ASIJ candidates square off

By Christen Wegner
MUSTANG DAILY STAFF WRITER

ASI Election Chair Carlos Diaz called it "light night." However, the Associated Students Inc., president and vice president candidate forum that was held Wednesday went off without a hitch.

At the forum, students were allowed to ask questions pertaining to the candidate's campaign or any other issue to which they wanted answers. Since this is the first election under the new "bicker" system, in which presidential candidates campaign with a running mate, many questions from the audience were directed to each team and not individuals.

"The event was really well," said Angie Hacker, ASI president. "Since the transition has been pretty tame so far, the debate wasn't too threat as it could have been." But some audience questions were certainly tougher than others.

When asked how they will increase diversity on campus, presidential candidate Metal Marzuni said that the only way they can improve diversity on campus is by reaching out to the students. "We have to reach out to the student body to teach them that having a diverse campus will make happy students, and the only way to do that is to educate them," said Marzuni, a political science junior.

Vice presidential candidate Kaitlin Ayers noted that she hasn't done anything to create a more diverse campus, but hopes to change that.

The lack of diversity on campus tracks because I came from a very diverse city so I know how important it is," said Ayers, a business junior. "That is why Jake Parnell and I are running for office — to change the lack of diversity.

Candidates Andrew Hunt and Leigh Love were also asked a difficult question, but the questions pertained to their VHI (vertical and horizontal integration for one student body) campaign slogan. While some students asked if the campaign was meant to deter freshmen from extracurricular activities during their first year at Cal Poly, Love denied the implications.

"I think it is very important for freshmen students to get involved with campus life, and VHI will help them do that," said Love, an information systems major.

Lantern festival lights up UU

By Leslie Edwards
MUSTANG DAILY STAFF WRITER

"The Lights of Asia" will shine this weekend when the Eighth Annual Lantern Festival concludes Asian and Pacific Islander Month.

This year's festival, sponsored by Chi Delta Theta, an Asian-interest sorority, in conjunction with the Multicultural Center and Associated Students Inc., will be held Saturday at the University Union from 5 to 9 p.m. The festival is free and open to the public. The theme, "Lights of Asia," will be reflected in the festive lights and lanterns that will decorate the University Union.

Angie Wong, member of Chi Delta Theta and one of the coordinators of the Lantern Festival, said the evening is meant for everyone to come and celebrate all Asian and Pacific Islander cultures.

"The Lantern Festival is kind of like an Open House, but for Asian cultures," Wong said. "We expect a pretty good turnout this year because we have a lot of great performers and a lot of people have been inquiring about the event."

The Lantern Festival will feature live performances, including martial arts demonstrations by Shorin-Ryu Karate and a Taiko drums performance. The festival will also feature student turned monk

Lecture focuses on college student turned monk

By Sara Howell
MUSTANG DAILY STAFF WRITER

Thomas Merton is the most famous monk in American history, and the most influential spiritual writer of the 20th century, said Cal Poly English professor and author Robert "Larry" Inchausti last Tuesday night, during a lecture in Phillips Hall.

The lecture was the first in an annual series sponsored by the Newman Catholic Center.

"The series intends to explore the intellectual crossroads of philosophy and theology," said Cal Poly English professor John Hampsey. "Each year we hope to bring a theologian or philosopher in contemporary culture."

"It is one of the best writers about the college experience," Inchausti said. He articulates feelings of loneliness, meaningfulness, relationships, religious doubt, and family issues — all things experienced by students today.

The lecture discussed Merton's progressive ideas of interfaith dialogue and social justice. He was able to draw upon his older life experiences to interpret his faith and make it applicable to real life. Inchausti discussed how Merton was an authentic free thinker and how he lived his life as a prophet of spiritual longing in a materialistic world.

The honesty and reality of Merton's writings drew Inchausti to his writing, he said.

Merton's teachings revolve around being open and non-judgmental. He changed his ideas about himself and his way of life throughout his life.

During his lifetime he became a silent monk. Merton was a progressive idea of interfaith dialogue and social justice. He was able to draw upon his older life experiences to interpret his faith and make it applicable to real life. Inchausti discussed how Merton was an authentic free thinker and how he lived his life as a prophet of spiritual longing in a materialistic world.
Students spread spirit at Special Olympics

By Theresa Ngo-Anh
Muñoz Hall Staff Writer

An 8-year-old boy races down the track, striving for first place. However, he is not running. He races on his skateboard. And once he crosses the finish line, Cal Poly students are there to cheer him on.

The 33rd Annual Special Olympics meet is coming to San Luis Obispo today, and Cal Poly students will be playing a prominent role in the day’s festivities.

Dr. Edward Dowlen, a recreation administration senior who currently has an internship with the Special Olympics, described the day’s events.

“This will be about 600 athletes participating in this weekend’s event— a record number for the San Luis Obispo area,” Dowlen said. The activities will be held at Morro Bay High School from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Dowlen’s internship focuses primarily on fund-raising for the Special Olympics. “Special Olympics receives no government funding, so all funds come from the community,” she said.

While many people have heard of Special Olympics, not many have a clear understanding of just how extensive the event is.

“Most people think Special Olympics only has that one big track event, but they do so many other activities,” said Cynthia Morey, a recreation administration lecturer.

The Special Olympics also hosts Winter Games and swimming training for the disabled.

Moyer is having her students participate in fund-raising activities for the Special Olympics. These activities include a “Tip-A-Cop” fundraiser on May 14 and 15, when police officers act as winters and all their tips go to Special Olympics.

“Students from the REC 210 class will be designing themes and decorating the San Luis Obispo Veterans Hall for the event,” Dowlen said.

“Vendors from F. McLintock’s and Mo’s Barbecue will be providing the food.

All proceeds will go to the Torch Run that leads to the Special Olympic Summer Games in Long Beach this summer, Dowlen said.

There are approximately 200 volunteers this year, including members ofAmericorp, the Cal Poly Greek system and recreation administration classes.

“There is a lot more group support from clubs on campus, especially the fraternities and sororities,” said Jody Watty, director for the local Special Olympics chapter.

Watty has worked for the Special Olympics for the last seven years and finds her job extremely rewarding.

“I grew up with someone who had a disability, and I like the idea of helping people to help themselves,” she said.

Watty said she attributes the amount of increased volunteers to two Cal Poly students, Bonnie Guerra and Lisa Yackam.

“I just saw how much fun people had participating in Special Olympics and I wanted to help this great cause,” said Guerra, a journalism junior.

For Yackam, being a part of the event is rewarding.

“I wanted to get Greeks involved because a lot of people stereotype us, and they don’t see the philanthropic events we participate in,” said Yackam, a speech communication junior.

“The area meet is a huge event that everyone can take part in.”

LANTERNs continued from page 1

ture a traditional Chinese lion dance, Polynesian dancing, Filipina and Indian cultural dances, modern hip-hop dance routines, singing groups and much more. In addition, there will be a karaoke contest and other games to get the audience involved.

Cal Poly clubs and organizations, along with other businesses from Central Coast communities, will have booths set up at the UU to sell Asian delicacies and drinks, such as sushi and pearl tea beverages.

Local designers from Southern California will also be featured at the Lantern Festival. Black Laava and Tribal Pinoy will showcase their clothing lines in a fashion show and also will have a booth set up to sell their clothes.

“Their clothing lines are mainly geared toward Asian-Americans,” said Lorraine Magaus, a member of Chi Delta Theta and coordinator for the Lantern Festival. “It’s a good way to show different talents of Asian-American designers.”

Traditionally, the Lantern Festival is celebrated in Chinese and Vietnamese culture as way of honoring the beauty of the moon.

“Asian Awareness Month is basically a month where we have events and speakers that highlight different Asian groups here in America,” said Mark Fabionar, director for the Multicultural Center. “The Lantern Festival is a way for the campus as a whole to come together and experience Asian-American life and culture.”

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New York blast injures 50

NEW YORK — Fifty people were injured when an explosion rocked a 10-story commercial building Thursday. At least three or four of the victims were in serious condition. They were sent to hospitals along with about 20 others who were critically injured. Facial and chest burns were among the injuries reported.

Plumbers were working in the boiler room of the building at 11:30 a.m. — the time of the explosion — but it is unknown whether the work being done was related to the blast. Law enforcement officials do not believe the incident was related to terrorism.

Windows along the block were blown out by the force of the explosion. Several people were injured by the flying glass. The façade of the building was also blown off. It was not immediately clear how much of the building’s interior was damaged. Several nearby buildings were evacuated. More than 100 firefighters were called out.

Associated Press

Policy of sexual abstinence extended

WASHINGTON — The “abstinence only” program has been renewed by a House committee that turned back a Democratic attempt to let states who take federal money decide whether to include discussion of birth control methods. The committee voted 35-17 to extend the program for another five years.

States are not obligated to teach abstinence, said committee chairman Billy Tauzin, R-La.

In the debate, Democrats highlighted programs in some states which emphasize abstinence as the best choice, and provide information on ways to prevent pregnancy and the spread of diseases.

The federal law bars discussion of the benefits of birth control and instructs programs to teach that any extra-marital sex has harmful consequences.

Only California has opted out of the federal program, said Rep. Henry Waxman, a democrat from California.

“A pragmatic rule on information is no way to solve a serious health problem,” he said.

The committee also rejected a Democratic amendment that would require only medically accurate information be included in the programs. Republicans said it would be impossible to agree on what information was medically accurate.

The federal government provides abstinence-only programs with $50 million annually. Additional funds are given through grant programs.

Associated Press

Death penalty may be declared unconstitutional

NEW YORK — U.S. District Judge Jed S. Rakoff said that he is ready to declare the federal death penalty unconstitutional unless the government can promptly provide an explanation as to why the number of condemned inmates that are later found innocent is so high.

The conclusion was outlined in an 11-page order in which he also said he may toss out the death penalty eligibility of two men charged in a drug and murder conspiracy.

The judge has set the final ruling for May 11. The government will be given the opportunity to present arguments on the subject before the ruling.

“If the court were compelled to decide the issue today, it would … grant the defendants’ motion to dismiss all death penalty aspects of this case on the ground that the federal death penalty statute is unconstitutional,” Rakoff wrote in the report.

— Associated Press

Running of red light cause of train accident

PLACENTIA, Calif. — Investigators said Wednesday that the reason a freight train slammed into a commuter train, causing the deaths of two people and injuring more than 260 others, is that the train ran a red light.

Although National Transportation Safety Board chairwoman Marion Blakey said that “there is no question that the train should have stopped,” she stopped short of blaming human error and said that officials were continuing their investigation of the head-on crash.

Blakey said that the freight train was running at 48 mph when it ran the red light and hit the other train, which was stopped at the crossing. No problems were found with railroad signals, equipment or the tracks.

The freight train began braking about 2,100 feet before the crash, and was able to slow to 20 mph by the time it made impact with the commuter train, Blakey said. The commuter train was ordered to stop by a Metrolink engineer who saw the freight train coming.

Investigations are looking at personnel records and at factors that may have impacted their performance, Blakey said.

Robert Kube, 59, of Moreno Valley and Lawrence L. Sorenson, 48, of Riverside were killed in the crash.

— Associated Press

International Briefs

Asia

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Malaysia installed a new king Thursday. Syed Sirajuddin Syed PutraJamalulhadi is the country’s 12th king, and participated in a ceremony that harked back to feudal times.

Syed Sirajuddin picked up and kissed the royal golden dagger that only he may touch. It is one of many symbols of privilege reserved for a class that has been shorn of any real power for quite some time.

The honorary king and queen will reside in the royal palace and hold the title for five years.

Malaysia has a unique system that rotates the position of monarch among nine hereditary sultans. Syed Sirajuddin, 55, is the nominal head of the armed forces and all the country’s laws. The appointment of all cabinet ministers also requires his assent, but his role is largely ceremonial.

— Reuters

Middle East

BAGHDAD — A plan, based on a romantic novel written by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, is to be released in Baghdad on Friday.

Saddam, who was an important spokesperson for his country.

Saddam’s novel appeared last week and was compared to the 85 yen citizens can buy a whale burger from a sandwich and a whale hot dog, which sells for 300 yen ($2.30) between two patties of pressed whale.

The sandwich features whale meat with a barbecue-like sauce between two patties of pressed rice. It sells for 100 yen ($0.80) compared to the 85 yen citizens pay for a McDonald’s hamburger.

“The Place of Whales,” which also sells a fried whale cutlet sandwich and a whale hot dog, has been swamped with large lines during lunchtime.

“My real goal was to come up with something with whale in it that would be casual and cheap,” said owner Yoshiaki Nakagawa. “We are the only place that provides this.”

Whale has become an expensive gourmet food in Japan. Following World War II, whale was used as a source of protein for the impoverished country.

Nakagawa also runs a fancier whale restaurant and a store, which sells raw whale meat, salted whale skin, whale bacon and thinly sliced whale tongue.

— Reuters

Threat behind Civil War

female soldiers exposed

By Rachel Haskins

(U-WIRE) EMPIRIA, Kan. — There was total silence in the room as Jo moved from describing watching her father get killed to getting raped by her stepfather.

On Wednesday night, Joyce Thierer, history instructor and former for Ride into History, performed a first-person narrative of Jo, a woman soldier dressed in a men, fighting in the Civil War. Thierer has been performing with Ride into History for 12 years, traveling all over the nation to share her characters.

Kim Comstock, vice president of Phi Alpha Theta, the honor history society, and a history graduate student, said the presentation was a good experience for all.

“Everyone needs to know the history of this country and this was a good way to learn about the Civil War and women’s place in the Civil War that is interesting and fun,” Comstock said.

Jo is the newest of Thierer’s four characters, first appearing last August.

During the Civil War, women were not allowed to fight, so many women dressed as men in order to serve their

— Reuters

WOMEN, page 7
The Rock, as the King, is the pits

By Andra Coberly

...some of the crowd's laughter is caused by lines that probably weren't supposed to be jokes — laughter that was out of pity and disbelief.

The 'Scorpion King' is directed by Chuck Russell, who is not the director of "The Mummy" or "The Mummy Returns." As I entered the "Mummy" movies, I could see that the change in director may have caused a less than brilliant product. While most action movie creators make the mistake of taking themselves too seriously, the makers of "The Scorpion King" do the complete opposite by not even attempting to make a quality film. It's as though they gave up the minute they realized their star was famous for referring to himself in the third person, laying his smoke down and wearing sandals. The major fault of "The Scorpion King" is that the audience can't take this seriously, and it turns out to be ... well ... corny.

The entire movie is filled with wanna-be catch phrases and cheesy one-liners. This was probably an attempt to spawn Scorpion King products such as T-shirts with "We make our own destiny" and "Live, die well" written on the front in bold letters.

These lines, incredibly entertaining, give the audience no opportunity to take the story as a genuine, well-thought-out work. This does not qualify "The Scorpion King" as a bad movie. In fact, it was really quite entertaining. There were great fight scenes that displayed a wide array of acts that an ancient warrior could mug, name and kill. From wood fights to the good 'ol bare-knuckle brawls, I was pleased to see that The Rock has broadened his pain-causing horizons.

There is also a plethora of comic relief with the crazy antics of Mathayus' sidekick (Grant Heesol), a scruffy, unshaven horse thief, the movie moves smoothly and quickly. While "The Scorpion King" did keep the jokes rolling and the audience entertained, some of the crowd's laughter was caused by lines that probably weren't supposed to be jokes — laughter that was out of pity and disbelief.

Another good part about the movie is the use of humor. While the bulging muscle of The Rock is an attraction for female movie fans, the audience can be constantly amused by the oddly high number of unusually beautiful women that grace the screen as prostitutes and members of the king's harem. The beauty of these females is unusual due to the fact that women of that time were unshaven and lacked the eye shadow and lipstick that was predominantly placed on the actresses' faces. Also odd is the costumes of Hu, which include a chain-link bikini, rope and some cloth, and strategically placed bags. While the blatant male fantasy is evident, the topless Michael Clarke Duncan, who is also in "The Green Mile," could leave a woman hesitating for more.

With mediocre acting and bad writing, "The Scorpion King" gets by on humor, semi-nudity and the fact that the audience can laugh at, not with, the movie.

Don't count on 'Murder By Numbers' to entertain

By Sarah E. Thien

It was a movie miracle; Sandra Bullock was neither cute nor perky. Instead, she seduced a murderer then threw him out of her bed.

The rest of "Murder By Numbers" is a bit more predictable. This murder mystery tries very hard to be creepy and psychotic, sometimes succeeding, but when it isn't, it's simply a bore. The fact that it's a bore out the audience, it is reverting back to the basics.

Bullock plays Cassie Mayweather, a detective with a troubled past and, of course, a brand new partner. If that doesn't sound familiar, you haven't been to the movies in a really long time. Cassie is hard-boiled and nothing is going to obtain evidence, while her partner Sam Kennedy (Ben Chaplin) is soft-spoken, kind and strives to do the right thing. Predictably, the two become romantically entwined. He stalks by her even after she throws him out of her bed, and he also helps her commit her part.

The killer is derived from a common movie formula as well. There is Ryan Gosling as psycho No. 1, a rich boy named Richard Haywood with no parents and too much time on his hands. Psycho No. 2, Justin Pendleton, played by Michael Pitt, is sensitive, poity and philosophical. It seems like the director, Jerry Rice, may have decided if we were afraid of the villains or feel sorry for them. He apparently thought, as Cassie tries to protect Justin and hurt Richard, a boy who is too much like the man who hurt her.

Gosling delivers the best performance in the movie, as he was the only one who managed to be convincingly crepny. When he starts into the camera and lies at one point, the audience feels as though it can believe him, even though it knows the truth.

In his breakthrough role, Gosling played a Jewish neo-Nazi in the film "The Believer," the Grand Jury prizewinner at the Sundance Film Festival. He was also a Mouseketeer with Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake, so he has plenty of experience acting creepy.

Part is supposed to scare us with his brooding, quiet hostility. Instead, I found myself focusing on his lips, which were painted bright red. The color may have been intended to imply his insanity, but ultimately made him look like a girl. Pitt's other acting credits include a part as Hedwig's love interest in the independent film "Hedwig and the Angry Inch."

In film, "Murder By Numbers" is a mystery that crime is the path to freedom. To truly be free, he believes one must commit crime for no reason at all. Following that theory, the boys go out to plan the perfect murder. They choose a random victim, leave false evidence and frame another person. However, Cassie has a hunch, based on nothing except her hunch, that the two boys are somehow behind the crime.

In her pursuit, Cassie runs up against the usual resistance. Her boss yells, "This case is over, Cassie, closed." In the end, she starts to track down the killers herself.

Along the way, the director introduces plot lines that he never follows through on. I guess they would have made the movie too interesting. For starters, the sexual tension between the two boys is evident, but never followed through on. It definitely would have been interesting if those two got together, but the director wasn't ready to take the film to that level.

This is mainstream Hollywood after all, not an indie film. Since the plot was a bit a lackluster, the most exciting part of the movie was the setting, as parts of "Murder By Numbers" were filmed here in San Luis Obispo. It was cool to see our streets up on the big screen, but it was also very distracting. It's hard to lose yourself in a movie when it's obvious that Sandra Bullock is standing in the Mission Plaza, or that the courthouse is our courthouse, complete with a shot of the Fremont. It also didn't help that when any recognizable location appeared onscreen, the theater buzzed with whispers, "Look, the mission," or "Hey, that's near my house!" were common phrases.

"Murder by Numbers" could be fun, or depressing depending on your outlook. Depressing because the kids have been driven to crime, or for some it's too hard to be beyond the edge that you have to laugh. And if you figure out how the title corresponds to the film, let me know.
Get on the road to see ‘Changing Lanes’

By Dawn Rapp

A s an avid hater of L.A. traf­ fic, I was really intrigued to see the movie “Changing Lanes,” a film about what happens when road rage is taken too far. “Changing Lanes” takes the drama to a much deeper level, questioning people’s ethics and examining human nature.

The movie begins with an inci­ dent of road rage on a busy freeway, but then confronts the conse­ quences of split-second decision making. The characters must face up to how their selfish, quick deci­ sions affect the people and their environment around them.

I was skeptical of the film at first, but it seemed to be a race of who can screw over the other person more. And I found that much of the film I predicted. But as the characters rush to their custody hearing when he and Ranek collide on a busy freeway, Gibson tries to handle the accident “cor­ rectly” by exchanging insurance information; however, Ranek refuses, writes him a blank check and leaves him in the middle of the free­ way with a flat tire.

After he leaves Gibson stranded, Gibson finds a tile that Ranek dropped in the confusion of the accident, a tile that Ranek needs for his court proceedings that day. When Ranek realizes that he has dropped the tile, he pleads with Gibson to return the papers to him. Gibson, however, will not comply and doesn’t cheat the viewer. It is the end of the film to ask the question: Are people inherently good and evil? Gibson believes people are inherent­ ly good, but his morals are pushed to the limit throughout the movie. Ranek, however, chooses to base his philosophy of life on the motto of his superiors: “At the end of the day, I do more good than harm. What other standard have I got?”

Don’t flash your lights or honk the horn to get a driver to move out of your lane.

Avoid making gestures or eye contact with another driver.

Put yourself in the other driver’s shoes. Don’t take other driver’s actions personally.
**Letters to the editor**

**Diversity is a front for racism, Editor**

Lately, significant attention has been paid to the dominance of racial diversity on campus. Everyone seems to agree that promoting racial diversity is a good thing – and why shouldn’t it be? The very word “security” conjures up images of different colored people holding hands on a mountain top singing “We Are The World.” Who could possibly be against this? Yet, there is certainly nothing wrong with diversity. However, we should all be against the idea, which is so proudly espoused by the Cal Poly administration, that racial diversity is something we should actively strive for if we ever hope to achieve academic excellence. This same attitude is often extended into business environments in the form of racial quotas. The danger behind this idea is it requires the assumption that persons of a certain race exhibit certain behavioral or ideological characteristics, which must be recognized and included if we truly want to enhance an educational or business environment. In a sense, we are saying that diversity of skin colors will ensure diversity of ideas. Unfortunately, the belief that a person’s skin color somehow determines one’s ideology or behavior is the very essence of racism. Nobody thinks that white Americans think or act the same or even that all have similar life experiences. So why should we believe this about non-white Americans? We are wrong to categorize anyone on the basis of their skin color. For example, we only affix social stigmas and ignore the fact that we are all individuals. So, next time someone mentions the need for racial diversity, including those at the Multicultural Center, challenge them to view others as individuals and not simply as members of a larger racial group. In the end, we should hope that society would see the promotion of racial diversity for what it is: a front for racism.

Steve Hinkle is an industrial technology junior.

**Why not ban cars while we’re at it, Editor**

The natural extension to President Devore’s argument justifying the outlawing of skateboards and bicycles due to the fear of lawsuits is to ban cars since people are also injured in car accidents on campus. It is interesting that our society accepts automobile-caused injuries without question: Let’s ban cars on campus – we’d all be safer and breathe cleaner air too.

Robert R. Rice Jr. is a professor of integrated pest management.

**Badass skater calls for skateboard registration, Editor**

I just got pulled aside from my job making pizzas at Campus Market. Officer Lori Hashim warned, “We know what you look like.” She informed me that “if we (the police) see you skateboarding and don’t catch you, you will be charged under Article 141 for resisting arrest.” I have skateboarding on campus every day since. Hamas represents the law, and the law doesn’t allow skateboarding. But as James Medina (“Skateboarding rules should be re-evaluated,” April 23) questioned, “...do skate-boarding and bicycle restrictions really reflect society’s rules?”

Theoretically, it’s a great idea. Anything that encourages Cal Poly students to get up and speak their minds is a good thing in my opinion. It encourages people to speak freely (and gives dialogue, however disagreeable, is legal and meant to be “a public and visible forum.” I must never be censored. Maybe it’s the journalist in me, but as Voltaire said, “I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”

I sincerely hope that the ASI candidates to enact a skateboard registration program. Such a program would enable Cal Poly students and faculty who would like to use their skateboards for transportation purposes to register themselves, pay a nominal fee to cover program costs, and thereby avoid an ambush in the event of a skateboarding injury. Skateboarders possessing proof of registration shall remain unmolested by the police during campus skateboarding incidents. It would also protect skaters who litter and destroy property by grining cuffs and handcuffs, or night- skat­ers in the living rooms would warrant loss of regis­tration privilege.

Vehicle registration is no new idea. Cars, motorcycles, and even bicycles are already being registered on campus. Registration seems to work well for our society. So let’s “lock and key” it on the sidewalks and put a sticker or an armband in return. Let’s see how this goes.

Chris Ferrier is an industrial technology junior, Campus Market employee and in the band “I Tried.”

**Faith and reason are stronger than just faith, Editor**

Recently, I’ve been inspired to reflect on how society, and Christianity has on some level, Ham­med Poly society, and pretty much the entire west­ern hemisphere. Having grown up in a theosophical household – belief about God and the world through more of an eastern philosophic insight – I was started to have been exposed to Christianity on a much larger scale upon coming to Cal Poly, almost to the point of suffocation. It seems like I can’t walk to class without either seeing a “OneWorld” sign, receiving a Bible study flirt, or being hassled by a man and his daughter ranting their rhetoric about how I’m going to hell for not being Christian.

Indeed, I believe the Bible contains truthful insight about the knowledge that transcends scien­tific observation. However, there’s always a serious factor of doubt in the validity of the texts in any religion. This is why the Bible shouldn’t be regarded as the ultimate source of truth because one can only obtain greater wisdom by accumulating knowledge from different sources.

After attending a few lectures, including the “Christian” meetings, I’ve found that some Christian students believe that the quest for truth and more about the emotional security an organized religion can bring. Sure, parallels of non-religious material and passions may be rectified, but other scripture should be sought after as well. The search for truth should be done as objectively as possible so that when someone asserts their faith, they will do so in a manner based on reason. Christian faith and reason is stronger than sim­ply faith.

Ian Carlson is an electrical engineering sopho­more.

Thanks for writing on under­appreciated culture, Editor,

This letter in response to Arak Kartian’s comments, “Too many people have forgot­ten” (April 4). I would like to thank Arak for taking the time to read and write, and write on something that is very close to me. Growing up away from my immediate family kept me from understanding what it meant to be Armenian. I can remember in history class when the teacher would ask what heritage we had. I’ve always received questionable looks and sighs when told I was Armenian. Moving back to California has helped me understand who I am and learn more about my family and myself. As we get older and become more Americanized, we start to lose pieces of our past and the line between truth and fiction start to blur and then fade. As the older generation begins to move, I have found it harder and harder to reconnect with my roots. With their passing, they take their stories and traditions. I am glad to read this is something that people in my gener­ation who are reconnecting with the past long enough to join the future. Once again, thanks, Arak. I really appreciated your arte­cle.

Tyson Carroll is a landscape architecture junior.

**Letter policy**

Mustang Daily reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, punctuation and length. Readers’ names will be published unless otherwise requested. Letters should include the writer’s full name, campus number, major and class standing.

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**Opinion**

**If it’s really free speech, then it’s a great idea**

Any student who has been at Cal Poly for any length of time has (and heard) the community members who are continually speaking in the UU Plaza – they are usually older men, and they are usually speaking loudly about their “right to free speech.” I used to see several such people in my four years on this campus.

Whether or not you agree with their respective points of view, those men have the right idea. And whether you call it lecturing, preaching, teaching, or B.S., it’s free speech.

And we are entitled to it, too.

In a nod to our long-standing First Amendment rights, ASI has recently started holding an organized “Free Speech Hour.” On Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to noon, people can sign up to speak for three to five minutes in the UU Plaza in front of a microphone. ASI President Angie Hacker has said that two people are then allowed to take the stage and rebut that speaker’s point of view, after which the next person on the list can speak.

Unfortunately, I haven’t been able to participate in this event yet. With that said, I have to say that I am looking forward to this new program.

Theoretically, it’s a great idea. Anything that encourages Cal Poly students to get up and speak their minds is a good thing in my opinion. That’s part of the reason I’m writing a commentary for this newspaper. But I’m not so sure about the sign-up process. First of all, how “free” is it if you have to sign up first?

It’s important to keep in mind the spirit of those religious zealots – if we really want to be heard, we can stand up on a soapbox at ANY time and start yelling. Though it’s great that ASI has set aside a time for the public to speak their mind, we must remember that, in real life, we are not restrained by those limits.

I think this is definitely a step in the right direction. Symbolic, even. As a university, Cal Poly shouldn’t be restrained by the law, even if maybe as “col­lege kids” really should be listened to.

The ASI Web site states that this event is meant to provide an educational opportunity. I hope the planners of the event realize that encouraging people to speak freely (and giving them the right to free speech) will encourage some “unwanted” dialogue. This dialogue, however disagreeable, is legal and must never be censored. Maybe it’s the journ­alist in me, but Velarde said, “I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend the truth of your right to say it.”

Just as Mustang Daily should serve as a forum for free expression on paper, ASI’s “Free Speech Hour” should serve as an equal­ly relevant tool for speech. But it is up to the participants to make it so. I sincerely hope that people who have something to say will get involved, understand that this is their time, and I also hope that their speech will not be cut­tated in any way.

Katherine Gernhardt is a journalism senior and Mustang Daily staff writer.
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Friday, April 26, 2002 7

**FORUM** continued from page 1

agribusiness junior and vice presiden­
tial candidate. "The VHI idea is there
to help freshmen into campus life
by helping them with their studies,
and not deter them from participat­
ing."

Another issue the candidates
addressed was their plans once they're
elected.

Vice presidential candidate Wendy
Martin stated that she would like to
improve the image of ASI.

"Alison Anderson and I would love
improve the ASI Web site so that
every student knows what their ASI
representatives can do for them," said
Martin, an environmental engineering
junior.

However, it was a different response
that made the crowd cheer over­
whelmingly.

"I will get up and go to class," said
Parnell, a presidential candidate and
agribusiness senior. "I don't want to
disassociate myself from the rest of
the student body, so I want everyone
to know that I will be just another stu­
dent and who also happen to be their
representative for student issues."

During the closing arguments, presi­
dential candidate Hunt was one of
several candidates that pleaded for
every student to go out and vote.

"I want everyone to go to your
favorite voting location and vote for
the candidate that has the most
unique view of campus; Hunt and
Love," said Hunt, a computer engi­
nerng senior.

**MONK** continued from page 1

around the idea of the "false self" and
the "real self." The "false self" consists
of the way we think other people per­
ceive us. The "real self" is a point of
truth within, known only to God. The
battles of the two stereotypes were the
corner­
stone of his writings, Inchausti said.

"His writings are beneficial to stu­
dents because he has conclusions
based on 10 years of contemplation," Inchausti said. "That's worth consider­
ing."

Merton's religious ideas did not
focus on dogma and labels. He based
his faith on the experiences found in
all religions that bring people closer
to God, Inchausti said.

Merton could be considered a con­
tradiction; he was both a man of the
past and the future.

"Maybe one of the most important
things you can do is go backward," Merton said.

His progressive ideas are why he is
so influential, Inchausti said.

"His life was a paradox," he said. "He
was a Catholic monk who accept­
ed and studied many different world
religions. He was a world-famous her­
mit."

Sister Mary Pat White, associate
director of the Newman Catholic
Center, said Merton strove to bring
together the similarities of different
world religions.

"He was a monk,” said to "look
Christianity, see what we can learn
from the East and see where these two

WOMEN continued from page 3

performance for a similar reason. "It's
not something that talked about very
much so I thought it would be inter­
esting to hear," Jones said.

Thierer said some people won't
believe women fought during the Civil
War until they see proof other­
wise.

"Before World War I, they didn't
do body shops," Thierer said. "All
it took for a woman to become a man
was to put on pants. It was so socially
taboo for a woman to put on pants
that it just had to be a man."

Part of Jol's character came from
a letter Thierer found at the Kansas
State Historical Society. "The letter
talked about a man who went away to
fight in the Civil War — and fought bravely — but ended up with an arm
wound," Thierer said. "He was on the

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**ADMINTS**

20th Annual Lantern Festival
A free event celebrating Asian &
Pacific Island Cultures Sat. April 27
@ UU Plaza 5-9 pm
Live performances & Asian food
Golf team wraps up season

By Theresa Ngo-Anh

The Cal Poly men and women's golf teams competed in the Big West Championships on April 22 and 23, with the men coming in sixth and the women placing fifth at the Serrano Country Club in El Dorado Hills, Calif. Yet in both teams' second year in NCAA play, the golfers chose to focus on the high points of the season instead of the negatives.

"We felt good," said freshman Grant Boss. "We had a limited roster but we were confident with the scores we put up during the year, that we could place well." Head coach Scott Cartwright noted the team's improved play.

"We played a lot better than the year before," he said. "Next year, we'll have everybody back. We're progressing and look forward to next year."

The men's team were ranked seventh in the Big West conference before entering the championship and finished in sixth place. The team finished sixth after a final round score of 898, with a score of 989 for the tournament. Junior Aaron Doshkeimer posted a final round of 72 to finish the second-round tournament in a tie for sixth place.

Crother was excited to play in the Big West Championship this year.

"I didn't even expect to play in a tournament all year," Crother said. "But I stepped up for the team and put up some decent scores."

He also pointed out the limited roster that the team brought to the tournament, which team members stated as a positive.

"We had eight teams this tournament, with eight different line-ups," Crother said. "We never had the same five players at a tournament at once."

The women's team finished in fifth place after shooting 597 in the final round.

"As a team, we had the lowest score for the final round," said senior Melony Bos.

Freshman Rebecca Norris led the team with a total score of 238, and came in 12th overall.

"I've been struggling with my putting all year, but it finally came together," Norris said.

Now that the season has concluded, both teams hope to get more players on the green.

"We've been doing a lot of recruiting for the women's team," Norris said. "Next year we hope to get five new players next year."

Team members mentioned one prominent high school golf school that all Cal Poly players love.

"Golf is free of a great perk," Boss said. "We get to play at nice courses and have practice privileges as well."

By Bridgette Vanherweg

The Cal Poly softball team is looking to pull off a series of home wins this weekend against Big West rival Sac State.

With the season entering the homestretch, players spoke about the constant process of working out kinks in the team's play.

"We're working on putting a complete game together," said senior infielder Kasey Poit. "All season, we've been really inconsistent. Sometimes our offense does great, and other times our defense is flawless but we don't score."

The Mustangs' only prior meeting with the Hornets this year resulted in a Cal Poly eighth inning, two-run victory. Senior third baseman Jackie Wayland scored the first RBIs at the top of the eighth, while junior first baseman Holly Ballard drove in the second score to crush the Hornets 2-0 in the last game of the UCSB tournament in February.

Last year, the Mustangs took two wins from the Hornets in a three-game conference series. Cal Poly scored two runs and surrendered one to Sac State in the first game of the doubleheader, but fell by two in the second. The next day, Cal Poly bounced back to sting the Hornets 6-3.

"We need to continue to work hard to keep our game sharp," said Cal Poly head coach Lisa Byer.

The Mustangs, 22-23 for the season and 5-10 in conference play, currently sit sixth in the conference, followed by Sac State at seventh.

As of late, sweeping victories haven't been in the stars for the Mustangs. The team has failed to finish its opponents and win a series, while earning split-doubleheaders at best.

Last Saturday, the Mustangs gave up the first game of a doubleheader to the Santa Clara Broncos by a score of 4-0, followed by a 1-0 win. Sophomore infielder Romi Speret collected two of the Mustangs' three hits in the 4-0 loss. In the second game, sophomore pitcher Jamie Gelbart earned her sixth win of the season when she shut out the Broncos on seven hits.

The Mustangs split their last home doubleheader with Cal State Northridge two weeks ago, only to lose the third game of that series Sunday with a no-run, no-hit loss.

"If we play well this weekend, we're up for a three-way tie for fourth place in the conference," Poit said.

In the other double, the Hornets, 15-27 overall and 4-11 in conference, are coming off a three-game losing streak after surrendering 41 runs and scoring only six.

No. 1 slugger Carly Cooper leads the Hornets with a season-high 15 RBIs, while Jillian Bivert leads in runs, triples, doubles, hits and steals.

Columnist says it's time for kids to cash in and for us to let them play

For any other team, finishing fifth or sixth might be a devastating finish.

But for a couple of sophomores, even having a place is a success.

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Every year, the sports world experiences the same debates regarding underclassmen in professional sports. People argue that an athlete should have to go to college before taking pro, or that an age minimum should be established in the professional ranks.

Those ideas are completely ridiculous. If an athlete has both the physical and mental ability to compete at the professional level, then why shouldn't he? If he is ready, then why aren't we to say that the athlete shouldn't go pro? I agree that some of these kids could stay in school and polish their game before dipping their feet into professional waters, but if the athlete is ready, then there is no point in delaying his admission to professional sports.

Most athletes are always heard that athletes should stay in school so that they could have something to fall back on in case they suffer a career-ending injury or if things just don't work out in the pro. That logic is flawed. It should be the other way around. Collegiate and high school athletes are who are able and willing to play at the top level should do just that and not let anything slow them down. Then if they get hurt, they could always go back and get an education.

I'm not saying that every talented fifth grader should drop out of school and solely focus on their athletes' future. But if an athlete is the best of the best after high school or a year or two of college, then why keep him shackled down playing against inferior competition?

It's no secret that some athletes use college basketball, for example, would benefit if the likes of Drew Gooden, Chris Wilcox, Caron Butler and Jared Jeffries decided to stay another year as well. As a college basketball fan, I would love to see those guys stay another year or two, but it's not up to me. The athletes are the ones who make that decision and we can't fault them for doing what's best for them.

The fact is some of the best athletes of all time skipped a few college years. Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods, for example, both left college after two years. Wayne Gretzky, the Great One himself, didn't even go to college. In fact, he made his professional debut at a 17-year-old. So how can we fault athletes for skipping school early if they are just trying to follow in the footsteps of their idols?

Andy Fahey is a journalism sophomore and a Mustang Daily contributing editor. E-mail him at afahey@calpoly.edu