4 Cal Poly students charged in connection to Starkey's death

Taylor

Marszal

Ellis

Ibrahim

COURTESY PHOTOS

Matt Fountain

Four Cal Poly students were arrested Thursday in connection with last year's alcohol-related death of architecture freshman Carson Starkey after a nearly six-month investigation by the San Luis Obispo Police Department. Investigators say the death was the result of a night of excessive drinking as part a hazing ritual for pledges in the Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) fraternity. Agriculture business sophomore Haithem Ibrahim, 20, of Lafayette and agriculture senior Zacary Ellis, 22, of San Luis Obispo were each charged with one felony violation of hazing causing death or great bodily injury and one misdemeanor violation of permitting a minor to consume alcohol. Computer engineering senior Russell Taylor, 22, of Fresno and agriculture business senior Ailani Marszal, 21, were each charged with two misdemeanor counts of the same violations.

The four surrendered themselves Thursday morning after warrants were obtained for their arrests and were booked at the San Luis Obispo County Jail. Bail was set at $5,000,000 for the felony charges and $100,000 for the misdemeanors. Each posted bail by Thursday afternoon.

If convicted, the suspects could face up to three years in state prison for the felonies and up to a year in county jail for the misdemeanor charges.

At a press conference at the San Luis Obispo police station Thursday afternoon, San Luis Obispo Police Department Chief of Police Deborah Linden said the investigation "exposed a ritual that was as disturbing as it was deadly."

see Arrest, page 2

Greeks don boxing gloves for good cause

Rachel Glas

Fighting and philanthropy normally don't go hand-in-hand but Sigma Phi Epsilon's third annual Fight Night will change that.

The boxing event this Sunday will raise money for Sigma Phi Epsilon brother and Cal Poly student John Murphy who was severely injured last July after falling out the window of his fourth-story hotel room. Murphy sustained massive head trauma among other injuries and underwent six surgeries.

"John's undergoing an extensive recovery process," said Sigma Alpha Epsilon president Casey Shadel. "We thought this was a good way to raise money and help with the medical expenses."

For the past two years, the event raised money for Sigma Phi Epsilon's national philanthropy, youth AIDS.

To garner sign ups, members of Sigma Phi Epsilon visited other fraternities and asked for brothers to sign up. Participants have been training for two months with SLO Kickboxing in order to learn how to box, since a substantial number of the fighters have no previous experience.

There will be approximately eight to 10 fights, though the numbers are subject to change. According to materials engineering sophomore and Sigma Alpha Epsilon brother Alex Doyle, only about 30 percent of those who originally sign up end up participating due to the extensive training regime and time commitment.

Each fight will consist of three one and a half minute rounds. Though there will be no prizes, winners get "the gratitude of winning a one-on-one fight," said Doyle.

see Fight, page 2

Dead rat, mouse found in Cal Poly water reservoir

A maintenance worker inspects a reservoir near the Cal Poly "P". The reservoir was shut down Thursday morning for disinfection following the discovery of a dead rat and mouse in the water. The rodents were only discovered after the pumps went down during a Wednesday power-outage. The reservoir supplies potable drinking water to the Cal Poly campus. Two years ago, a bird was found in one of the Cal Poly water reservoirs, and the potential health hazards of that incident prompted school officials to shut off the campus water supply. In yesterday's case, officials decided the rodent discovery prompted no health hazard.

Go online to mustangdaily.net for the full story.
**Arrest**

*continued from page 1*

"Despite being illegal and against formal greek organization policies, dangerous hazing rituals remain part of the culture of certain groups, a culture that claims to promote leadership and value friendship, but which fails to protect young and impressionable recruits who simply want to belong," Linden said.

"Carson's death was the result of a crime and it was entirely preventable," she said. "Tragically, his death was not the first resulting from a fraternity hazing ritual, and unless the Greeks change their culture in a fundamental and meaningful way, it will not be the last." When asked by reporters why the investigation took nearly six months, Linden cited the "sheer volume of the people involved," and the lack of "clear and open" cooperation by SAE members throughout the investigation.

Starkey, 18, passed away the morning of Dec. 2, 2008, at Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center. An autopsy revealed the cause of death was respiratory arrest due to acute ethanol toxicity or alcohol poisoning. His blood alco­hol content was estimated between .39 and .44 percent — a level equivalent to the effects of surgical anesthesia. It was determined that marijuana and other drugs were in Starkey's system.

Starkey came to Cal Poly as a fresh­man from Austin, Texas, in September 2008 and began the pledge process to SAE in October. The death occurred during the fraternity's "Big Buy Week," where pledges, or "Little Brothers," are paired with active members, or "Big Brothers." Braham was designated as Starkey's Big Brother.

The investigation revealed that the night of Dec. 1 was "Big Buy Night," an annual pledge event where Big Brothers provided each pledge with a brown bag containing large quantities of alcohol. Braham, Taylor and Olavsdotter allegedly paid for and purchased the alcohol from two stores in San Luis Obispo.

Ellis was SAE's designated Pledge Educator, a membership position that helps lead pledge recruitment through their pledging process. On the night before Starkey's death, Ellis reportedly instructed the group of 57 pledges — all of whom were under 21 — to consume the full contents of their bags within an hour and a half to additions to the contents of the bags, pledges were also given a bottle of 151 proof Everclear, which has roughly twice the alcohol content of normal liquor.

The investigation found that at some point in the night, Starkey became unresponsive, at which point several SAE members placed him in a vehicle in an apparent attempt to take him to the hospital, removing his pledge pin to prevent him from being associated with the fraternity. The SAE members reportedly returned Starkey to the house, however, once he began associated with the fraternity. The SAE members allegedly carried Starkey to bed and checked on him until approximately 2 a.m. After he was found unconscious a few hours later, an SAE member called 911 and began performing CPR. He was taken via ambulance to Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.

One of the suspected SAE mem­bers, Russell Taylor, currently serves as the Associated Students, Inc. Board of Directors for the College of Engi­neering. When discussing one of SAE board members being arrested on sus­picions of raping, current ASI president Angela Kramer said, "It's especially difficult because we don't want to see him in this situation, but the fraternity probably had a bad decision that led to the death of a student. Our country has due process for a reason."

"This is the first time when any mem­ber of our campus community is in­volved in a situation like this," she said. "It was a devastating tragic event. The SAE had lost Carson Starkey, but (I think it was) no one's direct fault; there's no sign of malicious intent." The family thanked the San Luis Obispo Police Depart­ment and lashed out at the "long, standing, dangerous pledging rituals" of the fraternity system.

"Every single one who has lost a child can begin to comprehend our family's pain and sorrow. Our grief is deepened by the fact that Carson's death was not due to a natural cause like a disease or illness," the statement read.

"Carson was an excellent student who aspired to be an architect but also, unfortunately, aspired to become a fra­ternity member and he participated in a dangerous fraternity ritual during which he was compelled to drink a fla­tulent amount of alcohol. His death was not caused by 'voluntarily' drinking too much, and anyone who might suggest otherwise is misinformed." The family added, "We will honor Carson and other families by doing everything we can to end dangerous misconduct by fraternities and their members. So, today, we express our gratitude to the police and prosecutors for understanding our loss and assisting us in this first of many steps towards achieving change and justice."

Cal Poly president Warren Baker also released a statement Thursday, re­stating the university's zero tolerance policy towards hazing.

"The university has investigated more than a dozen students who may have been involved in this tragic event," Baker said.

"As a result of these investigations and as an outcome of the campus disciplinary process, nine students have either permanently withdrawn from Cal Poly or been suspended for at least one academic year. Our investigations into other students may who have been involved are continuing."

"We have initiated several new pro­grams designed to eliminate hazing and promote responsible social behaviors. Among those programs are required training sessions for student leaders of greek pledge activities," Baker added.

"We also are hiring two staff people who will devote 100 percent of their time to working with and educating all fraternity and sorority members on these issues."

The charter of the San Luis Obispo chapter of SAE remains suspended indefinitely.

- Melanie van Rossumhuy and Giana Magnolia contributed to this report.

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**Fight**

*continued from page 1*

Fight Night will take place at The Graduate in San Luis Obispo, which will be importing a boxing­ ring for the day, SLO Kickboxing employees said.

All participants will be out­fitted in headgear and clothes to minimize injuries.

Though some may expect this to be a rare event, others argue it presents an opportunity for the greeks against each other, Casey says that's not the case.

"It's a really fun event," he said. "It's a sport, not really fighting, and actu­ ally brings all the greeks together to support one another together, every­ one is really supportive of all the fighters."

"It's a fun event," he said. "Every fighter gets their own walk-up song played by a DJ and there's always a nice attendance win a 34 inch flat screen tele­ vision, food, drinks." "We're trying to support John and his fam­ily," Casey said. "He's not doing anything through a trau­ matic injury. Having 500 people stand behind him on a night like this is the best way to show them all there would say so.

"It's a really fun event," Casey says. "We use this as the new pas­sident denouned it."

"The president promised to work with lawmakers to develop an "ap­ propriate legal regime" for those who can't be tried and are too dangerous to be released. Still, he did not pro­vide the level of detail about his plans that lawmakers, including Democrats, demanded in a 90-6 Senate vote de­ pending run for the money down on the Wednesday.

"It's a really fun event," Casey says. "Some people may think this event pits fra­ternities against each other, and I think it was no one's direct fault; there's no sign of malicious intent." The family thanked all the greeks in this first of many steps towards achieving change and justice."

- Melanie van Rossumhuy and Giana Magnolia contributed to this report.

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**Obama fights to take command of Guantanamo debate**

**Jennifer Loven**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama fought Thursday to retake command of the emotional debate over closing Guantanamo, de­ nouncing "Fear-mongering" by politi­ cal opponents and insisting that mass­ imm­on-communications experts in the U.S. can safely house dangerous terrorist suspects transferred to Cuba.

Obama made his case moments before former Vice President Dick Cheney delivered his own address de­ fending the Bush administration's cre­ ation of the prison camp as vigorously as the new president denounced it.

"Obama, appearing at the National Archives said shutting down Guan­ tamo would "enlist our values" to make America safer. Speaking a day after an overwhelming congru­ entional rebuke to his pledge to close the prison, he forcefully declared the camp a "horror show" that "has not — to preventing future terrorist attacks. He con­ tinued that the prison, which has held hundreds of detainees for years without charges or trials, motivates US enemies overseas.

The president promised to work with lawmakers to develop an "ap­ propriate legal regime" for those who can't be tried and are too dangerous to be released. Still, he did not pro­ vide the level of detail about his plans that lawmakers, including Democrats, demanded in a 90-6 Senate vote de­ ending run for the money down on the Wednesday.

"It is a great event to us in this first of many steps towards achieving change and justice."

Cal Poly president Warren Baker added. "It was a devastating tragedy to our family on this first of many steps towards achieving change and justice."

"The investigation found that at some point in the night, Starkey be­ came unconscious, at which point several SAE members placed him in a vehicle in an apparent attempt to take him to the hospital, removing his pledge pin to prevent him from being associated with the fraternity. The SAE members reportedly returned Starkey to the house, however, once he began associated with the fraternity. The SAE members allegedly carried Starkey to bed and checked on him until approximately 2 a.m. After he was found unconscious a few hours later, an SAE member called 911 and began performing CPR. He was taken via ambulance to Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.

"Carson was an excellent student who aspired to be an architect but also, unfortunately, aspired to become a fra­ternity member and he participated in a dangerous fraternity ritual during which he was compelled to drink a fla­tulent amount of alcohol. His death was not caused by 'voluntarily' drinking too much, and anyone who might suggest otherwise is misinformed." The family added, "We will honor Carson and other families by doing everything we can to end dangerous misconduct by fraternities and their members. So, today, we express our gratitude to the police and prosecutors for understanding our loss and assisting us in this first of many steps towards achieving change and justice."

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- Melanie van Rossumhuy and Giana Magnolia contributed to this report.

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**Friday, May 22, 2009**

- **Karl Gammelgrod**

2nd year, Liberal Studies

"I like the sudoku."

Get caught reading the Mustang Daily and get a free shirt!
**State**

**SANTA MARIA, Calif. (AP)** — A former Santa Barbara County psychologist convicted of sexually abusing female patients has now pleaded guilty to sexual exploitation by a nurse practitioner.

**Fernando Cordeno, who worked for Santa Barbara County Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services in Santa Maria and taught scleratology at Hancock College, entered the felony plea on Wednesday.**

**ORANGE, Calif. (AP)** — Police say a student carrying two air pellet rifles that he was planning to use in an acting prop brought a search of an Orange County college.

**Orange police Sgt. Dan Adams says many calls shortly after 8 p.m. Wednesday reported a person carrying a gun in a parking lot of Santiago Canyon College.**

**Adams says police officers spotted a truck with what appeared to be magazines from a rifle. They then saw a man walk up carrying two airsoft rifles in a case.**

**Adams says the man told officers the guns were for an acting class for "some sort of war scenario."**

**The student was questioned but released after he was deemed not a threat. Earliest, police questioned a man toting a similar gun on the north end of the community college's Irvine campus. He also was questioned but not arrested.**

**AP poll: Many students stressed, some depressed**

**Nancy Benac**

Associated Press


So much in the throes of college day.

The vast majority of college students are feeling stressed these days, and significant numbers are at risk of depression, according to an Associated Press-Pew U poll.

Eighty-five percent of the students reported they felt stressed in their daily lives in recent months, with worries about grades, school work, money and relationships the big culprits.

At the same time, 42 percent said they had felt down, depressed or hopeless several days during the past two weeks, and 13 percent showed signs of being at risk for at least mild depression, based on the students' answers to a series of questions that medical practitioners use to diagnose depressive illness.

These students complained of trouble sleeping, having little energy or feeling down or hopeless — and most hadn't gotten professional help. Eleven percent had had thoughts that they'd be better off dead or about hurting themselves.

That's not just a case of the blues to be shrugged off by taking a break with Facebook or going for a weekend. Kristin Potts, who graduated from Penn State last week with a 4.0 in chemistry and will go on for a master's, says she had a couple friends who didn't come out of their rooms very much. "I tried my hardest not to be like that, but I definitely saw it."

At the University of Maryland in College Park, students were sobered by two suicides within two weeks this past semester.

"It was pretty scary," says Armeen Mayer, a junior studying psychology. She says there's lots of information and help available for students with mental disorders, but they need to know what to do.

"I think they should take responsibility for what they did. (In) using that kind of hazing they could instead use something that does not involve alcohol."

Jillian Rice, history freshman

**International**

**PARIS (AP)** — A thousand French Internet users a day could be punished with accordance to the law for downloading music and movies.

As the husband of supermodel-turned-pop star Carla Bruni and friend to some of France's most powerful media figures, Sarkozy has long basked in his cozy ties with the entertainment industry, which has embraced the measure. But many in Europe have denounced it, saying government controls needed to enforce the law could open the way for invasive state monitoring that violates privacy.

**ISLAMABAD (AP)** — Donations to help refugees fleeing Pakistan's latest offensive against the Taliban surpassed $200 million Thursday, as the country's allies sought to ease a crisis that risks ending public support for military action against the militants.

About 1.9 million people have fled the fighting in the Swat Valley and surrounding areas, a mountainous region not far from the Afghan border where the Taliban have found a safe haven in recent years. More than 160,000 are staying in肿hering camps just south of the battle zone, the rest have been taken in by relatives.

"I think they should take responsibility for what they did. (In) using that kind of hazing they could instead use something that does not involve alcohol."

Jillian Rice, history freshman

**WORD ON THE STREET**

"Should the students connected with Carson Starkey's death suffer any consequences?"

"I think that the law should handle it. I think they should be punished with accordance to the law."

Kevin Wahlberg, chemistry senior

"It really depends on how much evidence is gathered. It does need to be punished to the point where sororities and fraternities take this seriously and not just here at Cal Poly, but everywhere."

Teresa Leonard, history and liberal arts senior

"I think they should take responsibility for what they did. (In) using that kind of hazing they could instead use something that does not involve alcohol."

Jillian Rice, history freshman

**3 U.S. soldiers, dozens of Iraqis killed by bombings**

**Robert H. Reid**

Associated Press

Bombers struck in Baghdad and a northern city Thursday, killing three American soldiers and nearly two dozen Iraqis in a new span of violence that has taken at least 66 lives in two days.

A spate of attacks since April seems aimed at stoking sectarian tensions and undermining public confidence only weeks before U.S. combat troops are due to leave Baghldad and other cities, handing security responsibility to Iraq's security forces.

Although recent violence has not seen Iraq, page 4

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Iraq
continued from page 3
risen to levels of two years ago, it has fueled public unease over whether Iraq's army and police can maintain the security gains since the 2007 U.S. troop surge. Most of the attacks this year have been on Shiite targets, suggesting that al-Qaeda and other Sunni Arab extremists are trying to rekindle sectarian fighting and undermine Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki within his Shiite constituency.

Attacks have accelerated since the Shiite-led government began cracking down on Sunni paramilitary groups that abandoned the insurgency and joined forces with the U.S. to augment security. The deadliest blast Thursday occurred in an outdoor market in Baghdad's southern Dora district, where a bomb exploded near an American foot patrol, U.S. and Iraqi officials said. U.S. officials said three soldiers were killed and an undisclosed number of Americans were wounded. Iraqi police said 12 civilians also were killed and 23 wounded. The Iraqis spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not supposed to release the information.

Among Maj. David Shoupe said U.S. officials could not confirm Iraqi police and witness reports that the attack was carried out by a suicide bomber. Khalil Hamza, a college student who lives near the market, said he noticed four passengers in a white car watching the Americans as they walked through the area. After the blast, he saw the car speed away with three men inside.

"Thick smoke filled the area and the shoppers were in panic," he said. "Ambulances arrived and rescuers started to look for the dead and wounded through the smoke and cried for help from the wounded." Earlier Thursday, seven Sunni paramilitaries were killed and eight wounded when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives as they stood in line waiting to be paid at a military base in the northern city of Kirkuk, police Maj. Nabil Zankana said.

Paramilitary groups, known as Awakening Councils or Sons of Iraq, have been frequently targeted by al-Qaeda and other Sunni insurgent groups. Sami Ghyashi, 37, who was among the wounded in Kirkuk, said the local council members had been waiting three months to receive their salaries.

"While we were waiting at gate talking to one another a big explosion took place," he said from a hospital bed. "I saw several colleagues dead, among them my cousin. I have no idea how this suicide bomber got among us." Also Thursday, a bomb exploded in a trash container inside a Baghdad police station, killing three policemen and wounding 19 others, an Iraqi police official said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release the information.

The attacks came a day after a car bomb exploded near a group of restaurants in a Shiite neighborhood of northwest Baghdad, killing 41 people and wounding more than 70. It was the capital's first major car bombing since May 6 and the deadliest in the city since twin car bombs killed 51 people in another Shiite neighborhood, Sadr City, on April 29. Despite those attacks security in Baghdad remains much better than a few years ago, when the rumble of explosions reverberated daily through the city. In recent months, violence has been cyclical, with periods of calm punctuated by brief series of high-profile attacks.

Nonetheless, the battered attacks have stoked public anger over the failure of Iraqi security forces to prevent bombings, especially in areas where large numbers of civilians congregate. U.S. troops are due to leave Iraq by the end of next month under the terms of the U.S.-Iraqi security agreement that took effect Jan. 1. President Barack Obama plans to remove combat troops from the country by Sept. 30, 2011, with all U.S. forces out of Iraq by the end of 2011. In wake of the recent attacks, parliament's defense and security committee plans to meet Sunday to review the security situation, a Kurdish member of the panel, Firod Rawdoun, said.

He blamed the violence on al-Qaida and Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated Baath Party, saying they "have reorganized recently and were able to revive some of their cells." The "information we have is that the Baath Party and al-Qaeda are conducting attacks now and al-Qaeda has retreated to second place," Rawdoun said. "Some of our security forces have slackened recently after the improvement in the security situation and this has given some freedoms to the terrorists to move." - Associated Press writer Samir N. Zaidi. "The war in Iraq," which appeared in Al-Salamajjali contributed to this report.

Depression
continued from page 3
"there's still a stigma associated with mental health issues and so a lot of people don't want to go to those services. They feel like they're less cool or something like that if they go. It's a sign of vulnerability."

Megan Salame, a sophomore studying civil engineering at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., says she'd turn first to her parents or the 180 friends she's made at college. But she hesitated to add, "Depressed — I don't really like to use that word because it sounds so negative." Mental health disorders like depression typically begin relatively early in life, doctors say, and college is a natural time for symptoms to emerge.

The AP-interview poll surveyed students at 40 U.S. colleges, exploring the students' state of mind and the pressures they face, including strains from the tough economy. It found substantial numbers of students with symptoms of depression, many of them failing to receive professional help.

Among the poll's results:

— Nine percent of students see at risk of moderate to severe depression. That's in line with a recent medical study that found 5 percent of young people had depression.

— Almost a quarter of those with depression were college freshmen, suggesting they had just begun to experience the stresses of college.

— Among those who reported serious symptoms of moderate depression or worse, just over a quarter had ever been diagnosed with a mental health condition.

— More than half of those who reported having seriously considered suicide at some point in the previous year had not received any treatment or counseling.

— Just a third of those with mental disorders that were serious or worse had received any support or treatment in the last year, according to a mental health professional since graduating high school.

— Nearly half of those diagnosed with at least moderate symptoms weren't familiar with counseling resources on campus.

Anne Marie Alban, an associate professor of clinical psychology at Columbia University, said college is a "tender age" developmentally, a period when young adults start taking responsibility for their lives. They're selecting careers, moving toward financial independence, establishing long-term relationships, perhaps marrying and having children.

The most troubling thing coming out of the AP-interview poll and other studies of adult depression, with 18 percent of adults dealing with depression, she said, is that "they don't get help at a time when they're learning how to care for themselves."

"It's like a sign of vulnerability. It's like a sign of weakness. It's like a sign of vulnerability. You don't need to have a serious, diagnosable depression to go "nervous."" she said. "If you feel down or if you feel like you're not yourself, go talk to somebody about it."

The AP-interview poll found that 6 percent of students said they'd know where to turn for help if they were in serious emotional distress or thinking about hurting themselves.

Most said they'd go first to friends or family. Twenty percent said they'd try school counseling. That means it may be up to friends and family to guide students toward professional help where necessary, said Dr. Thomas Insel, director of the National Institute for Mental Health, said students need to understand that depression is "a very treatable illness."

"Their school counseling centers are a good resource, he said, although they're not all set up take care of serious mental health conditions.

"There should be somebody who could at least assess this, and in some cases offer reassurance that I'm sure you'll feel better after exams are over," he said. "Serious cases can be referred for treatment, he said — and "treatment works."
Au Revoir Simone's new record will put you in your place

Here's the thing. Au Revoir Simone has the potential to be written off as total manufactured hipster bullshit. They are three girls, who look like they just stepped out of the Urban Outfitters catalog, singing softly and coaxing gentle melodies out of a pile of synthesizers and Casios. Their name manages to be both kitschy (for being a Pee-Wee's Great Adventure reference) and pretentious (for being French). And to top it all off, they're from Williamsburg, Brooklyn (Otherwise known as "Fucking-Hipster-Williamsburg").

So this being my first encounter with the band, I had some reservations when I started listening to "Still Night Still Light," but I was genuinely weirded out when Au Revoir Simone seemed to anticipate my scolding and then immediately throw it back in my face, giving me a harsh reprimand with the album's opening lyrics, "Don't tell me it's another likely story." It took them about seven seconds after that to utterly destroy what remained of my flimsy defenses.

It would be easy to credit my pushover conversion entirely to my pathetically impotent willpower (not a stretch), but I think the tenacity of the band's songcraft is the real culprit here. Far from a flavor of the week creation, Au Revoir Simone (Annie Hart, Erika Foster and Heather D'Angelo) have been developing their sound since 2003. This is their third release on their own label, Our Secret Record Company, but the band really begun to take off in the last year or so.

Songs on this record revolve around carefully layered synths and vocals that derive their emotive impact from their detached, wounded indifference. Now, this description might seem indicative of a band somewhere between Stereolab and Cassette for the Painfully Alone with three vaginas, but there are a couple of ca­veats to that: There's some super-cute all girl harmonizing here, and the pop hooks have the im­mediately accessibility of Bubblegum Gum.

The frantic "Anywhere You Looked" is the catchiest example; it's the kind of song that convinces you (against all reason) that you should sing along every time you hear it, even though you never can quite keep up with the tempo, and you inevitably just look like a fat tool (kind of like that Third Eye Blind song).

When the girls settle down and get contemplative, as on "Trace a Line," they are "getting drunk in taxi cabs and writing names on backs of hands" or deciding to "let our plants die" in "Organized Scen­ery." This kind of literal imagery can be powerful, especially in conjunction with the resigned, intimate delivery.

Irresistible is not too strong a word for Au Revoir Simone. Just try not to fall in love when they almost whisper in your ear, "I'm the one you won't regret," on the gos­samer "The Last One." Don't judge them by their cute frocks, they're for real.

Jesse Bo Widmark is a KCPR DJ and a Mustang Daily music columnist.
Josh Green

Dear Daily Californian readers,

When did it become a party foul to talk politics in public?

At my recent wedding reception I started talking politics with an Orange County Republican who I thought was actually pretty articulate for a guy who thought McCain would be a better president than Obama. There is always an unavoidable, and often annoying, pattern when you have to engage in small talk with strangers. I mean, you can't exactly break out and ruin the wedding. But it's the sort of conversation that makes you tempted to try to get a few people to mix it up with me. Just to avoid to boredom, mostly of the time.

But at this wedding reception I looked around the table and realized that the OCC Man and I were the only ones comfortable with the politics repertoire. In fact, some people were visibly quivering. I suppose they were worried that some kind of downturn would break out and ruin the wedding. But the more interesting thing about that is that half enough didn't know enough about politics to get in on the conversation, and the other half that asked that asking others about their political views is like breaking bread at the table.

Maybe it's only natural that people don't want to get involved with the political world. In some cases, for some, is kind of like cracking your best ethnic jokes before you've figured out if everyone in the room is willing to watch. I try not to judge those who would rather talk about the future fabulous cyber-stuff on YouTube than the future of the country. I've found it impossible not to judge. One woman I know does not vote at all because she doesn't follow politics and doesn't see the point of voting. Those are people I cannot relate to.

The Internet's wealth of information creates a paradox for modern democracy. The more information we have, the less interested we are in the things that determine how our society survives, like, um, who calls the shots in Washington or Sacramento. Political junk-ies, despite their passion for cultivating a culture of debate and discussion, are likely to see the 2008 presidential race as a contest between personality and platform, where the former is the more important and where the latter is of little consequence.

Four Cal Poly students charged in Starkey's death

California State University campus security said late Monday afternoon that police have arrested four students in connection with the death of Paul Parson, 24.

Spime should focus less on Israel, more on Middle East

I have an issue with Spime's wall display brought up earlier this week. For a club that purports to "promote awareness and dialogue of issues dealing with the Middle East," and promote the banner for "Justice and Peace," the club's events have not shown to deal with any issue but Israel. This week's event, 60 percent of which focus on Israel, gave the impression that issues in the Middle East are mostly due to Iran.

When does the discussion regarding the women's rights in Saudi Arabia begin? How does Israel (which comprises 1.17 percent of the land) become the majority of the Middle East discussion?

Perhaps the club should abandon its title to Students for Justice and Peace in Palestine, as this has been the focus of the club for the past three years. I call on you, members of Spime, to show us that there are other causes of instability in the Middle East. Inform and engage us about topics other than Israel, and stop demonizing the discussion about Israel/Palestine.

Josh Green

San Diego State University
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**Housing**

Rentals 2009-10 Off-Campus Housing www.FarrellSmyth.com or 543-266 Farrell Smyth Property Management

Rooms for Rent 2 rooms available 4 rent in Santa Maria. $500 each + dep, all utilities included. Call/text Freddie @ (805)288-0942 for more info.

**Edited by Will Shortz**

*New York Times* Crossword

No. 0417

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Ginger Beef

**Girls & Sports**

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Colorado State broke Cal Poly's seven-year national championship streak last year the teams faced off in a battle for seventh place May 9.

Alex Kacik / Mustang Daily

Women's lacrosse faced stiff competition at nationals

"If you gave up everything for the team," Spalding said. "That right there says more about a team than winning."

Hemmen said she was impressed her team could compete with Division 1 players and was excited to undertake the leadership role of goalie and hopefully inspire her team.

"It was hard because we do have a younger team that hasn't had national exposure," she said. "A bunch of D1 players played on club level and we were able to compete."

After finishing the season 7-3, No. 8 Cal Poly began the 16-team national championships by defeating No. 12 Georgia 15-14, a close first-round competition the Mustangs weren't accustomed to, Burtis said. The Mustangs were forced to play from behind during the next three games against improved national competition, a formidable task.

"A lot of these teams are coming out to beat us, we have a long history of being the best so they are fired up to play us," Burtis explained. "For us it was just another game; we tried to work on that mindset — approaching games knowing that this team wants to kill us."

The Mustangs will focus on maintaining consistent training during the offseason to improve their play, Curry said.

"We really hadn't had to push ourselves in the past," she explained. "Now (the competition) is keeping with their training programs throughout the year, so we must incorporate more things to prepare for the season."

According to Burtis, a parent of a University of Michigan player came up to Cal Poly defensiveman Laura Hopson's mom after the Mustangs lost in third game 8-10 to commend Cal Poly.

"Cal Poly raised the bar so high that no team could ever reach it for seven years, and now they are finally starting to get there," the opposing team's parent said.

In last year's championship game, the Rams beat seven-time champion Cal Poly by scoring the final six goals to overcome the Mustangs 8-5 in overtime. Yet, this year was a bit different; the squads weren't competing for a championship, but for seventh and eighth place.

Cal Poly's season ended May 9 with an eighth-place standing after losing to Colorado State.

During the past two trips to nationals, the Mustangs have witnessed the vast improvement of the competition, finishing second and eighth out of nearly 170 club teams.

"All the other teams have improved drastically," said junior midfielder Amber Curry, noting that the sport is growing on the West Coast.

"Last year when we lost, there was a new pressure that showed us that we could lose with no demons trying (team) it made everybody push that much harder.

Women's lacrosse faced stiff competition at nationals

Alex Kacik / Mustang Daily

The Cal Poly baseball team (36-17, 13-18 Big West Conference) will host UC Riverside (31-10, 10-11) in the final series of the season tonight at 6 p.m. at Baggett Stadium.

"For us it was just another game; we didn't have the experience," she said. "There says more about a team than winning."

Hemmen was excited about the respect of her opponents, saying more about a team than winning.

For the season."