Higher costs for food, energy and medicine push wholesale prices up sharply

Martin Crutsinger

WASHINGTON (AP) — Battered by bad economic news, consumer confidence plunged while wholesale food, energy and medicine costs soared, pushing inflation up at the fastest pace in a quarter century.

The Labor Department said Tuesday that wholesale inflation jumped by 1 percent in January, more than double the increase that analysts had been expecting.

The New York-based Conference Board reported that its confidence index fell to 75.0 in February, down from a revised January reading of 87.3. The drop was far below the 83 reading that analysts had forecast and put the index at its lowest level since February 2003, a period that reflected anxiety in the leadup to the Iraq war.

Consumers were shaken by a prolonged slump in housing that has pushed the country close to a recession. A third report Tuesday showed that home prices, measured by the S&P/Case-Shiller Index, dropped by 8.9 percent in the fourth quarter of last year, the steepest drop in the 20-year history of the index.

"Home prices across the nation and in most metro areas are significantly lower than where they were a year ago," said Robert Shiller, one of the index's creators. "Wherever you look, things look bleak.""The January inflation surge left wholesale price rises by 7.4 percent over the past 12 months, the fastest pace in more than 26 years.

The worse-than-expected performance was certain to capture attention at the Federal Reserve, which has chosen to combat a threatened recession by aggressively cutting interest rates in the belief that weaker economic growth will keep a lid on prices.

The combination of rising inflation and weaker growth raises the threat of "stagflation," the economic malady that plagued the country through the 1970s, when a series of oil shocks left households battered by the twin problems of stagnant growth and rising inflation.

The 1 percent jump in wholesale prices followed a 0.3 percent decline in December and was the biggest one-month increase since a 2.6 percent increase in November. That gain had been driven by sharply higher energy costs.

The big jump in wholesale prices followed a report last week that consumer prices had risen by a worse-than-expected 0.4 percent, reflecting higher costs for food, energy and health care.
Souza continued from page 1

CSU system, but by tearing into a 15-year-old building, it is going to be hard for us to be sustainable and it might not be cost effective," Souza said.

Souza said sustainable practices would cost more but did not rule out sustainable construction practices and materials completely.

"Building sustainable could pay off in the long run and pay for itself," he said.

The expansion is proposed because of the increasing amount of students and lack of machines and space in the facility.

"I really do like the Rec. Center idea; (the) school is only getting bigger," Marlin said.

Liberal studies freshman Sarah Wiercbrock agreed.

"As long as we pay after it is completed, I'm fine with it," said Wiercbrock, who had just left the Rec Center after not finding a machine and noted that she wouldn't mind paying the extra fees for a larger Rec Center.

Souza said he is working with the Empower Poly Coalition on solar panel installation to power the Rec Center pool, an effort that has been ongoing since he ran for office last spring.

Another important matter to Souza is safety. He talked about a problem with a crosswalk that leads to Spanos Stadium, and said there are not enough emergency blue light systems installed on campus. He thinks students should be able to stand at one blue light and see where the next one is.

"I want to install them in all future buildings and parking garages. Cerno Vista already has this, and Poly Canyon too, where there is a high resident traffic area," Souza said.

"We have a very safe campus when it comes to student safety on and off campus. Students shouldn't be scared!"

This year, ASI has also expanded The New York Times readers program so more students can pick up a national newspaper for free on campus.

Souza meets with and gives speeches to students, such as the freshmen Hall Council, on how he became president as well as his role at Cal Poly.

As one of the members of Hall Council, Wiercbrock heard Souza speak earlier this year and said she is impressed by what Souza is doing for the school.

"Souza is a really good communicator and seems to work really hard at what he does," Wiercbrock said.

Souza has weekly, biweekly and monthly meetings with people ranging from Cal Poly President Warren Baktar to ASI students to community members. One of those meetings each month is the Student Community Liaison Committee meeting held at City Hall.

"The Student Community Liaison Committee has created the San Luis Obispo Night with your Neighbors, keeping a good town and gown relationship, because things do pop up that affect our university's image," Souza said.

Corel Morton, vice president for Student Affairs at Cal Poly who also sits on the SLC with Souza, speaks highly of Souza's actions as ASI president.

"Brandon came in with a realistic understanding related to issues, services, programs and shared government. He is a good listener who uses his leadership to attempt to build bridges on specific issues," Morton said.

"So far, as ASI president, Souza said he has no regrets and loves every minute of being in office.

Souza will graduate in spring and was offered jobs as a fundraiser for nonprofits, an employee at an agriculture finance firm and other Associated Students positions, all in San Luis Obispo and Fresno. Some of the perks of being president include a driving a Toyota Highlander hybrid for ASI traveling, paid tuition for a year and priority registration.

Upcoming projects for Souza include driving to Sacramento to make a stand against legislation hurting the CSU system due to the state's recent budget deficits.

"It's encouraging because there are many different options purported to make a solution to allocating more funding to the college systems. We are now spending more on the education system, and for every dollar put into the system the state gets $4 in return," Souza said.

Economy continued from page 1

The wholesale report said that energy prices jumped 1.5 percent, as gasoline prices rose by 2.9 percent and the cost of home heating oil jumped by 8.5 percent.

Food prices, which have been surging because of increased demand stemming from ethanol production, rose by 1.7 percent last month, the biggest monthly increase in three years. Prices for beef, bakery products and eggs were all up sharply.

Corel, wholesale inflation, which excludes food and energy, posted a 0.4 percent increase, the biggest increase in 11 months. This gain was led by a 1.5 percent spike in the cost of prescription and non-prescription drugs.

The cost of book publishing was up 1.7 percent while the price of light trucks and passenger cars were both rose by 0.3 percent.

Prices excluding food and energy are up 2.5 percent over the past 12 months, the fastest 12-month gain since a 2.5 percent rise in the 12 months ending in October.

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Left Out

Whoopi Goldberg seemed sad and choked up on "The View" Monday when her fellow co-hosts discussed how she was not included in a montage featuring Oscar nominees during the Academy Awards telecast. The 52-year-old Goldberg has received two Oscar nominations, winning for her role as Oda Mae Brown in 1990's "Ghost." She hosted the event in 1994, 1996, 1999 and 2002. She did, however, appear as an Oscar winner in a separate montage Sunday night.

Goldberg appeared stunned that the academy would leave her out of the one clip, as well as repeat host Steve Martin.

Clapton in Korea

North Korean officials have invited rock guitarist Eric Clapton to play a concert in the Communist state, a diplomat at the country's embassy in London said Tuesday.

The diplomat confirmed reports in the British media that Clapton was officially invited to Pongyong — the first such invitation to a Western movie star to the isolated nation.

Eric Clapton is a well-known musician and guitarist, famous throughout the world," said the official, who declined to give his name. "It will be a good opportunity for Western music to be understood better by Koreans."

Not so funny

In a filing in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, attorneys for former sitcom star Jerry Seinfeld, asked a judge to throw out a lawsuit filed by Missy Cdiase Lapine against Seinfeld and his wife, expecting a good opportunity for Western music to be understood better by Koreans.

Lapine is seeking unspecified compensatory and punitive damages for copyright and trademark infringement, and made slander and defamation claims. Lapine, the author of "The Snarky Chef: Simple Strategies for Hiding Healthy Foods in Kids' Favorite Meals," accused Seinfeld's with plagiarizing her cookbook, Jessica Seinfeld's "Deceptively Delicious: Simple Secrets to Get Your Kids Eating Good Food." The lawsuit was published in October; Lapine's book was published in April.

More Britney Drama

Britney Spears' father and a lawyer who claims to represent her traded legal barbs Monday in an intensifying fight over whether James Spears is violating her civil rights by controlling her finances and life.

A lawyer for James Spears said in papers filed Monday that Attorney John Eardley cannot represent the singer because a probate judge in state court found that Britney Spears "lacks the capacity to hire an attorney, and Mr. Eardley cannot remove the conservatorship proceedings on his own behalf."

The pop star and her estate were placed under a temporary conservatorship after she was taken to UCLA Medical Center on Jan. 31, her second hospitalization in a month. Conservatorships are granted for people deemed unable to care for themselves or their affairs.

sick Naomi

Naomi Campbell was hospitalized in Sao Paulo and is being treated by one of Brazil's top specialists in infectious disease, the hospital's press office said Tuesday.

"The patient and her advisers have determined that the hospital's medical staff will not issue any formal or informal information on her medical condition," the hospital said in a statement. — Associated Press

State Briefs

SAN LUIS OBISPO (AP) — Cal Poly San Luis Obispo is planning a partnership with the Saudi Arabian government for an engineering program, which is being seen as a random attack, police said. Officials were sent to the AMC Fullerton 20 shortly before 7:30 Sunday night for a report of a bag being found containing illegal substances, police Lt. Tom Basham said.

While officers were on the scene, people started running out of the theater showing "The Signal," including two bloody men.

SANTAYNEZ (AP) — The Chumash Casino Resort in a major economic engine in Santa Barbara County, bringing jobs, increasing tourism and generating $136 million to the local economy.

A 40-page economic impact report funded by the Santa Barbara County Taxpayers Association business group concluded the Santa Ynez Valley Indian casino is a "significant economic enterprise."

Last year, the tribe had 1,587 employees and spent an estimated $185 million on labor, goods, services, payroll and financial distributions to tribal members.
Iraq combat tours to be cut even if troop reductions are suspended

Anne Flaherty

The Army's top general said Tuesday he hopes to reduce combat tours for soldiers in Iraq from 15 months to 12 months this summer, although he said it would not go back to the longer tours even if President Bush decides to suspend troop reductions for the second half of the year.

"We are consuming readiness now, as quickly as we're building it," said Army Secretary Pete Geren, who also testified.

Geren also urged Congress to pass a $100 billion war spending bill this spring, contending that the Army will run out of money by July.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, the Army could probably last until August or September by transferring money from less urgent accounts. Army officials counter that this approach is inefficient and can cause major program disruptions.

The hearing came as the Senate headed toward a vote on whether to cut off money for the war within 120 days. The measure, by Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wis., was widely expected to fail short of the 60 votes needed to pass.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey, right, and Army Secretary Preston Geren, before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

National Briefs

CANTON, Ohio (AP) — A jury began deliberating Tuesday whether to recommend the death sentence for a former police officer convicted of killing his pregnant girlfriend and their unborn daughter.

Bobby Cuts Jr. was led from the courtroom by sheriff's deputies after the judge began deliberations. It was the same jury that convicted Cuts earlier this month.

A sobbing Cuts appealed to the jury Monday to spare his life. He said he took responsibility for the deaths of 26-year-old Josie Davis and the couple's unborn daughter last June.

PHOENIX (AP) — Polygamist sect leader Warren Jeffs was handed over to Arizona authorities Tuesday to face charges alleging he arranged the marriages of two teenagers gig to older men.

He was already convicted in Utah.

Deputies from the Mohave County Sheriff's Office took custody of Jeffs from Utah officials, Jeff's spokeswoman Trish Carter said.

ATLANTA (AP) — When asked what he plans to do as a brand-new multimillionaire, lottery winner Robert Harris answered simply: "Live happy." 

The 47-year-old iron worker worked overtime just to make ends meet for his wife, Torina, and their three children and six grandchildren could visit.

The couple won Friday's $875 million Mega Millions jackpot — the largest prize won by a single player in Georgia Lottery history. With it, they plan to build that dream house, pay for their grandchildren's college education and shower their family with presents.

CINCINNATI (AP) — Two teenagers bid overnight in a house and spent more than six hours torturing a disabled woman after her mother left in the morning, authorities said.

Butler County Sheriff Richard Jones said the teenage boy and girl tied up the 18-year-old woman, dribbled her, kicked her, shaved her head and socked her with water before making her walk barefoot outside in the snow.

"This is one of the worst crimes I've ever seen," Jones said Monday. "They are sick animals, apparently enjoying this torture and no other reason."

CINCINNATI (AP) — American Airlines on Monday insisted it tried to help a passenger who died after complaining the cabin's oxygen, disputing the account of a relative who said that she was denied oxygen and that medical devices failed.

The airline said the oxygen tanks and defibrillator were working and noted that several medical professionals on the flight, including a doctor, tried to save passenger Connie Davis, 44, who had heart disease.

"American Airlines, after investigation, determined that oxygen was administered on the aircraft and it was working, and the defibrillator was applied as well," airline spokesman Charlie Wilson said Monday.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell said the bill is a good chance for the Senate to go on record again as refusing to cut off money for the war.

"All the more so we will oppose it when the fight in Iraq, by all accounts, is showing clear-cut tactical progress, and now, at last, some important political progress is also being made," McConnell, R-Ky., said.

In recent months, violence in Iraq has declined and the Baghdad government has made small steps toward political reconciliation, including plans to hold provincial elections on Oct. 1. While Democratic voters remain largely against the war, the security improvement has helped to cool anxiety among Republicans and ease off legislation demanding that troops start coming home.

With Feingold's bill almost assured to fail and lacking a veto-proof majority in Congress even if such a proposal passed, Democrats are talking about whether to shift their strategy. Instead of repeating losing votes on legislation trying to force troop withdrawals, many party members want to focus more on the policy issues surrounding Iraq, including the preparedness of U.S. troops and training in private contractors.

Another desire by many Democrats is to tie the almighty economy to the war. A coalition of anti-war groups said this week that it plans to spend more than $20 million this year to convince voters that the Republican party's support for the war is bad for their wallets.

Still, other Democrats, including Feingold, D-Wis., say they want to pursue more votes to end funding for the war.

According to aides, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., who co-sponsored Feingold's proposal, agreed to stage Tuesday's vote in exchange for Feingold's earlier support of a defense policy bill.

Anti-war activists say they believe Americans are increasingly aware of the economic burden the Iraq war has caused. This election season, they say, voters will blame Republicans for supporting the war at a time of rising health care and college costs and in the midst of a mortgage foreclosure crisis.

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A Soldier kisses his wife at his homecoming. Troops are too tired to continue for 15 months both mentally and physically and are now trying to reduce time to 12 months.
International Briefs

BAGHDAD (AP) — The Iraqi government demanded for the first time that Turkey immediately withdraw troops from northern Iraq, warning Tuesday it feared an ongoing incursion could lead to clashes with the official foes of the semiautono­
mous Kurdish region.

Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the operation would only end “once its goal has been reached.”

* * *

BANJA LUKA, Bosnia-Her­
zegovina (AP) — Police fired tear gas at Bosnian Serb rioters Tuesday to prevent them from storming the building of the U.S. consulate after protests against Kosovo’s independ­ence.

A group split away from the al­most 10,000 peaceful protestors in Banja Luka and headed toward the consulate, breaking shop windows and throwing stones at police who blocked the streets leading to the building with armoured vehicles.

Some bystanders returning from the peaceful part of Tuesday’s pro­test yelled “shame on you!” at the ri­oters. One man, apparently a former Bosnian Serb soldier, shouted, “This is not what I bought for!”

* * *

NEW DELHI (AP) — De­fense Secretary Robert Gates Tuesday he was not concerned about a missile test announced by Indian officials on the same day he was holding talks with the prime minister and other leaders.

Instead, he said he is impressed by how much the relationship between the American and Indian military has grown in recent years, and the United States is interested in further expanding that relationship.

India’s quest to modernize its military against a backdrop of Clas­si’s burgeoning defense growth and an ongoing regional terrorism threat are key focuses of Gates visit here.

* * *

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — President Hugo Chavez’s gov­ernment is taking battle against U.S.“imperialism” into Venezuelans’ dictionaries, urging state phone company workers to avoid English­language business and tech terms.

Through a campaign launched Monday, newly nationalized CANTV hopes to wean employees and others from words like “staff” (English is preferred), “marketing” ("mercadario") and “password” ("contraseña").

Stickers and banners printed up by the company exhort Venezuelans to “Say it in Spanish. Say it with pride.”

* * *

NEW YORK (AP) — Most of the world’s Internet users lost access to YouTube.com for several hours Sunday after an attempt by Pakistan’s government to block access from domes­
tically affected other countries.

The outage highlighted yet an­other of the Internet’s vulnerabili­ties, coming less than a month af­ter broken fiber-optic cables in the Mediterranean took Egypt off line and caused communication prob­lems from the Middle East to India.

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“All people deserve to fulfill potential.” This is the line reiterated throughout “The Heidi Chronicles,” a Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Wendy Wasserstein, that portrays the play’s main theme.

This resonating line is the writer’s definition of feminism, according to Pamela Malkin, a Cal Poly theatre professor and director of the upcoming performances.

“She branded feminism as humanism, stating women and men should have intellectual, emotional, political and social equality. Wendy Wasserstein and her characters did not like any philosophy that was too rigid,” Malkin emphasized. “Her characters are bright, funny and witty, and struggle to be true to themselves.”

More than 50 actors — mostly Cal Poly students — auditioned last fall for the cast of eight. This comedy takes the audience from 1965 into the 1990s, as the characters find their way through women’s movements and gender gaps.

Wasserstein wrote the play in 1989 out of frustration; she didn’t think theatre at the time showed women she recognized, Malkin said. “She captured contemporary women’s struggles, particularly women that wanted both intellectual independence and a long-term relationship,” Malkin said of Wasserstein.

Each character shows personal changes, especially Susan, played by theatre junior Lindsey Cieibel. When Susan is first introduced, she’s at the forefront of the women’s movement. Then, as she grows older, she withdraws from everything she once knew. Malkin told Cieibel to study Samantha from “Sex and the City,” taking note of how she talks and the way she moves, in order to prepare for playing Susan.

“My character changes drastically with every decade. I am up there at the top with the feminist movement, then go into being self-absorbed in Hollywood. She is a really fun character to play in the end,” Cieibel said.

The historical context sets the scene as the women transform in both positive and negative ways. The women try to transcend the stereotype of working women while simultaneously attempting to fulfill their dreams.

“It’s a great story coming through history. It hits all the decades, some of the characters are quirky and change as the decades change. It’s really a beautiful story about Heidi, who plays the main character, and how she tries to stay true to herself,” Geibel said.

“The Heidi Chronicles” opens Thursday in Spanos Theatre and have showings Friday, Saturday, and March 6 to 8. All shows begin at 8 p.m.

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**Principles of Geometry album is sooooo sexy**

French music is hot. HOT. OMG HOT. Like, I only listen to French music when I rollerblade in spandex along the Paris Plage. I put on my roller-blades. Oh, god. You all love Justice, right? You all know the song “D.A.N.C.E.” And you all worship Daft Punk. “Oh, Daft Punk, I love you, Daft Punk.” Ooh, oh Beethoven’s new album, old Serge Gainsbourg psychedelic reissue compilations or Brigitte Bardot. Speaking of hot, if you like all things French, please tune into the Le Rendezvous show on KCFR, 91.3 FM Tuesdays from 5 to 6 p.m. for the hittest, Frenchiest, sexiest show hosted by Katrine and IJ Nurella.

If you’re skeptical, which smart people should you be online and download some TFC? I recommend the “Travailler” Dj Orgasmic remix. And I’m not going to get started on French House in detail because it would take up the rest of this column. But a good place to begin is a good, old-fashioned Ed Banger’s compilation.

This fascination with all things French started on the music front quite a while ago (Daft Punk = ‘90s), like back before you were calling french fries “freedom fries.” You’re reading this because you’re hip and want to know what the hottest, newest, sexiest French album is. In my humble opinion, this would be Principles of Geometry’s “Lazarr.” Why? Well, allow me to explain.

Principles of Geometry is the product of the combined genius of Guillaume Gosso and Jeremy Duval. They have beards. They use a synthesizer. This record is like a sex-time dance party at a NASA launch site in the late ‘70s, when the cocaine was good and the disco was hot. Except we would all be wearing astronaut bathing suits, speedos and mini-shorts galore. Somehow they line the
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What happens when the sophistication of jazz collides with the raw grit of hip-hop? The Crown City Rockers, that's what. And they're bringing their unique sound to Cal Poly's University Union tomorrow.

If you talk about innovative and eclectic hip-hop bands, the Rockers are bound to surface. Combining the polished musical talents of three Berklee College of Music graduates, one street-savvy emcee and one beat-producing guru, the five-piece group breathes fresh air into the worlds of jazz, funk, hip-hop and soul.

"We're an amalgamation of sounds," emcee and frontman Raashan Ahmad said. "Each of us comes from such different musical backgrounds. Our music is literally all over the place, which is one of our strongest points."

Relying on sampling and live instruments as a backdrop to smooth, poetic lyrics, the group offers a vibrantly organic sound. Crown City Rockers is similar in comparison to such pioneering acts as De La Soul and A Tribe Called Quest, but in a category all their own.

Group members originated from all over the U.S. but eventually met and formed in the Boston/Roxbury scene during the late '90s. In 1999, they headed west to the Bay Area to record a self-titled EP (then under the name "Mission."). A few years and a full-length album later, the band changed its name to Crown City Rockers. Since then, the group has been touring extensively in support of its most recent full-length, "Earthtones," playing for countless fans across the globe.

"We've really been grindin' lately," Ahmad said. "From Japan to the U.K., all our audiences are super live."

Grinding has brought Crown City Rockers to San Luis Obispo many times before, prompting the band to call Downtown Brewing Co. its "second home." Brenden Gough is a student at Cuesta College, but still plans to come to campus to enjoy the Rockers' live show Thursday.

"I've seen them play before," Gough said. "Their live shows are always good; they have a very positive vibe."

Bullshit continued from page 7

album with steaming Italo-Disco cuts that drip with sex, juxtaposed against two clever hip-hop cuts that trick you into liking them. These are surrounded by expansive amounts of intelligent, technical beats that are at times fancy and for moments spacey, cinematic and otherworldly.

Then they lay out the hits, like an Italo-Disco track with Sebastien Tellier on vocoder called "A Mountain for a President," or the straight-up club jams that build and build with layers and subtleties that will call you back again and again. This record is like a lover who treats you like a worthless sack of skin, but is so good in bed you put out every time. French people put out Principles of Geometry puts out, KCRW puts out.

Brian Cassidy is an English senior and music director for KCRW, San Luis Obispo, 91.3 FM. He's also completely full of it.

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Columbia Daily Spectator (Columbia L.C.)

“The sitcom is dead!”

That has been the rallying cry of industry types and the public alike ever since the end of “Friends.” Yes, there have been hitos, even brilliant, half-hour shows gracing the airwaves in the past few years — series like “Arrested Development,” “V” and “The Office.” But in spite of their respective Best Comedy Emmy runs, the viewership of these programs has been shaky at best. Furthermore, with their absurd humor and sitcom one-camera style of shooting, they are anything but traditional.

Still, the cry of the sitcom’s untimely death seems like a premature proclamation by an industry that needs to indulge in rash and harsh criticism of the slightest mistep. In only three episodes of “The New Adventures of Old Christine” — a show chugging solidly along for three seasons now — there is enough reason to realize that although the sitcom’s ultimate savior is still waiting in the wings, the genre has not flattened yet.

“The sitcom is dead!” The show’s premise is simple. Christine Campbell, played with verve by Julia Louis-Dreyfus in the role that finally shuttered the so-called “Seinfeld curse,” is a happily divorced woman trying to navigate the world of dating once again. She must also contend with countless awkward situations, like trying to save face among the haughty guests at her son’s private school. She gets along quite well with her immature ex-husband Richard (Clark Gregg), her less-so with his much younger girlfriend, also named Christine — hence the title of the show. The entire ensemble, including Hamish Linklater as Christie’s goofy live-in brother, is great, including Hamish Linklater as Chris- tine’s goofy live-in brother, is great, but Dreyfus, in the end, stands alone. The only other person to come close is the always-welcome Wanda Sykes, playing Christine’s best friend and gym co-owner Barb.

Since the beginning, not much has changed. Christine is as prone to neurosis and lackluster in love as ever, but perhaps thanks to the show’s shortened runs, each episode still feels fresh. The third season premiere, which aired last Monday, once again firmly engaged in a relationship with the man whom she was switched with all last season — her former teacher Mr. Harris, played by the charming Blair Underwood. But a few episodes later, she will once again be alone. Yet, even in a relationship, Christine is still her over-the-top, anxious self. She refuses to share so that she will not be tempted to have sex with Mr. Harris,车道 herself with a “hair chastity belt.” It is this kind of quirky, over-the-top humor that keeps us in tune with a “hair chastity belt.” It is this kind of quirky, over-the-top humor that keeps us in tune with the show.

Watching Dreyfus in her Emmy-winning role is a curious experience. She is frazzled and frantic, obese and absurd — a “30 Rock” Liz Lemon of a character existing in the laugh track-aided world of Mary Tyler Moore. The writing is top-notch, and the performances both nuanced and broad, but still, the format seems outdated and hokey at times.

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McCaIlin, Clinton, Obama, oh my... but what about California?

It seems in this season of presi­dential politics that little else matters other than talking pennies, campaign endorsements, and the like. One thing forgotten about, though, is the home front. Unless you are an ardent political figure who may not have noticed California is facing a $16 billion budget deficit. For those of you out there from the Soviet States of Southern California and the Peo­ple’s Republic of San Francisco, this means the state is spending more than it is taking in, and I blame you.

If you or someone you know supported Proposition 98 in 1988 without also supporting Proposition 74 in 2005 to suspend and decrease education spending in times of budgetary hardship, I blame you.

If you are a Republican who compromised your values to elect Arnold Schwarzenegger in the rec­all of 2003 just because he was electable, I blame you.

If you are a state politician who provides no service to the people you represent and has done nothing to solve the problem, I blame you.

If you are a citizen who votes for the leaders you elect, because you like the promises they make to you, despite the fact that they have consistent­ly broken those promises, I blame you.

If you voted against Propositions 74, 75, 76 and 78 in 2005 because you were easily swayed by the pro­paganda of unions and bureaucrats, you are an idiot and I once again blame you.

Finally, if you are not outraged by the current state of affairs, I blame you.

For several years now, the state budget has been a problem and little has been done to solve it. The prob­lem is largely structural in nature. This is largely due to constitutional requirements for spending in areas such as education. These require­ments force the state to increase spending when times are good, whereas the people use the services for and changes in inflation. This is all fine and good, except when you pay taxes. Some people see it to claim that there are no considerations of decreasing revenue in these require­ments. In cases such as these, the state has been forced to divert funding from other spending categories like transportation and levy protection to “the打赢 night club.” Don’t get me wrong, I love education and I think it is an important priority. However, if we look at the results of the increased spending, California has gone from the top 5 percent of schools to the bottom 5 percent of schools. Is throwing more money at the problem really helping? But I digress.

It is this type of budgetary prob­lem that contributed to the recall of Governor Gray Davis. Many heralded Arnold as the savior of the state, for the record, I voted for McCain). They said he was going to come in and “terminate” all the problems. While he started strong, he let his ego get in the way and became more “moderate” af­ter he failed to gain substantial re­forms. The state needed the reforms of Propositions 76 (state budget spending limits) and 77 (redistrict­ing). Had either of these passed, the state would not be hurting as much as it is. If you might want to ask: Poli­tics, plain and simple. The politicians in power like to keep their power. They are not going to make spend­ing cuts even if they are necessary because that is the way they get elected. They are the “bad guy,” when it comes to education funding and prison spending. The bottom line is our elected representatives are not here to serve us.

They are beholden to the Califor­nia Teachers Association, who went bankrupt forcing the governor in 2005’s reform efforts, just as they are beholden to the police and fire unions, the nurses’ unions, and the prison guards’ union. These groups and others spend millions on the elections, seeing to it that they get more of the budget pie. When there isn’t enough to go around, they spend millions more seeing to it that their share is protected.

I can’t tell you what the solution is. I doubt a long-term solution will be found in the future, if at all. Yet, I am cynical. Politicians will continue to spend like drunken sailors, unions will continue to fight for more money, and California will continue to be raped by the system. It is a vicious circle that will continue to drain the state of California’s economy from housing, to agriculture and technology. Until we see a new breed of people who are interested in a self-sustaining state, I don’t see much hope for the beleaguered Republican Party to get elected.

They learned this by bitter ex­perimentation in 2004, when they ran candidates with that same-old Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) poll-tested, empty-cas­sette de­me­n­c­ar that we’ve come all (and in my case, later). They especially tried to cast the elec­tion as Bush vs. [Not Bush], and much to their disappointment, the public saw it more like Bad ideas vs. [No ideas].

I know I could win a lot of debate on this issue, but the fore­ sight of the Democratic Party, but something tells me they’re not going to let it happen again this November.

We can observe this with the referees (almost slow and narrow) of these extreme-centrist, DLC­ grooved candidates like Hillary Clinton and John Edwards. The Democratic Party finally recognizes that before it will be able to authentically take back the White House, it must funda­mental­ly re­c­ar­i­se with a new and more importantly patriotic (lib­eral) political vision, garner a new American majority of voters, and have enough backbone to stand on its own principles.

They also have the benefit of being against a party that was already counting on casting a Hillary Clinton vs. [Not Hillary Clinton] election, and now it is clear that they don’t even have that going for them.

Again, one of the hardest re­al­i­ties is that this bullsh*t is going to have to wrap his or her mind around, however, is al­ though Americans are tired of the excesses of fear and bitter part­ner­ship associated with the W-era, they know simply putting a Democrat in the White House will not fix all their problems.

They want a strong yet open­minded leader capable of reaching across the aisle to achieve genuine progress and prosperity... some­thing they haven’t gotten as op­posed to a different flavor of what they’ve already got.

Americans are sick and tired of partisan polit­icians­hacks of other-people’s problems at the federal level. This is to say (and you just might have heard this phrase lately) “They want change, and looks as if right now the Democratic Party may be able to surf this wave of change and huger to political greatness.

Let them not forget, as Win­ston Churchill once said, “The price of greatness is responsibil­ity.”

Jade McGowan is a political sci­ence sop­ho­more and a new Mustang Daily liberal columnists.
Basketball
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minutes and 18 seconds in a 53-47
defeat at the hands of UC Davis
before surrendering a 17-4 run
amidst the final 6:17 of regulation
in a 75-69 overtime loss to Pacific
on Saturday.

"I think our hearts were defi­
nitely broken," Mimnaugh said of
the pair of falters, in which Cal
Poly committed a combined 51
turnovers. "I think the team is re­
ally searching for an opportunity
to come away with a win."

The Highlanders have had no
problem doing that, as their six­
game spree was triggered with a
67-55 victory over Cal Poly on
Feb. 2, when the Mustangs went
7:44 without scoring, descending
a 30-24 deficit into a 42-24 mar­
gin they couldn't recover from.

Guard Seyram Gbewonyo was
7 of 13 from the floor to lead the
Highlanders with 23 points, while
forward Tainoisouti Lott went 6 of
10 to chip in 14 points.

In UC Riverside's 64-55 win
over Cal State Fullerton on Sat­
urday, Gbewonyo led four double­
digit scorers with 15 points, and
Lott added 14 of her own.

Gbewonyo is third in the con­
ference in scoring, at 13.0 points
per contest, but more instrumental
to the Highlanders'surge could be
their defense, which ranks No. 1
in the Big West by holding oppo­
nents to just 38.8-percent shoot­
ing from the floor.

Still, Mimnaugh says fifth-place

Junior forward Megan Harrison
(23) and Cal Poly can still earn a
bye in the conference tournament in
Anaheim from March 12 to 15.

Cal Poly, which leads the confer­
cence in both rebounding (40.2 per
game) and assist-to-turnover ratio
(1.5 per game), should be encour­
gaged by its close outing against
first-place UC Santa Barbara (16-7, 12-1) in a 74-72 overtime
loss Feb. 16 and then the more
recent, narrow slipup against sec­
ond-place UC Davis (17-4, 11-3),
which beat UCSB 59-56 in over­
time Saturday.

"This has been a freaky kind of
year," Mimnaugh said. "It's really
been a lack of consistent perfor­
mance on our team's behalf."

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Sorensen

continued from page 16

strength to even finish them," Rodriguez said. "Our coach knows what he is doing. He has trained many champions over his coaching career, so we trust his judgment."

During the season, September through February, the women's swim team competes at some races almost every weekend. When everyone goes home for winter break, the team is at Cal Poly training for two hours, twice a day.

"Our team is like a family. We are with each other more than some families are, so we share a lot of memories and good times together," Rodriguez said. "Sometimes I wonder what I am doing wasting my whole college life at a pool, working my butt off, but then I remember I have all awesome friends/teammates there with me every day doing the same thing."

Sorensen spent the past two summers training with head coach Tom Miles every morning. Although Sorensen would like a summer break, she says the non-stop training is necessary.

"After a week of being out of the water, it hurts to get back in," she said. "I'll feel like I'm not going anywhere. I'm taking strokes and nothing's happening. At the end of the season, we're in water constantly, almost every day. Because if we lose that feeling, there goes everything."

Last year, Sorensen set three Cal Poly records in one day for the 50, 100 and 200 freestyle.

"Stacey pushes herself in practice when necessary, and her times reflect it," Rodriguez said. "She has a fast arm speed-turnover rate, and heart to beat out the competition next to her, and that is what makes her a great swimmer."

Sorensen credits her swimming success to her competitive personality.

"I've always been competitive with my brothers," she said. "Even in school, I'll have a class with a friend and I'll be like, 'What did you get on this test?'"

"If she sees someone who is doing something better than her, she takes it to the next level," Pam Sorensen said. "She doesn't like to be beat."

While juggling all of her responsibilities, Stacey Sorensen has little time for much of a social life.

"I just feel like I have the rest of my life to do that and I can only swim for so long," she said. "And I really enjoy it so it hasn't bothered me to give up these other things."

Pam Sorensen explained that Stacey has made the Dean's List every quarter since she's been at Cal Poly.

Of the Olympic trials possibility, Sorensen said, "I probably will do it because it would be such a great experience, just to say that I tried it. But it's hard now that I could be done."
 playing together before it can make a run for the playoffs.

Miami Heat (A-): Wow, what a deal. They acquired some lottery championship out of Shaquille O'Neal and then dumped his $40 million salary for one of the best small forwards in the game, Shawn Marion.

Orlando Magic (B-): Although they failed to make any major, major transactions, this is just a reminder that they vastly overpaid for Rashard Lewis and now overpaid for Hedo Turkoglu, playing very similarly and at the same level.

Washington Wizards (N/A): It is understandable that they didn't want to make any last-second trades at the deadline because Gilbert Arenas will be rejoining Antawn Jamison and Caron Butler in the lineup soon.

Northwest Division

Denver Nuggets (C-): The Nuggets traded for Tamme Green right before the deadline. It's OK if you don't know who he is but this Denver fan doesn't know either.

Minnesota Timberwolves (B): By moving from Denver to Houston, the Timberwolves received a second-round draft pick, but it was really worth it. As for Kevin Love, he must have missed the cupcake dunk during the all-star game because there is no way he would have traded Green.

Portland Trail Blazers (N/A): There were rumors of them being involved in the Kidd trade; they were going to send many players on their bench for Harris. The team's young talent has developed very well and when Greg Oden returns next year they will be a force to be reckoned with.

Utah Jazz (A-): They've played lights-out since acquiring Kyle Korver more than a month ago. Silently, they are one of the best teams in the West, and people are sleeping on this team even though it reached the Western Conference finals last year.

Seattle Supersonics (B+): David Stern made his official when he told the media that the Sonics will inevitably move to Oklahoma City. Before the relocation, the Sonics decided to rid themselves of excess salaries for more draft picks.

Pacific Division

Golden State Warriors (D+): They weren't able to trade Mickael Piernas before the deadline, though many teams were interested in him. Now, the Warriors face the possibility that he will sign with another team this summer as an unrestricted free agent, and they will have nothing to show for it.

Los Angeles Clippers (N/A): The season is over and they will still only focusing on when Ethon Brand will return. Instead, they should be making the proper changes that will allow them to compete for the playoffs next year.

Los Angeles Lakers (A+): Kobe Bryant's game rose to a whole new level of intensity with Pau Gasol in the lineup. There is no doubt in my mind that Bryant would elect to amputate his injured pinky instead of surgery, which could sideline him for six weeks.

Phoenix Suns (B-): Bringing O'Neal in was not the best move, but Marion's threatening to opt out of his contract off-season didn't help.

Sacramento Kings (F): The Kings must have realized that they can't compete in the Western Conference any time soon so they have entered the rebuilding mode. The problem with that is they didn't trade Ron Artest.

Southwest Division

Dallas Mavericks (B-): Yes, it was bad to trade for Kidd, but Mark Cuban and the Mavericks had no other choice. Kidd will bring veteran leadership to the Mavericks and will be a better facilitator than Harris.

Houston Rockets (B): On Thursday the Rockets traded Bonzi Wells and Mike James for Bobby Jackson. Wells and James were lost on the bench and this move was done so that the team could add some veteran leadership.

Memphis Grizzlies (F): John Wayne in "The Searchers" said, "Well, there are some things a man just can't run away from." Grizzlies general manager Chris Wallace needs to remember that quote because the chain reaction he caused when trading Gasol to the Lakers created a wild West for many other managers, coaches and team owners will not easily forget.

New Orleans Hornets (C): Although they added more depth with Wells and James, it was unnecessary. They were already one of the top teams in the Western Conference, under the radar.

San Antonio Spurs (A-): Bringing Tim Duncan through a Britt Barry trade was a fantastic move for the Spurs. He is a veteran who will know his role in the offense. Thong is as also one of the few people that could guard Tim Duncan effectively, and now that they're teammates, that problem is resolved.

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CLASSIFIEDS
The NBA, where trading happens

Dmitry Beck

The NBA trade deadline has passed, and the dust is finally settling following the flurry of the latest player transactions. Here are grades for each team evaluating the trades they have made this season:

Atlantic Division

Boston Celtics (A-): Over the summer, Danny Ainge must have sold his soul to the devil (aka Kevin McHale) in order to revitalize the Celtics and make them one of the NBA powerhouses.

New Jersey Nets (A): Not many teams can trade a disgruntled, aging all-star, get cap room and a better player in return like the Nets did last week when they shipped out Jason Kidd for Devin Harris. Statistically, Harris is better than Kidd on offense and defense.

New York Knicks (D): They made some noise while pondering trading either Eddy Curry or Stephon Marbury up to the trade deadline. To nobody's surprise, both are still Knicks.

Philadelphia 76ers (B): Since trading for Gordan Giricek, the 76ers have won more and are now competing for the last playoff spot.

Toronto Raptors (N/A): Even after acquiring Primoz Brezec, the Raptors still deserve an incomplete because they did not address any issues.

Central Division

Chicago (C+): Even though Ben Wallace was a huge disappointment in Chicago, trading for Drew Gooden and Larry Hughes was not the answer. Obviously, John Paxson has never visited www.heylarryhughespleasestoptaking-somanybadshots.com.

Cleveland Cavaliers (A): Wallace should provide the Cavaliers with veteran leadership and defensive toughness. Joe Smith will add depth to the bench, somanybadshots.com

Detroit Pistons (A-): By trading for Juan Dixon, the Pistons didn't really accomplish much, but they didn't need to because they are a great veteran team playing in a weak conference.

Indiana Pacers (N/A): They needed to trade Jermaine O'Neal while he still had an ounce of value, but with all of his injuries, he made it impossible.

Milwaukee Bucks (N/A): The Bucks have terrible team chemistry and can't even make the playoffs in the Eastern Conference. The roster needs to be shaken up, and players like Michael Redd, Andrew Bogut and Mo Williams could have brought great value back in the trade market.

Southeast Division

Atlanta Hawks (B+): Trading for Mike Bibby finally addressed their point guard issues and it will take pressure off Joe Johnson in the backcourt.

Charlotte Bobcats (N/A): They didn't make any trades, but surprising as it may seem, that was the right move. This team possesses talent; it just needs more time.

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see NBA, page 15

The Give and Go

One milestone down, another to go?

Cary Conrady

Brandon Haynes

On Saturday, Cal Poly women's swim team captain Stacy Sorensen swam in the last meet of the season — and of her college career — at the Big West Conference Championships.

Four years of intense athletic training comes to an abrupt end with graduation looming. Now Sorensen has to decide if her days as a swimmer are over or if she is going to begin training for the Olympic trials because, as she says, she has "always loved competing."

"Stacey will be missed so much on the team," sophomore teammate Chamar Rodriguez said. "There were tears at the conference meet, when we all began to realize this was her last meet and her college swimming career was finished."

Sorensen's swimming career began at age 8, when her elementary school friends convinced her to join the local summer league team in San Rafael. Even though all of her friends dropped out, she stuck with it.

"There was no push from home for her to continue swimming," said Sorensen's mother, Pam Sorensen. "It was just something she wanted to do. She doesn't like to run or hike, but she can swim for hours."

Monday through Friday, Sorensen meets with her team at 6 a.m. for practice, then again at 3 p.m. for a second round of practice. There is also a morning practice every Saturday.

"Our coach is extremely tough and gives us workouts each day that challenge our

see Sorensen, page 14

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Women's Basketball

Struggling Mustangs still in Big West hunt

Most of Cal Poly's losses in Big West Conference play were close, including three coming in overtime

Donovan Aird

Despite the fact that the Cal Poly women's basketball team has lost eight of 10 games, and will next play UC Riverside, which has won six straight, the Mustangs could still have plenty of reasons to be optimistic about their chances in the Big West Conference race.

"There are four or five teams that, if they get on a roll at any particular time, could all win it," said Cal Poly head coach Faith Mimnaugh.

Her Mustangs (9-17, 6-7), who've lost five of seven Big West play were close, including three coming in overtime

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