Clinton urges fix of Social Security with budget excess

By Terence Hunt
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Shaken by scandal, President Clinton sought to reassess his leadership in a crucial State of the Union address Tuesday night, urging Congress to “save Social Security first” before cutting taxes or increasing spending.

With the end of big budget deficits, Clinton said “every penny of any surplus” should be devoted to shoring up Social Security, which faces bankruptcy next century as baby boomers retire. Republicans are eying the surplus for tax cuts.

Replying to Clinton, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said the best thing Washington can do is C L I N T O N page 3

First lady criticizes prosecutor

By Pete Test
Associated Press

WASHINGTON - In an extraordinary clash, former White House prosecutor Tuesday of allying himself with “right-wing opponents” to destroy her husband, the prosecutor dismissed her comments as “nonsense” and summed President Clinton’s personal secretary before a grand jury.

“Our current investigation began when we received credible evidence of serious federal crimes,” Whitewater Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr said in a tersely worded statement defending the expansion of his investigation into allegations of a presidential affair and overpay.

Among the issues Starr is investigating is whether Clinton encouraged former White House intern Monica Lewinsky to lie on a sworn affidavit she gave in connection with the Whitewater investigation.

PowerHouse Media, Cal Poly Foundation's heavily invested multimedia service organization, is expected to be shut down after pressure from local businesses and concerns about its for-profit status.

PowerHouse opened in October with a $250,000 jump-start from Foundation, advertising a range of services, from CD-ROM and video production to web design to marketing campaigns. It was a for-profit extension of Cal Poly's nonprofit Visual Education Productions (VEP), which has provided instructional materials for more than 30 years.

Problems arose after New Times, the local weekly newspaper, ran an article Dec. 11 criticizing PowerHouse's House. PowerHouse Media operated within this Pacific Street building.

Students who work out at the Recreation Center have become accus- tomed to waiting a while to use the more popular equipment. But now, with the floor undergoing renovation, stu- dents are waiting at the door just to get in.

For the next four to six weeks, the free weights room will be under construction in the west wing.

According to Recreation Center employees Dave Airaudi, weights constantly being pounded on the floor have damaged it and caused a safety hazard.

The new floor will be made of concrete with a rubber overlay making it more suitable as a free weights room.

Until construction is finished, students will have to make do with the crowded workout area.

Recreation Center employees have moved equipment from the free weights room into the adjoining area, and cardiovascular workout machines were moved downstairs.

“We haven’t heard any complaints from students, but they’re surprised when they come in and see the cardio equipment down here,” Airaudi said. “But they’re pretty understanding and they know it’s for their own safety.”

Friday evening, a 15-minute wait resulted in a line of around a dozen people near the door to the workout area. A Recreation Center employee let in one person for every person who left. Students in line were quick to call the employ- ee’s attention to anyone done with their workout. Students said the situation was the same Monday.

Airaudi explained that the room has a 90- to 100-person capacity which employees have to monitor to stay in line with fire safety regulations.

He said there hasn’t been a wait this past week, but some students disagree.

“There’s a line tonight,” computer science junior Mark Doris said Monday, adding that he has changed his workout schedule to avoid peak hours.

Regular hours at the Recreation Center are Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to midnight, Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 8 a.m. to midnight. The most crowded times are Monday through Wednesday from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

DAILY photo by Michael Tovell

PowerHouse's House: PowerHouse Media operated within this Pacific Street building.

(Facing) Ben Olmedo, biology sophomore, works out on a stationary bike which has been moved downstairs into the lobby. (Above) Equipment is crowded into reduced floor space.
One year after the disappearance of Peter Rejlek, people who searched for the missing paraglider will gather today for a vigil. "He died on land somehow, and we tried to search everywhere he could conceivably be," Kilpatrick said.
Kilpatrick said he knew Rejlek every chance of survival. "You become very attached to people when you fly with them, because it's kind of dangerous," Kilpatrick said. "I told him I'd always find him, and he told me the same. That was a vow I had to try to keep.

Wildflower dates set, volunteers and competitors sought
The 16th annual Wildflower Triathlons Festival will be May 1-3 at Lake San Antonio. Wildflower's continued success is due, in part, to Cal Poly student-volunteer power. More than 35 students are part of the management team for the event, and they need help.
A booth will be set up in the U.U. Plaza Wednesday through Friday to give out information, answer questions and recruit Team Leader applications and hand out triathlon registration information.
The deadline for Student Team Leader applications is Jan. 31, and interviews for the positions are Feb. 5.
"University clubs can expect to receive sign-up information by Feb. 15.
For more volunteer information call Cellene at 782-9082 or Running Thunder at 785-8417.
If you'd rather compete at Wildflower than volunteer, applications for any of the three triathlons will be available from the U.U. booth, the Running Thunder office in the University Union and select sporting goods stores. You can also call Tri-California Event Management at (408) 373-0678, or check www.tricalifornia.com.

Byzantium seeks creative entries
Got a creative work you're dying to see in print? Cal Poly's annual literary magazine, Byzantium, is looking for submissions of poetry and short stories. The 28th annual contest is open to all Cal Poly students who are currently enrolled.
Cash prizes will be awarded for the best works which will also be published in the magazine. First prize for poetry and first prize for short story will earn $100. The deadline for submissions is Feb. 9.
For contest rules see posters on campus or pick up a copy of the rules in the English department (bldg. 47, hallway 322). Please don't phone to ask for the rules.

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HILLARY from page 1

section with the Paula Jones sex- and harassment lawsuit and whether job offers that President Clinton went on a television offensive to defend him. She launched her assistant's struggle to provide for their families.

Social Security faces bankruptcy, and gave the president a respectful applause. Earlier in the day she had spoken to Congress about the president's State of the Union address. With the president out of sight, preparing the speech, Mrs. Clinton went on a television offensive to defend him. She launched her personal troubles, I thought, to deny you the capacity to use them again.

In a separate look at the Social Security issue, Clinton challenged Congress to join in a bipartisan search for a fix. With the prospect of the first balanced budget in 30 years, Clinton said the question is what should be done with the projected surpluses.

"I have a simple four-word answer: save Social Security first," the president said. "Tonight I propose we reserve 100 percent of the surplus — that's every penny of any surplus — until we have taken all the measures necessary to strengthen the Social Security system for the 21st century."

The president set up a confrontation between the Republican-led Congress and the politically weakened president. Gene Sperling, a senior economic adviser to Clinton, said the surpluses should be "protected from being spent or tax cut away" until a Social Security fix is in sight.

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Attention Poets! Mustang Daily wants you.

It's come! The opportunity you've all been waiting for. We, the editorial staff, would like to publish a few love poems for our Valentine's Day issue on Feb. 13. You will get name recognition and a published work! You don't have to be a Wordsworth or Tennyson to have your work published in the Mustang Daily. We are looking for creative, relevant, and interesting poems. All submissions will be considered for print if received by Feb. 10.

Minimum deposit is $5. All deposits made during January are entered in the drawing.
You made me fat, unhappy, have lung cancer.

...so I'm suing!

PRESIDENTIAL SEX SCANDAL CHALLENGES U.S. MORALITY

Editor,

I commend Bryan Ridley on his column "Little Billy's Willy" Jan. 26 for considering the issue of character as it pertains to the American president. It is a profoundly important topic, and in light of our president's most recent sex scandal, it deserves to be addressed with seriousness and rapidity. As American citizens we are now faced with the simple question, one whose answer will not only define future presidential administrations, but also future generations. Does character matter to us?

Many have argued that these and other allegations of impropriety charged to President Clinton are simply the partisan confections of Republicans out to get the president. I disagree adamantly. I am an outspoken conservative, and though I differ with the President ideologically, I have nothing personal against him. I do, however, hold the institution of the presidency in high regard and therefore I have a fundamental problem with his very apparent moral deficiency.

The issue at hand is less about politics and more about the importance of character. Our leaders firmly believe that morality is critical to good governance. Do we still believe that? Even more importantly, do we as citizens hold ourselves to a transcendent standard of right and wrong, or have we descended into the abyss of moral relativism where the only thing that matters is what feels good to us. Sadly, it seems that we as a country have misplaced our moral compass, leaving us with no tangible sense of direction. When so many accept adultery as a natural occurrence among married couples, what does that say of us as a nation? In the early years of our country, French observer Alexis de Tocqueville marveled at the purity of the nascent American government and society in general. He in no way believed it was flawless, but in it he saw a revolutionary precedent of morality. How far we have come from that standard?

We have a unique opportunity in the Clinton Administration to answer distinctively the question posed above. If we respond "yes" that character does matter to us, then we must make our outrage evident.

President Clinton holds the highest office in the land, and to many around the world, he is the very embodiment of America. If we maintain that morality is paramount to our society, then we must not accept that the man who is supposed to represent the greatest of American ideals has adopted such a debased standard of behavior.

If we answer "no", then it is obvious we have yielded our collective soul to the winds of relativism that have brought down empires before us and will not hesitate to send our great country into oblivion.

Character is essential to the functioning of our society. With it we have prospered more than any other country in history. Without it we will fall as individuals and stumble as a nation.

Kathryn Lovell is a political science sophomore.

SUBTLE BIASES ARE LURKING EVERYWHERE

Editor,

I am appalled to see that a political science major in Mr. Drake "People who speak but who listens?" Jan. 27, is so ignorant and sadly uninformed about current issues. In your delusional world, racism and sexism may not exist. However, speaking as a 19-year-old white female, I can assure you that discrimination and bias lurk everywhere, even in subtle forms.

Martin Luther King, Jr. would be turning over in his grave at your comments. He in no way believed it was okay to discriminate against a person's skin color, gender, or sexual orientation. He passionately believed that character does matter to us, that we have an obligation to speak up and speak out. "We the people" is not a passive statement, it means that we have a responsibility to make the world a better place.

Kathryn Lovell is a political science sophomore.
Editor,
First of all, I support the departmental secretaries in their quest for a job re-classification and therefore higher salary. However, the fact that they’re only striking over their lunch hours will, in my opinion, prove ineffective. These women (and some men in their support) are picketing against an administration that cares little for public opinion. While the media attention the departmental secretaries are obviously attracting will sway public opinion in their favor, the administration will continue to ignore them unless they are themselves affected. Going to work and then striking only over lunch hour doesn’t affect the administration since the papers still get filed, the phones still get answered, transcripts still get transferred, etc.

The most effective way to “be heard” by the administration that seems to care little for their opinion would be for the departmental secretaries to show up at work for a day without them would be. That would be a 9-5 (or whatever hours they work) strike. Then the administration would realize how important they are and be more cooperative.

For example, when French Premier Alain Juppe tried to reduce the French budget deficit by cutting government workers’ pensions, the country was literally bought to a standstill, since government workers included the train conductors, bus drivers, as well as Air France pilots. With most transportation paralyzed, the country could not properly function, and Juppe decided not to raid their pensions after all.

An example closer to home was the UPS strike over the summer. When workers not working, the company was losing a huge amount of money each day. Competition couldn’t even absorb the deluge of business the company lost over those weeks. Due to this, management changed its policy in regards to part time workers (the cause of the strike).

While their contract prevents them from striking, the departmental secretaries can still do everything by all calling in sick. Public school teachers and other civil servants like policemen and garbage men are famous for this. Their contracts also prevent them, in many areas, from striking. Until the administration realizes the importance of these women, they will continue to ignore them.

Ryan Kawasaki is a business sophomore.

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JULIE O’SHEA
ASHES, ASHES, WE'LL FALL DOWN!

The last time I tried contacting the governmental elite I was twelve years old, and I felt like I needed to start a crusade to prevent the processing of plastic bags. For my trouble, I received a lovely picture of George Bush and a quaint form letter, informing me the president was a very busy man but would take my concerns into consideration sometime in the near future.

I thought Mr. Bush ever read my let­ter, and because of what happened years ago, I have come to the belief one person can’t make a difference. A professor of mine carries a different viewpoint; he thinks that’s a scary thought: this animal will go extinct, and my life won’t be affected. We are the most advanced civilization on this planet. We have the power to destroy their homes and butchering of these animals, and my life won’t be affected.

We are killing off these animals by the hundred. I have never heard a Panda Bear, cry, but, from what I’ve read, it is one of the saddest noises anyone could ever hear.

We are killing off these animals by destroying their homes and butchering them for their pelts, horns and teeth. What selfish reasons is all I can say. We are the most advanced civilization on this planet. We have the power to stop this holocaust, and yet, we choose not to.

We need to find some kind of solu­tion. Doesn’t it cross anyone’s mind that perhaps we are killing off more than just the animals? What of the plants dis­covering the flames of a falling forest are not only taking the homes of thou­sands of species, but the cure for cancer and AIDS as well?

Does anyone have a suggestion? Or have we become too advanced to stop what we have started? Is silence really any kind of salvation? Should we make the forests illegal to cut down? But then where would we get our lumber?

Certainly something to think about. A subject maybe even worthy enough to grace the desk top of Mr. Clinton? Maybe he’d give us all more of his time than just a signed photograph with promised hopes—maybe.

-Julie O'Shea is a journal­ism junior.

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PUNY LUNCHTIME PICKETS WON'T WORK FOR SECRETARIES

Editor,
Thanks for the coverage given to our departmental secretary reclassifi­cation issue.

For the record, you should know that many of us have been asking for this for years. Your Staff Editorial said: “If you wanted it five years ago, you should have asked for it then.” I agree ten years ago good enough? I first for­mally requested reclassification out of the departmental secretarial series in 1988. I most recently was denied in December 1997, after requesting a review in October 1996. Yes, it took 14 months for Human Resources to reach a final conclusion.

Believe me when I say we have given Cal Poly every opportunity to see this through regular channels before taking to the streets. Our upper administra­tion would realize how important they are and be more cooperative.

Ellen M. Stier is the administrative assistant for the Cal Poly Computer Science Department.

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MUSTANG DAILY WELCOMES AND ENCOURAGES CONSTRUCTIVE LETTERS FROM READERS. LETTERS SHOULD BE CLEAR, COMPLETE WITH NAME, MAJOR OR DEPARTMENT, CLASS STANDING AND TELEPHONE NUMBER. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EDIT GRAMMAR, SPELLING ERRORS AND LENGTH WITHOUT CHANGING THE MEANING OF WHAT IS WRITTEN. LETTERS SENT VIA E-MAIL WILL BE GIVEN PREFERENCE AND CAN BE SENT TO: ford@polymail.calpoly.edu. FAX YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO 756-6784 OR DROP LETTERS BY BUILDING 26, SUITE 226.

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OPINION
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FALL OUT
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WAVE
---

CREATING
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RADIOACTIVE WASTE THREATENS LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Editor,
The Coastal Commission hearings taught us a valuable lesson: democracy works well when local citizens are involved in the process! Therefore it is extremely important that we all become just as active on another critic­al issue facing our county: the trans­portation and/or storage of high level nuclear waste generated at Diablo Canyon.

Large amounts of this highly radioactive material, called by the industry “spent fuel,” has already accum­ulated and is now being stored in a large water-filled pool. When the pool reaches capacity PG&E will have to either create more storage space on-site or transport it out. We should be deeply concerned about this decision because any handling of “spent fuel” increases the chances of an accident and that could have devastating consequences for the entire county.

The nuclear industry defines a “maximum credible accident” as a severe impact followed by a massive prolonged fire. According to a 1983 U.S. Department of Energy study, such an accident would cause radioactive conta­mination of an area five and a half times the size of San Luis Obispo, evacuation of the affected area for 3 to 4 years, an inestimable human toll and property damages in the tens of billions of dollars.

Just one nuclear accident of this kind would create 60 times as much damage as all 99,490 hazardous mater­ials accidents in the entire U.S. over the last 10 years combined (U.S.

Department of Transportation statis­tics). Despite this horrifying prospect, those who would be most affected, the local citizens, have been systematically kept out of the decision-making process. Last year the U.S. Congress passed two bills (SB 104, HR 1270) which were actually written by the nuclear lobby. Citizen input was limited to an unprecedented degree.

How could this happen? In 1997 alone, the nuclear industry contributed $13.1 million to the campaign coffers of “our” representatives.

What can still be done about this outrage? First, write or call President Clinton immediately and urge him to veto this legislation, as he previously promised. Secondly, support the local Nuclear Waste Management Committee which, although formed at the request of SLO County Councils of government in May, 1995, has never received any funding nor any other type of support. Call your supervisor or city council person. “The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.”

Klaus Schumann is the Green Party County Coordinator.

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NEW ADVICE COLUMNIST AT DAILY

Ann Landers look out! Cal Poly has its own advice columnist right here at Mustang Daily.

Having questions or doubts about a relationship, school, work, family or just life in general? Here’s your chance to ask questions and receive advice from Mie, a psychology junior. Letters should be addressed Dear Mie and sent to mhali@polymail.calpoly.edu.

Letters chosen for the column will appear on other Fridays on the Opinion page. All letters will be anonymous. Give it a whirl and see what Mie has to say, and then take it or leave it.
North state bar owners add their voice to growing revolt against smoking ban

By Steve Gechtman
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO - Scores of bar owners from throughout much of Northern California met Tuesday to plot the overthrow of the smoking ban they say is unpopular and hurting business.

"The revolt is just now coming. It's gone too far. We're coming together to see what we can do about it," said Jim Keenan, owner of the Nite Hawk Tavern in Sacramento.

The efforts of the unnamed group—which includes owners from as far away as Fairfield, Jackson, Chico, and Lodi—comes at a time when bar owners and others are organizing campaigns against the ban throughout the state.

California became the first state to ban smoking in bars and gambling halls on Jan. 1. The prohibition went into effect due to the end of an exemption that bars had for three years to the state law that bans smoking in workplaces.

The ban, aimed at protecting employees and nonsmokers, is supported by numerous health groups and others.

But bar owners are reporting customer dissatisfaction and loss of business.

Since Jan. 1, reports around the state indicate the new ban is being enforced in some areas but not in others, and vigorously protested in some regions, though not in others.

Sacramento County sheriff's deputies raided several bingo parlors, handing out tickets to patrons and owners, but authorities have since suspended enforcing the ban in the parlors until legal issues are resolved.

Nearly 150 Alameda County pub owners protested the ban in Hayward. In Humboldt County, many bars are refusing to recognize the prohibition.

In protest of the state ban, boycotts of the state lottery have been organized in the city of Tracy, and in Sonoma, Humboldt and Riverside counties. More are planned.

There's even been violence: Two smokers asked to snuff cigarettes in a Fontana night club attacked two uniformed security guards with a beer bottle and a club.

The National Smokers Alliance so far has supplied 3,000 bars with signs and other materials in a campaign to overturn the ban, said alliance spokesman Tom Humber.

 Included are coasters that customers can sign and mail to their lawmakers.

There are several 1997 bills, aimed at overturning the ban, still pending in the Legislature. Their fate is uncertain. The issue has caused major debates over the years in the Legislature, where the tobacco, liquor and gambling industries are big campaign contributors.

Legislative challenges also are under way. However, a Sacramento Superior Court judge has refused the requests of a coalition of bar owners to issue orders blocking the ban or its enforcement before a suit challenging its constitutionality goes to trial.

Local DA declines to prosecute Kaczynski

By John Howard
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO - The district attorney of Sacramento County, home to two of the Unabomber's victims, gravely confirmed Tuesday that there will be no local prosecution of Theodore Kaczynski.

District Attorney Jan Scully said she would have liked to pursue a death penalty case against Kaczynski, but was barred from prosecuting him for a crime he has elsewhere been convicted of committing.

"He should have faced a jury to determine the penalty he should suffer," she said.

Kaczynski, 55, pleaded guilty on Thursday to a 10-count federal indictment filed in New York. He admitted in court that he had been responsible for all 16 of the Unabomber attacks, which killed three people and injured 29 others.

The Sacramento victims included computer store owner Hugh Scrutton, who was killed in 1985 by a nail-filled bomb disguised as a piece of lumber, and forestry lobbyist Gilbert Murray, who died in 1995 when he opened a package bomb mailed to his downtown office.
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** hears telling each other ever)thing You know about women.**

by Chip Dunham

**MISSTER BBFO**

by Joe Martin

**We're hearing each other ever)thing we know about women.**

**BIZARRO**

by Dan Piraro

**WE HACK ON**

**MAYBE WE SHOULD PUT THE PLAN ON HIGH**

by Chip Dunham

**by Joe Martin

**It's a wayer than what we're finding cut- through dozens of years.**

**BIZARRO**

by Dan Piraro

**Therm's pizza & soda pop in the fridge just help yourself. The children are in the kitchen. They can scare across their neighbors until midnight, but then turn on the lights and chase them back into their cracks & crevices.**

by Chip Dunham

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**SPORTS TRIVIA**

Yesterday’s Answer: Brazil and Germany have played 73 soccer matches in the World Cup. And Brazil leads the pack, winning 49 of those matches.

Congrats Steve Geringer!

Today’s Question:

What NHL star player known for his “gentlemanly conduct” has been nominated for the Lady Byng Trophy five times?

submit your answer to: masthead@mustangdaily.edu.

The first correct answer I receive will be printed along with your name in the paper the next day.

**SCHEDULE**

**THURSDAY**

- Men’s basketball vs. U.C. Irvine at Irvine at 7 p.m.
- Women’s basketball vs. U.C. Irvine at Irvine at 7 p.m.
- Baseball vs. St. Mary’s at Sinsheimer Stadium at 7 p.m.
- Women’s tennis vs. Westmont College at tennis courts behind Mott Gym at 2:30 p.m.
- Swimming and diving at U.C. Davis at 1 p.m.
- Men’s basketball vs. Cal State Fullerton at Fullerton at 7 p.m.
- Men’s tennis vs. Boise State at tennis courts behind Mott Gym at 1 p.m.
- Men’s lacrosse vs. U.C. Santa Barbara at library field at 2 p.m.
- Wrestling vs. Oklahoma University at Norman, Okla. at 12 p.m.
- Wrestling vs. Oklahoma State at Stillwater, Okla. at 7:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY**

- Women’s basketball vs. Cal State Fullerton in Mott Gym at 2 p.m.
- Baseball vs. St. Mary’s at Sinsheimer Stadium at 1 p.m.
- Women’s tennis vs. U.C. Davis at tennis courts behind Mott Gym at 8:30 a.m.
- Men’s tennis vs. University of Hawaii at tennis courts behind Mott Gym at 1 p.m.

**SPORTS BAR**

Former kamikaze to ring sacred bell at Olympics

By Eric Toland

Associated Press

NAGANO, Japan — When Mochitsugu Tsuchiya, 69, sat in the Zento-ji temple, one of the oldest Buddhist centers in this country and a sort of patron temple for this city of 360,000 where the games begin Feb. 7, it was a very special privilege: he said from the small room in the temple’s main hall where he worked as a lay assistant, his twelve years of service to Buddhist temples, and would wish for the success of the games, and the happiness and health of all people.

“Because of my past, I have a special feeling about peace,” he said. “The war that I fought in should never happen again.”

Tsuchiya, with a head of thick gray hair and the weathered face of a farmer, still carries with him a photo of the unit he was assigned to and the official orders that sent him to an almost certain death.

His unit was responsible for guarding a strip of coastline with torpedoes that required a human pilot. It was a one-way trip.

“I remember my commander telling me when I reported for duty that my life was in his hands,” Tsuchiya said. “We all knew that it was our job to blow up both ourselves and our sake.”

Before he got his orders to pilot one of the torpedoes, the war ended on Aug. 15, 1945.

“We all heard the emperor announce the end of the war on the radio, but the broadcast was so full of static that we didn’t understand it,” he said. “We were already on our way to die.”

After the war, Tsuchiya returned to his life growing rice and raising silkworms. Twenty-seven years ago, he began working for the temple.

“I don’t like to talk about the past,” he said. “I don’t want people whose loved ones died in the war to be angry that I am going to ring the bell. I don’t want to open any old wounds.”

He said the arrival of thousands of athletes, officials and journalists from around the world for the Feb. 7-22 games symbolizes how much things have changed since the war.

Sampras is down and out Down Under at Australia Open

By Steve Wilkins

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Pete Sampras packs quickly, he can catch the same long flight home as Andre Agassi.

They can commiserate about the Australian Open that slipped away, as they were poised to rule until they met in the final. Or so they thought.

Karel Kucer? No way Sampras, or anyone else, figured the Slovakian could beat him for a berth in the semifinals against Pete. Kucer hadn’t beaten anybody in 10 Grand Slam tournaments and had never gone beyond the third round in any of the six other majors he played.

There was Kucer in the cold, starry night Tuesday, transforming himself into a vision of silky elegance while crafting a 6-4, 6-2, 6-7 (7-5), 6-3 work of art against Sampras, the defending champion. And there was Sampras, winner of 10 major titles and recently voted by his peers as the greatest player of past quarter century, looking utterly pedestrian.

Twenty-four hours after little Alberto Berasategui of Spain ran Agassi out of the tournament, Kucer caught the same upset fever.

“He played the match of his life,” Sampras said. “I just ran in to hit a hot player. It must be easy to play me because they have nothing to lose, just swing away. And he played great. I give him all the credit in the world.”

Kucer, ranked No. 20 and under the tutelage lately of 1988 Olympic champion Miloslav Mecir, has been hot since the start of the year. He led Slovakia to the Hopman Cup title in Perth, captured a tuneup in Sydney and in the Australian extended his winning streak to 12 matches.

“My goal this year is not to lose a match,” Kucer joked in a heavy monotone voice that never waivers. He betrays no emotion on or off the court.

Nothing in the unanticipated way Kucer went about getting to the quarterfinals — he met only one seed, No. 10 Sergi Bruguera, who retired with blisters, and had a tough time in other matches — hinted he was capable of beating Sampras so easily.

Kucer’s two-fisted backhands flicked perfect groundstrokes into the corners. His fluid forehands kept Sampras running behind the baseline. And when Kucer served, he dominated, whacking 18 aces to Sampras’ mere seven.

Perhaps the best part of Kucer’s game, though, was his work of service. He arrived on his serve. He launched 10 aces and drove them back before Sampras could react. He hit returns to Sampras feet, or just put them back in play, frustrating Sampras, who is used to many more free points.

Sampras never found his groove. He missed aces by millimeters, or so the lineemen ruled, while Sampras shook his head in disbelief. His trusty forehand betrayed him, causing 29 of his 46 unforced errors. (Kucer totaled only 21 unforced errors.) And, as if Sampras needed more problems, he found them in the Swedish umpire, Lars Graff, whose overrules cost Sampras a couple of points, including one that set up match point.

“We both had a bad day,” said Sampras, who complained to the umpire much more than usual and uncharacteristically refused to shake his hand at the end of the match. That bit of petulance brought boos from the crowd.

“If I could do it over again, I probably should have” shaken his hand, Sampras said.