**Surfing success:**
Two Poly grads turn creativeness into cash, 5

**Shame on smokers:**
They cost us money, 6

**TODAY’S WEATHER**
High: 71°
Low: 50°

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**Professor returns to Afghanistan**

Malika Zulfacar travels back home to help country rebuild itself

By Dale Quinn and Sonia Slutzki

Social sciences professor Malika Zulfacar just returned from a trip to Kabul, Afghanistan, where she is originally from. Zulfacar has not been able to visit her homeland for 23 years. Afghanistan’s Ministry of Higher Education invited Zulfacar to help rebuild the university system and promote the position of women in higher education. The goal is also to connect Kabul University with Cal Poly.

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**City Council passes ordinance to clean up SLO**

By Stephanie Perry

Roaming through the neighborhood of San Luis Obispo, it is fairly easy to distinguish between a family home and one that is occupied by a group of college students. Student residences, often set apart by poor paint jobs, unkempt lawns and multiple cars jammed into a single driveway, can often be eyesores to the public.

A new set of rules approved April 16 by the San Luis Obispo City Council may change all that. Under the ordinance, property owners will be required to keep their properties looking neat by repairing damaged paint and structures, as well as maintaining a sensible upkeep on lawns and yard work.

The rules, which will become law late next month, may also mean that students will see improvements in rental conditions. By holding landlords accountable for both the cost and upkeep of their properties, renters should experience a higher quality of rental living, Byyn said.

The ordinance

Under the new regulations, buildings and houses will not be allowed to have excessive paint damage. This includes houses in which more than 25 percent of the exterior has flaking or curling paint. The outside surfaces are not limited to the house itself, but also include trim, gutters, downspouts, doors, windows, fences and walls.

Buildings that are abandoned, partially destroyed or left partially built would also be in violation. Partially damaged means that 25 percent or more of the structure has been damaged and not repaired for more than one year. Partially built means that the building has remained unfinished for more than two years and takes away from the appearance of the neighborhood.

Other rules include cutting lawns and weeds that are more than 12 inches high, repairing driveways or paved areas with sizeable cracks and removing graffiti from buildings. Neglected structures and machinery, like old cars, will no longer be allowed to sit in neighborhoods.

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**Many homes, like this one on Hathway Avenue, will have to get rid of things such as furniture in their front yards under new regulations to take effect later in May.**

By BETSY FILSON

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**Reasons people take GHB**

By Sean Martin

"They did it for the euphoric feeling," psychology junior Brian Kent said about his friends.

Other people use gamma-hydroxybutyrate, commonly known as GHB, to relax, enhance sexuality or increase verbalization.

Users often feel side effects such as dizziness, loss of bladder control, amnesia, vomiting and possible death, according to a Feb. 11 Associated Press article.

The drug is usually found as a clear liquid, white powder, tablet or pill. It is usually made of common household products, such as furniture cleaners and rat poison, and users can find recipes on the Internet.

"I'd much rather clean with GHB, to relax, enhance sexuality or increase verbalization," said Tonje Silfvenius, director of the Psychology junior Brian Kent.

The drug usually takes effect 10 to 20 minutes after it is taken, and it costs us money, 6

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**GHB, to relax, enhance sexuality or increase verbalization.**

By Stephanie Perry

Roaming through the neighborhood of San Luis Obispo, it is fairly easy to distinguish between a family home and one that is occupied by a group of college students. Student residences, often set apart by poor paint jobs, unkempt lawns and multiple cars jammed into a single driveway, can often be eyesores to the public.

A new set of rules approved April 16 by the San Luis Obispo City Council may change all that. Under the ordinance, property owners will be required to keep their properties looking neat by repairing damaged paint and structures, as well as maintaining a sensible upkeep on lawns and yard work.

"We want to build the community up, so we think this is really a step in the right direction," said Rob Bryn, San Luis Obispo Neighborhood Services Team (NST) manager.

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**Under the new regulations, buildings and houses will not be allowed to have excessive paint damage.**

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Other rules include cutting lawns and weeds that are more than 12 inches high, repairing driveways or paved areas with sizeable cracks and removing graffiti from buildings. Neglected structures and machinery, like old cars, will no longer be allowed to sit in neighborhoods.
Reni shared a similar feeling. "We want to not only have the tools available to us to respond to this, but we want to send a message to landlords. Please don't try to take advantage of our students or other tenants by allowing your rental properties to run down," he said.

How it works

Community Development's Code Enforcement Group will enforce the ordinance. While some provisions are subject to 72-hour notice, others may take a little more time. For instance, if property owners have a paint violation, they will receive a notice advising them of the violation. The owner then has 15 days to contact the Code Enforcement Group to find out how they can clear the violation. If an owner is not financially able to make the necessary changes, Bryn said there are steps that can be taken to make sure the maintenance gets done, depending on the seriousness of the violations. In certain cases, community service clubs or Student Community Services could be contacted to help an owner make any adjustments.

"There are a lot of people around who would like to help and if someone is truly destitute and barely making it, we would make every effort to find volunteers to assist in doing that," he said.

Since San Luis Obispo is 52 percent renter-occupied, Holcomb said that the idea of the ordinance was to fix some of the aesthetic problems that exist in the community and that one reason he felt comfortable approving the ordinance was because it focused on landowners, not tenants.

"If students are living in a place where the paint isn't up to par and is peeling or cracking, they shouldn't be responsible for that," Huerta said. "It's a landlord issue."

A closer look

The recently passed rules are actually a set of adjustments that were made to the 1995 Neighborhood Enhancement Ordinance, which was initiated as a "clean-up" package on property regulations. The 1995 ordinance took rules that were scattered among existing city codes and placed them into a single package. The purpose was to take the legal language out of the codes, making it easier for the public, as well as the people administering the regulations, to understand the rules, Bryn said.

New property maintenance ordinances were created to enable the city to hold the large number of absentee landlords accountable and a green weed ordinance was established to provide year-round enforcement of grassy yards, Holcomb said.

The April 16 package added several new regulations, as well as some local standards existing rules. For example, prior to the ordinance, the fire department could only enforce weeds if they were a fire hazard, meaning they had to be dry. RQN started working on the new ordinance in March 2002. This entailed a review of the city's Municipal Code and identification of areas RQN thought needed to be changed or updated. After agreeing on the proposal package, it underwent recommendations by NST, the Planning Commission and finally the City Council.
National Briefs

Perfect SAT scores for roommate pair
HARTSVILLE, S.C. — Anna Hurst and Kelly Allen share more than a room at a public boarding school. They also share attention they are receiving for their perfect scores of 1,600 each on their SATs.

Both girls are students at the South Carolina Governor's school for Science and Mathematics, which is a public boarding school for academically advanced high school juniors and seniors.

"This is a most unusual thing," said Gerry Caffee, vice president for student development at the school. "We've had some students score 1,600 in the past, but we never had two in a class score that high, let alone two roommates." Caffee predicts that, from now on, many students will want to board in the room, which has been nicknamed "Room 3202." — Associated Press

Body of rock singer found with heroin kit
SEATTLE — Heroin paraphernalia was found by a relative Friday, lying in the room, which has been nicknamed "Room 3202." — Associated Press

U.S. support of Colombia protested in Washington
WASHINGrON — Hundreds of protesters marched peacefully to the Capitol Monday to oppose U.S. funding for the Colombian military, but only after they erected a pledge against vandalism, violence, running and swearing.

The demonstration was unauthorized, but mostly peaceful. Law enforcement turnout was high, but officials credited protest leaders for keeping the peace by urging non-violence.

Protesters hiked 1.5 miles from the Washington Monument to the Capitol. Police officials estimated the protesters to number 1,200 and the police to number 700. Thirty-seven protesters were arrested for obstructing traffic after kneeling with hands linked to block two entrances to the Capitol grounds.

Demonstrators were concerned about the government's funding of the Colombian military in its anti-guerrilla war and of a U.S. Army school that trains Latin American soldiers, some of whom committed human rights abuses after training.

Pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli demonstrators were also protesting in Washington at the time. A mile-long portion of one of the city's major thoroughfares was cordoned off for them.

— Associated Press

International Briefs

Africa
KIGALI, Rwanda — Former Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu was arrested for allegedly conducting illegal political activities, police said Sunday. He led Rwanda after a 1994 genocide campaign killed 500,000 people.

The arrest occurred Friday, after documents indicating Bizimungu was conducting illegal political activities that were allegedly designed to breed discontent and endanger national security were found in his home.

If convicted, Bizimungu could face up to 10 years in prison and a $227 fine. Police said that he had been given advice to stop spreading rumors and propaganda. In 2000, Bizimungu tried to start an opposition party in Rwanda, political parties are allowed, but political campaigning is banned.

— Associated Press

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GHB
continued from page 1

normally wear off after four hours. According to a National Institute for Drug Abuse study, GHB-related visits to the emergency room rose from 20 in 1992 to 2,960 in 1999. Ninety-five percent of those treated were between the ages of 15 and 34, the study said.

Increasing use of GHB, otherwise known as "Grievous Bodily Harm," "G," "Liquid Ecstasy" and "Georgia Home Boy," is a problem nationwide and locally.

"For several years there have been indicators of rising use," said Capt. Burt Topham of the San Luis Obispo Police Department. "We have responded to a lot more calls relating to its use."

According to the California Central District Drug Threat Assessment, released by the Department of Justice, the abuse of dangerous drugs such as GHB is significantly affecting California.

"It is pretty similar to ecstasy. The statistics come later, after the deaths."

Tonje Silfvenius
director of the Prevention Education Program at San Jose State University

A New Times article published two years ago detailed San Luis Obispo's "club drug" scene. It showed the use of various drugs at Tortilla Flat's weekly rave, at the Graduate, at parties in rented-out halls such as the Forum, and simply at house parties.

The owners at every club in the story said they take many precautions to avoid drug use on their property, but it still happens, according to the New Times article.

It is hard to judge how far GHB use has actually grown. There are still very few statistics out there, Silfvenius said.

"We don't have any data," said Mary Peracca, alcohol and drug specialist for the Health and Counseling Services Center at Cal Poly. "All the 'club drugs' are pretty new. It will take some time to gather figures."

Silfvenius agreed, and said that counselors are just now starting to see statistics about GHB.

"It is pretty similar to ecstasy," she said. "The statistics come later, after the deaths."

The bigger problem for college students, though, is still alcohol and marijuana abuse. A recent study by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism states that 4.6% college students die in alcohol-related deaths a year.

For questions about GHB, call the Health and Counseling Services Center at 756-2511.
Poly Profiles

Poly grads ride surf industry to success

By Bryan Dickerson

From the window of the Morro Bay Surf Company, owners Nate Ditmore and Anthony Randazzo watch the traffic on Highway 1. Most of the passing cars choose to view the timeless horizon line of sea and sky to the west, rather than a cluster of businesses clinging to the east side of Main Street.

Highway 1 is a major conduit connecting central and southern California, but Ditmore and Randazzo are used to being missed. They've done a lot to be noticed, including constructing a giant fiberglass wave on the side of the building. But like the cars on Highway 1, the surf industry takes little notice of them, rarely glancing across the timeless horizon line of sea and sky.

By Bryan Dickerson

As Orange County, we knew some day the Central Coast is very "missable," said Ditmore. "Nine-five percent of the world surf industry is in Costa Mesa, and we knew some day we wanted to work in the industry." To compensate for the geographic tilt and the consequent settling of the Central Coast, the two have utilized each other's strengths to create and function as a business entity seldom found in a single human, said Bill Gates.

Randazzo plays the straightforward business guy while Ditmore tows out the occasional sarcastic quip — always quickly and eloquently clarified by Randazzo. During conversation they often finish each other's sentences with the last word usually going to Randazzo. Being so tuned into each other and consolidating their forces has formed the backbone of a handful of companies, all thriving.

Randazzo graduated from Cal Poly with a degree in industrial technology. He has developed many products, including items for the snow and body board as well as surfboards for his company Perfect Conditions. Randazzo and Ditmore have also developed a Tahitian screening business called Synergy.

Ditmore, a graphic communications graduate, designs the logos, pamphlets, advertisements and reminds the other surf companies that the Central Coast exists.

"Nate is the industry guy," Randazzo said. "He's established a lot of contacts for us. It's hard to live up here and be noticed, of them, rarely gazing with or without tapioca balls

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Ditmore perceives the relationship in a less abstract context.

"Anthony is positive and I'm negative," Ditmore said. "I'm Eeyore and he's Tigger. Randazzo said Ditmore keeps him in grounded.

"When I get excited, he keeps me in check, otherwise I'm bouncing all over the place," Randazzo said. "I can be at one end of the spectrum, but in the middle of us is reality. He used to be more negative, but I'm working on him. We make a really good team. The word team can be overused these days while it was once reserved for sports and comic book crime fighters, it has recently settled to the ranks of everything from hamburger franchise employees to cleaning products. But team is an apt description for the two. They split the shop's duties equally, both ordering, tracking and stock keeping inventory and giving surf reports. While one keeps a financial ledger of daily activities, the other creates the required spreadsheet come tax time. Both hold full-time jobs and spend the rest of their time keeping the companies and shop going.

Nate is art director for fellow Poly alumni Sunshine Makamoto's "Surf Life For Women" magazine, and does freelance graphic work.

Randazzo teaches industrial technology at Cal Poly and brings his experiences from the real world into the classroom.

"I tell students 'imagine spending 10 to 12 hours a day with your project partners," Randazzo said. "That's the reality of a business product venture. But the 70 to 80 hours a week I put in don't seem like work."" Morro Bay Surf Company considers events part of the work equation.

A party for local artist and videoographer Chris Emms' release of his video "Dead or Alive" netted a couple hundred people. When the cops responded to complaints, they cut Randazzo and Ditmore some slack.

"The party got really huge but when the cops showed up they were cool," Randazzo said. "They had seen Emms' video on cable access and knew what the whole deal was about."

This is the Central Coast's version of celebrity recognition and special treatment. While it would be missed by the E! spotlight, Ditmore and Randazzo don't mind.

"If we grow up there (in Southern California), we would have moved away," Randazzo said. "We have great waves, great people and it's mellow and slow compared to there. I've traveled a lot and for as beautiful as things are elsewhere in the world, the Central Coast is home."
Smokers are costing America billions of dollars

The nasty habit of smoking is finally taking its toll on non-smokers. Each pack of cigarettes sold in the United States costs the nation $7 in medical care and lost productivity, a government study recently reported. More shocking is that the study estimates that smoking-attributable expenditures cost Californians $7.1 billion.

If smokers continue puffing away at this rate, they will soon put themselves at the top of the list of most money spent on addiction-related medical problems. And that's something for which non-smokers shouldn't have to pay.

The study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) put the nation's total cost of smoking at $3,391 a year for every smoker, or $157.7 billion.

While the cost of cigarette packs is increasing, the annual median cost in taxes is going up as well. Those taxes brought in by each carton the usual chain smoker buys aren't nearly enough to cover the medical costs incurred by smoking two packs a day. As usual, the report indicates that smoking continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. On average, adult men and women smokers lost 13.2 and 14.5 years of life, respectively, because they smoked. That's 15 years more that smokers get out of paying taxes on the medical bills they've placed on the government's doorstep because of an addiction they picked up in middle school to look cool.

The enormous health-economic costs to society aren't worth the nicotine fix each cigarette contains. What's more is that the painful diseases like lung cancer, heart disease, and smoking-related addictions cost billions to those who choose not to input such harmful substances into their bodies.

According to the CDC report, in 1999 was $2.92. Since then, government taxes have been increased, overwhelmingly so, in an effort to discourage youngsters from starting and encouraging old-timers to quit. The last time I heard, a chain smoker buys aren't nearly enough to cover the medical costs incurred by smoking two packs a day. The last time I heard, a chain smoker buys aren't nearly enough to cover the medical costs incurred by smoking two packs a day.

So why don't we do the right thing and just not do it? It's not illegal to smoke, but where it is illegal is that smoking is an addiction that costs society billions of dollars.

Marine mammals, including large whales, are the subjects of this debate since these creatures survive primarily on their own-society communication systems to locate each other and find food. "It is absolutely necessary to be worried about sound if we don't want to negatively impact marine creatures," said Darline Kretsn, and auditory specialist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and a member of an ongoing National Academy of Sciences research effort into ocean noise.

Icons such as Shamu and Sea World would need to be re-evaluated whether the public, how can we allow a technology to become widespread when it potentially threatens the lives of these whales?

The National Marine Fisheries Service is currently examining whether the sonar technology may be used and what restrictions should be put in place if it is deployed. If the technology is up, the examinations will be overturned and end on the back burner.

The sonar technology versus marine mammal debate is only an excuse to aid the current military push toward exemption from environmental regulations. After the catastrophic terrorist events of Sept. 11, the United States seems to be moving gradually back toward the militarism more common in the 1980s and 1990s.

Skrabale boards should be re-evaluated, I'm writing in response to Jay Devore's request "Claims against El Salvador's" (Feb. 14, ridiculous), April 17). Jay was asking why some people, such as skateboarders, believe that society's rules apply to everyone but themselves. First of all, I'm pretty sure that the skateboarder in question doesn't feel that the restrictions of skateboarding on campus should apply to anybody, including himself.

Most people associate with have no problems with skateboarders either. So this is "society" and what gives them the right to make rules beyond social pressure are telling me that it isn't a society of responsible skateboarders. I certainly can't understand. Being a bike rider, I feel persecuted on campus too. I have less in between themselves and encourage old-timers to quit. The last time I heard, a chain smoker buys aren't nearly enough to cover the medical costs incurred by smoking two packs a day.

I've heard some people say that they spend the same amount on cigarettes a quarter that they spend on tuition at Cal Poly. If a habit is as much as my tuition each quarter, I know that long-term as well as short-term consequences aplenty, you can be sure that I'd find something else to do with my time rather than take a smoking break - and find something better to do with my money, like take a trip to Hawaii. There is a huge difference in the cost to society and what society is getting back in taxes from cigarettes. Unfortunately, non-smokers are bearing the burden that smokers are placing upon them each time they light up a cancer stick.

The individual behavior choices of smokers are taking their toll. And you can bet that the government will respond to this by increasing taxes on cigarettes, cracking down on the tobacco industry and leaving smokers and their families to foot the medical bills when they're lying in the hospital cravering one last cig­arette before they die.

Jennifer Thompson is a journalism junior and a Mustang Daily staff writer.
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News
Tuesday, April 23, 2002 7

Mustang Daily
ZULFACAR continued from page 1

youth peace corps with the United States, and connecting Kabul University with universities in the United States, including Cal Poly.
She is also trying to urge scholars and second generation Afghans to return to the country, at least on a short-term basis, to lecture and teach English as a second language.

"It's like the globalization of Cal Poly," she said, referring to her hopes of connecting the two universities. The program has a dual purpose to her: to bring unfettered exposure of the absolute poverty and lack of resources on the other side of the world to Cal Poly stu-
dents, and at the same time, to use the resources available to students in this country to benefit and improve the situa-
tion of Afghan students.

"The purpose is to have more interac-
tion with students inside Afghanistan," she said. "With more exposure to people from different parts of the world, I think the culture of vio-
tence will change. They will have more hope and incentives for the future. They will think twice about the culture of fanaticism and oppressive regimes they were living under."
The disparities between U.S. univer-
sities and those on the other side of the world are clearly evident, she said.
For example, 16 students live in one dormitory room at Afghan universities. They have no access to electricity after 8 p.m., and with no computer systems, they have no means to contact the out-
side world.

Because of these disparities, one of Zulfacar's main goals is to make Cal Poly students aware of the inequalities between U.S. universities and those in less developed countries.

After being away for 23 years, the realization of such inequalities came as a shock. When she arrived at her old neighborhood, she said she felt as if it were a dream or a movie. It was unreal to see a country exposed to such a level of poverty and deprivation. Afghanistan has always been a poor country, but prior to the turmoil it was a self-sufficient agrarian society.

For the most part, the citizens of Afghanistan are relieved that the politi-
cal turmoil is gone. Whenever Zulfacar rode in a taxi, the driver would always play a cassette, something forbidden under Taliban rule.

"They would comment, 'You don't know what it's like to not listen to music for so many years,'" she remembered.
However, fear of the oppression still remains in the country. Women did not wear their veils at the university but always carried them and wore them once they stepped off campus. When Zulfacar asked them why, they said they wore them out of fear.

Young men also remain fearful of the retaliation. They liked having the opportunity to show their bravado and to wear western clothes, yet insecurities remained and most remained them-
selves from doing either.

Zulfacar explained that insecurities persist because of the presence of fanat-
ic elements in the culture. Some stu-
dents told Zulfacar that there were many fanatics with shaved heads, hid-
ing among the crowds.

What carried Zulfacar through the dramatic experience of revisiting her home country was the overwhelming sense of hope surrounding her.

"In the midst of their absolute depre-
dation and poverty, there was such a strong sense of hope for the future," she said.

She recalled how every time she walked out of a taxi they would hang on to her hand and ask her if she would return, if she would stay to help the country get out of its current situation. Their pleas were those of hope, she remembered. Hope that scholars and second generation Afghans who had left the country would come back and help rebuild the nation.

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Mustang Daily
Cal Poly baseball opened its house to UC Irvine this weekend, and the Anteaters — much like the friend who shows up unannounced, eats all of your food and crashes on your couch — left the place a mess.

After taking the first game of the series on Friday night with a 7-4 victory, Cal Poly dropped the final two games in the series Saturday and Sunday after a barrage of hitting and stellar pitching by Irvine.

Friday night's victory marked the first time since Feb. 17 that Cal Poly had a .500 record, highlighted by 7 1/3 innings pitched by righty Teler Finch and a 1-3-4 night from catcher Kyle Wilson, who continues to be a force to be reckoned with at the plate. His RBI led the way and brought his team-leading total to 37.

The Mustangs only got a short taste of life at the break-even point, however, as a 14-10 loss Saturday afternoon brought the club to 21-22-1 overall.

For the 10th time this season, Cal Poly reached double digits in hits, continuing its dominance in the batter's box, but six pitchers were not enough to silence Irvine, who pounded out 23 hits on their way to the win. After leading 12-1 by the third inning, the Anteaters didn't give in, with Fitch and a 3-for-4 night from catcher Kyle Wilson, who continues to be a force to be reckoned with at the plate.

In the rubber match on Sunday, the Mustangs were presented with the daunting task of facing Irvine's Glenn Swan, a freshman out of San Diego with a wicked curveball and pinpoint accuracy around the plate. The leftfielder had recently been named a mid-season "All American" by Baseball America for his 6-3 and 2.81 ERA.

But Cal Poly sent in ace to the ace, with right-hander Kevin Conlee bringing a 7-2 record to Pugett Sound to face the hot bats of the Anteaters. From the quick start by both hurlers through the first two innings, it appeared a pitcher's duel might have been in store, but Irvine quickly put an end to any idea of the zero.

With two outs and a runner on in the third, former Gusta College standout Chris Klemm stepped to the plate for the Anteaters and delivered a bloop single into left field to start the rally. Designated hitter R.J. Brown then ripped a double to right-center, driving in Klemm and Anderson and upping his RBI count for the series to nine.

Tally up a wild pitch and three more hits for Irvine, and the Anteaters were off to a 4-0 lead. The fourth inning brought more of the same, as catcher Chris Miller stepped to the plate. With the wind blowing steadily out to left field, Miller took a 2-2 pitch over the left field wall for his ninth home run of the year. "They swang the bat's lights out this weekend," Cal Poly coach Ritch Price said of the Irvine offensive attack.

After a three-run rally in the bottom of the fifth, led by senior Jason Barringer's leadoff triple, it seemed as if Cal Poly was showing some signs of life. But Swanston wouldn't have it, dazzling the Mustang offense with a mix of the curve and a changeup, painting the black and nailing every spot he needed to hold the potent Cal Poly batters to six hits.

"I knew coming in here that my velocity's not that great, so I've got to mix my pitches," Swanston said.

As Cal Poly dropped the series — a crucial one in the Big West standings, where the Mustangs currently are at fifth place — Price still saw positives overall.

"I thought we played as well defensively as we could," he said. "Scott Anderson put on a clinic on how to play shortstop." Barringer also noted that confidence is the key for success for the rest of the season.

"I was seeing the ball well today," he said. "I feel pretty confident right now. The key is hitting the ball hard.

As Cal Poly heads into a weekend series with Sacramento State, a team winless in conference play, Price sees an opportunity to put some more wins on the board and stay in the playoff hunt.

"We've continued to play well," he said. "We're in pretty good shape.

By J.A. Adande

Los Angeles Times

(WIRE) LOS ANGELES — Find the most comfortable seat in the house. Make sure the refrigerator is well-stocked with snacks. Keep the ibuprofen handy. If you want something for dinner, go take a walk on the beach.

Laker playoff run is going well, with right-hander Kevin Conlee throwing a five-hitter over Portland in Game 1. Long and laconic. Grinning. Not pretty.

"As long as we're winning, we can discuss later how aesthetically pleasing to the eye it is," Rick Fox

L.A. Lakers forward

San Diego with a wicked curveball and pinpoint accuracy around the plate.

Good help is going to be hard to find. And don't expect it to come from some unexpected source.

If Game 1 was any indication, Phil Jackson is keeping his rotation tighter than a kitten's pint-sized outfit. He straight up said before the game that he is "not very comfortable" with using Mark Madsen and Slava Medvedenko at power forward.

Linsey Hunter made a token appearance and we might not see Mitch Richmond again until the victory parade.

Not that the parade is a sure thing. In fact, here's the only thing you can guarantee: the Lakers won't sweep through the Western Conference.

We should get a good chance to see the comparison between then and now, because it's likely the Lakers, if they get far enough, will face the same three opponents. Portland, San Antonio and Sacramento.

Portland already has closed the gap a little bit. The Trail Blazers weren't within 13 points of the Lakers at the end of any playoff game last season. Now they seem ready to hang in and put up a fight, as opposed to last year's debacle when they melted down into a towel-cissing, referee-attacking mess that posed a threat only to themselves.

"It's going to be one of those series where we're going to have to read," Jackson said.

As opposed to what, just looking at the pictures?

Yes, this is going to take some effort, both playing and watching. It will require stamina. Jackson went on to talk about stuff like "specials," "automatics" and "pressure releases," but the key word in his descent into basketball jargon was "survive."

That probably will be the theme of these playoffs, and that's what the Lakers did Sunday.