Tree planting project completed after four years

Ashley Ciallo

With summer sunshine rapidly approaching, students seeking shade on campus have the opportunity to enjoy the comfort of trees planted and a bench installed by forestry and national resource students.

Last week, the four-year-long project created by two alternating classes, urban forestry and community forestry, marked successful completion with the addition of a plaque dedicated to the students involved. The installation is between the Alan A. Ehart Agriculture and Mathematics and Science buildings.

National resource management professor Richard Thompson said students learned how to get a plan approved and the complications involved in the process. Learning how to navigate the political and administrative policies to institute an environmental change was an important experience, he said.

"Planting a tree is a fairly simple act, but to do that in an urbanized environment is a big deal," Thompson said.

Students presented their ideas to the director of facilities and the landscape advisory board at Cal Poly to be approved. The students had to consider aesthetic appeal on campus as well as prevent interference with any underground facilities.

Chinese Flame and Polonia, two types of subtropical tree species, were selected to be planted on the campus because California's Mediterranean climate is appropriate for them.

Bill Kellogg, agriculture education and communication professor and a licensed contractor, provided help and technical support with the concrete portion of the project, which required pouring the cement foundation and constructing the bench.

Forestry and national resource senior Shane Larsen was one of the lead students involved in the project. The main goals of the project are to understand the health and social impact.

A group of Cal Poly students recently completed a campus beautification project, installing trees and a bench near the Mathematics and Science building.

Tree planting project completed after four years

Poly club’s vehicle gets 2,358 MPG, second place

Matt Fountain

Cal Poly took a top spot at the Auto Club Speedway in Fontana this weekend in a race that tested not speed, but longevity.

The university earned second place out of 44 participating schools in the 2009 Shell Eco-marathon Americas, an annual competition where student-built vehicles compete to achieve the highest possible fuel-efficiency. The competition is held globally each year and participants include universities, high schools, amateurs and even motor manufacturers.

It features participants from both North and South America. This year’s roster included 44 teams from 29 universities and six high schools from the United States, Canada, Mexico and Brazil, as well as a guest team from India.

The Prototype competition featured 28 combustion-engine vehicles, five using fuel cell and hydrogen technology, three using liquefied natural gas, and one all-electric vehicle.

Even though the competition was higher this year with more schools participating in the event, no team was able to meet the record of 2,843 miles per gallon set last year by Mater Dei High School of Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Shell Eco-marathon is an annual international competition where students design, construct and test vehicles to achieve the highest possible fuel-efficiency. The competition is held globally each year and participants include universities, high schools, amateurs and even motor manufacturers.

It features participants from both North and South America. This year’s roster included 44 teams from 29 universities and six high schools from the United States, Canada, Mexico and Brazil, as well as a guest team from India.

The Prototype competition featured 28 combustion-engine vehicles, five using fuel cell and hydrogen technology, three using liquefied natural gas, and one all-electric vehicle.

The Cal Poly SuperMileage team continued their success at the Shell Eco-Marathon competition, coming in second place this year.

Ashley Ciallo

Cal Poly and University of California, Santa Barbara will soon share more than just a rivalry.

The recently-launched center for Collaborative Engineering Research and Education combines the Cal Poly undergraduate engineering programs with graduate research at UCSB.

UCSB director and mechanical engineering and materials professor Anthony Evans said the center is a forum for people on both campuses to learn about different projects by taking advantage of the complementary skills of the students.

Evans said the quality of research will likely increase because of Cal Poly’s strength in building designs, fabrications and testing devices, complemented by UCSB’s strengths in theory, simulation and process science.

"In the end, those two skill sets are needed to have successful research outcomes; that’s why it’s such a good idea," Evans said. "I think this will allow us to develop a larger research initiative for a greater international impact."

Cal Poly mechanical engineering professor and co-director of the center Thomas Mackin hoped to better integrate research and innovation into the curriculum since he came to Cal Poly.

"I’ve always wanted to engage undergraduates in research because I think they are really creative and can do really high-level research," Mackin said.

Currently, students from Cal Poly travel with Mackin once a week to spend a day doing research with UCSB graduate students. Last week, Mackin took his current team of three undergraduate students, David Lavelle, Dan Fisher and JJ Siefert to conduct research on improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Mechanical engineering junior Lavelle said his project aims to design advanced armor plating to protect U.S. troops. To do this, the team is simulating a landmine explosion and testing the force that the exploding sand exerts on the bottom of military vehicles.

"If we can get a proper model, we can go to an organization and run the real tests," Lavelle said.

He added that being able to do research earlier in college is very valuable and an incredible opportunity for students.

Ashley Ciallo

Cal Poly and University of California, Santa Barbara will soon share more than just a rivalry.

The recently-launched center for Collaborative Engineering Research and Education combines the Cal Poly undergraduate engineering programs with graduate research at UCSB.

UCSB director and mechanical engineering and materials professor Anthony Evans said the center is a forum for people on both campuses to learn about different projects by taking advantage of the complementary skills of the students.

Evans said the quality of research will likely increase because of Cal Poly’s strength in building designs, fabrications and testing devices, complemented by UCSB’s strengths in theory, simulation and process science.

"In the end, those two skill sets are needed to have successful research outcomes; that’s why it’s such a good idea," Evans said. "I think this will allow us to develop a larger research initiative for a greater international impact."

Cal Poly mechanical engineering professor and co-director of the center Thomas Mackin hoped to better integrate research and innovation into the curriculum since he came to Cal Poly.

"I’ve always wanted to engage undergraduates in research because I think they are really creative and can do really high-level research," Mackin said.

Currently, students from Cal Poly travel with Mackin once a week to spend a day doing research with UCSB graduate students. Last week, Mackin took his current team of three undergraduate students, David Lavelle, Dan Fisher and JJ Siefert to conduct research on improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Mechanical engineering junior Lavelle said his project aims to design advanced armor plating to protect U.S. troops. To do this, the team is simulating a landmine explosion and testing the force that the exploding sand exerts on the bottom of military vehicles.

"If we can get a proper model, we can go to an organization and run the real tests," Lavelle said.

He added that being able to do research earlier in college is very valuable and an incredible opportunity for students.
Unity continued from page 1
to grow as a student and an en-
gineer.
"It's an honor to be involved and a great experience," Lavell said. "The great thing about re-
search is that everything you do contributes to a greater sum of knowledge."

He said that he hopes to see other students get involved with future projects.
The research — including ex-
perimtations and simulations — is funded by government agen-
cies and research project agencies. Mackin said. The center is also
writing proposals to the federal government for monetary support
and in the future. Evans said, they hope to receive corporate spon-
sorship.

"We imagine that once we have a formalized framework we will write joint proposals to the National Science Foundation to
try to establish other activities as-
sociated with the center and try to
gain funding to support the ac-
tivities," Mackin said.

"Although it's its name, Collaborative
Engineering Research and Education, sounds restricted to the
particular discipline," Mackin said
that could change. He wants to be
the first to show that collabora-
tion can be successful, which would be the start of broader rel-
ationships, Mackin said.

"My guess is that in the next few years other people in the
College of Engineering will jump on board," he said. "As people
get to know about it in both institutions, they are abso-
olutely welcome to engage be-
cause these type of activities can benefit everyone."

Working with this center, Mackin said, would allow for a
streamlined way to continue on to
get their master's degree at Cal Poly and doctorate at UCSB.

The specific objectives will
 teach students a basic set of skills
of how to do research, which can then be transferred to all sorts of
projects.

"I hope that this collabora-
tion leads to greater recognition for Cal Poly and greater oppor-
tunities for students to want to
go to our institution," Mackin said.

"We want to put people into leadership positions where they're setting the agenda for the
nation."

Vehicles continued from page 1

petroleum gas, another three with so-
lar power and two using diesel fuel.
The 2009 Eco-marathon also included for the first time an Ur-
ban Concept vehicle. As an oppor-
tunity to the Prototype category, where vehicles are designed specifically for maximum fuel efficiency and future
streamlined bodies for drag reduc-
tion, entries in the Urban Concept
category are designed in more "no-
worthy" fuel-efficient vehicles and
are closer in appearance to cars.

Grand prize for the Urban Con-
cept category went to the 2008
Prototype champs, the Mater Dep-
Supermileage Team, whose vehicle,
Street Buggy, won them $5,000 with
a mileage of 433 miles per gallon.

Other categories included bee
prototypes for Fuel Cell/Hydrogen and Solar Power vehicles, a best Eco-
Design award, recognizing the team that incorporated recycled and eco-
friendly materials into the produc-
tion of their vehicle; a Safety award for those that best met the safety
regulations of the Eco-Marathon;
best Technological Innovation, in
which Cal Poly came third place; best Design, rewarding originality and an overall cohesive design; best Communication, for the team that
best promoted the competition; and
best Team Spirit, this year going to
the Shell Eco-marathon, in a press
release. "By encouraging these stu-
daents to build vehicles with greater
energy efficiency, we hope this will
help inspire others and together we
can find solutions that will help meet the global energy challenge.

The third consecutive year the Cal Poly Supermileage Team participated in the event. In 2007, the Black Widow earned them the grand prize, with 1018 miles per gal-
lon. Last year, the team placed second in the competition, while improving their mileage to 2,752 per gallon.

According to mechanical engi-
neer Josh, president of the logging
Team member Gabriel Montalvo, al-
though they did not reach last year' s
mileage, the team was "very pleased."

"It went extremely well — bet-
ter than we expected, you could say," Montalvo said. "I mean, we placed first for all the American teams." Montalvo said the design of this year's track contributed to the lower mileage with twice as many turns as last year, forcing the Black Widow to burn more gas while cruising less.

"We burned through hydrogen so much fuel this year," he added. "But, overall, the race went really well ... We'll definitely be participating next year!"

In addition to competing in the Prototype category, the Cal Poly is ex-
pected to enter a vehicle into Urban.
Concepts for next year's compe-
tition.

Planting continued from page 1

benefits and multiple uses that trees
to the community, he said.
People are drawn to trees for the
protection and the coverage
that they provide," Larsen said.
"These trees planted will hopefully
shade the bench and make it a
more comfortable environment."
Larsen, president of the logging
team at the time of the bench in-
stallment, received help with con-
struction from many logging stu-
dents, who helped form, frame and
finish the project. Pavers were laid
in front of the bench to match the
rest of campus.

"It's good to go through every stage of the process, from planning to
digging holes and seeing the fin-
ished product. It was just a picture
on a piece of paper before, while you now can sit on it," he said.

Though this project was in addition to this project, forest and natural
resource students are also involved in providing much-needed direc-
tions for Pismo Beach city parks.

"Students are always appreciative of classes when you can actually
get out and help people and make a
cure in their environment," he said.
"The students have come
back years later and say, 'I planted
that tree; I built that wall and look
at all the shade it is providing the
building and the people.' I think it
would make you feel pretty good.

"I think it looks beautiful; I
think it turned out to be a very
pretty sitting area for anybody
that's going to want to sit down for
a minute," Kellogg said.

APRIL 21 - 24
Tuesday - Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
ORDER FOR GRADUATION
• Personalized Graduation Announcements
• Class Rings (Graduation Days Discounts)
• Thank You Cards
• Certificates of Appreciation
• Diploma Plaques
• Schedule your Senior Portrait
• Join the Alumni Association

GRAD CENTER OPENS May 21st
for cap, gown, and commencement tickets

www.mustangdaily.net
mustangdailynews@gmail.com
Tuesday, April 21, 2009

Become the next ASI CHIEF OF STAFF
And help the new ASI President shape Cal Poly's future
For an application and job description visit asi.calpoly.edu

ASI will be your student connection to the ultimate college experience.
Dozens ‘lie down’ at Capitol for Columbine

Catherine Tsai
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dozens of people participated in a “lie-down” at Colorado's state Capitol Monday to demand stricter gun control and mark the 10th anniversary of the Columbine High School shootings.

Thirteen people representing those killed at Columbine lay spoke of a wheel at the west steps of the Capitol. They had wrapped blue and white ribbons around their necks, the official colors of the suburban Denver school.

Others knelt nearby as the names of the 23 injured in the April 20, 1999, attack also were read.

Among them was Mallory Sanders, granddaughter of slain teacher Dave Sanders, and Steve Wewer, godfather of slain student Daniel Mauser.

Daniel’s father, Tom Mauser, said he realized some might question his appearance at a ceremony with a political, though not partisan, overtone on the solemn occasion.

But he said he didn’t think the country has done enough to stop gun violence since Columbine.

“I would just say, ‘Why wouldn’t we do this today?’” Mauser said. “ ‘We have become desensitized. We shake our heads and say, ‘What a shame,’ but we don’t do very much about it.’

Mauser wore the Vans shoes his son was wearing the day he was killed, shoes that were held in evidence until five years ago.

Above the rally, the United States and Colorado state flags flew at half-staff at the gold dome.

“I would just say, ‘Why wouldn’t we do this?’” Mauser said. “ ‘We have become desensitized. We shake our heads and say, ‘What a shame,’ but we don’t do very much about it.’

Mauser wore the Vans shoes his son was wearing the day he was killed, shoes that were held in evidence until five years ago.

Above the rally, the United States and Colorado state flags flew at half-staff at the gold dome.
Townhouse
Apartment Living
For Students

Great Amenities...
- Your own bedroom in 3-Bedroom Units
- Each Bedroom is individually leased
- Fitness center equipment and Heated Pool
- Computer Lab with FREE Internet Access
- Recreation Center/Billiards/Ping Pong
- TV Lounge with 72” Big Screen and VCR
- Walk to Shopping Center and Restaurants
- On Sal City Bus Route
- Convenient Leasing Options
- Reduced Noise Hours after 10pm
- GPA Discount of 5%-10% for Superior Grades
- Full-time Maintenance Department
- 24 hour Staffing for After-Hours Assistance
- We Accept Visa or Mastercard
- Newly renovated Rec Center

Apply Now and Receive
$150 off
1ST MONTHS RENT
WITH THIS COUPON

On-site Tours Weekdays 9am-5pm
555 Ramona Drive, San Luis Obispo CA 93405
tel 805-543-1450 fax 805-543-1477
www.valenciaapartments.com

CALL FOR DISTINGUISHED
LECTURER AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Cal Poly chapter of the California Faculty Association (CFA) is seeking nominations from students, faculty and staff for the “Distinguished Lecturer Awards.” The awards are given annually to Cal Poly lecturers from any department or program.

Criteria: teaching excellence is the primary criterion, but if the nominee has engaged in professional development activities and service as well, these items should be mentioned.

Please provide specific examples that support your nomination and include the name of the nominee and department as well as your name and department and contact information.

Nomination Deadline: May 15, 2009
To nominate someone send your nomination through campus mail to
Dorothy Pippin
CFA Office
Building 38-141
or email to
dppippin@calpoly.edu

Award winners will receive $500.00 and a plaque. These awards will be presented at the CFA end of the year barbecue to be held at Cuesta Park during finals week.

Previous award winners are not eligible. The following list of award winners is provided.

Mohal Agrawal
Kim Bellah
Cynthia Breaux
Barbara Black
Zoljka Howard
Pam Melkin
Jen Ramsey
Jim Osasing
Robert Clark
Kerry Cochran
Aaron Rodrigues
Claudia Royal
Kovin Sites
Lewis Cali
Davy Hall
Gary Weisenberger
Rosemary Wild
Melike Zulfucr
Ethan Eighandour

WORD ON THE STREET
“What will you do throughout this week to keep cool?”

“I’ll do all my homework in the labs at school instead of at my house.”
- Ryan Reck, computer science graduate

“I’ll hop into the pool at the Rec Center and wear board shorts whenever possible.”
- Bran Azzopardi, construction management senior

“I’ll drink a lot of water and eat a lot of ice cream.”
- Jamie Foley, nutrition freshman

Compiled and photographed by Clinton Mcgue
**How to do it right:**

new column aims for inclusiveness

Sex and dating columnists, we need to talk. First, let me just say that I like the Mustang Daily. Sure, the copy editors don’t always catch every typo, and there are occasional scandal with plagiarizing (laz) columnists, but without the daily Word on the Street, letters to the editor and crossword puzzles, my time between (and often during) classes would be spent… I don’t know, studying. And dammit, that’s just not something I’m prepared to do.

But there is one area in which the Daily has failed me for the last four years: the sex and dating column. Many of you have tackled this overest of the arts and entertainment section in hopes of becoming the next Carrie Bradshaw, despite the fact that it is the character’s overwhelming lack of understanding when it comes to relationships that fuels both the comedy and drama of that show. Your columns use obnoxious and often vulgar slang in a feeble attempt to be in your face and push the envelope. You assume that men and women live up to stereotypes that both sexes have been trying to squash for the past few decades and draw cliche conclusions based in pop psychology. And I’ve yet to see any of you address abstinence or non-heterosexual experiences.

OK, I know I too hate people who whine about a problem without offering any sort of solution, so let me explain what I think a sex and dating column should be. It seems obvious that a sex column would be a great outlet to inform students about sex. The column’s primary function should be to give information. Yes, the information that we all should have learned at least by high school, if not sooner. Topics could include: How to tell if you have an STI, what types of contraception are available to you, where to get them and how effective they are and your questions answered about LGBT issues.

Its second function should be to give an opinion about relationship or sex-related topics. Why are you columnists so afraid to make an argument? If the topic is “Long Distance Relationships — Worth the Effort?” the writer will undoubtedly conclude with a vague “well, for some people it can work and for some people it can’t, so you’ll just have to figure out what’s right for you.”

It’s like the terrible sex-ed movies we’d watch in middle school that would try to tell you that every feeling you have is perfectly normal, even if it’s different from someone else’s experience. Booooorrring. I want a column that says “long distance sucks, don’t ever do it!” Yeah, go ahead and point out the merits of the side, but then refute them. That’s what having an opinion is about. And what’s the worst that will happen? The Daily might get 300 letters from whiny freshmen about how their long distance thing is fantastic? Awesome, you have 300 readers!

Look sex and dating columnists, I just don’t think this thing between us is working. It’s not you, it’s me. Denise is a great writer who isn’t afraid to talk about handjobs and I love that. But it’s just not enough for me anymore. I’d like to see other columnists, that’s why I’ve signed up. We can still be friends if you like. This is just something I need to do for myself at this point in my life.

Jaime Ray is an English senior and one of Mustang Daily’s sex columnists.
Les Misérables opens to large crowds and PCPA in Santa Nella hosts popular tale "the miserable os"

Mikaela Akuna

The famous tale of the unfortunate, "Les Misérables," is now playing at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts (PCPA).

Known as the Central Coast's resident professional theatre company, PCPA presents an all-star cast including Erik Stein and Sam Zeller as Inspector Javert and Jean Valjean respectively, both Broadway and PCPA Alumni. The show also features resident artists Andrew Philpot and Elizabeth Stuart as the Thenardiers, Michael Jenkinson plays Marius, Vanessa Ballam appears as Cosette and Valerie Rachelle as Fantine as well as special appearances by young actors Alexandra Medina and Michaela White as the Young Cosette and Gavroche, respectively.

"Les Misérables," based on the classic novel by Victor Hugo, is a story of unrequited love, vengeance, deception and redemption.

The play spans two decades and chronicles the lives of its diverse group of characters who come from all levels of the social arena, each living in their own way in the middle of the French Revolution.

Intended to be a commentary on the period's social injustices, "Les Misérables" revolves around central character Jean Valjean, who receives parole after a 19-year internment for stealing a loaf of bread.

When revolution strikes, every character's life and everything around them begins to tear at the seams.

PCPA's rendition of "Les Misérables" does a wonderful job of portraying the emotional strife of every character. Director Roger DeLaurier and his team present an astonishing performance that incorporates both on-stage and behind-the-scenes perfection. From lead to character, it is obvious that the entire cast is committed not only to the performance but to their individual characters.

"Everyone is so talented and I am so privileged to get to work with this cast," Sam Zeller said. "When you put in all the elements and everyone does their homework you get a production like the one we have."

All aspects of the theater, both in and out of view of the audience, are used intricately and give the facade that the stage is much larger than it is. The dynamic use of movable walls provides an interesting way of moving both...
positive reviews

Maria

e of

scenery and ac-
tors on and off
stage.

To parallel the
creativity of stage
use, choreogra-
pher Michael Jen-
kins has prepared a
visual masterpiece in
the use of "grid work"
that the thrust stage
of the Marian Theater
requires as well as an
innovative use of slow
motion acting.

"I've never actu-
ally seen 'Les Mis' be-
fore and I had heard
that they usually use
a revolving stage,"
Droz said. "I was
impressed that they did the scen-
ery change without that
typical aspect."

Zeller and his stage foe,
Erik Stein, have worked to-
gether before playing best
friends in a show called
"Babes in Arms."

Hard sought to find an
imposing person to match
the 6-foot-2 Zeller, the
6-foot-6 Stein plays
an enticingly evil and
conflicted Javert.

Despite the
tragic back-
ground of "Les Mis-
èrables,"
Zeller hopes the
audience will leave
with a sense of
hope.

"It is true
though the title
means the mis-
erable ones, and
we look into the
audience during the
finals and see people
crying. 'Les Mis' is
really about en-
joying life and
telling you to do
good things with
it," Zeller said.

"We're really
telling a poignan-
t story."

"Les Mis-
èrables" is being
performed at Hancock College's Marian Theatre in Santa
Maria and runs throughout the months of April and May.
The play will then move to the Festival Theater in Solvang
through June and July. Ticket prices vary from night to night
and can be viewed on the PCPA Web site.
Danish environmental efforts should be mirrored by world

With Earth Day tomorrow, now is a good time to tune in to the current state of things. Today, with CO2 levels at 385 parts per million, the disruptive impacts of climate change are only in the news. The Arctic ice, which has shrunk by half its size since the 1950s, is melting at an annual rate of 24,000 square miles, meaning that an expanse of ice the size of Western Europe is disappearing each year.

This year, the world is expected to burn through some 31 billion barrels of oil, 6 billion tons of coal, and 1.4 billion cubic feet of natural gas. The combustion of these fossil fuels will produce, in aggregate, some 400 quadrillion British thermal units of energy. It will also yield around 30 billion tons of carbon dioxide.

Next year, global consumption of fossil fuels is expected to grow by about 2 percent, meaning that emissions will rise by more than half a billion tons, and the following year consumption is expected to grow by yet another 2 percent.

Bjorn Stigson, president of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), has overseen this global coalition of some 200 leading corporations since 1995.

"The question I get from around the world is: How is sustainability development fallen off the table given there is a recession? My response is the opposite," he said last week. "What has happened is that sustainability development has come to a tipping point, in my view, and that the focus on the strategic aspect on sustainable development, climate change, and so on — that focus is even stronger than before. It's stronger in companies, and it's stronger in governments. The recession is not really a barrier or a black hole."

In Forbes magazine's "Best Countries For Business, 2009," published last month, the No. 2 country is the United States. Denmark, No. 4, is the fourth country in the world where home to 4,900 residents (mostly farmers and fishermen), the island is unique because it was the first to declare its intent to rely on renewable energy for 100 percent of the island's needs.

It all started in 1997 when Denmark held a national competition. The selected community would be home to a one-of-a-kind experiment. The winner would be expected to convert all its energy supply to 100 percent renewable energy within 10 years. Because it is an island that has no conventional energy resources of its own, Samso was an ideal choice for such a controlled experiment. When our group visited the island, we were fortunate to get a tour from Søren Hermansen, director of Samso's Energy Institute. The personable and entertaining Hermansen explained how, without any direct subsidy from the Danish government, the islanders built a 56 million Euro energy system. Eighty percent of the capital was raised from local investors, relying only on Danish laws and regulations.

They beat their homes with grass burned in a central heating system. Their electricity comes from the wind, and they power their vehicles on biofuel which they also grow. Since 1998, Samso has been converting its energy into renewable energy, and has been so successful that 100 percent of its electricity comes from wind power and 75 percent of its heat comes from solar power and biomass energy. With the completion of an offshore wind farm comprised of 10 beautiful turbines, Samso has become carbon neutral. The energy produced by these wind turbines compensates for the island's transportation emissions, including the ferries, and all other non-renewable energy sources. In fact, sometimes Samso's wind turbines produce so much energy that the island sells it back to the mainland! The residents of Samso that I spoke to were clearly proud of their accomplishments.

"We are a conservative farming community — how one Samsoinger put it, "We are only normal people," he said. "We are not some special people." Ordinary people doing extraordinary things — that's all it takes.

Ben Eckold is a business senior, the former president of the Empower Poly Coalition and a Mustang Daily columnist.

Jennifer Kohne Howard

Responding to the question: "It's turned me into a cold-hearted bastard"
Capping malpractice payouts could be first step toward affordable healthcare

It is obvious that America's healthcare system is in the dumps, yet President Obama stresses that every citizen deserves affordable healthcare. If he is really serious about making healthcare affordable, then all he needs to do is to start fixing the problem to is to take one easy step.

Putting a monetary cap on the pain and suffering part of a medical malpractice suit (while leaving the rest unlimited) will allow doctors to pay less insurance cost. With doctors paying less insurance, they will be able start providing more affordable health care, instead of passing the rate increase off to patients.

In a 2003 report, the General Accounting Office, which is the auditing and investigative arm of the U.S. Congress, found that "losses on medical malpractice claims, which make up the largest part of insurers' costs, appear to be the primary driver of rate increases in the long run."

States like Texas (and California) understand this. From 2003 to 2005, Texas passed legislation to reform the way malpractice suits were handled. With the influx of doctors fleeing from other states, there are now over 30 insurance companies in Texas competing for business, which is driving rates down. If you're still not convinced, let me walk you through some reasons why a cap would be the best and fairest thing for Obama to do.

First and foremost, a cap would eliminate frivolous lawsuits that are a chief cause for raising healthcare costs. Who is supposed to decide what a broken arm is worth? Is it $100,000? Or $200,000? How does one measure mental suffering? A cap would somewhat relieve the responsibility of a supposedly impartial jury by limiting the damages awarded for pain to reasonable amounts.

How is an impartial jury (that's made up of emotional human beings) supposed to believe this 'rich' doctor and insurance company when they feel so sympathetic for the plaintiff who was wheeled out on a body cast?

On a side note, this is how 2008 Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards made his fortune. As a trial lawyer, the majority of his cases were related to medical malpractice. His most notable cases involved suing doctors, charging them with mistakes when children were born with cerebral palsy, even though the disease is multifactorial. It is interesting to note that Edwards would very rarely take a case in which the child died, most likely because he then couldn't parade the child in front of the jury and receive an emotional verdict.

Although sympathy is justified, it leads the jury down the road of rewarding a tremendously unfair verdict. The fact that medicine is not a perfect science doesn't help either. Two very good doctors may come to different conclusions on the same case. Juries may believe they are punishing the doctor for his mistake, when in reality it could have easily been made by the next doctor.

If the president puts a cap on the monetary rewards for pain and suffering, there is still no limit on the amount one can receive on lost wages and medical bills. The persons will still be compensated for any cost relating to the injury for the rest of their life.

We are now starting to see a shortage of medical professionals. Doctors are simply retiring or quitting their jobs to avoid paying the insurance cost which can be up to $200,000 a year depending on a doctor's specialty. One side effect is that doctors are less likely to open small clinics because they cannot afford that much-starting overhead. They now are more likely to work in large hospitals making them more aloof and distant. Access to healthcare is more difficult because of malpractice, as obstetric gynecology physicians (OB-GYN) often give up obstetrics (which they enjoy) and solely practice gynecology because of the lower malpractice risk.

Have you ever wondered why doctors choose their profession? More often than not it's not because they wanted to make lots of money, but because they actually cared for people (gasp!) and wanted to cure them. Unfortunately, if they are not able to take on the added insurance cost the doctor who wants to provide for the sick and poor in his or her community may not be able to. Here has it become acceptable to live in a society that has so many qualified doctors while still so many uninsured people.

If you're like me, then you're a fan of the movie "Tommy Boy." And thanks to David Spade we all know that the only people who go to college for 'a shade under a decade' is any character played by Chris Farley, and doctors. The fact that doctors undergo such an intense education and certification process ensures that in this society, bad doctors are few and far between. We don't need these lawsuits to ensure that bad doctors are penalized. As previously stated, medicine is an inexact science and the chance that any doctor could make a mistake is probably in the same likelihood as any other doctor in his field. In fact the word medical mistake is actually a misnomer. A 'mistake' is rather a known risk and then a subsequent complication. Lawsuits cannot be viewed as the start of the Darwinian process of weeding out doctors, that process starts way before then.

This current system is also flawed because it penalizes any doctor who has had a mistake-free career. It's sad that they have to pay millions of dollars in malpractice insurance for something they never did. Unfortunately for them and us, a few mistakes by bad doctors forces the mistake-free ones to pay unequal amounts.

Out of all these reasons the one I find the most disheartening is that, in the current system, doctors may no longer focusing on healing a patient but rather on defensive medicine. In other words, getting sued is such a frightening thought that doctors may no longer worry about what they're doing so much as they're thinking about what the doctors after them may think. Unfortunately, if a patient is not insured and cannot pay the bill, we all pay the rest of it in hidden taxes.

So from now on, when you see these million dollar lawsuits against doctors for malpractice and you either think that the plaintiff's struggle is justified or you see the doctors as the victims, just remember in the end though we are all victims. It's time for Obama to change that.

Zack Lantz is a journalism junior and Mustang Daily reporter.

The Wall

Post a comment on our wall ...
Jackson wants Lakers to avoid letup against Jazz

Beth Harris
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Phil Jackson has a better sustained effort from the Lakers against the Utah Jazz. Not a strong, 48-minute effort. But a strong, 42-minute and 14-second effort.

Jackson was so displeased with the final 24 minutes that he wrote a message afterward in the locker room: "M. Elliman — alluding to his assistant finalists to the team's initiatives at the first of this NBA championship since 2002.

"We're not going to win 15 games in a row," Jackson said Monday. "This is a time of the season where you look for improvement.

The Jazz will be looking to end its 19-game losing skid at Staple Cen­
ter in Game 2 Tuesday night. Utah coach Jerry Sloan questioned his team's nastiness after their loss, and he's still meddling them Monday.

"You've got to get up and guard playing well. We're one goal be­
down before their High to Orange County, and you can come out of it just as

"I've been on enough teams that..." "It's the same old Utah, they're just coming out of the locker room," said Hiller. "It's East Coast-style basketball.

"It's time for Utah to get up and guard playing well. We're one goal be­
down. It's not the regular season. We're play­
ing, to some extent, like it's a regula­
time, not in overtime. We're too good a team to play that way."

Carlos Boozer offered his inter­
pretation of Sloan's demand for sus­
tances.

"Our style is physical, in your face, t o d a y.

"I don't think they're going to get away with that. They've had a couple, but defense and you can come out of it just as
tique.

"We've got to trust our game passing. Although that was because we're not going to play that way."

The Ducks made the 1-hour drive then it's leaving Paul Millsap for his part. Sitting on the other side, they're prob­
ably going to be over the hill. Utah and hill of traffic in front of the net."

Jackson found irksome.

"For his part, Bryant relishes the..." "I think the whole team is doing a great job right now boxing guys out. Hiller's bunched up on the floor. Not many centers step out and slolr or get the opposing center right in front of him. We're playing with purpose." 

For another, the Indians aren't..." "Don't think he'll see the paint Sunday despite the absence of..."

Jackson found irksome.

"For his part, Bryant relishes the..." "I don't think they're going to get away with that. They've had a couple, but defense and you can come out of it just as
tique.

"I don't think they're going to get away with that. They've had a couple, but defense and you can come out of it just as
tique.

Jackson found irksome.

"For his part, Bryant relishes the..." "I don't think they're going to get away with that. They've had a couple, but defense and you can come out of it just as
tique.

Jackson found irksome.

"For his part, Bryant relishes the..." "I don't think they're going to get away with that. They've had a couple, but defense and you can come out of it just as
tique.

Jackson found irksome.

"For his part, Bryant relishes the..." "I don't think they're going to get away with that. They've had a couple, but defense and you can come out of it just as
tique.

Jackson found irksome.
Greg Beacham
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Throughout the season, Sharks' coach Todd McLellan always warned the results didn't matter as much as the process.

Even while the Sharks ranked up the best record in franchise history, he mostly praised their steady growth and consistent effort, not the growing pile of victories.

"Trouble is, the Sharks' six outstanding months have counted for absolutely nothing in the first few days of the NHL playoffs. With just two goals and a boatload of missed chances in two tight games, the Presidents' Trophy winners already are down 0-2 to the playoff-tested, results-oriented Anaheim Ducks."

The top-seeded Sharks' effort and growth are still fine, McLellan now says — but the results had better catch up in the next two games, or this delightful season will be another disaster for his playoff-starved franchise.

"You can play good and play close all you want, but we're not in the process part of the season," McLellan said Monday. "We're in the winning part."

San Jose has struggled with that part of the playoff equation for four years now. Three straight ousters in the postseason's second round led to coach Ron Wilson's firing and McLellan's arrival from the Detroit Red Wings, who were last season's champions — but also the last No. 1 seed to fall to a No. 8, when Edmonton pulled the upset in 2006.

Yet even after two close defeats in the Shark Tank, where they lost just five times in regulation all season, McLellan still believes San Jose is playing well enough to be rewarded eventually. His quietly

Home Run Derby

every day

at Yankees' new ballpark

COURTESY PHOTO

Cleveland Indians right fielder Trevor Crowe, shown above, is unsuccessful in bringing in a homerun at Yankee Stadium.

Jim Litke
ASSOCIATED PRESS

You don't need an industrial engineering degree like the one Joe Girardi got from Northwestern to know something's funny is going on at the Yankees' swanky new stadium. But if your livelihood depends on winning games there, as his does, it certainly can't hurt.

No sooner did the $1.5-billion baseball empire open its doors last week than baseballs began flying out at a record pace. There were 20 by the time the four-game series against the visiting Indians ended Sunday with a split, the most ever during an opening homestand at a new park.

"It seems to be playing somewhat short," the Yankees manager said a day earlier, after watching his team lose the long-ball battle 6-2 and the game 22-4. "It's too early to call, but the early indications are the balls are carrying to right field."

No kidding. Fourteen of the 20 home runs during the series left the yard in that direction, including the decisive blow Sunday by pinch-hitter Jorge Posada. The umpires confirmed the two-run shot after looking at a video replay, because a fan in the first row appeared to interfere with Cleveland outfielder Trevor Crowe's leaping stab at the ball.

Even stranger might have been Girardi's thinking afterward that if the wind was gusting as strongly as the previous few days, a replay would have been unnecessary.

"The ball would have landed another six, maybe eight rows up," he said.

It shouldn't come as a shock that the wind would blow hard through any house that George Steinbrenner and family built. Exactly how hard,