Missing student case remains open

Janelle Eastridge

A judge ruled Feb. 2 that the ongoing investigation into the disappearance of Kristin Smart, a Cal Poly student who vanished in 1996, is not considered cold. This ruling allows the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department to continue to investigate the case.

Sheriff Charles Crandall set a September re-examination hearing to review the file for perhaps the final time. If no major investigative discoveries are made before then, the case will most likely be declared cold, he told The Tribune.

"Plaintiffs are pleased with the ruling — the case remains stayed, yet is being actively investigated by the Sheriff's Department, according to the camera review of the sheriff's detective's declaration," said Tana Coates, attorney for Stan and Denise Smart, Kristin Smart's parents, in an e-mail interview.

Crandall has met with the Sheriff's Department every six months to review the case and determine whether the case should be closed.

If the judge rules that the case is cold at the September hearing, records and documents from the case may be sealed.

see Case, page 2

Cal Poly student manages own business before graduation

Samantha Freitas

Many college students have a hard time balancing their lives with school, work and maintaining a social life. It's not until they've moved on from term papers and finals that they have to worry about the stress of a career.

However, one Cal Poly student is taking on a career simultaneously. Kristina Spitale is the owner of Crazy Cowgirl Jewelry & More in San Luis Obispo and an agriculture management senior.

Crazy Cowgirl Jewelry & More, which opened in December 2006, carries a variety of western, retro and classic jewelry, purses and home decor.

"We opened the week before Christmas, which was great because I really wanted to be open before the holidays, but it happened to be during finals week which made it really hard," Spitale said.

Opening her business during finals week was one of many scheduling conflicts Spitale has had between work and school. She keeps her prices low by not hiring any other employees, which means she is at work running her store every day. "Now that I'm doing this, I have to schedule all of my classes really early and really late," she said. "It's not easy, but it has worked out."

Spitale started her business shortly after beginning college by using the money she earned from selling beefies, sheep and steer at the Mid-State Fair while she attended Templeton High School where she was president of the school's National FFA Organization, an organization dedicated to agricultural science education.

Spitale found success selling jewelry at high school and college rodeos throughout California out of tents and make-shift stands. Now she is open at Crazy Cowgirl Jewelry & More in San Luis Obispo.

see Cowgirl, page 2

Navy seeks to deploy dolphins against terrorist swimmers

Thomas Watkins

SAN DIEGO — Dozens of dolphins and sea lions trained to detect and apprehend waterborne attackers could be sent on a mission to patrol a military base in Washington state, the U.S. Navy said Monday.

In a notice published in this week's Federal Register, the Navy said it needs to bolster security at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, located on the Puget Sound close to Seattle. The base is home to submarines, ships and laboratories and is potentially vulnerable to attack by terrorist swimmers and suba divers, the notice states.

Several options are under consideration, but the preferred plan would be to send as many as 30 California sea lions and Atlantic Bottlenose dolphins from the Navy's Marine Mammal Program, based in San Diego.

"These animals have the capabilities for what needs to be done for this particular mission," said Tom LaPuzza, a spokesman for the Marine Mammal Program. The Navy is seeking public comment for an Environmental Impact Statement it's preparing on the proposal.

LaPuzza said because of their astonishing sonar abilities, dolphins are excellent at patrolling for swimmers and divers. When it detects a person in the water, a Navy dolphin drops a beacon. This tells a human interception team where to find the suspicious swimmer.

Dolphins also are trained to detect underwater mines; they were sent to the Persian Gulf in the wake of the 1990-1991 Gulf War and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

see Dolphins, page 2

Dolphins, page 2

Dolphins

Dolphins also are trained to detect underwater mines; they were sent to the Persian Gulf in the wake of the 1990-1991 Gulf War and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.
Dolphins continued from page 1

do this in the Iraqi harbor of Um Qasr in 2003. The last time the animals were used operationally in San Diego was in 1996 when they patrolled the bay during a Republican convention. 

Sea lions can carry in their "mouths special cuffs, attached to long ropes. If the animal finds a numpy swimmer, it can clamp the cuff around the person's leg. The individual can then be reeled in for questioning.

The Navy wanted to deploy marine animals to the northwest in 1989, LaPuzza said, but a federal judge ruled with animal-rights activists concerned about the time the animals were used operationally in San Diego do this in the Iraqi harbor of Um Qasr in 2003. The last time the animals were used operationally in San Diego was in 1996 when they patrolled the bay during a Republican convention.

Stephanie Boyles, a marine biologist and spokeswoman for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, said sea mammals do not provide a reliable defense system, and they should not be kept in small enclosures.

"We believe the United States' citizens deserve the very best defense possible and this just isn't it," Boyles said, adding that dolphins are easily distracted once in open water. "They don't understand the consequences of what will happen if they don't carry out the mission."

Among the other options the Navy is considering for the K-9's Bangor base are the use of human interception teams and remote-controlled machines.

The Navy has been training marine mammals since the 1960s, and currently keeps about 100 dolphins and sea lions. Most of those are in San Diego, but about 20 are deployed at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Ga.

Dolphins live for up to 30 years, LaPuzza said. The Navy occasionally gives its retired animals to marine parks but generally keeps them until they die of old age.

The Navy hopes eventually to downsize in marine mammal program and replace the animals with machines.

"But the technology just isn't there yet," LaPuzza said. "The value of the marine mammals is we've been doing this for 35 years and we've ironed out all the kinks."

Mardi Gras continued from page 1

Cowgirl continued from page 1

Displays.

After a few years, she upgraded her display to a trailer and intended on making enough money to open a permanent location shortly after graduation

"I always knew I wanted to own a business right after I graduated," she said, "I didn't ever think I would have a business while I was still in school, but it just worked out this way." 

Despite the long hours and busy schedule, Spital said owning her business has perks that keep her motivated and push her through the mornings when all she wants to do is sleep.

"I am getting such good experience. When professors talk about real-world scenarios, I can relate because a lot of times it's things I have actually done," she said. "I'm not going to be shocked by reality after I graduate."

Spital's ultimate plan, if her business continues to do well, is to hire full-time employees so she can begin a career as a sales representative.

"If this business doesn't work out, I will still have my jewelry. It's something I will always be able to do no matter where I am in my life," Spital said.

LOUIS ANGELES (AP) — Police shot and killed a mentally ill man after he stabbed an officer's chest armor with a sharp object during a disturbance at a group home for the disabled, authorities said.

The man, identified as Francisco Mondragon, 24, died Sunday at Los Angeles County- USC Medical Center, said Lt. Paul Vernon, a police spokesman.

Officers were called to Fair Oaks Manor around 2 a.m. Sunday after Mondragon became violent and threatened two residents and a staff member, said the facility's director, Mark Cruz.

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Smoking marijuana eased the pain in some patients in a small study that nevertheless represented one of the few rigorous attempts to find out if the drug has medicinal benefits.

The Bush administration's Office of National Drug Control Policy quickly sought to shoot holes in the study. The study, conducted at San Francisco General Hospital from 2003 to 2005 involved 50 patients suffering from HIV-related foot pains known as peripheral neuropathy.

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A couple whose home was destroyed when Hurricane Katrina ripped holes in its roof paid their premiums on time, but their insurance company failed to properly or promptly pay their claim for damages, their lawyer said on Monday.

In opening arguments for a trial that could set the tone for thousands of other cases against insurers, Chrsity Howley said Lawrence Tomlinson and his wife Elizabeth paid their premiums in a timely manner but didn't get paid for their Katrina claims until Jan. 2006.

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democratic leaders circulated a nonbinding resolution Monday saying that Congress "disapproves of the decision of President George W. Bush ... to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq." The measure, expected to come to a vote by Friday, also says that "Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States armed forces who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq."

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's hard-line president, who has berated the United States more than three years of talks, has emerged in the first concrete progress after his nuclear program, is now softening his tone, saying Monday he wants dialogue rather than confrontation in Iraq. Tehran also denied giving sophisticated weapons to militants to attack U.S. forces.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad insisted that turmoil in Iraq is bad for his country and dialogue — not force — was the solution to the region's conflicts.

BEIJING (AP) — Six countries reached a tentative agreement Tuesday on initial steps toward North Korea's nuclear disarmament that could usher in the first concrete progress after more than three years of talks marked by delays, deadlock and the communist country's first nuclear test explosion.

The U.S. envoy to the talks, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, emerged in the early morning hours of Tuesday looking weary after a marathon 16-hour negotiation and announced that a tentative deal had been struck at the latest round of six-party talks on the North's nuclear program.

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Soldiers spearheading the increase in U.S. forces in Baghdad are papering car windows and storefronts with purple stickers listing telephone numbers and an e-mail address where Iraqis can send intelligence tips to help stop the violence.

But if a recent sweep in search of car bomb makers is an indication, they have a long way to go to improve intelligence.

Soldiers from the Army's 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment converged this week on a religiously mixed north Baghdad neighborhood of auto parts stores and "chop shops" that Iraqi commanders believed was used to build deadly car bombs.

Moving door to door, Iraqi and U.S. soldiers smashed padlocks with sledge hammers, clipped through wire gates and rifled through hundreds of buildings as Iraqi mechanics, their hands slick with grease and motor oil, perched from nearby shops.

The U.S. military has advertised some successes, including the discovery of 14 weapons caches during a series of raids and patrols in Baghdad during the week that ended last Friday. On Thursday, U.S. forces in Baghdad are papering car windows and storefronts with purple stickers listing telephone numbers and an e-mail address where Iraqis can send intelligence tips to help stop the violence.

But if a recent sweep in search of car bomb makers is an indication, they have a long way to go to improve intelligence.

Soldiers from the Army's 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment converged this week on a religiously mixed north Baghdad neighborhood of auto parts stores and "chop shops" that Iraqi commanders believed was used to build deadly car bombs.

Moving door to door, Iraqi and U.S. soldiers smashed padlocks with sledge hammers, clipped through wire gates and rifled through hundreds of buildings as Iraqi mechanics, their hands slick with grease and motor oil, perched from nearby shops.

The U.S. military has advertised some successes, including the discovery of 14 weapons caches during a series of raids and patrols in Baghdad during the week that ended last Friday. On Thursday, U.S. forces in Baghdad are papering car windows and storefronts with purple stickers listing telephone numbers and an e-mail address where Iraqis can send intelligence tips to help stop the violence.

But if a recent sweep in search of car bomb makers is an indication, they have a long way to go to improve intelligence.

Soldiers from the Army's 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment converged this week on a religiously mixed north Baghdad neighborhood of auto parts stores and "chop shops" that Iraqi commanders believed was used to build deadly car bombs.

Moving door to door, Iraqi and U.S. soldiers smashed padlocks with sledge hammers, clipped through wire gates and rifled through hundreds of buildings as Iraqi mechanics, their hands slick with grease and motor oil, perched from nearby shops.

The U.S. military has advertised some successes, including the discovery of 14 weapons caches during a series of raids and patrols in Baghdad during the week that ended last Friday. On Thursday, U.S. forces in Baghdad are papering car windows and storefronts with purple stickers listing telephone numbers and an e-mail address where Iraqis can send intelligence tips to help stop the violence.

But if a recent sweep in search of car bomb makers is an indication, they have a long way to go to improve intelligence.

Soldiers from the Army's 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment converged this week on a religiously mixed north Baghdad neighborhood of auto parts stores and "chop shops" that Iraqi commanders believed was used to build deadly car bombs.

Moving door to door, Iraqi and U.S. soldiers smashed padlocks with sledge hammers, clipped through wire gates and rifled through hundreds of buildings as Iraqi mechanics, their hands slick with grease and motor oil, perched from nearby shops.

The U.S. military has advertised some successes, including the discovery of 14 weapons caches during a series of raids and patrols in Baghdad during the week that ended last Friday. On Thursday, U.S. forces in Baghdad are papering car windows and storefronts with purple stickers listing telephone numbers and an e-mail address where Iraqis can send intelligence tips to help stop the violence.

But if a recent sweep in search of car bomb makers is an indication, they have a long way to go to improve intelligence.

Soldiers from the Army's 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment converged this week on a religiously mixed north Baghdad neighborhood of auto parts stores and "chop shops" that Iraqi commanders believed was used to build deadly car bombs.

Moving door to door, Iraqi and U.S. soldiers smashed padlocks with sledge hammers, clipped through wire gates and rifled through hundreds of buildings as Iraqi mechanics, their hands slick with grease and motor oil, perched from nearby shops.
Security Plan
continued from page 3
U.S. and Iraqi troops arrested two
members of a car-bomb-making
Cell in Amiriya, a Sunni neighbor-
hood near Baghdad airport, the
command said.
But for the soldiers of the 23rd
Regiment, the results of the new
phase have been disappointing so
far. Some of them fear that the
delays in kicking off the new secu-
riety operation may have given
Sunni and Shiite extremists time to
flee the capital or hide their
ground pounding,” asked Spc.
Kevin Gibson, 26, of Shiloh, Ohio,
as he slumped on a dusty couch in
an abandoned office after a day of
fruitless searches.
What still seems lacking, soldiers
say, is good intelligence — and
cooperation from Iraqis themselves.
“It’s like a 50-50 game. Fifty per-
cent is good intelligence and 50
percent is just plain bull,” said Spc.
Brett Rochon, 22, of Ansonia,
Conn. “You’ve got a better chance of
walking around the street.”
Since the collapse of Saddam
Hussein’s regime in 2003, U.S. mil-
tary officers have been courting
tribal leaders, repairing schools,
clearing streets and making contacts
with neighborhood — with
American units standing by in case of
trouble.
“We will have to share the bur-
dens and move forward together,”
Gen. David Petraeus said Saturday
when he assumed command from
Gen. George W. Casey. “If we can
do that and if we can help the peo-
ple of Iraq, the prospects of success
are good. Failing that, Iraq will be
doomed to continued violence and
civil strife.”
But some soldiers fear that the
ranks of the Iraqi police and army
are now so riddled with militants and
insurgent sympathizers that the
strategy may backfire.
The new plan had the best
chance of being effective two years
ago. But I don’t think it has much of
a chance now. It’s just too late. The
militias are embedded in
everything,” Slagle said.

Arizona legislature to rule on driving-while-texting law

Andrea Lorch
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT (U ARIZONA)

TUCSON, Ariz. — Text-mes-
saging while driving could become
a secondary offense, complete with
fines up to $200 if the Arizona state
Legislature passes a bill proposed by
According to the bill, a driver
could not only be pulled over for
text-messaging while driving, but
could also be fined if pulled over
for another offense while text-
messaging.
The fine for a driving-while-
texting, or DWT, offense would
be $50.
According to the bill intro-
duced by Farley Jan. 16, not only
would it be illegal to compose
text-messages while driving, it
would also be illegal to read them
while driving.
The bill does not mention
talking on a cell phone while dri-
v ing, or using any other cell phone
function other than text-messag-
ing.
Thirty-seven percent of people
ages 27 and younger admit to text-
messaging while driving, according
to a study conducted by Nationwide Mutual Insurance
released on Jan. 22.
In the study, younger drivers
reported using their cell phones
the most while driving.
Virginia Tech Transportation
Institute and the National
Highway Traffic Safety
Administration conducted a study
of driving distractions and acci-
dents, during which they followed
241 drivers for one year.
The study, released in April
2006, found that cell phone usage
was the biggest distraction to dri-
vers.
Although evidence indicates
there is an obvious danger in text-
messaging while driving, many
University of Arizona students are
not sure how a law like this would
work.
Thomas Lewis, an aerospace
engineering senior, said he does
not text-message while driving, but
if even if he did, this bill would not
make him stop.
“You would have to be an idiot
to hold your phone in front of
your face while you’re driving,”
Lewis said. “How would they even
know that you are texting? ... I’ve
seen girls put on makeup, read a
newspaper and drive at the same
time. I’m sure there are a lot
worse things you could do while
driving.”

Some students admit to text-
messaging while driving.
“All you have to do is hold
your phone down low, so they
don’t see,” said Sarah Merkle, a
psychology senior. “I feel like this
bill is pointless because how are
police going to know you are
texting? But it’s a good idea.”
Morgan Lor, an engineering
management sophomore, said he
would-text-message while driving
but thinks it’s very dangerous.
“I don’t think that law can be
enforced, but I think it’s a good
idea because people who text and
drive are horrible drivers,” Lor
said.
Nicole Hauptman, a psychology
senior, said if the bill is passed, she
might stop text-messaging while
driving when streets are really busy,
but not if there isn’t much traffic.
“I text-message while driving
but I probably shouldn’t because it
is distracting,” she said.

STUDY ABROAD
IN AUSTRALIA,
NEW ZEALAND,
OR THE SOUTH PACIFIC
SEMESTER/YEAR ABROAD
INTERNSHIPS
SUMMER
FULL DEGREE

Back-Up Location
College of Business Breezeway
Ask about our Affiliate Student Scholarships for Cal Poly students.

www.australearn.org
1-800-980-0033 ~ studyabroad@australearn.org

Tweet!
Check out the Daily online at: www.mustangdaily.net
...or I’ll poop on you

College Discount
$10 OFF MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY!
College students receive a $10 discount off an all day lift ticket every Monday
through Friday, non-peak periods. Valid college photo ID is required.
Tuesday, February 13th
5pm-7pm

Wear your PJ's
and receive a 30% discount on all:

- Regular priced Cal Poly clothing & gifts
- General reading & reference books
- Seasonal promotional gifts including:
  - Valentines
  - Greeting Cards
  - Stationery
  - Gift wrap
  - Stuffed animals
- Student Supplies including:
  - Art
  - Office
  - School

EL CORRAL BOOKSTORE
A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION SERVING CAL POLY SINCE 1933
www.elcorralbookstore.com
Little Wings takes flight in SLO

Kyle Field performed in my living room for free last Thursday night as he traveled up the coast.

No soccer moms, no NPR listeners, no fans of albums that never leave room for exploration.

What I got instead was an unexpected show at my house. My next tour. Her next tour. So, I asked Kyle if he would like to do a house show at a venue in town. His reputation is high among people surrounding me and I felt assured of a successful show and a large crowd.

In response, he requested a house show and some hat-passing to provide money. I quickly agreed, but plans died as time passed and I heard nothing.

At 5:03 a.m. last Tuesday, I responded asking for a house show on that Thursday. I quickly agreed and organized it between projects, studying work and dates. He got to my house at 7:30 p.m., engaging quickly in the party that formed as The Black Shirts and Watercolor Paintings played on my deck. Among coffee cups of wine and shared cigarettes, we prepared for beautiful, lonely, wandering folk. It was dark, silent, and intimate until the last song.

As he explained, he is 38 now and has left with an album that has no plans of being repressed. During the final songs, I lit a cigarette and handed it to him, my fingers that could still produce commotion stops and silence surrounding the first strokes of guitar. Kyle played with two locals who haunt Uptown Café and was pushed back in my recliner as the support howled under his vocals.

The set passed in waves with one song hitting only to allow minutes of laughter and talking. Eventually, he stumbled to my porch with a friend, cutting the last few vinyl copies of his album that has no plans of being repressed. During the final songs, I lit a cigarette and handed it to him, my fingers that could still produce commotion stops and silence surrounding the first strokes of guitar. Kyle played with two locals who haunt Uptown Café and was pushed back in my recliner as the support howled under his vocals. }

"(Kyle Field performed in my living room for free last Thursday night as he traveled up the coast. No soccer moms, no NPR listeners, no fans of albums that never leave room for exploration.

Valentine's Day is for Singles!
Featuring DJ Mel
Drink Specials
Love Potion #9. Cupid's Chosen One. bleeding Heart
Meet Mr. or Mrs. "Right Now"

Valentine's Day is for Singles!
Featuring DJ Mel
Drink Specials
Love Potion #9. Cupid's Chosen One. bleeding Heart
Meet Mr. or Mrs. "Right Now"

Spirit and unbound creativity. His songs are on endless mixtapes and many people lay by telling them the impression the nightime deck show had.

Over the last few days since the show, the town has tightened together even more. Stories about meeting up with Kyle or skateboarding with him have sneaked into many things other people tell me. I got a call to my radio show the moment I brought up the Little Wings' performance. Just another person to tell me about how they were talking about laying down tracks with Kyle. He's our true local celebrity. Probably the only one that can pull people to my backyard on a Thursday night last minute for what is essential."

"I'm running my first show of the quarter on Valentine's Day at the Steynberg Gallery. Canadian freak pop group They Shoot Horses, Don't They? will pour sweat all over the floor for us as Part Time Outlaw and Cub Scout Day Camp open up the show. It does slightly say romantic. But even more, it endearingly says that you're single and crazy in a way that almost nothing else can.

Show Tip: I'm running my first show of the quarter on Valentine's Day at the Steynberg Gallery. Canadian freak pop group They Shoot Horses, Don't They? will pour sweat all over the floor for us as Part Time Outlaw and Cub Scout Day Camp open up the show. It does slightly say romantic. But even more, it endearingly says that you're single and crazy in a way that almost nothing else can.

For all your car care needs.

RIZZOLI'S AUTOMOTIVE
30TH ANNIVERSARY OIL CHANGE SPECIAL

GETS YOU:
OIL AND FILTER CHANGE
AIR FILTER
FRONT CAR WASH & VACCUM
12 POINT RELIABILITY INSPECTION
COMPLIMENTARY SHUTTLE

$30

RIZZOLI'S AUTOMOTIVE

For all your care care needs.
www.RizzolisAutomotive.com

* Limited time offer. Offer expires 2/15/07. Up to 3 quarts standard oil, recycling fee and sales tax extra. Passenger cars and light duty trucks only. Not valid with any other offer.

2 LOCATIONS TO BETTER SERVE YOU
San Luis Obipso | Santa Maria
2584 Victoria 1149 W. Santa
805.541.1082 805.927.7742

RIZZOLI'S AUTOMOTIVE

For all your car care needs.
www.RizzolisAutomotive.com

* Limited time offer. Offer expires 2/15/07. Up to 3 quarts standard oil, recycling fee and sales tax extra. Passenger cars and light duty trucks only. Not valid with any other offer.
Poly DanceSport founder having a 'ball'

Janelle Eastridge

It is 11 a.m. on Saturday, an hour before the first dance of the day begins. Outside the rain is pouring down, but inside in a tent, the room dancers carefully apply makeup, secure hair, and change into sequined and bead-orned dresses and tuxedos — or jeans and T-shirts.

On the dance floor, couples are practicing intricate steps, warming up for their dances. In the background, Michael Bublé's "Feel Good," Norah Jones' "Come Away With Me," and Jennifer Lopez's "Let's Get Loud" play as couples glide gracefully across the floor.

In the midst of the mild chaos, Christopher Ellwood bashfully rushes around, practicing for one of his 32 dances and hammering out last-minute details before the competition actually begins.

Ellwood's dream of hosting a ballroom dance competition in San Luis Obispo finally became a reality this weekend at Cal Poly hosted their first Mustang Ball. The event was held in Chumash Auditorium on Monday, with members of the Red Hat Society, proud parents and grandparents, and fellow students watching from the sidelines.

Ellwood, the 2003 computer science graduate, who co-advises the ballroom dance club on a volunteer basis, but first joined the club his junior year at Cal Poly.

With a passion for music, especially jazz music (the played trumpet in a jazz band in high school), Ellwood first attended the club for fun. As time went on and he became more involved in the program, he was hooked.

"I really love music, so dancing is like the ultimate level of this appreciation," Ellwood said. "And it's a social thing. You can go to a dance where you don't know anyone, but at the end of the night you'll have 50 new friends because the dancing community is so welcoming."

A few years ago, he saw the need for a more structured venue in which to practice for, and give advice concerning upcoming competitions. Thus, the Cal Poly DanceSports Team was formed in January of 2003.

Though still considered a club, ASI has yet not labeled the team with "sports" status. As the team anxiously await this status, Ellwood hopes that this ongoing "frustrating process" will end soon.

Since Ellwood first joined the team, there has been talk about hosting a competition at Cal Poly; until this year, though, the idea had not progressed further than this. Since most schools and studios generally only compete in their region (i.e. Northern or Southern California only), it has been Ellwood's hope that, by hosting an event in Central California, this gap would be bridged.

"We're a common meeting point for everyone to dance and compete against people they wouldn't normally compete against," he said.

This year's Mustang Ball, hopefully the first of many, has been about a year and a half in the making, Ellwood said.

After looking at all the possible dates for holding the competition, the Feb. 10 date was set. With the date and venue in place, the bulk of the preparations began in earnest last summer. The "prettiest extensive process" included setting up a Web site, publicizing the event around San Luis Obispo and throughout California, and securing sponsors.

In retrospect, the day of the event was full of mixed emotions.

"It was definitely stressful at times — it was a long ordeal — but it was also exciting because it was actually coming together. In the back of your mind, there's always worry; 'What if something goes wrong?' 'What if a judge doesn't show up?' But it was mostly exciting," Ellwood said.

Now that the competition has been successfully completed, all the worry and stress of planning have been pushed aside — at least until planning begins again for next year.

"What made all the planning and hard work worth it was seeing everyone having such a good time. People enjoyed watching. People enjoyed dancing. And that made everything worthwhile — we achieved that goal," he said.

Ellwood credits the team of volunteers, club officers, and community supporters who worked with him for everything coming together and running as smoothly as it did.

His dream is that those dancers — and hopefully more in the future — will be able to have the Mustang Ball on a yearly basis, and that their love of dance will be infectious to the Cal Poly and San Luis Obispo communities alike.

Every Thursday the club holds lessons in the Architecture building at 8 p.m. Until the end of the quarter, they will be teaching the samba and the rumba.

More information on the Ballroom Dancing Club and DanceSport Team can be found at their Web site, www.cpdsenseports.com.

The Cal Poly literary magazine, Byzantium is hosting a Valentine's Day poetry reading and fundraiser today.

The magazine is run by under-graduate students, and co-edited by two senior English majors, who worked for months on the magazine in a senior project. Beside Bailey, this year's issue is co-edited by David Schwartz, also accompanied by the student art director, Julian Castruita.

Byzantium has won numerous literary awards and is sold at the El Coro Bookstore.

Loverspeak poetry contest to reflect Valentine mood

Amanda Retzer

The Cal Poly annual literary magazine Byzantium is hosting a poetry reading called "Loverspeak" today at 8 p.m. in Ag Engineering building, room 126. The reading will raise money for the magazine's upcoming yearly publication.

All of the speakers are Cal Poly English professors who will each be reading their own poetry as a pre-Valentine's Day production.

"Cal Poly's Byzantium is officially called a literary magazine, although it is published like a book. It features poems and stories written by Cal Poly students from all different majors.

"It's a creative writing contest and we choose the top four poems and the top four short stories," English major Meghan Bailey said.

Previous editions of the Byzantium will be sold, and donations are welcome at the event.

"The money will go towards the production of the magazine. In previous years, (the Byzantium staff) had to raise about $8,000 to purchase the book, so we're hoping to get in as many donations as we can," Bailey said.

Committees comprised of faculty members blindly judge the poems and decide on first, second and third place winners, along with one honor-
The smallest audience in the show's 17 million viewers represented amateur singer bail a spotlight duet back to Sunday night. The show even took home two trophies in little-with last year, according to Nielsen Media Research.

Last year Grammy organizers decided to go head-to-head with "American Idol" to worry about, the show's golden years. That's 14 percent

collections, including the rare triumph of record, "It's A Man's World." and even Bush.

That's interesting," Maines-crowed from the podium after the coup against Baltimore said last year, prompting the Grammys to crushed the Grammys when it went head-to-head on a Wednesday; might last year, prompting the Grammys to make back to Sunday.

The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, including albums of the year for "Taking the Long Way," and record and song of the year for "Not Ready to Make Nice," their defiant anthem penned by songwriter Dan Wilson. It was sweet vindication after the superstars' lives were threatened and their Record sales plummeted when feisty lead singer Natalie Maines critized President Bush on the eve of the Iraq war in 2003. Almost overnight, one of the most successful groups of any genre was boycotted by Nashville and disappeared from country radio.

With "Taking the Long Way," the women relied on renowned producer Rick Rubin's guidance for an album that was more rock and less country (Rubin, who also produced "Stadium Arcadium," was honored as producer of the year). The standing occasion the Chicks received Sunday illustrated how much the popular climate has changed regarding the Iraq war, and even Bush.

Sundays' "American Idol" award for "The Tracks of My Tears," per- formed by Wonder and 85-year-old Tony Bennett.

There were many such Grammy moments at the 49th annual awards show. Despite flashes of youth in performances by Timberlake, John Mayer, and Chris Brown, the show had a def- finite VH1 Classics appeal, from the kickoff by the reunited Police — who were not nominated for any awards and had no purpose except to draw audiences — to the tributes that lov­ ingly recalled the fading music industry's golden years.

Perhaps the only moment that seemed to have any cutting-edge edge was the "My Grammy Moment," in which three young women vied for a spot to sing with Timberlake. The winner, 19-year-old Ryn Robyn Trupt, was determined by text messages and Internet votes. The con-
text was an obvious nod to "American Idol," the TV talent competition that crushed the Grammys when it went head-to-head on a Wednesday; might last year, prompting the Grammys to make back to Sunday.

The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, including albums of the year for "Taking the Long Way," and record and song of the year for "Not Ready to Make Nice," their defiant anthem penned by songwriter Dan Wilson. It was sweet vindication after the superstars' lives were threatened and their Record sales plummeted when feisty lead singer Natalie Maines critizied President Bush on the eve of the Iraq war in 2003. Almost overnight, one of the most successful groups of any genre was boycotted by Nashville and disappeared from country radio.

With "Taking the Long Way," the women relied on renowned producer Rick Rubin's guidance for an album that was more rock and less country (Rubin, who also produced "Stadium Arcadium," was honored as producer of the year). The standing occasion the Chicks received Sunday illustrated how much the popular climate has changed regarding the Iraq war, and even Bush.

"That's interesting," Maines-crowed from the podium after the coup against Baltimore said last year, prompting the Grammys to crushed the Grammys when it went head-to-head on a Wednesday; might last year, prompting the Grammys to make back to Sunday.

The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, including albums of the year for "Taking the Long Way," and record and song of the year for "Not Ready to Make Nice," their defiant anthem penned by songwriter Dan Wilson. It was sweet vindication after the superstars' lives were threatened and their Record sales plummeted when feisty lead singer Natalie Maines critizied President Bush on the eve of the Iraq war in 2003. Almost overnight, one of the most successful groups of any genre was boycotted by Nashville and disappeared from country radio.

With "Taking the Long Way," the women relied on renowned producer Rick Rubin's guidance for an album that was more rock and less country (Rubin, who also produced "Stadium Arcadium," was honored as producer of the year). The standing occasion the Chicks received Sunday illustrated how much the popular climate has changed regarding the Iraq war, and even Bush.

"That's interesting," Maines-crowed from the podium after the coup against Baltimore said last year, prompting the Grammys to crushed the Grammys when it went head-to-head on a Wednesday; might last year, prompting the Grammys to make back to Sunday.

The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, including albums of the year for "Taking the Long Way," and record and song of the year for "Not Ready to Make Nice," their defiant anthem penned by songwriter Dan Wilson. It was sweet vindication after the superstars' lives were threatened and their Record sales plummeted when feisty lead singer Natalie Maines critizied President Bush on the eve of the Iraq war in 2003. Almost overnight, one of the most successful groups of any genre was boycotted by Nashville and disappeared from country radio.

With "Taking the Long Way," the women relied on renowned producer Rick Rubin's guidance for an album that was more rock and less country (Rubin, who also produced "Stadium Arcadium," was honored as producer of the year). The standing occasion the Chicks received Sunday illustrated how much the popular climate has changed regarding the Iraq war, and even Bush.

"That's interesting," Maines-crowed from the podium after the coup against Baltimore said last year, prompting the Grammys to crushed the Grammys when it went head-to-head on a Wednesday; might last year, prompting the Grammys to make back to Sunday.

The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, including albums of the year for "Taking the Long Way," and record and song of the year for "Not Ready to Make Nice," their defiant anthem penned by songwriter Dan Wilson. It was sweet vindication after the superstars' lives were threatened and their Record sales plummeted when feisty lead singer Natalie Maines critizied President Bush on the eve of the Iraq war in 2003. Almost overnight, one of the most successful groups of any genre was boycotted by Nashville and disappeared from country radio.

With "Taking the Long Way," the women relied on renowned producer Rick Rubin's guidance for an album that was more rock and less country (Rubin, who also produced "Stadium Arcadium," was honored as producer of the year). The standing occasion the Chicks received Sunday illustrated how much the popular climate has changed regarding the Iraq war, and even Bush.

"That's interesting," Maines-crowed from the podium after the coup against Baltimore said last year, prompting the Grammys to crushed the Grammys when it went head-to-head on a Wednesday; might last year, prompting the Grammys to make back to Sunday.

The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, including albums of the year for "Taking the Long Way," and record and song of the year for "Not Ready to Make Nice," their defiant anthem penned by songwriter Dan Wilson. It was sweet vindication after the superstars' lives were threatened and their Record sales plummeted when feisty lead singer Natalie Maines critizied President Bush on the eve of the Iraq war in 2003. Almost overnight, one of the most successful groups of any genre was boycotted by Nashville and disappeared from country radio.

With "Taking the Long Way," the women relied on renowned producer Rick Rubin's guidance for an album that was more rock and less country (Rubin, who also produced "Stadium Arcadium," was honored as producer of the year). The standing occasion the Chicks received Sunday illustrated how much the popular climate has changed regarding the Iraq war, and even Bush.

"That's interesting," Maines-crowed from the podium after the coup against Baltimore said last year, prompting the Grammys to crushed the Grammys when it went head-to-head on a Wednesday; might last year, prompting the Grammys to make back to Sunday.

The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, including albums of the year for "Taking the Long Way," and record and song of the year for "Not Ready to Make Nice," their defiant anthem penned by songwriter Dan Wilson. It was sweet vindication after the superstars' lives were threatened and their Record sales plummeted when feisty lead singer Natalie Maines critizied President Bush on the eve of the Iraq war in 2003. Almost overnight, one of the most successful groups of any genre was boycotted by Nashville and disappeared from country radio.
EDITORIAL

Write your own Valentine's Day poem

letters to the editor

Celeb rant doesn't trump real news

Research void in 'Liberal bias' column

HUMOR COLUMN

Write your own Valentine's Day poem

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cal Poly's Finest News Source

Exclusive Column

Got something to say?
Football
continued from page 12
James Noble ran for 1,009 yards and seven scores. The Walter Payton Award candidate became the first player in school history to surpass 1,000 yards in consecutive seasons, rushed for a school-record 1,578 yards in 2006 and averaged 5.1 yards per carry in 2006.
In addition to the 5-6, 180-pound Noble, another junior-to-be Fred Hives II, ran for 221 yards and two scores last year. The 210-pounder averaged 5.7 yards per carry and provided an effective, bigger change-of-pace back to the shifter Noble. Hives II also played some fullback.
Mole is not the only former Righetti skilled-position star who will get some reps when Cal Poly begins spring practice Feb. 21. Cal Poly announced in December that it had signed former Righetti and Hancock quarterback Jonathan Daly.
Aside from Mole and Daly, the Mustangs' recruiting class is high-lighted by versatility. Greg Francis, a 6-1, 180-pound cornerback/free safety from La Habra, returned two kicks, two interceptions and one punt for scores last season. He made 85 tackles and picked off six passes as a high school senior.
Jefferson Righetti, a 5-10, 175-pound tailback/defensive back from Fairfield, brought back two punts for 104 yards and averaged 8.4 yards per carry out of the backfield as a senior.
Ellerson said. "I love guys on defense that can catch the ball." He was not the only reason why the Mustangs signed two defensive ends.
"They both have those kind of ball skills that tell you they can play," Ellerson said. "We really like Jake Romanelli, known about him for their first league title since 1997. He had 54 tackles, one sack and one interception — returned for a touchdown — this past season. He also converted six of his 24 receptions into TDs and ran for five more scores out of the backfield.
The 6-2, 190-pound Romanelli, who fits so well here.
Ruark said. "We really like Jake (Romanelli), known about him for a while. He was probably the heaviest-recruited guy in our area. I also felt like the kind of student he was, the kind of family he comes from, he fits so well here."
Other players the Mustangs signed include defensive linemen Matthew Duffy (El Segundo) and Erich Klimek (Long Beach), offensive/defensive lineman Stash Angel Morales (Ventura), receiver/punter John Yesner (El Segundo) and running back/linebacker Jordan Yacum (Anaheim).
"He's a good player and athlete in his own right.
The recruiting class also includes three San Luis Obispo County products — linemen/Back Brandon Roberts and kicker Jacob West of Atascadero along with safety/wingback Jake Romanelli of Templeton.
Ellerson said the likely reason Francis and Houston served as return men at their respective high schools was because their coaches probably trusted them with the ball in their hands, a sign he's encour-aged by when looking at their prospects transitioning to the NCAA Division I-AA level.
"They both have those kind of ball skills that tell you they can play," Ellerson said. "I love guys on defense that can catch the ball."
Another prominent aspect of the recruiting class is Troy Shortwell, the younger brother of Buck Buchanan Award winner Kyle Shortwell and sophomore-to-be defensive end Ryan Shortwell.
Troy Shortwell, a 6-3, 206-pound defensive end/tight end, will likely see more time on the defensive side of the ball. That's where he racked up 86 tackles, 13 sacks and 21 tackles for loss as a senior at Dos Pueblos High in Goleta — where both his older brothers went.
"We believe in that gene pool," Ellerson said.
Ellerson, though, said that Troy Shortwell was signed for reasons greater than his relation to two of the team's top defensive playmakers in 2006.
"I'm excited about what (Troy Shortwell) future holds," Ellerson said. "He's a good player and athlete in his own right.
Ruark said. "I'll be very disappointed if I can't compete."
"Depending on how things go there I might keep training, but my body is getting beat up so we'll have to see," he said.
Ruark started pole vaulting in high school and entered Long Beach State ranked eighth among all college freshmen.
He transferred to Cal Poly the following year and redshirted the season.
The accounting and finance student could have graduated last year, but still had one year of eligibility. "I'll be very disappointed if I can't compete," Ruark said. "That's the only reason I didn't graduate."
Nunno said that Ruark will be missed at the meets he is unable to attend.
"Not only are we losing a pole vaulter, but we're losing a big part of our rooting section," Nunno said.
"He's a good team motivator."
Poly junior guard Whiten named Big West Co-POW

Dawin Whiten tied a school record with eight 3-pointers and scored a career-high 31 points in a win over UC Irvine on Saturday.

SPORTS INFORMATION REPORT

Cal Poly junior guard Dawin Whiten was named Big West Conference Co-Player of the Week, it was announced by the conference office Monday. Whiten earned the honor when he scored a career-high 31 points and tied a school record with eight 3-pointers in leading the Mustangs to a 89-80 win over UC Irvine.

Whiten received the honor despite playing only one game this week. Whiten was sidelined with an injury for Florida's game.

The native of North Hills scored his points by making 9 of 13 shots from the floor and 8 of 11 from the arc.

The junior also made 5 of 7 from the line.

Wild Pitch

continued from page 12
West — Cal State Fullerton (18-5) and Long Beach State (17-6) — are ranked 15th and 16th, respectively, in CollegeInsider.com's Mid-Major Poll.

But behind all these numbers is a greater reason why the Big West deserves more credit — Bobby Brown.

Brown, Cal State Fullerton's standout senior point guard, is widely projected to be a second-round NBA draft pick in June. The finalist for the Bob Cousy Award presented by the Naismith at the nation's top point guard — averages 19.4 points and 5.5 assists per game. He poured in 47 points in a 94-65 rout of Bethune-Cookman on Dec. 16.

And the Big West sending players to the NBA is hardly something new.

Present or former NBA players from current Big West schools include Bruce Bowen and Cedric Ceballos (Cal State Fullerton), Craig Hodges and Brendan Haywood (Long Beach State), Brian Shaw (UC Santa Barbara) and Michael Cooper (UC Irvine).

It was not long ago that Cal Poly beat two Pac-10 schools in the West Coast Conference on May 1-4 campaign, the Mustangs won at Cal (63-62) and at USC (93-78).

Sure, the Big West is not the Pac-10 or Atlantic Coast Conference. But when mid-major's are discussed, it deserves to be near the top of the list.

CLASSIFIED

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

SWIM INSTRUCTOR
Must be great with children, fun and committed to teach at the 5 Cities Swim Club Arroyo Grande (805) 481-6399

Day Camps Seek Summer Staff
San Fernando and Conejo Valley $3000.00 (888) 784-CAMP www.workcamp.com/s/o

Del Camps Reps Needed
Promote a top company to girls on real-world business & marketing experience! www.FreshDeal.com/Del to apply

HOMES FOR SALE

Day Camps Summer Staff WANTED at Cal Poly

Free List of all Houses and Condos for sale in SLO. Neilson Real Estate (805) 546-1990 or email steved@hshomes.com

RENTAL HOUSING

Day Camps Summer Staff
San Fernando and Conejo Valley $3000.00 (888) 784-CAMP www.workcamp.com/s/o

Room Available for Winter/Spring Master Bdrm with 2 walk-in closets, BR, shower, W/D included. Chill roommates, very clean. Stay for summer possible. $690 OBO Please call: (449) 515-1890

Luxury House Room available in two story house 581 Stoneridge Blvd SLO $650/mo. pets OK (805) 624-5177

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SkyDive Taft

100% ADRENALINE RUSH Tandem & AFF Courses in Safety & Skydiving Student Discount www.skydivetaft.com

(SLO) 765-5867

SHOUT OUTS! FREE EVERY THURS Submit your's by Tuesday!

Shout Outs

Envision World Peace

Now is the time to act for more info contact; Reisethefelters@gmail.com

LOST AND FOUND

Lost African goat from Farmer Van $100 REWARD 755-5242

FOUND: Sunglasses in Brad 13 Small Town square (805) 633-8022

REWARD $50 for LOST dog "Nacho" Bulldog, Male. White/brown. Call: 438-5424

FOUND Women's watch near Foothill Blvd. Call (915) 214-5090

FOUND scarf in University Cashier Call Betty 755-2310

FOUND Women's coat, shaped hoop earrings. (564) 483-9647

REWARD for lost gold bracelet with heart and "France" engrossed please call: (805) 484-1000

LOST Motorola cell phone contact: hduong@calpoly.edu

Lost and Found ads are FREE
Chargers zap Marty as head coach

Monday night's firing of San Diego's head coach surprised many; irreconcilable differences between Marty Schottenheimer and GM AJ. Smith are cited as grounds for the dismissal.

Bernie Wilson

SAN DIEGO — Chargers coach Marty Schottenheimer was fired Monday night in a shocking move by team president Dean Spanos, who cited a "dysfunctional situation" between the coach and general manager AJ Smith.

Less than a month after San Diego's NFL-best 14-2 was wrecked in a home playoff loss to New England, Spanos cited the exodus of both coordinators and other assistants in firing Schottenheimer.

The coach had a year left on his contract and will be owed more than $3 million.

"When I decided to move ahead with Marty Schottenheimer in mid-January, I did so with the expectation that the core of his fine coaching staff would remain intact," Spanos said in a statement. "Unfortunately, that did not prove to be the case, and the process of dealing with these coaching changes convinced me that we simply could not move forward with such dysfunction between our head coach and general manager.

"In short, this entire process over the last month convinced me beyond any doubt that I had to act to change this untenable situation and create a better environment.

The firing was first reported by ESPN.

Spanos said Schottenheimer didn't immediately return messages left on his office and cell phones.

"This decision was so hard because Marty has been both a friend and valued coach of our team," Spanos said. "My first obligation is always to do what is in the best interest of our fans and the entire Charger organization. I must take whatever steps are necessary to deliver a Super Bowl trophy to San Diego. Events of the last month have now convinced me that it is not possible for our organization to function at a championship level under the current structure.

"On the contrary, and in the plainest possible language, we have a dysfunctional situation here. Today I am resolving that situation once and for all."

Defensive coordinator Wade Phillips was hired as head coach of the Dallas Cowboys on Thursday, following defensive coordinator Cam Cameron and two other assistants out of town for better jobs.

Although Schottenheimer said last week that change was inevitable, Smith sounded concerned saying, "Both go in the same year — Wow."

Tight ends coach Rob Chudzinski became Cleveland's offensive coordinator, and linebackers coach Greg Manusky was hired at San Francisco's defensive coordinator.

see Schottenheimer, page 11

Polystyle's Ruark hopes to vault back into fray

Cal Poly senior Adrian Ruark competes in the pole vault.

The standout pole vaulter was ranked 15th nationally in the event before suffering a variety of injuries to his left ankle.

Samantha Freitas

Cal Poly senior pole vaulter Adrian Ruark, considered a contender to qualify for nationals this year, injured his left ankle at the Washington Indoor Invitational three weeks ago.

Ruark's ankle suffered five fractures and torn ligaments, muscles and tendons after a fall during his 16-foot opening jump, in what he called a freak accident.

"I've done that exact same fall a thousand times, but normally there are pats there instead of wood," he said.

The spikes of Ruark's shoe caught the wood on his way down while his ankle was still moving, causing it to snap.

Ruark came into the season ranked 15th in the nation and was expected to help lead his teammates to a Big West Conference win.

"We have a really good chance to win conference this year," Cal Poly junior pole vaulter James Nuñno said. "Every point counts. Not having points from Adrian would have a huge effect on us."

Ruark's doctors do not yet know if he will need surgery or how long his recovery process will be, although he is hoping to return to pole vaulting by April.

"March is all entry-level meets that I can afford to miss, " Ruark said. "April is the month with all the biggest meets. If I miss those, it's going to be a challenge to get back."

Ruark did not qualify for nationals last year despite vaulting 17 feet, 3 inches and placing first at the conference meet.

"My first year at Cal Poly, I placed eighth at regionals and missed nationals by one spot. Last year I got ninth and missed nationals by one spot. This year I was hoping to not miss nationals by one spot."

Ruark's injured leg has already lost considerable strength, but he is trying to remain in shape by working his upper body while his ankle recovers.

"He's been working out really hard and doing everything he can to keep in shape for vaulting," Nuñno said. "When the doctor give him the OK, he won't be starting from scratch."

Ruark added, "Pole vaulting requires strength and speed. You need the whole package or it doesn't work."

Ruark will continue to train through next year, even if he does.

see Ruark, page 10

Mustang football recruits versatile, but most will redshirt, Ellerson says

Having won 32 of its last 46 games, Cal Poly typically redshirts the majority of its incoming freshmen.

Tristan Aired

As promising and versatile as the Cal Poly football program's recruiting class is, head coach Rich Ellerson hopes his team does not have to rely too heavily next season on its 14 incoming players.

The Mustangs announced their signings last Wednesday. Ellerson said the lone player he hopes can have an immediate impact is Ryan Mole, a tailback who played two seasons at Sacramento State before transferring to Allan Hancock College and now Cal Poly.

"I would think Ryan has the best chance to step in and be in the mix," Ellerson said Monday. "The freshmen, frankly, have to have some extra ability to be on the cup of getting some playing time. We have that every year, with the absence of some catastrophic injury. It's better for their adjustment to college. It's a real boon for them if they don't have to play in their first year. Inevitably, one or two of them are going to find themselves in the mix."

Mole, a Santa Maria native and Righetti High Graduate, rushed for 858 yards and five touchdowns as a freshman at Sacramento State. As a sophomore, the 5-foot-10, 195-pounder led 944 yards from scrimmage and received second-team All-Big West Sky Conference honors. He will have two years of eligibility at Cal Poly because he did not play at Hancock.

Cal Poly already has a deep backfield returning.

As a sophomore this past season, Mole had 944 yards from scrimmage and received second-team All-Big West Sky Conference honors. He will have two years of eligibility at Cal Poly because he did not play at Hancock.

see Football, page 10

The Wild Pitch

Putting the 'Big' in Big West

Tristan Aired

The Big West Conference teams are more about basketball than some might think.

Here are the numbers to prove it:

• The eight Big West teams have combined for an 11-6 record against West Coast Conference teams. Somehow, the WCC is still ranked four spots higher — at No. 12 — than Cal Poly (No. 16) among 32 Division I conferences in USA Today's Jeff Sagarin ratings.

• Big West teams have combined for winning records against the following conferences: Atlantic East (1-0), Big Sky (6-3), Ivy (1-0), Metro Atlantic (1-0), Mid-Continent (1-0), Mid-Eastern (1-0), Southeastern (1-0), Southern (3-2) and West Coast (11-1) conferences.

That's right, there is a win in there against an SEC team. UC Irvine, which Cal Poly shot past 89-80 Saturday, dismantled visiting South Carolina (12-11) — a team ranked 11th in the nation.

Here are the numbers to prove it:

• The eight Big West teams have combined for winning records against the following conferences: Atlantic East (1-0), Big Sky (6-3), Ivy (1-0), Metro Atlantic (1-0), Mid-Continent (1-0), Mid-Eastern (1-0), Southeastern (1-0), Southern (3-2) and West Coast (11-1) conferences.

That's right, there is a win in there against an SEC team. UC Irvine, which Cal Poly shot past 89-80 Saturday, dismantled visiting South Carolina (12-11) — a team ranked 11th in the nation.

The reason the Big West is stuck at No. 16 in the Sagarin ratings could partly be because it is tied for the fewest teams in its domain (eight).

Still, it is inexplicable for the Big West to be ranked four conferences lower than the WCC — which also has eight teams — when it has won 11 of 17 games played between the two conferences this season.

Granted, Big West teams are 0-8 against the Pac-10.

But don't let ESPN or USA Today fool you — the Pac-10 is under the best conference in the nation.

And when looking at that 0-8 mark, you must consider that three of the Big West's losses came at fifth-ranked UCLA. Not to mention, Cal State Northridge only lost 84-73 at No. 15 Oregon and UC Davis — which will join the Big West next season — only fell 84-72 at Stanford.

The top two teams in the Big West are ranked No. 1 and 2, but that doesn't work.

see Wild Pitch, page 11