Kids learn the beauty of engineering

The Society of Women Engineers visited local elementary schools to teach kids about different fields they can pursue

Kristen Osto
MUSTANG DAILY

Thirty fourth-graders at Hawthorne Elementary School sat mesmerized as three Cal Poly students described the differences between various engineering fields.

In keeping with tradition, the Society of Women Engineers visited fourth grade classrooms at local elementary schools this week as part of an outreach program.

The program is only one component of National Engineers Week, an event founded in 1951 by the National Society of Professional Engineers. Engineers, students, professors and government and business leaders all over the nation observe the week, which is intended to highlight the contributions engineers have made to society.

SWE began as a small club, but we’ve grown to over 4,000 members,” said Amy Hewes, Director of Publications & Communications for The College of Engineering. “It is the largest on-campus professional organization at Cal Poly. We are also the schools, SWE hopes to inspire kids to take an interest in engineering.

The outreach program is an event designed to create awareness in the community. By visiting elementary schools, SWE hopes to inspire kids to take an interest in engineering.

“There is a noticeable decline in programs designed to teach young students about the science and math fields, Hewes said. “One of our main goals is to attract more girls, and possibly interest them in pursuing a career in science and math.”

Syria to withdraw troops from Lebanon

Following the assassination of a former Lebanese Prime Minister, Syria has been pressured to remove its 15,000 troops from Lebanon.

Albert Aji
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DAMASCUS, Syria — Syria will withdraw troops from mountain and coastal areas in Lebanon in line with a 1989 agreement, Lebanon’s defense minister said Thursday amid international pressure following the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

Lebanese Defense Minister Abdul-Rahim Murad said the troops will be withdrawn to the eastern Bekaa Valley on the Syrian border, but gave no timetable.

Lebanese and Syrian military officers have been meeting to define “the dates and the way” the withdrawal will take place, Murad said, adding that the plan was in line with the Arab-brokered Taif agreement that ended Lebanon’s 1975-90 civil war.

“The decision to withdraw has been taken,” Murad said in television interviews. “What remains is the exact timing.”

In the wake of Hariri’s Feb. 14 assassination, the Bush administration has issued strong calls for Syria to withdraw completely from Lebanon, where Damascus has about 15,000 troops.

The Americans have also said Syria should remove its intelligence agents, but there was no sign of such a move.

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the United States has not been notified about a withdrawal and it remains to be seen how many troops would be removed from Lebanon and when the pullout would occur.

Israel welcomed Syria’s announcement that it would withdraw some troops from Lebanon in accordance with a 1989 agreement, but indicated the pullout would not be total.

Syria makes effort to ease tension

Syria announced on Thursday that it would withdraw some troops from Lebanon in accordance with a 1989 agreement, but indicated the pullout would not be total.

Syrian intelligence post

Israel’s decision to withdraw the Taif Accord, the Syrian Foreign Ministry statement said.

The Syrian statement, read to journalists by deputy Foreign Minister Walid Mouallem, did not give a timetable but noticeably referred to “withdrawal,” and not just deployment, the term used for past troop movements.

Syria also indicated the withdrawal will not be complete and sought to explain why it would not immediately take such a step.

“Speeding up the pace of withdrawals requires enabling the Lebanese army and internal security forces to fill the vacuum that could take place in a see Syria, page 2

Bush criticizes Russian democracy

Terence Hunt
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia — Struggling to repair troubled relations, President Bush prodded Vladimir Putin on Thursday about Moscow’s retreat from democracy but the Russian leader bluntly rejected the criticism and insisted there was no backsliding.

“Strong countries are built by developing strong democracies,” Bush said, adding that Putin had made a choice in favor of democracy.

Confronting criticism that he is quashing dissent and consolidating power, Putin said Russia chose democracy 14 years ago and “there can be no return to what we used to have before.”

Four years after Bush said he had gotten a sense of Putin’s soul and found him trustworthy, the two leaders talked for 2 1/2 hours at a hilltop castle in hopes of easing mounting distrust between Moscow and Washington.

Bush said he had not changed his opinion of Putin and wanted to remain friends.

“The kind of fellow who, when he says ‘No,’ he means yes, and when he says ‘Yes,’ he means no,” Bush said.

Yet Bush challenged Putin about his government’s behavior, saying that democracies reflect a country’s customs and culture but must have “a rule of law and protection of minorities, a free press and a viable political opposition.” He said he talked with Putin about his “concerns about Russia’s commitment in fulfilling these universal principles” and about Putin’s restrictions on the press.

“It’s not the minister of propaganda,” Putin said, standing alongside Bush at a news conference.

They also confronted differences over Moscow’s arms sales to Syria and Russia’s help for Iran’s nuclear program. While Bush tried to keep a smile on his face throughout the session with reporters, Putin seemed tense.

It was their first meeting since Bush opened his second term see Putin, page 2
Putin continued from page 1

promising to spread democracy and freedom and asserting that relations with all leaders would be predicted on how they treat their people. Bush faced pressure from home, from prominent Republicans and Democrats alike, to get tough with Putin, and their talks were seen by some as a test of whether the president would put his inaugural pledges and his shutdown of independent secret services from Lebanon." Both deny the accusations.

In public, Putin compared his understanding on that," Putin said.

Bush was challenged as well, by a Russian journalist who asked about "violations of the rights of journalists in the United States" without giving specifics. Bush seemed irritated. He said he talked with Putin about Russian press freedom and that the Russian leader asked in turn about practices in the United States.

"People do get fired in American press," the president said, adding that they get fired by editors or producers or not, by government.

Putin continued from page 1

career in engineering. Women are so underrepresented in these areas as it is. We want to reach out to these kids when they're young," said Dye.

This was the first year the program was presented at Hawthorne Elementary School teacher Jill Deck's class. Wednesday morning, her fourth-graders were hard at work.

"I think this is a great experience for these kids. Other teachers have had (Cal Poly) students come into their classrooms in previous years, and they have all been really happy with their presentations. The kids are enjoying the activities so much," Dye said.

"It's also good for them to learn something different," she said after watching her students for a few moments.

Groups of two to five kids were given 10 sheets of white computer paper and a strip of masking tape. They were instructed to construct an earthquake-proof building that would withstand the simulated "shake table.

"I really like learning how to build these," said 9-year-old Hannah Gilbert as teammates Bailey, Erinn, 9, and Skylet Boswell, 10, nodded vigorously in agreement.

"When I grow up, I think it would be really interesting and fun to be an engineer," Boswell said.

"Me too!" Gilbert said. "I want to be a computer engineer so I can make fun games and programs."

In addition to Hawthorne Elementary, Cal Poly student volunteers visited classrooms at C.L. Smith Elementary School, Pacheco Elementary School, Monroe Grove Elementary School and Old Mission Elementary School. The presentation varied at Pacheco Elementary, where a Spanish-language element was incorporated to fit in with the school's immersion program.

"I really believed a withdrawal to the eastern Bekaa Valley, a predominantly Shi'ite area that borders on Syria, was that scheduled for the early 1990s. The accord also calls for an eventual total pullout.

Syrian troops are deployed on some of the high ground of central Lebanon in Muslim Christian and Druze towns of the central mountains that separate the coast from the Bekaa Valley. Syrian troops were removed in earlier withdrawals from the coastal area, near Palestinian refugee camps and south of Beirut.

Syria has viewed control of the Bekaa Valley as a strategic interest, seeing it as an avenue of attack for Israel to drive into Syria. The Lebanese-Syrian border is only a 20-minute drive from Damascus. The United Nations drew the border between Israel and Lebanon, but did not pull out of Lebanon, and I think that word is the 'complete' withdrawal from Lebanon," opposition spokesman Samir Franjieh told the Lebanese Al-Hayat-LBC television station.

Pressure against Syria has grown inside Lebanon and from abroad since the bombing, which opponent blame on Syria and the Lebanese government. Both deny the accusations. A U.N. Security Council resolution in September demanded Syria withdraw its troops, and President Bush increased the pressure Wednesday, reiterating that "the position of our government is Syria must withdraw not only the troops, but its secret services from Lebanon."

The Syrian government warned against "provocation and incitement from some inside Lebanon and abroad," saying such behavior may damage the interests of all parties, particularly Lebanon.
STATE NEWS

SACRAMENTO — Doris Manusi, widow of the late Rep. Robert Manusi, reported Thursday that she raised nearly $70,000 in six weeks for the March 8 special primary election to replace her husband in Congress.

In fund-raisers held in Washington, D.C. and Sacramento since her husband’s Jan. 1 death, Manusi topped $91,867, including

donations from congressional Democrats, political action committees and former Clinton administration officials.

The totals greatly overshadowed Manusi’s opponents in the heavily Democratic 5th Congressional District race for the seat held for 26 years by her late husband, also a Sacramento Democrat.

LOS ANGELES — Mayor James Hahn’s re-election bid has suffered — along with the image of honesty he worked hard to cultivate — amid accusations he let corruption and fraud flourish at City Hall.

County prosecutors have been probing allegations that Hahn supporters shook down firms that wanted to do business with the city by tying public contracts to political contributions. Federal prosecutors have opened their own inquiry.

SAN DIEGO — Supporters of Donna Frye’s write-in bid for mayor on Thursday appealed a ruling that upheld Dick Murphy’s election to a second term, keeping alive a bid to topple the city’s longest-serving mayor.

The gunman was later killed.

In a rampage prompted by a child three law officers.

the site where the plane went down. The trial passed the items on to a local hotelier who gave them to Akano Mangino, another Uruguayan who survived the flight and happened to be in western Argentina at that time. Mangino delivered to Strauss.

IN OTHER NEWS

BANGKOK, Thailand — Doctors have partially restored the sight of an 81-year-old Buddhist monk who accidentally glued his eyes shut when he mistook a tube of superglue for eye drops.

The doctors at Ang Moh Hospital, 100 kilometers north of Bangkok, used a chemical solvent, acetone, to dissolve the glue in the monk’s right eye, a hospital spokesman said Wednesday.

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay — One of 16 survivors of a 1972 Andes plane crash made famous by a book and movie has gotten his wallet and jacket back 32 years after leaving them in the mountain snows.

Eduardo Strauch, who survived 72 days in high mountain snows, received the aged wallet, drivers license and other personal items Wednesday, a week after they were found in the Andes by a mountain climber.

Strauch, now a 57-year-old architect and father of five, was aboard a flight with fellow rugby players, relatives and friends when their plane crashed high in the Andes on Oct. 12, 1972.

A Mexican hacker chanced upon the items just yards from the site where the plane went down. The hacker passed the items on to a local hotelier who gave them to Akano Mangino, another Uruguayan who survived the flight and happened to be in western Argentina at that time.

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Nun who challenged Catholic texts is subject of Oscar-nominated film

Sister Rose Thering gestures during an interview in her Whippany, N. J., home Feb. 11.
David Porter

WHIPPANY, N.J. — Sister Rose Thering recalls that, even as a little girl, the words just didn't sound right: Did the Jews really kill Jesus? It was the 1950s, and Thering's hometown of Plain, Wis., was mostly Roman Catholic with a smattering of Protestants and no Jews. Her curiosity soon led the young Thering to an intellectual contradiction — and then to a lifelong campaign for change within her church.

"I got the answer from my mother and from my teachers: They (Jews) killed Jesus," she said. "But I got something else from my books, that God is all good. And it didn't make sense to me, even as a little kid." Thering realized that the prevailing teaching of her day had to be wrong, and worked long and hard to challenge her church on the matter — ultimately helping to reshape its worldwide policy. And on Sunday, a film about Thering — "Sister Rose's Passion" — is up for an Academy Award in the short documentary category.

"She was a nun in 1950s America, without any mentors or role models to follow, and she said, 'I can't live with this injustice and I have to do something about it,'" director Oren Jacoby said. "It was very heroic." The 39-minute film intersperses footage of Nazi Germany with people-on-the-street interviews, in which present-day Catholics describe being taught as children how Jews were responsible for the death of Christ.

It also accompanies Thering, a professor emerita of Jewish Christian Studies at Seton Hall University, on a trip to her Wisconsin hometown. Thering translated her message into action when she arrived at Saint Louis University in 1957 to pursue her doctorate. For her dissertation, she was encouraged by Father Trafford Mahler, the head of the department of education, to pore through textbooks that were being used in secondary schools to look for examples of anti-Semitism. She found numerous passages where Jews were described in "some very ugly terms."

In a fortunate bit of timing, Thering's story appealed to Steve Kalfert, owner of a family of car dealerships in Amundale who had produced two other Oscar-nominated films — "More," an animated short about a lonely inventor, and "Curtain Call," a short documentary featuring actors, dancers and musicians talking about their careers. "Sister Rose's Passion" has been purchased by HBO and is scheduled to be aired on Cinemax in May.

"She has a worldwide message and there's been a worldwide response," Kalfert said. "Here she is at 94, in frail health, and she just keeps on going. She did a heroic job. There were some days we couldn't film, but she extended herself greatly."

Thering suffers from diabetes and pulmonary hypertension and is largely confined to a wheelchair. Still, she attended the Tribeca Film Festival last spring — where the film won for Best Documentary Short and she met Robert De Niro, among others — and earlier this month she flew to Los Angeles to attend the Oscar nominees luncheon at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. Among the celebrities she met was Warren Beatty, who couldn't resist flirting with her.

"I asked him, 'What is your position here?' and he said, 'Sister Rose, I'm a seducer,'" Thering said, with a chuckle. "'All the girls' eyes lit up, but mine didn't.'"

The instant fame that has accompanied the Oscar nomination has been taxing for Thering, who said she will not attend the Academy Awards but will instead watch the broadcast with friends. Given the choice, she would not have sought the attention, "but if it gets the message out there, I can suffer a little bit," she said.

Watch "Sister Rose's Passion" on HBO on March 25.
Local tourism moves up, not 'Sideways'

Greg Riding
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Frank Ostuni can't seem to keep his cocktail napkins in stock. The owner of the Hitching Post II restaurant, featured in the Oscar-nominated "Sideways," is on pace to blow through a three-year supply of 50,000 napkins in the next few months. Customers, it appears, are soaking up napkins as souvenirs.

"We went out wanting to involve as many people as possible," Machamer said.

The trials of 'Macbeth' come to Poly

Kristen Oato
MONTAVENT DAILY

"We were formulating different looks and scenes pretty early before everyone got involved," Machamer said.

The students auditioned and began rehearsals in early January. The cast consists of 14 actors, who in majors ranging from theater to history to social sciences.

"This was an exciting play to work on," said Machamer. "It's a family story, but to a different way. I think there's something for everyone to appreciate.

All performances begin at 8 p.m. Ticket prices are $12 for adults and $10 for seniors, Cal Poly staff and students. Tickets are on sale at the Performing Arts Center box office.

PEOPLE

Who's doing what around the world

NEW YORK — Jennifer Lopez has confirmed that she and Marc Anthony are husband and wife.

"Yes, we're married," Lopez tells People magazine, on newsstands today. "I mean, come on, everyone knows. It's not a secret."

It was the first public acknowledgment of their union with the salsa singer.

The couple performed a duet at the Feb. 13 Grammy Awards show. Lopez says she was ailing from swollen glands and a sore throat during the performance, which caused her to cancel a London trip to promote the British release of her film "Shall We Dance?"

Though the trip cancellation prompted some speculation of pregnancy, Lopez said she's "not on a timetable" to have a baby.

Now, the 34-year-old said, she's "entered "phase two": a less public, "a little bit suburban" life with Anthony... and a far cry from her "Bennifer" days with former fiance Ben Affleck. Lopez counts the high-profile romance as a learning experience.

"I take responsibility for the fact that I can't be perky about my accomplishments," she says. "Now I'm a little more careful. I travel in a certain way. I'm careful at a certain time. I learned."

Lopez's new album, "Rebirth," will be released April.

NEW YORK — Bruce Springsteen is returning the favor to Bonrossover talkative frontman, who gave memorable stream-of-consciousness speeches inducing Bob Marley and Springsteen into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, will be saluted by Springsteen when the Boss inducts U2 next month.

Springsteen's no douch in the induction speech department. He shyly noted last year how inductee Jackson Browne's audience always seemed to be filled with women.

Justin Timberlake will board the "Love Train" to pay tribute to the O'Jays in its next month's ceremony. B.B. King and Eric Clapton will team to induct bluesman Buddy Guy. Red Stewart will speak about "When a Man Loves a Woman" singer Percy Sledge and Neil Young will honor the Pretenders.

The 20th annual ceremony will be held March 14 at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. Highlights will be televised March 19 on VH1.

-Associated Press
End of quarter stress: Learn to deal with it

As the end of the quarter draws near, the pressure of midterms and last-minute projects are upon us. After many long hours and late nights, we're all suffering from lack of sleep and motivation — yeah, we know you missed that morning lab.

College students can only handle so much stress until sanity takes a nosedive. Stress can have detrimental effects on your well-being. Read on to learn how to cope.

Day in and day out we come in contact with stressors. We respond to our environment, our bodies and our thoughts through physical, mental and emotional changes — this is also known as stress. The human body is designed to experience stress and react to it. Stress can be positive, keeping us alert and ready to avoid danger. But, it can become negative when a person faces continuous challenges without relief, a condition known as chronic stress.

Stress-related tension leads to physical symptoms including headaches, digestive problems, elevated blood pressure, chest pain and insomnia. Hormones like adrenaline cause changes in the body to make it more efficient for "fight or flight" responses, which raises blood pressure and heart rate. In addition, the body's ability to ward off illness may be reduced, which helps explain why people who suffer from stress often are more likely to catch colds, the flu and other illnesses. During periods of prolonged stress the fight or flight mechanism runs into overdrive burning energy. This may be followed by severe fatigue, and even daily tasks can become a challenge.

As we all know, students are no strangers to stress. According to the Department of Health Psychology and Applied Psychophysiology at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, 43 percent of all adults suffer adverse health effects from stress. In addition, 75 to 90 percent of all doctor's office visits are stress-related. This can explain why stress is linked to six of the leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver and suicide.

But don't be discouraged. There are plenty of simple ways to help alleviate stress. For starters, get an adequate amount of rest each night. So, finals approach and assignments reach their due dates, make time to relax and refocus. It'll pay off in the end when you ace those exams.

Stacy White and Jane Wilson are nutrition seniors and members of the Peer Health Nutrition Team. Contact them at 756-6181.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Artist explains intention of controversial cartoon

Again, the intention of my work in the Mustang Daily had nothing to do with the Jewish suffering of the early 20th century. I went to a group of Jewish students for approval before submitting my work to make sure the message of my work would not be obscured by the attention-grabbing mechanism.

I wanted students to be aware that two of their basic rights (freedom of speech and the right to public assembly) had been taken away by the city. I wanted to grab attention by having a threatening figure represent the authorities taking away our freedom. I didn't want to choose an Asian, Latin American or Arab figure because I understand that to the city, the students pose a threat. Yet, taking away civil liberties cannot be the answer, even if it works.

Nick Cueva
Architectural engineering senior

Nobody cares about other people's opinions, views

To all those who are organizing "Top 10" lists — stop it.

To Morgan Elam who wrote about the town not needing the students' money ... wait. You mean to tell me there are towns in this country that survive without the financial contributions of a college and its students? No way.

And for everyone else who writes those letters that look like they're written to inspire or move people about their political views or ideas about how other's should live their lives, please realize that no one cares about you or your opinion unless they're a true follower. Hell, you shouldn't even be reading my letter. I don't even know why I read these and I encourage you to not care about anything I have to say. Get over yourselves.

Derek Kurtti
Civil engineering senior

We should be able to have reasonable, adult conversation

A while ago, I wrote a letter talking about half facts and how we were being flooded with one-sided arguments. Amazing, as it seems, we've gone downhill.

The other day I was amazed to look at the opinion section and find the word "hooligan." I personlly look at it as a legitimate humor word, but this time it was being used seriously.

Now please, we're supposed to be intelligent people. Why are we resorting to elementary school name calling? If your opinion is right, it should be enough to prove it. You don't win an argument by simply insulting the other person.

If you have an opinion, just tell it to us. Tell us why you believe that opinion, and provide a source that can back you up. This does not mean calling the other person a "caca-head."

We're in college now, not high school, not elementary school. If your idea has merit, it'll see the light. If not, name calling is not going to help prove your point.

So please, let's all take the pacifiers out of our mouths, sit down and have a reasonable discussion like adults. If you still want to call names, please just put on a diaper and go to the sandbox where those of us who care don't have to deal with it.

Troy Kuersten
Artwork engineering sophomore

LETTER POLICY

Send us your love, hate and more

Mustang Daily reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, profanities and length. Letters, commentaries and cartoons do not represent the views of the Mustang Daily. Please limit length to 250 words. Letters should include the writer's full name, phone number, major and class standing. Letters must come from a Cal Poly e-mail address. Do not send letters as an attachment. Please send the text in the body of the e-mail.

By e-mail: opinion@mustangdaily.net

Letter to the Editor Building 26, Room 226 Cal Poly, SLO, CA 93407

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?
can you say it in 250 words or less?

Send your letters to the editor to opinion@mustangdaily.net

mustangdaily@calpoly.edu e-mail

"Everyone is paper-cutting my face today."

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — While President Bush was conducting a discussion of a proposed national health care system with top congressional leaders at the White House, a protest of hundreds of the uninsured roared its support of a Medicare-style plan.

The president came under fire from several sources on issues of Iraq and the national debt.

"We're at the end of our rope with Blackwater," said Kameran Khan of Iraq, a member of the Democratic Party's grassroots organization, Move on America.

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Wrestling
Continued from page 8
No. 1 in 2004, won the title and is ranked No. 1 this time around as well.
Scott Jorgensen of Boise State posted one of the biggest surprises a year ago as the unseeded wrestler won the 133-pound championship, marking the second year in a row that an unseeded wrestler had won that weight class. He is getting more respect this time ranked No. 1 in his weight class in conference.

Wrestling

The next edition: Movies in Mind
Edited by Will Shortz
No. 0114

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69 “The rest of the story”
70 Longtime Penn State football coach
71 “A City in Mind”
72 Someone with 16 team titles, followed by Cal Poly Pomona, who won the 133-pound championship, marking the second year in a row that an unseeded wrestler had won the title. The championship finals are slated for 6 p.m.

DOWN
21 Take suddenly
22 Longtime Penn Slate football coach
23 As in color
24 A child sings before it
25 “Another day in Paradise”
26 Songbirds

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QUOTE OF THE DAY
A child sings before it wakes, dances almost before it walks, music is with us from the beginning.

-Kate_LaRoche

Continuing the sports allows LaRoche to keep in touch with former Cal Poly players and former college and national basketball association players.

“Pinky Williams (former Cal Poly player) and I just played in a three-on-three tournament in Palm Springs,” he said. LaRoche was, like Pinky Williams, inducted into the Cal Poly Hall of Fame.

“1 wish I was playing today,” LaRoche said. “I think competitive sports got me ready for law school.” LaRoche said “I had developed a thicker skin and a competitiveness that you need at law school.

To the instinct that never quiets, even when things don’t go your way, really helped me.” LaRoche now is a successful lawyer in the Sacramento area, but still has a love for the sport that helped him get to college. He still plays in Master’s Tournaments for adults 50 years and over, held in places like Buffalo and Detroit.

“I wish I was playing today,” LaRoche said. “With the three-point line, I could have averaged three or four more points. Playing in these tournaments the skills are still there, but there are no replacing 22 to 25 year-old legs.”

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Pac-10’s best to wrestle at Mott Gym

The Mustangs struggled in the Pac-10 going 1-5, but they have a chance to make up for it at the Pac-10 championships at home.

Although this weekend’s Pac-10 wrestling tournament may help promote host Cal Poly, at least one thing may not bode well for the Mustangs. At the 2004 tournament, Cal Poly may have lost the conference title by just 3.5 points to Boise State, but in the past, host schools have won just a quarter of the time, with a total of 43 Pac-10 tournaments having been contested and the host school winning just 12 titles. No host school has won since Arizona State in 1997. Additionally, Cal Poly already struggling, ending the dual meet season 5-12, going 1-5 in Pac-10. It doesn’t look like the Mustangs have any better of a chance of winning a conference title than the last time they hosted the tournament, in 1994, when Oregon State took top honors.

Arizona State appears to be the favorite this year. The Sun Devils are the lone Pac-10 team in the USA Today/National Wrestling Coaches Association Poll at No. 20. Arizona State has won 13 of the last 20 Pac-10 crowns and posted an 8-0 mark in dual meets against Pac-10 opponents.

The 10-team field includes four NCAA All-Americans from the 2004 championships. Stanford’s Matt Gentry won the 157-pound title in St. Louis while Arizona State’s Ryan Bader placed fourth at 197. Cal Poly’s Vic Moreno was sixth at 125 and Cal State Bakersfield’s Matt Sanchez placed eighth at 133.

Cal Poly is returning one Pac-10 champion, Ryan Hickey, who took top honors in the 184-pound weight class. In large part, the Mustangs have been hurt by injuries and disappointment this year. Entering the tournament, they’re not the only team to feature embattled wrestlers.

Matt Ellis of Oregon State won the 165-pound title in 2004 at Arizona State’s Wells Fargo Arena, but is ranked No. 2 behind Joey Beaumont of Oregon. Bader won the 197-pound championship on his home mat last year, only to find himself ranked No. 2 this week behind Oregon’s Scott Barker.

And Stanford’s I mam Kharbud captured the title at 174 pounds a year ago as the third seed. He’s got the same seed this year No. 3. Perhaps the only sure bet is his teammate Gentry who was seeded first.

The journey that Michael LaRoche took to get to Cal Poly is a unique one: a journey that began with rejection, but ended in just the right place.

LaRoche grew up in Ventura County and was a three-sport star in high school playing football, basketball and baseball. But his best sport was basketball, and in his senior year he verbally offered LaRoche a scholarship. That offer was never put in writing and by the time August rolled around, LaRoche still had not been given the scholarship. When LaRoche and his high school coach finally again reached the Oregon head coach he offered LaRoche a chance to play his way onto the basketball team without a scholarship. But LaRoche did not have the money to pay the high out-of-state fees that would allow him to attend the school. This new offer was not feasible.

With just weeks left before many universities started classes, LaRoche and his head coach from high school headed north to find a school that could give him the scholarship that would allow him to play basketball and go to school at the same time.

“My coach and I started up the coast. The first stop we made was UCSB,” LaRoche said. “They did not have any scholarships though and there was no guaranteed offer from the coach for one in the future. We left UCSB and continued on up the coast and the next school we stopped at was Cal Poly. Head Coach Ed Jongerson said he knew who I was and that he wanted me for the team.

He got me a scholarship and got me set up for classes just a few weeks before they started.”

Oregon’s loss was Cal Poly’s gain. LaRoche had a stellar Cal Poly career. He could play both the forward and guard positions and his sweet shooting helped him rack up points. LaRoche’s Cal Poly career included the following impressive numbers:

- Highest point average in one season — 23.9 PPG
- 1500 points scored in a three-year career that spanned 70 games, 21.4 points scoring average for his career and 358 free throws made

LaRoche received more than just individual school awards. He was also a three-time All-California Collegiate Athletic Association player.

LaRoche was given a scholarship and chance to play at Cal Poly where he became a hall of famer after Oregon reneged on it’s offer to him. He was coached by the Hall of Fame player for the Boston Celtics, Bill Sharman, and he had the opportunity to play against Hall of Famers like Rick Barry and Julius Erving.

“I made it through the rookie camp,” LaRoche said, “and then veteran’s camp and I made the 12-man roster.”

If he hadn’t made the roster, he might have joined a traveling team and ended up playing overseas somewhere, but after making it through both camps coach Sharman asked him to stay.

During an exhibition tour with the Stars, LaRoche had the chance to come back and play at Mott Gym just months after he had left Cal Poly.

The homecoming, though, didn’t quite go according to plan.

“We were playing the Oakland Oaks, Rick Barry’s team,” LaRoche said. “There was an introduction of all the players I couldn’t see so I coached, page 7

Searching for anything, finding the Hall of Famers like Rick Barry and Julius Erving.

“T...