**Accidents plague Grade**

Holiday traffic, speeding leads to several accidents on Cuesta Grade

By Stephen Curran

Speed and slippery road conditions were contributing factors in 11 accidents on Sunday at Cuesta Grade, said California Highway Patrol accident review officer Glenn Knight.

Forty-four vehicles were involved in minor accidents, but no major injuries were reported. While not major, most of the accidents resulted from drivers following other cars too closely. This, coupled with high speeds near that many drivers could not slow down and struck cars in front of them, Knight said.

“They (the drivers) think they can drive 65 mph with half an inch of water on the road,” he said. “That’s why they don’t run NASCAR in the rain.”

Last year, there were a total of four accidents the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Sunday’s heavy rain was a major factor this year.

“We really got hammered on Saturday because of rain,” Knight said.

The CHP reported a total of 14 accidents in the area on Sunday.

Cuesta Grade construction did not see ACCIDENTS, page 2

**Flu shots arrive while others worry about smallpox**

Students can now buy peace of mind at the Health Center, in the form of a flu vaccine.

Ordered in April, the long-awaited vaccine arrived last week and is available to Cal Poly students for $7.

The vaccine guards against multiple types of flu, in addition to masking flu symptoms for those already affected, according to Bob Negretti, the projects coordinator of Counseling Services at Cal Poly.

Despite the advance order of the vaccine, many flu-ridden students have been unable to get a shot in recent weeks, due to a delay in shipping from Cincinnati.

“Lots of students have been coming in and making inquiries about getting a flu shot,” Negretti said.

“Until now, it just wasn’t available.”

Negretti said that many healthcare companies have been inundated with requests for flu vaccines this year, and health centers like Cal Poly’s are unable to meet the demand for flu shots.

“It’s much worse at other places,” Negretti said. “Some local clinics have already completely run out, and because of the demand nationwide, new shipments have been slow to arrive.”

But Negretti said he doesn’t see FLU, page 2

**Smallpox more of a threat to Americans than anthrax, officials say**

Philosophy junior Annelisa Rueben receives her flu shot near the end of the afternoon in the Cal Poly Health Center. The shots cost $7 and were available to students last week. Because of a delay in shipping the shot from Cincinnati, the shot wasn’t available for a few weeks.

By Emily Schwartz

While anthrax cases continue to threaten Americans, health care officials said that the United States is not prepared for a smallpox outbreak which would present an even greater health risk.

“Smallpox is highly contagious, making it more of a threat than anthrax,” said Vicki Warnock, director of infection control at French Hospital.

Besides the fact that smallpox is more contagious than anthrax, other differences also make smallpox more threatening.

By Jacob Jackson

Students can now buy peace of mind at the Health Center, in the form of a flu vaccine.

By Stephen Curran

As high school seniors on the East Coast fret and worry about their college applications getting to their destinations on time, students in California are not concerned, said local guidance counselors.

For students in this state, the anthrax scare is not as relevant, they said. Few local students that apply to schools on the East Coast are unconcerned.

Most students have just started (sending out our applications),” said student

By Alissa J. Rubin and Tyler Marshall

CHAMAN, Pakistan — The Taliban apparently to be on the verge of surrendering a key area along Afghanistan’s southern border with Pakistan on Monday as hundreds of U.S. Marines took up positions near Kandahar, the Islamic movement’s only remaining stronghold.

A spokesman for an anti-Taliban tribal leader announced late Monday that Taliban forces in Spin Boldak, an Afghan border town, had agreed to hand over power in the surrounding area to a leader of the Noori tribe, one of the largest tribes in southern Afghanistan.

Abdul Khalig, the tribal leader and an official in Afghanistan’s government before the Taliban took power, reached a tentative agreement with Taliban officials Monday for the surrender of the border town, said spokesman Zulmai Khan. A final decision on when the hand-over would occur and where Taliban forces would go was still being negoti-
TALIBAN continued from page 1

FLU continued from page 1

Expect Cal Poly to run out of the vaccine like many clinics in the county have. The Health Center ordered 500 of the flu shots.

"What we've learned about the vaccine is that we are going to order on the previous year's need," Negranti said. "Five hundred is typical of what we've had in prior years.

Barbara Schwenhena, the immunization coordinator at Public Health in San Luis Obispo, said it also has suffered from a shortage because there is not enough vaccine to go around.

"I read that because of the Anthrax scare, more people are worried about getting flu shots," she said.

Schwenhena said she was pleased to hear that Cal Poly's flu vaccine had arrived.

"It's a wonderful service at a very competitive rate," she said.

"People should take advantage of it if it's out there.

Schwenhena described the vicious cycle of the flu on the Cal Poly campus.

SMALLPOX continued from page 1

States is waking up to the possibilities of chemical, nuclear and bioterrorism," she said. "These are all threats that the government is developing an infrastructure for. Right now, the only prevention is going to be knowledge and tolerance.

"I think that the United States is waking up to the possibilities of chemical, nuclear and bioterrorism. Right now, the only prevention is going to be knowledge and tolerance.

Vicki Warnock, director of infection control at French Hospital, is looking for a few good writers to join our award-winning newspaper!

...id that Marines also were taking up positions Monday at the main Kandahar airport, just a few miles from the city.

...e Marina mission, except to say that there were Marine carriers. Two Navy F-14 fighters attacked the column, leaving several vehicles in flames.

Additional forces were being involved in a clash with Taliban forces. Marines in low-flying AH-1 Cobra gunships spott...ed a column of armored personnel carriers. Two Navy F-14 fighters attacked the column, leaving several vehicles in flames.

A spokesperson for the U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Fla., said that the Taliban convoy, whose exact location was not disclosed, was not approaching the Marine base. It was unclear whether the Marine helicopters were involved in the firefight and whether there were casualties.

In Washington, Pentagon officials said the initial force of about 500 Marines who began landing near Kandahar on Monday will be joined by "hundreds, not thousands" more to tighten the squeeze on Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders by limiting their movements from the Kandahar area.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and other Pentagon officials declined to elaborate further on the Marines' mission, except to say that they will "establish, hold and protect" the airfield as a forward operating base, but not necessarily as the vanguard of a substantially larger American ground force.

U.S. Special Forces have been active in and around Kandahar for weeks, but having Marines on the ground will mean better "interdiction" of traffic around the crossroads city, especially traffic to Iran in the west and Pakistan in the east, Rumsfeld told reporters at a Pentagon briefing.

On Oct. 31, an accident claimed the lives of two people on southbound Hwy. 101 near Cuesta Grade when the brakes on a tractor trailer lost control and rear-ended a Ford Ranger pickup, forcing the smaller truck into oncoming traffic where it hit two other vehicles.

ACCIDENTS continued from page 1

The 15th is based at Camp

...eaters and anti-Taliban soldiers suggest... that the 15th, number eight. Clarke said.

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...he 15th, number eight. Clarke said.
National Briefs

Three teens arrested, two sought for bomb threat

BOSTON — After a janitor found a note dated from an alleged plot to mimic the school shootouts at Columbine High School in Colorado and alerted police Saturday, three students of New Bedford High School in Massachusetts were arrested. The police are waiting for two more suspects to turn themselves in. Two of the arrested teens were arraigned in juvenile court and the other pleaded not guilty in adult court to charge including conspiracy to commit murder and possession of ammunition.

The school reopened Monday, but only half of the students returned, many brought their parents. They were supposed to receive counseling after their first period classes, but the accused students went to class.

Police bomb squads scoured the school Sunday, but did not find anything. There had been knowledge of a threat as soon as Oct. 17 when a student alerted a teacher, who in turn alerted police.

— WCVB

Death toll lowered for WTC

NEW YORK — Mayor Rudy Giuliani said that the total of people confirmed as dead or missing presumed dead due to the World Trade Center tragedy has fallen from the highest estimate of 6,500 to 3,602. Death certificates have been issued for 2,423 of those people, many of whose remains have not been recovered or identified. There are 1,199 still classified as missing while authorities believe that most of the missing are dead.

The number of missing could continue to drop as more people are accounted for, especially from other countries. The previous highest estimates are likely the result of double counting from different lists and from other countries reporting more people missing than was the actual case.

— CNN

Missing sailor found by Navy

WASHINGTON — The body of a missing sailor has been recovered by the U.S. Navy. He drowned after he boarded an oil tank in the Persian Gulf that sank Nov 18. Petty Officer 1st Class Benjamin Johnson, 21, was from New York and was one of eight U.S. servicemen who boarded the craft.

Petty Officer 1st Class Vincent Parker, 30, of Providence, R.I., was also missing and is presumed drowned. The other men were rescued along with 10 Iraq crewmembers in the tanker. One of the Iraq men died, his body was recovered immediately.

The search for the tanker was already in question after the servicemen boarded. They found 1,700 metric tons of smuggled Iraqi oil bags on deck of the ship before it sank.

— CNN

Bid for Olympics includes environment-friendly measures

SAN FRANCISCO — In an attempt to gain an advantage over other cities bidding for the 2012 Olympics, the Bay Area Sports Organizing Committee is working with environmental groups. The group took their case from Sydney, Australia, whose environmental measures helped them win the bid to host the 2000 Olympics. San Francisco is competing against New York, Houston, and Washington, D.C. to be the U.S. Olympic Committee's candidate city.

If San Francisco wins the bid, events will take place in the Stanford Stadium, Pacific Bell Park, the Oakland Coliseum and the golden gate bridge. The committee has promised to put carpool lanes in every freeway surrounding the bay, and public transit rides for ticket holders, organic foods at all concessions stands, an extensive recycling program, and the non-government organization Islamic Relief, hopes to start distributing aid this week, the first large-scale distribution since the 2004 tsunami.

— NBC News

South Asia

NEPAL — King Gyanendra of Nepal has declared a state of emergency after the west worst violence the country has seen since a Maoist revolt began six years ago.

In the case of the missing are dead. The rebels called off their cease fire last week, saying the government was blocking peace talks.

— NBC News

International Briefs

South Asia

AFGHANISTAN — About 230,000 people in Kunduz are possibly facing starvation because the government has stopped food supplies to be delivered for the last two weeks.

The World Food Program spokesman, Linda Davies said the roads between Kunduz and Spin Boldak, on the Pakistani border, are still considered too dangerous for truck drivers.

— NBC News

Houston named dirtiest city in U.S. by EPA

Houston has been named the dirtiest city in the United States by the Environmental Protection Agency. The agency said, "Any winds coming from the east blow toxic chemical pollutants towards downtown Houston and the petrochemical roads where people work and live." Through the end of October, the Houston-Galveston area claimed the highest number of days of pollution exceedance for any country in the nation with 14.

The people who are most likely to be affected adversely are those who work in the petrochemical industry, James Chadwick, a lifelong Deer Park, Texas, resident, has an employee of an oil refinery who worked in the petrochemical plant for 10 years.

"Chemicals aren't the best thing to work around, but these plants are good jobs available in (Deer Park) and I can't afford to picky, even if there are health concerns," he said.

Harry Nicholson

The Daily Cougar

By Harry Nicholson

L/HEDER HOUSTON — While the debate continues as to whether Houston or Los Angeles is the nation's dirtiest city, a report released this year by the Environmental Protection Agency named Houston the "dirtiest" city in America in terms of air pollutants.

The EPA, the federal agency charged with enforcing the nation's environmental regulations, has established a National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) that are used to determine if an area is in compliance with the standards. The agency defines smog as "pollution made up of a combination of primary pollutants: carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, lead, volatile organic compounds and particulate matter."

The EPA separate ozone exceedances into three categories: 125 parts per billion (ppb) for sensitive groups (children, seniors citizens, 165 to 224 ppb is unhealthy for the general population and 205 to 454 is very unhealthy.

The leading factor driving the Houston-Galveston area's pollution problem is the petrochemical industry. The cities of Pasadena, La Porte, Deer Park, Channelview, Baytown, Texas, are home to 36 petrochemical and oil refineries.

In 1999, a letter to the EPA from the community group Galveston-Houston Association for Smog Prevention said, "Any winds coming from the east blow toxic chemical pollutants towards downtown Houston and the petrochemical roads where people work and live."

— NBC News

Briefs compiled from various news services including the New York Times, the Houston Chronicle, and USA Today.
By Jessica Alden

THE TOWERLIGHT

(90x1495)4 THE TOWERLIGHT

(91x1283)The holiday season quickly of explaining terrorism to their children. As the holiday season quickly approaches, even the toy industry has been forced to reconsider the products being designed for kids.

Many toy and department stores have evaluated their products to decide if items are still fit to sell to the public. While most retailers have pulled merchandise from the shelves, some have deemed certain products inappropriate.

Amy Sanns, head of media relations for Target Stores, said Target did not have to pull any toys from its shelves, but the company did take time to review what was on the sales floor. "The news media have been faced with the duty of explaining terrorism to their children, and we have had to reconsider the products we are designing for kids," Sanns said.

Target is a family-oriented store and wouldn't pull items that promoted violence, she added. "I don't think it would make a difference if certain toys were not taken off the shelves. I don't think it would make a difference because kids already have the toys," Sanns said.

Another concern for those in the toy industry is that numerous movies played on broadcast and cable television have had questionable content removed.

"I've noticed movies on regular TV took out words that referred to terrorism," she said. "I think it's interesting that they have taken out words that referred to terrorism," she said.

Sanns added that it probably wouldn't make a difference if certain toys were not taken off the shelves. "I don't think it would make a difference because kids already have the toys," Sanns said.

Companies such as Fisher Price have come out with new toys that represent heroes from Sept. 11. Fisher Price created a toy called "Rescue Workers" featuring firefighters and police officers. "It was pulled for offensive material," Sanns said. "I think it's interesting that they have taken out words that referred to terrorism," she said.

Companies such as Fisher Price have come out with new toys that represent heroes from Sept. 11. Fisher Price created a toy called "Rescue Workers" featuring firefighters and police officers.

"It was pulled for offensive material," Sanns said. "I think it's interesting that they have taken out words that referred to terrorism," she said.

Another concern for those in the retail industry has been the economy. Sales and toy stores are slow in sales at the moment, but managers expect business to pick up as the holiday season gets closer.

But Class doesn't expect any problems over the holiday shopping season and Kenfey isn't doing anything differently to promote their toys.

"Black Friday (the day after Thanksgiving) is our busiest day and we expect to do a lot of business," Class said. "Right now it's slow, but I think customers are just waiting for the sales to begin."
Many people think belly dancing has something to do with stripping. And they’re not entirely wrong. The Middle Eastern dance moves are sensuous and sexy and are used to tell stories and express feelings of joy while physically conveying the mood that the music implies. “Belly dancing is very empowering and most people don’t realize that — they are either drawn to it or scared,” said Pamela Plantz, a dance instructor at Emerald’s Dance in Atascadero, which offers belly dancing. “Women who belly dance become stronger in personality, gain control over their bodies, and can even gain spiritual fulfillment.”

Plantz said she enjoys sharing her experiences in dance with other people. She said she believes that the expression of dance is the best gift someone can give another person.

“Belly dancing is very empowering and most people don’t realize that — they are either drawn to it or intimidated by it.” Pamela Plantz dance instructor

Though it is unknown where belly dancing originated, Plantz said hands of belly dancers have been around for a long time. These groups of people would travel from country to country to share music and dancing, and interest in the dance form simply started spreading.

Belly dancing groups, including the troupes in San Luis Obispo, perform in elaborate, colorful costumes. They wear decorative tops and skirts with belts that accent the hips. The tops and belts are beaded, fringed with bells and decorated in bright colors.

There is something magical about exotic music, theatrical make-up, unusual lighting and a wonderful costume all working together to make a first impression, according to an article about belly dancing in Time magazine.

In San Luis Obispo, belly dancing groups perform at Farmers Market, parades and at Middle Eastern restaurants around town, including Morocco Restaurant on Foothill Boulevard and Oasis on Higuera Street. On Friday and Saturday nights there are between two to five belly dancers at Morocco Restaurant.

The dancers begin at 7 p.m. and dance until about 9 p.m. At Oasis, belly dancers perform on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays around a similar time slot. The Oasis restaurant is new to San Luis Obispo — it just opened two weeks ago.

“Customers love the dancing and it works really well,” said Lisa Benbrahim, owner of Morocco.

Benbrahim said the dancers love to perform, and that it gives them an alternate outlet to express themselves. The dancers’ goal is to get customers involved in the performance to make for a fun experience. Though the belly dancers perform for free, they receive dinner and tips from the customers who watch while eating.

“The troupes are well known in the community,” Benbrahim said. “The dancing is just so beautiful and fun.”

The SLO Beledi Troupe, above, is a local belly dancing group currently dancing at two Moroccan restaurants in San Luis Obispo. Left, troupe member Janet Phillips performs at Morocco Restaurant on Foothill Boulevard, where she has danced for the last two and a half years. Individual troupe members take turns performing at the Morocco and at new restaurant, Oasis, on Higuera Street.

There is something magical about exotic music, theatrical make-up, unusual lighting and a wonderful costume all working together to make a first impression, according to an article about belly dancing in Time magazine.
Opinion

Mustang Daily

Letters to the editor

Supporting teams will help foster winning environment

Editor

Mustangs’ Baz columns asked some good questions, including the obvious: Why can’t Cal Poly teams win consistently? Why does it take so long to keep coaches? Should we just shut up our intercollegiate athletics program and use the money for something else? Why do our club teams win more consistently than our intercollegiate teams can?

I certainly don’t claim to have the answers to these questions. But I do think it is an important topic and worthy of discussion. Here is a start.

The big question is this: Why have intercollegiate athletics in the first place? This is a complex question. Everyone needs to come up with his or her own answer. Relatively few students actually participate in athletics, and most of them are recruited for that purpose, so you could argue that the “real” students don’t participate at all. Of course after they get here athletes either become “mail students” or they don’t last long, but this is still one of those chicken-and-egg arguments. There is another group of students who get involved with athletics through related activities such as marching band, pep band, cheerleading, etc. and still others who get paid to work at games, etc. Some other students may attend infrequently, if ever, but they keep track of how many teams are doing. Later in life they may follow some of the teams they are interested in and still take pride in their accomplishments and in their association with Cal Poly. Having been a student at Northeastern University many years ago I can tell you that I will look for Northeastern’s results even though I never paid much attention to the event or the opponent who defeated us. Recently one of those former players (Sean Jones, who played tackle for the Oakland Raiders a few years back) said that he has taken some pride in the way he handles himself. I have been around Cal Poly long enough to have the same respect for the school, the athletics program, and other Cal Poly alumni who have distinguished themselves.

So why can’t we win, and thereby create more scholarships? This is also a difficult question. But let’s start with the basics. In basketball competition there are (at least) two teams involved. Both want to win and have demonstrated that they want to win. It is unreasonable to expect us to win all the time, but a lot of this depends on the schedule. By moving to Division 1, Cal Poly has become a tougher schedule than in the past. This move can be, and has been, debated, but the thinking was that we need more competition in order to stay competitive and to attract some of the players who are that close to our door, or larger, which also have good name recognition. The athletic department has been working on raising the level of our competitive capabilities for a number of years with varying degrees of success, and even though Cal Poly has put a lot of money into athletics, we had, and still have in some regards, a long way to go. Perhaps our competitiveness depends entirely on recruiting. Recruiting depends greatly on availability of scholarships, previous success, fan support and facilities. It also depends on the availability and upgraded facilities. We still could see more scholarship money. Our facilities, while adequate, are certainly not impressive (except for the new baseball and softball complex). I’m sure the school and its administration realize this, but at least they are a product of competitive success. It is another chicken-and-egg situation. A major problem for the football program has been a lack of a conference affiliation. While the Big West affiliation has been excellent for many sports (e.g. baseball and basketball) it does not provide a competitive football. The lack of a conference complicates scheduling and probably hurts recruiting as well. This is not an unacceptable obstacle, but it is an obstacle.

So how do we make bad decisions when we hire coaches, and why don’t we jump the losers faster? Since I have some friends who are involved with coaches, I think this is one of those chicken-and-egg situations. The first answer is that it is very hard to know in advance whether a coach has had success in one environment and will carry that over to a higher level. If other factors are somewhat equal, there can be tremendous pressure to “hire a local guy a chance.” Once a coach is hired, my feeling is that he or she should be given every opportunity to succeed, even to fail, learn, gain experience, and move up (especially, competitive). I might feel differently if our coaches were given every opportunity to succeed, but I do not think that most of them start at a disadvantage relative to the top teams in their conference (or division, in thecase ot football, which has a conference affiliation). I also think that we need to be reasonable in terms that we consider success. If a coach turns a good program into a great program, we expect to see accomplishments in new conferences, leagues and players, and other roles, by the rules, graduate his players, commands respect in the community, etc., and grow into success. I think that in the remainder of the book of Exodus (the work where the Ten Commandments are found), it is relatively easy to tolerate a lack of that in the Commandments, which has no conference affiliation, to tolerate a lack of that in the Commandments, which is more consistent with the way God chose to do things.

I also think we need to be reasonable in terms of what we consider success. If a coach turns a good program into a great program, we expect to see accomplishments in new conferences, leagues and players, and other roles, by the rules, graduate his players, commands respect in the community, etc., and grow into success. I think that in the remainder of the book of Exodus (the work where the Ten Commandments are found), it is relatively easy to tolerate a lack of that in the Commandments, which has no conference affiliation, to tolerate a lack of that in the Commandments, which is more consistent with the way God chose to do things.

So what is my suggestion? Support the Mustangs, their coaches and the athletic director. Go to games if you have the interest and make some noise. If you get really fed up, you could even learn the words to our fight song (Su na na Mustangs). No matter who you are, you are part of the overall environment that helps determine what kind of teams we will have. In the future you will probably identify with Cal Poly athletics no matter how indirectly you have been involved.

Bob Digan is director of fiscal services.

What ‘Thou shalt not kill’ really means

Editor

This letter is in response to Brandon Mangus’ editorial and logical reasoning. (What “does Thou shalt not kill’ really mean,” Tuesday, November 27, 2001.)

“For the fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom, and knowledge is the faculty of good judgment. (Psalm 9:10).” A question I have been pondering is this: Why have intercollegiate athletics and why can’t we win, and thereby create more scholarships? Our facilities, scholarship availability, previous success, etc. vary in degrees of success.

Another chicken-and-egg situation. A major problem for the football program has been a lack of a conference affiliation. While the Big West affiliation has been excellent for many sports (e.g. baseball and basketball) it does not provide a competitive football. The lack of a conference complicates scheduling and probably hurts recruiting as well. This is not an unacceptable obstacle, but it is an obstacle.

So how do we make bad decisions when we hire coaches, and why don’t we jump the losers faster? Since I have some friends who are involved with coaches, this is one of those chicken-and-egg situations. The first answer is that it is very hard to know in advance whether a coach has had success in one environment and will carry that over to a higher level. If other factors are somewhat equal, there can be tremendous pressure to “hire a local guy a chance.” Once a coach is hired, my feeling is that he or she should be given every opportunity to succeed, even to fail, learn, gain experience, and move up (especially, competitive). I might feel differently if our coaches were given every opportunity to succeed, but I do not think that most of them start at a disadvantage relative to the top teams in their conference (or division, in the case of football, which has a conference affiliation). I also think that we need to be reasonable in terms of what we consider success. If a coach turns a good program into a great program, we expect to see accomplishments in new conferences, leagues and players, and other roles, by the rules, graduate his players, commands respect in the community, etc., and grow into success. I think the message they wished to convey. I call it a “news letter.” Hinkle unaccountably states, “Like self-defense.” I personally struggled with this commandment, in the case of football, which has no conference affiliation, to tolerate a lack of that in the Commandments, which is more consistent with the way God chose to do things.

Secondly, it seems blatantly obvious that Hinkle did not speak to any of the “protestors.” I used this aspect in my argument to show how God created this thing that he was writing about. I agreed that it is not easy to tolerate a lack of that in the Commandments, which has no conference affiliation, to tolerate a lack of that in the Commandments, which is more consistent with the way God chose to do things. In the remainder of the book of Exodus (the work where the Ten Commandments are found), I think that we need to be reasonable in terms of what we consider success. If a coach turns a good program into a great program, we expect to see accomplishments in new conferences, leagues and players, and other roles, by the rules, graduate his players, commands respect in the community, etc., and grow into success. I think the message they wished to convey. I call it a “news letter.” Hinkle unaccountably states, “Like self-defense.” I personally struggled with this commandment, in the case of football, which has no conference affiliation, to tolerate a lack of that in the Commandments, which is more consistent with the way God chose to do things.

Kevin McCollough is a computer science junior.

Hand me that wrench... I mean, I... Mac Editor

Monday, November 27, 2001

Volume LIX, No. 49

Letter policy

by mail

By mail

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor

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Mustang Daily reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, perspective and length.

Please limit length to 250 words.

Letters should include the writer’s full name, major and class standing.

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UC experts tapped for projects involving post-Sept. 11 issues

By Marjorie Hernandez

DAILY BRUIN (U-WIRE) LOS ANGELES — From biological and chemical security to race relations, the applications for their findings.

Researchers to provide expertise concerning post-Sept. 11 issues

Most researchers have conducted studies for years, but the aftermath of the terrorist attacks have brought an increased demand for possible applications for their findings.

"There's certainly been much more of a redirection of people's overall thinking in which ways research can be helpful," said Vice Chancellor of Research Roberto Peccei. "There are people who are definitely going to spend more time thinking about these issues."

In response to the attacks, UCOP required all campuses to compile a list, detailing faculty members' special interest and area of expertise pertaining to terrorism, which it then released to Gov. Gray Davis' office.

Researchers are already looking at possible uses of their new developments and technologies other than what was first intended.

"The world is a different place than it was before Sept. 11," Zegars said. "And the challenges of terrorism are different from what they were. Given the tremendous uncertainty and danger of the current world situation we would be irresponsible if we didn't take a closer look at all aspects of foreign policy."

In addition to campus research, the Lawrence Livermore, Lawrence Berkeley and Los Alamos national labs are conducting studies in weapons of mass destruction and biological weapons. According to UCOP Vice Provost for Research Lawrence Coleman, the Livermore and Los Alamos labs are working on technologies such as DNA fingerprinting to identify criminals and pathogens.

"These labs have conducted research for years, the outbreak of anthrax and the possibility of other bioterrorism, the importance on these studies, Coleman said.

"There's a lot of research that has been going on for a long time on things that are directly applicable," Coleman said. "In general, the federal research is at the forefront of these interesting topics."

Civil engineering departments and labs in UC Berkeley and UC San Diego are also conducting research to improve building and bridge infrastructure that will prevent future massive damages, such as those that occurred with the World Trade Center.

Additionally, UC researchers are studying agricultural bioterrorism, different forms of surveillance and cyberterrorism.

Researchers at the UC campuses and in labs nationwide are receiving support from government agencies to continue terrorism-related studies.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, along with the Combating Terrorism Technology Support Office Technical Support Working Group, announced in October a competitive selections process for research proposals.

Areas of research interest for the proposals, due Dec. 23, include the awareness and mapping of under-ground facilities, remote sensors, and locating and identifying faces in video images, terrorist behavior-predicting technology and the detection and countermeasure of released chemical and biological agents.

"Everybody is doing their bit to be helpful," Peccei said. "I don't know if they have on some particular subject matter." Peccei said. "That is basically one of the things universities have to do, repositories of knowledge. That is where our role is most clear."

WEST WING continued from page 4

(Richard Schiff) rounded up his staff after a damaging comment he made was leaked to a reporter. "By and large, the press doesn't care who really knows what as long as they've got a quote," he told them, adding that by coying up to reporters, "the press becomes your constituents, and you sell out the team."

In the same episode, a principal reporter explains why he has little interest in the White House beat by saying, "I don't like being a stenographer." He then proceeded to ridicule a columnist who complained about the scandal she'd covered over the past decade, "as if the news was to blame for the quality of journalism. I don't know if there's ever been a more important time to be good at what I do."

The week before, meanwhile, White House Press Secretary C.J. Cregg (Allison Janney) humiliated a TV reporter depicted as caring more about fashion than facts. And in the prior episode, Cregg deftly managed the press corps to serve administration objectives, chopping bread crumbs that reporters happily followed.

Compare these moments with previous seasons, when reporter Danny Concannon, played by Timothy Busfield, was the show's focus. Season four focused on Concannon being viewed as "the West Wing."

Moreover, few TV series devoted to the press have come close to exploring such issues with the depth or complexity that Concannon's character illustrated. The character was the show's moral voice, the one who always said he would return in the future. "There's a lot of moral ambiguity about what executive's no doubt deemed the least-than-riveting art of journalism."

A recovering cocaine addict, Sorkin has been apologetic since his arrest, saying he had done something "ridiculous" and grated any embarrassment he might have caused. He also went out of his way to acknowledge the current writing staff when accepting "The West Wing's" second Emmy as outstanding dramatic series a few weeks ago, a seeming reaction to accusations he was unwilling to share credit for the show.

West Wing. Indeed, since "Lou Grant" premiered in 1977 (a year after "All the President's Men"), most programs set in newspapers, print or broadcast — from "WIOU" and "Capital News" in 1990 to last year's "The Guys" and "The Persuaders" — were either soon canceled or swallowed in melodrama to spice up what executives no doubt deemed the least-than-riveting art of journalism."

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Still, several articles published this summer nevertheless painted a less-than-flattering portrait of the 40-year-old writer as an enormous talent victimized, to a certain extent, by his own ego and excesses. And at the Emmys, when "The Sopranos" James Gandolfini was announced as best actor in a drama — an honor most pundits felt Sheen would claim after his showy Latin-spouting monologue to God during the season-two finale — reporters watching on monitors across from the Shubert Theatre erupted in cheers.

So is there a critical backlash against "The West Wing," and has Sorkin — consciously or not — used the show, as he so often does, to articulate his response?

Attempts to reach Sorkin to discuss the matter were mixed by his representatives at the publicity firm PMK/BBH, who first asked that an interview request be faxed over in writing before saying Sorkin was busy working and had no time for interviews.

Fair enough, but it makes you wonder how C.J. — or maybe even Sigourney Wead — would try spinning that...
Audiences and studios want familiarity not creativity

By Patrick Goldstein

HOLLYWOOD — In a comic outtake from "Rush Hour 2," Chris Tucker and Jackie Chan toss a bad guy out of a booth window. Tucker then states: "Guess he won't be around for "Rush Hour 3.'"

In the 1990s, Hollywood's best movies were musicals and screwball comedies. In the 1970s, films were full of counter-cultural and budding anti­heroes. But the movies that exemplify the spirit of our time are part of a genre that stands to benefit more from corporate profits than content: the Franchise Film. And in an age when much of popular opinion is formed on borrowed references, audiences — and their advertisers using dead celebrities to sell anything from music creating hits out of melodies lifted from movie soundtracks, all geared to keeping consumers engaged — want to see that the next movie starts the cycle again.

When the negatives of the earliest days of the business were turned into profit, the logic is inescapable: Making a hit film is easier for a studio than hiring a distinctive filmmaker who would put his own stamp on the material, the studio opted for Chris Columbus, a protege who wrote ingenious kids' movies like "Gremlins" and "Home Alone" before directing a string of increasingly lackluster, sentimental sequels in the works. You can count on studios wanting to maximize this franchise in every way.

In today's Hollywood, maxim­izing means playing it safe.

"The studio had its choice of virtually any director for "Potter,"" says New York magazine's entertainment reporters, Alan Horn put it recently: "We want to maximize this franchise in every way."

"We want to maximize this franchise in every way." — Alan Horn, studio chairman

The studio has its choice of virtually any director for "Potter," from Steven Spielberg to Jonathan Demme to Terry Gilliam. The studio finally hit pay dirt with the protege who wrote ingenious kids' movies like "Gremlins" and "Home Alone" before directing a string of increasingly lackluster, sentimental sequels in the works. You can count on studios wanting to maximize this franchise in every way. It's easier to identify John Williams' Miltastic score than anything attributable to Columbus' directorial per­sonality. If all you want to do is make money, not good movies, it's a shrewd move.

Audiences today crave familiarity — they don't want filmmakers to stray too far from the source material. Give them the new "Junior Park" with Jig­ ger, scatter dinosaur, and most fans will go away happy. It's not just an American phenomenon. In France, franchise films are the rage, with seven series in active development, including a sequel to the Claude Zidi hit " Asterix and Obelix vs. Caesar" and "Taxi 3," a follow-up to "Taxi 2," the country's biggest hit in 2000.

In many ways, franchise films are the direct outgrowth of an audience sensibility shaped by what you might call opening-weekend hype. Being No. 1 is now a marketing tool in itself.

Many moviemakers judge a film by its box office number, not by its criti­cal reception. If you're a studio executive, the logic is irrefutable: Making a movie based on a hit attracts a built-in audience.

"It used to be just the hard-core Trekkies who wouldn't let filmmakers change a thing," says New York magazine's "Polaroid" critic Peter Rainer. "But with these franchise movies everyone has become a Trekkie. No one wants the filmmakers to change anything about the franchise.

When Tim Burton made the sequel "Batman Returns" too weird and obsessive, altering the series' core elements, Warner replaced the director of the series, replacing him with a director, Joel Schumacher, who made the films more homogenized.

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