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Candidates clash over economic crisis



The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Barack Obama and John McCain clashed repeatedly over the causes and cures for the worst economic crisis in 80 years Tuesday night in a debate in which Republican McCain called for sweeping action by the government to directly shield many homeowners

from mortgage foreclosure. "It's my proposal. It's not Sen. Obama's proposal, it's not President Bush's proposal," McCain said in the debate that he hoped could revive his fortunes in a presidential race trending toward his rival. In one pointed confrontation on foreign policy, Obama bluntly challenged McCain's steadiness. "This is

a guy who sang bomb, bomb, bomb Iran, who called for the annihilation of North Korea — that I don't think is an example of speaking softly." That came after McCain accused him of foolishly threatening to invade Pakistan and said, "I'm not going to telegraph my punches,

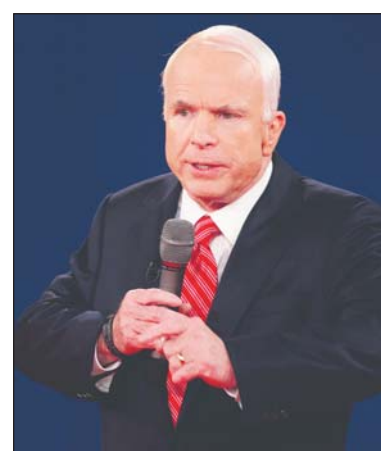
Please see CANDIDATES, Page A8

What you're interested in is trying to figure out, how is this going to impact you."

BARACK OBAMA

"It's my proposal. It's not Sen. Obama's proposal, it's not President Bush's proposal."

JOHN MCCAIN



Human angles

Neanderthal DNA tells tale of extinct cave man

By Dan Linehan
Free Press Staff Writer

ST. PETER — For more than two decades, Svante Pääbo has been telling stories using the DNA of the dead.

Ever since Pääbo plucked DNA from the skin cells of an Egyptian mummy's leg in 1985, he and others have sequenced ancient corn, woolly mammoths and plant species found in the excrement of the extinct ground sloth.

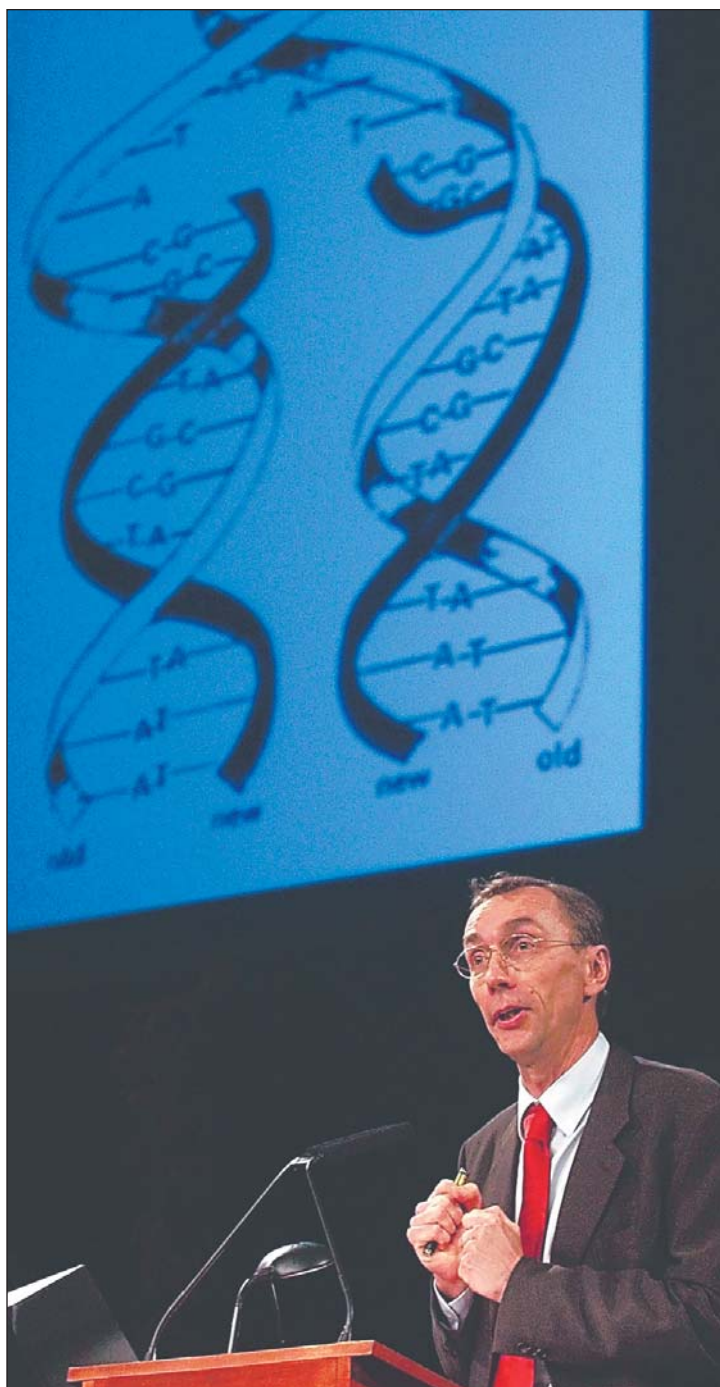
Since then, he's turned his atten-

tion to Neanderthals, the sort-of-human with a bigger build that disappeared mysteriously.

Pääbo spoke Tuesday at Gustavus Adolphus College's 44th annual Nobel Conference, which explores "Who were the first humans?" Pääbo is one of six speakers at the conference, with each researcher approaching the question from a different angle.

Also Tuesday, the college announced a \$2 million

Please see HUMAN, Page A7



Svante Pääbo begins with a refresher course in genetics before discussing his work sequencing the Neanderthal genome during his speech Tuesday at Gustavus Adolphus College's Nobel Conference. Pääbo's team at the Max Planck Institute in Germany hopes to sequence the equivalent of a Neanderthal genome by the end of this year.

John Cross

Seafood could be critical factor in transformation

ST. PETER — Curtis Marean believes he knows where Homo sapiens underwent the transformation between anatomically modern but somewhat less intelligent hominids and culturally modern human beings.

He's excavated caves

along the South African coast that he believes present the best candidates for the area where Homo sapiens became truly human, most likely between 195,000 and 123,000 years ago.

Please see SEAFOOD, Page A7



Archeologist Curtis Marean excavated caves along the South African coast to research early humanity.

Buffalo hunting harder than one might think

By Dan Linehan
Free Press Staff Writer

ST. PETER — Try chucking a wooden dart at a buffalo from more than 30 feet, and you probably won't do much more than make him mad.

But attach your seemingly flimsy spear to a

stick with a notch in it, and it turns into a deadly weapon.

A deadly weapon that takes some getting used to, as Sarah Faltesek of St. Paul discovered Tuesday along with the rest of the University of Minnesota's

Please see HUNTING, Page A7



Sarah Faltesek of St. Paul lets a dart fly Tuesday at a Nobel Conference exhibit. In a light rain, volunteers summoned their inner cavemen (or women) and tried their luck and skill on the fake buffalo, seen at right.

John Cross

Fed will lend to companies

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve reached deeper into its bag of tricks Tuesday to slow the financial crisis. Wall Street was not amused.

Frantically trying to thaw frozen lending and get the economy moving again, the Fed for the first time said it would lend directly to businesses that aren't banks and hinted that it could slash interest rates soon.

Stocks continued their free fall anyway. The Dow Jones industrial average plunged more than 500 points, to its lowest level in more than five years, and the Standard & Poor's 500 fell below 1,000 for the first time since 2003.

Please see FED, Page A8

Experts warn of higher heating costs

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Although global oil prices have plummeted, the cost of heating your home this winter will be a lot more expensive, especially for households that depend on fuel oil, the Energy Department predicted Tuesday.

Households that use fuel oil can expect to spend an average of \$2,388 — or \$449 more than last year — for the October-April heating season. Users of natural gas will pay less than half that, \$1,010 on average, still \$155 more than last year.

Please see HEATING, Page A8

UPCOMING

TOMORROW IN THE FREE PRESS

Old Haunt

Owners make sure Dark Shadows Mansion stays fresh, keeps getting spookier.

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PAGEFINDER

Business	A4
Comics	C4
Corrections	A2
Crossword	C8
Marketplace	C5-C8
Nation-World	A3
Obituaries	B2
Sports	D1-D4
TV	C5

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Take our poll

Who won Tuesday night's presidential debate?

Nick Nolte escapes burning home

MALIBU, CALIF. — Nick Nolte escaped a fire that caused an estimated \$1.5 million damage to his Malibu home on Tuesday, authorities said.

The 67-year-old actor scraped his arm and inhaled some smoke but was not hospitalized, Los Angeles County fire Inspector Sam Padilla said. The electrical fire, reported at 11:34 a.m., started in the living room, and Nolte apparently tried to put out the fire before firefighters arrived, Padilla said.

— The Associated Press

WEATHER, PAGE B4

A few clouds

Partly sunny. High in the upper 60s. Low around 41.



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