Not just a night’s stay: SLO hostel a learning experience

SLO Coast Hostel offering visitors a chance to stay consciously and comfortably

By Gil Sery
Daily Staff Writer

Recycling paper, aluminum and glass has been around for many years now, but recycling a house? That’s just what Elaine Simer did.

Simer owns and manages the SLO Coast Hostel on Foothill Boulevard. She learned from Cal Poly Architecture Professor Richard Schmidt about a house that was about to be torn down. Simer managed to save the house by having it cut into three separate wings and having each part moved individually to its present location.

The hostel began in Simer’s house off Grand Avenue, in the summer of 1991 as a “wildly successful” summer experiment. It was so successful that Simer again opened up her home in the summer of 1992. Seeing the obvious market for such a place, Simer decided to go into hosteling full-time. It was then that she moved to her present location on Foothill Boulevard.

The hostel’s backyard, as well as some of the main house, has recently undergone extensive renovations. The rooms, some of whose walls were sawed off when the house was moved, are completely remodeled with new walls, new wiring, new ceilings and new plumbing.

Simer is a great believer in recycling. “As individuals we all need to do what we can with what is remaining,” she said. “We strive to be an example for sustainable living. We’ve got our own organic vegetable garden; we grow our own chickens. We have special light fixtures that are not heat-producing (and) we have our own water system.”

Of the people who stay at the hostel, Simer said 60 percent of her business is with foreign travelers. Of that number, 60 are either from Germany or Australia.

While most of the hostelers are in their 20s, it is a common misconception that hosteling is best left to the youth. “We’ve had a 92-year old man stay with us,” Simer said. “(He) was our oldest.”

Most hostelers travel lightly, so they only

See HOSTEL page 2
Coast Hostel provides its residents with many traditions at most hostels, SLO Coast Youth Hostel included. "This encourages people to go out and do some exploring and gives us time to clean up and have some free time," Simer said.

Another tradition at most hostels, also observed at SLO Coast, is that they are closed during the day. "We don't get set itinerary, no set plan, no set route," Curran said.

hostel

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See CREDIT page 5

WASHINGTON - Americans continued borrowing at a moderate pace in February after building debt in January at the fastest rate in six months. Consumer debt rose at a 6.7 percent seasonally adjusted annual rate in February to $1.21 trillion following an increase at a 10.3 percent rate in January, the largest since July, the Federal Reserve said Monday. The report was slightly stronger than analysts' expected because January's rate was revised up from an earlier 8.4 percent estimate. It fits with other evidence suggesting economic growth in the first quarter continued at around the robust 3.8 percent rate of the fourth quarter. Consumer spending, supported by strong job growth, is powering the economy right now. It represents about two-thirds of overall activity. Borrowing by consumers has grown every month since May 1993. "I don't think this number suggests that consumers are splurging... but it fits with the income my starting out (the year) quite strongly," said economist David C. Munro of High Frequency Economics.

WASHINGTON - Americans, continuing a trend that began in November, are borrowing at a much faster rate in February than in January. Consumer credit increased $55 billion in February compared with $49 billion in January. For all of 1994, consumer credit expanded $310 billion, the fastest pace since 1983. The Federal Reserve said Monday that consumer debt rose to $1.21 trillion in February from $1.16 trillion in January, an increase of $50 billion. This brings the rate of increase in debt in February to $2.5 billion a day, which is much faster than the $1.2 billion a day rate recorded in January.

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WASHINGTON — A virus may increase chances of obesity, say University of Wisconsin scientists who also discovered an intriguing paradox: The virus appears to make people fatter without raising heart-threatening cholesterol levels.

"We have no reason to believe obesity would be any different," he added. "I think it's very plausible."

"With the big increase in obesity in the world ... I wouldn't rule it out," Foreyt said, calling the new study "provocative." The groups were equally overweight, yet they had significantly different levels of artery-clogging cholesterol and a related blood fat, triglycerides. Patients believed infected with Ad-36 had normal cholesterol and triglycerides.

"I think it's very plausible."
It's 8:20 a.m. and the bus is coming in 21 minutes. It's a desperate attempt to maintain my sanity through the music, that sadistic little hamster up there. What will it be, then my day will go along with less tension because it wakes them up, puts them in a good mood, and makes me happy. I must find it. I've got to get it playing.

Such is my morning routine. I assume that, for some reason, the little hamster running on the wheel in my head has deemed it necessary to have a repetitive song playing on his transistor radio. And it's driving me mad.

The morning ritual is an attempt to control the song that will be playing for the day. If I can get something good going, something I know all the words to, with a good rhythm and a happy little beat, then my day will go along with less tension and chaos.

It usually doesn't work, though. No matter how I try to influence the subconscious's choice of background music, that sadistic little hamster up there always picks something strange and irritating.

"Copa Cabana" by Barry Manilow seems to be one of his favorite choices.

"Hey, Big Wheel, It's Wassailing," is another recurring tune. I get that time-honored Christmas carol in my head when I feel very alert and joyful. (What is Wassailing, anyway?)

Sometimes the songs come and are never heard from again. One morning my head played a combination of "We Are the World" and a song from "The Simpsons" called "We Are Sending Our Love Down the Well."

None of my friends are particularly sympathetic or helpful. When I plead desperately with my roommates, my brother, or my parents to sing me something so I can dislodge some tune from my head when I feel very alert and joyful. (What is Wassailing, anyway?)

Yeah, well you try to take a midterm with pieces of Village People and Barbara Streisand songs drifting through your head. You don't understand my pain.

I'm convinced that I would be a much more productive and interesting person if a good portion of my brain weren't devoted to playing random songs throughout the day. Losing keys and textbooks, leaving my bus pass at home, forgetting to return phone calls, forgetting to read for classes. These are all symptoms of my unique disease. The area of my brain that ought to keep me functioning as an individual member of society now plays annoying little tunes.

I appeal to the faculty and students of the psychology department. Take me on as a case study. Find the cause of my disorder. Maybe my parents locked me in the closet with an AM radio when I was a baby.

Maybe this is a beginning stage if some sort of psychosis. I beg of you, find the cure and help me shut off this little hamster. Otherwise you just might find a few years from now a wailing around the streets of Little Tokyo. In my bathtub, a tragic story of a woman driven into madness by her music.

Amanda Burt is an English sophomore.

The opinion article by Mr. Alan Dunton that appeared in the Mustang Daily on April 3 asked a question expressed countless times by many people: "How can a God, who claims to love each and every one of us, stand by and let tragedies take place?" This statement was prompted by the tragic death of one of the author's friends at an early age and the pain and sorrow suffered by the family and friends of the deceased.

While the sovereign Lord, in his wisdom, may not always allow us to know the reason for everything that happens to us in our lives, we can take comfort in the fact that God knows what he is doing and deeply cares for us. No matter what happens to us, whether good or bad from a humanistic standpoint, God will use it for our eternal good. (Rom. 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for the good of those who love him...")

For example, God allows us to endure hardships as discipline (Hebrews, chapter 12) to strengthen our faith and trust in him in order to lead us to, and keep us focused on, our eternal home in heaven.

The tragic death of a person, especially a young age, may be difficult for us to understand, but as creator of the universe it is God's sovereign right to give life and take it (Deuteronomy 29:20). Job 1:21, et al. are good examples of how God gives us some insight into why at least some people may be taken at an early age in Isaiah 57 (vs. 15) "... and no one understands that the righteous are spared from evil."

Thus, in God's love for us may choose to take someone to spare them from severe suffering. But even if God chooses to allow someone to experience suffering, we have his assurance that he will give us the strength to endure it, and that it will work out for our good. In any case, we have no right to question God's ways or judgments. "But who are you, 0 man, to talk back to God?" (Rom. 9:20a). God assures us that his ways are always best and right. (Rom. 9:20b)."

"The Lord is righteous in all his ways." (Psalms 145:17 et al.), even if we do not understand them. We must trust God that he knows what he is doing and realize that he doesn't operate or think like humans: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways." declares the Lord. (As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours and my thoughts than your thoughts.) (Isaiah 55:8-9).

We must also realize that God is not the author of tragedy, sin or evil, Satan has this distinction. Adam and Eve brought us into the world, death, sickness, disease and every other sort of evil into this world when they disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. Since every human being descended from Adam and Eve, and is directed with an arched nature, we deserve nothing but death. ("The wages of sin is death."). (Rom. 6:23).

Instead of accusing God of wrongdoing in his actions, or denying his existence when tragedies strike, we should thank and praise him for loving and forgiving us. "That we brought on ourselves. God, in his love for us, has turned the Author to give us the strength to endure it."

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NEW YORK - Stories about dangers in the sea and in the air, about hopes and fears generated over fishing and pollution are devastating the oceans. The Seattle Times also won two Pulitzers, journalism's most prestigious prizes.

An Associated Press photo of Russian President Boris Yeltsin dancing at a rock concert while campaigning for re-election was among other winners.

The Times-Picayune's public service award was for a series titled "Oceans of Trouble." It examined problems facing the fishing industry in Louisiana and around the world, including flooding, supplies and ecological problems. One story detailed the horrors of the "dead zone," an area in the Gulf of Mexico rendered nearly lifeless by vast amounts of untreated sewage and other pollution.

Times-Picayune Editor Jim Amoss called the public service award the "essence of teamwork and what this newspaper is all about." The newspaper's second winner was editorial cartoonist Walt Handelsman.

The prize for spot news reporting went to Newsday for coverage of an explosion of TWA Flight 800 off New York's Long Island. The newspaper mobilized 32 reporters and photographers to cover the disaster, producing a 24-page special section.

"I can't imagine a prize that would involve more reporters, photographers and editors than this one... It was truly a team effort," said Miriam Pawel, Newsday's assistant managing editor for local news.

The national reporting prize went to The Wall Street Journal for a series examining how overfishing and pollution are devastating the oceans. The newspaper's second award the "essence of teamwork and deniability," said Oliver North's "shredding party." And his lawyer, Brendan Sullivan, offered, "I am not a potted plant."

The issue at hand is the current affair, and the flatulence of its platitudes. The other day in the White House, the news corps implored press secretary Mike McCurry to explain the terminology of fund raising. McCurry said "Servicing" tends to be a term used in January when the fund-rais ing community uses as thank-you's for people who have already contributed, as opposed to 'prospecting,' which is, you know, you're bringing people in because you want to talk to them, get them excited about the program, try to encourage them to be supportive at a later date."

"Another term you see sometimes," he instructed, "is 'donor maintenance,' which are people who are long-time active contributors to the party that you want to keep briefed and keep them active."

The White House generated a memo that said: "This dinner will be an accountability event."

The news sleuths say an accountability event is a staging affair for folks who already pledged money but haven't yet delivered. "Hard money" goes to elect candidates; "soft money" goes to party-building activities. "Hard-soft splits" are activities paid for by money hard and soft. "Sleepovers" is a term used by the White House for its slumber parties for presidential pals and supporters. And the term "coffee klatchs" refers to gatherings that gave guests a chance to pass cream and sugar to the president.

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Red tide possibly responsible for dolphin deaths

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY - Environmental authorities said Monday that 162 dolphins found dead on Gulf of California beaches earlier this year died from red tide, a naturally occurring toxic algae. Investigations in the northern state of Sinaloa said they have largely discounted early hypotheses that toxic wastes or cyanide-based chemical known as NK-19. But the state committee said the marine mammals probably swam through a red-tide bloom in the open ocean, and then entered the Gulf of California and died there.

Final results of an investigation by the State University of Sinaloa into the deaths should be available within two weeks.

While red tide is a relatively short-lived seasonal phenomenon, reports continue of mass deaths of marine species along the Sinaloa coast.

In Mazatlan, 100 miles south of Culiacan, residents reported Sunday that 20 stingrays washed up on area beaches.

The stingrays, some of which measured as much as 7 feet in length, do not normally approach beaches.

FUNDs from page 3

Sauseda said he didn’t know whether the state would be willing to make up the difference if the counties bailed.

“We hope that the counties will step up to the plate here as the state has, and assist in making the program viable,” he said.

Margaret Pena, a lobbyist for the California State Association of Counties, said her group is opposed to Wilson’s plan. While the counties have gotten an increase in direct federal support, that was because demand for services was far outstripping previous funding.

“There isn’t enough money in the program as it is, and if there has been a $10 million increase … then that’s something the counties easily will be able to spend just to provide all the services that are needed,” Pena said.

“Berna and John have been among the main funding volunteers. They are not Cuesta alumni but have always taken a deep interest in community college education,” Alexander said.

Carol and Russ Kissig also donated an adjacent 23-acre parcel to the college, increasing the campus site to 105 acres.

Russ Kiessig said he is able to understand the needs of students, particularly re-entry students who need to update skills or change careers because of technological advances.

“Changes are good,” she said. “(They) give everyone a fresh and new perspective. No one expects to stay with the same company forever anymore.”

Russ Kiessig said he thinks the location, in eastern Paso Robles, is ideal because the land between Paso Robles and the coastline is relatively undeveloped and is an area of anticipated growth.

Cuesta, in conjunction with O’Connell and the city of Paso Robles, will hold a north county public forum on April 24 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. to share new developments with the community.
In giving the jury permission to consider a lesser count than rape, Curran said he con­
cerned Mesa had been charged with tooserious a crime. The judge criticized a change in the
Ohio law that expanded the defini­
tion of rape to include penetra­
tion other than intercourse.

The trial, which began March
31, has kept Mesa from joining
the Indians for the start of the
season. Mesa had a total of 85
saves the past two seasons and
was on the mound when Clevelanclinked its first AL
championship in 19 years for 1995.

VIRUS from page 3
eural years ago. A severe outbreak struck
Bombay's poultry farms and a vet­
erinarian mentioned puzzling
avian adenovirus found this avian adenovirus
indeed fattened chickens while
not affecting their cholesterol.

The chicken virus neither infects people, so Dhurandhar
closed his Bombay medical prac­
tice and moved to Wisconsin to
hunt a human adenovirus similar
to enough cause to change the same syn­
drome.
Bill for construction of Giants stadium approved

By Ken Berger
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The San Francisco 49ers on Monday became the first National Football League team to implement a domestic partner policy to team employees and players.

The new policy will extend health care and retirement benefits, as well as other entitlements to unmarried couples, team president Carmen Policy said.

The 49ers accept our responsibility in terms of domestic partners legislation," Policy said. "San Francisco is San Francisco because of its diversity.

At a news conference with city officials, Policy said the team's plans comply with the city's law, scheduled to take effect June 1. It requires companies and agencies doing business with the city to provide the same benefits to workers with registered domestic partners — gay or straight — as they do to married employees.

Benefits covered under the new policy also include pension benefits, bereavement leave, disability and team discounts.

"In an industry like ours, you would think this would have a ho-hum type of an effect," Policy said. "But he added that he was slightly surprised that team employees "just felt this is the right thing to do."

Policy said he didn't know what effect the decision would have on other NFL teams, but added the NFL's league office thought it was the appropriate decision to make.

Openly gay supervisor Tom Ammiano commended the 49ers new policy.

"It includes gay and straight people because we certainly don't want to discriminate against any group," Ammiano said.

The team's plan was applauded by Jeff Sheehy, president of the Harvey Milk Lesbian/Gay Bisexual Democratic Club, a political gay activist group.

"When we brought this legislation to the board a year ago, we had no idea that the organization that would lead the way would be the Catholic church, the premiere sports franchise in the United States and the largest bank in California," Sheehy said. He was referring to Bank of America and the local Roman Catholic clergy, which also have domestic partners policy in place.

Carol Stuart of the Milk club co-authored the new policy and was enthusiastic about the team's adoption of the policy.

"This is the NFL who are complying with non-discrimination law. That's monumental," Stuart said. "Sometimes it takes a law to make people do the right thing."

She hoped that 49ers owner Eddie DeBartolo would include domestic partners policies in all of his business enterprises nationwide, including several shopping malls.

Assault charge thrown out; Mesa defense rests

*Judge rules jury may consider lesser charge in Cleveland Indians' pitcher's trial

By Ken Berger
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The jury in Jose Mesa's rape trial can consider a lesser charge when it begins deliberating Tuesday, a day after the Cleveland pitcher's lawyer suddenly rested his case without calling any witnesses.

Cuyahoga County Judge Thomas Curran ruled Monday that the jury of six men and six women may consider whether Mesa was guilty of the reduced charge of gross sexual imposition, instead of a charge of rape.

In addition, the judge threw out a felony assault charge against the Indians star reliever, saying the state did not prove Mesa intended to hurt one of the women.

Defense lawyer Gerald Messerlian requested his case without calling anyone to the stand. Then, in closing arguments, he mocked the police investigation and challenged the truthfulness of Mesa's accusers.

"What we have here is a story that is chameleon-like," Messerlian said. "If we have to be yellow, we'll be yellow. If we have to be red, we'll be red. It's tough when you have to become a scotch plaid."

He also tried to use the prosecutors' own videotape against them.

Using a larger TV screen than the pros-

eccution, Messerlian played a videotape that showed Mesa's rape accuser leaving the nightclub while adjusting something on her left shoulder.

"She testified that she remembered adjusting her bra strap," Messerlian said, replaying the video several times in slow motion. "Was that a purse on her shoulder? That is for you to decide."

The woman, 26, testified last week that Mesa took her purse and lured her into his truck, where he raped her. The video showed the woman adjusting something, but it wasn't clear if it was a purse.

Another clip showed the woman with her purse in plain view in a different part of the bar.

"If she is (adjusting her purse) while leaving the bar, the whole purse story falls apart," Messerlian said.

The woman testified that Mesa raped her by forcing his hand into her jeans and underpants during a ride to a suburban motel early Dec. 22. Her friend, also 26, testified that Mesa struck her in the mouth with a door, then fondled both women in the room.

The charge of rape is a felony with a three- to 10-year prison term. Gross sexual imposition also is a felony, but it carries a penalty of six to 18 months.

Mesa, 30, still faces two other gross sexual imposition charges that the judge said must go to the jury, along with a theft charge.

Curran said he would instruct the jury and order them to deliberate Tuesday morning.

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