Garden Grille sees changes

Liza Manion  
MUSTANG DAILY

The Garden Grille, though it only opened in fall 2005, will be replaced with 19 Market Place by fall 2008.

NICK COMACHIO  MUSTANG DAILY

Students advocate drinking in moderation

Kelly Cope  
MUSTANG DAILY

For first time, majority of Californians may vote absentee

Rachel Konrad  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A majority of California voters may cast absentee ballots in the Nov. 7 election, a milestone that's forcing politicians to rethink campaign strategies and prompting registrars to streamline ballot-counting procedures.

The growth of absentee voting in the most populous state echoes a nationwide trend that's most pronounced in the West. Oregon and Washington have used mail-in ballots almost exclusively for a decade. More than half of all votes are absentee in Washington, Nevada, New Mexico and Texas.

Marin County, just north of San Francisco, has sent ballots to 54 percent of its nearly 147,000 registered voters. And registration Elaine Ginnold

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Under Four
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in moderation. The campaign is actually presented as a one-quarter option for business students enrolled in the otherwise two-quarter-long senior project course, BUS 464 applied senior pro­ject. Professor Mitch Wolf oversees students’ progress in the project. The idea for the campaign originated when studies explored the idea that “most people tend to want to do what their peers do,” Wolf said. Most people “overestimated how much their friends were drinking,” Wolf also said that “if you tell people the facts, they will be in all likelihood model their behavior after what is really happen­ing.”

The program is now in its fourth year, using grant funds from Coors Brewing Co. and Cal Poly. In order to organize the campaign more effectively, the business students have also joined forces this year with students in AGB 460, agribusiness marketing planning. The continual promotion throughout the year is facilitated by rotating respon­sibilities every quarter between the business and agribusiness students. Currently, under the guidance of Marianne McGarry Wolf, the agribusi­ness students are implementing events that were planned during the campaign the year before. Public opinion is cru­cial to the success of the campaign, so these students will also conduct surveys of about 500 students and, in this way, analyze the data to gauge the level of alcohol awareness in the student body. After their findings are summarized, they will advise the next group of stu­dents taking on the following year’s campaign.

During the upcoming winter and spring quarters, students in the business senior project class will continue to execute the marketing events planned, and conduct another batch of surveys to further measure alcohol awareness. They will also cement the plan for the 2007–08 school year.

This year’s campaign focus is on using a designated driver, because dur­ing the past few years, all behaviors associated with irresponsible drinking except this one have decreased. Business senior Brittany Shehi partic­i­pated in last year’s campaign. Her group used many different methods to get their message across, including press releases sent to local media, ads in the Mustang Daily and even hosting a PiNT Night at Matt’s Bar and Grill downtown. The flyers were a particularly crucial part of the effort.

“How our flyers around campus reminded students and faculty about our campaign during all parts of their day,” Shehi said in an e­mail. “Flyers were posted on stakes outside, in dining areas, hallways, bathrooms and class­rooms.”

Acceptee
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voters mailed thousands more than the Oct. 31 deadline for requesting absentee ballots. In the June primary, 57 percent of Marín voters were absentees. “People lead busy lives, and voting by mail is a wonderful benefit,” Gans said. “Even if we expanded voting at the polls for an entire weekend, I think absentee ballots would be more convenient for a majority of people.”

The rising popularity of mail-in voting in California has political — from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to city council members — reaching out to absentee voters. Instead of spending the bulk of campaign money in a media frenzy the week before the election, they syn­chronize direct mail to arrive at the same time as absentee bal­lots.

Derek Kneil, who ran last year for the Novato Unified School District Board, deliv­ered flyers four weeks before the election. When polls closed, he was down 13 votes. After last-minute absentee ballots were tallied, he won by 104. “I was delighted but not sur­prised,” he said. “People came up to me the week after the election in the grocery store and said they hadn’t mailed the lot in but delivered it to a polling place at the last minute, so I had a good feeling I might win.”

Advocates hope the conve­nience of absentee ballots could halt or reverse a decades­long decline in voter turnout. High absentee voting also lets cash-strapped counties get by with fewer poll workers and voting machines.

But critics note that Oregon hasn’t boosted turnout for statewide elections since mov­ing to mail-in ballots 10 years ago. Although turnout has increased in some local and county elections, it hasn’t dra­matically expanded Oregon’s overall voter demographics.

“People who aren’t going to vote won’t do it even if it’s as easy as putting something in the mail,” said Gary Jacobson, a political science professor at the University of California, San Diego.

Carris Gans, director of American University’s Center for the Study of the American Electorate, called absentee vot­ing an “accident waiting to happen,” allowing people to vote weeks before campaigning ends. “Suppose Osama bin Laden was caught the Friday before the election, or the Monday before the election the stock market crashes,” Gans said. “There would have been 20 million votes cast without that information.”

Absentee voting peaked with the June primary, when 47 per­cent of 5.2 million California voters mailed in their ballots. That’s up from about 25 per­cent in 2000. In 1970 — decades before registrars encouraged people without physical handicaps or special conditions to become perma­nent absentee voters — only 3 percent of California voters were absentee.

More than half the voters in densely populated counties such as Marin, Alameda and Sacramento are expected to mail ballots in the upcoming election. Rural counties have long been strong supporters of absentee ballots.

In Plumas County, in the Sierra Nevada foothills, 47 per­cent of registered voters had received absentee ballots by last week — including county Clerk-Recorder-Registrar Kathleen Williams, who lives in Cumbres, population 140, where the closest polling place is 15 miles away.

“It’s the easiest way to vote at home at your kitchen table, where you can study the issues and candidates, vote on them and drop it in the mail­box,” said Williams, who expects her county’s absentee vote count to exceed 50 per­cent.
Census data highlights degree advantage

Katt Henry

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. —
The U.S. Census Bureau released a series of tables Thursday titled "Educational Attainment in the United States: 2005," showing a significant difference in earnings of employees with bachelor's degree and those with high school diplomas.

According to the table, available on the U.S. Census Bureau Web site, college graduates earn an average of $51,554 per year, while high school graduates earn an average of $28,645 per year.

Mike Bergman, public affairs specialist at the Census Bureau, clarified that the Bureau classified earnings as salary and wages, while income is comprised of salary, wages and investment income.

According to the Census Bureau, the data was collected by the Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic Supplement, and is based on figures from 2005.

Bergman said the tables are based on data collected every year around the year 2005.

March from a survey sent to about 80,000 households.

"We ask questions about how much they earned in the previous calendar year," he said.

Although the table shows the earnings gap between college and high school graduates has decreased slightly from the previous year, this information was not stated in the official report. The Census Bureau was unable to comment on any economic changes that this year's data might show.

"We are basically in the business of collecting and publishing the data, and a lot of the interpretation we leave up to expert data users out there," Bergman said.

Economists professor William Johnson said the income gap has generally been increasing since the 1970s. "The trend from the last 20 to 25 years has been for it to be widening, or at least not shrinking," he said.

Johnson said the economic benefits of going to college can be summarized by a rate of return, or how much profit is made.

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The haunt for the best costume

Stars of recent movie releases have proved popular costumes this year, like pirate captains and Oktoberfest dresses.

Joshua Krane

Halloween night is only a clay away and the search for the perfect costume is in full swing downtown.

Orniston waits in line to enter Costume Capers off of Chorro Street. She plans to dress up as Nancy Spüngen, the girlfriend of late Sex Pistols bassist, Sid Vicious. She has already assembled most of her outfit — tight pants, a "sleazy" shirt and a fur shawl — and has come to Costume Capers to pick up a wig. She plans to show off her costume this Friday at a party. "You're allowed to go to your extreme and you're not looked at like you're weird, everyone's weird," Orniston is said of Halloween.

Linda Murray said the store's pirate costume has also been a top seller this year. Bumblebees, ladybugs, cops and firefighters are also popular items, Murray said. There's even a Hugh Hefner costume for men.

Need a last-minute costume?
* Fanny Wrappers
799 Higuera St., SLO
* Costume Capers
984 Chorro St., SLO
* Goodwill
15 Higuera St., SLO

Store manager Brandon Farmer said traffic flow is nonstop this time of year at Costume Capers, a densely packed store with everything from boa to political masks hanging from the floor to the ceiling. Farmer said employees have been staying after hours each night, sometimes until 4 a.m., restocking for the next day. Pirate costumes are the most popular items this year, Farmer said, a by-product of the "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" release this summer. Oktoberfest costumes have been popular items for girls, he said, a result of the movie "Beerfest" that also came out this year. And there are always the staples "Star Wars," skeleton, Grim Reaper, devil and angel costumes.

Still outside, agriculture business senior Eric Johnson said he isn't sure what he wants to be, but is leaning toward a Superman outfit with a Mark Kent suit over it. He said he plans to hang out at Marti's Bar and Grill and other parties downtown for Halloween. "Everyone dresses up and gets crazy," Johnson said of his favorite part about the holiday. "Inhibitions are lost." A few blocks down in The Creamery, Moai Sue sells Halloween accessories from lobster hats to bowling ball sunglasses.

Sue Schinsing said her pirate accessories like hooks, gold teeth, swords and parrots have been the most popular items this year. She also sells wigs and has Polynesian accessories like leis, grass skirts and coconut bras.

Sue said the unpredictability of Halloween is what makes it different from any other holiday. "The popular themes change every year. You never know what's coming," she said. "One year it's French maids, the next year it's whatever."
No excuses needed to drink on weekends

I digress, let’s all digress back to wine festivals. With a serving of wine being approximately four ounces and a sample being one to two ounces, you are essentially trying half a glass of wine for each different varietal. If you start out with Chardonnay and work your way down to Pinot Noir or Syrah, that could be between three to six “tastings.” I have been to wineries where there are 14 different wines on the menu and they pour every single one. This is no different at wine festivals, in fact, they try to roll out the carpet and give more samples during these functions. So take your tastings and multiply that number by the amount of wineries present (in this case 26) and you have landed yourself in a metaphorical drunk tank.

Two weekends ago, Paso Robles wineries sponsored the unrolling of Crush, an open house for all of the wineries showing off their new wines from this year. With tacky cover bands and all you could eat meatballs, the wineries were off the hook! Though it should be known that “crush.” or harvest, where they take the grapes from the fields to the holding tanks, then to the barrel, is still actively continuing. This upcoming weekend, I advocate anyone with a small range of wine knowledge to a vast plethora of wine know-how to the Harvest Celebration in Edna Valley. The entire celebration begins Friday and continues through Sunday. On Saturday there will be the Harvest Celebration hosted by the San Luis Obispo Vintners Association at the Avila Beach Golf Resort. You can find more info at www.dowine.com, but tickets cost $70.

But have no fear, poor college students. On Sunday, the entire Edna Valley is hosting their Open House! What does this mean? This means find a designated driver Kir cover bands and all you could eat appetizers. I look forward to seeing you tasting this weekend, my wine minions! But before you go, I have some Tasting Room Etiquette for you:

1. Be friendly: Ask the pourer his/her name and how their day is going, etc.
2. Don’t be pushy. They know you’re there. If not, politely wait for eye contact and tip your glass to them.
3. Know the area. For example, know that Edna Valley mainly produces Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah. Also know that Edna Valley is a coastal region cooler than Paso Robles.
4. Ask what makes the wine you are trying different from others.
5. Lastly, under any circumstance, do not drink from the Spit Bucket!

Feel free to submit any recommendations, favorite wines or recipes to laurenjet@gmail.com.

I nagine going to Bull’s one afternoon and slamming $20 on the counter and having all the alcohol your blood circulation levels could handle. This is essentially what a wine festival is and Saturday’s Wine and Style event at the Madonna Inn proved to be no exception. Not only did you get to walk away with a special “commemorative” glass to mark the event, which you may have a hard time remembering happening, but you also got (in most cases) unlimited wine tastings.”

So as I arrived at the Wine and Style Festival, they gave me some silly little wine glass and sent me on "unlimited wine tastings." Monday, October 30, 2006

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O ne of the most disturbing trends emerging from the Iraq war is America's growing reliance on the private sector to help get the job done. While there is nothing new about the military's use of private contractors, the Iraq conflict has taken this privatization of war to an unprecedented level as there are more than 90,000 private contractors working in Iraq.

Many of these workers provide logistical support for the military, by building bases, supplying food, water and electricity; however, 35,000 of these contractors go beyond simple logistics and provide actual military support to U.S. interests and companies. This means that there are 35,000 mercenaries roaming the streets of Iraq that is three times the amount of British troops. While I understand the benefits from such “Private Security Forces,” their presence has become more of a liability than an asset for the U.S.

Some might disagree with the mercenary label given to these contractors, but when one considers that these men get paid three times the amount our soldiers do, and are not guaranteed prisoner of war status under the Geneva Conventions, one can't help but deem them mercenaries.

Labels aside, the most troubling thing about using these hired guns is that virtually no laws currently exist to govern their behavior. Unlike our soldiers in Iraq, these military contractors do not operate under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. And because of Paul Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority Order 17, they are granted full immunity from Iraq's laws. According to Peter Singer, author of "Corporate Warriors," because these mercenaries aren't held accountable under U.S. or Iraq law, hardly any of them have been prosecuted for crimes committed on the job.

This lack of regulation allows military contractors to be very aggressive in their operations which ultimately hurts the overall U.S effort to win "the hearts and minds" of Iraq.

One instance where contractors hurt the counterinsurgency effort was when Blackwater contractors were hired to protect Ambassador Bremer for a year. Former Col. Thomas Humes claims that while Blackwater contractors did their job in protecting Bremer, their aggressive tactics were actually counterproductive to the war. "Each time they [Blackwater] went out they had to offend locals, forcing them to the side of the road and at times running vehicles off the road, making enemies each time. Their interests are fundamentally different than ours. You (U.S. Army) may lose an ambassador in an insurgency — that's a fact; but you have other ambassadors. If Blackwater loses an ambassador they're out of business."

One another unforeseen cost of the increased use of military contractors is the impact it has on recruitment levels for high level officers. Private security firms are poaching highly trained Special Forces soldiers by offering them salaries that are up to four times what they can earn in the military.

According to a report from the British-American Security Information Council, "American and British Special Forces personnel are resigning in record numbers and taking highly-paid jobs as private security guards in Iraq and Afghanistan."

I will admit there are certain benefits in outsourcing roles to private military contractors because in theory they save taxpayers money. According to Steven Schooner, an expert on government contracting, "It might end up being worth it to pay individuals a tremendous amount of money for a short period of time. Consider, for example, the government isn't going to pay anyone for anything working as a contractor in Iraq."

While this may be true, the fact is that we have hired these private contractors since the beginning of the war, three and a half years ago, and each day these men are making three times the amount our soldiers are making — that doesn't seem very cost-effective.

In the "breeder" question, the military has become overly dependent on the private sector to make up for a lack of troop strength in Iraq and while regulated military contractors can be helpful and cost effective in short-term conflicts, this has certainly not been the case in Iraq. Instead of spending all this money on private mercenaries, whose allegiance is first to their client and second to their country, we should use that money to better our troops' pay and benefits — after all they are the ones with the right priorities.

Patrick Molnar is a business reporter and Mustang Daily political columnist.
With arguably one of the five biggest wins in program history Saturday night, the Cal Poly football team soared back into the playoff picture.

Tristan Aird

SAN DIEGO — Kenny Chicheone was a senior freshman the last time the Cal Poly football team beat a Division I-A school.

Things have come full circle.

The senior free safety recovered a crucial fumble with 3 minutes, 2 seconds remaining, leading to Nick Corinnes’ game-winning 37-yard field goal in the Mustangs’ stunning 16-14 win over I-A San Diego State on Saturday night in front of 20,074 at Qualcomm Stadium.

It marked the seventh time this season a 1-A team has defeated a 1-A team and the first time (Cal Poly has done so since a landmark 34-13 win at UTEP and the first time Cal Poly has done so at New Mexico State in 1977.

“I think that was the start of something great in the Cal Poly football program, to beat a 1-A opponent down here,” Chicheone said of the UTEP game. “That was huge for the team just to start understanding that OK, we can start beating national contenders. We started developing that belief system over time that the (1-A) national championship is not far away.”

Indeed, the 1-A postseason looks like a much greater possibility now than it did following Cal Poly’s shocking 24-19 victory over Division I-A San Diego State, kind of a traditional foe, on the same night.

Cal Poly’s Chelsea Hayes (13), Candace Milton (9) and Salah Schunecke (15) battle UC Irvine’s Kristin Jackson (21) Saturday night.

SAN DIEGO — Kylie Atherstoiie, who had 14 of her 26 digs and saved numerous rallies, set the East Coast Pac-12 on fire Saturday night.

Initially, it looked like Atherstoiie would be nullified in the fourth quarter of Cal Poly’s 16-14 win over Division I-A San Diego State at Qualcomm Stadium.

As impressive as Kyle Shotwell’s performance was, it was his brother, freshman defensive end Ryan Shotwell, who forced Attyah Henderson’s game-changing fourth-quarter fumble.

“We got a takeaway, we got a break,” Ellerson said. “I was going to make sure that we gave ourselves a chance to win the game down there. I was not going to return the favor.”

None of the Anteaters would have been possible without the playmaking of Walter Payton Award candidate sophomore outside hitter Kyle Shotwell, who had 12 tackles and four sacks. His four sacks were the most by any Mustang since Cal Poly moved to the 1-A level in 1994.

The Buck Buchanan Award candidate had 11 solo tackles, five tackles for losses of 26 yards and also forced a fumble.

But after the first quarter, Cal Poly limited San Diego State to 186 yards from scrimmage.

The biggest single reason for the defensive success was senior middle linebacker Kyle Shotwell, who had 12 tackles and four sacks. His four sacks were the most by any Mustang since Cal Poly moved to the 1-A level in 1994.

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