A boost for the Gulf Coast

- First lady touts resort in Fla. visit, 2A
- Federal government issues revised moratorium on deep-sea drilling, 2A

Swiss say no to Polanski extrication

- Authorities blame U.S. Justice Department for decision to free film director, 8A

Jennifer Weiner on pain, growth

- Fly Away Home is an entertaining take on a political wife's renewal. Book review, 1D

Green revamp for Empire State Building

- New York City's tallest structure is removing, retufting and replacing 6,500-plus windows. 3A
- Three are dead in New Mexico shooting
- Man in dispute with girlfriend fires on her work, wounds four, kills two and himself. 3A
- Money: Hospital mergers growing

A new generation of talented pitchers who have been trained with increasing sophistication. Some also say umpires have played a role with inconsistent strike zones that hitters say add another layer of guesswork - which pitches are strikes - on top of solving the talent young arms throwing those pitches.

Perfection strikes twice: The Phillies' Roy Halladay pitched a perfect game May 29, the second in the majors that month - and the first in 130 years there have been two in one season.

By Paul White
USA TODAY

Some of baseball's most prolific sluggers filled three hours of prime-time television Monday in the All-Star Home Run Derby, the game's annual salute to power and offense. It's about time the hitters got some attention.

With two perfect games and a celebrated near-miss, two more no-hitters and diminished offense across baseball, this has been the Year of the Pitcher - at least up to the season's traditional halfway point marked by today's All-Star Game in Anaheim, Calif.

There's no consensus on a reason, but theories abound.

Baseball's stricter policy on performance-enhancing drugs - namely steroids and amphetamines - is widely seen as a factor, but it's more complex than that. The crackdown, in its sixth season, has taken place amid the arrival of

The pitchers rise again

Young talent wave, new training ideas change the game

By Matt Schoeffel, AP
USA TODAY

Scoreboard says it all: The Athletics' Dallas Braden made history May 9.

Perfect game

While the Angels and Rangers couldn't get their bats going, Braden (6-0) struck out 11 and walked one in 8 2/3 innings of a 2-hitter to earn his first career shutout.

By Brian Cook, The Orange County Register

If you don't think you can catch a fly ball, say's Braden, "then you're probably not going to catch a fly ball." And if you do think you can catch a fly ball, "then you're probably going to catch it." Braden is going to become an All Star, for sure. He's going to be a success no matter what happens.

'Now, it's the pitchers' era. It's just one of those things you can't explain."

By Bruce Horovitz
USA TODAY

The latest storm for Gibson

- Tape recordings allegedly featuring threats against his ex-girlfriend raise new questions about actor, 1D

Backlash grows vs full-body scanners

Fliers worry about privacy, health risks

By Gary Stoller
USA TODAY

Opposition to new full-body imaging machines to screen passengers and the government's deployment of them at major airports is growing.

Many frequent fliers complain they're time-consuming or invade their privacy. The world's airlines say they shouldn't be used for primary security screening. And questions are being raised about possible effects on passengers' health.

"The system takes three to five times as long as walking through a metal detector," says Phil Buhl of Atlanta, one of many fliers on USA TODAY's Rant Board who oppose the machines. "This looks to be yet another disaster waiting to happen.

I prefer the machines - dubbing them as virtual strip searches - were installed at many airports in March after a Christmas Day airline bombing attempt. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has spent more than $80 million for about 500 machines, including 133 now at airports. It plans to install about 1,000 by the end of next year.

But the machines are running into complaints and questions here and overseas:

security officials in Dubai said earlier this month they wouldn't use the machines because they violate "personal privacy" and information about their "side effects" on health isn't known.

Last month, the European Commission said in a report that "a rigorous scientific assessment" of potential health risks is needed before machines are deployed there. It also said screening methods besides the new machines should be used on pregnant women, babies, children and people with disabilities.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office said in October that the TSA was deploying the machines without fully testing them and assessing whether they could detect "threat items" concealed on various parts of the body. And in March, the agency said it "remains unclear" whether they would have detected the explosives that Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab allegedly tried to detonate on a jet bound for Detroit on Christmas.

The TSA has deployed about 500 machines, including 133 now at airports. It plans to install about 1,000 by the end of next year.

But the machines are running into complaints and questions here and overseas:

- Some fliers say the machines are invasive and can be uncomfortable.
- Some fliers say the machines are time-consuming and can cause delays.
- Some fliers say the machines are not effective in detecting threats.
- Some fliers say the machines are not cost-effective.
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Stores look to YouTube for help

Teen 'haul' videos star in back-to-school strategy

By Bruce Horovitz
USA TODAY

Show-and-tell shopping videos posted by teens on YouTube for fun are about to get a serious back-to-school commercial twist.

Today, J.C. Penney, one of the nation's largest retailers, will announce plans to turn a handful of these "get-at-the-store" videos known as "hauls" - into a core component of its back-to-school marketing.

Penney joins several teen-oriented retailers, including Forever 21 and American Eagle, in exploring the use of hauls this fall to go for a bigger share of the $50 billion Americans are expected to spend on back-to-school and back-to-college goods.

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By Andrew Wayt
USA TODAY

The Intemational Air Transport Association, which represents 250 of the world's airlines, including major U.S. carriers, says the TSA lacks "a strategy and vision" of how hee machines fit into a comprehensive checkpoint security plan. "The TSA is putting the cart before the horse," association spokesman Steve Lotz says.

Fliers can refuse screening by the machines - dubbed by some as "virtual strip searches" - were installed at many airports in March after a Christmas Day airline bombing attempt.

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Hauler: Annie St. John shows off her J.C. Penney finds: a military-style hat and a necklace.

By Bruce Horovitz
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Debate rages over full-body scans

Fliers complain of added security time, privacy issues, radiation fears

By Cary Stoller
USA TODAY

Frequency business traveler Melissa Wilson refuses to be screened by the government's new full-body imaging machines at airport security checkpoints. She says she noticed before a recent flight from Houston that the machines increased screening time up to five minutes per passenger. The equipment also enables the government to "strip-search" passengers without probable cause, and the long-term effects of radiation emitted are unknown, she says. "I've been screened zero times, and that number will remain zero," said Wilson, a management consultant from Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Faced with a choice of getting screened by the machines or screened by a metal detector and a pat-down search by a security agent, Wilson and many frequent fliers are choosing a pat-down as questions and opposition about the machines grow. A survey of members of USA TODAY's Road Warrior panel of heavy travelers found more than half of 49 of them who've been screened at least once by the machines, with 35 saying they increased screening time.

The Transportation Security Administration, which has spent more than $900 million for about 500 machines, says the criticism is unwarranted. It says the machines improve security, are no threat to passenger privacy or health, and were chosen after an alternative screening procedures by more than 98% of passengers during airport tests.

Among the issues debated:

- Processing times. The TSA says it takes about 20 seconds to screen a passenger with the machines. The International Air Transport Association, which represents 250 of the world's airlines, disputes that. The group says it observed the new machines at Baltimore-Washington airport during the July 4 holiday weekend, and it took 50 to 70 seconds to screen a passenger.

- Privacy invasion. Full-body machines violate the Fourth Amendment, which guards against unlawful searches and seizures, by subjecting travelers to an "invasive search" without any suspicion that they did anything wrong, the Electronic Privacy Information Center alleges in a July 2 lawsuit filed in a U.S. appeals court in Washington.

- Radiation fears. Frequent flier Richard Hofrichter of San Francisco, wrote a letter to John Holdren, President Obama's top science adviser, expressing "serious concerns" about "potential health risks" from the machines. The professors are experts in biochemistry, imaging technology and cancer. "The dose to the skin may be dangerously high," they said.

- Ability to detect weapons and explosives. The Government Accountability Office said in March that it "remains unclear" whether the machines would have detected the explosive devices of a man who allegedly tried to blow up a Northwest Airlines jet bound for Detroit on Christmas Day in 2009.

- Processing times. The TSA says it sets the machines to blur travelers' faces and places employees viewing the images in a separate room. The agency says it doesn't store the images and deletes them after viewing.

- Radiation. Frequent flier Richard Hofrichter of Glen Allen, Va., says he's been screened by the full-body machines about 30 times this year, and he's worried about the cumulative effects of radiation. TSA spokesman Kristin Lee says the machines that use X-rays emit a very low dose of radiation, equal to the amount received from the environment during two minutes in flight. Other machines that use electromagnetic waves that emit energy to scan passengers are "thousands of times less than what is permitted for a cellphone," she says.

The TSA says machines that use X-rays were evaluated by the government and scientists who determined that the radiation doses for individuals being screened, operators and bystanders were well below the dose limits specified by the American National Standards Institute. In April, however, four professors at the University of California-San Francisco, wrote a letter to John Holdren, President Obama's top science adviser, expressing "serious concerns" about "possible health risks" from the machines. The professors are experts in biochemistry, imaging technology and cancer. "The radiation emitted by the scanners would be safe if it was distributed throughout the entire body, but the majority is absorbed by the skin and underlying tissue, the professors wrote. "The dose to the skin may be dangerously high," they said.

TSA spokesman Kristin Lee says the agency is "highly confident" in the detection capability of full-body, or advanced imaging technology. "There are no screening technologies that are 100% effective," he says.

TSA spokesman Lee says the agency "has the best technology" on the market and "has a higher success rate than any other technology in detecting explosives or weapons." The TSA says its machines are "safe and effective" and are capable of detecting metals and non-metals.