Organization sends graduates back to school — to teach

Kelly Cope
MUSTANG DAILY

Graduating students of all majors and backgrounds at Cal Poly will get the chance to serve their country — but in another way than in the military. Thanks to Teach For America, those recent graduates will enrich the lives of other, younger students — in the classroom.

Teach For America is an organization that trains and places recent college graduates as teachers in low-income area schools in 25 different regions of the United States, from California's Bay Area to Connecticut and the Miami-Dade area, in both urban and rural communities. These teachers serve a two-year stint; most are placed in their first-choice region.

"I joined Teach For America because it’s a good way to spread some love and serve others who don’t get to grow up with a quality education like many of us do," said Eric Martin in an e-mail, a TFA participant who is teaching in the Bay Area. He graduated from Cal Poly in June.

Applicants go through a very strict selection process, which includes interviews both by phone and in-person. This process occurs multiple times during the year — new applications are accepted in September, November, January, and February — with new applicants each time, in order to encourage as many interested applicants as possible. The upcoming deadline to submit applications, which according to TFA’s information packet should include “personal and academic information,” a one-page resume, a letter of intent and an essay each 500 words long, is Feb. 18. Regardless of when students apply, they will be trained during the following summer.

The experience has proved to be difficult yet extremely rewarding for many of the teachers. Erica Weybright, a 2005 graduate of Cal Poly and TFA participant teaching in Houston, Texas, described in an e-mail her struggle to deal with a particularly difficult student to inspire last year, and the unexpected gift he gave to her: "He would often be asked to leave. He was found to be a very difficult student to inspire last year, and the unexpected gift he gave to her: "He would often be asked to leave.

Schwarzenegger announces plan to cut greenhouse gas emission by 10 percent

Aram Hur
THE STANDARD DAILY (STANFORD)

Entering his second term, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced an ambitious agenda in his State of the State address Tuesday. Among the items the Governor introduced is a mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emission from motor vehicles, making California the first state in the nation to adopt such strict emissions laws. Schwarzenegger issued an executive order to slash the carbon content of all passenger vehicle fuels sold in California by 10 percent by the year 2020. While details of the motion are still in the works, administr-

SLO council wants quake retrofit deadlines tightened

The City Council wants tighter retrofit deadlines because earthquake safety measures have yet to begin on 69 unreinforced masonry buildings.

The council voted 4-1 on Tuesday to support a hazard ranking system and timeline that could require retrofit of some old masonry buildings earlier than 2010.

The ranking system, drafted by the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce's Seismic Retrofitting Task Force, would be based on the risk the building poses to people.

The council asked staff to come back with recommendations on how to implement the ranking system and still be flexible with building owners.

Flexibility would involve nonprofit organizations, property owners with buildings undergoing redevelopment and owners who have
House passes bill boosting federal support of embryonic stem cell research

Andrew Taylor
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Democratic-controlled House Thursday passed a bill bolstering embryonic stem cell research that advocates say shows promise for numerous medical cures. But the 233-174 vote fell short of the two-thirds margin required to overturn President Bush's promised veto, despite gains made by supporters in the Congressional elections. Bush vetoed identical legislation last year and the White House on Thursday promised he would veto it again.

The White House said the bill — the third bill the Democrats' first 100 hours agenda to pass the House — "would use federal taxpayer dollars to support and encourage the destruction of human life for research."

At stake was whether research on cells taken from human embryos considered by scientists to be the most promising approach to developing potential treatments or cures for dozens of diseases — should be considered unethical by taxpayers.

The debate raises passions because of the destruction of frozen embryos created for in-vitro fertilization. It draws fierce opposition from anti-abortion lawmakers who believe their taxes should not fund such research. Proponents of the research say it is done on embryos that would otherwise be discarded.

"I support stem cell research with one exception — research that destroys human life," said Minority Leader John Boehner, R-Ohio. "Taxpayer-funded stem cell research must be carried out in an ethical manner in a way that respect the sanctity of human life. Fortunately, ethical stem cell alternatives continue to flourish in the scientific community."

Democrat countered with Rep. James Largent, D-K.Y., an anti-abortion lawmaker who is paralyzed from the chest down after a handgun accident that occurred when he was a teenager. The research, Largent said, offers "tremendous hope that not all stem cell research might lead one day to a cure for spinal cord injuries but one day a child with diabetes will no longer have to endure a lifetime of painful shots and tests."

Dr. Robert Lanza, a top stem cell researcher at Advanced Cell Technology, Inc., said that stem cell breakthroughs were just a few years away for eye and spinal cord injuries, but that a decade or more of research is needed before treatments might become available for diseases such as diabetes and Alzheimer's.

Polls show most Americans support embryonic stem cell research, and Democrats say the issue played a big role in the Nov. 7 elections that gave them control of both the House and Senate.

But in the House, Democratic gains of 30 seats don't translate into anywhere near that number of new votes for the embryonic stem cell research bill, sponsored by Reps. Diana Degette, D-Colo., and Mike Castle, R-Del. For starters, many Democrat's freshmen defeated more moderate Republicans who voted for the bill when it originally passed in 2005 and on an unsuccessful veto override attempt last year. And some Republicans who supported the bill have been replaced with opponents of the measure.

As a result, House embryonic stem cell research proponents have gained only 15 votes over the high-water mark of 234 in the prior GOP-controlled House.

If every House member votes, it takes 290 votes to override a veto, and both the House and Senate must override a veto for a bill to become law without a president's signature.

Scientists still say, however, that embryonic stem cells so far are backed by the most promising evidence that one day they might be used to grow replacements for damaged tissue, such as new insulin-producing cells for diabetes or new nerve connections to restore movement after spinal injury.

The legislation would lift Bush's 2001 ban on federal dollars spent on deriving new stem cells from frozen embryos. Bush's veto of the bill last year was the first veto of his presidency.

Embryonic stem cells are able to morph into any of the more than 220 cell types that make up the human body. Bush on Aug. 9, 2001, restricted government funding to research using only the embryonic stem cell lines then in existence, groups of stem cells kept alive and propagating in lab dishes.

But those 21 stem cell lines have many problems, and researchers say 300 newer lines, called from fertility clinics elsewhere, are not being thrown away, are considered better suited for implantation into sick Americans.

Scientists take those cells from a 5-day-old embryo, when it's bigger than the period at the end of this sentence.

SLO county woman who kept 121 animal reaches deal on felony counts

An Edna Valley woman convicted of misdemeanor charges for mistreating her 121 animals pleaded no contest to a reduced animal cruelty charge in exchange for dropping five other felonies.

A Superior Court jury convicted Cynthia "Cindy" Walsh, 57, on two misdemeanor charges of killing animals to improperly care for animals and a third misdemeanor of owning more than four animals without a permit.

However, the jury acquitted her of a felony animal cruelty count but deadlocked on five other felonies. The plea deal reached Wednesday reduces one count to a misdemeanor and drops the other four felony counts.

Walsh will be sentenced Feb. 7 on the four misdemeanors.

Investigators said the woman kept 84 dogs inside her three-bedroom home and 37 other animals, including seven cats, four goats and a duck.

--- Associated Press

Emission continued from page 1

owners to complete partial strengthening by July or face the shorter deadline of 2010. Those who have completed partial retrofitting have until 2012 to complete the entire retrofitting.

--- Associated Press

Deadlines continued from page 1

plans a strengthening schedule with tenants.

--- Associated Press

This is the first year that TFA is applying, students can contact Christopher Ho at cphoo@calpoly.edu, Recruitment Director Pearl Easu at pearl.esau@teachforamerica.org or go to Teach For America's Web site at www.teachforamerica.org.

For more information on how to apply, students can contact Christopher Ho at cphoo@calpoly.edu, Recruitment Director Pearl Easu at pearl.esau@teachforamerica.org or go to Teach For America's Web site at www.teachforamerica.org.

--- Associated Press

--- Associated Press

--- Associated Press
Bush’s Iraq plan draws confrontational opposition from Democrats, some Republicans

Tom Raum

WASHINGTON — President Bush’s plan to send more troops to Iraq ran into a wall of criticism on Capitol Hill on Thursday as administration officials drew confrontational, sometimes mocking challenges from both Democrats and Republicans.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in response that the administration might abandon the increase if the Iraqi government doesn’t do its part, but he provided no timetable. “I think most of us, in our minds, are thinking of it as a matter of months, not 18 months or two years,” he told the House Armed Services Committee.

Bush and top members of his national security team sought to rally support for the troop buildup a day after he unveiled his plan for turning around a conflict that has lasted nearly two months and is already shaping the 2008 presidential election.

“I think this speech given last night by this president represents the most dangerous foreign policy blunder in this country since Vietnam, if it’s carried out,” Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, a potential 2008 presidential contender, told Rice. While he is a Republican, administration officials were defending the plan for the first time to the Democratic-controlled Congress.

Bill Nelson, D-Fla., noted his own past support for the administration on the war but said he could not continue. He declared, “I have not been told the truth over and over again by the American people have not been told the truth.”

A new AP-Ipsos poll found approval for Bush’s handling of Iraq hovering near a record low — 29 percent disapprove.

Bush, visiting with troops at Fort Benning, Ga., cautioned that the troop increase “is not going to yield immediate results. It’s going to take awhile.”

His plan, outlined in a prime-time address to the nation on Wednesday, would raise troop levels in Iraq by 180,500 troops over the next five years. The U.S.-led coalition that invaded Iraq in March 2003, despite failing to win U.N. Security Council support.

As Rice testified to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Howard Berman, D-Calif., likened Bush’s plan to a “Hail Mary” play — jokingly combining Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s cameo with the football “Hail Mary” desperation pass.

The U.S. led a coalition that invaded Iraq in March 2003, despite failing to win U.N. Security Council support. The government of Saddam Hussein quickly crumbled and Bush declared major combat operations over two months later.

Bush’s war effort initially had strong support, both in Congress and among other Americans. Yet that support has eroded as violence has continued. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he hoped to bring up a nonbinding resolution next week expressing opposition to any troop buildup. A similar move is expected in the House.

Reid, in a Senate speech, said Bush ignored the results of November’s midterm elections that ended 12 years of GOP control of Congress, the advice of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group and that of his own top generals. “In choosing to escalate the war, the president virtually stands alone,” Reid said.

The Senate’s top Republican, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, threatened a filibuster — a delaying tactic — to block any legislation expressing disapproval of the buildup plan.

McConnell conceded that GOP lawmakers as well as Democrats are troubled by Bush’s new policy, but he said, “Congress is completely incapable of dictating the tactics of the war.”

Options for critics of the war to try forcing its end are limited, given the slim margins of Democratic control, especially in the Senate. But votes vetoing symbolic opposition to the troop buildup could embarrass many Republicans leery of supporting Bush’s plan.

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The Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which presents the annual Golden Globe Awards, announced Wednesday that it had reached an agreement with the Internal Revenue Service to satisfy past tax obligations on the plush gift packages given to awards-show presenters.

The end result: No such swag will be handed out at this year's show, to be held Monday at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, said HFPA president Philip Berk.

"The academy set the example and we followed suit," Berk told The Associated Press, referring to the film academy. "It was a nice little something extra for them to look inside and maybe find one or two items they like," he said. "I don't think anybody really takes it as an incentive." However, presenters will still be given gift boxes worth more than $20,000. Each package included a $2,000 gym membership, a $1,200 diamond pendant, an $865 Chopard watch and a $475 cell phone, plus handbags, MP3 players and a slew of gift certificates.

Beth Tucker, the HFPA's gift suite coordinator, said, at the end of the day, "I'm also doing some others in the second half that I've always wanted to do," he added. These include Robert Schumann's "Papillons," Ravel's "Pavanne Pour Une Infante Défunte" ("Butterflies"), and Bartók's "Sonate." The performance dedicated to one artist, Spiller mentioned that the advantage of being a professor, as opposed to a student, is that he gets to play whatever he wants. "I'm also doing some other pieces in the second half that I've always wanted to do," he added. "I'm playing what I love, although I have a certain fondness for Beethoven," Spiller said, "I'm playing the thematic music department," Abba said in reference to the show that Spiller performs annually. Abba has been involved with the printing and publishing of programs and fliers for the concert. With 45 years of experience, Spiller has earned degrees in piano performance from the University of Washington, Indiana University and the University of Southern California. He has also performed across the country as a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and accompanist. The benefit recital is sponsored by the music department and the College of Liberal Arts. Tickets to the recital are $6 for students and senior citizens, and $10 for the public. The Performing Arts Ticket Office, where tickets may be purchased, is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays, and additionally on the day of the performance beginning one hour before curtain. To order by phone, call SLO-ARTS (756-2787).
The Golden Globes have traditionally been not only a unification of drama and comedy/musical, but a forum for other mediums to shine other than just film.

Unlike the Oscars in February, the Golden Globes provide winners from television and film, featuring the often mutually exclusive categories of drama and comedy/musical.

Let's look at the major nominees. I'll give you my picks and those of the experts, enjoy.

**Best Actor**

**Leonardo DiCaprio**
- Blood Diamond and The Departed
- Venus
- The Pursuit of Happiness
- Forrest Whittaker
- The Last King of Scotland

Sorry about the absence of the Best Actress category, but it's almost a forgone conclusion that Helen Mirren will win for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth in "The Queen." Again, there are some heavy hitters here. Smith delivered an awesome performance alongside his son in "Pursuit." Whittaker made a murder-most-darkest movieizzable, likewise for DiCaprio who made audiences believe in a diamond trader. I'll go with "Venus" because it is under the radar and has no shot. The experts at TV Guide mention the public and predict "Grey's" will take home the Globe.

**Best Picture (Drama)**
- The Departed
- Little Miss Sunshine
- The Queen

"The Departed" in a landslide. In this case, the critics and I agree, "The Departed" is not just the best of the year, but the best in years. It's been a long time since we've had a political epic that was so well-paced and directed. It's a great film that will no doubt win at the Oscars as well. I hope it's good.

**Best Actress**

"Little Miss Sunshine" was touching, and further confirms the absolute scrumptuousness of Steve Carell. "Thank You For Smoking" was also very good with Aaron Eckhart playing a sarcastic and slimy tobacco lobbyist. I will go with "Little Miss Sunshine" because it is a great film with an excellent cast. However, most experts are going with the mustached, anti-Semitic journalist from Kazakhstan. Let's hope he shows up in character just one more time.

**Best Television Series (Drama)**
- "24"
- "Big Love"
- "Grey's Anatomy"
- "Heroes"
- "Lost"

Kiefer Sutherland is steic yet powerful as Jack Bauer in the gripping Fox series. "Big Love" is underated and quite funny for being in the drama category. "Grey's Anatomy" is easily the most watched among the nominees, taking on an almost late night soap opera feel. "Heroes" is probably the best new show of those nominated. "Lost" is like its Fox counterpart as the mainstay of the group. Since I like to lose, I will go with "Big Love" because it is under the radar and has no shot. The experts at TV Guide mention the public and predict "Grey's" will take home the Globe.

**Best Picture (Comedy or Musical)**
- The Devil Wears Prada
- Dream Girls
- Enigma
- The Importance of Being Earnest
- Thank You For Smoking

Sorry about the absence of the Best Actor category, but it's almost a forgone conclusion that Helen Mirren will win for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth in "The Queen." Again, there are some heavy hitters here. Smith delivered an awesome performance alongside his son in "Pursuit." Whittaker made a murder-most-darkest movieizzable, likewise for DiCaprio who made audiences believe in a diamond trader. I'll go with "Venus" because it is under the radar and has no shot. The experts at TV Guide mention the public and predict "Grey's" will take home the Globe.

**Best Actress (Drama)**
- Helen Mirren
- Maggie Gyllenhaal
- Rachel McAdams
- Rachel Weisz
- Catherine Zeta-Jones

"The Devil Wears Prada" will take center stage Monday, Jan. 15 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.
LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

Actions speak louder than shouts

Dear Brian Eller,

It was with mounting anger that I read your hate-filled, overly judgmental letter about the homeless. You not only failed to stop and give a hand to someone who needs it, but you have also been fighting for their rights as veterans, and have been reduced to panhandling.

Other cities dump their homeless here too, sending them here with a one-way bus ticket. Maybe you should research who homeless people are before you try to speak on their behalf.

People spend $5 on a cup of coffee. Yet fewer people are willing to stop and give a hand to someone who needs it. If you want to donate money, great. How about doing so to your local homeless shelter instead of verbally abusing the homeless in town.

It's easy to say what you would do in their situation without actually being in it. Show some empathy and compassion, not hate.

Melissa Lowman

Editor's note: Opinions expressed in the Mustang Daily are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mustang Daily or the California Polytechnic State University. Letters are subject to editing for length, clarity and grammar.

Opinion: The role of Cal Poly

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Reaching 2007 first: a life in Australia

In a few minutes, I will be welcoming the New Year with more than a million people. No one here is wearing goofy 2007 sunglasses or waving for a photo that will drop.

Not in Sydney, Australia — people are wearing bikinis or T-shirts and shorts, sipping on a bottle of Tobacco (Crown's isn’t Australia for beer). They are patiently waiting to see what the large flashing question mark on the Harbour Bridge will reveal in the next few minutes.

I still cannot comprehend that I am in one of the first cities to celebrate 2007. Last year, I remember watching Sydney’s fireworks display on my 19-inch TV, never imagining that I would see it live. Now, I’m in Sydney.

For being such a large crowd of people, it is surprisingly not too claustrophobic. Though it was challenging to find a spot to sit down (especially when my friends and I arrived in Milsons Point at 5 p.m., rather than a 30 a.m. like we should have), we have sitting semi-comfortably across from the now fluorescently lit Sydney Opera House.

Looking at the sea of people around me, I realized that Australia isn’t the stereotypical backward-Outback country as portrayed in “The Simpsons” or in last-summer’s episode.

For being isolated from most continents, the country, especially Sydney, manages to attract people from every nationality.

So I suppose the great distance separating Australia from the rest of the world instills an image that Australia is a deserted island paradise. Next to me are a few trigger-happy Japanese tourists flash­ing peace signs and big smiles, a Slavic-speaking family passing around a bottle of Stolichnaya and a pack of annoying Poms (British folk) blowing loudly on horns.

In the six months I’ve lived here, meeting a native Australian has been rare, but strangers greatly influence this country and in a good way. The oddball fusion of Thai, Lebanese, Turkish, Indian and Indonesian cuisine saves the population from subsisting on bland Australian meat pies and tomato sauce alone. (My favorite food fusion has to be Greek Yum Yum Chiki.)

And despite being in the Southern Hemisphere, two Northern Hemisphere countries — the United Kingdom and the United States — have a distinct presence. Sydney’s architecture reminds me a lot of London while its population looks like it just stepped out of Lagoona Beach.

The tabloid frenzy over where Paris Hilton and several wives of British footballers are partying can also attest to this fact. The city’s desire to absorb everything from anywhere gives Sydney its unique presence.

On the bridge numbers begin to appear queuing me and the million others to begin the countdown.

In unison, we belt out 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Happy New Year! My friends and I ecstatically begin to hug and kiss each other as confetti rains down. The 13-minute fireworks display is absolutely amazing. The Poms are stillooting their horns and are yelling what I am sure is not Sprite near my new clothes, but I am too averse to care. Fireworks are alternately originating from skyscrapers, barges in the water, and, of course, the Harbour Bridge itself.

At the end of the show, the question mark on the bridge transforms into a red coat hanger with a large diamond in the middle of it. It is quirky and a bit confusing, but that is Sydney for ya mate.

QUEST COMMENTARY

Friendship can’t be bottled in vials of sand

Colin Dugdale

When old people die, I will tell their stuff on e.3.

For years, I’ve bought pre­owned goods, perusing estate sales and resold them on the Internet. Antiques, clothes, clothes. It’s like feudalism gone nobbing — a pecu­

The word “bottled” makes me think of something that is contained, that I cannot escape.

But moralitit is surprisingly convenient. When an elderly couple I used to shop with passed away, her estate was sold in August, I made enough money to get fifth-row seats at the “American Idol” concert.

Last summer, however, I acquired something even more precious than someone’s possessions: someone’s memories.

Inside a dusty cigar box was a collection of small glass vials, each filled with sand from a different city from around the world. Apparently the man who had died was a avid traveler and had been collecting them for decades. Now, here it is, entire life in a cigar box.

It was marked at $1. “He always was going somewhere,” his niece regaled me. “Always moving. Always blowing in the wind.”

While cleaning over break, I re­discovered the box which had been buried under a small stack of gay porn DVDs (cleverly hidden in Shania Twain jewel cases of course). As I pillared, I was amazed by the various destinations: Laguna Beach, Calif., Quito, Ecuador, and Bar Harbor, Maine.

Rolling through his bottled memories, I was suddenly con­fronted by one of my own. There, in bolded font, was my ex­boyfriend’s last name, which appar­ently was also the name of an off­beat Midwestern city. In light of the name’s rarity, it struck me as instantly peculiar. Then I looked at the date.

Jan. 6, the same day I was read­ing it.

My jaw dropped, so far — in fact — you could have vacuumed my lower lip. It was one of those eerie events that make you evalu­ate the difference between mere coincidence and cosmic symbol­ism. Immediately, I knew what it meant.

Though my relationship — like the man himself — had long ago passed, I was still thinking of sand, tiny flicks of granular hope that we might one day become reconciled.

Though I initially tried — as so many foolishly do — to establish such camaraderie, the attempts disappointed. Inevitably, I began passing each other on the street, like strangers.

Strangers, despite the fact that I had named his testicles “copy and paste.”

Thus, as I stared at the vial, I realized: Any attempt at friendship must be as transparent as the granular itself. You can’t capfulle friendship any more than you can capture a country in a bottle.

Upon this realization, I left my house and ran to the neighbor­hood lake across the street. At the water’s edge, I opened up the vial and poured the sand into my hand.

And despite the fact that I had named his testicles “copy and paste,”

To: mustangdailyopinions@gmail.com

subject: something to say

Letter to the editor:

submit your thoughts, opinions, rants and raves in 250 words or less

Jenna Hall

Managing editor: Jennifer Hall

mustangdaily@gmail.com

6

www.mustangdaily.net

GET SOMETHING TO SAY?

Send a letter to the editor!

for 2007 words or less

Given that you’ve...
Beckham to play for Galaxy for $250 million

The former English soccer captain started only two of 25 games for Real Madrid this season, but will earn an average of $50 million per year playing in Los Angeles.

Beth Harris

Attorney Anderson

Bend this, TomKat and Brangelina: Becks 'n' Posh are coming to Hollywood.

And David Beckham didn't even have to audition to become the next American Idol.

The most recognized soccer player on the planet — fashion icon, tabloid fixture, marketing giant — announced a deal Thursday to play for the Los Angeles Galaxy.

"David Beckham is a global sports icon who can transcend the sport of soccer in America," gushed Major League Soccer commissioner Don Garber.

Bringing free kicks, glitz and his Spice Girl wife, Beckham is leading another British Invasion, hoping to do for American soccer what the Beatles once did for pop music.

"There are so many great sports in America," the 31-year-old former English captain said. "There are so many kids that play baseball, American football, basketball. But soccer is huge all around the world apart from America, so that's where I want to make a difference with the kids."

Beckham turned down a two-year contract from Spanish team Real Madrid, where his fading skills left him on the bench.

The Galaxy didn't say exactly what they'll pay him, but floated a figure of $250 million in salary and commercial endorsements over the five years of his contract. In other words, his move could be worth $1 million a week.

Los Angeles opens its season April 8 in Houston, but Beckham is not expected to join the team until August. His four-year contract with Madrid expires at the end of this season.

---

**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:**

1. TouchHarmony: 10-20-2004
2. Fifi: 3-14-2004
3. Kelli: 3-28-2004
4. 99: 2-7-2004
5. Madeline: 4-21-2004
6. 56: 12-1-2004

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**Wild Pitch continued from page 8**

down page from 1996-2003:

The best part of all is that Garcia and Donovan McNabb — the other Pro Bowl quarterback Owens likes to pick on — are now on the same team.

A team that beat out Owens’ for the NFC East title.

It’s no surprise that Mark McGwire didn’t get into the Hall of Fame on Tuesday.

It didn’t help that he virtually went into hiding since his “I’m not here to talk about this” display before Congress in March 2005. You’d have a better chance of getting an interview with a Big Mac at McDonald’s than with the baseball version.

What was surprising is that Cal Ripken Jr. and Tony Gwynn were not unanimous choices.

How prominent do some writers have to be to vote against those two guys merely based on the belief that most were not unanimous?

Both players are in the top 18 all-time in hits and helped define the game for an entire generation. If they can’t be unanimous inductees, who can?

It’s not like we’re talking about Allen Iverson here.

Iverson’s scoring average is slightly higher than Mike Trout’s and he’s had two MVPs while Trout has one. But that’s not the only reason.

Sure, baseball writers should get off their moral high horse and acknowledge this era of baseball, antraks and all.

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Mustang men's hoops squad hangs on for 72-68 win over UCD

Lafe, Cal Poly sophomore point guard Titus Shelton (35) goes up for a layup. Above, Cal Poly senior wing Derek Stockpeter (25) reacts to defensive pressure from UC Davis freshman guard Bussey Ellis. The host Mustangs (7-8, 1-5 Big West Conference) won the nonconference game 72-68 Thursday night in Mott Gym. Senior power forward Tyler McGinn led Cal Poly with 14 points. Vanessa Trice Clark, Dawn Whiten and Stockpeter added 12, 11 and 10, respectively. The Mustangs led 37-23 at halftime before the Aggies tied the game 52-52 late in the second half. UC Davis (2-12), which is independent, will officially join the Big West next season.

Cal Poly concludes its two-game, nonconference home stand against Sacramento State at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

The Mustangs have five top-25 opponents this season.

Tristan Aird
MUSTANG EDITOR

Cal Poly women's tennis head coach Hugh Bream knows his team has a difficult schedule this spring season, with five opponents ranked in the top 25.

So why not hit the ground running?

The Mustangs open their spring schedule at the Cal Winter Invitational this weekend.

"Cal is one of the contenders for the NCAA title this year along with Fresno State and St. Mary's," Bream said Monday at a weekly press conference of the tournament field. "It's a great way to prepare us for our first dual matches of the season following weekend with USC and Pepperdine.


"What's exciting about our schedule is we're going to be playing five of the top 25 teams in the country," said Bream, who is 69-40 in his six years at the helm. "USC, UCLA, Pepperdine, Arizona State and Berkeley. We're going to get a great opportunity to improve ourselves in that culture early. See what we're doing well and find out those areas we want to improve as well.

Cal Poly was 12-10 and third in 5-2 in the Big West Conference last season. The Mustangs will be gunning for their first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2003.

At the forefront of that effort will be senior Carol Erickson, who was 20-9 last season.

"Carol is one of the most unique individuals I've had in 21 years of coaching," Bream said. "She's put in a lot of extra time outside of practice. She's improved every aspect of her game, especially her serve and her ability to be aggressive. I feel like she's a level up right now above any time she's been in the past. She's going to really step up at tie top of the (singles) line-up."

Erickson, who was 7-4 with Samantha Waller in doubles last year, will pair with freshman Stefi Wong this season. Erickson and Wong were 7-3 during the fall portion.

Bream said his recruiting class was recently ranked No. 3 among mid-majors and 29th among 310 Division I programs overall.

Leading the newcomers is freshman Brittany Blalock, who won the first collegiate tournament she played in during the fall season when she took the Fullerton Invitational. She had a 12-2 record in the fall.

Others Bream will be counting on include sophomores Maria Malec and Shannon Brady and freshman Diane Filip.

"We have a great young group this year," Bream said.

Cal Poly visits three-time defending Big West champion Long Beach State on March 3. The Mustangs' home opener in the spring season is a nonconference date against St. Mary's on Feb. 9.

The Wild Pitch

41-14? No freakin' way!

Tristan Aird
MUSTANG EDITOR

It's the most wonderful time of the year.

Not because of the holidays, but because of sports — NFL playoffs, bowl games, Division I-AA playoffs, the prelude to March Madness and even some regular-season NBA games to boot.

Here's one point of view on some of the recent hot-human issues:

• Florida 41, Ohio State 14.

Huh? It says it all that one day after the Buckeyes' historic debacle, the school's official website had featured the gymnastics team on its front page.

Holy smokes.

The Gators were by far the best team on the field Monday night. No question.

But should they have been 27 points better?

How much impact did a 51-day boycott between games have on Ohio State's weak showing?

Where does this leave Boise State, which, by the way, finished the season as the only undefeated team in Division I-A, but didn't even get a shot at the national title game?

There is one unavoidable answer to both questions, one that will end the purposelessly controversial and give much-needed integrity to the I-A universe.

Playoffs.

• There is definitely some poetic justice to the fact that Jeff Garcia is currently leading Terrell Owens' old team through the NFL playoffs.

Now, you won't find non-stop anti-T.O. speech in this column like you will in virtually every other media outlet. Although he is often a much-needed integrity to the I-A universe.

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