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## 72nd ALL-AMERICAN SOAPBOX DERBY

# CHAMPION FINDS MOM KNOWS BEST

Sarah Whitaker, 10, of Norton, turns parent's advice into crown in derby stock division in only her second year of competing

By Jim Mackinnon  
Beacon Journal business writer

Sarah Whitaker is more than happy her mom urged her to try Soap Box Derby racing two years ago.

That little push turned the 10-year-old from Norton into a world champion Saturday at the 72nd All-American Soap Box Derby.

Sarah, a student at Miller South school in Akron, won the championship heat in the stock division race with a time of 29.66 down the hill.

"Amazing. I just loved it," she said. "I felt incredible. Words cannot describe it."

Sarah is just the 15th Akron-area resident to win an All-American spot in derby history, said Jeff Iula, the event's general manager.

Sarah's uncle, Jon Underwood, who raced as a youth himself, rushed over and swept her up in his arms after the final races concluded at Derby Downs. "You did it! You did it!" he said. Thirteen members of the family have participated in derby racing, going back to his father in 1946, and Sarah is their first champion, he said.

"My mom made me try it first," Sarah said. "Then I just fell in love with it."

Her father, Jim Whitaker, said he wasn't really expecting a championship this weekend.

"It's only the second year she's been racing here," he said.

Gray skies, occasional wind gusts and an off-and-on light rain did little to spoil the all-day racing event and conclusion to the derby.

Police and race officials estimated about 16,000 attended the event, Iula

Please see **Derby, A10**



Maija Liimatainen (left) of Madison, Wis., Megan Thornton of Cleveland and Sarah Whitaker (right) of Norton celebrate their Soap Box Derby championships.



ED SUBA JR./Akron Beacon Journal photos

Left to right, Dakota Potts, 9; Trina Perry, 16; Bunny Perry; and Linda Lindsey celebrate after Dylan Perry, 11, wins a heat in the rally super stock division Saturday. The Perry family came from Fernpark, Fla., for the competition.



See list of the top finishers in six categories. Read about the winner of the Ultimate Speed race and the Super Kids champions **A11**



Derby veterans beat age record to compete for oil can trophy; Falls man wins **A10**

## ANALYSIS

# Obama walking a fine line dealing with racial furor

President in unique position to make a difference in interactions of ordinary Americans on race

By Charles Babington  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama's summary of the furor over a black Harvard professor's arrest was so understated, and perhaps obvious, that it barely rose above the cable-news-driven din.

"Race is still a troubling aspect of our society," the nation's first black president said Friday as he tried to tamp down a controversy he had helped fuel two days earlier.

Without doubt, what's less clear, however, is whether Obama's history-making election is triggering changes in the day-to-day racial interactions of ordinary Americans. After all, if one of the country's most prominent black scholars can be arrested in his home after a heated exchange with a white

police officer, doesn't that suggest Obama's racial breakthroughs apply more to the political world than to the broader society?

No, say a variety of people who welcomed his plunge into the controversy, even if it caused the president a little heartburn. He is uniquely positioned, they say, to pour light on one troubling issue - racial profiling by police - and to nudge the nation to talk more openly about race in general, if only for a short while, as he did with a widely followed speech in March 2008.

"Obama's election gives us someone in a position of authority to speak personally to this experience," said James Lai, director of the Ethnic Studies program at Santa Clara University.

Please see **Race, A7**

## Today's weather

Clouds with some sun and possible thunderstorm

80° High 61° Low  
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## Hubble telescope shows glimpse of Jupiter gash

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope is offering a glimpse of atmospheric debris from an object that plunged into Jupiter in a rare collision with the planet.

Scientists used the telescope Thursday to capture what they call the "sharpest visible-light picture" so far of the expanding gash. An amateur stargazer in Australia spotted the impression last Sunday.

NASA estimated the diameter of the object that hit the planet was the size of several football fields. The debris possibly came from a comet or asteroid.



## PARADE

Vanessa Hudgens has attracted millions of fans as America's high school sweetheart. The 20-year-old actress talks about her new home and her new movie *Bandstand*.

# Massive size of health care slows reform

Getting competing interests, public on board could delay bill's passage

By David Lightman  
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON: Why is it so difficult to get an agreement on overhauling America's health-care system?

There's a simple answer: "It's going to affect everybody," said House Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller, D-Calif.

The changes also could have a long-lasting effect on the federal budget and the economy, and the debate involves high-stakes politics pitting President Barack Obama against Republicans.

This week is the last week that the House of Representatives is scheduled to meet before a five-week summer recess. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., hasn't ruled out a vote on medical legislation, even though 40 to 45 moderate Democrats say they won't vote for the leadership's plan unless major changes are made.

"We will take the bill to the floor when it is ready, and when it is ready we will have the votes to pass it," Pelosi said. "I don't know that we would even have to stay any longer than our regularly scheduled departure."

The Senate, though, won't take a final vote until September at the earliest. If the two houses

Please see **Health, A6**

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