They pave Mitchell Park, put in a parking lot

Cassandra Keyse  
CASSIDAN DAILY

In a 3-2 vote on Tuesday night, the San Luis Obispo City Council approved the proposed construction of a 12-space parking lot behind the San Luis Obispo Senior Center at Mitchell Park. The approved plan is slightly different from the original Mitchell Park Master Plan that called for a 14-space lot. The decrease in the number of spaces lowered the expected cost of the project from nearly $195,000 to $150,000.

The issue has stirred controversy in the community, pitting those in favor of preserving the downtown park against those in need of easier access to the senior center. The decision to lower the number of spaces to 12 was made by Mayor Komore and councilwoman Adrienne Alston in order to appease both sides of the argument.

Members of the senior center make up the majority of those in favor of the new parking lot as street parking in front of the center is hard to come by. The parking lot will provide easier access to and from the center for those who require the use of walkers, canes or wheelchairs for mobility.

“I'm just overjoyed,” said Marie Wilson, chair of the office volunteers at the Senior Center. “I couldn't believe it almost. I was very old when someone told me it had past. It was a gift from God.”

According to Wilson, many members of the senior center are older; some are in their 80s and 90s. For these people, finding close enough parking on popular nights such as bingo night is crucial because their mobility is so limited.

Dave Kuykendall of the Save Mitchell Park group expressed the group’s disappointment in the decision to pave at Mitchell Park.

“Going into this, we knew there was little chance of us de­laying the decision,” said Kuyk­endall of the group’s expecta­tions. “Although we did have an excellent design and alternative plan, it seems that the city coun­cil had already made up their minds before hand. We're very disappointed.”

The three council members who voted to approve the mea­sure were Mayor Dave Romero, and Councilman Andrew Carter and John Ashbaugh. Councilman Allan Suttle and Councilwoman see Park, page 2

Schwarzenegger to restart stalled budget talks

Steve Lawrence  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Gov. Ar­nold Schwarzenegger said Wednesday that he'll restart stalled budget talks with legis­lative leaders in hopes of getting a quick deficit-cut­ting agreement that would save the state from having to issue IOUs to vendors and taxpayers expecting refunds.

"Everyone makes New Year's resolutions," Schwarzenegger told re­porters during a news con­ference. "So here's a chance to say, 'Let's start a new year here. We have a huge budget deficit. We have three weeks before we go off the cliff and before we have to hand out those IOUs. Let's do it."

The Republican gov­ernor said he would meet Thursday with the two top Demo­crats and two leading Republicans to try to reach an agreement before the state is forced to start issuing promissory notes and laying off some state workers in February.

He called the news con­ference a day after vetoing an $18 billion deficit-cutting package pushed by Demo­crats. Schwarzenegger said the Democratic plan was short on spending cuts and failed to roll back environ­mental reviews to speed up job-creating public works projects.

The governor and Demo­crats want a combination of spending cuts and tax in­creases to deal with a deficit that is projected to reach $42 billion over the next 18 months, but Republicans have balked at any tax hikes.

Democrats need at least three Republican votes in each house to put together the two-thirds majorities re­quired to pass tax increases. Democrats attempted to get around that requirement in their $18 billion package by raising some taxes, cutting others and imposing a new fee on gasoline sales.

Republican lawmakers and taxpayer groups filed a lawsuit this week against

Obama hails 'extraordinary' moment with presidents

Ben Feller  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) — Con­fronting a grim economy and a Middle East on fire, Barack Obama turned Wednesday to perhaps the only people on the planet who un­derstand what he's in for: the four living members of the U.S. presi­dents' club.

In an image bound to go down in history, every living U.S. presi­dent came together at the White House on Wednesday to hash over the world's challenges with the president-elect. There stood, shoulder-to-shoulder in the Oval Office: George H.W. Bush, Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter.

"This is an extraordinary gathering," Obama said, looking plenty at ease in the humbling office that will soon be his.

"All the gentlemen here under­stand both the pressures and possibil­ities of this office," Obama said. "And for me to have the opportu­nity to get advice, good counsel and fellowship with these individuals is extraordinary And I'm very grateful to all of them."

Bush, blistered without mercy by Obama during the campaign season, played the role of gracious host.

"All of us who have served in this office understand that the office transcends the individual," Bush said as Obama nodded in thanks. "And we wish you all the very best. And do so, the country."

It was a moment of statesman­ship that tends to happen when presidents get together, no matter how bitter their previous rivalries. In a photo opportunity that lasted less than two minutes, Carter, Clin­ton and the senior Bush smiled but said nothing. They deferred to the

see Presidents, page 2

President-elect Barack Obama met with every living U.S. President on Wednesday to discuss world issues. From left: George H.W. Bush, Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter.
Schwartzenger recently released his own budget fix to cover the next 15 years. He proposed $14.3 billion in tax increases and other new revenue, $17.4 billion in spending cuts and $10 billion in borrowing.

The U.S. stated also said one of the militaries killed was a woman. The incident happened in Afghan, districts, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) northeast of the capital Kabul.

In western Farah province on Wednesday, Afghan army and coalition forces killed 24 insurgents. Five of the militants were killed in a firefight with US troops.

In the incident, coalition forces killed 32 insurgents during the past week. The US military said in a separate statement. An American soldier was killed in a firefight in eastern Afghanistan on Monday.

The US military said the troops were on the road to Kunduz, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the capital Kabul. The firefight came ahead of an expected influx of 30,000 American troops into Afghanistan to combat a Taliban insurgency that has seen violence skyrocketing in the past two years.

US-led forces raided a Taliban bomb-making cell in eastern Afghanistan, killing 11 insurgents in a battle with scores of armed militants who shut down them from roadside and waylays, the military said Wednesday.

The firefight broke out on Tuesday in Laghman province when as many as 75 armed militants converged on the troops, who were searching a number of compounds in the area, the military said in a statement. The 11 insurgents were killed when coalition troops returned fire.

The troops destroyed two caches of weapons and roadside bomb-making materials that were too unstable to move to another location, the statement said. The firefight came ahead of an expected influx of 30,000 American troops into Afghanistan to combat a Taliban insurgency that has seen violence skyrocketing in the past two years.

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Johannes Mehserle submitted the resignation letter. His attorney according to a BART official.

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The BART Rapid Transit police officer who fatally shot an unarmed man at Oakland’s Fruitvale station resigned from the transit agency Wednesday. Representaives for 27-year-old Johannes Mehserle submitted the resignation letter on his behalf, according to BART officials.

Twenty-two-year-old Ob­
grant of Hayward was lying face-down on the station platform when he was shot and killed early New Year’s Day. Mehserle was one of several officers responding to reports about groups of youths fighting on a train.

Decatur, Ala. (AP) — A federal judge offered an Alabama sheriff locked up in his own jail Wednesday after holding him in contempt for failing to adequately feed inmates while profiting from the skimpy meals.

U.S. District Judge U.W. Clem­
son had court security arrest Mor­
gan County Sheriff Greg Barrett after dramatic testimony from skinny prisoners about paper-thin bologna and cold grits. The hear­
ing offered a rare look into Ala­
abama’s unusual practice of letting sheriff’s pockets the money left over from feeding inmates.

Read the full story at www.mustangdaily.net

NEWS

Briefs

State

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Peace activists and religious orga­
nizations are holding a silent candlelight vigil at the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles to call for a cease-fire in the Middle East.

The peace action Wednesday is the latest demonstration in the city over the conflict between Is­
raeli forces and Hamas militants in Gaza. The vigil has attracted more than 50 members of the Quakers, American Friends Service Committee, the Los Angeles Jew­

International

NEW DEHLLI (AP) — “Keep your phone switched on,” a banker instructs a gunman by phone in the midst of the Mumbai siege, so that we can hear the gunfire.

The ruthless commands come from a transcript of phone calls Indian authorities say they inter­
cepted during the attacks in No­

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — U.S.-led forces raided a Taliban bomb-making cell in eastern Afg­

Baghdad (AP) — The top American commander in the for­

WORD ON THE STREET

“If you were president, what would you choose to talk about?”

“I would probably want to talk to President George W. Bush and I’d ask him if he had eight years to do it over again, would he do it the same?”

— Bill Lane, civil engineering sophomore

“Which living U.S. president would you meet with and what would you choose to talk about?”

“I would meet Clinton and I would ask him to give advice to our current president (on) how he’s balance the budget.”

— Dylan Van Lant, electrical engineering sopho­

ARE YOU CONTEMPLATING CHANGING YOUR MAJOR?

Career Services is here to help you navigate the major change process. Here are some suggestions for what to do if you are not happy with your current major.

• Set up an appointment to meet with a Career Counselor by calling Career Services at 805.756.2501, ext. 4. Your Career Counselor can assess where you are at in the decision making process and help you figure out options that may be a good fit.

• If you are still unclear about your options, your Career Counselor may recommend that you take an online assessment that will help you discover occupations related to your interests, values, skills, and personality.

• Your Career Counselor may also recommend several career exploration tools to help you further clarify what you want to do, such as reading about careers online or in our Career Resource Center (Bldg. 124, Room 117). You can explore further by asking faculty, students, alumni, and professionals in the field about careers. Trying out a career by shadowing someone or taking a class in the major you are thinking of switching to is also recommended.

• After deciding what major you want to change into, you should go directly to the department or college advising center to ask about change of major policies and application procedures.

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New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson listens to questions from the press regarding his withdrawal as the nominee for secretary of the Commerce Department. Richardson was at attending, along with Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez Wednesday.

Richardson adviser worked for firm under federal probe

Barry Massey

One of Gov. Bill Richardson's closest friends and advisers worked as a consultant for the California firm at the center of a federal post-play probe that detailed the governor's appointment as commerce secretary. Mike Stratton's consulting firm worked for CDR Financial Products to advise on business in New Mexico at the time the company was hired to work on bond deals with the New Mexico Finance Authority.

Federal investigators are now scrutinizing whether CDR's work, for which it earned nearly $1.5 million in fees, was influenced by political contributions that CDR and its chief executive David Rubin made to Richardson's political committees.

Stratton, a longtime Democratic political consultant, has been friends with Richardson for more than 25 years. He advised Richardson — and raised money for him — during the governor's failed bid for the 2008 presidential nomination.

Stratton did not immediately return telephone messages Wednesday. Richardson said Wednesday there was no wrongdoing in how the state awarded the work to CDR.

"In my view, the state and its officials have done nothing wrong. They behaved with the best of intentions and the best conduct," Richardson said at a news conference in Albuquerque.

Stratton worked for CDR as a business development consultant until at least 2007. CDR spokesman Allan Ripp said he was not sure exactly when Stratton started working for the company, but said it was in the early 2000s. Richardson took office in January 2003.

Stratton's consulting had "nothing to do with political contributions," Ripp said.

CDR and Rubin contributed $11,000 to Richardson's political committees in 2003-2005.

The largest contribution was made in 2004 and helped pay expenses for some of Richardson's staff and supporters at the Democratic National Convention. Stratton worked with the governor during the convention, helping Richardson carry out his role as convention chairman.

The $75,000 contribution was made June 18, 2004, just days before Richardson was awarded a no-competition state contract to reinvest bond proceeds.

The Finance Authority's chief financial officer recommended CDR for the work in a memorandum dated June 24, 2004, and the authority's board approved the selection June 30.

Bill Sisneros, executive director of the Finance Authority, said he received numerous telephone calls from Stratton's firm in June 2004. Joan Coplan, a senior consultant for Stratton and Associates, had telephoned him repeatedly about the opportunity for reinvestment of the bond proceeds held in escrow and the authority's possible use of CDR.

Stratton's firm was "kind of pitching the idea" for the escrow reinvestment, he said.

"The only person that was lobbying the Finance Authority was Michael Stratton's office," Sisneros said.

The escrow reinvestment was approved by the authority's board as a "sole source procurement" of services with CDR — with no competitive bid process before the firm's selection. Sisneros said the agency needed to act fast before the reinvestment was precluded by a change in federal regulations.

Sisneros said it was a "market-driven transaction" — not influenced by Stratton's firm or the governor's office.

"No one in the governor's office contacted him about the possible transaction with CDR," Sisneros said.

"Nobody ever instructed me to use them," he said.

Sisneros said federal investigators have questioned him about his contact with Richardson's former chief of staff, David Contarino, on CDR deals. Sisneros said he had discussed the escrow reinvestment plan with Contarino but was not instructed to hire CDR.

"Even to this day I've never had a conversation with Gov. Richardson about CDR," Sisneros said.

Iraqi cleric urges attacks on U.S. troops over Gaza

Iraqi demonstrators burn a U.S. flag as men hold a poster showing radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr during a protest against the Israeli attack on Gaza in Sadr City, Baghdad, Iraq, Dec. 31, 2008.

Sameer N. Yacob

Anti-U.S. cleric Moqtada al-Sadr on Wednesday urged the United States to withdraw American forces in Iraq to protest Israeli's Gaza offensive, as Arab nations rose over civilian deaths in the Palestinian territory.

The strongly worded statement signaled a threat by al-Sadr's militant fighters to renew violence against American troops after months of relative calm.

It was unclear, however, how much influence the once-powerful Shiite leader — who is believed to be in Iran — still has. His fighters have been hit hard in U.S.-Iraqi military operations over the past year.

The U.S. State Department dismissed al-Sadr's calls, describing them as "outrageous." "Any call for attacks against Americans is outrageous and, frankly, not worthy of much more comment," deputy State Department spokesman Robert Wood told reporters. "Outside calls to attack Americans for what's going on in the region are outrageous."

The Bush administration held off Wednesday from backing an Egyptian French cease-fire proposal to Gaza, saying it was exploring other options to secure a lasting agreement that would end the violence. Iraqis have expressed outrage over the Israeli offensive and what they perceived as U.S. inaction, holding meetings to show solidarity with the Palestinians. The issue has again put the spotlight on Iraq's relations with Israel and the two countries remain technically at war.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki expressed "deep regret" over the Israeli offensive and accused the international community of ignoring the plight of the Palestinians.

"It is regrettable that this brutal crime continues with the silence of the international community," he said. "We wish to stress that no Arab and no Muslim nation is able to abide diplomatic relations with Israel and to "stop all public and clandestine contacts with this murderous regime.

Only two Arab countries, Egypt and Jordan, have peace treaties with Israel.

In his own statement, al-Sadr said more action was needed "due to the continuation of Arab silence and the massacres committed by the Zionist enemy under U.S. and international cover."

"I call upon the honest Israeli resistance to carry out revenge operations against the Zionists and the massacres committed by the Zionist enemy under U.S. and international cover," he said.

"I call upon the honest Israeli resistance to carry out revenge operations against the great accomplice of the Zionist enemy," he said, using rhetoric referring to the United States and Israel.

He also urged that Palestinian flags be raised on mosques, churches and buildings in Iraq and that all countries close Israeli embassies.

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Apple's Steve Jobs takes $1 salary, but holdings suffer

Jordan Robertson

ASSOCIATED PRESS

As he's done for the last decade, Apple Inc. Chief Executive Steve Jobs took home his customary $1 annual salary in 2008, but the economic meltdown and Apple's falling stock price whacked half a billion dollars off the value of his personal holdings in the company, according to company filings.

Apple said in a regulatory filing Wednesday that Jobs, who holds 5.3 million shares of Apple's stock, hasn't sold any of the shares since acquiring the company in 1997. That means what he lacks in annual compensation is made up for in the enormous amount of stock he already holds — a board that took a beating in 2008 amid fears about the Mac maker's vulnerability to the U.S. recession.

Apple shares have lost more than half their value since the end of 2007, when they were trading at nearly $200. Apple's stock price today is worth more than $1 billion. The stock finished Wednesday's trading session down $2.01, 2 percent, at $91.01, meaning Jobs' stake is worth around $500 million.

A big hit by any measure, the decline still barely dents Jobs' massive fortune, estimated by Forbes magazine earlier this year at $5.7 billion and ranking him 61st on the magazine's list of the richest Americans.
Ted Neeley performed as Jesus Christ in the original 1973 film version of "Jesus Christ Superstar," a role he still performs today.

-- Blake Goble

Meryl Streep stars in "Duble," an adaptation of a famous Shansley play.

-- Blake Goble
well as a good mock-mirror through which to watch the students. The manners, relating to meddling and formality, are fascinating because they’re so true. For outsiders it’s funny and unusual, but for Catholic school refugees, it’s almost too honest.

But it’s the intrusiveness that leads to a series of religious quandaries and tested fates over what exactly happened to the boy Did Flynn do something? Or is Aloysius over-reacting? The drama, which shouldn’t be elaborated upon too heavily, is breathtaking. As an audience member, you can never take sides or make assumptions because you’ll never know what to make of anyone in “Doubt.”

It’s the kind of film that the Academy drools over. In immaculate performances, Hoffman, Streep and Adams each put themselves at differing points in their faiths, but the real runaway winner will be Viola Davis (“Disturbia”) as Mrs. Miller, Donald’s mother. Her beautiful soliloquy about her son is worth the price of admission alone. It transcends the simplicities of religion to show how faith never gives perfect answers.

With a film that has such brave ideas, presented ornately and with historical thoroughness, the only letdown may just be the direction. Shanley, an Oscar-winning writer, directed here and pangs of first-time winning writer, directed here and pangs of first-time decision make “Doubt” imperfect. Just like any religion.

Over the winter break, my house reckons our love affair with an exquisitely rare film known throughout the land as “The American Astronaut,” a space-western musical perpetrated by the band The Billy Nayer Show. Starring, written, and directed by the front man Cory McAbee, the film chronicles the misadventures of Samuel Curtis, who must bring a 16-year-old boy to Venus so that he may be the stud for the planet made up entirely of women. Since the film’s debut in 2001, Cory McAbee spent the majority of his time working on another film, a book and another album, which never seemed to come until now. He emerges again triumphantly, changing the band’s name from The Billy Nayer Show to The American Astronaut and releasing two new EPs: “Goodbye California” and “Reno” as well as a new film, “Stingray Rats” that will debut this month at Sundance. This brings me to my review of American Astronaut’s America first track “Goodbye California” and “Reno” tread a slightly more mature ground than projects undertaken by the band previously. As The Billy Nayer Show, songs seemed more concerned with love, sex and how magically tragic they inevitably become. In fact, I can’t think of an early song that doesn’t reek of the sappiness between honeymooners or the shirt that covers the broken hearted. That’s why I got into them in the first place. But now Cory McAbee seems to have left all those joys and dispositions behind him and now roams the world looking for his place in it. The two EPs seem to be the product of a middle-aged man leaving a dead end job without having to go other than a filthy bar to do so. It’s awesome. In the title track “Goodbye California,” Cory McAbee grunts an explanation for his self-imposed exile from the laid back douchebaggery of our state. It’s simple really. The lyrics and the music are unimpressive and cranky. But as the EP progresses, things get better. In “Twist and Shout,” the band dances out their anger in a seedy bar to crunchy guitar riffs accompanied by a very clean and simple piano. This track “Two Flies” reminds me of watching your ex hook up with some guy at said bar. The worst part is if they make out, she watches the expression on your face because your ex is doing the same old bullshit with new people, kind of like the band. In short, I’m all about this band and their films. They are worth a listen and a watch. Beginners should start out with their first feature film “American Astronaut” and allow themselves to get sucked in that way. If that doesn’t work out for you, then you are some sort of square with healthy living habits and I don’t want to know you.
Make responsibility count.

Join PricewaterhouseCoopers in New Orleans for two days of community service that will inspire a new generation of leaders. Learn more and register for a chance to participate at www.pwc.tv/neworleans
Appointment of Panetta is one giant leap in the wrong direction

Ian Nachreiner

What world are we living in, where a career political hack, Leon Panetta, can make his way to an Obama appointment as the Director of the CIA? I contend, we are in a nation that has forgotten, forgotten how far we've come and the resolve it takes to defeat Islamic fascist extremists bent on the destruction of Western civilization.

I have argued that one of the many reasons Obama is now our President-elect is because it was a referendum against President Bush and the policies of the past eight years; policies that involved a global war on terrorism, detentions of enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay and increased intelligence capabilities. Most importantly, policies that allowed for interrogations of prisoners. Yet Bush opponents contend that terrorists need to be given civil rights and criminal trials.

As Brian Williams reported Tuesday on NBC Nightly News, Panetta's appointment is "a big change in direction for U.S. intelligence policy." Frankly, this is not Obama's first mistake, and it won't be his last. Panetta is by no means an expert when it comes to intelligence.

He served as former President Clinton's chief of staff and budget director. At a news conference this week, Obama explained, "The intelligence community is no longer geared towards what they think the president wants to hear, but instead delivering what the president needs to hear... Panetta brings extraordinary management skills, great political savvy and impeccable integrity." First, what evidence is there to suggest that over the past eight years the intelligence President Bush was receiving was both he wanted to hear, and what he needed to hear? The two are not mutually exclusive. Second, how does having "great political savvy" help you in the CIA? It may help you get more funding on Capitol Hill, but when it comes to the day to day operations of running that agency, Panetta isn't qualified to be a receptionist, let alone the Director. The problem is that he has been overly political in the past, and there is no evidence to suggest that he won't in the future. The CIA, like most government agencies, should be as apolitical as possible. I don't want to lay awake at night wondering if our government isn't keeping us safe because an interrogation is no longer politically expedient.

Having known terrorists in custody away from concentrations of civilians in one centralized location is a good thing. The terrorists are off the streets and we are safer.

Civil liberties shouldn't matter when it comes to terrorists if they are not citizens. That is not to say we shouldn't be respectful, but it doesn't mean that all constitutional rights afforded to citizens of this country should apply. And certainly do not treat our shoulder-to-the-rest-of-the-world intelligence, where it comes to terrorists if they are not citizens. That is not to say we shouldn't be respectful, but it doesn't mean that all constitutional rights afforded to citizens of this country should apply. Furthermore, regardless of what activist judges decide.

The Geneva Convention-like civil liberties do not apply to terrorists. Terrorists groups did not sign the agreement, and certainly do not treat our shoulder-to-the-rest-of-the-world with the same modicum of decency that we do to them. We don't hear the report on our nightly news programs of what our enemies does to us. Where they take the wounded bodies of our troops, hang them from the sides of bridges, booby trapped to inflict additional casualties. It is an enemy we can respect.

The dirty little secret is that lives are saved not by being porous on the battlefield. No-body wants to be in favor of torture, or brutal practices. But they work. I am not a Bush apologist by any stretch of the imagination. However, when it comes to the issue of national security, are we safer today than were eight years ago? Yes, we are safer.

If we want to maintain that safety we will have to keep taking the fight to them. It may be ugly, and we may not like it, but it is a necessary evil. The American people are OK with such things as long as they are ignorant to the truth. If their safety is secured without knowing how we get it, we the people will accept it.

The bottom line: I protest Panetta's appointment, and hope the Senate rejects his confirmation. It represents a disastrous change in direction for our national security. However, unlike my liberal counterparts, I will not hold my breath until this happens and I realize that no matter how much I kick, scream, yell or argue, I will not get my way. Panetta will more likely than not be the next CIA Director, wrong as it may be.

Ian Nachreiner is an agricultural science senior and a Mustang Daily columnist.
Thursday, January 8, 2009

Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne Jr. published an article titled “The Party of Tomorrow” Tuesday in which he discusses the state of politics in America, more specifically the future of the Republican and Democratic parties.

Both political parties are electing new chairmen and thus both stand to reinvent their party’s public discourse. For Democrats, this is the time to hold on to the open-minded, moderate aura that is the time to hold on to the open-minded, moderate aura that President-elect Obama has established. On the other hand, the widespread losses that Republicans suffered in the last election have placed their party in a peculiar and delicate situation.

Dionne asked the director of polling at The Washington Post to crunch media exit poll statistics from the last two elections by party and ideology, and he found that “In 2004, 18- to 29-year-olds tilted only narrowly Democratic, 37 percent to 35 percent. In 2008, 45 percent of the under-30s called themselves Democrat; only 26 percent called themselves Republican.”

So, there is a striking trend of people our age leaning toward the Democratic Party. Some would say that this trend arises, not from a newfound liberal persuasion in college-aged people, but because during the last election our generation strongly resonated with the politics of Barack Obama.

There is no certain way to predict if people indicated that they were Democrat last November because of Barack Obama, if there was a genuine resonance with the ideas of the Democratic Party or if it was due to the simple fact that more Democrats came to the polls.

Dionne claims that there was a genuine resonance between the Democratic Party and the American people, and he credits the change of heart to what has been termed by others “The Bush Effect” and the rite de passage of the Republican Party.

I do not condone compromising ideological values for political purposes nor do I approve of political opportunism, but I do believe that the conservatives need to adapt to the moderate voice in America if they want to be effective in future American politics.

In times like these, when simply maintaining a job and paying the bills is an issue for many people, and as we watch the middle class slowly dissolve into poverty, the promise of fiscal responsibility and low taxes just doesn’t cut it.

In hard financial times like these, those two absolutes of the Republican Party’s ideology reveal how distant they are from the cares of the average American. It reminds me of the famous phrase, “Let them eat cake,” which was said to be uttered by Marie Antoinette during the famine in France.

And sadly, the Republican Party’s focus doesn’t get any better from there. One of the four Republican contenders for chairman is Chip Saltsman, who is known for releasing a song called “Barack the Magic Negro,” which aired on the Rush Limbaugh radio talk show.

That song is extremely offensive and racist, and while I do not believe that the Republicans will end up with Saltsman as their chairman, the very fact that he is being considered for the position is decentering and perplexing.

On the other hand, Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine has been offered a position as chairman of the Democratic Party, and has been hailed by an Obama adviser as “a pragmatic progressive, less concerned about orthodoxies than about getting things done.” The flow of thought in America is swiftly headed in a definite direction — away from rigid ideology, on both sides and toward a renewal of thoughtful, creative policies.

That said, I would not want the Republican Party to lose its place in American discourse, because I believe that we need them as a reliable check and balance for the policies that will be coming out of the Democratic Senate, Congress and White House.

However, I am having trouble reconciling the ideal of the two party system with what I see coming from the Republican Party. Americans need them to throw away their agenda and their preconceived notions of what may have worked for the 1980s, and come to the table ready to talk about what will work today.

As I have written before, neither the far left agenda of total market regulation, high taxes and entitlement programs, or the right’s agenda of market deregulation, low taxes and the end of entitlement programs will help us out of the recession.

Both parties need to fight for new centrist ideas, and Republicans need to start creating progressive solutions to the issues facing average Americans right now. Perhaps more importantly, Republicans need not firmly resist the healthy current of open-minded political discourse in America for the next four years.

Stephanie England is an English junior and a Mustang Daily political columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Focus on moral intentions of both sides in the Gaza conflict

Despite a cease-fire, Hamas fired almost 2,000 rockets into Israel in 2008. Israel responded by targeting Hamas in order to defend itself. Israel announced that it was in favor of extending the cease-fire, provided that Hamas adhered to its conditions. Israeli's conditions include ending all rocket fire and halting weapons smuggling. Hamas later announced that it would not agree to extend the cease-fire.

The announcement of Hamas not wanting to extend the cease-fire shows the moral intentions of each side. As rockets continue to fire into Israel, the nation is simply trying to defend itself by targeting Hamas militants, not civilians. While I am saddened by civilian deaths, most of the people killed in Gaza are Hamas militants who operate in mosques, schools, and other buildings, firing their rockets from those places. Israel doesn’t want civilian deaths. Israel just wants to protect their cities and citizens. How long would Los Angeles wait if rockets were targeted there?

Hamas continues to fire rockets with motives to kill any civilian possible. They do not support the Israel’s existence and will do whatever it takes to kill Israelis, either by rockets or by suicide bombers. Unlike Israel, their moral intentions are dangerous. Hamas is recognized as a terrorist organization by the US, the EU, the UN, and by NATO. It does not want peace.

Barack Obama said: “If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I would do everything to stop that, and would expect Israel to do the same thing.”

Benjamin Nejatkhain
Landscape architecture senior

Resistance is futile: head for middle ground

The Liberal Lens
by Stephanie England

That song is extremely offensive and racist, and while I do not believe that the Republicans will end up with Saltsman as their chairman, the very fact that he is being considered for the position is decentering and perplexing.

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Both parties need to fight for new centrist ideas, and Republicans need to start creating progressive solutions to the issues facing average Americans right now. Perhaps more importantly, Republicans need not firmly resist the healthy current of open-minded political discourse in America for the next four years.

Stephanie England is an English junior and a Mustang Daily political columnist.
Basketball

Continued from page 12

spect him that much.”

Bromley said that stopping Ako-
gnon is relative to the number of
shots he is forced to put up in order
to score his points.

“He gets (the shot) off so easily,”
Bromley said. “He’s a quick shot
getter. He has a great stroke and great
size on the frontline, a fact that
Meyer said helps Cal Poly.

“Tebow should really help him,”
Bromley said. “I think we
make it look good. Not only for us,
but to see the pride we have for Cal Poly.”

And Anderson added that he hopes to
see a bigger crowd than normal for
the game due to it being nationally
televised against a conference-rival
with a legitimate NBA prospect.

“Is absolutely a lot more mo-
ivation having it nationally tele-
vised,” Anderson said. “We really
want to get a lot of fans there and
make it look good. Not only for us,
but to see the pride we have for Cal Poly.”

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MUSTANG DAILY

Sports designer: Kate Nickerson

Basketball

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Championship

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choose.”

There’s plenty of time to think
about The BCS latest TV deal
with ESPN ensures there won’t be
a playoff until at least 2014.

Meanwhile, there’s a pretty at-
ttractive game brewing at Dolphin
Stadium between 12-1 teams.

The Tebow won a freshman two
years ago, backing up Chris Leak
against Ohio State for the national championship.

Tebow was the Heisman last season
and now will try to add a second
national title.

The Rambo-style quarterback
will soon explore his NFL op-
tions, deciding whether to enter the
draft or return for his senior season.

Tebow is not exactly elegant with
his left-handed tosses, and some
scouts project he’ll wind up as a
tight end in the pros.

“I’ll hear something about Tim’s
throwing motion or the NFL is
looking for — I sometimes get con-
 fused!” Meyer said. “Do they want a
guy that’s going to lead a team to
win games? I don’t know if there’s
any better than Tim.”

Tebow drew the most first-place
votes in the Heisman ballot last
month, but finished third overall.

Oklahoma quarterback Sam Brad-
ford, a sophomore, also has
risen to the top of the list.

“Oklahoma has lost four straight
BCS games, including two for the
national title. Down here in Gator
country, both teams got in early
shots this week.”

Sooner cornerback Dominique
Franks went first, saying Tebow
would be nothing more than the
fourth-best quarterback in the Big
12. The next day, Florida linebacker
Brandon Spikes called Big 12 de-
fense “a joke”.

Usually, teams try to avoid giving
their opponents something to tack
up on the bulletin board. This time,
Meyer seemed more than fine with
the barbs. His team was a four-point
favorite, and he wanted to avoid any
chance of complacency.

“If I had my druthers, I’d rather
coach a very mean, angry, nasty,
up-set team,” he said. “I have to get to
that point.”

Admission is FREE for Cal Poly Students for all home Athletic events.
Josh Akognon has played against the world's best basketball players. He helped his relatively unknown Nigerian national team beat defending world champion Serbia in 2006.

The 6-foot-11 guard, who is eighth in the nation in scoring, leads Cal State Fullerton (6-8, 0-2 Big West Conference) into Mott Gym at 8 p.m. tonight to face Cal Poly (3-9, 0-2) in an important early-conference game.

If that isn't enough to motivate the Mustangs, the game will also be nationally televised on ESPNU. "I love anytime we get any TV exposure," said Cal Poly head coach Kevin Bromley. "It gives you a chance to showcase your own kids in your arena."

Both teams are trying to avoid potentially falling three games behind conference leaders UC Riverside and Long Beach State.

"It's going to be a big game because we're 0-2 in conference," said Cal Poly junior guard Lorenzo Keeler. "By Sunday our goals are to be 2-2 in conference by knocking off Fullerton and Irvine and to play with intensity."

Keeler will be one of the Mustangs given the unenviable task of guarding Akognon who is averaging 23.5 points per game.

"Josh is a handful," Keeler said. "He's instant offense. He's already gone twice for 40-plus points. Usually if he plays well, it's easier for them to win."

Akognon, who transferred to Cal State Fullerton following his freshman year at Pac-10 Washington State, is currently sixth in the nation in 3-point field goal made per game at 3.9.

"We've got to make it tough for him," Keeler said. "We have to make sure to have a hand up in his face every single time."

Junior guard Charles Anderson will also see time defending Akognon. He agreed that limiting the quality of Akognon's buckets is an important part of the Mustangs' gameplan. "He's the best shooter the nation's leading scorer, Davidson junior guard Stephen Curry.

Curry, also a relatively small guard, is averaging 29.2 points despite a game in which he was double-teamed for the entire 32 minutes he played, with or without the ball. Curry was held scoreless in the game. His Wildcats still won by 30 points.

Anderson said not to count on a similar strategy against Akognon. "We respect him," Anderson said. "We have to see Basketball, page 11"

Clark ruled academically ineligible

Cal Poly senior guard Trae Clark was ruled academically ineligible for the winter quarter and will miss the remainder of the men's basketball season.

"This is disappointing for all of us, including Trae," Cal Poly head coach Kevin Bromley said in a statement. "He has fallen short on his academic responsibilities and that has cost him the remainder of his senior season of basketball."

The ruling effectively ends his Cal Poly basketball career.

Clark, a business administration major, was named a co-captain at the beginning of the season after leading the Mustangs in scoring and assists last year.

As a junior, Clark averaged 10.3 points and 2.2 assists per game, starting 20 of Cal Poly's 30 games.

Clark was named a starter at the beginning of the season after leading the Mustangs in scoring and assists last year.

As a junior, Clark averaged 10.3 points and 2.2 assists per game, starting 20 of Cal Poly's 30 games.

Clark last played in the Mustangs' 66-64 loss to Cal State Bakersfield on Dec. 23 where he collected eight points, two assists and a rebound.

He was averaging 6.8 points and 2.7 assists per game this year.

Clark played in '95 games during his four-year career at Cal Poly, starting in 70 of them.

Senior guard Chaz Thomas has assumed the starting role in Clark's place, while sharing playing time with freshman guard Justin Brown.

"I think at some point it might happen. I didn't believe that a few years ago, but I feel the discussion is out of control. I can't imagine any guy that enjoys football not dreading that when ever he's at. So I imagine at some point that might happen now."

As to whether or not it should be a tournament for eight, or 16 teams, that's someone else's department.

"It's not my job to figure that out," Meyer said. "I think it would be hard. I don't know how you do it."