Dalai Lama committed to autonomy

Mamel Valdes

SEATTLE — The Dalai Lama said Sunday that Tibet cannot make any more concessions to China and renewed his call for the government to cease suppression in his former homeland and withdraw troops.

The exiled Tibetan spiritual leader denied Chinese claims that he has called for Tibet to be split from China and that he is behind recent turmoil, saying instead he is committed to pursuing Tibet's right to autonomy.

"The whole world knows that the Dalai Lama is not seeking independence, nor separation," he said at a news conference.

Recent protests in Tibet against five decades of Chinese rule have been the largest and most sustained in almost two decades and have fueled pro-China and anti-China sentiments that have been the largest and most sustained in almost two decades and have fueled pro-China and anti-China sentiment.

The Dalai Lama said that if the Chinese stop such suppression and withdraw armed police and troops, he would advise all Tibetans to stop their protests.

Iraqis dismiss 1,300 soldiers after Basra fiasco

Slobodan Lekic

BAGHDAD — Iraq's government moved Sunday to restore discipline within the ranks of the security forces, sacking more than 1,300 soldiers and policemen who deserted during recent fighting against Shiite militias in Basra.

At the same time, Iraq's Cabinet ratcheted up the pressure on anti-American Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr by approving draft legislation barring political parties with militias from participating in upcoming provincial elections.

Al-Sadr, who heads the country's biggest militia, the Mahdi Army, has been under intense pressure from Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, also a Shiite, to disband the Mahdi Army or face political isolation.

Al-Sadr's followers are eager to take part in the local elections because they believe they can take power away from rival Shiite parties in the vast, oil-rich Shiite heartland of southern Iraq.

And in a new move to stem the flow of money to armed groups, the government ordered a crackdown on militiamen controlling state-run and private gas stations, refineries and oil-distribution centers.

It is believed that gas stations and distribution centers, especially in eastern Baghdad and some southern provinces, are covertly controlled by Shiite militias dominated by the Mahdi Army.

The failure of government forces to capture Basra despite superiority in numbers and firepower was an embarrassment to al-Maliki, who ordered the offensive and personally supervised it during the first week.

It also raised questions whether Iraq's mostly Shiite army and police can confront Shiite militias, including Iranian-backed "special groups," which the U.S. command now considers the greatest threat to Iraqi democracy with the diminishing influence of al-Qaida in Iraq.

National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley said al-Qaida in Iraq is very active in southern Iraq.

"So we have illegal militias in the southern part of the country that really are acting as criminal elements that are pressing the people down there and, in good measure, as we've seen, alienating the Iraqis from Iran," Hadley said. "Foxy see Iraq, page 2
Rolling
continued from page 1

He said he joined an adult online
discussion group devoted to the
books in 1999 before launching his
own Web site as a hobby a year later.

Since then, neither Rolwing nor her
publisher had ever complained about
anything on it she said.

In May 2004, he said, Rolwing
mentioned his Web site on her own,
saying, "This is a great site that I
have been known to sneak into a
Internet café while out writing and
check a fact rather than go into a
bookshop and buy a copy of Harry
Potter (which is embarrassing). A Web
site for the dangerously obsessive; my
natural home."

Iraq
continued from page 1

News Sunday"

The Bara's offensive - which opened March 25 -
quickly stalled amid strong resistance from
numerous militant groups, despite artillery and air support provided by
U.S. and British forces.

During the attack more than 1,000 security forces -
including a full infantry battalion — refused to fight or
joined the militias, handing them weapons and vehicles.

U.S. officials have praised al-Maliki for the determina-
tion he showed in confronting the militia, but they have
told the Bara's operation was hardly arranged and badly
equipped. Critics said it highlighted the Iraqi army's poor
leadership and the low morale among its rank and file.

Washington maintains that as the Iraqi forces increase
their capabilities, they will replace U.S. troops providing se-
curity in much of the country. But last week, Defense Sec-
tary Robert Gates acknowledged that future U.S. troop
withdrawals will go more slowly.

Speaking to reporters in Bras, Interior Ministry spokes-
man Maj. Gen. Abdul-Karim Khalaf said the government
had fired 421 policemen who have not returned to duty
since the campaign ended. They included 37 senior police of-
icers ranging in rank from lieutenant colonel to brigade

Khalaf said that 500 soldiers who have been absent
without leave since the campaign ended on March 30 had
also been dismissed and would be tried by military courts.

"Some of them were sympathetic with these lawbreak-
ers, some refused to go into battle for political or national or
sectarian or religious reasons," Khalaf said.

The majority of Iraq soldiers and police are Shiites. Many of the government troops said to have been\nsufficient to confront fellow Shiites in battle.

In Kirk, a city 100 miles southeast of Baghdad that was\nalso affected by the fighting, 400 more policemen were
dismissed, said a senior police commander who asked not\nto be named because he is not authorized to speak to the medi

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Monday, April 14, 2008

News editors: Sara Hamilton, Giana Magnoli
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Huge crowd expected to greet pope at White House

Jennifer Loven
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The leader of the world’s Roman Catholics has been to the White House only once in history. That changes this week, and President Bush is pulling out all the stops: driving out to a suburban military base to meet Pope Benedict XVI’s plane, bringing a giant audience to the South Lawn and hosting a fancy East Room dinner.

These are all firsts. Bush has never before given a visiting leader the honor of picking him up at the airport. In fact, no president has done so at Andrews Air Force Base, the typical landing spot for modern leaders.

A crowd of up to 12,000 is due at the White House on Wednesday morning for the pope’s official, pomp-filled arrival ceremony. It will feature the U.S. and Holy See anthems, a 21-gun salute, and the U.S. Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps. Both men will make remarks before their Oval Office meeting and a send-off for his popemobile down Pennsylvania Avenue.

The White House crowd will be the largest of Bush’s presidency. It even beats the audience last spring for Queen Elizabeth II, which numbered about 7,000.

The evening festivities will mark the first time the Bushes have put on a high-profile meal in honor of someone who isn’t even a guest. Wednesday is the pontiff’s 81st birthday, and the menu celebrates his German heritage with Bavarian-style food.

But Benedict’s prayer service that evening with U.S. bishops at a famed Washington basilica preclude him from coming to the dinner, according to the White House. Catholic leaders will be there instead.

The president explained the special treatment — particularly the airport greeting.

“One, he speaks for millions. Two, he doesn’t come as a politician; he comes as a man of faith,” Bush told the EWTN Global Catholic Network in an interview aired Friday. He added that he wanted to honor Benedict’s conviction that “there’s right and wrong in life, that moral relativism has a danger of undermining the capacity to have more hopeful and free societies.”

The Bush-Benedict get-together will be the 25th meeting between a pope and a sitting president.

The first did not come until shortly after the end of World War I, when Woodrow Wilson was received at the Vatican by Pope Benedict XV in 1919. The next wasn’t for 40 more years, when President Eisenhower saw Pope John XXIII in Rome. President Carter hosted the first White House visit by a pope, when John Paul II came on Oct. 6, 1979.

Since then, such audiences have become a must-do. Every president has met with the pope at least once, often more.

There are more than 64 million reasons for this. Catholics number nearly one-quarter of the U.S. population, making them a desirable constituency for politicians to court. Worldwide, there are now an estimated 1 billion Roman Catholics.

“The pope represents not just the Catholic Church but the possibility of moral argument in world affairs and it is very important for American presidents to rub up against that from time to time,” said George Weigel, a Catholic theologian and biographer of Pope John Paul II.

The Vatican — sort of a government as well as a religious headquarters — has an interest, too.

“It wants to be a player in world affairs, and everyone understands that to do that you have to be in conversation with the United States,” said John Allen, the Vatican correspondent for the independent National Catholic Reporter.

On social issues such as abortion, gay marriage and stem cell research, Bush and Benedict have plenty of common ground.

But they disagree over the war in Iraq, just as Bush did with Benedict’s predecessor, John Paul.

When Benedict was a cardinal before the 2003 invasion, the now-pontiff categorically dismissed the idea that a preventive strike against Iraq could be justified under Catholic doctrine. In his Easter message last year, Benedict said “nothing positive comes from Iraq.”
Word on the street

"What event or period in history would you visit?"

Compiled and photographed by Dustin Stone

"The crucifixion of Jesus Christ, because it is such a world known (event) and a miracle. It is sad but also glorious."
— Jessica McDorman, graphic communication junior

"The invention of the wheel, because it got the ball rolling."
— Andy Sofranko, mechanical engineering junior

"I would want to visit the Three Musketeers...so whatever period that was."
— Ted Andreas, physics freshman

"I'd have to say the Wild West because I've always wanted to be a cowboy."
— Drew Fitzpatrick, forestry and natural resources management junior

State

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A motorist was thrown from a Ford Explorer after the vehicle collided with a bus on a Ventura Freeway on Sunday, authorities said.
The driver, 59-year-old Fernando Morales, was taken to a hospital in serious condition with head trauma, Los Angeles Fire Department spokesman Cecil Motera said.
The bus driver, Lorena Rozitis, suffered a broken left leg and other minor injuries, he said.
There were no passengers on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority bus.

SAN BERNARDINO (AP) — Donkey fans are fitting a herd of wild burros with reflective collars in an attempt to reduce the number of creatures being hit on a busy road.
About 50 burros live near Reche Canyon Road, 10 miles south of San Bernardino. The rural road connects the cities of Colton and Moreno Valley and has seen traffic increase in recent years, the Los Angeles Times reported Sunday.

OAKLAND (AP) — Police say two cars involved in an Oakland car-munt "sidewalk" rally plowed through a front yard and into a home, igniting a blaze that torched the three-bedroom residence.
Authorities said the two drivers lost control of their vehicles and hit each other before slamming into the one-story home in East Oakland early Saturday morning.

Oakland fire Lt. David Breen said one of the cars clipped a natural gas line feeding the house, which started the fire.

VISALIA (AP) — An unusual rise in syphilis cases has health officials investigating why Tulare County residents are getting the sexually transmitted disease at a higher rate than in other counties.

Preliminary California Department of Public Health data shows that about half the syphilis cases in the San Joaquin Valley in 2007 came from Tulare County, which had 30 cases for the year.

Visalia (AP) — An unusual rise in syphilis cases has health officials investigating why Tulare County residents are getting the sexually transmitted disease at a higher rate than in other counties.
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International

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — President Mwai Kibaki named opposition leader Raila Odinga as prime minister Sunday, implementing a long-awaited power-sharing deal aimed at resolving a political crisis that left more than 3,000 people dead.
The deal marks the first time Kenya will have both a president and prime minister. But the working relationship between Kibaki and Odinga, who has been flown to the past, will determine how long the coalition lasts.

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania (AP) — About 1,000 people cheered and marched with a team of 80 athletes and a Cabinet minister participating Sunday in the Tanzanian leg of the Olympic torch relay, the flame's only stop in Africa.
Officials have said they do not expect any of the disruptions that have hit other torch runs in the world. Kenyan Nobel Peace laureate Wangari Mutaah, however, pulled out of 30 of the relay in Tanzania to protest China's human rights record.

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's government moved Sunday to resume discipline within the ranks of the security forces, sacking more than 1,300 soldiers and policemen who deserted during the three-week fight against Shiite militias in Basra.
At the same time, Iraq's Cabinet called on governments to stop enabling other countries to give arms to the militias, a move that threatens to further erode the government's ability to maintain order in the south.

SEATTLE (AP) — The Dalai Lama said Sunday that Tibet can't make its own decisions, that it must have a close relationship with China and renewed his calls for the government to cease oppression in his former homeland and withdraw troops.
The exiled Tibetan spiritual leader denied Chinese claims that he has called for Tibet to be split from China and that he is behind recent unrest, saying instead that he is committed to pursuing Tibetan rights.

FANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — A central Kentucky planning board won't get Gale Warren's field, but the city commission might.

Officials in Franklin are discussing whether goats are livestock or pets.
The issue came up in October when Warren received a violation notice about the goat and duck she keeps as pets on her residential property. Warren said the letter informed her that Stone the goat had to go. 

Briefs

WASHINGTON (AP) — The president of the World Bank on Sunday urged immediate action to deal with mounting food prices that have caused hunger and deadly violence in several countries.

Robert Zoellick said the international community has "to put our money where our mouth is" and act now to help hungry people.

"It is a stark as that," he said on television.

"I would call on governments to rapidly carry out commitments to provide the U.N. World Food Program with $500 million in emergency aid this month," he added.

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (AP) — The numbers of mothers removed from a polygamous sect's ranch in West Texas after an abuse allegation are appealing to Gov. Rick Perry for help, saying some of their children have become sick and even required hospitalization.

In a letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press, the mothers from the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints also say children are "terrorized" by physical examinations they have undergone while in state custody.

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's government moved Sunday to resume discipline within the ranks of the security forces, sacking more than 1,300 soldiers and policemen who deserted during the three-week fight against Shiite militias in Basra.

Wellington, Fla. — The International Olympic Committee's executive board is expected to decide Monday whether three athletes who said they were attacked by South Korean fans will compete.

The U.S. women's soccer team may be able to use its own stadium for the Olympic torch relay.

The IOC's decision isn't expected until late Monday or Tuesday.

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Local punk-rock band New Tomorrow prepares for new album, upcoming tour

Patrick Barbieri
MUSTANG DAILY

You’re hungry, exhausted, broke and far from home. Tonight you’re playing music in an unknown town for people you’ve never met, though they know all the words to your songs. And you wouldn’t trade it for a thing.

That’s the attitude of New Tomorrow, one of San Luis Obispo’s hardest working punk bands. With a commitment and touring ethic that would defeat less-devoted groups, New Tomorrow has successfully spread their positive punk rock to fans all over the country and has earned a global fan base by doing so.

“We basically sacrifice everything we have for this band,” drummer Kevin Menesez said. “We’re four smart dudes who could be anything we want, but we choose to do this because we want it most.”

Inspired by ’90s pop-punk bands, New Tomorrow plays a modernized version of punk rock and hardcore with a spirit and conviction that’s hard to find these days.

Since forming in 2005, the band has embarked on five full U.S. tours in support of its two full-length albums. When not driving cross-country in a small van, members can be found working at home, saving money, spending time with their loved ones and writing new material — only to hit the road again a few months later.

For these guys, playing for and interacting with fans on a personal level at shows is what it’s all about. In typical punk-rock fashion, fan participation is highly encouraged at their shows. Kids start singing along at shows, it’s the greatest reward we could ever ask for. That’s the dream of anyone who picks up an instrument.

The band claims that playing for small crowds in intimate settings is what motivates them to keep going, since it’s moments like these that allow them to give back to the scene they were a part of growing up.

“The reason I started going to shows as a kid was to be around people like me,” singer Brandon Wood said. “Smaller towns have kids that can’t get to the bigger shows. (Kids in smaller towns) are there for the music and nothing else; that’s what it’s all about.”

With so many road trips, the band has no shortage of stories. One memorable night found the group playing in a basement of a shady Chicago suburb to a rough crowd of skinheads armed with baseball bats and switchblades. The show ended when cops pulled up halfway through the band’s set, at which point everyone, including the band members, abruptly bailed.

“It was one of the scariest shows we’ve ever played,” Menesez said. “People were getting their asses kicked. It was ridiculous.”

“When you’re a punk band on tour, you play the venue that’s available. Usually it’s the neighborhood on the other side of the tracks with rain clouds overhead,” Wood said.

With hard work has come recognition. The band recently signed a deal with Skeleton Crew Records, the record label owned by Frank Iero of My Chemical Romance, San Luis Obispo-based punk-rock group New Tomorrow is preparing for the May release of its third full-length album. Above, New Tomorrow is (from left to right) Adam Kratochvil, Brandon Wood, Danny Derrick and Kevin Menesez.

Send your opinions, rants and raves in 250 words or less to mustangdailyopinions@gmail.com

All published letters must include author’s name, year and major, and are subject to editing for grammar, style and spelling.
It's all about the green lifestyle

(but bringing back Captain Planet wouldn't hurt)

Brian McMullen

I'm an eco-thing, my heart's for that green. I don't drive by. I bike by, if you know what I mean.

You know how every year the tabloids predict the sun will turn blue or red or explode, causing Armageddon within a month, but on the date predicted it never happened?

Well, they're actually almost right. I mean, according to scientists, the sun has been trying to kill us since the beginning of time, but lucky for us, our gas force field denied most of its deadly rays. Now, ironically, we are doing the sun's bidding by depleting our ozone. What will it take for us to survive? Crafty marketing campaigns encourage us to "go green."

The whole "green" trend is really good for the environment but really bad for sanity. Lots of products today are touting themselves as green. It makes one wonder: Is NBC really doing the environment good, or was green its new "network" campaign just to get us to watch Tracy Morgan act a fool in "30 Rock" (he's the best character they've got and he gets the least amount of airtime, WTF Tina Fey)?

Would there really be big-ass hybrid SUVs, developed if the "go green" marketing campaigns weren't effective? And why do they still make hybrids that look like cheap Disney Channel-y movie versions of future cars? Will gas-only body styles one day go out of style? Will we all drive four-door sedans that have only the bottom half of the back tires exposed? Hell, no. Just make hybrid versions of the cars we have now.

Going green isn't just a way to sell products; it's also a lifestyle. For example, www.treehugger.com gives readers tips on how to live and the green. That's right, there's an article titled "How to green your funeral!" What's the difference? For real, I'm not made of Styrofoam. I'm going to decompose, and my big marble coffin will be no different than a large rock in the ground. I have often wondered where we're all going to be buried in the year 4047 when the U.S. is developed from coast to coast and cemeteries have no open room to expand. Eh, by then we'll all be litterbugs in space, throwing out our waste out the window like big-ass hybrids that look like cheap Disney Channel-y movie versions of future SUVs thrown out the window like big-ass hybrids that look like cheap Disney Channel-y movie versions of future SUVs. It's all about the green lifestyle (but bringing back Captain Planet wouldn't hurt).

Brian McMullen is a journalism senior and Mustang Daily columnist.

Memo: 'Office' returns to NBC with abounding hilarity

Tony Lewis

The time has come for the computers to be boosted up, the pencils sharpened and the coffee percolated. That's right, Dunder Mifflin, everybody's favorite Scranton paper branch, is back in business. To the delight of many viewers, "The Office" returned last Thursday from its Winter's Guild Association strike-induced hibernation.

Ever since the strike ended Feb. 12, the show's creators have been hard at work filming six new episodes to air during NBC's shortened spring lineup. The writers have already promised that, even though the season has been cut short, there are still major plot developments to be revealed before summer. Consequently, there has been constant buzz in the air in anticipation for the reappearance of the sitcom.

Last week's episode invites audiences to join in on what could be one of the most awkward parties of all time. After numerous failed attempts, Michael (Steve Carell) manages to trick Jim (John Krasinski) and Pam (Jenna Fischer) into coming over to his condo to join him and Jan (Melora Hardin) for dinner. Much to the dismay of Dwight (Rainn Wilson), Andy (Ed Helms) and Angela (Angela Kinsey) are also invited to this party with his much older former babysitter as his date.

The show's writers prove with this episode that the long layover has not left them rusty, providing all the awkward comedic moments and sarcastic comebacks fans have come to expect from this award-winning sitcom. But what makes this particular episode work are the comedic situations set up as a result of the three completely polarized couples being together in one area. During one scene in the living room, this contrast is especially funny. First, Pam and Angela sit together on one couch. Andy is being egged on by himself and Jan is on Michael's lap in another recliner. This arrangement expertly symbolizes Jim and Pam's stable, loving relationship, Jan's dominating hold over Michael, and Andy and Angela's absurdly distant hookup. It is these stark details that give this episode its explosive energy.

Carell, Krasinski and Fischer are excellent as usual, but it was Hardin who really shined in this one. Her portrayal of Jan's breakdown resulting from her failure to mask her unstable relationship with Michael is almost as hilarious as the comedic situations that result from it.

If this episode had one flaw, it would be the absence of the rest of the Dunder Mifflin employees. One of the strongest aspects of "The Office" is its diverse cast, and it is always a bit disappointing when the rest of the gang is not there to help generate the laughs. With one down and five to go, viewers can only guess what "The Office" has in store this week. "You do not want to miss the second episode back," Jenna Fischer said in an interview with "Entertainment Weekly," as "big stuff happen/ for Jim and Pam."
Ballet blends Shakespeare and Shel Silverstein

Rachel Glas
MUSTANG DAILY

From bullfighting with turkeys to dancing with Titania, Queen of the Fairies, the Civic Ballet of San Luis Obispo put on a diverse show Sunday at the Performing Arts Center. Though enjoyable overall, some aspects of it worked, while some didn't click.

The performance kicked off with an adaptation of the play "A Midsummer Night's Dream," by William Shakespeare. For anyone unfamiliar with the play, I imagine the storyline would be initially confusing (I've read the play, though not recently, and I was confused). However, as it went on, the tale of two couples' romantic hi-jinks, engineered by Oberon, King of the Fairies, and his servant, Puck, became clear. The choreography by artistic director Drew Silvaggio and dancer Jackie Lee perfectly captured the mood of Shakespeare's comedy. Though at points the dancers would fall out of time, as the play went on they became more and more sure of themselves and their dancing improved greatly.

From the gauzy costumes to the graceful dancers to the classical music used, every inch of the performance was rooted in traditional-style ballet.

The second act, "Sidewalk Stories," adapted from Shel Silverstein's book of poems, was an entirely different animal. As a fan of Shel Silverstein's poetry, I was excited to see how Silvaggio wove the simple poems into a story. The poems, though they share general themes of love, friendship and childlike wisdom, don't fit neatly into a linear story model.

Silvaggio incorporated different poems from the book, though some seemed to be randomly thrown in unconnected to the rest, that served as events in the life of a family. Some of the poems were adapted very literally (a poem called "2 Boxes" was, in fact, two cardboard boxes dancing with one another), while other dances were more figurative arrangements of the root poem.

Another issue I had with the arrangement was Silvaggio's use of Silverstein's actual poems. To start each dance, either the words of the poem were projected onto the side of the theater, or read aloud by an unseen narrator. However, viewers sitting near the side where the words were flashed had two choices, either to read the poem or watch the dance — doing both was impossible.

The entire effect was disconcerting, but maybe that's the point of a modern ballet. And despite, or perhaps because of its flaws, I did end up enjoying "Sidewalk Stories." After all, not knowing what's coming next is a great way to keep the audience on its toes.

The introduction and first dance, "I Won't Hatch/Afraid of the Dark," took place before intermission. Using music by DeVotchka (who contributed to the "Little Miss Sunshine" soundtrack), the dance set the stage for the wistful, nostalgic hour to come. The first dance after intermission, "Traffic Lights/Us," was a touching portrayal of a marriage in disrepair. The two dancers did an excellent job of communicating anguish (her) and indifference (him) using body language and choreography.

My favorite dance, "Ma and God/Long Haired Boy," set to Queen's classic song, "Bohemian Rhapsody," was a large-scale, intricately choreographed number that was a joy to watch. However, "Point of View," featuring a turkey bullfighting the family during Thanksgiving dinner but ending with her consumption, was a little uncomfortable to view. As a ballet novice (my main experience with the art being the movie "Center Stage"), I found the Civic Ballet of San Luis Obispo's production to be enjoyable and creative, despite its rather endearing flaws.

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Welcome back Mr. Astley
Now, I think it's time you go

I got “rickrolled” last week and apparently I’m not alone. I attempted to click on a link posted on a blog and was redirected to the music video for the song “Never Gonna Give You Up.” More than 18 million Americans have experienced the Internet phenomenon known as the “rickroll,” according to SurveyUSA. That’s a little more than 15 percent of the population of the United States.

It all started 10 months ago when an anti-science group began posting links of the 1987 hit disguised as normal click-throughs all over the Web. Anyone who clicked on one of these links was redirected to Astley’s YouTube video on his song “Red Right Wine.”

From there, it’s only history. Rickrolling gained momentum and soon other Internet users copied the technique, sending more and more unwary surfers to the young, suave, denim-clad singer.

The first time I was rickrolled, I was confused. The second time I was entertained. But after thinking that being the victim of an unwanted rickroll, I was ready to call Web surfing quits.

What makes it worse is that “Never Gonna Give You Up” ranks second on my list of most hated songs of all time. And that’s saying a lot. Anyone who knows me can vouch for my hatred song list to reflect my current annoyance with Astley. I am curious about the aggravating trend. Why Astley? Why “Never Gonna Give You Up?”

For anyone like me who has forcibly experienced Astley’s gem of a music video, I’m sure you asked yourself the same questions. In the ‘80s video, Astley snags his fingers and smiles at the camera as two blonde dancers swirl around him in attire that thankfully stayed locked in the ‘80s...

Poverty is everyone’s problem

If you’re like me, you probably don’t give much thought to what your next meal will be or where you’ll be sleeping that night or if you’ll be able to afford a routine trip to the doctor. But for nearly 37 million Americans, these are daily questions; living at or below the poverty level presents a struggle to ensure some of the basic necessities many of us take for granted.

The Census Bureau defines a state of poverty as “an individual earning an annual income of $9,393 or less or a family of four earning $14,660 or less.” And that in 2007, “over 37 million Americans lived in poverty,” compared to the reported 30 million in 2000. Last year 10 percent of all households were afraid that they might not be able to put food on the table or sufficiently provide for themselves or their families. These are scary statistics, yet I, as well as most Americans, try to ignore them, believing that since poverty might not affect each one of us directly, it is not important.

But the problem of poverty, and the widening gap between the rich and poor, cannot be pushed aside in the hope that it will simply go away or that if we ignore the problem, it will somehow fix itself. It’s time to realize that these are our problems too; poverty is everyone’s problem and the quality of life for all Americans diminishes if there are some who suffer. If there is a family being evicted from their home because they missed their month’s rent, that matters to me even if I don’t know them. If there is a family forced to choose between paying the medical bills and putting food on the table, that matters to me even if I have food in my belly.

But what can I do? What can any of us do? to amass the state of poverty gripping our nation? The solution begins, I think, with a re-examination of our priorities as a nation, as a people. We have a problem when the stark dichotomy between rich and poor is more defined than in any other time in our nation’s history and working class parents are forced to decide between sending their child to college or being able to pay the month’s rent. We have a problem when the stark dichotomy between rich and poor is more defined than in any other time in our nation’s history and working class parents are forced to decide between spending two jobs or being able to spend time with their kids. To alleviate these problems, more federal funding programs need to be instituted, and the pre-existing ones need to receive increased revenue support. We need to stop giving tax breaks to the wealthiest 10 percent of earners, and instead that money should be put back into the pockets of hard-working and deserving Americans. We need to stop giving tax breaks to companies who outsource jobs to other countries where labor is cheaper. And we need to erase the tacit understanding that says a person is poor because of their own faults or because they don’t work hard enough.

As an American people, one of our best attributes has been our ability to be candid and decide when the time called for it, and I only hope that we can do so again.

Collin Edwards is a biochemistry junior and a guest columnist for the Mustang Daily.
Girls & Sports by Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein

Last Ditch Effort by John Kroes

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz No. 0303

Pop Culture Shock Therapy by Doug Bratton

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The puzzle by C. W. Stewart

42 Heroic legend: 46 Call to a call
48 Blow ___(breakdown)
49 Brave ___ (adjective)
53 Subtitle of the 60s Beatles hit
54 F.O.B. successor
55 Middle measurement
56 It may be puffed

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

v. Easy
Five Mustangs qualify for NCAA Regional at UCLA invitational

LOS ANGELES — Greg Maddux didn’t stick around to talk about his 349th career victory. He left the clubhouse right after the final out to catch a plane for Las Vegas, where his family is no doubt planning a celebration for his 42nd birthday.

Maddux allowed two hits over five innings and combined with four San Diego relievers on the five-hit shutout, using Paul McAnulty’s fourth-inning sacrifice fly to beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 1-0 on Sunday.

“This is a tough loss,” Dodgers manager Joe Torre said after his team’s fifth defeat in six games. “When you come into the day and know you’re going to give up one run, you have to feel pretty good about things — even though you know you are facing Maddux.”

The four-time Cy Young winner was exactly what the Padres needed following Saturday night’s 11-1 loss and heading into an off day. Maddux (4-0) has made nine of his 35 career starts against the Dodgers in April, going 8-0 with a 1.11 ERA in that month. He threw 68 pitches in 95-degree heat, striking out two and walking one.

“Trevor Hoffman, the all-time saves leader, pitched a scoreless ninth for the Padres since going 4-0 with a 1.05 ERA last year against them. The only other time that a Dodgers pitcher beat San Diego four times in a row was 1974, when Sutton and Andy Messersmith accounted for half of Los Angeles’ victories in the season series (16-2) and the Dodgers went on to win the NL pennant.

“The way he naturally throws the ball is conducive to a long career.”

— Bud Black

Padres manager

Maddux gets 349th win in Peerless of 42nd birthday as Padres beat Dodgers 1-0

Associated Press

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John Nadel

LOS ANGELES — The Los An­
egles Lakers took sole possession of the Western Conference lead Sun­day. Keeping it might be a different matter, even if they win their only remaining regular-season game.

MVP candidate Kobe Bryant had 20 points, five rebounds and five assists before sitting out the fourth quarter, and the Lakers motored the defending NBA champions San An­

tonio Spurs 95-85 for their seventh win in eight games.

"It was big for us," Bryant said. "It was another step in the right direction. Going into the playoffs is all we were fighting for. Now, we just have to take it up another notch once the playoffs start.

The Lakers (46-26), who clinched their first Pacific Division champi­
onship in four years and at least the No. 3 seed in the West on Friday night, need to beat visiting Sacra­
ments on Tuesday night and have Houston lose at least one of its final three games to earn the conference's No. 1 seed.

Should Los Angeles and Hous­
ton tie for the conference title, the Rockets could finish first, but the Lakers would be the No. 1 in the west based on how the three teams fared against each other.

"We know we have to win out and play the right way And that was our

message in the locker room after the game. Fortunately for us, we got some rest, got some guys who had a little bit of time to recovery before Tuesday night.

Lamar Odom, the only Los Ange­
les starter to play in the final period, added 17 points and 14 rebounds be­
fore coming out for good with 4:26 remaining. Pau Gasol had 14 points and 11 rebounds, Derek Fisher also scored 14, Jordan Farmar added 11 points and Ronnie Turiaf scored 10 for the Lakers, who outscored the Spurs 53-32 in the second half.

'They're the best in the West at this point,' Spurs coach Gregg Pop­
ovich said. 'Their rhythm is good, everybody knows their roles, they are playing confidently, defensively looks very good, Heck of a team.'

The Lakers outrebounded San An­
tonio 51-36, including 31-16 af­ter halftime, and the Spurs shot just 31-11 of 37 after halftime, and the Spurs shot just 14-25 in the opening 24 minu­tes.

"What a hell We came out and played an exceptional second half," Jackson said. "We were on our heels at the end of the first half, (Tony) Parker was jarring the ball down our throat and we couldn't seem to find a way to stop him. I thought the second half we came out and made a good defensive stand and stopped penetration.'

Bryant said he believes the Lakers have found their defensive identity.

'It's just like offense,' he said. "You have to find out what your identity is. We think we have found that defensively. We are very aggres­
sive. We have a tremendous amount

of versatility — wings and guys who are fast and athletic and long. We can get after guys. Parker had 20 points, seven rebounds and five assists, but was held to two points after halftime. Tim Duncan added 16 points and 12 rebounds and Ime Udoka scored 14 for the Spurs (34-26), who lost for just the third time in 13 games.

The Spurs played without lead­
scorer Manu Ginobili, who missed his second game because of a strained left groin. Robert Horry hasn't played since March 21 be­
cause of a bruised left knee.

'Come playoff time, we'll have as good a chance as anybody to do well,' Popovich said.

The game was tied at 53 at hal­

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Los Angeles Lak­
ers guard Kobe

Bryant, right, scores a basket
over the reach of San Antonio Spurs
forward Tim Duncan during the second quarter of their game with

"It's still our responsibility to finish Sunday night at Denver and Mon­

ton Tuesday night and have

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Women's tennis team wins pair of Big West matches over weekend

Brittney Clyde
MUSTANG DAILY

A week after backing to basics following four losses in a row paid dividends for the Cal Poly women's tennis team. The Mustangs won twice over the weekend at Mustang Courts, 5-2 over UC Davis on Saturday and 7-0 over UC Santa Barbara on Sunday.

In the closest match Sunday, Cal Poly's No. 1 doubles tandem of Britanny Blalock and Stelli Wrag edged Marta Simic and Charlotte Scafiffe, rallying for a 9-8 (11-9) tiebreaker victory to go to 13-6 on the season.

At the No. 3 spot, Cal Poly's Diane Filip and Amy Markhoff topped Tova Hauman and Brittany Kaesen 8-4 to stay unbeaten and extend their dual mark to 11-0.

Filip, who later defeated Hauman by herself 6-3, 5-7, 11-9, was the only Mustang to be taken beyond two sets in singles play.

"After the victory against the Aggies (11-9, 3-5 Big West Conference), Cal Poly's No. 3 singles player, Whitney Peterson, said the Mustangs (11-10, 5-3 Big West) were picking up momentum at just the right time, an upswing they carried into the rout of the Gauchos (9-13, 4-4 Big West) the next day. "The goal is (to succeed at) the Big West Tournament," he said.

In that direction," she said.

In the closer affair with UC Davis, the Mustangs started off strong by winning the doubles point through securing the first and third matches.

"We really carried a high intensity throughout the entire match," Peterson said.

"We fought really hard and competed really well to the last point, which was something we had been really working on — just competing from the first point to the last point as hard as we could," Cal Poly assistant coach Paige Esparrza stressed the importance of the Mustangs' doubles performances.

"I think we came out tough today, strong in our doubles play," Esparrza said. "They worked really hard this past week and it really showed in the match."

In singles competition, each of the Mustangs' four wins ended in two sets.

Since the end of the year is nearing, Esparrza said she doesn't expect significant changes in the Mustangs' lineup.

"We're going to keep playing our games and enjoy every battle that we play in," she said.

Cal Poly will host Cal State Bakersfield in its home finale at 1 p.m. Wednesday before concluding the regular season by visiting Fresno State at 11 a.m. Saturday.

The Big West Conference Championships are held in Indian Wells from April 25-27.