**Cardboard dreams**

*By Evann Gastaldo*

Students help build new homes

They may not be as visible here as they are in other cities, but that doesn’t mean they don’t exist. The homeless and the poor do live in San Luis Obispo, and Habitat for Humanity is trying to help them by building affordable housing for low-income families.

Volunteers from the Cal Poly chapter of Habitat for Humanity work with the San Luis Obispo affiliate of the program. Habitat for Humanity is an international volunteer organization with chapters in different countries. Each chapter works with their respective county to aid low-income families.

The job of the Cal Poly chapter of Habitat for Humanity is to raise awareness, plan fund-raisers and provide volunteers for the San Luis Obispo chapter.

*see HOUSES, page 2*

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**Persecuted refugees subject of prof’s film**

*By Sonia Slutzki*

It was a desire to expose the human tragedies of a 20-year-old civil war in Afghanistan that prompted Cal Poly sociology professor Mahfu Zulficar to recently travel into the heart of the struggle in June 2002.

Zulficar and five other women had been invited to the central valleys of Bazarak and Panyshir, Unrated in a region, was to fly in a down-hill helicopter that engaged in the air trying to avoid possible missile attacks.

Once there, she met and filmed thousands of refugees who have fled the Taliban rule in fear of ethnic cleansing and persecution, and talked to the many natives who have been affected by the constant fighting in the area. The end result was hours of film detailing the situation.

"The initial goal was to talk about women’s rights," said Zulficar Wednesday night, when her film was shown for the first time to an audience of about 60 students, faculty and community members. "But once we got there, we saw that it was an issue of human rights."

Zulficar herself became a refugee from Afghanistan in 1979, when a family member ordered her to leave because she opposed what would become the Taliban movement. Some relatives warned her of the arrest and she fled into Germany, later residing in the United States.

Before showing the film, Zulficar gave a short history of the region explaining how the Taliban, a regime known for its extreme oppression of women’s rights, gained control over Afghanistan.

"The Taliban is a product of the cold war era," Zulficar said. "It was a buffer state between the Soviet Union and the United States."

Zulficar said that the United States provided military training and supplied weapons to the Taliban, which led to more fighting and a vicious cycle of violence.

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News

Creative engineers speak of success

By Michelle Hatfield
Managing editor

Three structural engineers who have pushed the limits of creative engineering around the world will speak on their successes today. These engineers include Benjamin Fay, Emmanuel Valivasakis and Horst Berger. Some of their notable projects include the new Denver Airport and the world's tallest building in Malaysia.

The speakers are part of the 11th Annual Structural Forum hosted by the architecture and engineering department's student chapter of the Structural Engineers Association of California. The forum is free and open to the public.

"The way that the speakers are structured, the forum is for anybody who is interested in engineering and structures," said Neil Rusch, architectural engineering senior and forum organizer. "The presentation will be very visual."

This year's forum has the theme "creative engineering" and will provide informational presentations using slides and Microsoft PowerPoint.

Cal Poly alumnus Benjamin Fay will start the forum at 9:30 a.m. with a presentation on the structural glass. Fay graduated in 1995 and worked for Advanced Structures Inc. in Santa Monica for three years, according to a press release from the architectural engineering department. His projects included the NASDAQ glass that will be Times Square and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

At 11 a.m., Valivasakis will speak on "thin-shell structures." Valivasakis is an engineer at Thornton-Tomasetti in New York City, according to the press release. He has been involved in projects such as the connector bridge of the Petronas Twin-Towers in Malaysia, the world's largest building, the thin-shell parabolic roof of the American Airlines Hangars in San Francisco, and the New York State bicycle-wheel pavilion.

Rusch said that the forum was able to get Valivasakis as a speaker because of the close relationship between Cal Poly and Thornton-Tomasetti.

After Valivasakis' speech, the forum will recess for lunch from 12 to 2 p.m.

At 2 p.m., designer-engineer and author Horst Berger will discuss high-profile international projects like the newly opened Denver Airport, the San Diego Convention Center and the Taj Terminal in Saudi Arabia.

Ray Ladd, assistant director of advancement for the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, said that the event has a lot of student involvement.

"This is a totally student-run event," he said. "It gives people direct exposure. It's especially worthwhile to the public with the question-and-answer periods following the speaking.

The forum begins Saturday at 9 a.m. for sign-in at the business building rotunda, room 213, and will go until 4 p.m. Coffee, orange juice and bagels will be served in the morning.

About 20 to 25 volunteers work at each Habitat for Humanity building site. Family members for whom the houses are built are also required to contribute to the work. The cost of a house usually runs between $55,000 and $80,000.

"No one should be afraid of coming and not being able to do anything."

Josh Price
Cal Poly chapter president

"We work together," said Josh Price, Cal Poly club president. "We provide Cal Poly members and volunteers, and then (the San Luis Obispo affiliate) runs the big show."

Price said about 20 to 25 volunteers work at the building site each weekend. Club members also help with fund raising. He said a large part of the volunteer base includes members of other campus clubs, fraternities and sororities.

"We rely quite heavily on Cal Poly volunteers," said Vallerie Steenson, office manager for the San Luis Obispo affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. The San Luis Obispo office also has its own list of volunteers from the community.

Steenson said Price is a member of the San Luis Obispo affiliate's board, and he keeps them updated on what the Cal Poly chapter is doing. In addition to recruiting volunteers, the Cal Poly chapter raises funds and then makes donations to the San Luis Obispo affiliate.

"It's a really significant contribution to the work that we do," Steenson said.

To qualify for a Habitat home, a family's income must be 30 to 50 percent of the median income. Price said. Families also must contribute a minimum of 200 hours of volunteer work with Habitat. The family pays the cost of the house, which is very low because the materials, labor and land are either donated or bought at a reduced cost.

"There's a lot of support from the community," Price said.

Most houses cost between $50,000 and $80,000, said Price. Habitat does not make any profit on the houses, and the mortgage is payable directly to Habitat through a non-interest loan, he said.

"Nothing from the government or grants or anything," he said. "It's just businesses and people, everybody doing a little."

Habitat has three houses currently under construction in Paso Robles. Volunteers can work on them whether they have experience or not, Price said.

"If you have any talent, we'll take it," he said. "You don't have to be a builder. If you have absolutely no experience, you can just show up and help. People can contribute in a lot of ways - you don't have to do anything more."
By Kirsten Orsini-Meinhard

MUSTANG DAILY MANAGING EDITOR

Immediately after stepping off the plane, my sister Sonja grabbed my hand and forged her way out of the airport in San Jose with the determination of a drill sergeant. She was brown and thin, practically a native, and the way she hurried expertly to the bus stop made it plainly obvious that she had been living in Costa Rica for three months.

The rattling pink bus (yes, pink, they must have been out of yellow that day) only came to a stop because Sonja stepped off the curb into its path. She did this without hesitation or fear, as if she was hail-ing a taxi. The bus pulled away from the curb as I was still struggling to squeeze my heavy, strap-ridden backpack through the door. Sonja turned to me and said smiling, "Don't pay any attention to the driving."

"Distractedly" fast, I jumped off the bus and was immediately surrounded by Costa Ricans harrumphing down the sidewalk at lightning speed. The city was bustling in every sense of the word. It was only 10 in the morning, but stalls lined the cracked sidewalks and shopkeepers were standing by their stores, yelling at me not to push. So, I peered nervously out the side window as the bus sped down the one-lane highway for a newcomer, San Jose is a blur of Spanish and aging buildings, poverty and character. About 300,000 Costa Ricans call San Jose home, a considerable amount since only 3 million people live in the entire country. The city has been growing steadily; Costa Rica was colonized by the Spanish in 1736 and in 1823, San Jose became the capital city. Since then, it's been a focal point for the coffee trade in the country, and, since the 1950s, has been the center of transportation. Now it holds two universities, hundreds of stores, wild dogs and heaps of Ticos (locals). For tourists, San Jose is merely a stopping off point en route to the "real Costa Rica," the beaches and the rain forests. But those that stay only a night in the "loco" capital fail to realize that San Jose is the "real Costa Rica." It's the Costa Rica of the people.

"...courtesy of the Mustang Daily"

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KIRSTEN ORSINI-MEINHARD/MUSTANG DAILY

A church in San Miguel, a suburb of San Jose, plays host to many events in the city, such as the wedding party seen here.

Friday, February 2, 2001 3
Today's issue: Start thinking about next quarter

Priority system is fair/It always goes wrong

Ah, registration. In a few weeks, I will once again go through the long process of registering for classes. I already have the spring schedule and have been listing classes that I need. Next quarter, my priority is the luck No. 9. This means registration starts Monday, but I won't be able to register until March 2. This will be the ninth time I go through this procedure, and although it can be a pain, Cal Poly's priority registration system is a fair way to manage all the students here.

I admit that it is extremely irritating to have the perfect schedule planned out, then log on to register and find out that three of the four classes you need are now full. This means that you have to scramble to make a new schedule before any more classes fill up.

I remember that the first quarter I registered here, I had to call through CAPTURE. It took me about three times before I actually got the access code right and was able to get through. I wanted to crawl through the phone and strangle the woman who continually told me that the lines were busy. But Cal Poly got smart and started using POWER. Now, with a simple click, you have all the classes you need, and can tell beforehand which classes are still open.

Around the same time, Cal Poly also changed the registration priority schedule. Now, every other quarter, each group has the chance to be in the top six priorities. To make it even fairer, summer rotation is on a separate schedule.

Many people are still upset with this system. At Castra, registration is done by seniority. The more classes you have taken, the better your priority. But this wouldn't work here at Cal Poly. There are way too many students who need a limited number of classes. Just because someone has a few more units than you, you don't mean that you have to wait to take the classes you need.

The further along you get in school, the more limited the classes. I'm done with my general education classes, and just about done with my required major classes. That means I have to take upper-division electives, which can be offered sporadically. Since I have to schedule classes around work, it makes it even tougher when classes are in the middle of the afternoon. That's why the random priority system works so well. Every other quarter, I have the chance to register early to get the classes I need.

One thing that should be changed is that new students and athletes should register in the same mix as everyone else. New students have an abundance of classes to choose from, so it shouldn't matter when they register. Athletes should be able to register around their schedules, just like most people do around work. If that doesn't work, that's why crashing classes is an option.

There is an excellent way of getting the classes you need, even if you don't have a good priority. It's called taking a priority, which puts you ahead of everyone else. I did this fall quarter, when I had 11th priority, and registered after the entire incoming freshman class. I took one of my three priorities and got all the classes I needed at the times that were convenient.

Cal Poly has a lot of work to do in getting enough classes for the amount of students it admits. But until that happens, priority registration is an excellent and fair way of allowing all students the chance to register first.

Larissa Von Beuren is a journalism junior and Mustang Daily staff writer.

I'm registered for bowling this quarter, and I asked my friend Wendy to take it with me. Although it was the first day of classes when I remembered to ask her, Wendy willingly crashed the class.

After bowling the first day, Wendy went home and used our oh-so-fair registration system to add the class. She was in— or so she thought.

Two more classes go by, and we're still bowling. Then, during our fourth class session, the student aide told Wendy she couldn't continue bowling with us.

CAPTURE had let her add the class, even though it was full. This seems a tad misleading to me. Plus, she was in the class four sessions before getting the boot. She could have been out crashing another class for that extra unit she needed. Or, better yet, she just wouldn't have had her time wasted.

Cal Poly's registration system has many flaws, and it seems to irritate even the most docile students. From the mistake-prone phone system, CAPTURE, to our slightly less frustrating online system, POWER, Cal Poly is lost when it comes to user-friendly systems of registration.

My biggest problem is with the ranking rotation. One of my friends is now in his second rotation of 11th priority— in a row. Getting a raw deal back-to-back quarters must make his life fun.

Then there's my friend Jessica who looked ill when discussing her priority this quarter. "I swear I haven't been in the top five in years," she said.

Although her problem may be hard to believe, the ranking system may not be as fair as some would like us to think. When I look at the ranking rotation, it seems pretty obvious that some of us are getting the short end of the stick. God forbid, I fall back to seventh, eighth, and finally 11th. Except for that one first priority, there doesn't seem to be many low numbers in the sequence. And these poor people aren't even in the group that got 11th twice in a row.

So, the "system" seems to think its little rotation is fair, but what about seniority? Shouldn't seniority have the ability to get upper-division classes they need before dueling with everyone at 7 on a random morning with some horrifying priority number?

Giving some privilege to seniors who are still struggling to get classes would be nice, but our registration system gives them no leeway. It's already hard enough to graduate from this school.

Seniors should map out exactly what classes they need, have them approved by a counselor and automatically get the classes that help them graduate.

Then there's our wonderful hold policy, which states that no one can register until all holds are cleared with the cashier. Ugh. I had an overdue library fee of a dollar once. I went to register, and sure enough, there was a hold on my account. I desperately needed a particular class, and I was some terrible rank in the rotation, of course. After hashing my butt up to school and paying the stupid fee, I registered and saw that the class was almost full.

You'd think they could just be nice and trust that they'll get their dollar before I graduate. Calm down, people. It's a dollar, and it almost kept me from getting a class offered once a year.

Registering at Cal Poly is a drag. From the screwy ranking system to stupid policies, I just want to find out what the next thing that hinders my registration will be. After all, so many things could go wrong.

Janelle Foskett is a journalism senior and Mustang Daily staff writer.
Death penalty problems outweigh benefits

White supremacist Buford O. Furrow Jr. proved himself to be a menace to society on Aug. 10, 1999, when he shot over 70 rounds into the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles with an Uzi submachine gun, injuring a woman and four children. If that's not enough, only hours later, he fatally shot a police officer because the policeman was a Jew.

On Jan. 24, Furrow pleaded guilty and will be sentenced to life in prison for the murder of the police officer. Furrow escaped a death sentence, however, on Aug. 10, 1999, when he shot over 70 rounds into the families of victims who happen to be families of the perpetrators.

These families need to be allowed to heal, and they can't do that if they don't have closure. Life in prison is a much quicker trial process, and it's much easier on everyone involved.

The abolishment of the death penalty wouldn't put innocent members of society in any more danger, and furiously focused on what would really be best for society.

Capital punishment cannot be seen as a means of restoring respect for the innocent victims. In a murder case such as this one, the families of murder victims have the most direct interest in the punishment meted out. Finally, a long, drawn-out legal battle would only make things worse for the families of murder victims as well as the families of the perpetrators.

The loss greatly saddens all members of our club. We have come to feel that we have any safe haven or refuge from those with different ideals at Cal Poly. As this not only constitutes theft, but discrimination and persecution of our ideology, a police report will be made. Jerry Rosner's column ("Allow ideas to stir thought, open dialogue.") Jan. 31) suggests that the purpose of E-WEEK is to discover your own doctrine. Ironically, our club was founded on the principles of open dialogue and free thought. It is a doctrine that includes theft of other groups' sandwich boards really consistent within your value system? WWJD?

Not that... Perhaps we can organize a candle vigil with Campus Crusade for Christ, as this is their "special" week, for the poor lost soul who, in his attempt to fulfill his or her.

We've all heard the stories. A girl is suspended from school for two weeks for giving a cough drop to a classmate. Another is suspended for two weeks for having some fingernail clippers in her purse.

These stories aren't just tidbits from "News of the Weird." They're fallout from schools enforcing zero-tolerance policies against weapons, drugs and violence.

However, the shining jewel from this policy's crown came last week when school officials in Jonesboro, Ark., suspended an 8-year-old boy for the simple fact that he was a readied chicken finger at a teacher and saying, "You, pow, pow, pow.

That's right: A chicken finger. Were you aware poultry was that dangerous?"

Apparently the principle of Scientific Elec.

"People saw real threats to the safety and security of their stu-
dents," Principal Dan Sullivan said.

Perhaps in the wake of several schoolyard shootings -- including one in Jonesboro in 1999 where four students and a teacher were killed at Westlake Middle School - our nation has embraced a culture of hysteria over weapons in schools. Even Sullivan himself admitted that the school has a zero-tolerance policy because the public wants it in place.

While policies that ensure the safety of schoolchildren are important and necessary, enacting zero-tolerance policies can end up causing more to be scrutinized and something that isn't a Nerf ball to be considered a dangerous weapon. Schools need to re-examine their use of zero-tolerance policies to ensure that children who are just innocent of their own doing aren't harshly punished by a blan-
ket rule for all situations. It's almost impossible to implicate one rule to each child and making attempts to do so is definitely wrong.

Sullivan also said that punishment for a threat "depends on the tone, the demeanor, and in some manner you judge the intent. It's not the object in the hand; it's not the thought in the mind. Is a plastic fork worse than a metal fork? Is a pencil a weapon?"

He should ask himself that ques-
tion. Chances are the 8-year-old had little malicious intent.

Children are prone to playing games like "cops and robbers," and punishing them for that is not necessarily to "cops and robbers" at school isn't a good idea absolutely wrong. How do you manage to realize that blanket policies don't work and seek to improve the safety of their students in more feas-
ible ways. The ideal situation is for violence in any form to end; just find a more reasonable way of attaining that goal.

Staff editorial, W.Va. University, U-
wire.

Chickens that are not guns

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wire.
Zulfacar continued from page 1

to an extremely fanatic group. The Taliban, fighting to further consolidate their armies that were invading from the north. When the Soviets withdrew in 1989, Afghanistan could not draw their attention from the conflict, leaving behind a highly armed Taliban network that subsequently awakened the creation of a deeply religious Islamic rule.

learn that the scope of such violations under Taliban rule is the only thing that has kept the arguments about Afghanistan going.

"To have to wear a veil is the least of their concern," Zulfacar said while putting on a blue veil that covered her entire body, allowing only the tip of her nose to show. "Before, it was a class issue and only the privileged classes got to wear it.

Under Taliban rule, women not clothed in accordance to the regulation or who violate any other rules, can face death, beating, starving or even death. Women are also completely banned from working outside the home, having contact with males outside their immediate family and speaking out loud, among other things that have concerned feminist movements around the world.

"But women are not the only ones who are suffering," Zulfacar said. "Men also are punished if they don't follow the rules.

The film, titled "Hope Under Terror," was produced, edited and translated by Zulfacar herself. It showed the rural lifestyle of the central valley region, that has remained under opposition control.

The population in this region is highly dependent on women to work on the fields and care for the children. The opposition also follows the Muslim traditions, but women are allowed to work freely, are not restricted to using the veil and generally enjoy greater freedoms than their counterparts.

The overall population consists of women, old men and children.

"Most young men are either at war or are crippled or remain uneducated," Zulfacar said in the film. Those young people who have survived the fighting remain single due to the impossibility of finding jobs to care for a new family.

According to the film, the everyday lives of these people have been damaged by the constant fighting, which have led to the bombing of households, hospitals and schools, disrupting the economy and the educational system.

In addition, half a million refugees have fled into Bamiyan and Panjshir valleys since the civil war started. The increase in population has deeply depleted food supplies. Blue tents, donated by the United Nations, are the main means of housing.

Currently, the United States does not have any specific policy toward Afghanistan, and only Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have recognized Taliban rule.

"Unless the Taliban receives support from foreign countries, they would not be able to continue fighting," an old man told Zulfacar in the film.

Zulfacar explained that most of the aid comes from neighboring Pakistan, which in turn receives U.S. aid. But a greater amount of the money needed to finance the Taliban military, comes from the trafficking of opium. Afghanistan is currently the largest producer of opium in the world.

"Contrary to common belief, this is not a struggle for power," said Ahmadshah Masud, leader of the opposition, during an interview with Zulfacar and her companions. "Part of this crisis stems from internal causes, but mainly from external (foreign) pressures.

Masud called for an open election as the only solution to the conflict.

The film was partly financed by the Cal Poly College of Liberal Arts, and the presentation was sponsored by the Social Science Club.

RUSH continued from page 1

change in this year's rush. Freshmen are now able to join a fraternity and they have completed 12 units or more. This deferred rush was designed to help new students make their studies a priority.

"Anyone that didn't have 12 units completed couldn't join a fraternity," Dhamidarka said. "Anyone was able to come out and join a fraternity regardless of school status.

Dhamidarka said an initiative was put together last year for recruitment that was supposed to take effect fall of 2002.

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SANCHEZ continued from page 8

on ESPN to end the season. I think ninth team, with no conference wins.

continued from page 8

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The Mustangs are in last place in the Big West Conference League, but only eight teams make the tournament. Right now, we are that with the way the team has been play-

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"We're so in (conference), it's unbelievable, but our record doesn't show it," Byrkdland said. "If we can just get on a roll here and win two or three games in a row, we will be right back in the mist of it."

The firm's test begins Saturday, when the hype finally becomes reality. That night, the first two games of the inaugural season will take place.

The XL will be made up of eight teams located in Bannister, Chicago, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Memphis, New York/New Jersey, Orlando and San Francisco.

When the punter lets fly, anything can happen. The strategic possibilities are endless.

Basil De Vito
XL league president

The first involves the elimination of the far-catch punt return. Players can only kick the ball if it is caught in the field of play, but once that happens, the allowed a five-yard protective area. As long as the grab is made. Members of the kicking team will not be able to release from the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.

Any punt that sails more than 25 yards can be picked up and returned by either team, something league officials are calling "the most exciting fourth down in football."

"You can be sure that no fan will get a drink or go to the bathrooms during an XL punt," league president Basil De Vito said. "When the punter makes his move, the world is watching. The strategic possibilities are endless."

BASEBALL continued from page 8

n was our first game," Hill said. "We had 13 hits, but we didn't come out with the quality at-bats I expected, especially out of the veteran guys. We scored all we had to do, but we're not a powerful team."

The Mustangs have also been suffering from a lack of pitching, one of which have gone extra innings.

"As a coach, I'm happy we were involved in four close ball games," said Price, who has already sent 17 different players to the plate this sea-

The 'kids teaching Kids"

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BASEBALL continued from page 8

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The Cal Poly men's basketball team lost yet another game Wednesday, in front of, well... no one.

First off, I would like to say that this is in no way Kevin Bromley's fault, the interim coach. I really feel for Bromley. He just got put into a bad situation where it looks like the Mustangs are no longer a team. I hear about three different people say how it just looks like none of the players care anymore about the games.

A lack of talent is not the problem at all. We have Chris Bjorklund, as well as two young freshmen, Jamil Scott and Varnie Dennis, who can definitely play at the Div. 1 level. There just isn't any team unity. I mean, what kind of offense are we running? All preseason I heard about this great triangle offense, but I haven't seen any resemblance to a triangle offense. The offense this team runs is whoever gets the ball first shoots. The team just really looks like they don't care anymore. It seems as though they can't wait to get this season over with and move on to next season. The problem is losing all three recruits from last year, a coach change and having no chance at salvaging this season. But wait — there is a chance.

The men's team has looked really good the past two games, even though the team's energy level increases. The team needs more guys like Burris. Guys that slap each other on the butt, pump up the team as well as the crowd.

When he gets on the court, the team's energy level increases. The team needs more guys like Burris. Guys that slap each other on the butt, pump up the team as well as the crowd.

We still have nine more games left, including one televised game on Fox West next Thursday, and one more.

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