Material on Islam that [Wired] has acquired. In them, the Constitutionally protected religious faith of millions of Americans is portrayed as an indicator of terrorist activity.” [http://bit.ly/qBPsT1]

MEDIAWATCH: HuffPost DC, covering “local D.C.,” brings the HuffPost mix of aggregation and reporting to the city and suburbs, “boosted by the six people in our Washington bureau who’ve come through City Paper … It’ll be led by Mike Grass, former CP editor, Arin Greenwood, an author and frequent CP contributor, and Rachel Tepper, a former food and drink reporter with NBC’s ‘The Feast.’ It’s the best of times in Washington for the retainer class, and we’ll cover them closely, but we’ll also tell the stories of those for whom it’s the worst of times.”

SPORTS BLINK – DEBUTING TODAY -- Free iPad app: “Sports Illustrated Football Rivals takes you deep inside 10 of football's definitive rivalries, both college and professional. Stunning photography, compelling videos and moving photo montages narrated by Emmy nominated actor Kyle Chandler (‘Friday Night Lights’ coach Eric Taylor) enhance the inside stories as told by SI's … writers. … [P]ick any point in the respective teams' histories to get the highlights, the back stories and all the key statistics. Relive the exploits of the iconic players and coaches who make the rivalry what it is. Then get an inside look at this year's upcoming showdown.” [iTunes http://bit.ly/mYZLDt]

N.Y. POST wood, on the N.Y. special election’s message to Obama: “WHAM BAM!”

--PARTY OF WOE -- Jonathan Martin and Ben Smith and Jake Sherman: “On a high-level campaign conference call Tuesday afternoon, Democratic donors and strategists commiserated over their disappointment in Obama. A source on the call described the mood as ‘awful.’ ‘People feel betrayed, disappointed, furious, disgusted, hopeless’…. The president’s feisty new jobs plan has probably preempted open revolt in his party – though a Bloomberg poll released Wednesday morning found that 51 percent of Americans don’t believe it will help lower the unemployment rate…. [S]ome Democratic insiders sought to put a better face on their diminished state -- before adding that they wanted to see a tougher Obama.”

MORNING CRUNCH – “The myth of freshman power,” by Jonathan Allen and Elizabeth Titus: “[R]ather than burning down the House, [Republican freshmen] made themselves at home, … with voting patterns that are virtually identical to the rest of the Republican caucus, according to a POLITICO analysis of voting trends. On 100 key House votes, Republican freshmen rarely stand out, bucking the party line at almost the same rate as all other House Republicans — 12.5 percent of the time for freshmen and 12.34 percent for veterans. On 77 out of 100 votes studied, there was no more than a 5 percentage point difference between the freshman vote split and the nonfreshman split.”

BREAKING – “Kabul siege ends after 20 hours” – Reuters/Kabul: “A marathon siege in Kabul's diplomatic enclave ended with the death of the last two of a group of gunmen who held off Western and Afghan security forces for nearly 20 hours, showering rockets on Western embassies in a dramatic show of insurgent strength. It was the longest and most audacious militant attack on the Afghan capital in the decade since the Taliban were ousted from power … U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker said around six or seven rockets had hit inside the embassy perimeter during the early hours of the attack.”

ELIZABETH WARREN holds five-stop announcement tour TODAY for Dem. nomination to challenge Sen. Scott Brown (R-Mass.): “The pressures on middle class families are worse than ever, but it is the big corporations that get their way in Washington.”


IF YOU READ ONLY ONE PARAGRAPH -- “Pessimism Surges as 72% See U.S. Economy on Wrong Course,” by Bloomberg’s Mike Dornin: “Just 9 percent say they are confident the economy won’t slide back into recession, in a Bloomberg National Poll. A majority says it will take at least six more years for home values in their community to recover.”

CNN/ORC, out this a.m.:

--Better off than three years ago? No: 58% … Yes: 32%

--Are you ANGRY about how things are going in the country? Yes: 72%

--Are you SCARED about how things are going in the country? Yes: 71%
--Who do you rust more to handle the economy? Obama: 46% ... Republicans: 37%

--Obama and Congress should pay more attention to ...? Jobs: 65% ... Deficit: 29%

--Obama jobs plan: Favor: 43% ... Oppose: 35%


TOP TWEET-- @ErinMcPike: “From my debate story, DNC’s @woodhouseb says re Perry, ‘When they’re biting you in the ass, you're in the lead.’”

TIM PAWLENTY IN D.C. FOR “RETIRE THE DEBT” PARTY LAST NIGHT, with joshing and meatballs: $500 to $5,000 per individual or PAC. Co-hosts (eight senators and three House members) each gave $5,000 from leadership PACs. Amount raised wasn’t disclosed, but finance folks were clearly pleased. Joining T-Paw and Mrs. Pawlenty were Speaker Boehner; Sens. Thune, McCain, Burr, Blunt, Graham and Hoeven; Reps. Kline and Paulsen; plus Charlie Black, Sam Geduldig, Dan Meyer, Ron Kaufman, Jim Hyland and Mike Needham. Former Pawlenty staff and advisers included Brian Haley, Caitlin Dunn, Mark Kennedy, Sara Fagen, Phil Musser, Alex Conant, Patrick Ruffini Joey Smith, Rob Noel, Jon Seaton, Michael Toner and Elise Stefanik, who hosted the party at her Hill townhouse. Elise used her Italian mom’s recipes and made all the food, including bruscetta, mozzarella and tomatoes.

--SPOTTED: Speaker Boehner, making a beeline for the meatballs.

--Pawlenty thanked guests by quoting the Beatles/Joe Cocker, “I get by with a little help with my friends.” Jokingly added next line: “I get high with a little help from my friends.”

GOP HANDILY WINS BOTH SPECIALS:

--NY-09: AP, 2:23 a.m.: “With more than 80 percent of precincts reporting, [Republican Bob] Turner had 54 percent to [Democrat David] Weprin’s 46 percent.”

-- NV-02: Las Vegas Review-Journal: “The final tally was 58 percent to 36 percent.”

THE NARRATIVE -- “For Democrats, It’s 2010 All Over Again,” by Nate Silver, NYT’s “FiveThirtyEight” guru: “There are good reasons to think that local issues may have loomed especially large in [the Weiner district]… Obama had significantly underperformed his Democratic predecessors in the district in 2008, and the large split in voting between the Brooklyn and Queens portions of the district — the Brooklyn parts are more heavily Jewish — implies that Israel-related issues may have played a role. … [T]he [past] four special elections, taken as a whole, suggest that Democrats may still be locked in a 2010-type political environment. Democrats might not lose many more seats in the House if that were the case, since most of their vulnerable targets have already been picked off, but it would limit their potential for any gains. And it could produce dire results for the Democrats in the U.S. Senate, where they have twice as many seats up for re-election.” http://bit.ly/qXD3Ln

PUNDIT PREP -- “Voters rebuke Obama in special House elections,” by Dan Hirschhorn and Alex Isenstadt, with Ben Smith and Maggie Haberman: “Democrats suffered a major blow in two special House election losses, leaving the party at a political low point as it gears up for 2012. Republicans pulled off an upset in New York’s 9th Congressional District … And the GOP cruised to an easy win as Mark Amodei won Nevada’s Republican-friendly 2nd District [over Kate Marshall]. The outcome in New York … was particularly crushing. … ‘We have been told this is a referendum,’ [Republican Bob] Turner said. ‘And we’re ready to say,
‘Mr. President, we are on the wrong track.’ … We are unhappy, I am telling you. I am the messenger … I need us. … We’ve lit one candle today and there’s going to be a bonfire pretty soon.’ …

"[Democrat David] Weprin … refused to concede. … The night broke a string of special election losses for Republicans, and in a particularly sweet way: Democratic Medicare attacks never caught on as an issue for elderly voters in Nevada like they did in an upstate New York special election earlier this year … Turner’s star rose in part because of unrest with Obama’s Israel policy among Jewish voters. ‘It was all Obama — not even a thought of anything else,’ Turner consultant Steve Goldberg said.” http://bit.ly/r6UHYH

--AP’s Beth Fouhy, on the district: “Democrats have a 3-1 registration edge and have held office for nearly a century.”


TO TELL THE KIDS – Nickelodeon encourages kids to get active by briefly going dark on Sat., Sept. 24, for Worldwide Day of Play, ‘Supported by ‘Let's Move,’ the President’s Council On Fitness, Sports and Nutrition and the National Park Service -- Nick to Transform D.C.’s Ellipse with Entertainment and Appearances by More Than 25 of Net’s Stars and Characters, including Victoria Justice and the Cast of Victorious; Keke Palmer; Big Time Rush; Cast of iCarly; SpongeBob SquarePants; Dora the Explorer”. “Nickelodeon’s networks and websites will go dark from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. (ET/PT) as a signal to kids and families to get up and get active. In D.C., activities will begin at 10 a.m. ‘This event is the biggest celebration of play in our history,’ said Cyma Zarghami, President, Nickelodeon Networks. ‘The First Lady's leadership in elevating the importance of kids and families living healthier and more active lifestyles is a passion we share.’ …

“More than 25 of Nickelodeon’s most popular stars will travel to Washington, … including iCarly (Jennette McCurdy, Nathan Kress, Noah Munck and Jerry Trainor); Victorious (Victoria Justice, Daniella Monet, Elizabeth Gillies, Ariana Grande, Avan Jogia, Leon Thomas III and Matt Bennett); Keke Palmer (Truc Jackson, VP); Big Time Rush; SpongeBob SquarePants; Dora the Explorer; the Fresh Beat Band; and the casts of Supah Ninjas (Ryan Potter, Gracie Dzienny and Carlos Knight), Bucket & Skinner’s Epic Adventures (Taylor Gray, Dillon Lane and Ashley Argota) and the forthcoming live-action series, How to Rock (Cymphonique Miller and Max Schneider). … Nickelodeon, now in its 32nd year, … has been the number-one-rated basic cable network for 16 consecutive years.”

BIRTHDAYS: Katie Smith (hat tip: La Ronda) … Will Nichols is 4; celebrated last weekend with a gymnastics party; was under the weather yesterday so hoping to bounce back for Game Day (cap tip: Charlie) … Kari Scott Abitbol … Carey Klutz is 3-0 … Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is 46 … Judy Vilmain … Dan Langer … Hope Warschaw … Pam Porter … Linck Zingale … Dave Dogan … Ken Strasma (h/t Teresa Vilmain).

OUT TODAY: Transatlantic Trends, the German Marshall Fund’s 10th-annual poll of Americans and Europeans on foreign policy and economic policy. Highlights: Americans are now more likely to look toward Asia (51%) than the European Union (38%) as being in the U.S. vital interest, and it is youth who are driving the numbers toward Asia. In 2004, it was flipped: 54% of Americans said Europe was more vital than Asia (29%). Europeans broadly approved of Obama’s foreign policy (75%) and his handling of international terrorism (73%). 82% of Americans felt personally affected by the economic downturn, and 61% of Americans wanted to decrease government spending. For the first time, a majority of Americans were pessimistic about stabilizing Afghanistan (56%), while 66% felt troops should be reduced or withdrawn from the country. http://www.transatlantictrends.org
PINK RIBBON RED RIBBON – “The George W. Bush Institute, the U.S. Department of State, Susan G. Komen for the Cure®, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Announce New Women’s Health Initiative -- Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon Partnership Expands Critically Needed Breast and Cervical Cancer Interventions in sub-Saharan Africa”: “The George W. Bush Institute, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Susan G. Komen for the Cure®, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) announce Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon®, an innovative partnership to leverage public and private investment in global health to combat cervical and breast cancer – two of the leading causes of cancer death in women – in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon will expand the availability of vital cervical cancer screening and treatment and breast care education … ‘It’s time to take the next step in building on the progress that has been made over the past decade in the fight against HIV and AIDS,’ said President George W. Bush. … ‘Today the majority of women in Sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to critical breast and cervical cancer screening and treatment services and we must move quickly to address this growing epidemic,’ said Ambassador Nancy G. Brinker, founder and CEO of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.”

EXCLUSIVE -- FORMER BUSH SPOKESMAN ROB SALITERMAN TO GOOGLE: Rob Saliterman has joined Google to run its sales and outreach efforts to Republican campaigns. Rob will be the political ads team’s point person in Washington, building relationships with campaign managers, digital agencies and advocacy groups to drive adoption of online advertising. Saliterman comes to Google from Bloomberg L.P., where he was Chief of Staff for Public Affairs. He previously was Communications Director to former President George W. Bush in Dallas, and earlier served in communications roles at the White House and Treasury. His political experience includes working at the RNC and B-C ’04. Rob received an MBA from Harvard Business School and a BA from Columbia University. And he changed the world by introducing Playbook to Teddy Downey.

--FLASHBACK: Karl Rove in the Wall Street Journal (March 10, 2011): “[I]n the year ahead, smart campaigns will devote a good deal less money to running 30-second TV ads and a good deal more to using the Internet to organize, persuade, motivate and raise funds. ... In 2012, the Web will likely eclipse newspapers and close in on TV as the principal source of election news. ... [C]ampaigns are only starting to understand how to use the Web and social-networking tools to make video and other data go viral—moving not just to those on a campaign's email list but to the broader public. ... [W]e are seeing a version of Joseph Schumpeter's 'creative destruction' fundamentally alter the landscape of American politics. It will have huge implications on how campaigns are run, who we elect, and what kind of country we become.”

--HAPPENING TODAY: YouTube & Google Boot Camp at the Newseum -- free one-day training for campaigns of all sizes. http://bit.ly/oYVe3t

--KEVIN SHEEKEY, Rob’s boss at Bloomberg: “I love NYC, but sometimes tough to compete with a job offering that comes with life guard and beach volleyball. But credit Google's unrelenting foresight, Rob is a rising star, and online advertising is the most targeted campaign spending, and this cycle will be a watershed in how campaigns and outside groups are run and interact with voters.

BLEAK TIMES: N.Y. Times 1-col. lead, “SOARING POVERTY CASTS SPOTLIGHT ON ‘LOST DECADE’” ... WSJ 4-col. lead, “Income Slides to 1996 Levels” ... USA Today, 1.5-col. lead, “Poverty at 15.1%, highest since '93: 10-year income drop [is] USA’s 1st in 5 decades” … Daily Beast, story 1, “U.S. POVERTY SKYROCKETS: A staggering 46.2 million American — or 15.1 percent of the population — are living in poverty, according to new census date. It’s the highest number in 52 years.”

--L.A. Times 2-col. lead, “U.S. poverty totals hit a 50-year high: More go without health insurance, and young adults move home”: “In a grim portrait of a nation in economic turmoil, the government reported that the number of people living in poverty last year surged to 46.2 million — the most in at least half a century
— as 1 million more Americans went without health insurance and household incomes fell sharply. The poverty rate for all Americans rose in 2010 for the third consecutive year, matching the 15.1% figure in 1993.”

http://lat.ms/1q7day

TOP TALKER – “Hill staffers fear pay cuts, layoffs,” by Anna Palmer and Jonathan Allen: “The anxiety is so high over expected pay cuts, salary freezes and layoffs that some senior staffers are considering careers on K Street — a brain drain some observers already predict. ... ‘We are eliminating or combining several staff positions,’ one House Democratic chief of staff told POLITICO. ... As part of their cost-cutting agenda, House Republicans initiated an across-the-board, 5 percent budget cut at the beginning of the year. Offices are expecting to feel even more pain if the Senate passes a House Appropriations Committee bill that includes an additional 6.4 percent in cuts to members’ budgets. ... Many chiefs of staff have started with small office perks: water jugs, sodas and orange juice.

“One Republican lawmaker told POLITICO that aides now take up a collection because the office can’t afford coffee. But the next round promises to cut much closer to the bone ... ‘Salaries are essentially frozen and in some cases going down,’ said one former senior House Democratic aide, who recently left the Hill. ... Do you ask the boss to give up a government-funded car lease or simply get rid of someone who writes letters to constituents back home? At what point do you give up the subscription to the local newspaper? For some offices, the cuts will mean across-the-board salary reductions ... [O]ne House chief of staff: ‘You’re going to see a lot less mass mailings, so it will impact people’s ability to interact with constituents. You could lose, on average, one staffer per office.’” http://bit.ly/r18dQ2

SOLAR SCANDAL:

-- WashPost col. 1, “E-mails cite rush on loan to solar firm: White House pushed OMB on timing despite concerns about risk,” by Joe Stephens and Carol D. Leonnig: “The Obama White House tried to rush federal reviewers for a decision on a nearly half-billion-dollar loan to the solar-panel manufacturer Solyndra so Vice President Biden could announce the approval at a September 2009 groundbreaking ... August 2009 e-mails ... show White House officials repeatedly asking OMB reviewers when they would be able to decide on the federal loan and noting a looming press event ... Solyndra collapsed two weeks ago, leaving taxpayers liable for the $535 million loan. ... White House officials said Tuesday that no one in the administration tried to influence the OMB decision ... In one e-mail, an assistant to Rahm Emanuel ... wrote ... to OMB about the upcoming Biden announcement on Solyndra and asked whether ‘there is anything we can help speed along on OMB side.’ An OMB staff member responded: ‘I would prefer that this announcement be postponed. ... This is the first loan guarantee and we should have full review with all hands on deck to make sure we get it right.’” http://wapo.st/PC1ZMh

-- ABC’s Brian Ross did a “World News” piece on the “internal emails uncovered by [Republican] investigators for the House Energy and Commerce Committee,” and provided to the Center for Public Integrity: “‘This deal is NOT ready for prime time,’ one White House budget analyst wrote in a March 10, 2009 email, nine days before the administration formally announced the loan.” Video http://abcn.ws/oDHhPw

BUSINESS WATCH – “Mayor Emanuel Announces $25 Million Partnership with Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Initiative in Chicago”: “Mayor Rahm Emanuel ... announced that Chicago will join the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses initiative, which will help Chicago’s small businesses gain crucial education, business support services, and access to capital. ‘There is nothing more important for the future of Chicago’s economy than our small business community,’ said Mayor Emanuel. ‘This partnership between the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses initiative and local Chicago partners will provide our small business community essential resources to help us meet these goals.’ The initiative, which is already in place in five other cities, will help local small businesses create jobs and stimulate economic growth by committing $25 million for small business loans, business education and grants for supporting community partners. ‘Goldman Sachs has supported many of Chicago’s companies for more than a century,’ said Lloyd C. Blankfein, Chairman and CEO of Goldman Sachs. ‘Through 10,000 Small Businesses we are also investing in Chicago’s small
businesses, helping them to expand, create more jobs and realize their economic potential. The program will begin in January 2012. Applications are being accepted at http://www.ccc.edu/10ksb.com.”

SPORTS BLINK – Cover of USA Today Sports Weekly, “Pack attack: Aaron Rodgers & Co. show off a Super offense ... Rodgers cool in the spotlight: Packers QB comfortable in tackling the challenge of repeating as champ.”

--“Monday Night Football Opener Wins the Night among All Networks ... broadcast or cable” – ESPN release: “The two ESPN MNF games finished as the two highest-rated programs of the night on any network, averaging a 9.5 household rating, 9,391,000 households (12,965,000 viewers). ... ESPN’s BCS National Championship Game (Auburn-Oregon, 1/10/11) -- the most-viewed program in cable television history with an average of 17.7 million homes (27.3 million viewers) – ranks as the most-viewed program of the calendar year, followed by the 2011 Rose Bowl (20.6 million viewers -- TCU-Wisconsin, 1/1/11).

--NFL Week 1 records – NFL release: “3 kickoff return touchdowns of at least 100 yards – Green Bay’s RANDALL COBB (108 yards), Minnesota’s PERCY HARVIN (103) and San Francisco’s TED GINN JR. (102) ... Cobb’s 108-yard kickoff return tied the record for the longest kickoff return in NFL history. The Packers’ rookie equaled New England’s ELLIS HOBBS, who returned a kickoff 108 yards for a touchdown against the New York Jets on September 9, 2007. ... San Francisco’s Ginn became the 12th player in NFL history ... to return a kickoff (102 yards) and a punt (55 yards) for a touchdown in the same game. ... New England quarterback TOM BRADY and wide receiver WES WELKER connected on the 12th 99-yard touchdown pass in NFL history ... 906 net passing yards between the New England Patriots (516) and Miami Dolphins (390) is the most in a game in NFL history ... The Patriots-Dolphins contest was also the first game in NFL history to feature both a 500-yard passer and a 400-yard passer – TOM BRADY, 517 & CHAD HENNE, 416. ... "Carolina rookie quarterback CAM NEWTON had 422 passing yards, the most ever by a player in his NFL debut. The previous mark was 346 yards by Pro Football Hall of Famer OTTO GRAHAM in 1950. Newton’s 422 yards are tied for the most in a single game by a rookie (MATTHEW STAFFORD, November 22, 2009). ... The Thursday night Kickoff opener between Green Bay (AARON RODGERS: 312 yards, 3 TDs) and New Orleans (DREW BREES: 419 yards, 3 TDs) marked the first time in NFL history that opposing quarterbacks both passed for at least 300 yards and three touchdowns without an interception in their teams’ season opener. ... Oakland kicker SEBASTIAN JANIKOWSKI connected on a 63-yard field goal against the Denver Broncos, tying the record for the longest field goal in NFL history. ... Cincinnati rookie wide receiver A.J. GREEN caught a game-winning 41-yard touchdown pass in the fourth quarter of the Bengals’ 27-17 win at Cleveland. It was the longest fourth-quarter game-winning TD catch in NFL history by a rookie in his team’s first game.”

DESSERT, from Kevin Robillard (@PoliticoKevin) -- STEPHEN COLBERT to AL GORE (the second Nobel Laureate to appear on the Colbert Report last night, after Paul Krugman): “Rick Perry endorsed you in 1988. Will you return the favor right now and endorse Rick Perry?”

GORE: “Well, it would hurt him a lot, in a Republican primary.”

COLBERT: “So, is that an endorsement?”

GORE: “No, it’s not.”

COLBERT: “So because an endorsement would hurt him and you won’t endorse him, isn’t that, in itself, an endorsement?”

GORE: “You could put it that way.”
F OR MONDAY PAPERS – “Obama-Campaign: Tough economic climate as Obama seeks 2nd term,” by Charles Babington: “Political aide David Axelrod hinted that Obama will try to sharpen his differences with Republicans who insist on spending cuts in virtually every area and who refuse to let tax cuts expire, as scheduled, for the wealthiest. ... The Republicans ‘essential message is, let’s go back to the policies that helped get us in this mess,’ he said, citing Wall Street deregulation and corporate tax breaks. If GOP lawmakers, backed by the presidential hopefuls, continue to thwart Obama’s bid to mix targeted spending cuts with tax increases, Axelrod said, ‘we’re going to take our case to the American people.’ ...

“Hopeful Democrats say Obama can survive next year if people feel growth is coming soon. Another way to survive is uglier: admitting the economy is a mess, but pressing the case that the GOP alternative is so unacceptable that the incumbent should stay in office, even with no recovery in sight. Obama’s aides say the election will be ‘a choice, not a referendum.’ That hints at a bruising effort to divert attention from the president’s record and focus on what the Obama campaign believes are the GOP nominee’s chief shortcomings.”

THE NARRATIVE – N.Y Times col. 1, “G.O.P. CANDIDATES TURN ATTENTION TO ONE ANOTHER -- FINE-TUNING STRATEGIES: With 3 Debates in Next 3 Weeks, Campaigns Enter a Key Stage,” by Jeff Zeleny, in Indianola, Iowa: “In both parties, there is now a sense that the president’s political frailty ... is even greater than it appeared at the start of the summer, injecting additional energy and urgency into the Republican primary race. While many Democrats once hoped that perceived deficiencies among the Republican contenders could provide a lightning rod to Mr. Obama, the prospect of losing the presidency is no longer summarily dismissed by his advisers. ... [T]here remains a debate within the [Republican] party about whether the candidates are moving too far right in pursuit of their most ideologically committed voters ... Jon M. Huntsman Jr. of Utah has been making the case for moderation, attracting new attention... Perry ... is at the center of nearly every Republican strategy.”


WHAT THEY’RE SAYING AT HAWK ‘N’ DOVE:

--People who don’t work for POLITICO and should succeed Carl Hulse as New York Times chief congressional correspondent: NYT’s Jackie Calmes ... Slate’s John Dickerson ... WSJ’s Jonathan Weisman ... HuffPost’s Jon Ward ... WashPost’s Paul Kane.

--People who don’t work for POLITICO and should succeed Moscow-bound David Herszenhorn as an NYT congressional correspondent: TIME’s Michael Scherer ... AP’s Chuck Babington ... USA Today’s Jackie Kucinich ... ABC off-air reporter Matt Jaffe ... AP’s Andrew Taylor.

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BIRTHDAYS: Sophie VandeHei is 9, celebrating with her new room! ... Beyoncé is 30 ... Anu Rangappa ... RGA communications director Mike Schrmpf (hat tip: Jon Thompson) ... Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer is 55 ... Susan Ferrecho McKelway (h/ts Patrick Gavin) ... Ashley Harvard is 26 ... Tom McInerney ... Al Fish ... former congressman Anthony Weiner is 47 ... Harold Ickes (h/ts Teresa Vilmain).

POPPING ONLINE: Twitter hashtag #911 remembered

--Department of Homeland Security, “Share Your September 11 Story … We invite you to share your 9/11 story or memory with others on our blog, on our Facebook page or on twitter using the hashtag #911remembered. You can see … what others are sharing on Twitter right now.” http://1.usa.gov/otZbZf

THE BIG IDEA: WAS BILL CLINTON “CLINTONIAN”? – Third Way co-founders Matt Bennett and Jonathan Cowan have a piece in WashPost “Outlook” as part of a centerfold spread, “What’s in a name, and what isn’t? When history’s most influential people don’t live up to their namesakes.” Their is the only one on a contemporary political figure: “At times, Clinton helped feed the notion that ‘Clintonian’ was shorthand for cautious political calculation, as when he allowed the callow political consultant Dick Morris to define his post-1994 agenda as ‘triangulation.’ And even some of his closest allies accused him of sometimes taking the path of least resistance, as he did with the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell law, which attempted to split the difference on gays in the military — a policy Clinton now says he regrets.

“But [a] more expansive notion of ‘Clintonian’ infused his White House. He was fond of saying privately that he cared more about trend lines than headlines. He saw that the nation was on the verge of a post-industrial information age … Clinton understood that everything we knew about the economy was changing — and that the New Deal and Great Society approaches that had made America more prosperous and more just would not provide a blueprint for this new era. For a Democratic Party still in the grip of Mondale-era liberalism, his ideas initially seemed heretical. But … today, the Democratic Party that Clinton challenged is largely gone. Clinton’s opponents continue to fight over his legacy and still hope to make the negative definition of ‘Clintonian’ stick. … [W]e believe that the term's deeper meaning — the willingness to challenge stale orthodoxies; to reform, not reject, government; and to modernize progressive ideas — is the one most likely to endure.”
http://wapo.st/qvuKLT

POLL DU JOUR -- Boston Globe 1-col. lead, Scott “Brown’s support high, but slipping,” by Noah Bierman: “Senator Scott Brown remains the most popular major political figure in Massachusetts, but his approval rating has fallen from a year ago, a sign he may be more vulnerable than anticipated as he gears up for a reelection fight, according to a Boston Globe poll. … 49 percent said they view him favorably … A Globe poll conducted last September showed him with 58 percent approval … Elizabeth Warren, a Harvard professor and former Obama administration official, … remains unknown to large swaths of the voting public (60%) … The Globe poll reinforces the belief among some political analysts that Democratic contenders start with built-in advantages in Massachusetts and that almost any candidate who draws strong party support could forge a credible challenge to Brown. … Obama is more popular [54%] than Governor Deval Patrick, who was rated favorably by 45 percent.” http://bo.st/orfeiU

SPORTS BLINK – First Saturday of college football – “Ducks are plucked: Four turnovers by Oregon help LSU to victory, by Dallas Morning News’ Brad Townsend, in Arlington, Tex.: “Even without its starting quarterback, No. 4 LSU reaffirmed that it’s a powerhouse program that has innate ability to produce on a national stage. … Senior backup quarterback Jarrett Lee of Brenham passed for only 98 yards, but he was error-free as the Tigers rolled past the mistake-prone [No. 3 Oregon] Ducks, 40-27, before 87,711 Cowboys Stadium fans in the third annual Cowboys Classic.”

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colleagues have been getting -- sign up for this exclusive FREE 14-DAY PREVIEW today: https://www.politicopro.com/preview, Promo Code: PLAYBOOK1 **
BULLETIN – AP: “Employers added no net jobs in August, while unemployment rate was unchanged at 9.1 pec.”

--The White House budget office’s “Mid-Session Review,” released yesterday, projects unemployment averaging 9.1% this year and 9.0% next year. The first question at yesterday’s briefing, from AP’s Julie Pace: “The new budget projections … predict 9 percent unemployment next year when the President is facing reelection, 1.7 percent growth for this year. Does the White House believe that the jobs initiatives the President is going to announce [in his 7 p.m. Thursday address to Congress] will change [unemployment and growth] projections for the positive?” Carney: “Yes. Absolutely.”

FIRST LOOK – Texas Gov. Rick Perry today will announce top members of his presidential campaign staff, which this week moved into offices, in a former steam laundry at 8th and Congress, in downtown Austin: Rob Johnson, campaign manager; David Carney, chief strategist; Deirdre Delisi, policy and strategy director; Wayne Hamilton, political director; Ray Sullivan, communications director; Eric Bearse, deputy communications director; Mark Miner, national press secretary; Robert Black, travel press secretary; and Katherine Cesinger, state press director (working with Texas media).

--Gov. Perry: “I am committed to turning our country back into the land of opportunity as the next president of the United States … I look forward to working closely with this talented team of experts to take our message to the people of this country and get America working again.”

TEAM PERRY:

--Campaign Manager Rob Johnson recently served as senior advisor to Gov. Perry in the Texas Governor’s Office. Johnson managed the governor’s successful 2010 gubernatorial re-election campaign. Prior to that, he was chief of staff to Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, and also served as his deputy chief of staff and campaign manager of his 2002 campaign. He also served as chief of staff to Rep. Jay Dickey in Washington. Johnson received bachelor’s degrees in political science and public relations from Southern Methodist University.

--Policy and Strategy Director Deirdre Delisi has most recently served as the chair of the Texas Transportation Commission. Delisi has more than 14 years experience in government policy. She was chief of staff and deputy chief of staff to Gov. Perry, and served as his special assistant when he was lieutenant governor. She is a former policy advisor to the presidential campaigns of Lamar Alexander and George W. Bush. Delisi earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Duke and master's in international policy studies from Stanford.

--Political Director Wayne Hamilton is the past executive director of the Republican Party of Texas, where he was the longest serving executive director in party history. Prior to that, he was a senior campaign aide to Rep. Joe Barton. For the past eight years, Hamilton has worked as a consultant, focusing on governmental affairs, corporate public affairs, political consulting, and event and project management, managing projects in 15 states. After the historic Republican victories of 2002, including Gov. Perry’s election, Hamilton was executive director of the 2003 Texas Inaugural Committee. In 2007 and 2011, Hamilton was again asked to serve as the executive director of the Inaugural Committees. He is a graduate of Dallas Baptist University.

Deputy Communications Director Eric Bearse in 2007 formed Bearse & Company, which provided political and communications consulting services to Texas House Speaker Joe Straus, Comptroller Susan Combs, Attorney General Greg Abbott and Railroad Commissioner Michael Williams. Bearse wrote speeches for Gov. Perry for eight years (1999-2007), including two inaugural addresses, four State of the State addresses, and several Republican State Convention addresses. He has also written speeches for university officials and private citizens, and directed grassroots and media campaigns for private organizations. Bearse worked for six political campaigns in Texas – including Gov. Perry’s campaigns for lieutenant governor and governor – and consulted on several political campaigns in the 2008 and 2010 election cycle. A 1993 graduate of Texas A&M University, Bearse was a member of the Fightin’ Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets and earned a bachelor’s degree in political science.

National Press Secretary Mark Miner served as communications director for Gov. Perry during the 2011 and 2009 legislative sessions. He was communications director for Gov. Perry’s successful 2010 gubernatorial re-election campaign. He previously served as communications director for Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, former Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore, the Republican National Committee, and the Bill Simon for Governor Campaign in California. Miner graduated from Michigan State University in 1987, with a bachelor’s degree in communications.

Travel Press Secretary Robert Black most recently was the director of governmental affairs for American Electric Power. He was Gov. Perry’s press secretary and communications director from 2003 to 2008, and directed the governor’s communications during his 2006 gubernatorial re-election bid. Previously, Black was communications director for Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott’s successful 2002 campaign, and was communications director for the Republican Party of Texas from 1998-2001. He graduated from the University of Texas – San Antonio.

State Press Director Katherine Cesinger has worked for Gov. Perry for nearly seven years, most recently as his press secretary at the state capitol. Prior to that, she was deputy press secretary for three years. Cesinger also served as communications director for the Governor’s Competitiveness Council, and has worked in the governor’s budget, planning and policy division, as well as the office’s legislative division. Prior to working in the Texas Governor’s Office, she worked for the Louisiana House of Representatives. Cesinger earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from Louisiana State University.

FIRST DOUBLE-HEADER PLAYBOOK BREAKFAST – next Tuesday – SECRETARY NAPOLITANO and CHAIRMAN MIKE ROGERS! Ahead of the 9/11 decennial, Mike Allen talks live onstage with Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, followed by a conversation about global hot spots with House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Rogers, who was all over TV as Libyan rebels overran the compound. These breakfasts are a unique chance for you to interact with Washington’s top newsmakers and with celebrity Playbookers. B’fast is Tuesday, Sept. 6, at The Newseum, in downtown D.C. Doors open at 8 a.m.; program begins shortly thereafter. Please RSVP here http://politic.com/event/PlaybookSept, or to playbookbreakfast@POLITICO.com.
NOW'S THE TIME TO GO PRO: POLITICO Pro has published nearly 10,000 stories and alerts on energy, technology and health care policy since launch just six months ago. See what you've been missing - sign up for this exclusive FREE 14-DAY PREVIEW today: https://www.politico.com/preview. Promo Code: PLAYBOOK!

SUNDAY SO FAR – ABC “This Week”: Nearly two years after the deadliest attack on U.S. soil since 9/11, the family of Fort Hood shooter Nidal Hasan breaks its silence. ABC’s Bob Woodruff talks with Nader Hasan about how his cousin went from having an all-American upbringing to killing his fellow soldiers. Maj. Nidal Hasan has not shown remorse, but Nader wants to make sure something like this never happens again. Bob Woodruff finds out what Hasan’s family is doing to move from this act of murderous rage to promote a movement for non-violence and a patriotic commitment to America. ... Also: Sen. Jim DeMint.

--“Face the Nation”: Rep. Michele Bachmann ... Jon Huntsman.

--“Fox News Sunday”: Dick Cheney

--CNN’s “State of the Union”: Sen. Jim DeMint ... James Hoffa, on Obama’s speech ... Sen. Joe Lieberman and Chairman Mike Rogers.

BIRTHDAYS: TOM “Tommy Boy” MANATIS! (bonnet tip: Andrew) ... Trevor Thomas ... former Sen. Alan K. Simpson is 80 ... New Media Strategies' J.P. Friere (hat tip: Patrick Gavin) ... Peter Ueberroth is 74 ... Terry Bradshaw is 63 ... Sen. Jim DeMint is 60 ... Vi Neil ... Connie Cook ... Elizabeth Birch ... Michael Kolene ... Mary Kay Aide (h/ts Teresa Vilmain).

#REAGANDEBATE:

--SNEAK PEEK – On Sunday, George F. Will gives his fantasy question ideas for Wednesday’s moderators, John F. Harris and Brian Williams: “For Mitt Romney: ... In 1996, you called a 17 percent flat tax ‘a tax cut for fat cats.’ ... What annual income or net worth defines ‘fat cat’? Are you one? ... For Rick Perry: ... Would you solve the problems inherent in fiat money by returning to the gold standard? ... Your Texas Emerging Technology Fund is, essentially, a government-financed venture capital operation to nurture infant tech industries and to lure some to the state. How do you square this form of industrial policy ... with governmental minimalism?

“For Michele Bachmann: You say that under President Bachmann gasoline will cost less than $2 a gallon. How? ... Should politicians promise particular prices for global commodities? ... For Jon Huntsman: You, who preen about having cornered the market on good manners, recently tweeted, ‘I believe in evolution and trust Scientists on global warming. Call me crazy.’ Call you sarcastic. In the 1970s, would you have trusted scientists predicting calamity from global cooling?”

--PEGGY NOONAN in Saturday’s WSJ (column now online), “Perry and Romney's First Face-Off: Meanwhile, can Obama restore trust in his economic leadership?”: “Wednesday's debate will be all about the current front-runner versus the former front-runner. Rick Perry ... has to show he's not a two-week wonder ... The amazing thing about his rise is not that he's become the front-runner, but that he's zoomed to the top with such comfortable and sudden margins. ... Mr. Perry has to start convincing a broad Republican audience that it's about his excellence and electability. ... Mr. Romney has to regain his footing. Up to now in debates he has pretty much coasted—he's big, radiant and smiling, the others were small, yappy and querulous. He can continue that way, as if he's unruffled by an Austin interloper who'll do himself in with his mouth or get done in by good oppo. Or he can conclude that new circumstances dictate new strategies, and fight. ...

“The night after the debate, President Obama will outline his long-awaited—too-long-awaited—jobs plan. The speech will have to be very good not to be called very bad. The White House has talked about it too much for too long and built expectations too high. They've put too much weight on the back of a single address. ... He should go to the meaning of things, to his view of that meaning. He should attempt a new frankness, a new
candor, a broad clarity. ... He would appear to be thinking, not only calculating. He would seem aware of the big picture, of this moment in history. It might lift him beyond the platitudes and out of the smallness."

GOP 2012:

--WSJ EDITORIAL, “Huntsman's Good Economic Plan: Better than anything so far from the GOP Presidential field”:: “Jon Huntsman is lagging in the polls, but the economic agenda he rolled out this week may start getting him more attention. And deservedly so. The heart of the plan lowers all tax rates on individuals and businesses. Mr. Huntsman would create three personal income tax rates—8%, 14% and 23%—and pay for this in a ‘revenue-neutral’ way by eliminating ‘all deductions and credits.’ This tracks with the proposals of the bipartisan Bowles-Simpson commission and others for a flatter, more efficient tax system. ... Mr. Huntsman's proposal is as impressive as any to date in the GOP Presidential field, and certainly better than what we've seen from the front-runners. Perhaps Mr. Huntsman should be asked to give the Republican response to the President's jobs speech next week.

--ROMNEY REMARKS TODAY to the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, in Tampa: “Four more years on the same misguided political path would be disastrous. Career politicians got us into this mess and career politicians can’t get us out! I am a conservative businessman. I have spent most of my life outside of politics, solving real problems in the real economy. Twenty-seven years ago, I joined with some friends to start a business. We started with ten employees, and grew it to become one of the most successful enterprises of its kind in the world. ... On Tuesday, I will present a detailed plan to get America back to work and to grow our economy. It will be bold, sweeping and specific. But any plan is only as good as the person leading it. And you know, if we want to create jobs, it helps to have a President who has had a job!

“I will make business taxes competitive with other nations, eliminate burdensome regulations and bureaucracy, and support America’s workers instead of its union bosses. I will promote the exploration of our own natural resources, which will create countless jobs. I will make sure that America’s workforce is prepared for the modern economy. ... We must pass a torch to the next generation, not a bill. I will insist that Washington learns to respect the Constitution, including the 10th Amendment. We will return responsibility and authority to the states for dozens of government programs – and that begins with a complete repeal of Obamacare. Finally, I will vigorously advance our trade interests around the world. That means ratifying pending agreements with allies like Colombia and Panama to create jobs right here in Florida and across America.”

--FOX NEWS AND GOOGLE TO HOST REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE IN FLORIDA": “FOX News and Google announced ... that they will present a presidential debate on September 22nd from 9:00-11:00 PM/ET in Orlando, Florida, in conjunction with the Republican Party of Florida. In making the joint announcement, Michael Clemente, Senior Vice President of News Editorial, FOX News, said, ‘For access to news and information, it’s hard to imagine two more powerful brands than FOX News and Google, which is why we are proud to partner with a leader in global technology. The strength and reach of both should ensure a thorough and engaging debate that anyone can participate in.’

--Moderated by ‘Special Report’ anchor Bret Baier with panelists Chris Wallace, host of ‘FOX News Sunday’ and Megyn Kelly, anchor of ‘America Live,’ the debate will incorporate video and text questions submitted by the public on YouTube.com/FOXNews. ... Steve Grove, Head of News and Politics for YouTube, said, ‘We’re delighted to give voters across the country this opportunity to ask their questions of the GOP candidates. Through this joint debate with FOX News, we hope to bring more voices into the arena to create an informed and lively dialogue about the future of our country.’ The FOX News/Google debate will be presented live from the Orange County Convention Center on FOX News Channel (FNC) and live-streamed on YouTube.com/FOXNews.”

THE PRESIDENT’S DAY: At 10 a.m., “the President will depart the White House for Camp David. The President will stay there until he departs for New Jersey on Sunday.”
--THE V.P.’s DAY: The Vice President will be in Wilmington, Delaware. There are no public events scheduled.

SPORTS BLINK – Peter King’s Super Bowl pick, in Sports Illustrated’s 162-page “NFL Preview” issue (King visited 23 training camps this summer): Atlanta Falcons 24, San Diego Chargers 20. (Nick Ayers is psyched!) ... ESPN The Mag sees a Keystone State Super Bowl: Philadelphia Eagles over Pittsburgh Steelers ... And The Sporting News expects “Aaron Rodgers and the Packers to strike a familiar pose at the end of the season”: World Champion Green Bay Packers over New England Patriots.

--COLLEGE FOOTBALL KICKED OFF LAST NIGHT – USA Today “Sports” front, “Season’s start not woes’ end”: “The college football season is underway, and controversies continue. Thursday’s games hadn’t even begun before No. 16 Ohio State and No. 20 Mississippi State announced suspensions. The Buckeyes will sit three players for at least Saturday’s opener against Akron for receiving impermissible benefits of $300 or less each at a charity event earlier in the year. Mississippi State went into Thursday’s game at Memphis without five players suspended for various violations of team policies, according to a school statement. But the games go on. Among the highlights this weekend: No. 15 TCU at Baylor today, No. 7 Boise State vs. No. 22 Georgia on Saturday and No. 9 Texas A&M vs. SMU on Sunday.”

**WHAT’S ALL THE BUZZ ABOUT PRO?** With unmatched reporting, custom instant alerts, must-read morning and afternoon newsletters and subscriber-only events, it’s no surprise that POLITICO Pro has quickly become Washington’s essential news service for energy, technology and health care policy. See what your colleagues have been getting -- sign up for this exclusive FREE 14-DAY PREVIEW today: https://www.politicopro.com/preview. Promo Code: PLAYBOOK1 **
ORLANDO, Fla.-Rick Perry remains the favorite to win Florida's Presidency 5 straw poll here today, though his Thursday night debate performance clearly hurt him. A surprisingly large number of the nearly 3,500 delegates were undecided before the debate, and Friday it was easy to find people shifting to Romney or at least reconsidering Perry.

"A game changer," former GOP chairman and Romney backer John Thrasher said of the debate, predicting Romney will do "very well" Saturday.

Perry, who met privately with a dozen legislators Friday, will speak at a breakfast for delegates, and then bolt for Michigan before P5 actually kicks off. Former Railroad commissioner Michael Williams will speak on his behalf at the actual event.

The other candidates addressing the delegates are Newt Gingrich, Herman Cain (who could do well today, based on the buzz), Ron Paul and Rick Santorum.

Voting takes place from 4 p.m. to about 4:45, overseen by the Seminole County elections office. We should have results at about 5:30 ET. Florida Gov. Rick Scott will announce them to the crowd between 5:45-6.

*** Score is brought to you again today through a partnership between POLITICO and the St. Petersburg Times, home to Florida's top team of political journalists.

ADAM C. SMITH MINDMELD -- THE ST. PETERSBURG TIMES POLITICAL EDITOR ON IMMIGRATION: Who would have thought Massachusetts health care reform could prove to be less damaging to Mitt Romney than illegal immigration to Rick Perry? Based on the last two debates, it could well be. It's a reminder of how toxic immigration is among the Republican base and how tricky the issue will continue to be if the rhetoric gets too hard-edged as the party courts Hispanic voters. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush supported driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants and then-state Rep. Marco Rubio supported a bill similar to the Texas Dream Act Perry is getting pounded on. Those days are gone. Florida Gov. Rick Scott won his primary largely by bludgeoning Bill McCollum on immigration. Here's a web video of Smith and Hohmann chatting at the convention center yesterday afternoon: http://bit.ly/oawmkj.

FLORIDA INTEL - SNEAK PEEK OF RICK SCOTT'S KEYNOTE: Keep an eye on Gov. Rick Scott today. He was never a particularly active member of the Republican Party of Florida, but he's delivering the keynote speech of Presidency 5 as the de facto head of the party. Scott put some effort into his speech, which comes just days ahead of the state's expected decision to violate RNC rules with an early primary. Scott will hype the role delegates will play in the primary, saying they are the most important people in the most important state. According to an advance copy of the speech, Scott will say, "I'm convinced that the Republican candidate who wins Florida will be our nominee for president." http://bit.ly/ncm4Np.
SOME HISTORY - WHY P5 MATTERS: Florida has a history of holding significant 'Presidency' conferences with debates and a straw poll, and actually, every winner of a Presidency straw poll has gone on to win the GOP nomination. Ronald Reagan won in 1979, George H.W. Bush won in 1987 and Bob Dole won in 1995. Then-Gov. Jeb Bush and the GOP opted not to hold a Presidency event in 2005. And in 2007, the party's Presidency IV featured a debate and speeches by all the major Republican candidates, but at the urging of several campaigns, particularly John McCain's, the party did not hold a straw poll.

THE OTHER STRAW POLL - MAKINAC, MICHIGAN: The results of the Mackinac Republican Leadership Conference straw poll will be announced Sunday morning. CNN raises the curtain by noting Romney's deep ties and strong organization in the state: "Perry will be mostly an unknown quantity to the 1,600 or so Republican activists when he speaks to them Saturday...Although some experts said they have not seen much of a Perry organization develop yet in the state, he is working on building one. He will meet with some activists and donors while at the Mackinac Conference." http://bit.ly/pzgUwB ** Jonathan Martin landed in Michigan yesterday to discover that both the Detroit Free Press and Detroit News played their Mackinac previews inside the paper.

MARCO RUBIO WATCH - SKIPPING CPAC, P5 FOR SPENDING SHOWDOWN: Alas, Sen. Marco Rubio had real work to do. A vote on a stop-gap spending measure kept him in Washington Friday (he voted no) but there was plenty of love for him at CPAC FL anyway. Bill Kristol, editor of the Weekly Standard, said during a panel that history would show Rubio's defeat of former Gov. Charlie Crist as a key moment in the conservative resurgence. Kristol said Rubio was the right choice for vice president and named another Florida lawmaker, U.S. Rep. Allen West. "I actually wouldn't mind if Marco thought about running for president. He's plenty ready."

SIZING THEM UP - EVALUATING THE CANDIDATE CPAC SPEECHES: All nine from Thursday's debate had 15 uninterrupted minutes Friday to speak to thousands of CPAC-Florida delegates in a dark, cavernous room at the convention center. Here are brief thoughts on each:

- PERRY - DOWNPLAYING HIS BAD DEBATE: Perry sought to ease concerns about his uneven debate performance while tying Romney to Obama: "It's not who is the slickest candidate or the smoothest debater that we need to elect." He continued: 'Remember President Clinton? He could sell ice cubes to Eskimos and then the next day be against ice cubes.'

- ROMNEY - SHARPENING IMMIGRATION CRITIQUE: Romney showed the crowd a piece of paper with his hand-written notes when he started his speech. The maneuver came across an obvious attempt to counter the criticism that he's too slick. Otherwise Romney's remarks felt as much aimed at convincing delegates to not vote for Perry as much as to vote for him today. His most direct shot came on immigration: "I think if you're opposed to illegal immigration, it doesn't mean that you don't have a heart. It means that you have a heart and a brain."

- BACHMANN - INSISTING ELECTABILITY DOESN'T MATTER: Overshadowed in Thursday night's debate by Santorum and having lost many of her early supporters to Perry, Bachmann argued that electability shouldn't matter to primary voters because whoever the nominee is will beat President Obama. "If there was any election when we conservatives don't settle, it's this election," she said.

- SANTORUM - INTRODUCING HIMSELF: Santorum, so willing to be the attack dog in the last few debates, gave an almost exclusively biographical speech. Acting like he won the debate, he focused on what he got done during his decade-and-a-half in Congress. He said he's got the "mettle" to survive criticism from Obama and vetting from the media, an implicit criticism of Bachmann.
JOHNSON - EXCITED TO BE HERE: Catching attention for his dog poop quip, Gary Johnson ran through his plans for reforming Social Security, balancing the budget and cutting military spending. The former New Mexico governor looked genuinely thrilled to be a part of the discussion.

GINGRICH - HYPING HIS NEW CONTRACT: The former Speaker of the House continues to fire up the hype engines ahead of a new Contract with America he plans to unveil next Thursday in Des Moines.

PAUL - IN HIS COMFORT ZONE: Ron Paul, who has been forced to defend controversial elements of his ideology in debates, spoke at length on the monetary policy issue that put him on the map and has broader appeal.

CAIN - MORE A PREACHER THAN A POLITICIAN: The former Godfather's Pizza baron focused on the economy and touted his 9-9-9 plan. His preachy style is well-suited to this kind of format and crowd.

HUNTSMAN - NOT PANDERING: The former U.S. ambassador to China greeted the crowd in Chinese, then quickly laughed and said he was just kidding. Following roars for Cain, Huntsman's policy-focused speech switched them into (often polite) applause mode. But there were no boos when Huntsman announced that he disagrees with the base on a host of issues.

AN ANSWER TO YESTERDAY'S QUESTION - THE MOST INCENDIARY THING ANN COULTER SAID: The conservative commentator called Democratic National Committee Chairman Debbie Wasserman Schultz "a hideous beast who has a voice like a hyena getting an abortion.' Name-dropping the liberal Florida congresswoman drew loud boos from the CPAC crowd. Video: http://bit.ly/n2ySnl.

DEBATE FALLOUT-WHAT BROKE THROUGH:

PERRY'S FACE PLANT - CONSERVATIVE ELITES AGREE HE BOMBED: Juana Summers sifted through all the commentary on right-leaning blogs. She has compiled damaging reaction from Weekly Standard editor Bill Kristol, National Review editor Rich Lowry, Michelle Malkin, RedState editor Erick Erickson, conservative Iowa radio talker Steve Deace and others. http://politico.com/qLsm8X

A POSSIBLE INFLECTION POINT - TEA PARTY LEADERS GIVE ROMNEY ANOTHER LOOK AFTER PERRY BOTCHES DEBATE: "The head of an influential Tea Party group that has been outspoken against Mitt Romney signaled Friday that their opposition to the former Massachusetts governor is softening as Rick Perry falters,' Jon Ward writes on The Huffington Post. "'Romney has an opportunity to rehabilitate himself,' [said] Matt Kibbe, chairman and CEO of FreedomWorks...'It's not enough to be right and lose. The goal here is to win the presidency,' Kibbe said." http://huff.to/oYsTro.

6.1 MILLION WATCHED DEBATE: An average of about 6.1 million viewers tuned in during the two-hour event, including 1.7 million in the 25-54 demographic. It was the highest-rated debate so far this year. The Nielsen numbers: http://bit.ly/m7XAX.

NO APOLOGY CHANGES - PERRY CAMP HIGHLIGHTS EDITS TO ROMNEY BOOK: Perry slammed Romney during the debate for downplaying health care when he revised it for printing in paperback. His 'truth squad' posted a scanned-and-highlighted version of the omitted passage yesterday: http://scr.bi/o8PpK3

DEM ATTACK:

A NEW WHITE HOUSE MESSAGE ON THE REPUBLICAN FIELD: "Governor Perry is someone who has led the tea party, and Governor Romney is someone who is being led by the tea party," White House Communications Director Dan Pfeiffer told NBC's David Gregory. Watch: http://on.msnbc.com/roXZC9.
• AMERICAN BRIDGE HITS ROMNEY ON RACE TO THE TOP: American Bridge 21st Century quickly cut out a web video juxtaposing a clip of Romney praising Race to the Top on Wednesday against a clip from the Thursday debate after Perry attacked. It's the second in their new "Mitt's Flips" series: http://bit.ly/nliwEe

• MOVEON HIGHLIGHTS BOOING OF GAY SOLDIER DURING DEBATE: The liberal group put out a web video criticizing the Republican candidates who stood silent at the debate when audience members booed during and after a YouTube clip from a gay soldier. There is dispute about what was being booed and how many did it, but this has already become a meme on the left. http://bit.ly/qadaGA

WHAT THE PRESIDENT IS UP TO - The president delivers remarks at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation annual awards dinner in D.C. at 8:35 p.m. tonight. He has four fundraisers out west Sunday (flying to Seattle before hopping down to San Jose).


2012 FUNDRAISING-PAUL RYAN TO CHAIR FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE: Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus announced yesterday that fiscal conservative rock star and House Budget Committee chairman Paul Ryan will chair the RNC Presidential Trust. Priebus convinces his home-state ally to take on the project as Ryan's reelection comes to look more secure (a much-hyped Democratic recruit did not really measure up, redistricting insulated Ryan and the backlash to his Medicare plan has died down). The RNC is the only party organization allowed by federal law to make coordinated expenditures with the presidential campaigns.

CODA - QUOTE OF THE DAY: "Right now I am the most Googled name on the planet because last night I came up with a witty sentence on dog poop...I appreciate that opportunity." -Gary Johnson at CPAC, trying to convert his trending status on a search engine into actual traction [If you want to know more about the dark horse, GQ has published a new profile: http://gqma.ag/plijhN.]
By James Hohmann (jhohmann@politico.com; Twitter: @jameshohmann)

SNEAK PEEK - HISPANIC SUPPORT FOR OBAMA SOFTENS: President Obama is underperforming with Hispanics, according to a poll that will be released later today by Resurgent Republic.

- In Florida, Obama leads a generic Republican candidate 46 to 36 percent. 48% think the president deserves reelection. In 2008, Obama beat John McCain 57-42 among Sunshine State Hispanics.

- In New Mexico, Obama leads a generic Republican 58-28. 56% say he deserves reelection. He won Hispanics 69-30 there in 2008.

- The president's support is more durable in Colorado. He leads a generic Republican 59-27 (compared to his 61-38 performance against McCain).

Resurgent Republic, a 501(c)4 non-profit cofounded by GOP operative Ed Gillespie, conducted 1,200 interviews with Hispanic voters in Florida, Colorado, and New Mexico from Sept. 6-10 in conjunction with the Hispanic Leadership Network. Other interesting findings from the results:

- The sample split 37-37 over whether Obama's policies have made things better or worse for most Hispanic Americans.

- Majorities of Hispanics say Obama has been a weaker leader than they expected: 57-34 in FL; 54-40 in CO; 54-39 in NM.

- Hispanics still trust Democrats more by big margins on every big issue, from the economy to health care, immigration and national security. Democrats maintain a 51-14 party ID advantage in Colorado and 57-18 in New Mexico.


REALITY CHECK- OBAMA REASSURES NERVOUS DEMS: "The odds of me being reelected are much higher than the odds of me being elected in the first place," the president said at a D.C. fundraiser last night.

CABLE CATNIP - SCOTUS STAYS EXECUTION OF KILLER PERRY WAS READY TO LET DIE: "The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday issued a stay of execution for Houston killer Duane Buck in a case that drew arguments that his punishment might have been tainted by racial testimony," the Houston Chronicle reports from the execution site in Huntsville, Texas. "The high court stayed his execution pending a decision on whether to review his case. The decision came about 7:30 p.m. approximately 90 minutes after Buck was to have been executed. He was waiting in a holding cell next to the state's death chamber." http://bit.ly/n61cbT

This delay will likely restart a conversation (on cable and elsewhere) about the 234 executions Rick Perry has
authorized as governor, especially the 2004 death of Cameron Todd Willingham (who many believe was innocent). Remember that Perry's record does not necessarily hurt him with the Republican base.

As Perry pounces on a Romneycare study, Afghanistan politics flares up and Kucinich prepares for a primary with Kaptur, here's POLITICO's Morning Score: your daily guide to the permanent campaign.

"PONZI SCHEME" - HOW PERRY'S SOCIAL SECURITY POSITION ACTUALLY TURNS OFF GOP VOTERS: "Perry's statements on Social Security are more likely to harm his campaign indirectly by weakening his perceived viability than they are to turn off Republicans who disagree with his views," Gallup's Lydia Saad writes in an analysis posted this morning of results from a USA Today/Gallup poll. "In contrast to the 19% of Republicans who say they would personally be less likely to support Perry over his Social Security views, 37% believe those views would hurt his chances of being elected president if he were the GOP nominee." http://bit.ly/oW3Xqc

TOP TALKER - NYT ON BACHMANN'S PATTERN OF "EXAGGERATION" - The fallout continues from Bachmann's unsubstantiated story about the HPV vaccine causing mental retardation. "People close to the campaign, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Mrs. Bachmann is often influenced by the last person she speaks with on an issue rather than maintaining discipline in communicating a message," Trip Gabriel writes in today's New York Times. He draws a distinction between the Minnesota congresswoman's run-of-the-mill gaffes (mixing up Elvis' birthday with the day he died, calling Russia the Soviet Union), staff-caused mistakes (saying the shot heard round the world happened in N.H.) and "more serious political assertions that she is prone to utter with conviction, only to have them turn out to be baseless."

--The ONLY example given of the latter (besides HPV) is Bachmann parroting the inaccurate report last year that Obama's India trip would cost taxpayers "$200 million a day" and include more than 870 "five-star hotel rooms." The story runs on A16 under the headline: "With Stakes for Bachmann Higher Now, Her Words Get in the Way." http://nyti.ms/q6kWJ6

NO APOLOGIES - BACHMANN WON'T ANSWER FOR HPV CLAIM: 'During the debate, I didn't make any statements that would indicate that I'm a doctor, I'm a scientist or that I'm making any conclusions about the drug one way or another,' Bachmann told reporters in San Rafael, Calif., who questioned her yesterday about the story she told suggesting that the vaccine had caused mental retardation. Per CBS: "Asked whether she would apologize for comments that outraged medical experts say will discourage parents from getting their children immunized, Bachmann said: 'Oh, I'm not going to answer that.'" http://bit.ly/pC6FLx

HPV- BACHMANN BLOWBACK DOES NOT FIX PERRY'S PROBLEM: The backlash to Bachmann's gaffe does not mean that Perry's executive order on Gardasil is significantly less of a liability for him.

• ABC told the story yesterday of the dying woman who influenced Perry's decision to sign the executive order mandating the vaccine: http://abcn.ws/qZ5M3p.

• But this did not assuage angry conservatives. Blogger Michelle Malkin responded to the ABC report with a frustrated post: "While the personal back story now being disseminated by Team Perry supporters may help explain why he did what he did, it does not in any way excuse it." http://bit.ly/n4A0Mz

• "Perry's record on the HPV vaccine is 'not going to play well,' said Bob Vander Plaats, an Iowa conservative leader, told the Huffington Post. http://huff.to/qV1luf

• Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council to NBC: "He's going to have to be a little clearer. He's going to have to say, 'That was a violation of the sacred relationship between parent and child.'" http://on.msnbc.com/qVHhb7
The Union Leader editorial board says he still has questions to answer: "An opt-in is hardly a mandate, so does he now think girls should not be required to get the vaccine?" [http://bit.ly/oXRjke]

THAT MERCK LOBBYIST WHO PUSHED THE HPV MANDATE? - HE'S NOW RUNNING A SUPER PAC FOR PERRY: Friday's Austin American-Statesman profiles former top Perry aide Mike Toomey, the Merck lobbyist during the Gardasil mandate flap who became an (unnamed) character in Monday's debate. He's now promoting Perry's candidacy from Austin with the Make Us Great Again super PAC. "That raises the question of how Toomey can put aside his friendship with Perry, as well as his ownership of a resort island on a New Hampshire lake with Perry campaign strategist Dave Carney, as his so-called super PAC tries to raise millions of dollars to elect his friend," the Statesman writes. "After all, Toomey has a track record in Texas with similar quasi-campaign operations that have landed him either in court or in the middle of controversy." Neither Toomey nor the Perry campaign responded to questions from the paper. [http://bit.ly/qKgCDs]

ROMNEY'S HEALTH CARE PROBLEM - STUDY CLAIMS ROMNEYCARE COST 18,000+ JOBS: Suffolk University's Beacon Hill Institute, a conservative think tank, released a study yesterday blaming the health care law passed by Mitt Romney in 2006 for the loss of more than 18,000 jobs. The study found that, "on average, Romneycare cost the Bay State 18,313 jobs; drove up total health insurance costs in Massachusetts by $4.311 billion; slowed the growth of disposable income per person by $376; and reduced investment in Massachusetts by $25.06 million." The Boston Herald story: [http://bit.ly/nZMvEy]. The study: [http://bit.ly/o2pvfa].

Romney spokesperson Andrea Saul tells Score that the study is deeply flawed: "It is based on the assumption that Massachusetts healthcare reform caused the rate of healthcare cost increases to accelerate. In fact, healthcare cost increases have slowed since the passage of reform. This error therefore invalidates the study."

PERRY POUNCES - PUTS STUDY INTO STUMP SPEECH: Perry, kicking off a swing across Iowa, touted the Beacon Hill study by name last night. "I think it's very important that we put someone as our nominee that does not blur the lines between President Obama and the Republican Party," he said in Jefferson, Iowa. "If it cost Massachusetts 18,000 jobs, think about what ObamaCare is going to do to this country." [http://bit.ly/obk9eY]

ENDORSEMENT WATCH - TOM RIDGE TO BACK HUNTSMAN: The Union Leader scoops that Jon Huntsman will announce the endorsement of former U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Gov. Tom Ridge at an event today at St. Anselm College. The former Pennsylvania governor will attend a press conference with Huntsman at the college's New Hampshire Institute for Politics. [http://bit.ly/plLZda]

AFGHANISTAN HEDGING - OPPONENTS SEIZE ON PERRY EFFORTS TO CLAIM A MIDDLE GROUND: To hawks listening closely, Perry sounded like he semi-endorsed Jon Huntsman's call for a quick withdrawal from Afghanistan during Monday night's debate. A senior Perry foreign policy advisor sought to limit the potential damage in a Thursday interview with Foreign Policy Magazine. But his quotes make it clear that the Texas governor is still trying to figure out how best to message his support for the war effort, popular with many in the base but deeply unpopular with independents. "He would lean toward wanting to bring our troops home, but he understands that we have vital strategic interests in Afghanistan and that a precipitous withdrawal is not what he's recommending," the advisor said. 'He has a clear sense of the mission and wanting to win it, but not just by throwing the kitchen sink at it.' The unnamed source refused to say how many troops Perry thinks should be withdrawn and at what pace. [http://bit.ly/q3aaeQ]

Romney pounced with a statement on "RICK'S REVERSAL ON AFGHANISTAN": "In Comments Published Today, The Perry Campaign Said Governor Perry Does Not Recommend Withdrawing Our Armed Forces From Afghanistan...However, Governor Perry - On Two Separate Occasions Within The Last Week - Said He..."
Wanted To Withdraw Our Forces From Afghanistan." They linked to his debate comment and the interview he gave Time Magazine, in which he said: "I think we need to try to move our men and women home as soon as we can, not just in Afghanistan, but in Iraq as well."

PERRY'S SECRECY - ADMITS HIDING $800,000+ IN GOVERNOR'S MANSION SPENDING: In a confidential settlement reached last week with the Texas Ethics Commission, Perry's campaign admitted that it violated disclosure laws by hiding the details of more than $800,000 spent on amenities at the Governor's Mansion, including flowers, food and drink - even cable bills that included hundreds of dollars worth of charges for movies and events. Ken Vogel and Ben Smith looked at Perry's record as one of the most secretive governors in the country, including his office's unusual email deletion policy: http://politico.co/otVG9F. The complaint against Perry: http://politico.co/op3nJT. The confidential settlement: http://politico.co/nV1whf.

MORE POLLING -

- BLOOMBERG NEWS (popped overnight): 64% of Americans hold a favorable view of Hillary Clinton. 34% say the U.S. would be better off now if she beat Obama in 2008, including 44% of tea partiers. http://bloomberg.r2SKKx

- CNN/ORC (released yesterday): 49% of Republicans and independents who lean towards the GOP say they support the tea party movement or are active members. 51% say that they have no feelings either way or that they oppose the movement. http://bit.ly/oazdF2


THE OTHER ARIZONA SHERIFF - ROMNEY COURTS BABEU: The headlines yesterday were about Bachmann meeting with Sheriff Joe, but less noticed by the national press was that Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu spent the day with Romney at both his Tucson and Sun Lakes events. The two met briefly in private after the latter. Babeu, currently the National Sheriff of the Year, is talking to the other candidates, but he's much further down the road with Romney. The sheriff is particularly impressed by Romney's promises to end the SB 1070 lawsuit against Arizona and seriously deal with the border security problem.

WHAT THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ARE UP TO: Perry continues his Iowa swing, hosting an 8 a.m. Jasper County meet and greet at Uncle Nancy's Coffee shop. Then he speaks at the Iowa Credit Union Convention at the Polk County Convention Complex in Des Moines at noon, tours the Atlantic Bottling Company at 2 p.m. and hosts a meet-and-greet at Tish's Restaurant in Council Bluffs at 5:30 p.m. Romney is in California to host an 8:30 a.m. breakfast reception at the home of Jenny Craig in Del Mar. Also in California, Bachmann hosts a 'Join Team Bachmann!' Orange County Rally in Costa Mesa at 9 a.m. and then speaks to the California GOP convention at 7:30 p.m. Cain has a 9:30 a.m. rally at the Aiken County Historical Museum in South Carolina, a 1 p.m. meet-and-greet in Simpsonville and a 4:30 p.m. rally at Winthrop University in Rock Hill. Ron Paul will speak to the Liberty Political Action Conference at the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino in Reno at 7 p.m. [As always, all times are local.]

WHAT THE PRESIDENT IS UP TO: At 10:45 a.m., the president will travel to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia. He'll visit a classroom, give a speech and sign the America Invents Act into law.

COMING LATER TODAY - NH DEMS PUSH GOP CANDIDATES ON OBAMA JOBS BILL: "While the major GOP contenders were out of state debating before Tea Party audiences and attending campaign fundraisers, the New Hampshire Democratic Party compiled messages for the candidates from the state's
editorial pages," says a message going out later this morning. Included on a graphic designed to look like a while-you-were-out message slip are excerpts from editorials in the Concord Monitor, Valley News, Keene Sentinel and Laconia Citizen stressing the need for action. http://bit.ly/nmKV10

HATE THE SIN; LOVE THE SINNER - CANDIDATES BASH STIMULUS, THEN CAMPAIGN PLACES THAT BENEFITED FROM IT: The Associated Press moved a story over the wire last night on Republican contenders campaigning at businesses that benefited from the 2009 stimulus "with an awkward frequency... Romney himself made at least two campaign appearances this summer with stimulus beneficiaries. There are a half dozen such examples involving several candidates, former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman and Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann, among them." Perry has "not used stimulus beneficiaries as campaign props," the story says, but Texas has taken Recovery Act money. http://bit.ly/oshs79

OHIO HOUSE - KUCINICH VS KAPTUR PRIMARY BATTLE LIKELY: Dennis Kucinich won't move out of Ohio, and it looks like he is almost certain to face off against fellow Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur in a new district they've both been drawn into by Republicans in Columbus. The two met after the release of the new map, and neither has drawn a sword yet. POLITICO's Dan Hirschhorn previews what everyone expects will be a hard-fought primary: "Kaptur starts with a [4-1] financial advantage...but party insiders are split over who to peg as the early front-runner. Some give Kucinich that nod, in part, because...his base in the Cleveland media market covers more of the district. Others...say Kucinich's presence on the national stage as a sometime presidential candidate, his excursions into issues far outside the district...and his very public search for a new district have all damaged him back home." http://politico/pDDDMn

CALENDAR UPDATE- MICHIGAN MOVING TOWARD FEB. 28 PRIMARY: "The Republican-led Senate approved a bill to follow through on the plan by a 25-12, mostly party line vote Thursday. The measure next goes to the Republican-led House," according to the AP. http://bit.ly/q8PbLQ


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Defendant's Exhibit # 086
EXCLUSIVE - ANUZIS ENDORSES ROMNEY: Michigan Republican National Committeeman Saul Anuzis, an RNC power broker, will come out for Romney today. As GOP state chair, Anuzis officially stayed neutral in 2008. He served on the host committee of a briefing by the Romney campaign for RNC members at last month's summer meeting in Tampa, but he was publicly flirting with Rick Perry's candidacy at the time. Now he's all in for Mitt. "His singular focus on fixing our economy combined with his Michigan roots and ability to relate to the hopes and dreams of Michigan voters make him the one candidate that can and will beat Barack Obama," Anuzis says. In a forthcoming statement, Romney says he is "thrilled to have him on board our leadership team in a critical state like Michigan."

TRUMP TOWER MINDMELD - THE DONALD LIKES PERRY, BUT HE'S WAITING ON PALIN: Donald Trump feels his meeting with Rick Perry last night at Trump Tower went well. The pair had dinner at Jean George after. The New York businessman went home impressed by Perry, who he thinks is a straight shooter with an impressive story to tell. They have been speaking by phone for six weeks. Trump likes the Texas governor but is reluctant to endorse a candidate until Sarah Palin's intentions are known, a source familiar with his thinking tells Morning Score. He is a big Palin fan. Trump is coming off his role as a robocaller for Congressman-elect Bob Turner, who won in the NYC district Trump grew up in. Turner thanked Trump in his victory remarks.

EXCLUSIVE - HUNTSMAN CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCES YOUTH LEADERSHIP: Jeb Bush Jr. is naming the national and regional leaders for the Huntsman campaign's youth and young professional program today. With 139 campus chapters in 42 states, the Huntsman campaign calls GenH-chaired by Jeb Jr.-the most broad-based youth program in the Republican field. Zach Howell, the former chairman of the College Republican National Committee, will be on-staff director of GenH and Mary Anne Huntsman, the governor's oldest daughter, will head the young professional finance program. National co-chairs are former "Students for Daniels" chairman Michael Knowles, former Maryland College Republicans chairman Mike Esteve, New York College Republican chairman Michael Ventre and former "Students for Meg Whitman" chairman Chasen Bullock. Here is the complete list of campus chapters: http://politi.co/om1le9.

Huntsman will attend the first GenH tailgates at the South Carolina and Clemson football games this Saturday. His willingness to challenge Republican orthodoxy on issues like global warming and civil unions could create an opening for him to be a favorite of the 18-35 year-old demographic.

As Bachmann finds herself losing on HPV, Democrats wring their hands about NY-9 and a former top aide to Walker watches the FBI search her home, here's POLITICO's Morning Score: your daily guide to the permanent campaign.

NEW HAMPSHIRE GOV. LYNCH WILL NOT SEEK REELECTION - OVIDE IS EARLY FAVORITE: Democrat John Lynch will announce at a press conference this morning that he is not running for a fifth term next year, increasing the chance that Republicans can claim the seat and jumpstarting contested primaries on both parties. New Hampshire Journal looks at the dynamic: "Former-State Senator Maggie Hassan