, it will take \$30,400 — don't ask how anybody came up with that number — for a couple to dine with the chief executive. But you can attend a reception for only \$1,000 a person, and \$2,500 gets you VIP seating while you listen to "American Idol" alum and Oscar winner Jennifer Hudson and Earth, Wind & Fire perform. Assuming you're on a diet like everyone else, you can skip the high-calorie dinner, spare your wallet — and still show your support for the Dems as they gear up for the midterm elections.

The Beverly Hills event is expected to raise at least \$3 million and follows a similar gala the president attended in Indianapolis May 17, after his controversial but well-received commencement address at Notre Dame. Just for the record, and to show the relative difference in the cost of living — and giving — between B-Hills and the Midwest, a couple could attend the Indianapolis dinner for less than half the price — \$15,000 — which is enough of a discount to make it almost worthwhile to put up with their weather.

Both dinners are part of Obama's personal effort to [See Cause, Page D8]

ON THE MEDIA

Says who? It's not so transparent

JAMES RAINEY

Most historical materials note that the Roosevelt Room in the White House has no windows. So it makes sense that the Obama administration chose the location for a somewhat opaque briefing on the selection of Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor.



While the president introduced the appellate judge before the bright lights and a bank of cameras, his handlers insisted an hour later on continuing an unfortunate practice of past administrations — revealing details of presidential decisions on the hush-hush.

That meant inviting a couple of dozen reporters into the windowless Roosevelt Room, where the president's men promised enlightenment, but only to members of the media who promised not to identify the two "senior administration officials" giving the briefing.

The 20 minutes of "background" Q&A that ensued helped the media fill in a few details of the choice — that Sotomayor met for seven hours last week with administration officials, for example, and that Obama pegged her early on as the preferred choice — but revealed no par- [See Media, Page D7]