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CHICAGOLAND

TRIBUNE SPECIAL REPORT THE OREO, OBESITY AND US

As fat fears grow, Oreo tries new twist

Kraft's push to build a billion-dollar brand collides with the obesity crisis, forcing changes in junk-food marketing



The Oreo mascot delights wide-eyed children at the Lincoln Park Festival in June. Earlier this year Kraft promised to stop advertising junk food to young kids but didn't end other kiddie sales gimmicks.

By Patricia Callahan, Delroy Alexander and Jeremy Manier | Tribune staff reporters
Photos by Chuck Bermer | Tribune staff photographer

The perky emcees had the same question for everyone lining up in Lincoln Park this summer for an Oreo jingle-singing contest: How do you like to eat an Oreo cookie?

"Stuff it in my face," chirped Rachel Wax, an 11-year-old happy to get the free package of cookies and an Oreo T-shirt supplied by Kraft Foods Inc.

Marketers spend billions to elicit that kind of enthusiasm for a brand. But such an honest outburst from a child is so evocative an unhealthy image that Kraft is trying to avoid.

The success of the Oreo, the world's best-selling cookie, has created an unexpected burden for Kraft, the nation's largest foodmaker. The more effectively it sells cookies, the more the company's critics can accuse it of stuffing junk food in the faces of Americans.

With childhood obesity rates tripling since the 1970s,

foodmakers are recalibrating long-standing marketing tactics that have helped elevate snacking to America's fourth meal.

Kraft earlier this year promised to stop advertising its most fattening products to kids under the age of 12, the first major food company to do so. It also was among the first to yank such products from school vending machines.

But the company, which spends more than \$5 billion a year to market all its brands, still employs contests and other sales gimmicks that appeal to children.

The evolution of Oreo marketing shows how foodmak-

ers are recalibrating long-standing marketing tactics that have helped elevate snacking to America's fourth meal.

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TRIBUNE PROFILE ANGELA MERKEL

Eye on the prize: Being chancellor

Is Germany ready for its first female leader?

With polls on her side, Angela Merkel just might find out

By Tom Hundley
Tribune foreign correspondent

TEMPLEIN, Germany—Little more than a decade ago, in the clubby, male-dominated back rooms of Germany's Christian Democratic Union, people assumed Angela Merkel was one of the secretaries.

Her political mentor, former Chancellor Helmut Kohl, used to refer to her as mein maed-

chen—my girl—in a way that many an ambitious woman would have found chauvinistic or patronizing. Merkel just smiled.

When she began her political ascent, rivals and critics mocked her frumpy outfits and utilitarian hairstyle. Newspapers seemed to take cruel delight in running the least flattering photos of her. But she turned the mockery to her advantage. She forced them to deal with her as a politician of substance, not a "female politician."

Merkel, 51, always kept her eye on the prize. Next month she is expected to claim it. If the polls hold, she will become Germany's first female chancellor.

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Angela Merkel campaigns last week in Wittenberg, Germany.

Bystander killed in cop chase

Police defend pursuit of carjacking suspect

By Tonya Maxwell and Liam Ford
Tribune staff reporters

America Rodriguez came to the United States with her boyfriend Juan Aguilera three years ago. The young couple were earning money to send to their mothers, hoping to buy them houses in Loreto, Mexico.

On Sunday, police gave Aguilera shattering news: Rodriguez, 22, had died early that morning when another car, which was being chased by Calumet City police, rammed into the passenger side of the vehicle she was sitting in.

By Sunday evening, Cook

County prosecutors determined that a Harvey man accused of fleeing police by stealing a car with four people inside was responsible for Rodriguez's death.

Seneca D. Allen, 21, of the 1700 block of Honore Avenue has been charged with 41 felonies, including first-degree murder, driving under the influence, aggravated battery on a police officer and vehicular hijacking.

Aguilera, 25, said he is overwhelmed by what happened to Rodriguez, who was on her way home from the Lansing pizzeria where she worked. "I want to know what happened. I have a lot of questions," he said.

Calumet City police officials said Sunday that officers followed the department's policy

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The cold, hard facts on cryonics

Progress aside, don't hold your breath for immortality

By Howard Witt
Tribune senior correspondent

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.—Such is the breathtaking pace of modern scientific advancement that in the three short years since the technicians at the Alcor Life Extension Foundation famously severed baseball star Ted Williams' head from his torso and deep-froze the parts for anticipated resurrection at some future date, there have been a number of improvements to the preservation process.

Antifreeze much better than anything in your car is now pumped into a client's corpse. State-of-the-art cooling techniques are used to chill the body parts down to minus 320 degrees Fahrenheit before they are stored inside tall stainless steel tanks that look like they might have come from a microbrewery. The battered bicycle helmet that used to be strapped onto the deceased's head during the cooling phase is

The freezing process

Temperatures in Fahrenheit

98.6 degrees Under ideal circumstances, Alcor personnel are on hand as the patient nears death. Once the heart stops, the patient is declared legally dead.

Less than 98.6 degrees The body is placed in an ice water bath. A heart-lung resuscitator and IV drugs are used to help protect the brain.

32 degrees The body is connected to a heart-lung machine, which lowers the temperature and replaces the blood with an organ-preservation solution.

Below 32 degrees The entire body is to be preserved. It is slowly cooled to -166 degrees using nitrogen gas. If just the head is in liquid nitrogen inside a cryogenic vat at -320 degrees, the body or head is stored

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A charter school of your own is latest in home amenities

By Jamie Francisco
Tribune staff reporter

The standard subdivision amenities used to be Olympic-size swimming pools, golf courses and lakes trails. But in a dramatic shift, a developer in Kane County proposes to lure home buyers with an \$18 million charter school within easy walking distance.

On Monday Community Unit School District 300, based in Carpentersville, will discuss what could be the first charter school in Illinois built by a developer. School board members will consider whether to give the developer more time to answer their financial concerns

about the school or possibly pass on the proposal.

Cambridge Homes, based in Libertyville, wants to build a school for about 1,000 pupils in kindergarten through 6th grade in its new subdivision near Pingree Grove in the northern part of the county.

The developer said the public school is part of a quality-of-life package that home buyers want, and future residents said it's an undeniable draw. But the plan, which state officials said is the first of its kind in Illinois, has drawn fire from some board members, who fear the school could divert dollars from other

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## CRASH: Police plan inquiry into chase protocol

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on chases, which they declined to specify. But Sean Howard, a spokesman for Dolton, where the chase ended, said Calumet City police did not tell his city's police department that a high-speed police chase was heading into Dolton before the chase entered the city.

The chase that led to Rodriguez's death began with a 12:36 a.m. call Sunday to Calumet City police about a fight in the parking lot of Castaways Bowl at 1025 Sibley Blvd.

An officer arrived to find two men fighting on the ground, one of them punching the other, Sgt. Kevin Glaser said.

When the officer identified himself, one man ran off, but the officer caught him, police said. They fought, but the man punched the officer, hitting the officer's knee.

The man then is alleged to have run to a 1980 brown Chevy Caprice as it was leaving the bowling alley's parking lot. He jumped through the window, either pushed over the female driver or sat on her lap and began driving the car, Glaser said.

Three other men were in the Chevy Caprice, one in the front and two in the back, he said.

The people in the Caprice did not want to be part of the police chase, Glaser said. Investigators still were trying to determine whether the occupants knew the assailant, he said.

As another Calumet City squad car arrived, the Chevy Caprice turned onto Sibley Road, heading west. The officer who was hurt told the officers in the squad car a Calumet City police trainee and another officer with at least five years' police experience, what happened, Glaser said.

Five more squad cars, three from Calumet City and two from the Burnham Police Department, joined the chase, following the Chevy Caprice as it moved at speeds ranging from 30 to 70 m.p.h., Glaser said.

The people inside the Caprice appeared to be struggling with the driver, he Glaser said. They tried to leave through the car



Juan Aguilera, America Rodriguez's boyfriend, grieves for her outside the home they shared in Blue Island.

Tribune photos by Jose Moran



Candalaria Arriaga, who was in the car with America Rodriguez, was thrown from the back seat by the impact.

windows and were signaling to police for help, he said. Police still are trying to determine if the driver had a weapon, Glaser said. After the Caprice crossed the Calumet City into Dolton, it ran a red light at East Sibley Boulevard and Cottage Grove Avenue—2.5 miles from the 1992 Nissan Sentra, Glaser said. The Caprice hit the Sentra's passenger side, where Rodriguez was sitting. Jose Luis Mendoza, 31, who

## Woman killed in collision with carjacked vehicle



Police chase vehicle westbound on Sibley Boulevard. The carjacker reaches speeds up to 70 m.p.h.

After running a stop light, the carjacker collides with a Nissan Sentra traveling north on Cottage Grove Avenue. A 22-year-old woman is killed. A man carjacks Chevy Caprice with four other people inside as it leaves Castaways Bowl parking lot.

said through a translator as he lay in bed. Arriaga, 41, who was sitting in the back seat, also said he never saw the car hit and had no idea how he landed in the street. He was able to get up and tried to see how Rodriguez and Mendoza fared, but police led him to an ambulance. He had a gash on his head and cuts on his right forearm, and his right knee was split open. Arriaga learned later that Rodriguez died. After the crash, she was airlifted to St. James Hospital and Health Center in

Olympia Fields, where she was pronounced dead shortly after her arrival. He was released from the hospital Sunday and spoke through a translator at his nephew's home, still dressed in a blue patient top and pants and unable to get out of bed. At the hospital, a police officer told Arriaga that officers would hit another vehicle. She said she never thought the speeding car would hit another vehicle. Police seemed to be justified in the incident, Arriaga added. In the Chevy Caprice, the

## CRONICS: Attempt at immortality isn't cheap

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soon to be replaced with something more clinical-looking. But the experts here, who have been struggling to perfect their techniques since 1972, still haven't quite conquered the ultimate base of cryonics practitioners everywhere: the unfortunate phenomena known in the trade as "accoustic fracturing events."

In layman's terms, those would be the audible cracking noises made by the brain and other internal organs as they shatter from the effects of the extreme cold.

"It's exactly that kind of noise when you drop an ice cube into a glass of Coke," explained Tanya Jones, Alcor's director of technical operations. "In the best-case scenario we've ever had, it was only five fracture events. We are working on the engineering to see how to eliminate this problem."

And what will happen to all those fractured organs if the bodies can somehow be thawed out and revived?

"It should just be a matter of stitching them back together," Jones said. "You might be able to glue them together, but we don't have repair technologies on that scale yet."

Achieving immortality, it turns out, is not going to be easy. But that's no discouragement to the true believers in cryonics, the study of freezing freshly deceased bodies so that they might one day be revived and treated for whatever caused them to perish.

There are now at least five cryonics facilities in the United States, of which Alcor claims to be the largest. The oldest, the American Cryonics Society



Alcor Life Extension Foundation, among five such companies in the nation, stores the remains in stainless steel vats.

Its adherents a lot of cash now—Alcor charges \$150,000 to preserve a whole body, \$80,000 for just the head—and a lot of faith later that what seems like science fiction will someday become fact. "As far as the unproven aspect of the technology, cryonics is no different than the folks who are trying to find a cure for cancer," said Joseph Wojnicki, Alcor's CEO and president. "There's no cure for lung cancer, for example. Yet we spend hundreds of millions of dollars a year searching for one. It's no more speculative than that, or any other advanced medical procedure that's experimental right now."

Alcor says it has 765 members who have paid their fees, many by purchasing life insurance policies for the purpose. New customers are generated through referrals and events such as Cryofest 2006, a potluck picnic scheduled for later this month in Sunnyvale, Calif. ("Fridge available," the invitation notes.)

**Processing a patient** Members who become "patients" in the Alcor vocabulary and what happens next is more technical. Ideally, a volunteer Alcor paramedic team will be able to rush to the hospital and begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation to keep blood flowing to the brain and intracranial gases while a preservation solution is pumped into the veins.

Those who can't be reached immediately and are shipped off to funeral homes face inevitable ischemia as their organs rapidly decompose from lack of oxygen. Alcor will still freeze them, but their future prospects are not considered as bright. And if the funeral home has already embalmed a patient with formaldehyde, or the patient has been autopsied or committed suicide with a gunshot to the head, they are really in trouble.

The patient is next packed in ice and transported to Alcor's Scottsdale facility, which is in a nondescript office park next to an interior design company



Matthew Sullivan, a readiness coordinator at Alcor, prepares the operating room to process a patient in Scottsdale, Ariz. The company has 68 clients in deep freeze for revival in the future.

There, in a makeshift operating room, the blood is drained from the patient's body and replaced with a special glycerol antifreeze.

If the patient has opted for preservation of just the head—the assumption being that future scientists will be able to reconstruct the brain—its is detached from the body and placed in a special plexiglass box. In either case, holes are drilled into the skull to observe the brain and make sure the antifreeze is infusing evenly and then the holes are plugged with wax.

Finally, the patient is frozen in nitrogen gas and lowered with a crane into one of the large storage vats, which can hold up to 10 whole clients alongside several heads.

There's also a vat for pets of members, and it now contains about two dozen cats and dogs. "Oddly enough, the pets can have better preservation right

woman, one backseat passenger and the suspect Allen were treated in area hospitals and released, Glaser said. By Sunday afternoon, one man remained at St. James Hospital and another at St. Margaret Mercy Hospital in Hammond, he said.

Calumet City police will investigate to determine if proper procedures were followed during the chase, Glaser said, but he added that the officers appeared to have adhered to police policy. He said the department has a written policy regarding chases, but he declined to release a copy of it.

Police departments in the Chicago area and across the country have been tightening chase procedures in recent years.

In most cases, an incident involving an aggravated battery and a carjacking in progress, such as those Allen has been charged with, would allow the continued pursuit of a vehicle. State police guidelines bar pursuits unless a violent felony has been committed.

Many departments, including Calumet City, routinely will call off a chase if a suspect has not committed a violent felony.

In 1997 in Calumet City, police investigating a domestic battery and theft spotted the suspect's car but gave up pursuit when he ignored police warning lights and crossed into Hammond. The suspect was captured later, after police began chasing him again and he tried to elude them by driving his car into the Calumet River. Officers pulled him out.

After a series of high-profile chases, including one in January 2005 in which a female bystander who was pregnant was killed, the Chicago Police Department revised its pursuit policies.

Under current rules, if a police chase begins when a motorist commits a theft or is stopped for a traffic violation, officers must cease pursuit if the motorist runs stoplights or stop signs.

Meanwhile, Aguilera, Rodriguez's boyfriend, is trying to figure out how to send his girlfriend's remains back to Mexico, where she has a 5-year-old daughter. All of her closest relatives are in Mexico, he said. He has never had to do anything like this before. Aguilera said outside the home he and Rodriguez shared on the 13000 block of Western Avenue in Blue Island.

He said he worries about sending her home, holding a folded \$20 bill, which someone had been ready for anything but never thought the speeding car would hit another vehicle.

And he doesn't know if he'll be able to attend her funeral. [matthew@tribune.com](mailto:matthew@tribune.com) [tribune.com](http://tribune.com) [tribune.com](http://tribune.com)