Students feel disconnected from NASA’s new mission

By Louise Attard
Mustang Daily

Cal Poly students have mixed views on space exploration and John Glenn’s return to space. Many students don’t even know who John Glenn is, or that NASA has recently sent another shuttle into space.

“Is he an alumnus of Cal Poly that was an astronaut?” said Tricia Bartholomew, an environmental engineering senior. “I don’t have time to watch television.”

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students Stare into Space

Poly observatory offers chance to explore the stars

By Lauren Nowenstein
Mustang Daily

Most Cal Poly students probably don't know they can stare outside of science building 52.

Todd Rigg, a physics senior who runs evening telescope programs twice a week, said the astronomical observatory has been around since the 1960s.

Soon the observatory will receive some dramatic improvements, because the 12-inch telescope will be replaced by a new, computerized telescope, according to John Poling, a physics and astronomy professor. The physics department recently received a $45,000 grant to buy equipment for the observatory, including a camera that will attach to the new telescope and allow pictures to be taken through it.

Poling said using the telescopes often gives students a new perspective on outer space.

"It makes a different kind of impression than just seeing pictures in a textbook," Poling said.

Rigg said attendance at his observatory sessions ranges from three to 25, but usually averages about eight students.

"It is highly variable by quarter and by night," Rigg said.

He begins sessions by orienting viewers to the night sky using the North Star. After this, Rigg helps them find constellations without using the telescopes, which helps them better understand what they will see through the instruments.

Students then use the telescopes to see visible planets and the moon. This quarter Jupiter and Saturn can be seen clearly from the observatory.

"It would be like trying to point a gun at a moving rabbit across a field," said Rigg about catching a glimpse of the space shuttle from Cal Poly's telescope

"It will be funded by the students," Parsons said. Because the observatory is nestled between the chemistry and physics wing of building 52, campus lights often affect visibility of the night sky.

"The biggest factor is that the telescope is pretty much in the dead end of the science building," Rigg said.

According to Poling, a new structure will be built to house the telescope. The old building is used to host the telescope, which helps them better understand what they will see through the instruments.

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According to Poling, a new telescope will help sessions run more smoothly. Students will be able to view more objects because they won't have to wait for them to be located.

The new computerized telescope will allow them to find places in the night sky with the push of a button.

"Right now if I have to find everything myself. There's a lot of stuff out there," Rigg said.

According to Poling, a new structure will be built to house the telescope. The shape of the old building often makes him smile.

"We won't be able to make jokes anymore. It truly looks like an observatory," Poling said.

Funds for the new equipment are coming from past student fees. Poling said students are unable to view the Mir space station or any space shuttles through Cal Poly's telescopes because they move too quickly to be seen clearly by almost anything but military equipment.

"It would be like trying to point a gun at a moving rabbit across a field," Rigg said.

However, Poling said these objects can be seen without equipment.

"You have to know when and where to look or you are not going to see them," he said, adding that predicted locations of spacecraft can be found on the Internet.

Rigg said students interested in astronomy should visit the observatory during sessions held — weather permitting — on Mondays and Wednesdays from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. Observatory sessions are free to students.

"Students should come out and learn something about the universe we live in, even if it's something little," Rigg said.
GLENN
continued from page 1

and really don’t have time to pick up a paper and read it.”

Agricultural science freshman Andrea Elliott
knows of Glenn’s latest expedition, but has not
been following it closely.

“I’ve seen just little bits and pieces on the
news,” she said.

Josh Walker, an amphibious senior, knows of
Glenn and watched the launch on television.

“It’s always awesome to see a space shuttle
going into space,” he said.

On Feb. 20, 1962, when Glenn launched into
space for the first time, hundreds of students gath­
ered in the Cal Poly dining hall to drink coffee
and watch the saga of the flight. The television
set was on from early morning until late at night as students
watched the event unfold.

Glenn was the first
American to orbit Earth.

Now, on his second launch, the 77-year-old Glenn is the olde­
est person in the world to go into space. Previously, the oldest per­
sont was senior astronaut Steven Maystrup, who
went into space at age 61.

The space shuttle Discovery was launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida last week.

After traveling almost 3.5 million miles, Discovery is due to land at the Kennedy Space
Center on Nov. 7.

NASA receives billions of dollars from the federal government for its space exploration programs. For the 1999 fiscal year, NASA estimates its total budget to be about $13.5 billion. NASA’s funding represents about one cent out of every dollar in the U.S. federal budget, according to NASA’s official Internet site.

At the height of the Apollo program in the 1960s, NASA received four cents out of every dollar in the budget. It also mentioned that reducing the amount of money spent on space exploration and putting it into social programs would eliminate resources for one of the few federal agencies devoted to the future.

Bartholome said much of the funding NASA gets should go toward solving social problems.

“I think there’s a lot of other things that we need to
worry about. It’s interesting to know what’s out
there, but it should be if the taxpayers want
that,” she said. “My vote would be spending
the money to it, then it’s not that important,” she
added.

Elliott hopes the money given to NASA will be
well spent in the long term.

“As far as the United States being number one in
technology, if you look in the future it’s going to
leave us in better standing than other countries, not only
technology but medical-wise,” she said.

Stephane Tannen, a psychology freshman, said
computer science student Mark Doorsi has mixed
feelings about the proposed medical research.

“It’s probably a good idea, the only prob­lem is
that, it should be if the taxpayers want
it,” she said.

Doorsi agrees it is probably a media stunt.

“It builds NASA’s reputation and they
probably should have chosen a retired school
teacher,” some critics are suggesting NASA’s choice to send
Glenn back to space was more motivated by its trying
to enhance its image than by wanting to con­
duct medical research on the elderly.

“Doorsi agrees it is probably a media
stunt.”

Elliott expressed disappointment at Glenn
returning so much publicity, while the rest of
the crew is largely ignored.

“The other astronauts on the shuttle haven’t
gotten any recognition at all,” she said. “They’re just as
much a part of it as he is.”

Before last week’s Discovery lift-off, the Challenger
launch was the last to be shown live on television.

Challenger blew up minutes after its launch on
Jan. 28, 1986, killing all seven crew members including
elementary school teacher Christa McAuliffe.

Walker remembers where he was when Challenger
exploded.

“My parents’ car was broken down while we were
traveling across South Dakota,” he said. Walker, who
was in the fourth grade at the time, said his parents
sat in a diner while the car was being fixed and
watched Challenger explode on television.

“I couldn’t believe it. It was horrible,” he said.

Walker said one of his own teachers had made it to
the finals to be selected on the shuttle mission.

“It was kind of scary to know that it could have
been one of your teachers,” he said. The success of
several launches since then, plus the publicity sur­roun­
ding last week’s launch prompted NASA to tele­
vise Discovery’s lift-off.

The main focus of Glenn’s current mission is to
capture any similarities between the effects of
microgravity and aging on the human body. Space
scientists noticed astronauts who spend prolonged
time in space encounter health problems upon their
return to Earth, such as loss of muscle and symptoms
of osteoporosis.

Computer science student Mark Doorsi has mixed feelings about the proposed medical research.

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Strange followings

Christianity, it's America's religion of choice. Doesn't seem strange, our major religion is several times removed geographically! It's source is the Middle East, but it quickly spread to Greece where all the wrinkles were sorted out by the intellectuals. Then the Romans adopted it as an excellent new way to control people and brought the religion up through Europe as they laid waste to everything in their path. Then a persecuted cult of British subjects ran off to the Netherlands for shelter and then decided they were completely unable to get along with anyone but themselves, so they left for the "New World." And now we have our nation's religion. Most religions are full of paradoxes and historical tales which relate to their followers. Christianity has nothing to do with America. I know a believer would point out God's love is available to everyone. I just think it's weird people chose to accept foreign religions as opposed to religions that were more local. At least the Mormons invented a version of Christianity that involves America. I love the pictures of Jesus talking to guys in overalls in stands in the Bible which directly contradicted his policies. When the Church of England formed, their new Bible was filtered out so as not to get any hang-ups. The most important thing that people should realize about Christianity is that it is a religion composed for political gains. I am not disputing the fact that Jesus existed or even that he performed miracles (I simply don't know about the latter). When the Romans took over Christianity they peeled together the information they wanted and left out what they didn't want. There were no major schools of thought after Christ's death. The first was we considered common, conventional Christianity, made up of people who believed we must learn about Christ from writings about him and from our knowledgeable clergy. The second was made up of the Gnostics. "Gnostic" is Greek for "having knowledge of." They believed everyone could have direct knowledge of God. The structure of the church of course was an unnecessary step in having a relationship with Jesus. The Roman church declared all Gnostics heretics and burned all of their literature and even some of the Gnostics themselves. By eliminating any other viewpoints, the church gave people access to Christ only through its system. This method of control extended for an incredibly long time and the idea of people's inadequacy and inability to experience God still exists today.

When you consider the fact most of the story of Jesus was written a few hundred years after his death, the Romans edited the religion to control people, and the religion has been translated and moved around for 2,000 years, do you really know what Christianity is anymore?

Jon Wilson is a philosophy senior.

Great intentions with terrible timing

Editor:

Wow, the big "MTV" is coming to Cal Poly! Who'da thunk it! Too bad they're coming the Sunday before finals week, so all the freshmen in the dorms can have yet another reason to get put on academic probation. All Concerts chairman Tony Rogondino must only be taking one class (much like myself) so he can enjoy all those free MTV floats that MTV will bring in as an assault on Cal Poly. And OCEH OOH, I say I can't wait to see the 6 and Third Eye Blinds. They're so original, I'd buy two tickets, just because it's a good cause.

Who did the write-up on the band? "The guitar work of ... "Third Eye Blind" will open students eyes." Gimme a break, it'll put me to sleep. I've seen more originality in a Puff Daddy song. I applaud Rogondino's desire to try and get bigger bands to play at Cal Poly, but look what happened with the Mandy Playground show. Will these bands draw any better? They're pretty much in the same genre. Didn't they learn a lesson? Maybe MTV hopes their name will sell enough people so the show won't have to go to god forbid, that shack they call the Forum. Crazy thing is, MTV's name probably will. Also, if the study on music videos is true (the article appeared in the same issue), then how can this be a good venue during finals week? After this show, I think students would be more apt to drink themselves silly for spending $30 to see these guys. I know I would. Hell, I drink myself silly for having to wake up in the morning. The only good thing MTV could bring to Poly is a statement saying they'll play more videos, or at least different videos then the ones they have in continuous rotation. And instead of Whack-a-Mole, they should have Whack-an-MTV, Voojey. Especially if Jesse's gay. I'd pay $20 for that.

Mark Hartz is a journalism senior and a bit softer, bitter man.

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by University Graphic Systems

"There's nothing funnier than talking about the ol' penis."

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OPINION

Wrestling with an obsession

I’ve tried to hide it for years. A secret so potentially damaging that I’ve been forced to conceal it from friends and classmates. But now, my horrible secret is out. Yes, I am a pro-wrestling fan.

It is true. Every week I watch bulky men running around in Speedo shorts pretending to hit each other while making stomping noises with their feet. Guys with names like Bad Ass Billy Gunn and Buff Bagwell. Characters in the form of vampires, heavy-metal rockers, even the occasional insane dentist.

I have the wrestling hats and shirts, I play the wrestling video games, I’ve hung the Rad Ass Billy Gunn and Buff Bagwell. I’ve even been to see the wrestlers live and in person. At least I haven’t succumbed to coughing up $30 for a pay-per-view show yet, but the danger is always there.

The strange part is that I’m not even sure why I watch pro-wrestling. It’s silly at best, offensive at worst, and portrays a world where everything is solved by cracking your neighbor over the head with a folding steel chair. I keep telling myself that I’m going to quit watching, but after a week or two of abstinence, my TV always seems to find its way back to the rasslin’ channel.

I have to give credit to the creative people behind pro-wrestling. Despite my complaints and the embarrassment of being a fan, I keep tuning in to see what will happen next. "Oh, will Sting get his revenge on the Hitman for the previous week’s defeat?" "What about the connection between the Lawman and the Iron Sheik?"

I’ve even gone as far as to try and explain my violence scripted and fake. Besides, being a pro-wrestling fan might not be such a bad thing right now. Not only are there shows on TV that are just as bad or worse (cough-Jerry Springer, cough), but wrestlers are becoming more mainstream, as evidenced by Stone Cold Steve Austin’s role as commentator on MTV’s Celebrity Deathmatch show. Plus there’s good old Joe ‘The Body’ Ventura. If a former WWF star can be elected governor of Minnesota, how bad can this pseudo-sport be?

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Editor:

I had the privilege of reading yet another editorial, “Pedestrians face unce­ssary peril when crossing the pave­ment” on Nov. 2, which discussed the inherent dangers of walking the fine streets of San Luis Obispo. I actually alternate between driving and walking to school (depending on how late I am for class) and felt myself well qualified to comments.

Personally, I don’t think the hotheads of this community have anything to gripe about, and, with the article the writer of the article placed too much blame on the motorists. I come from Southern California, a little less than an hour from The Land of the Chalk Outline.

I’ve stood into the eye of madness. I’ve seen the blank stare of a half-comatose starring actor, more involved in her cell phone conversation with porn producer Mr. 101 than in her duties as a motorist. It has been engraved into my psyche since childhood to never step off the curb if an automobile is within the field of view of the Habble telescope in order to avoid a hit-and-run, and quite frankly I’m amazed at both the bravery of the pedestrian and the tolerance of the drivers in this community.

So where does this gallantry, possessed by the pedestrians of San Luis Obispo come from? It spawns from the daring of the pedestrians of San Luis Obispo, a little bit of common sense, and a lot of spirit. But, try as I might, I can’t get support for this in Sacramento, no matter how many letters I write.

So, until a crosshair is the hood ornament of choice, I guess the alternative is for drivers to keep their eyes peeled, and for the users of the crosswalk to show a little respect and common sense. If you have questions as to the braking ability of that 1973 Mercury that’s smoking a path straight for you, do us both a favor and don’t step off the curb.

Andy Allen is mechanical engineering sophomore with a big car.

SLOw pedestrians beware

Editor:

I had the privilege of reading yet another editorial, “Pedestrians face unce­ssary peril when crossing the pave­ment” on Nov. 2, which discussed the inherent dangers of walking the fine streets of San Luis Obispo. I actually alternate between driving and walking to school (depending on how late I am for class) and felt myself well qualified to comments.

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Andy Allen is mechanical engineering sophomore with a big car.
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if he rang your doorbell...

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**SPORTS STANDINGS**

**MEN'S SOCCER**

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**RIDE BRECKENDIRE!**

**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING**

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Mustangs to face No. 1 Bruins

The Cal Poly men's soccer team is getting ready for one of the biggest games of the year against No. 1 ranked UCLA. The teams play Sunday in Mustang Stadium at 5 p.m.

Cal Poly is currently 9-5-2 overall, with a 4-2 mark in Mountain Pacific Sports Federation play. They are tied for fourth in the league with Stanford. Last week, Cal Poly defeated UC Irvine 1-2 in overtime and suffered a 5-0 loss to Cal State Fullerton.

Cal Poly's leading scorer is junior midfielder Brian Lueck. He has 13 points on six goals and an assist.

Seth George of UCLA will be the man to watch for the Mustangs. He is second in the MPSF with 31 points on 12 goals and seven assists.

Cal Poly, freshman goalkeeper Benroni Junge is leading the MPSF with 69 saves and a 1.69 goals allowed average. Nick Rendsmill, UCLA goalie, has 43 saves, and a 5.5 goals allowed average (GAA). His GAA is second in the league.

The Mustangs are 0-7-2 all-time against the Bruins. Before the match against UCLA, the Mustangs will host MPSF opponent Sacramento State on Friday at 7 p.m. The Humans haven't played a game this season and have a 0-13 record.

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Kazo Kawal Kawal Kaz Kaz Good luck to AFP, KS, DAW, JAD, MK, EKA, EX, ZN, TKE, AZ, 1217, 31 Z in the Kappa Alpha Theta Frosh on the Fairway Tournament, Saturday.

G4K FORMAL TONIGHT in Avila 8-12pm Come cheer on the girls of Kappa Alpha Theta Frats on the Kill. EX, AY, IN, TKE, AH in A< W 2 in the sorority soccer tourney.

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Cal Poly athletes of the week

This week, five members of the men's cross country team are the Athletes of The Week. Avery Blackwell, Sean Phillips, Adam Strickler, Greg Plaster, and Darren Holman helped the team place first in the Big West Finals in Oxnard, Texas last weekend.

The team finished with 50 points. A distant second place in the meet went to Utah State, which had 92 points.


- Avery Blackwell
- Sean Phillips
- Adam Strickler
- Greg Plaster
- Darren Holman

The first correct answer to the trivia question will be published in the next issue of the paper.

Friday
- Men's basketball vs. Five Star Sports in Mott Gym at 7 p.m.
- Men's soccer vs. Sacramento State in Mustang Stadium at 7 p.m.

Saturday
- Football at Southern Utah at 1 p.m.
- Volleyball at Pacific at 7 p.m.

Sunday
- Men's soccer vs. UCLA in Mustang Stadium at 5:30 p.m.

Briefs

The Cal Poly men's basketball team was predicted to finish first in the Big West Western Division. The coaches and media made the selection at the annual Big West Media Day last week.

Cal Poly received 185 points and 9 out of 12 first place votes in the media's poll. They also got 93 points and nine first place votes in the coaches poll. Long Beach State will most likely be Cal Poly's main competitor, and were chosen to finish second in the Western Division in both polls.

The University of Idaho was picked, by both coaches and media, to finish first in the Eastern Division.

Cal Poly will play Idaho on Jan. 7 in Mott Gym. It will also be televised on ESPNU.

**MEN'S SOCCER**

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