A survival guide for Cal Poly students

Syreeta Straton

Cal Poly English major Jennie Reinhold was traveling on a train from Nice, France to Florence, Italy when suddenly the train stopped. After three hours at a standstill, the check-in time came and passed for the hostel she had previously booked. At 1 a.m., Reinhold and her companion found themselves off the train and on the empty, dark streets of Florence, Italy with no place to stay the night. They were tired, afraid and weary from the journey.

"I felt scared and lost because I didn't know where I was or where I was going. I felt like I was kind of just wandering around searching for us," said Stephanie. Reinhold said. "No one really knew where exactly we were, and no one was waiting for us anywhere so we just kind of had to find our own way." Under the moon and prestige that accompanies the words study abroad, most students in the program experience at least one challenging situation. Some wish they had kept their money hidden better to avoid theft, others that they had budgeted better for language classes. Yet most students find that surviving these experiences increases their self-confidence and they've found that with proper planning and a positive attitude, even the most difficult situation can be conquered.

Students around the nation are opting to take on the world during their college experience abroad. According to the U.S. Department of Education, over 80,000 Americans study abroad at the university level each year and the number continues to increase each year. The Institute of International Education ranks Cal Poly second out of 40 top master's institutions in the highest number of students who studied abroad for one to two quarters during the 2007-08 school year. A total of 817 students, or 3 to 4 percent of Cal Poly students, were involved in study abroad program. Cal Poly also ranks sixth out of 40 master degree level universities in the nation for number of students who study abroad for one year. Many study abroad students don't realize the comfort and convenience that accompanies living in the United States until they leave it. Reinhold backpacked in Europe before she traveled to Germany for school. While backpacking, she lived on only the bare necessities, staying in hostels and eating from grocery stores. She traveled Europe by train, in main transportation system, and usually had better luck reaching her destinations on time than that one stranded night in Florence.

Survival tip No. 1: pack only necessary items to avoid a heavy load. Reinhold, an experienced backpacker, packs the top ten items she thinks will make the experience light and memorable. She suggests using a large, durable backpack with lots of storage compartments. Inside should be multi-purpose soap to use for clothes, shampoo and body wash, comfortable shoes, an energy bar, a passport holder that can be strapped beneath clothing for safety purposes, a watch with an alarm clock, a journal, pen, scissors and glue for scrapbooking and a camera with two memory cards.

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India claims Mumbai gunman tied to Pakistani group

Ravi Nessaan

The only gunman captured after a 60-hour terrorist siege of Mumbai said he belonged to a Pakistani militant group with links to the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, a senior police officer said Sunday. The gunman was one of 10 who paralyzed the city in an attack that killed at least 174 people and revealed the weakness of India's security apparatus. India's top law enforcement official resigned, bowing to growing criticism that the security forces had been inadequately trained, poorly coordinated and better armed than police.

The announcement blaming militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba, threatened to escalate tensions between India and Pakistan. However, Indian officials have been cautious about accusing Pakistan's government of complicity.

A U.S. counterterrorism official had said some "signatures of the attack" were consistent with Lashkar and Jaish-e-Mohammed, another group that has operated in Kashmir. Both are reported to be linked to al-Qaida.

Lashkar, once seen as a creation of the Pakistani intelligence service to help fight India in disputed Kashmir, was banned in Pakistan in 2002 under pressure from the U.S., a year after Washington and Britain listed it as a terrorist group. It is since believed to have emerged under another name, Jamaat-ud-Dawa, though that group has denied links to the Mumbai attack.

Authorities were still removing bodies from the bullet and grenade-scarred Taj Mahal hotel, a day after commandos finally ended the violence that began Wednesday night.

As more details of the response to the attack emerged, a picture formed of wearily unprepared security forces. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh promised to strengthen maritime and air security and look into creating a new federal investigative agency — even as some analysts doubted fundamental change was possible.

"These guys could do it next week again in Mumbai and our responses would be exactly the same," said Ajit Sahni, head of the New Delhi-based Institute for Conflict Management who has close ties to India's police and intelligence.

Joven Police Commissioner Rakesh Maria said the only known surviving gunman, Ajmal Qasab, told police he was trained at a Lashkar-e-Taiba camp in Pakistan.

"Lashkar-e-Taiba is behind the terrorist acts in the city," he said. A spokesman for Pakistan President Asif Zardari's spokesman dismiss the claim.

"We have demanded evidence of the complicity of any Pakistani group. No evidence has yet been provided," said spokesman Farhatullah Balar.

In the first wave of the attacks, two young gunmen armed with assault rifles blijghly ignored more than 60 police officers patrolling the city's main train station and sprayed bullets into the crowd.

Bapa Thombre, assistant commissioner with the Mumbai railway police, said the police were armed mainly with batons or World War I-era rifles and spread out across the station.

"They are not trained to respond to major attacks," he said.

The gunmen continued their rampage outside the station. They eventually ambushed a police van, killed five officers inside — including the city's counterterrorism chief — and hijacked the vehicle as two wounded officers lay bleeding in the back seat.

see India, page 2

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President-elect Barack Obama plans on Monday to announce six experienced hands to fill top positions, paving the way for rapid action on the daunting leadership tasks that will guide his presidency through a time of war and recession.

The team includes long-time aides and political allies, like most notable Democratic presidential Hillary Rodham Clinton as secretary of state and President Bush's defense secretary, Robert Gates, staying in his current post. The two were among six who Obama planned to announce at a noon ceremony in Chicago. Democratic officials said.

The officials said Obama also planned to name Washington lawyer Eric Holder as attorney general and Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano as homeland security secretary. He also planned to announce two senior policy positions outside the Cabinet campaign finance adviser Susan Rice as U.N. ambassador and retired Marine Gen. James Jones as national security adviser.

Democratic officials disclosed the plans Sunday on a condition of anonymity because they were not ready to make public release ahead of the news conferences. Those names have been discussed before for those jobs, but the officials confirmed that Obama will make them official Monday, as in his inaugural.

Obama has settled on former Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle to be his secretary of Health and Human Services and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson to be commerce secretary, but those announcements are not yet official. Last week, he named key members of his economic team, including Timothy Geithner, president of Federal Reserve Bank of New York, as Treasury secretary.

The decisions mean Obama has filled half of his cabinet assembled less than a month after the election, including the most prominent positions at State, Justice, Treasury and Defense. The team also shares deep experience and proven ability to get things done, and it shares some characteristics with President Bush's first Cabinet choices.

For Secretary of State, both went with big names that campaigned against them in their primary races, with Obama choosing Clinton and Bush going with former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Colin Powell. At DHS, both chose deeply experienced elected officials — Obama picking Daschle and Bush choosing Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson.

They also chose experienced defense secretaries who had already served in the position — Gates for Obama and Donald Rumsfeld for Bush. And both put well-regarded governors as their first picks at Homeland Security secretary — a position Obama created — with Obama picking Napolitano and Bush picking Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge.

In some cases, Obama is choosing even more experienced hands. Jones and Richardson have both held high-profile military posts, including through a time of war and recession.

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Difficult situations are most likely to occur while backpacking, riding on mass transportation or while in a large group of people according to Scott Leinweber, Cal Poly's study abroad student advisor. He remembers a trip to Peru, including six-hour bus rides on a scary rural road through the Andes in South America.

"We were out in the middle of nowhere," Leinweber said. "There were no professors on the bus and one of the tires blew out."

The bus driver fixed the tire with a spare, and the group continued down the narrow road only to have a second tire fail. The bus driver, who only spoke Spanish, wanted to continue traveling with only five tires and the pickpocket had already turned around and found a replacement tire in a previous town.

Leinweber's experience highlights survival tip No. 3: Travel with someone who has enough language skills to communicate with native speakers, or develop your own language skills.

Theft is a major problem in many countries abroad. Leinweber's wallet was stolen the first day he arrived in Peru when it was in an inside pocket near the top of his jacket. While standing on a crowded bus, another passenger and his friend "accidentally" bumped into him. Leinweber saw the man put his wallet into his pocket and started yelling at them in Spanish, but the pickpocket had already disappeared into the crowd.

Survival tip No. 4: Keep your money and passport under your clothes with a money belt and passport holder. Traveler's checks are another good option as long as the company can match them. Purses and backpacks make stealing easy for thieves. If the thief can see your wallet, they can take it. Reinhold said. Also, avoid handling your money in public places because thieves can see exactly where you are placing your potential loot, advises Reinhold.

Most students who study abroad are required to take language classes during their stay. However, many students still experience culture shock from the lack of familiarity with the country. Art and design senior Lauren O'Donnell studied in Florence, Italy for one year. While there, she attended an Italian art school where classes were taught entirely in Italian. She found the language barrier challenging, but "character building" and classified it as one of the first experiences where she felt like a minority.

Survival tip No. 5: To cope with culture shock, realize that the shock originates from a lack of understanding of the other person's cultural background and the difficulty of communicating in a foreign language, according to the Consortium for University Overseas Programs. When a student realizes that he or she can gain an understanding of the culture and language through daily interaction, the shock will subside.

Similar to other students, O'Donnell said she faced reverse culture shock after returning to the U.S. To handle this she returned from Wales. Jeannette Lydon recommended befriending a person who returns to the U.S. at the same time. Lydon still calls her friend and passport under your clothes with a money belt and passport holder. Traveler's checks are another good option as long as the company can match them. Purses and backpacks make stealing easy for thieves. If the thief can see your wallet, they can take it. Reinhold said. Also, avoid handling your money in public places because thieves can see exactly where you are placing your potential loot, advises Reinhold.

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Space shuttle Endeavour finishes 16-day mission

John Antczak
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Space shuttle Endeavour and its seven astronauts safely returned to Earth on Sunday, taking a detour to sunny California after storms hit the main landing strip in Florida. Endeavour wrapped up a 16-day trip that left the international space station freshly remodeled and capable of housing bigger crews.

The shuttle dropped off all kinds of home improvement equipment, including a new bathroom, kitchenette, exercise machine, two sleeping quarters and a recycling system designed to convert astronauts’ urine and sweat into drinking water.

But the mission wasn’t without its problems. Astronaut Heidemarie Stefanyshyn-Piper let go of a $100,000 tool bag during the first spacewalk, muttering “Oh, great” as it floated away. And Endeavour’s astronauts also had to put in extra effort to get the urine processor working.

About seven liters of recycled urine and condensation were coming back aboard Endeavour for extensive testing. No one at the space station additions — and a few more scheduled to go up on the next shuttle flight in February — should enable NASA to double the size of the space station crew by June.

On Sunday, NASA ordered the detour to California after dangerously high wind and a stormy sky prevented a Florida landing. "Welcome back. That was a great way to finish a fantastic flight," Mission Control radioed.

"And we’re happy to be here in California," shuttle commander Christopher Ferguson replied.

Congratulations also came down from the space station. "Wow," said skipper Mike Fincke, who watched the landing broadcast live. Returning home from a six-month mission was former space station resident Gregory Chamitoff, who had rocketed away from the planet at the end of May.

The space shuttle’s journey, short by comparison, spanned 6.6 million miles and 250 orbits of Earth.

After landing, the astronauts inspected the shuttle’s underbelly. Accompanied by three crew members, Ferguson spoke briefly on Mission Control, Ferguson could see all the repairs on the joint were waiting.

As Endeavour soared over Houston, home to Mission Control, Ferguson could see all the bad weather in Florida. It was the first space shuttle landing at Edwards since February — just underwent maintenance and upgrades, and has yet to be parallel the temporary one — just underwent maintenance and upgrades, and has yet to be equipped with all the necessary navigation equipment.

NASA officials said both Ferguson and his co-pilot, Eric Boe, had practiced on the temporary runway in training aircraft. Endeavour’s crew members were expected to be reunited with their families on Monday in Houston.

Early Sunday morning, a Russian supply ship arrived at the space station with Christmas presents, food, clothes and other items.

The space shuttle Endeavour touches down at Edwards Air Force Base in Calif. Endeavour’s landing ends a 16-day mission during which the shuttle flew to the international space station delivering a new bathroom, kitchen, exercise machine, sleeping quarters and recycling system designed to convert urine and sweat into drinking water.

The space shuttle Endeavour finishes 16-day mission

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Food crunch opens doors to bioengineered crops

Elaine Kurtenbach

Zeng Yexin's outdoor laboratory in the terraced hills of southern China is a trove of genetic potential — rice that thrives in unusually cool temperatures, high altitudes or in dry soil; rice rich in calcium, vitamins or iron.

"See these plants? They can tolerate the cold," Zeng says as he walks through a checkerboard of fields sown with different rice varieties on the outskirts of Kunming, capital of southwestern China's Yunnan province.

"We can extract the cold-tolerant gene from this plant and use it in a genetically manipulated variety to improve its cold tolerance," Zeng says.

In a mountainous place like Yunnan, and in many other parts of the developing world, such advantages can tip the balance between hunger and a decent living. And China is ready now to tip that scale in favor of genetically modified crops.

Surging costs, population growth, drought and other setbacks linked to global climate change are pressuring world food supplies, while soaring prices on the street have triggered riots in 22 countries.

"Why should we change what nature has given us, when it is everything we need?" asked Filippo De Angelis, selling newspapers at a kiosk in Rome. "I don't think we can solve the problem of world hunger through genetics."

Even in China, despite hefty investments in the research, few are familiar with genetic modification. Some who have heard of it remain cautious.

"It's impossible to know if it's harmful to the body," said Zheng Wencai, a retired architect in Kunming shopping for soybeans in a downtown market. "There is still a global debate on this. So basically, I don't use it."

A worker uses a machine to cut rice on a test field sown with different rice varieties in the outskirts of Kunming, capital of southwestern China's Yunnan province, Tuesday.

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Is the AIDS crisis overblown? Some dare to say it is

Maria Cheng

As World AIDS Day is marked today, some experts are growing more outspoken in complaining that AIDS is eating up funding at the expense of more pressing health needs.

They argue that the world has entered a post-AIDS era in which the disease's spread has largely been curbed in much of the world. Africa excepted.

"AIDS is a terrible humanitarian tragedy, but it's just one of many terrible humanitarian tragedies," said Jeremy Shiffman, who studies health spending at Syracuse University.

Roger Englund of Health Systems Workshop, a think tank based in the Caribbean island of Grenada, goes further. He argues that UNAIDS, the U.N. agency leading the fight against the disease, has outlived its purpose and should be disbanded.

"The global HIV industry is too big and out of control. We have created a monster with too many vested interests and reputations at stake, too many relatively well paid HIV staff in affected countries, and too many rock stars with AIDS support as a fashion accessory," he wrote in the British Medical Journal in May.

Paul de Lay, a director at UNAIDS, disagrees. It's valid to question AIDS' place in the world's priorities, he says, but insists the turnaround is very recent and it would be wrong to think the epidemic is under control.

"We have an epidemic that has caused between 55 million and 60 million infections," de Lay said. "To suddenly pull the rug out from under this would be disastorous."

U.N. officials roughly estimate that about 33 million people worldwide have HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Scientists say infections peaked in the late 1990s and are unlikely to spark big epidemics beyond Africa.

In developed countries, AIDS drugs have turned the once-fatal disease into a manageable illness.

England argues that closing UNAIDS would free up its $200 million annual budget for other health problems such as pneumonia, which kills more children every year than AIDS, malaria and measles combined.

"By putting more money into AIDS, we are implicitly saying it's OK for more kids to die of pneumonia," England said.

His comments touch on the bigger complaint: that AIDS hoggs money and may damage other health programs. By 2006, AIDS funding accounted for 80 percent of all American aid for health and population issues, according to the Global Health Council.

In Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda and elsewhere, donations for HIV projects routinely outstrip the entire national health budgets.

In a 2006 report, Rwandan officials noted a "gross misallocation of resources" in health. $47 million went to HIV, $18 million went to malaria, the country's biggest killer, and $1 million went to childhood illnesses.

"There needs to be a rational system for how to apportion scarce funds," said Helen Epstein, an AIDS expert who has consulted for UNICEF, the World Bank, and others.

AIDS advocates say their projects do more than curb the virus; their efforts strengthen other health programs by providing basic health services.

But across Africa, about 1.5 million doctors and nurses are still needed, and hospitals regularly run out of basic medicines.

Experts working on other health problems struggle to attract money and attention when competing with AIDS.

"Diarrhea kills five times as many kids as AIDS," said John Oldfield, executive vice president of Water Advocates, a Washington, D.C.-based organization that promotes clean water and sanitation.

"Everybody talks about AIDS at cocktail parties," Oldfield said. "But nobody wants to hear about diarrheaa," he said.

They argue that the world has entered a post-AIDS era in which the disease's spread has largely been curbed in much of the world. Africa excepted.

"AIDS is a terrible humanitarian tragedy, but it's just one of many terrible humanitarian tragedies," said Jeremy Shiffman, who studies health spending at Syracuse University.

Roger Englund of Health Systems Workshop, a think tank based in the Caribbean island of Grenada, goes further. He argues that UNAIDS, the U.N. agency leading the fight against the disease, has outlived its purpose and should be disbanded.

"The global HIV industry is too big and out of control. We have created a monster with too many vested interests and reputations at stake, too many relatively well paid HIV staff in affected countries, and too many rock stars with AIDS support as a fashion accessory," he wrote in the British Medical Journal in May.

Paul de Lay, a director at UNAIDS, disagrees. It's valid to question AIDS' place in the world's priorities, he says, but insists the turnaround is very recent and it would be wrong to think the epidemic is under control.

"We have an epidemic that has caused between 55 million and 60 million infections," de Lay said. "To suddenly pull the rug out from under this would be disastorous."

U.N. officials roughly estimate that about 33 million people worldwide have HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Scientists say infections peaked in the late 1990s and are unlikely to spark big epidemics beyond Africa.

In developed countries, AIDS drugs have turned the once-fatal disease into a manageable illness.

England argues that closing UNAIDS would free up its $200 million annual budget for other health problems such as pneumonia, which kills more children every year than AIDS, malaria and measles combined.

"By putting more money into AIDS, we are implicitly saying it's OK for more kids to die of pneumonia," England said.

His comments touch on the bigger complaint: that AIDS hoggs money and may damage other health programs. By 2006, AIDS funding accounted for 80 percent of all American aid for health and population issues, according to the Global Health Council.

In Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda and elsewhere, donations for HIV projects routinely outstrip the entire national health budgets.

In a 2006 report, Rwandan officials noted a "gross misallocation of resources" in health. $47 million went to HIV, $18 million went to malaria, the country's biggest killer, and $1 million went to childhood illnesses.

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These competing claims on public money are likely to grow louder as the world financial meltdown threatens to deplete health dollars.

"We cannot afford, in this time of crisis, to squander our investments," Dr. Margaret Chan, WHO's director-general, said in a recent statement.

Some experts ask whether it makes sense to have UN-AIDS, WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the Global Fund plus countless other AIDS organizations, all serving the same cause.

"I do not want to see the cause of AIDS harmed," said Shiffman of Syracuse University. But "For AIDS to crowd out other issues is ethically unjust," he said.

De Lay argues that the solution is not to reshuffle resources but to boost them.

"To take money away from AIDS and give it to diarrheal diseases or onchocerciasis (river blindness) or leishmaniasis (disfiguring parasites) doesn't make any sense," he said. "We'd just be doing a worse job in everything else."
**WORD ON THE STREET**

**“Did you take part in Black Friday?”**

“No, I had to work. I don’t usually go... it’s too crowded.”

-Jodie Pitts, agricultural business senior

“I did. I went to Costco in Torrence, Calif. It wasn’t too chaotic.”

-JD Gill, electrical engineering junior

“I went to Cars, Boots, and Western Wear in Santa Maria and got a deal on some boots.”

-Erik Lahr, agriculture business senior

“I did, but I wasn’t hardcore like lining up the night before or waking up at the crack of dawn. I just went to Best Buy in Sunnyside, Calif. It was pretty low key.”

-Addie Pitts, graphic communications senior

**State**

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — About 300 people, carrying signs reading “Democracies against terror” attended a San Francisco rally for the victims of the recent terror attacks in Mumbai.

About 30 speakers from a diverse array of groups spoke. The crowd of mostly Indians and Jews increased the nearly 200 victims killed on Wednesday in attacks by suspected Muslim militants in India’s financial capital.

One of the speakers, Rabbi Peter Mochkin, says he was childhood friends with two of the victims, Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife Rivkah. Mochkin told the crowd that their mission was “not to fight back with hatred.”

An organizer of the event Khurshid Kazmi, an architect, called on President-elect Barack Obama to take a lead in a concerted international action to combat terrorism beyond Iraq and Afghanistan.

**SAN DIEGO (AP) —** A spokeswoman for San Diego International Airport said thick fog disrupted several dozen flights.

Spokeswoman Diana Lucero says the Federal Aviation Administration issued a “ground stop” for about 45 minutes Sunday morning because of the soggy conditions that caused air traffic to back up and created a long security line at one of the airport’s two terminals.

Lucero said planes in the air that were scheduled to land in San Diego were diverted.

**Briefs**

BERWICK, Pa. (AP) — Fans of Penn State can smell like the school for just $60. A fragrance developer on the far side of the country has made a perfume and a cologne inspired by Pennsylvanian State University’s blue and white colors and its campus vegetation.

Moss Collegiate Fragrances says the perfume for the school in State College, Pa., smells of vanilla, licorice, rose and white patchouli. The cologne smells of blue cypress and cracked peppers.

The company’s president says the 3.4-ounce bottles of fragrance should appeal to Penn State’s vast alumni and football fans. Moss has also captured the smell of the University of North Carolina, and plans to offer scents for six other universities next year.

**International**

GENEVA (AP) — The world’s most comprehensive legalized heroin program became permanent Sunday with overwhelming approval by Swiss voters who simultaneously rejected the decriminalization of marijuana.

The heroin program, started in 1999, is offered in 23 centers across Switzerland. It has helped eliminate scenes of large groups of drug users shooting up openly in parks that marred Swiss cities in the 1980s, and 1990s and is credited with reducing crime and improving the health and daily lives of addicts.

The nearly 1,300 selected addicts, who have been implicated in other therapeutics, visit one of the centers twice a day to receive the carefully measured dose of heroin produced by a government-approved laboratory.

JOS, Nigeria (AP) — Another two days of mob violence, an almost calm returned Sunday to this central Nigerian town. Women with plastic buckets ventured out in search of water and many of the dead were buried.

Troops on foot and in armored personnel carriers appeared Sunday to have quelled two days of ethnic and religious rioting that left more than 200 people dead in Jos, apparently ending the worst violence in the West African nation since 2004.

Streets stayed mostly empty, but hunger and thirst forced some residents out of their homes for the first time since the riots began Friday after a disputed election.
Plant Shop Plans For Annual Sale

The students of the poinsettia agriculture enterprise project will be spreading holiday cheer across Cal Poly in the form colorful poinsettias.

The poinsettia agriculture enterprise Project poinsettia sale will begin Dec. 1 at the Poly Plant Shop and continue through the middle of the month, featuring 30 varieties of plants.

Environmental horticulture senior Lisa Segler is one of the poinsettia project's six members. She does marketing for the project.

"This enterprise project has been a popular annual project for over 40 years," she said. "It provides many unique challenges that must be overcome for crop success."

Poinsettias are about as synonymous with the holidays as jingle bells, but the growing process behind these pretty plants starts well before the holiday season. Segler said 200 to 500 hours can go into raising poinsettias.

"We get 2,000 plus cuttings in May that we root and grow to be ready for the holidays," Segler said. "We grow these cuttings into three greenhouses full of plants."

Segler explained what makes these poinsettias special.

"Our crop is unique because we have many colors not commercially available," she said. "I really like the strawberries and cream variety, I like the variegated lacy leaves."

In addition to the traditional red and white poinsettias, the project will offer a variety of options like pinks, oranges, marbles and maroons.

To put a spin on the traditional holiday classic, the project will offer painted and glittery "blinged-out" poinsettias. Painted poinsettia color options include blues, purples and yellows.

The size of the plants vary and prices range from $6 to $60.

During previous holiday seasons, the Poly Plant Shop has relied on poinsettias to deck its halls, project employee and former manager Tracy Waples said.

"In the past we definitely have planned our decoration around the poinsettia plants in previous years," said Waples, an environmental horticulture senior. "We would fill the shop top to bottom and the lab next door."

The Poly Plant Shop's holiday open house on Dec. 5 will feature music and refreshments as well poinsettias.

From Dec. 6 through the 13, attendees can have their picture taken with a poinsettia instead of Santa. A photo backdrop will be set up for those who want a holiday picture. Poinsettia project representatives will be available to advise customers about their purchases.

The Poly Plant Shop is located at the top of hall on Via Carta and is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sydney Opera House
darks in mourning

Rehan Sullivan
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SYDNEY, Australia — The distinctive white sails of the Sydney Opera House will dim Sunday to mourn the death of Jorn Utzon, the creative mind behind the globally renowned landmark.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd led praise for the Danish architect, whose most distinctive creation had a troublesome birth in Australia but is now held dear as perhaps the country's most recognized icon.

"Jorn Utzon was a visionary architect whose legacy includes one of the world's most spectacular and inspiring buildings, the Sydney Opera House," Rudd said in a statement. "In the great sweep of history, what we're left with is a beautiful building. Sydney's symbol to the world, Australia's symbol to the world and owed in large part to this great man — a son of Denmark but I've got to say in terms of his spirit, a son of Australia as well," Rudd said.

"My sympathies go out to all Australians. It has become the most globally recognized symbol of our country," Rudd said.

Utzon died from a heart attack in his sleep early Saturday, surrounded by family members in Denmark, his son Kim Utzon, told The Associated Press. He was 90.

Utzon was a controversial and creative genius who gave Australia and the world a great gift," said Kim Williams, the chairman of the trust that operates the venue. "The Sydney Opera House is core to our national cultural identity and a source of great pride to all Australians. It has become the most globally recognized symbol of our country."

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And she has told Malawi's harrowing story in her documentary, "I Am Because We Are." With an audience thus far limited to isolated theater screenings, it will be screened for everyone with its TV premiere on Sundance Channel at 9 p.m. EST Monday (World AIDS Day).

"I had many goals," said Madonna during a phone conversation from her Manhattan home a few days ago. "I did get to a point where I thought, 'I'm being overambitious, I'm trying to say too much, I'll never accomplish it.' But I feel proud of the fact that I did get to make all my points."

"People can be of service in large ways and small."

The first wide exposure of "I Am Because We Are" may be coming at a propitious time, which befits the pop superstar who made it, with her knack for anticipating and identifying cultural trends.

On the eve of a new presidential administration, Americans seem set on a more idealistic path, however troubled they may be by economic trends, however hard-pressed by AIDS — had many consequences.

"If all you can do is fly live in YOUR world in a way that shows you are responsible for the people around you, that's a course of action," said Madonna. "People can be of service in large ways and small."

"I can no longer ignore what's going on around me," she said. "There are changes in the air, the sea, the land."

"Makinda's busy schedule continues apace. But the artistic life that drives it is a world you create and you inhabit, to express yourself and to inspire and reach out to other people," she explained. "It's also a consolation, a place you go to to protect yourself." That's true now, in particular, during her highly public split with Guy Ritchie, her husband of eight years, which she described as "not easy, I'm not going to lie."

On a brief New York break from her concert tour, Madonna said the day's long-to-do list called for this AP interview to be followed by interviews she would be conducting herself with prospective head mistresses for the girls school she is building in Malawi.

"We're all going there together at the end of March," she said, referring to David, 8-year-old son Rocco and 12-year-old daughter Lourdes.
Video Game Reviews:

Holiday video game gift guide

Brittany Peele

December 1, 2008

www.mustangdaily.net

The Strategists and Puzzle Solvers

"Professor Layton and the Curious Village": Exercising your brain is rarely fun as it is when solving mysteries with Prof. Layton. In a great, stylish murder mystery in which players have more than 100 touch-screen puzzles to solve, this game should be on the wish list of anybody who likes to use their brain. For the DS.

"Spore": From the creator of The Sims," Spore gives you the task of creating a creature and guiding it through all the stages of evolution—from simple organisms to space-faring powerhouse. The creature creator alone will be enough to satisfy, as it allows for near-infinite creativity. For the PC.

"World of Goo": A $20 downloadable title, there's an outstanding value in "World of Goo" which has players using their Wii remotes to build crazy goo structures in order to help goo blobs reach their goal and escape imprisonment from evil corporations. For the Wii.

The Action Gamer

"Call of Duty: World at War": Unlike "Call of Duty 4," which brought the series into modern warfare, "Call of Duty: World at War" goes back to the battles of World War II. However, it uses the same engine that made "Call of Duty 4" immensely fun and popular, delivering great gameplay and a fantastic online experience. For the Xbox, 360, PC, Wii and PC.

"Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning": In the alternate-history war with the monstrous Chrimera isn’t over. This sequel to the best-selling first-person shooter is more hectic than ever, with a 60-player online deathmatch and eight-player online cooperative play.

The Horror Fan

"Dead Space": Taking the best aspects of classics like "Silent Hill" and "Resident Evil 4," "Dead Space" is an extremely good and immensely terrifying survival horror game in which you have to cut the limbs of undead aliens and discover the shocking fate of Planet Crackler class ship USG Ishimura. For the Xbox, 360, PS3 and PC.

"Left 4 Dead": It's zombies vs. humans in this multiplayer game for. A band of four human players must work together to survive hordes of human-controlled undead with explosive results. The game is a blast when played with friends, but avoid it if you never intended to play online with others. For the Xbox 360 and PC.

The Role-Player

"Chrono Trigger": On the downside, this is the same adventure you enjoyed on the SNES 13 years ago. On the upside, this is the same adventure you enjoyed on the SNES 13 years ago. It's got the same amazing plot and timeless gameplay that fans remember and love. Tons of extra and refinement makes this the definitive version of the classic. For the DS.

"Final Fantasy 2": This fantasy epic lets you become the child of Amano's greatest character ever—the most feared villain. In addition to a main story featuring, open-world gameplay and third-person combat, you're given a large variety of activities and choices. You can hang out at the pool house, daughter villages, get married (to no more than one woman if you so choose) and even choose whether to have protected or unprotected sex. The world is yours to play in.

"Fallout 3": In this post-apocalyptic open-world role-playing game (RPG), players are given absolute freedom to do whatever they want—even if they never want to follow the game's main storyline. Important decisions between good and evil are present, giving you choices that not only affect the story or individual quests, but even whether an entire town will be saved or nuked. A rich story and possibility of more than 500 hours of gameplay awaits. For the PC.

"The Witcher Enhanced Edition": When "The Witcher" was released last year, it was welcomed with high acclaim and was heralded as one of the best PC RPGs in years, but a lot of people ignored the experience. Now, "The Witcher 2: Enhanced Edition" is the definitive "Witcher" experience, with a rewritten script and remixed audio acting, as well as upgraded visuals and faster loading. If you missed out on this dark fantasy epic before, don't make that mistake again. For the PC.

"World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King": If you're already a "World of Warcraft" addict, you probably have the second expansion pack, "Warth of the Lich King." But if you've been holding back, don't miss out on the chance to explore the icy realm of Northrend or explore the intricacies of the new Death Knight class. For the PC.

The Sports Enthusiast

"Animal Crossing: City Folk": While the newest game in the "Animal Crossing" series doesn't change much and adds little, it's still as addictive as ever. Players live in a town full of animal residents where they catch bugs, fish, interact with neighbors, decorate a house and try to escape an impending debt to Tom Nook. Perfect for food.

"Finer Try 2": Set in Africa, this open-world first-person shooter is packed with action, mercenaries, guns and wildlife. While the plot may be lacking, players have a lot of choices of which directions they will take in any given scenario. For the Xbox 360, PS3 and PC.

"Gear of War 2": Bigger, faster, and more bad-ass than the original, "Gear of War 2" combines first-person gameplay with excellent graphics, a great story, and outstanding multiplayer modes. For the Xbox 360.

"Prince of Persia": Coming in early December, "Prince of Persia" promises to build on everything that made the "Prince of Persia Sands of Time" trilogy on the last generation of consoles such a success. With a new, cel-shaded art style, intense combat and fun, Persian fans have never looked better. For Xbox 360 and PC.

"Starcraft II": The alternate-history war with the monstrous Chrimera isn’t over. This sequel to the best-selling first-person shooter is more hectic than ever, with a 60-player online deathmatch and eight-player online cooperative play.

The Toe Tappers

"Animal Music World Tour": It's a trip around the world on your Wii remote. For the PS3.

"Super Mario Galaxy": With excellent graphics, a great story; and outstanding multiplayer modes. For the Xbox 360.

"LittleBigPlanet": Paint the town. Literally! "De Blob" puts you in the role of a blob of paint that has to bring color back to a colorless world. For the PS3.

"Bare Knuckle: On Stage": Create. Share. In this cutesy side-scrolling platformer, players can play alone or with up to three friends to work through a variety of creative levels— or make some of their own to share online. For the PS3.

"Rock Band 2": A lot more than just a song pack, "Rock Band 2" adds a lot of the problems that fans encountered in the original, making it even more of an absolute blast to play both alone and with friends. For the PS3, Xbox 360, and Wii.

"Guitar Hero World Tour": The name is a little less appropriate now, as "World Tour" follows in the footsteps of "Rock Band" and provides the beloved over-the-top, all-American football experience you would want. Easy to pick up and play—both alone and with friends— and with handheld football that can be enjoyed by more than just "Madden" fans. For the DS.
Vote for your favorite in each category. The results will be published in our Best For Cal Poly Edition in February.
Taking back our state university system

mustangdaily@gmail.com

Editor in chief: Marlene van Ronnhub
Managing Editor: Gina Magnoli

Monday, December 1, 2008

OPINION/EDITORIAL

Is it possible to make student access to the CSU system more difficult? I bet I can name a few

The California State Legislature and the California State University system have let us down. Since 2000, our student fees have doubled. What that means for those of you who are on the eight-year plan is that you are paying for three college educations with little to no help from Uncle Sam. A few weeks ago I received an e-mail from a student asking me what it would take for Cal Poly to become part of the University of California system. I spent some time thinking about that and even asked some of the administrators. The answer comes down to a few different things, mainly funding and teaching vs. research perspectives, not to mention the huge numbers of UC students pay twice as much as we do to attain an undergraduate degree.

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**Marriage and Uncle Sam: a divorce waiting to happen**

The fury over Prop 8 involves two equally estranged, equally passionate camps: one that wants government to define marriage to allow people of the same sex to marry and another that seeks to restrict marriage to define marriage to allow people of the opposite sex to marry. Instead, the burden falls equally on passionate camps; one that wants government to include their love stories and be involved in marriage for the simple reason that as far as living memory goes, that’s how it has always been.

This is hardly the end of the discussion, but it makes for a fine beginning. To trace how far off the correct path we are, I think it is useful to consider what the fundamentals of marriage involve. Let’s consider the day of the wedding itself. Generally, it finds two people (usually a man and a woman, but I digress) making a binding promise before their peers and before God. In legalistic terms, marriage might be reduced to a simple contract where the pastor or priest is the officiator and the family and friends are the witnesses.

But amid the general sweetness of it all, there lurks a shadowy, cheerless bureaucrat with the dictionary who matters the most. What role does government even have in defining marriage? Is it legitimately involved in marriage for the simple reason that as far as living memory goes, that’s how it has always been?

Furthermore, it would seem that the best one could hope for is that the government would simply step out of the marriage business and leave people free to live as they see fit. Nonetheless, many seem convinced that something as important as marriage is best entrusted to the government’s safekeeping. Now, I don’t mean to marginalize anyone’s strong convictions whatever the matter at hand, but matter of fact is this: how laughably naive is it to trust something that one holds dear to the government. Need elaboration? Just look what the government’s done with your tax dollars lately. Liberals, do you enjoy financing the Iraq War? Conservatives, how fond are you of funding abortion?

So what’s the solution? Stranger, it’s the same whatever your stance, divided the government when it comes to marriage. You want traditional marriage? Well, marry your reproductive opposite and stick to the churches that respect your definition on marriage. For conscientious sake, avoid that one false step of being ordained or being legally married. At worst, you should protest your individual rights to the most egregious and consistent abuser of said rights. Why support the absurd notion that the government has any job legitimizing your marriage? All!

Lately, there’s been a grim search for a foolproof solution that has sparked an endless debate on both sides. But look, people throughout time have managed (albeit with splendid success) to carry on peacefully while holding differing opinions on matters of tremendous import. Once you recognize that government is the common enemy to your definition(s) of marriage, you may enjoy a moment of solidarity. And when you can accept anything that’s peaceful, you may enjoy a moment of peace.

Jeremy Hicks is a 2008 political science graduate, the founder of the Cal Poly Libertarians Club and a Mustang Daily political columnist.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** "Don’t Deal on Me" usually appears on Wednesdays. However, due to the fact that there was no Mustang Daily last Wednesday with the Thanksgiving break, the column appears today and again on Wednesday this week.
Pop Culture Shock Therapy by Doug Bratzon

Everyone froze—no one had ever ordered a certain appetizer when a certain friend was present.
**Oshkosh Park, N.Y. —** If a Bill was looking to cash in on the 49ers' disconnect from their once-loyal fans, who would have been closer than the Stadium? From their 72-yard drive on San Francisco's final possession, two field goals, and finally beat an opponent with a 350-yard game — but never breaking a touchdowm. The 49ers defense then did the same against the Bills, who had only themselves to blame.

**TO THE EDITOR**

I confess — please forgive me for not weighing college football as seriously as I should have before I saw your piece. As a former student and fan of Cal Poly, I have been critical of the school's athletic programs.

I am writing to you to express my appreciation for the thoughtful and insightful column you wrote about the Mustangs basketball team. Your article made me realize how much I have been missing out on as a lifelong fan of Cal Poly athletics.

The Mustangs, who are in the midst of a five-game homestand, their longest in nine years. Senior forward Luke McBride added seven points and a team-high seven assists.

I have been following the Mustangs for years, and I have to say that this season has been particularly exciting. The team is playing with a new level of intensity and enthusiasm, and you captured that in your article.

I would like to congratulate you on a job well done and thank you for bringing attention to the hard work and dedication of the Mustangs basketball team. Keep up the great work.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
MUSTANG DAILY

SPORTS

MUSTANG DAILY

football | # 12 WEBER STATE 49, # 3 CAL POLY 35

END OF AN ERA

Mustangs commit season-high five turnovers; prolific senior class exits playoffs in first round

Donovan Aird

SPORTS DAILY

For months, defenses had tried to get the ball out of the hands of the Cal Poly football team's offense.

To say they failed would be something of an understatement.

Cal Poly entered its Football Championship Subdivision (formerly Division I-AA) first-round playoff game against Weber State leading the FCS in both yards (481.4) and points (45.3) per game.

And the Mustangs, fifth in the FCS in turnover margin, had turned the ball over just six times all year.

They almost matched that total Saturday night, fortifying the ball five times in a 49-35 loss before 6,191 at Alex G. Spanos Stadium.

"They guessed right on a couple of plays," said Mustangs quarterback Jonathan Dally, who completed 11 of 30 passes for 185 yards and two touchdowns but was intercepted four times. "I can't really put it into words. It felt like a little bit of a characteristically of us.

"It's real hard to swallow right now," Dally said. "(Those were) terrible decisions on my part.

Dally, whose final interception was claimed by Scotty Goodloe with a 10-yard return that set up a 29-yard field goal to put Weber State up 28-21, was overpowered at the line of scrimmage and had been intercepted just once all season.

The play effectively brought the season to an end for third-ranked Cal Poly (9-3).

"It's heartbreaking," Mustangs head coach Rich Ellerson said. "That was our last time as a football team.

"Jake Vow's kick went out of bounds at the Cal Poly 46-yard line after the Mustangs closed the gap to 42-35 on a Dally 5-yard fade to recover Ramesses Barden with 3:08 remaining in regulation.

But 12th-ranked Weber State (10-3) needed just three plays in 33 seconds to regain a two-possession lead, as Justin White ran 21 yards around right end to provide the final margin.

"They were in a groove," Ellerson said of the Wildcats offense, which amassed 640 yards, the most by a Cal Poly opponent this season. "They did a great job of anticipating us. Prior to the snap of the ball, they had us."

Dally, who rushed for 177 yards and two touchdowns on 23 attempts, scored on a 1-yard keeper to bring the Mustangs within 35-28 with 9:59 left in regulation.

Bryan Escuti returned the ensuing kickoff 44 yards to the Mustangs 45-yard line, and five plays later, Scotty Goodloe's 1-yard sneak with 7:35 left in the game established a 42-28 lead.

Higgins, a 6-foot-2, 195-pound junior quarterback, completed 22 of 30 passes for 280 yards and two touchdowns.

The Wildcats pulled ahead 35-21 just 4:24 into the second half, as backup quarterback Brendon Doyle found Cody Nakamura on a 9-yard pass.

"We can certain things with (Dyke) and we haven't thrown the ball a lot with him," Weper State head coach Ron McBride said.

The Mustangs, who achieved a 28-14 lead midway through the second quarter, allowed the game to get away on a pair of interception returns.

Cameron Higgins threw a 29-yard pass to tight end Matt Smith in the first quarter as the Mustangs were trying to get the ball out of the hands of the defense.

And in the second quarter, Higgins threw a 1-yard touchdown pass to tight end Matt Smith on a second-and-goal play from the Cal Poly 3.

"We gave up a big play," Ellerson said.

The 1-yard touchdown pass to Smith finished a seven-play, 69-yard drive that began when Bryce Scanlon recovered a Jon Hall fumble.

"Turnovers are very uncharacteristic of our team, but our guys made plays," McBride said.

Cal Poly almost answered on the next series but a fourth-and-goal try at the Weber State 4-yard line failed when Ter'eale Toone was stopped on a reverse a yard short.

The Mustangs trailed at halftime for the first time this season. 26-21, thanks largely to Higgins, who was 14-21 for 280 yards.

The teams exchanged turnovers midway through the second quarter.

Toone had a pass over the middle into Goodloe's arms, but three plays later, Cal Poly's Asa Jackson forced a fumble that teammate Greg Francis recovered five yards before the end zone and returned to the Mustangs 23-yard line.

Hall then rumbled up the middle for an 11-yard touchdown run 3:10 before halftime to polish off an eight-play drive and cut the contest 21-21.

But Higgins struck right back, hitting a wide-open Tim Toone for a 15-yard score with 1:07 left.

"We just had nobody home," Ellerson said.

Toone had 10 receptions for 199 yards and two touchdowns.

Dally was picked off by Josh Morris at the Weber State 2-yard line 11 seconds before the teams headed to the locker rooms.

Weber State scored in previous touchdown on a one-play possession.

Higgins, protected in the pocket for several seconds, calmly surveyed the field and found wide-open running back Tremain Smiley for a 37-yard catch-and-run that put the Wildcats ahead 21-14 with 1:06 left in the first half.

The offensive line did an incredible job," McBride said. "Higgins got rid of the ball quickly. He can tell by pre-snap where he's going to go with the football."

Dally jumped over a defender on an 8-yard keeper up the middle to tie the game 14-14 with 14:44 left in the first half.

It came after Smith dived in and out of would-be tacklers for a 29-yard touchdown run with 2:44 remaining in the first quarter.

"If we'd have lost the game, I wouldn't have felt bad because the guys played their ass off," McBride said.

Weber State advanced to face No. 4 seed Montana, which came from behind to defeat Texas State 31-13.

The disappointment of this evening will in time dim against the background of their accomplishments and what they've achieved while they've been here."

— Rich Ellerson

Cal Poly football head coach

Cal Poly senior receiver Ramesses Barden is overcome with emotion after the Mustangs' season-ending loss Saturday at Alex G. Spanos Stadium.

"Cal Poly's, in my opinion, the best team we played this year," said Smith, who rushed for 137 yards and two scores on 25 carries.

After a defensive end Sean Lawyer sacked Higgins for a 9-yard loss to set up a third-and-17, Higgins lofted a 40-yard pass down the left sideline to Mike Phillips, who made a dazzling, rolling-on-the-ground catch between his legs. Four plays later, a 1-yard plunge by Smith finished a seven-play, 69-yard march and tied the contest 7-7 with 7:15 left in the first quarter.

Barden, who rushed in six passes for 108 yards and two touchdowns, caught a 19-yarder to give the Mustangs a 7-0 lead 4:43 into the game.

The reception tied Randy Munir's single-season NCAA record of 11 straight games with a touchdown catch.

Seventeen seniors' Cal Poly careers came to an end.

"It hurts," said a choked-up Barden. "I was playing with my best friends. And I don't get to play with them again."

A day after many glanced at pregame, the players may be more able to appreciate what had been a banner season, Ellerson said.

"The disappointment of this evening will in time dim against the background of their accomplishments and what they've achieved while they've been here," he said.

Among the offensive seniors were: Barden, Dally, running back James Noble (who became the school's all-time leader in rushing touchdowns) and Ryan Male, centers Stephen Field and Mike Porter, Toone and Vise Freitas at receiver, tackles Pat Kohgian and Eric White, and guard Brock Daniels.

Defensively, linebackers Fred Hoes II, Mark Restelli and Dominic Rickard, cornerback Marlin Grant and Gene Grant, and Lawyer were lost.

Barden, Field, Noble, Lawyer, Hoes and Toone were named to the All-Great West Conference Team, and Male was an honorable mention.

It's a spectacular group of seniors who've done some great things in their time here," Ellerson said. "Tonight wasn't one of them, of course. We're having to handle all the emotion — not only not winning the game, which is painful, but all of a sudden to realize 'My time as a Mustang is over.' "

END OF AN ERA