

**FORT MYERS**  
**FLORIDA WEEKLY**  
YOUR NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT SOURCE

**Publisher**

Pason Gaddis  
pgaddis@floridaweekly.com

**Executive Editor**

Jeffrey Cull  
jcull@floridaweekly.com

**Creative Director**

Jim Dickerson  
jdickerson@floridaweekly.com

**Reporters & Columnists**

Roger Williams  
Nancy Stetson  
Karen Feldman  
Betsy Clayton  
Michelle Start  
Evan Williams  
Artis Henderson  
Carol Simontacchi  
Barbara Boxleitner  
Jim McCracken  
Tanya Amador-Daigle

**Photographers**

Amanda Hartman  
Carol Orr Hartman

**Contributing Photographer**

Jim McLaughlin

**Copy Editor**

Cathy Cottrill

**Production**

Alex Perez  
Amanda Hartman  
Kim Boone  
Jon Colvin

**Circulation Manager**

Penny Kennedy  
pkennedy@floridaweekly.com

**Circulation**

John Noe  
Paul Neumann  
Rod Irvin  
Francie Moser  
Sherry Neumann

**Account Executives**

Shelley Lund  
slund@floridaweekly.com  
Doug Rosburg  
drosburg@floridaweekly.com  
Allison Spencer  
aspencer@floridaweekly.com  
Michelle Harrison  
mharrison@floridaweekly.com

**Business Office Manager**

Kelli Carico

**Street Address:**

Florida Weekly  
4300 Ford Street, Suite 106  
Fort Myers, Florida 33916  
Phone 239.333.2135  
Fax: 239.333.2140



**INLAND PRESS**

**Subscriptions:**

One year mailed subscriptions  
are available for \$29.95.

Call 239.333.2135

or visit us on the web at  
[www.floridaweekly.com](http://www.floridaweekly.com)  
and click on subscribe today.

**FORT MYERS**  
**FLORIDA WEEKLY**  
YOUR NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT SOURCE

Copyright: The contents of the Florida Weekly  
are copyright 2007 by Florida Media Group, LLC.  
No portion may be reproduced without the express  
written consent of Florida Media Group, LLC.

# OPINION

## Scary headlines: Who is going to lead us through these dark days in our future?



— *Editor's note: Tanya Amador-Daigle is reporting for Florida Weekly on the presidential election. She has a unique perspective on the primaries and the process for choosing a candidate, having traveled the country reporting on primaries and caucuses for the Purple States project. To learn more about Purple States go, to [www.purplestates.tv](http://www.purplestates.tv).*

"World Bank Under Cyber Siege in 'Unprecedented Crisis'" and "Chicken Stealing During Depression." These are just some of the scary headlines I saw this week. Today, it seems like the sky is falling all around us. As the presidential election draws closer, Americans are asking themselves, "Who can save us?"

### Americans are angry

I've been to a lot of rallies this year for the Purple States project. During the primary season, rallies and town hall meetings were cheerful and hopeful.

More recently, the vibe seems to be changing. Ever since that dark day when the bailout was passed, it seems that with every drop of the stock market, Americans are showing their angst. The rallies now seem passionately angry and ominous, with a touch of underlying steam that threatens to explode.

At the local Sarah Palin rally last Monday, was held at the Germain Arena, several protestors were thrown out. This isn't unusual. I've never been to a political rally where someone WASN'T thrown out. The opposition is good at infiltrating.

However, it seems there is more fury behind the outbursts now. *The Washington Post* reported that someone in the audience at the Clearwater rally that morning yelled, "Kill him" when Gov. Palin spoke of Sen. Barack Obama's association with William Ayers. Mr. Ayers is the guy who was labeled by the FBI as a domestic terrorist after he founded the radical Weather Underground in the 1960s. Other accusations are that a man yelled a racial slur at an African American cameraman, and that members of the press were jeered at after Gov. Palin made reference to her disastrous Katie Couric interview.

### The desperation is palpable

On television recently, at a town hall meeting in Waukesha, Wisc., I watched radio talk show host James T. Harris say to Sen. John McCain, "It is absolutely vital that you take it to Obama, that you hit him where it hurts, there's a soft spot. We have all of these shady characters who have surrounded him (Sen. Obama). I am begging you sir, I'm begging you, take it to him."

In front of the same crowd in Waukesha, another man said, "I'm mad, I'm really mad! When you have Sen. Obama and the rest of the hooligans up there, going to run the country, we have to have our head examined." Adding, "It's time the two of you represent the rest of us. So go get 'em."

### Voter fraud

I recently spoke with a university student who confided to me that she just discovered that some of the students at her school, who are supposed to be registering students to vote, are tearing up ballots for Sen. McCain. I cannot mention my source name yet until the cat is out of the bag. However, I'm confident it will soon become public since they've gone to the proper authorities.

In Nevada, over at the headquarters for ACORN, The Association of Community Organizers for Reform Now, the FBI has seized records and computers, prompted by complaints of voter fraud. Sen. McCain's camp claims that the supposedly bi-partisan group has received \$832,000 from Sen. Obama within the last year. I seriously doubt Sen. Obama knew they were up to no good, but it certainly doesn't look great that he once represented the group in a lawsuit.

ACORNs' track record with the authorities doesn't put it in a good light. It has been under investigation countless times, in several states, for voting irregularities and an embezzlement case. It's just more ammo for the McCain camp to use as an example of what they consider Sen. Obama's poor judgment in whom he associates with. The audacity of ACORN is absolutely stunning. I mean, come on, using the names of the starting lineup of the Dallas Cowboys football team for fake ballots? I wonder what Tony Romo and Terrell Owens think about that.

With a global economy on the verge of imploding, and only 21 days left to D-Day (Decision Day), I wonder what turn this country will take, once a new president is chosen. ■

## GUEST OPINION

### The opaque crisis



By the time the House of Representatives passed, on the second try, President Bush's \$700 billion financial bailout plan, many Americans thought they understood the problem in its broad outlines. It went something like this: With so many toxic assets on the books (in the form of mortgage-backed securities), America's financial institutions had become wary of lending to businesses, consumers and to one another. The federal government would step in to buy those bad assets in the hope that the infusion of government cash would cause the seized-up credit spigots to open once again, with the further hope that this would allow normal economic activity to resume.

That, at least, was the shorthand description of the crisis and the proposed solution that people tried to wrap their minds around, uncertain even as they did so that they had it right. That uncertainty is more than understandable, given the lack of consensus among economists on either problem or solution. And this week, the chorus of voices asking, "Just

what is going on — what is *really* going on?" grew, as stocks fell worldwide in the wake of the rescue plan's passage.

The first thing to remember is, even if the government plan succeeds in averting a once-in-a-lifetime economic crisis, the bailout will take time to do its work. The second thing to remember is, even if full-blown economic disaster is averted, the economy is very probably headed into recession, and the financial markets are responding as much to indicators (such as recent unemployment data) that reflect this turning of the economic cycle as they are to the credit crisis and the government's response.

Not that the immediate crisis and the overall state of the economy are unrelated. But if you think of the current state of affairs as a fire, the whole house doesn't have to go up in smoke for the value of the house to go down or for restoration work to be needed.

Even with these things in mind, though, what makes the present time so frightening is the opaque nature of economic causality. The effects are in plain sight — on Wall Street, in the falling value of Americans' retirement plans, in layoffs — but the causes remain hidden behind a wall of all-but-incomprehensible numbers and jargon. When those with advanced degrees in economics can't seem to come

to agreement, the rest of us are left in an advanced state of uncertainty. And uncertainty is fertile ground for fear.

This is a dangerous time, ripe for the worst kind of demagoguery and flim-flammy of all kinds. It is the sort of time when a nation most hungers for leadership. Unfortunately, genuine leadership can be in very short supply in the weeks before a seminal presidential and congressional election. The sitting president is deep in his lame-duck period. The presidential candidates are campaigning in an era when leveling with the people is considered a risk without reward. And Congress, having passed the bailout bill, has headed for the hills.

The assessment of the International Monetary Fund is that we are headed for a global economic downturn. This unwelcome news seems a realistic view of events. It might be most helpful now for those in our government, those running for government office, and those in the press to start acknowledging and explaining the true scope of the potential problem. Shedding light and providing clarity are not only the first steps in looking for solutions, they are necessary measures if we are to head off the "unreasoning terror," the "fear itself" that Franklin Delano Roosevelt warned of 75 years ago. ■