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Image courtesy of Jet Propulsion Laboratory
UNIVERSITY NEWS

RECORD TREE DISCOVERED IN POLY CANYON

Biology professor Matt Ritter and three of his students recently discovered what is thought to be the tallest Karri eucalyptus (Eucalyptus diversicolor) tree in North America.

Ritter, a biology professor and head of the Cal Poly Plant Conservatory, spotted the massive tree in Poly Canyon in 2005. But it wasn’t until late November 2007 that he and graduate students Jenn Yost and Chris Wassenberg, along with undergraduate Justin Bence, were able to climb to the top of the giant tree to measure it.

Using ropes and harnesses, the four researchers were able to get an accurate measurement of the tree’s height by dropping a line to the ground from the upper canopy. They recorded the tree at a height of 154 feet, a diameter of seven feet, and a 75-foot-wide crown.

Ritter submitted the data to the California Registry of Big Trees, part of a national forestry database. The Poly Canyon Karri eucalyptus has been accepted as the tallest tree of its type on record – almost 100 feet taller than the previous North American record holder, a San Clemente tree at 59 feet.

As an undergraduate student at Cal Poly, Chamitoff taught lab courses in circuit design and worked summer internships at Atari Computers and IBM. He fondly remembers Cal Poly Mathematics Professor James Mueller, whom he contacted recently about his upcoming Space Station trip. “My experience is proof that Cal Poly’s learn-by-doing philosophy is one that really works for just about anything one chooses to do,” said Chamitoff.

From Cal Poly, Chamitoff went on to earn master’s degrees from the California Institute of Technology and University of Houston Clear Lake, and a Ph.D. in aeronautics and astronautics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. While at MIT, Chamitoff worked on the Hubble Space Telescope, flight control upgrades for the Space Shuttle autopilot, and the attitude control system for the Space Station.

ALUM SCHEDULED TO RESIDE ON INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

CAL POLY ALUM GREGORY CHAMITOFF (EE ’84) will soon have quite a view out of the closest window. The electrical engineering graduate has been selected to work and live onboard the International Space Station as a flight engineer, another remarkable step in what has proven to be an incredible professional career.

Chamitoff will begin his journey in late April on Space Shuttle mission STS-124. He will stay on the ISS until September, returning to Earth with Shuttle mission STS-126.

Students Vote Online for Campus Issues

Cal Poly students can now vote on ASI issues from home, the library, or anywhere else they can connect to the Internet.

The new voting procedure allows Cal Poly students to conveniently vote from any location, on or off campus, by logging into the my.calpoly.edu portal. Students unable to vote on campus, such as those studying abroad, are now provided the opportunity to vote using the new procedure. The system also minimizes the logistical demands on Information Technology Services (ITS), Student Affairs and Facility Services staff.

ASI President Brandon Souza is excited about the new system and is hopeful that students will embrace this new method of voting. “In a time when students are busier than ever, a new voting system like this really helps,” said Souza. “Students can vote at their convenience and not worry about making a run to the polls between classes or extracurricular activities.”

On Jan. 16, ASI Student Government passed a resolution to support the use of electronic voting from any location with Internet accessibility for all campus-wide elections and referendums.

ASI first tested electronic voting in the 2007 campus-wide ASI Presidential and Board of Directors election. Several laptop polling locations were set up on campus, and students were able to vote electronically via the my.calpoly.edu portal.

Students and ASI called the online voting method a success, and voter turnout was the highest it had ever been. The success of the May 2007 elections affirmed the value for electronic voting for future elections and referendums.

Campus Alert System in Place

In the wake of last year’s Virginia Tech tragedy, Cal Poly officials immediately began researching new ways to communicate with the campus community during emergencies. In January 2008, Cal Poly adopted a new text message notification system that enables the university to send urgent information to students, faculty and staff.

With the new system, powered by e2Campus, university officials can send instant alerts directly to registered subscribers’ e-mail accounts and mobile phones via SMS text messages. Subscribers can also receive alerts via RSS, wireless PDA, My Yahoo, My AOL, and personalized iGoogle home pages.

Current students, faculty and staff may sign up through the Cal Poly portal at http://my.calpoly.edu.

For Campus Issues

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HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL LIFE HAS NEW NAME, NEW BUILDING

CAL POLY’S OFFICE of Housing and Residential Life has a new name – University Housing – and a new building. The 8,300-square foot, two-story Housing Administration Building replaces the old housing office and will accommodate the growing campus housing operations, soon to include the approximately 2,700-bed Poly Canyon Village complex.

Architects specifically designed the new building to encourage interaction between housing departments and the campus by blending programs, academics and administrative activities.

PASSINGS

Dean and Professor Emeritus Carl Cummins

Former industrial technology Professor Carl C. Cummins of San Luis Obispo passed away Thursday, Jan. 3. Cummins came to Cal Poly in 1958 to head up the newly formed Industrial Technology Department. In 1961 he was appointed as dean of the College of Applied Arts and served for 25 years until his retirement. He continued to teach part time in the College of Engineering until 1998.

Business Professor Emeritus Walter Rice

Longtime Cal Poly business Professor Walter Rice passed away Dec. 12, 2007, after a brief illness. Rice was 69 years old. During his 36-year career at Cal Poly he taught economics, headed the MBA program, and served as associate dean in the Orfalea College of Business before his retirement in 2000. Rice was an expert on transportation economics, especially California rail and trucking issues.

Statistics Lecturer Noel Claire Wheeler, retired

Former Cal Poly Statistics Professor Noel Claire Wheeler passed away Jan. 4. She taught statistics at Cal Poly from 1994-2001. After earning her Ph.D. in statistics in 1979, she was recruited by UCLA to head the statistical consulting unit in the School of Medicine, which she did until her retirement in 1999.

Social Sciences Professor Harold R. Kerbo is the recipient of the 2007 Cal Poly International Educator Award. The annual honor, sponsored by International Education and Programs, recognizes a faculty member who has significantly contributed to international education at Cal Poly.

Kerbo has been a faculty member at Cal Poly since 1977 and has a distinguished record of teaching, service and scholarship within international education. Founder of the Cal Poly Thailand Study Program, Kerbo has overseen approximately 350 students and 12 faculty members who have participated in the program since 1998. He has served as resident director, has taught in the study program for many years, and has taken an active role in program development, faculty and student selection, advising, and logistics.

In addition, Kerbo has received Fulbright awards to teach and conduct research in Japan, Thailand and Austria. He serves as a discipline reviewer for Fulbright applicants to European programs, and he has been visiting professor and visiting fellow at universities in Japan, Germany, Switzerland and Wales.

Reflecting on Kerbo’s contributions to international education and scholarship, President Warren Baker observed that Kerbo “is a leading advocate for global understanding who has created extraordinary opportunities for our students to participate in life-changing study-abroad experiences and, with his writings, has promoted greater understanding of comparative social and political realities around the world. This award is a fitting recognition of his many achievements through a long and distinguished career.”

Irrigation training and research center (ITRC)

Chairman Charles Burt.

The shortage is partly due to the fact that most of the major agricultural universities in the West have reduced or eliminated irrigation classes over the past 20 years.

In contrast, Cal Poly offers extensive irrigation training. Cal Poly currently offers a bachelor’s degree in bioresource and agricultural engineering and has an irrigation training and research center (ITRC) that offers additional programs, including courses from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and from industry supporters. The funding will be used to create a large assortment of high-quality online irrigation courses and continuing education.

“This program will allow people who cannot physically move to San Luis Obispo to take state-of-the-art irrigation classes for professional development, or for university credit applicable here at Cal Poly or at other universities,” said ITRC Professor and Chairman Charles Burt.

There is a growing lack of trained irrigation specialists, said ITRC Dean David Wehner. “California is the largest agricultural region in the United States, and we’re facing a catastrophic lack of people capable of designing and installing the complex irrigation systems the industry relies on,” Wehner said.

The shortage is partly due to the fact that most of the major agricultural universities in the West have reduced or eliminated irrigation classes over the past 20 years.

In contrast, Cal Poly offers extensive irrigation training. Cal Poly currently offers a bachelor’s degree in bioresource and agricultural engineering that includes a specialty in irrigation, as well as a master’s degree in irrigation (irrigation) minor for non-BRAE students. The department also offers an M.S. degree in agriculture with a focus on irrigation.

Students in those programs get hands-on experience in Cal Poly’s outdoor irrigation laboratories. The campus irrigation training labs are funded by industry and by ITRC contracts with irrigation districts, the California Energy Commission, California Department of Water Resources, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, manufacturers, and others.

CAL POLY WILL SOON OFFER students and professionals across California and the West a chance to earn university credit for irrigation classes – without leaving their jobs or their hometowns.

Cal Poly alumni Fred Hamisch (AE ’63) and his wife, Virginia, jump-started the online irrigation classes with a donation of $500,000 in December to the Bioresource and Agricultural Engineering Department (BRAE) in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAFES).

Cal Poly’s Irrigation Training and Research Center (ITRC) is currently seeking additional matching funding for the online courses from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and from industry supporters. The funding will be used to create a large assortment of high-quality online irrigation courses and continuing education.
ALUMNISIGN INTO POLYLINK NOW AND YOU COULD WIN AN iPod NANO

MAGAZINE in hand, head for the Internet and www.calpolylink.com. Look in the gold bar on top for the words "First Time Login." (Or look for the gold "First Time Login" text link in the main sign-in box.) Click on that text link, follow the instructions—and you’ll be in.

GO ORANGE: CUSTOMIZE YOUR CAL POLY NEWS You can do it at National Geographic, The Washington Post, and CNN Web sites. And now, you can do it with Cal Poly News and PolyLink. Buttons like the one at left are popping up on information Web sites all over the Internet. Pushing the orange button will get you the latest news headlines, sent to your computer monitor as an “RSS” feed. RSS feeds collect and bring news headlines from your favorite Web sites—like the Cal Poly News Web and PolyLink—to your computer when you sign in. No more Web surfing to get the latest headlines.

To get started, look for the orange button or similar buttons on your favorite Web sites. If you use Internet Explorer 7.0 or the Mozilla Firefox Web browsers, just clicking on these orange buttons will show you the latest RSS news headlines.

IE 7.0 and Firefox will both let you “bookmark” these headline “feeds,” or add them to your existing “Favorite Feeds” list. Or, you can also download a free “feed reader” program to your computer to compile your RSS feeds for you. Search engines like MyYahoo, MyGoogle, MyMSN and others offer personalized RSS sections. Users can sign in and create a personalized area pulling in headlines from multiple news Web sites—from the Discovery Channel to E! to Cal Poly News. Soon, PolyLink will also offer personal page RSS feed sections and displays, where members will be able to gather all their favorite RSS feeds from across the Web for easy, one-stop reading. The feeds will also let other alumni see members’ favorite feeds—and YouTube videos. Watch for the next Cal Poly Magazine for details.

Right now on PolyLink, alumni, parents and friends can sign up for alumni-oriented RSS news feeds at www.calpolylink.com/news—and for information on the latest alumni travel offerings, gatherings and outings at www.calpolylink.com/albums/)

No sign-in is required to read or subscribe to RSS feeds from either page.

One RSS perk for PolyLink members only: Every PolyLink group page offers an RSS feed. Members can simply hit the orange button and subscribe to their group feed, which will let them know when new group photos, group news, or new messages from other alumni are posted.

For more details about RSS, visit the “Internet for Beginners” section on About.com: http://netforbeginners.about.com/od/rssandlivewebfeeds/f/rss.htm.

IT’S THE HAIR Who is this man and why does he fascinate us? If you’re one of the 10,000+ Cal Poly Update e-newsletter readers, you may remember this photo of Cal Poly grad Steve Plath (MATH ’67).

After graduation and a tour of duty in Vietnam, Plath changed his look from boot camp to rock star. He married the foxy lady in the photo and is the father of two grown sons.

Steve and Susan Plath, circa 1973

Yahoo! mail users complain that Update and other campus e-newsletters are winding up in their bulk mail folders. Don’t let it happen to you! For details on how to receive Update directly in your e-mail in-box visit: http://www.calpolynews.calpoly.edu/update/mail.html.

Steve Plath (MATH ’67)

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ALUMNI, SIGN IN TO POLYLINK NOW AND YOU COULD WIN AN iPod NANO

THERE MAY BE NO SUCH THING as a free lunch, but wouldn’t you rather have a free iPod anyway?

The winners circle currently includes alumni Tylia Smith (BIO ’05), Mike Shick (CEN ’05), and Lauren Howell (OH ’90). All three logged in to PolyLink and created their personal and watch for news about more Polylink nano giveaways to be eligible for the next drawing on March 25, log in before and there are still three iPod nanos waiting to be given away to Polylink members!

There May Be no Such Thing as a free lunch, but wouldn’t you rather have a free iPod anyway?

There May Be no Such Thing as a free lunch, but wouldn’t you rather have a free iPod anyway?

There May Be no Such Thing as a free lunch, but wouldn’t you rather have a free iPod anyway?
IN 1995, RAUL CANO sparked quite a brouhaha when he reported in Science magazine that he extracted living bacterium from a bee entombed in amber 25-45 million years ago.

More than a decade later, the amber research of the renowned microbiologist and director of Cal Poly’s Environmental Biotechnology Institute (EBI) is more likely to cause a brew-haha.

Cano has discovered that prehistoric yeast plucked from his ancient amber samples produces surprisingly tasty beer—a frothy pint so good it’s headed to the “Olympics of Beer,” the 2008 World Beer Cup held in San Diego in mid-April.

The fungus, originally considered a nuisance in Cano’s lab oratory, is now the star athlete of his new venture, Fossil Fuels Brewing Co. Touting the motto “Bringing Good Things Back to Life,” the business is a way for the avid environmentalist and beer lover to “have my beer and drink it too.”

“Why waste good waste? I’m hoping to use profits from beer sales to fund biofuels research at Cal Poly’s EBI. The wastewater from beer production has a great deal of energy, therefore, potential to be reclaimed as biofuel,” said Cano.

Cano’s journey from microbiologist to brewer began shortly after his pioneering research was published in 1995, thrusting him concurrently into the scientific limelight and the Hollywood spotlight.
Cano’s peers weren’t as impressed as the crew. Scientific scrutiny followed the publication of Cano’s discovery in Science magazine. As expected, there were challenges to his claims, but “scientific method” smiled on him. There have been at least three independent verifications of the isolation of a living microorganism from amber, said Cano.

One of the scientists who confirmed the validity of Cano’s research was Lewis “Chip” Lambert. At the time, he was director of pre-clinical research at a Bay Area biotech company; now he’s Cano’s closest friend and partner in Fossil Fuels Brewing Co.

Both Cano and Lambert loved the idea of brewing beer with the prehistoric yeast and using profits for biofuels research, but they needed a commercial brewer. They found exactly what they needed on a Northern California ski slope in 2006.

Lambert was giving skiing lessons to a woman who turned out to be the wife of an award-winning brewery owner. Her husband, brewer Peter Hackett of Guerneville’s Stumptown, admits he was skeptical at first about brewing beer with patented 35-million-year-old yeast. But his adventurous spirit triumphed and he hatched the first commercial batch of Tyrannosaurus-Rat beer a few months later.

“How could I know I was dealing with the rock stars of the microbiology world? In addition to serving as research and development for two amazing scientists, I get to brew a remarkably unique beer that tastes like nothing I’ve ever had before,” said Hackett.

Stumptown offered the first public tasting of Tyrannosaurus-Rat beer at its Russian River Beer Revival last summer, followed by the first official review in a full trade publication. Compared to Stumptown’s trademark Rat Bastard Ale, “T-Rat is smoother, with softer fruity flavor characteristics and just a touch of lemony sweetness that isn’t tart,” said Jay R. Brooks, blind tasting director of Celebrator Beer News.

Perhaps the success of the company will create a new motto for “Jurassic Park: The Lost World.”

Coincidentally timed with the release of the movie “Jurassic Park,” Cano’s work attracted the attention of producers plotting a sequel to the blockbuster hit. Most of the scenes filmed on campus fell to the cutting room floor, but Cano managed to secure a celebrity role among the crew.

Using the 25-45-million-year-old yeast, Cano and a team of amateur brewers whipped up the inaugural batches of T-Rex Lager, Stegosaurus Stout, Jurassic Amber Ale, and Ancient Ale, and untapped them at the cast party for “Jurassic Park: The Lost World.”

AS HOUSING MARKETS continue to soften, select buyers are finding a small housing complex on California’s Central Coast very attractive.

Cal Poly’s Housing Corp. broke ground on the Bella Montaña faculty and staff housing complex at the height of the 2005 real estate boom to assist the university with recruiting and retention efforts. Homes began selling in December 2006, and sales have remained steady with 44 of the 69 units sold as of this report.

“There are a host of reasons we’ve had steady sales in spite of a declining real estate market,” said James Reinhardt, director of Cal Poly’s Housing Corp. “It’s difficult to find the type of community and quality construction offered at Bella Montaña for a comparable price.”

A mere half-mile from the center of Cal Poly’s campus, Bella Montaña offers faculty and staff buyers 10 different floor plans to choose from. A small community feel, friendly neighbors, and the ability to ride a bike to work and down town San Luis Obispo are just some of the extras that make the decision to purchase an easy one.

Bella Montaña boasts views of Cerro San Luis and Bishop’s Peak, and the homes are surrounded by beautifully landscaped and professionally maintained grounds. Private decks, patios and outdoor spaces allow owners to relax or entertain, while common areas allow community members to connect with one another.

“ar the moment we are enjoying things like family movie nights outside with neighbors on Fridays,” said resident Craig Nelson, director of the Cal Poly Fund and Advancement Services.

According to Reinhardt, the purchase price of any Bella Montaña home is guaranteed to be at least 20 percent below its appraised value. Along with other attractive incentives, including no closing costs and the first year of homeowner association dues paid, buyers are finding purchasing at Bella Montaña to be a smart decision.

First-time buyers also receive additional incentives, including:

- Cal Poly Housing Corp. pays one point toward the buyers’ loans.
- Preferred lender, Rabobank, reduced interest rates on the buyers’ loans by .125 percent below the published rates and offers buyers 100 percent financing with no private mortgage insurance.
- Initial buyers may realize additional appreciation at the time of resale by offering their homes at 80% of appraised value.

Reinhardt says he is happy with the way sales are going. “We’ve been enjoying things like family movie nights outside with neighbors on Fridays,” said resident Craig Nelson, director of the Cal Poly Fund and Advancement Services.

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PETUNIA PICKLE BOTTOM: LEARN BY DESIGNING

BY JO ANN LLOYD

CHRISTINE AGUILERA, GWEN STEFANI, Salma Hayek and Heidi Klum all have one. Oprah Winfrey presented one to Julia Roberts during an Oprah show. Even Sheryl Crow sings its praises.

New moms and dads no longer need to suffer the embarrassment of schlepping around baby’s dull drab diaper bag. At Petunia Pickle Bottom headquarters in Ventura, two Cal Poly alumni – and one CSU Chico alumna – are creating diaper bags elegant enough to call works of art.

DeNai Jones (LS ’97; CRED ’98), her husband, Braden Jones (BUS ’99), and Korie Conant, a Chico public relations grad, are bringing style and high fashion to the diaper bag industry.

It all started while on an extended trip to Alaska, where the couple had time to explore their career options. “We had no mortgage, no children. It was the right time to take a risk, to pursue our goals of building a business,” Braden said.

His first challenge was to convince a “totally risk-averse” DeNai, who thought a teaching career would offer security, a regular paycheck and summers off.

When the couple returned to Ventura, they got right down to it. DeNai did everything by hand. In a room above her parents’ garage, she traced the patterns and cut them out. She soon found a store in Santa Barbara that she knew would be a good fit for the high-end diaper bags she was designing.

DeNai and Braden launched the Petunia Pickle Bottom line in 2000. Until then diaper bags were just functional, portable changing stations. There were no fashionable, functional diaper bags. Everything was geared toward the baby, not the mother, DeNai said.

“We started out slowly, from scratch. Soon our bags were appearing in celebrity magazines,” DeNai said. “It got to the point where I couldn’t cut them fast enough. So we risked it . . . we took out a personal loan for $30,000 and had a few hundred units made.”

As business grew, they realized they needed someone to help market their product. They brought Korie on board as vice president and director of brand development. The three of them worked for years with no pay. “Korie worked as a waitress at night. We were totally boot-strapping this thing,” DeNai said.

The company now employs nearly 20 and distributes to more than 1,200 retail outlets nationally and internationally. Their bags, ranging in price from $150 to $325, are sold in high-end baby boutiques and stores such as Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom and Saks Fifth Avenue.

But DeNai and Braden recall more humble days. “In the beginning, we had to create a façade larger than we were. We didn’t want people to know we were working out of a room above our parents’ garages. We had one phone with nine extensions, and family members who would answer, ‘This is John in Shipping.’ We subscribed to the theory: ‘Fake it til you make it.’

After five years, DeNai is finally getting to do what she loves – designing. “I always wanted to focus on just the design aspect of the job, but I was busy packing boxes, putting out fires, making phone calls,” DeNai said.

Their creative line includes a masculine bag designed for dads, several styles of bags for moms, and a smaller clutch bag. They recently launched the Cake line, an upper-end line described as “deliciously decadent, a moveable feast in rich European cut velvets and wool tweeds, sculpted antique brass hardware and timeless, functional design.” They also sell the Fawn line of high-end baby bedding.

Petunia Pickle Bottom headquarters is the kind of place that nurtures creativity. A large loft-like space with wood floors, high ceilings, huge windows and a view of the Pacific, the offices are open and airy and light. “We’ll pay a little extra for a good working environment,” Braden said. “We want it to feel like family.”

And no wonder. Both DeNai and Braden have nothing but the highest praise for their families, especially their parents. “Our parents supported us all the way,” Braden said. “They gave us strong foundations. You can’t jump far without a good foundation.”

What’s next? “We want to expand the brand, make it more noteworthy,” Braden said. “We want to grow the company, too. We’re on the next five-year plan, which includes multi-product launches in the baby industry.”

And multi-baby launches, as well. DeNai and Braden are the proud parents of two-year-old Sutton and are awaiting the arrival of a second son in March. Korie had a boy last October.
Imagine a line of flames several miles long roaring swiftly up mountains and down valleys, incinerating an area more than five times the size of the District of Columbia. The fiery wave leaves behind a quiet landscape of charred brush, trees and horizons.

Peggy Hernandez (NRM ‘82), the newly appointed supervisor of the Los Padres National Forest, surveys the landscape once blackened by the Zaca Fire, the second largest in California’s recorded history. Fire season is now officially over. January rains have saturated the burn area more than five months after the inferno was contained. Most of the 240,000 affected acres were in the Los Padres National Forest.

“This fire was a devastating event, but in some ways a blessing since this is such a remote area,” said Hernandez as she eyes a once-blackened hillside. Fire can be a natural management tool for cleaning out dead vegetation and debris. For a typical wildfire, the main challenge is recovery – the landscape needs time to heal.

Overseeing fire recovery is just one of many supervisor duties for Hernandez, a California native and first-generation college graduate. She is responsible for the operations of the entire 1.76-million acre Los Padres National Forest, extending approximately 220 miles from Big Sur to the Ventura/Los Angeles county line. She oversees a staff of nearly 500 and a $20-million budget.
In the case of the Zaca Fire, rehabilitation efforts are a significant challenge because of the steepness of the slope and remoteness of the area. In addition, Forest Service officials believe much of the land will recover on its own over the years, since the chaparral ecosystems are fire-adapted.

Post-fire recovery efforts tie directly into another priority for Hernandez as forest supervisor – managing development on the borders of public land. According to Hernandez, these two areas significantly impact each other, sometimes with devastating results, which is what happened during the recent fires in Southern California. Development continues to push into wild land areas at high risk of wildfires.

As Hernandez settles into her new position, once an unimaginable responsibility to that apprehensive student who came to Cal Poly through the educational opportunity Program (eOP), which provided a “critical support network,” according to Hernandez, she said with a smile. “Cal Poly is at the forefront of this movement."

Current, the event was part of a nationwide effort comprised of more than 1,500 universities. Tomaneck reported that some animals have relocated further north or higher up, where it is colder, but that moving to higher latitude might not necessarily provide the answer. Food might be different, the weather is unpredictable, and new predators may be waiting, Tomaneck said.

“With glaciers melting at a rapid pace and vegetation shifting quickly, the days of reaching the top of the mountain may be numbered for some species. They will have reached the edge of extinction,” he explained.

Discoveries like this are driving environmental awareness and “green” practices, which have become serious business at Cal Poly. From developing stringent policies on sustainable development and energy efficiency to promoting conferences that raise awareness, spark discussion and increase knowledge of the subject, Cal Poly is demonstrating the vital role higher education can play in this area of increasing global concern.

This year Cal Poly is sponsoring several major events designed to teach people how to implement sustainable practices in industry. In late January, the Graphic Communication department sponsored The Business of Green Media, focusing on the print-and-publishing industries. One such project is a high-quality, award-winning magazine that raises awareness of environmental issues and the importance of sustainability, procurement and green economy. As Cal Poly Physics Professor Peter Schwartz pointed out at the Focus the Nation event, people are no longer choosing the easy way out; they are making their campuses more energy efficient and environmentally responsible.

The conference will promote cutting-edge sustainability practices, with sessions on green businesses in areas such as energy, water, transportation, food system, institutional sustainability, procurement and green economy.

Recognizing previous Cal Poly accomplishments, the group envisioned the institution as a leader in preparing students to contribute to sustainability solutions and identified ways to infuse sustainability into all aspects of the students’ educational experience.

At the end of July a fourth conference will take place: The 2008 UC/CSCU/CCC Sustainability Conference; Putting Sustainability to Work.

This four-day event will feature experts from the California State University, University of California and California Community College systems.

Faculty, staff and other attendees will present initiatives for making their campuses more energy efficient and environmentally responsible.

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of this galaxy, observable with binoculars in the constellation Ursa Major, was created using data from the Spitzer and Hubble space telescopes and Galaxy Evolution Explorer. (Image courtesy of Jet Propulsion Laboratory)

LESLEY LIVESAY: EYES ON THE FUTURE

ALTHOUGH MANY SUNS RISE on distant worlds in all corners of the universe, we have discovered no other life forms. So far.

If other planets like ours do exist, people like Leslie Livesay (MATH ’85) and her colleagues are going to find them.

Deputy director for astronomy and physics at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Livesay is spearheading the NASA Kepler mission, a space telescope designed to survey distant stars in a search of a planet similar to Earth.

To date, 273 planets orbiting a total of 234 stars have been discovered outside our solar system. All of these new worlds have proven to be nothing like Earth. Many are “gas giants” similar to Jupiter. Others are located extremely close or extremely far from their suns, leaving doubt whether life could survive due to temperature extremes. No trace of the telltale signs of potential life – the simultaneous presence of carbon dioxide, ozone or water – have been found. Current instruments lack the sensitivity needed to detect this chemical evidence.

Livesay hopes to change that. “Only a tiny fraction of our own galaxy has been searched for other planets and solar systems, and look what has been found so far,” Livesay said. “We are focused on finding planets in the so-called ‘Goldilocks Zone’ around stars – not too close, not too far, leaving the temperature just right for potential life. Much like where Earth is now.”

continued on next page…

CAL POLY MAGAZINE 21
The longtime Southern California resident had her eye on the sky early on, beginning a professional ascent as a Cal Poly summer student working for Martin Marietta (now Lockheed Martin), where she was introduced to the manned space program. Livesay had been interested in math and science since high school. "When Voyager flew by Saturn in 1981, that did it," said Livesay. "I began to focus on robotic space exploration."

A career of discovery followed. On July 4, 1997, the first images of the asteroid, alien landscape began trickling in from the historic Mars Pathfinder mission. Livesay was one of the project engineers. "It was amazing to be a part of that Mars landing, the first in more than 20 years, and bringing a rover to another planet for the first time in history."

"WHEN VOYAGER FLEW BY SATURN IN 1981, THAT DID IT, I BEGAN TO FOCUS ON ROBOTIC SPACE EXPLORATION"

Still, she considers the Deep Space 1 mission her proudest accomplishment. Livesay and her team developed an entirely new navigation and ion propulsion system for the probe, which flew by the comet Borrelly in 2001. At that time, the flyby resulted in the best images ever taken of a comet's nucleus.

Livesay also currently oversees other JPL spacecraft, such as the still-operating Voyager space probes, which inspired her by resulting in the best images ever taken of a comet's nucleus.

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ERIN MCCOY STRAPS HERSELF SECURELY into the seat of the small plane alongside friend and fellow Cal Poly student KRISTY LOGAN. Both women put on headsets and give a thumbs-up to the pilot, who throttles the single engine up to a deafening volume, moving the plane swiftly down the runway before it’s airborne over the Peruvian desert. It’s a clear day, perfect for sightseeing.

The plane circles slowly over the arid plateau, giving a prime vantage point for the women to see an amazing sight—figures of monkeys, fishes and lizards carved into the desert floor, the famous series of geoglyphs known as the Nazca Lines. “A very memorable experience, to say the least,” recalls McCoy, an environmental horticultural science major who had just completed the Cal Poly study abroad Program.

Both women had been in Peru for six weeks as part of the study abroad Program, living with a local family and going to class as regular college students. They shared their meals with their Peruvian hosts and attended many local festivals—even visiting Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca.

“It makes the world seem smaller and more tangible,” said McCoy. “This was the first time I was immersed into a Spanish-speaking culture. It’s humbling to be the outsider. You understand what immigrants to a new country must feel like.”

McCoy’s experience and changing perspective is typical for students in the study abroad Program, according to International Education and Programs Director John Battenburg.

In fact, so many students take advantage of it that Cal Poly ranked second in its category in a 2005-06 national study, based on the number of students (817) who have learned and lived on foreign soil.

According to the ranking organization, more American students than ever are recognizing the importance of studying abroad in a globally interdependent world. The number of U.S. college and university students receiving credit for study abroad increased 8.5 percent from the previous year, totaling more than 223,500 students.

Today there is consensus that globally fluent graduates are essential to American competitiveness, said Battenburg. International exposure, whether through study, volunteer work or internship, has become a “must-have” credential.

Cal Poly’s study abroad Program has expanded significantly over the last 10 years, adding such destinations as Thailand and Australia, along with “Cal Poly at Sea,” which allows students to spend an entire quarter on a ship, sailing the high seas of the Pacific. The ship stops at multiple ports of call. “It’s very popular with the marine biology majors, as you can imagine,” said Battenburg.

Although students can go where they choose, certain destinations are naturally more attractive to specific majors. Denmark and Italy are popular with architecture students, while Australia is popular with students in agriculture programs.

There are three popular misconceptions about the Cal Poly Study Abroad Program, said Battenburg. The first is that students have to know a foreign language, which is not true. Many destinations are English-speaking. In other areas, students have the opportunity to learn the language. McCoy, for example, spent the first two weeks in Peru attending Spanish classes two to four hours a day.

The second misconception is the cost. People think the entire program is expensive. Again, not true. It may be cheaper to spend a quarter in Thailand than to stay on campus, Battenburg said. The third is that it delays graduation. But completing courses abroad is the same as completing courses on campus.

As for McCoy, she calls her time in Peru one of the best experiences of her life. “The more I travel, the more I realize that the perceptions I had of a country beforehand are usually wrong,” she said. “People are more alike than different.”
ATHLETIC STARS SHINE BRIGHT

BY ERIC BURDICK

CHAD MENDES GRAPPLES. Sharon Day jumps. Phillip Reid runs.

They are the epitome of athletic success at Cal Poly. They also have overcome serious injuries that occurred midway through their Mustang careers.

Mendes injured a knee early in his junior wrestling season after competing in just seven matches. He was forced to sit out the rest of the 2006-07 campaign.

Day fractured her foot prior to the 2006 track and field season, but came back to finish fourth at the 2007 NCAA, was second at the U.S. outdoor track and Field Championships, and sixth at the Pan-American Games in Rio de Janeiro.

But all three have returned to the level of success enjoyed prior to their injuries, particularly on the national scene and, for Day, perhaps a shot at competing in the 2008 summer Olympics in Beijing, China.

Day, a senior kinesiology major from Costa Mesa, Calif., won the NCAA Division I high jump in 2005 with a personal-best mark of 6 feet, 4 inches, which still stands as the school record. After redshirting the 2006 season, Day came back to finish fourth at the 2007 NCAA, was second at the U.S. Outdoor Track and Field Championships, and sixth at the Pan-American Games in Rio de Janeiro.

She has a pair of Big West titles to her credit in the high jump and, as a freshman in 2004, finished second in both the Big West and NCAA championships. During her final season of track and field this spring, Day needs to post a mark of 6-4 3/4 to qualify for the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials in Eugene, Ore.

"Sharon has been a great role model for all Cal Poly athletes by being a committed team player and having been the top athlete on the soccer and track team while overcoming a serious injury," said track and field Director Terry Crawford.

"She is a quiet leader who leads by example, but is a ferocious competitor who hates to lose."

Day was one of Cal Poly's most outstanding players in the 16-year history of the university's women's soccer program. Twice she earned All-Big West first-team honors, and she was a second-team selection in her other two seasons. Day scored 27 goals in four seasons, including 11 as a sophomore in 2004, adding 14 assists for 68 total points. She was third-team All-West Region as a sophomore and Big West Freshman of the Year in 2003, leading the Mustangs into the NCAA playoffs both seasons.

Reid advanced to the NCAA national Championships in the two-mile (8:41.59) and no. 4 in the 5,000 (14:01.58) in 2005 and missed much of that year's track and field season.

They also have overcome serious injuries that occurred during their Mustang careers. "They are the epitome of athletic success at Cal Poly," said cross country Head Coach Mark Conover.

"He has put his complete faith and trust in his coaching, allowing him to focus on managing his own life and daily routine without wondering how he will develop as a runner. He understands progression and delayed gratification when it comes to his training and racing. That means he is able to persevere through injuries, good workouts and bad workouts – he is able to keep his focus on what lies ahead. He ran faster each year and now is embarking on his post-collegiate career."

Mendes started his sophomore season by winning his first eight matches, posted a 21-5 overall record, won a Pacific-10 Conference title, and finished sixth in the NCAA Championships, earning All-American honors. His junior year is something he'd rather forget, but it apparently has only made him stronger.

"I believe the key to Chad's success has been his great attitude and hard work," said wrestling Head Coach John Azevedo. "During his first couple years at Cal Poly, Chad struggled academically and wasn't sure if he wanted to keep going to school and wrestling."

"Chad decided to give it another year and began to work harder and smarter on his academics," Azevedo added. "With the extra effort, Chad began to have success academically and grow in confidence and maturity. Chad's great attitude and hard work have helped him be on the honor roll and an NCAA All-American."

"He is Cal Poly's first top-ranked wrestler since 1980 and, at the NCAA Championships in March at St. Louis, will attempt to become the third Mustang ever to capture a Division I national title, following in the footsteps of Tom Kline (1991 pounds, 1969) and Mark DiGirolamo (118 pounds, 1979)."
ALUMNI NEWS

CAL POLY TRAVEL PROGRAM

FRIENDS OF CAL POLY – join us on our travel programs.
You need not be a member of the Cal Poly Alumni Association – or even an alum – to join us. All are welcome!

TRAVEL TO SICILY IN 2008

Sicily – Taormina and Mondello
October 3-13, 2008

Strategically situated between Europe and Africa, the island of Sicily is a cultural crossroads that was paved by legendary Mediterranean civilizations.

Begin your discovery of this fascinating island in Taormina, and see its many Greek, Roman and medieval monuments. Marvel at the island’s scenic splendor during a drive to the town of Erice, and the picturesque fishing village of Cefalù.

Your trip is enhanced by informative educational lectures presented by local experts and excursions led by knowledgeable guides.

In Palermo, Sicily’s largest city, admire stunning architecture, and marvel at the mosaics of the cathedral in Monreale. Then, discover the impressive Doric temple at Segesta, the mountaintop city of Erice, and the picturesque fishing village of Cefalù.

For more information, go online to calpoly.edu/travel/travel.html.

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Although Robert C. Tapella (GRC ’91) wasn’t a natural resources major at Cal Poly, one of his first official acts as U.S. Printer was to save almost 500 trees—by electronically submitting the federal government’s 2,200-page budget.

For the first time in the nation’s history, the government will submit its proposed 2008-2009 budget electronically, a move that will save some 20 tons of paper and nearly $1 million over the next five years.

Nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed in October 2007, the energetic Tapella certainly has his work cut out for him. As the 25th Public Printer, he oversees the massive Government Printing Office.

The largest information processing, printing and distribution facility in the world, the GPO houses more than 2,200 employees in a 1.5-million square-foot complex.

The GPO is responsible for the production and distribution of information and services for the three branches of government. Documents include the Congressional Record and Federal Register.

“It is unique in the world. We offer permanent, public access to the documents of our democracy. That is truly exciting,” he said.

Although it took awhile to complete his studies at Cal Poly, during that time Tapella also owned several businesses and served full time as district representative for Congressman Bill Thomas.

He was working 20 hours a day and loving every minute of it. “Looking back, I realized I had been learning by doing. I didn’t know it then, but in retrospect, that is exactly what happened,” he said.

“THE GREATEST LESSON I LEARNED IN MY LIFE WAS FROM MY CAL POLY BASEBALL COACH,” SAYS ROBIN BAGGETT, A 1973 BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION GRADUATE. “WHEN I WAS COMPETING FOR A STARTING POSITION, HE TOLD ME, ‘WHATEVER YOU MAY LACK IN ABILITY, YOU CAN MAKE UP FOR WITH DESIRE AND HARD WORK.’”

Two successful careers later—first as an attorney, now as a vintner—he still believes desire and hard work pay off every time. In honor of the lessons he learned on the baseball diamond, he has named Cal Poly in his will so future generations can benefit from a similar experience.

“You always want to take care of your family first,” Robin explains about planning his estate. “After that, if there is some extra, you have to ask, ‘How can you do some good with that extra?’”

To learn more about how you can join Robin in supporting Cal Poly through your estate plan, please contact:

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It’s your legacy. Explore it.
ROSE PARADE FLOAT COMES UP A WINNER

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and Pomona students captured the Fantasy Trophy from the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, "Guardians of Harmony," a Chinese-themed entry that was the only float engineered solely by students, was driven by Cal Poly San Luis Obispo student Breana Dixon. (Photo by Keith Durflinger, San Gabriel Valley Newspaper Group)