A journey to India

Caitlin Donnell

I woke up to a smoky aroma that was so pungent and sharp, that it roused me out of bed. I peered out my porthole that morning from the ship and knew—we had arrived in India. I had overslept and missed my usual tradition of waking before dawn on mornings that we pulled into the bottomless blue seas. But on this morning, I had overslept and immediately woke up to the exotic stench that is characteristic of India. Looking out the glass separating me from the world of India, there were women dressed in the typical Indian attire of bright saris, sweeping the dust off the cold cement playing to welcome the ship's arrival.

It was our sixth port of call for the 650 other college students and I aboard the University of Pittsburgh's Semester at Sea ship, the MV Explorer. Our Fall 2004 voyage of discovery had sailed from Vancouver, Canada to Japan, China, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Thailand before docking in India.

We had traveled halfway around the world so far and still had many exciting and intriguing locales to look forward to: Tanzania, South Africa, Brazil, Venezuela and then back home to the United States where we docked in Fort Lauderdale, Fl.

But today, we were in India. And that was thrilling enough.

The port of call that early morning in October was Chennai, previously known as Madras, which rests on the Eastern coast of Southern India on the Bay of Bengal.

The itinerary for my five-day Indian adventure was rigorous. I had signed up for the most travel-intensive Semester at Sea organized trip for India because I wanted to see as much as possible. The plan was to travel for four days, most days starting before sunrise and ending after midnight. I was ready for everything India had to offer me, but looking back, I never could have imagined the array of vibrant, and oftentimes emotionally-challenging, experiences that lie ahead on my path through India.

When I stepped off the ship, my first day was spent on a service trip to help build a library for Dalit school children. This was my first direct encounter with the caste social system of India. The Dalits, also known as untouchables, are outcasts below the structure of the caste social system in which people are divided into separate groups based on Hindu ideals.

Peering out the windows on the way to the project site, I remained in the air-conditioned bubble of the bus and watched the shocking
India

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landscape pass by. There were mountains of rubbish in the streets, begging on every corner and an endless sea of deep brown eyes, eyes that will never leave my mind.

The bus stopped in the middle of the street and we were ushered into the whirlwind of a street parade. People were everywhere — smoke billowed in the air from people smoking bidis, a popular hand-rolled type of Indian cigarette. Men sat in windows and stood in door­ frames giving curious looks in our direction and women smiled all along the way. The women in this foreign scene held their babies and young children, who propped on their heads amusingly glowing cars. All the girls and women had nose rings that sparked in the midday sun.

It was a perfect welcome to a country to far away and vastly different from anywhere I had ever been — a country that still sticks in my mind as one of the most memorable places in the world.

We spent the day in the thick air and suffocating brick and mixing mortar to build walls for a library at the school the children and neighborhood families facili­ tated me. I was drawn to play with the chil­ dren and communicate in the only way I knew how to with them — with a smile.

I felt an overwhelming sense of satisfaction after my first day in India. Whether it was the exoticism of the experience as a whole, the smiling faces or the fact that I was in such a remarkable world — I knew I loved it and could not wait to see more.

The intensive traveling began at the early hour of 3:30 a.m. the next day. In just four days, our group took five flights, passed through a procession of merchants on the way down­ town, my seatmate and fellow Semester at Sea student pointed out that I was in a photograph the previous night. As I took my seat on our first flight of the day, my seatmate and fellow Semester at Sea student pointed out that I was in a photograph in the National Hindu Times from when I was working on the service project the day earlier. I was startled to see myself in print and it made the experience that much more real.

The first and most intriguing destination on the planned trip was Varanasi — the third hol­ est city for Hindus in Northern India that rests on the banks of the River Ganges with a popula­ tion over 300,000.

The life of Varanasi lies in the sacred water of the River Ganges. As darkness fell to a lighter shade of dawn, I passed through a procession of merchants on the way down­ town, my seatmate and fellow Semester at Sea student pointed out that I was in a photograph the previous night. The sun shone like a bronze Rupee (India’s currency) in the morning light mist of rain in the early morn­ ing.

As we boarded small wooden boats to glide through the maze of streets that lead from the building walls for a library at the school the children and neighborhood families facili­ tated me. I was drawn to play with the chil­ dren and communicate in the only way I knew how to with them — with a smile.

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Valentine's Day Special

— Do you have a valentine?
Yes, my wife.

— Are you getting her flowers or candy?
Neither, I’m taking her to dinner.

— What would an ideal Valentine’s date be?
To make my wife blush.

— Homemade card or Hallmark?
Homemade card, of course.

— Do you think Valentine’s Day is BS holiday?
Every day should be Valentine’s Day.

— Pink or Red?
Even though I consider myself masculine, pink.

— Favorite conversation heart?
“Will you go with me?”

Name: Carson Medley
Hometown: Jackson, Miss. • Teaching department: English

WHO SAID THAT?

I always wanted to be somebody. If I made it, it’s half because I was game enough to take a lot of punishment along the way and half because there were a lot of people who cared enough to help me.

— Althea Gibson (1927 - )
Hands
continued from page 2

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Science buildings, near the back of
the bookstore.
"Straight kids come in all the
time," Kramer said.
"We want everyone on campus
regardless of age, nationality, sexu­
ality, race, to feel comfortable here
in the center," she added. "It's not
just for gay students, it's for allies,
friends and family to come in."
The center offers students many
different research opportunities;
Marriage equality, HIV/AIDS,
LGBT youth in high schools and in
college, LGBT programs, literature,
connection to counseling and
community resources. Also inside
the center is a TV and VCR, in
addition to three computers people
can use at any time.

According to the LGBT coordi­
nators, there are several issues that
affect same sex couples at Cal Poly:
daily, one being marriage equality,
an issue Kramer says specifically
affects her.
"If I wanted to, if I was at a point
where I was ready to marry, I
couldn't legally do that," she said.
"It's not recognized as something
that's real."
However, Kramer said being
comfortable being open and out is
the biggest issue for her.
"A lot of people have the notion
that Cal Poly is a really conserva­
tive campus, and in a lot of ways it
is," she said. "But, I think a lot of
students would be surprised how
open-minded and accepting the
students, staff and faculty really are.
At least in my experience."

Cohen, on the other hand, said
the climate on campus is what
troubles him most commonly.
"People, a lot of times even
unintentionally, say things or act in
ways that make other people
uncomfortable," he said. "I feel like
there are a lot of students here who
aren't 'out,' and they struggle with
coming out. I feel if the climate
was a little bit more inclusive, those
students could put less energy on
concealing that part of themselves
and more energy into living their
lives."

Thank You
Students!
For helping to make last year's
Mardi Gras weekend safe & sane.

Your help turned it around last year. Smaller and friendlier crowds — fewer
arrests — violence curtailed... and you made the difference.

We need your help again this year.

TO SUPPORT THE EFFORT, THERE WILL BE:
• 300+ law enforcement officers on duty for the weekend
• DUI check points throughout SLO
• Violation costs tripled citywide
• University discipline for student violators
• Special fines in effect for flashing and nudity

San Luis Obispo belongs to all of us. Please help keep it safe. Tell your friends
looking for Mardi Gras parties to stay home the weekend of February 24th.

The Party Is Still Over
www.MardiGrasSLO.com
Many people are without a boyfriend or girlfriend — and some of them are bitter. So here’s what you can give that nasty ex...

LOW TO NO COST
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**HealthWorks**
Affordable Confidential Caring.
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www.healthworkscc.com  phone: 542-0900

**SPRING Recruitment**
Bowling with Gamma Thursday, February 16 @ McPhee’s in the University

**Stenner Glen**
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**V-Day to-do list for singles**

1. Wake up at dawn to watch the sunrise while sitting on a blanket at Bishop’s Peak, snuggling with a stuffed bear holding a heart — all alone, mind you.

2. Get home and cook a huge breakfast. I’m talking French toast, eggs, bacon, fruit, fresh-squeezed orange juice. Nothing says, “I love myself,” better than a hearty breakfast.

3. Eventually I have to go to class, so I’ll put that here as No. 3.

4. Time for a midday snack. How about I open that heart-shaped box of candy I bought for, well, I guess myself. And you can’t forget those little conversation candied hearts, classic V-Day cuisine. Trust me, it all tastes the same whether a beautiful girl gives it to you or not.

5. When I get home in the late afternoon, my roommates will leave one-by-one to spend their romantic evenings with their girlfriends. In the meantime, I’ll whip out a red tablecloth, the nice plates and flatware and prepare my very own candlelit dinner. Maybe I’ll even toss in the classic romantic movie “Lady and the Tramp” and watch the infamous spaghetti scene. That’s to-do No. 5.

6. Finally, after a long and arduous day, I’ll cry myself to sleep: No. 6.

But, truthfully, I don’t hate Valentine’s Day and I really am happy for those in relationships. Just remember to keep us poor single souls in your thoughts on this most romantic of days — and try not to rub it in too much.
The Christian Science Monitor
My goal as a maniac is to get a rowdy crowd that is going to be (into the game)
Hidden tales and sworn secrets of the Mustang Maniacs

OK, so it isn’t an undercover organization bent on world domination, but Cal Poly’s Mustang Maniacs are the engine of school spirit

Nick Coury
MUSTANG DAILY

It’s late evening on a Friday in October. You and that special person are wrapped in scarves, walking towards the football stadium at Cal Poly. Although no alcohol is allowed, the cheering crowd is getting drunk on something else: Mustang spirit, driven in large part by the Mustang Maniacs.

“Our goal is to promote pride in Cal Poly athletics,” said Scott Kirkish, a civil engineering senior and president of the Mustang Maniacs. “My goal as a maniac is to get a rowdy crowd that is going to be (into the game) and try to get the players to get something out of the game; the college rowdy experience.”

The Mustang Maniacs are the official spirit club of Cal Poly and members are usually seen handing out flyers around a dancing Mussy the Mustang during UH hour on Thursday mornings.

“It’s not hard getting motivated about Cal Poly athletics, because it’s exciting watching a team play,” Kirkish said. “On any given day anyone can win; that’s what gets me going to every single game. Even when we’re the huge underdog, there’s a chance we could win, and that’s worth going.”

Kirkish said that even though the spirit club is great, it is hard having support from other students to promote Cal Poly pride.

“The hardest part about athletics is going to all the games,” Kirkish said. “In addition to promoting spirit, athletes likes us to promote the Maniacs, and we’re really limited right now on personnel. We have seven core members and it would be nice to have more than that.”

As the student spirit club, the Maniacs have been around for almost two years. Before that the club was called “Running Thunder,” which retired school spirit after the original rally club disbanded in the late 1970s. The current club, named Mustang Maniacs, has been around since Running Thunder ended. With more help, Cal Poly athletics may see Maniacs, page 7

‘80 Olympics eluded Cal Poly coach

Joe Sargeant
MUSTANG DAILY

The Torino Olympics started Friday with a favored American team leading the way. Four years of hard work culminate into 16 days of intense rivalry as athletes from around the globe converge on the greatest of stages for athletic competitions.

It is the moment many have dreamed of, and the greatest achievement a competitor can strive for: an appearance at the Olympic games.

In 1980, however, politics became a barrier between the aspirations of American athletes and a chance to win that coveted Olympic medal.

Twenty-six years ago a Cal Poly wrestling coach, John Azevedo, assumed that he would make the team he was hurt and make the United States Olympic team to begin training for the games.

That was in February, by March the boycott was on.

“We had heard rumbling that we may not be going, that there may be a boycott,” Azevedo said. “I got tough, they figured no way they would do that to us,” Azevedo said.

Azevedo then joined the rest of the Olympic team to begin training for the games. The team kept training until March the boycott was on.

Michael Mullahy
MUSTANG DAILY

John Azevedo, Cal Poly’s head wrestling coach, made the United States Olympic team that was headed for the Moscow games.

Azevedo began wrestling in the sixth grade after his other older brothers started wrestling in high school.

“Both of my brothers wrestled in high school. They started coming home and showing me the moves, beating me up,” Azevedo said. “I got tough, they thought I couldn’t keep up.”

After playing through high school, Azevedo received a scholarship to the University of Patterson congratulated Azevedo on becoming a competitor can strive for: an American athlete and a chance to accomplish that goal due to powers beyond your control is an engine of school spirit.

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Hidden tales and sworn secrets of the Mustang Maniacs

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Cal Poly wrestling coach John Azevedo is in his third year of coaching at Cal Poly. He has amassed a career record of 22-27. The Cal State Bakersfield graduate was fourth at the World Championships in 1982.

Cal Poly’s coach Dan Gable told them that they were officially not going.

“The whole thing just left a bad taste all the way around, the athletes, the American public, our allies and just world opinion. It just looks like ‘what spoiled brat’,” Cal Poly history professor John Snetsinger said.

The official reason Carter boycotted the games was because the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan and he didn’t agree with the invasion. Moscow had geared up for the games and was hoping to do away with the world image of being a backwards nation, Snetsinger said.

But the foreign policy didn’t really accomplish anything, and it didn’t make much sense. It was like punishing our wrestling team at home because the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, Snetsinger said.

“You think ‘What’s the positive result of this policy?’ It didn’t make the Soviet Union get out of Afghanistan, and you wrecked those athletes’ lives,” Snetsinger said.

Carter was so adamant about no U.S. athletes participating that he said that any athlete that went would have their passports revoked.

“You’re goal is to go and wrestle in the Olympics and win it, not make the team. That’s just part of the process,” Azevedo said.

Azevedo assumed that he would make it onto the ‘84 team; he had taken fourth at the world wrestling tournament in ’82, but before he could make the team he was hurt and retired from wrestling. He was ranked 10 in the world that because of the communist invasion of Afghanistan, the United States, was boycotting the games.

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