Biomedical engineering students take advising role

Alexandra Sousa
SPECIAL TO THE MUSTANG DAILY

Due to the budget cuts that have distressed every department at Cal Poly, the biomedical engineering department has faced personnel cutbacks that threaten the department's viability, affecting its day-to-day operations.

However, the student Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES) plans to be the driving force in picking up the slack and doing much of the department's day-to-day chores, such as providing student advisement for classes and widening internship and job opportunities for students. The student group will also help coordinate the department's Week of Welcome activities for incoming students.

In the past, many of these duties fell to the department's clerical staff and faculty.

"This year, I am hoping for BMES to be 100 percent different from previous years," said new BMES president Bobby Nijjar, a senior in the department.

There is a sense that people need more help getting a job and BMES does that.

—Bobby Nijjar
Biomedical Engineering Society president

With its new expanded duties, Nijjar is hoping that this year will produce a student club that "will run in order to help students with the curriculum, in order for them to be more successful overall in biomedical engineering."

The department's faculty seems to agree.

"This year BMES is very open and transparent," professor David Clague said. "All the faculty feel that we have the freedom to offer what they feel is important. I really like transparency."

In comparison to previous years, though it cannot be definitively linked to the new way things are run, there has been a lot more participation. There is a sense that people need more help getting a job and BMES does that," Clague said.

Nijjar and the other student officers set up this year's program to meet three specific criteria: offer a diverse industry relation, promote student academia and improve social interactions within the biomedical engineering department.

"I have fresh ideas and an approach that is not as conventional as previous years." Nijjar said.

Sixty percent of the job of BMES is to help the department by lessening their load by advising students about classes, the biomedical engineering department and any questions about student life here at Cal Poly," Nijjar said.

"The other 40 percent of the time is spent on helping the student, whether it be helping students get internships, make connections within the industry and provide a helpful tutoring program."

Clague said that the club is good for students as well.

"The club allows students to build networks with the industry and it is a shared goal with the biomedical engineering department to assist our student by pairing them with an upperclassman tutor," he said.

Students are looking forward to the student club's expanded role.

"I hope that BMES will give me a better understanding of biomedical engineering, give me the opportunity to connect with other students and faculty of that major and to have a better understanding of how to get a career in this field," biomedical engineering student Jerry Lee said.

Rossman's math adds up

Cal Poly statistics professor wins national award

Katelyn Smith
SPECIAL TO THE MUSTANG DAILY

In the math world, Allan Rossman is the teaching equivalent of Usain Bolt, Michael Phelps or Michelle Kwan -- a gold medallist.

He will receive the Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Award in January. Rossman is one of three mathematicians in the country to receive the award, which is presented by the top mathematical organization in the country, the Mathematical Association of America.

"Allan is competing against statisticians and a plethora of mathematicians and it is incredibly rare that a statistician would get an award from the American Mathematical Association," statistics department chair Robert Smidt said. "It is exceedingly unique and a high honor."

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Rossman
continued from page 1
are doing our assignments on our
own, and he is always offering help
to anyone who looks like they may
be struggling," he said.
In Rossman’s classes, students
are not just crunching numbers
but understanding the concepts
through applications, Chance said.
"Rossman is really committed
in the classroom, and pulls off his
activity-based approach by letting
the students figure it out them-
selves," she said.
Outside of the classrooms at
Cal Poly, Rossman has been a ma-
jor influence among the statisti-
cal and mathematical worlds. His
published materials are being used
across the country, and he puts on
workshops and presentations to
spread his unique teaching
philosophy. His speech titled "Ask-
ing Good Questions" is based
on the notion that interesting
questions will make students
learn and retain information
more easily.
"To be honest the biggest
perk this award does for me is
to give me the chance to give
a talk to a big audience, where
I can try to convince them
that my ideas about teaching
are good ideas, and maybe I
will convince some of them to
adopt some of my ideas," Ross-
man said.

BMES
continued from page 1
freshman Ryan Phle said.
BMES hopes that possibil-
ity of social interactions between
students and teachers will further
help the department run more
smoothly.
And the BMES has been known
as an important component to the
biomedical engineering society
because it offers to help depart-
ments.
"They help us host information
sessions with companies to edu-
cate students almost every quar-
ter. They are an equal or greater part
of Week Of Welcome and they
actually plan everything and it’s
a huge help to an already short-
handed staff," Clague said.
"I love the beauty of biomedical
engineering) is that it is so di-
verse with so many oppor-
tunities. Biomed is always going to be there
and there will never be a shortage
for their expertise," Niyar added.

Sixty percent
of the job of
(the club) is to
help the de-
partment by
lessening their
load by advising
students about
classes ...
—Bobby Niyar
BMES president
Niyar is determined to make
BMES comparable and as oppor-
tunity-filled as the new depart-
ment.
"My favorite part of my major
is the idea that I can help people
with what I do. I might be able to
create something that could help
change someone’s life," Phle said.

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Copies are available to the
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Fort Hood shooting suspect was under FBI probe in 2008

Josh Meyer and Greg Miller MCCLATCHY-NEWSPAPERS

WASHINGTON — The FBI and the Army last year investigated contacts between a Yemen-based militant Islamist prayer leader and the Army psychiatrist accused of last week’s deadly shooting rampage at Fort Hood, Texas, but they dropped the case after concluding that he didn’t pose a terrorist threat, a senior federal law enforcement official said Monday.

The disclosure on Monday that Army Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan communicated with an imam who had ties to Sept. 11, 2001, hijackers was sure to raise the question of whether U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies had information that, if properly shared and investigated, might have helped to prevent the attack.

Even before that disclosure, lawmakers were calling for inquiries into whether the Army, the FBI and the Secretary of the U.S. Army John McHugh, left, discusses the shooting spree at Fort Hood as Army Chief of Staff George Casey, center, and Fort Hood Commander Gen. Robert Cone look on at a news conference.

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Life without parole not allowed for teens, Supreme Court says

Lesley Clark MCCLATCHY-NEWSPAPERS

WASHINGTON — Florida’s tough prison sentences for juveniles came under scrutiny Monday at the U.S. Supreme Court, as the justices appeared divided over whether locking up teenagers for life constitutes cruel and unusual punishment.

Attorneys for two Florida teenagers who are serving life in prison told the justices such sentences are unjust to teenagers, who often outgrow their felonious ways. Florida argued banning such sentences would undermine the state Legislature’s efforts to cut down on serious violent crimes by juveniles.

The court’s conservative bloc — Chief Justice John G. Roberts and Justices Antonin Scalia and Samuel Alito — seemed reluctant to embrace an outright ban on such sentences, suggesting instead judges take factors such as age into account during sentencing.

“Your client — his crime is horrendously violent,” Roberts said to Bryan Stevenson, an attorney for Joe Sullivan, who was convicted of raping an elderly woman when he was 13. “At the same time, he is much younger than in the typical case. And it seems to me that requiring ... consideration of his age avoids all these line-drawing problems.”

However, Bryan Gowdy, an attorney for Terrance Jamar Graham, see Teens, page 5

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Warning signs about Hasan's increasing activity may have followed federal guidelines in reporting that Saddam money entered an inheritance of capacity to carry out a plot, but someone in the U.S. military system should have objected to the numbers because, "they don't make sense." California's online watchdog official said Friday that CSU reported late last week that federal stimulus dollars let them remain about 26,000 full-time-equivalent positions. That's more than half of CSU's work force, and it's more jobs than the state of Texas and 44 other states reported saving with stimulus money.

Santa Cruz, Calif. (MCT) — This time of year, most people aren't thinking about sunny days at the beach. However, managers of state parks aren't ready for the short run. The recent budget cut that has closed campgrounds and left parks operating on a shoestring—at least through the end of the fiscal year July 1—could mean a dangerous low number of lifeguards on state beaches next spring and summer.

"We will likely have a significant decrease in guards next year," said Kirk Lingenfelter, a parks superintendent overseeing miles of Santa Cruz County coastline, including popular Sealright, Twin Lakes and Manresa beaches.

FBI probe continued from page 3

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Teens

continued from page 3

who was convicted of first degree mur­
ders which he was 16 and 17, argued a ban on sentences of life without a
change for parole would be more ef­
fective than a case-by-case review be­
because "we can't tell which adoles­
cent is going to change and which isn't."

"It needs to happen later," the Jack­
sonton, Fla., attorney told the jour­
ism common to the juvenile system.

Gould and Stevenson noted in a 2005
report, the high court prevented those younger than 18 from being
sentenced to death for their crimes
because young offenders are more
easily stored and lack the judgment
of adults. Life without parole, Stev­
enson argued, is comparable to a death
sentence.

Execution

continued from page 4

Maryland Attorney General
Douglas F. Gansler agrees, though he
objected to Adcock's 2002 decision to
move the case.

"It has worked out for the better. If
you are going to have a death penalty,
John Muhammad — just like Tim
McVeigh — is the poster boy for the
deadly penalty," said Gansler, referring
to the Oklahoma City bomber who
was executed in 2001. At the time of
the Washington shootings, Gansler
was chief prosecutor in Montgomery
County, Md., where six of the mur­
ders occurred.

Besides the 10 killings in the Wash­
ington area, Muhammad and Malvo
were believed to have killed at least
seven others in their cross-country
shooting spree.

It began on Sept. 5, 2002, when a
restaurant owner in Clinton, Md., was
shot six times as he left his establish­
ment. He survived, but a young thief,
apparently Malvo, stole $3,500 in cash
from him. Ten days later, the owner
of a nearby liquor store was shot and
robbed. It was not until Oct. 3 that the
shootings gripped the Washington area.
At 9:15 a.m. a taxi driver was
fatally shot while fleeing his car.
Fifteen minutes later, a woman was fa­
tally shot in the head while sitting on
a bench outside a restaurant. Less than
two hours later, another woman was
fatally shot as she stood next to her
area. And that evening, a man was shot
on a street in northwest Washington.

The shootings continued through­
out the month. The FBI eventually
used fingerprints on ransom notes to
trace Muhammad and Malvo back to
Washington state, where their shoot­
ing spree had began.

FBI probe

continued from page 4

that he was involved in "any terror­
ist planning or plotting."

"I don't know if it will greatly
affect our assessment of the case,
what motivated him. It remains to
be seen whether this means any­
thing or not," said the federal of­
icial, adding that authorities still be­
lieve Hasan acted alone when firing
a minutes-long spray of bullets that
killed 13 people and injured an­
other 29.

The official said that Hasan did
not appear to have known Awlaki
in person, except perhaps in pass­
ing, even though the militant prayer
leader was the imam at a Virginia

The mosque drew the attention of
the FBI at the time, and later the
Sept. 11 commission, because of
Awlaki's connection to at least two of
the Sept. 11 hijackers, who may
have followed him from a mosque
in San Diego to the Dar al-Hijrah
Islamic Center in Falls Church, Va.,

Awlaki, a U.S. citizen, left the
United States in 2002 and is be­
lieved to be in Yemen and actively
supporting the Islamist jihad, or
holy war against the West, through
his Web site.

Several U.S. officials said U.S. in­
telligence agencies first intercepted
communications between Hasan and
Awlaki starting in late 2008 as a
result of another investigation, and
that the information was given to
one U.S.-based multi-agency Joint
Terrorism Task Force (JTF) and
then to another one based at the
Washington Field Office because of
Hasan's assignment at the Walter
Reed medical center.

The Washington task force, which
included FBI agents and
Army criminal investiga­
tion per­
sonnel, launched a probe and deter­
mined that Hasan was contact­
ing the radical cleric — who has ties
to other al-Qaida-affiliated individu­
als — "within the context of the doc­
tor's position and what he was do­
ing at the time, conducting research
... on the issues of Muslims in the
military and the effects of war in
Muslim countries."

The federal official said Hasan
had "reached out to Awlaki several
times before he got a response," and
that there was little in the corre­
spendence to raise serious red flags.

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*Jeff Franklin
Junior, Electrical Engineering
"I like the crosswords."
Theater professor’s original play to debut on Spanos stage

Theater professor Al Schnupp’s “Zero to Infinity” opens in Alex and Faye Spanos Theatre tomorrow at 8 p.m.

A rather fat man in a black suit is sitting in his living room blowing up an oversized, vinyl sex doll. His wife, a woman with basketball-sized breasts and a head full of voluminous, pink hair, looks at him and blabbers, “Zero, it’s time to get off your kidoodles. Life is kicking along and you have nothing to show for it.”

So begins the opening scene of theater professor Al Schnupp’s “Zero to Infinity,” which will debut on Nov. 12 in the Alex and Faye Spanos Theatre. Schnupp’s made-up language and outrageous, clown-like characters show the hoops politicians have to jump through in today’s political circus.

Schnupp began writing this absurdist play about seven years ago when he was “thoroughly appalled and disgusted by politics at that time.” Though the play never mentions names, he said that the circus of events could be considered a spoof on the Bush-Cheney administration.

“The administration was just appalling immoral in my opinion. There were no weapons of mass destruction. Cheney did make a ton of money off of his Haliburton company,” Schnupp said. “I love absurd plays because I think they’re really a reflection of reality. So during the Iraq surge when Condoleezza Rice was asked, ‘Oh, is this troop increase an augmentation?’ and she said, ‘No.’ Then they said, ‘Well what is it?’ ‘Well she said, ‘It’s an allocation.’ To me, that’s absurd.”

Though the play does have an underlying satirical message, the overall atmosphere is more light-hearted, silly and colorful. The 14 short, fast-paced scenes that make up the production show the political campaign of husband and wife, Zero and Maxie, their outrageous campaign to help Zero become president of a country called Grodo.

Psychology and theater senior Ashleigh Droz, who plays Maxie, was drawn to the character because of her over-the-top, emotional personality. “I really liked her part and her role with the other characters,” Droz said. “She’s smart. She’s ambitious. She really wants power and money and luxury.”

Maxie convinces Zero to illegally obtain funds to finance his campaign, which is followed closely by Inspector Oodles, who tries to figure out how Zero came up with the money.

Throughout the play, Inspector Oodles uses several different disguises to investigate Zero’s campaign, including a Swiss yodeler, a French sculptor and an Italian chauffeur. Theater sophomore Ryan Austin, who plays Inspector Oodles, uses eight different accents throughout the play to match each of Inspector Oodles’s disguises.

“He is a very motivated investigator. He will pretty much try anything to get what he needs, although he may not be the best at it,” Austin said.

The political game that Zero plays to win over the people of Grodo resonates closely to the way presidential candidates in the United States campaign.

“There are so many landmines that politicians have to walk through to even be considered seriously, and I find that absurd and sad,” Schnupp said.

One of the events Zero must walk through is an interview with the media. Two life-sized puppets with skeleton faces, named Paul and Appalling, interview Zero about his quest to become president. The irony in the interview is that Paul and Appalling never seem to ask Zero any questions, but rather ask and answer them.

“What makes a woman say ‘yes’?”

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Holiday movie lineup lacks major blockbuster releases

Ross Britt
Arts editor

LOS ANGELES — No wizards named Harry, no lords chasing rings, no bunnies of rational measure, no night at a museum. Not even Bond is showing up.

This year’s holiday movie schedule is relatively sequel-free, save for a teen-vampire flock and few high-pitched chipmunks. And remakes are just as scarce, with only Scrooge and Sherlock Holmes on the agenda.

Yes, for the 2009 holiday season, Hollywood will be left to its own devices to get by — and it could end up being one of the industry’s biggest christmases ever.

“They really aren’t those guaranteed blockbusters,” said Brandon Gray, president of BoxOfficeMojo.com. “The season is more interesting because you don’t have those big franchise movies.”

The closest thing to a “guaranteed” blockbuster sequel this year is “The Twilight Saga: New Moon,” and that guarantee is somewhat limited.

The original “Twilight” teenage vampire film debuted last November and did well, but not spectacularly well enough to prop up an entire season of movie-going. The film, whose main audience is teenage girls, took in $53.7 million worldwide.

That puts it at 121st on the all-time list — well behind all six “Harry Potter” movies and countless other holiday entries. Independent studiio Summit Entertainment made the film for a reportedly relative paltry sum of $37 million, bringing a ten-fold return in receipts.

But Gray says it may be tough for “New Moon” to beat “Twilight’s” numbers because the film series, based on Stephenie Meyer’s popular books, was already well-known prior to the first film.

“The amount of hype was pretty high for the first movie,” Gray said.

The holiday movie season is sort of a miniature version of the industry’s lucrative summer season, says Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office analysis for Hollywood.com. Dergarabedian sees the amount of business that Hollywood gets from the holiday season is proportionally equivalent to summer — both rely largely on students with a lot of free time on their hands.

There’s roughly $4 billion in box-office receipts to be gleaned from 16 weeks of summer films, or about 40 percent of the industry’s full-year take. The holiday season is

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Banana Cream $8.95

Gourmet and Vegan Pies
Poly Pecan $10.95
Chocolate Pecan $10.95
Vegan Apple $13.95

Santa Barbara City College Press
www.mustangdaily.net
Play

continued from page 6

answer the questions themselves, probing their image instead of Zeelo.

Other examples of the righttype Do not seek to be considered for president include his makeover at Summer Clinic and the choice of a week-ended running mate who is five years younger.

Another absurd characteristic of the play is the unique language in which it is written. While words like "strummin," "kadoodles," and "boonies," the play's silly dialogue harmonizes with the colorful, crotchety scene of the play. Though the language is made up, Austin said that it is easy to understand in context.

Schupp is looking forward to patter on the production, hoping that the students will have a good time but also realize the political intrigue spread across the plot.

"I hope they laugh a lot and see it is not coincidental," he said. "Hopefully they see things from a pun and art, 'Touches' or 'You're right' or 'Yeah', that's a Saturday Night Live take on this aspect of politics."

"Zero to Infinity" will begin at 8 p.m. on Thursday and will run until Saturday. Tickets are $15

Movies

continued from page 7

a little less than half that long and comprises about 18 percent of the overall receipts, or close to $2 billion.

"Week-fo-week, dollar-for-dollar, it's as important as the summer season," Dergardened said.

Whether this holiday season can live up to that notion remains to be seen.

One of the big gambles this year is on "Avatar," the first feature film directed by James Cameron since 1997's "Titanic," still the all-time box-office champ. "Titanic" made $600 million in the U.S. and $1.8 billion worldwide.

"Avatar" cost a reported $250 million and took four years to make. It's the story of a band of humans that visits a distant planet and finds itself at odds with the natives over the discovery of rare gems on the planet. The protagonist is a paraplegic, war veteran transformed into one of the natives via a top-secret procedure. - a little less than half that long and comprises about 18 percent of the overall receipts, or close to $2 billion.

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Distributor Twentieth-Century Fox no doubt is looking for something similar to the box office it did for "Titanic," its co-venture with Viacom Inc.'s Paramount Pictures unit.

Twentieth-Century Fox, like Marvel, publisher of this report, is a unit of News Corp.

But the studio remains confident its gamble will pay off. As a company spokesman put it: "We know it'll be big -- the question is how big."

One big draw is expected to be that Cameron tries to break new ground with the film. He uses a new camera system that Fox officials insist will set a new standard for filmmaking.

Plus, the planet's natives are created via a sort of "performance-capture" animation, sort of like what was done with "The Polar Express" and "Bowfinger," as well as the robots character in the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

This, however, the film uses what Fox calls "emotion capture," which aims for a seamless transition between the live-action characters and those that are the product of animation.

"Avatar" is scheduled for release Dec. 18.

An even bigger gamble is Sony Corp.'s "2012," a disaster film that imagines the end of the world in three years, a prophecy emanating from the Mayan calendar. The movie, starring John Cusack, cost a reported $260 million to make and is due out this week.

The film's release was moved back from July in an effort to take increase box-office potential. Roland Emmerich, director of "Independence Day" and "The Day After Tomorrow," also was at the helm of "2012."

While there may be few sequels on tap, the season is chock full of fully animated features, the first of which debuted last Friday. "A Christmas Carol," a reanimation of the classic Dickens tale as done by Walt Disney Co., is one of four widely released films that will unofficiol start of the holiday season. Starring Jim Carrey in the Scrooge role, "A Christmas Carol" also uses performance-capture animation to illustrate the point.

"New Moon," debuts Nov. 20, the Friday before Thanksgiving, along with another animated feature, Sony's "Planet 51" and "The Blind Side," a sports drama from Warner.

Planning for the following Wednesday, three films hit theaters: "Ninja Assassin," an action film with Warner's "Old Dogs," a family comedy film from Disney and "The Road," a thriller from the Weinstein Co.

Also on that Wednesday will be a limited release of Disney's second animated fantasy for the season, "The Princess and the Frog." It's rare that Disney, the art form's pioneer, puts out two major animated releases in the same season. But Disney says "Princess" is different from "A Christmas Carol" in that it's all hand-drawn sketches, an art form becoming virtually obsolete in an era now dominated by computer-generated images.

Disney first announced plans for "Princess" at its 2007 annual meeting in New Orleans, the city where the film's story takes place. It was there that John Lasseter, the one-time Pixar chief who now oversees all Disney animation, announced the studio would revisit traditional hand-drawn animation. Along with "Avatar," "Princess" is one of the most anticipated films of the year.

Also in December, Sony will release the thriller "Armored" on Dec. 4, while Lionsgate's drama "Brothers" debuts. "Everybody's Fine," a comedy from Disney's Miramax unit featuring Robert De Niro, also debuts that day.

"Princess and the Frog" is set to go into wide release Dec. 11, and it'll be joined by Sony's romantic comedy, "Did You Hear About the Morgans?" with Hugh Grant and Sarah Jessica Parker, and "Invinctus," a Clint Eastwood film about South African leader Nelson Mandela.

After "Avatar's" Dec. 18 release, Christmas Day premiers include the only other sequel on tap, Fox's animated "Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel." Also opening is Universal's romantic comedy, "It's Complicated," featuring Meryl Streep and this year's co-hosts of the Oscar ceremony, Steve Martin and Alec Baldwin.

Other releases include "Sherlock Holmes" from Warner Bros., with Robert Downey Jr. in the title role, and two Paramount films that are expanding to wider audiences: "Up in the Air" with George Clooney and "The Lovely Bones," "Lord of the Rings" director Peter Jackson.

The season will have its share of Oscar bait but the campaigning is sure to be heavier this year, since the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has expanded its best-picture nominee list from five to 10 films.

Dergardened said that list may include a few films from earlier in the year, including such popular entries as "Star Trek" and "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince."

He adds that films like "Up in the Air" and "The Lovely Bones" are expected to capture awards attention. The surest sign a film is a contender is when a studio does a "platform release," getting a film in a handful of the theaters at first and then expanding the weeks wear on.

That goes for animated films, too, which have their own Oscar category. "Princess and the Frog" may be one, but another is the fifth animated film to be released, "The Fantastic Mr. Fox," from, well, Fox. Dergardened says featuring the voices of Clooney and Carey Blanchett, "Mr. Fox" comes out in limited release Nov. 26 and expands the following weekend.

BoxOffice/Mojo's Gray says that even though Hollywood is taking a gamble this year by releasing no trying-and-true franchises, a season of original material may be needed to prime the pump.

"Relying on movies that aren't franchises or aren't sequels is pretentious for the long term," Gray said. "If they don't come up with some new ideas, they won't have franchises or sequels for the future."

Doctors are evaluating investigational, medicated patches to see if they relieve pain when applied directly to the ankle.

Local doctors are currently conducting a clinical research study evaluating the effectiveness of investigational, medicated patches for treating the pain associated with an ankle sprain, when applied directly to the injured ankle.

To be eligible for this study, you must:

• Be 18 years of age or older.

• Be experiencing pain from an ankle sprain that occurred within the past 48 hours.

• Not have taken any pain medication or used compression to treat your ankle sprain.

Qualified participants will receive study-related medical evaluations and study patches at no cost. Reimbursement for time and travel may also be paid.

To learn more about this local study, please contact:

Are you suffering from a recent ANKLE SPRAIN?

SAM WORTHINGTON (left) and Zoe Saldana star as aliens in James Cameron's "Avatar," that comes out Dec. 18.

MUSTANG DAILY

ARTS

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

MUSTANG DAILY

Be our GUEST!

The Mustang Daily is always accepting guest commentators.

Send your commentaries of about 500 words (and an original topic) with your name and major to mustangdailyopinion@gmail.com

Posters advertising the play feature colorful wooden figurines which represent the main characters Zero, Maxie and Inspector Oodles.
A year after Obama's election, America's racial rifts are deep and persistent

George Curry

When Barack Obama was elected president, 70 percent of Americans were convinced that race relations between blacks and whites would always be a problem for the United States, or that a solution would be worked out. Gallup reported, "Responses to the long-standing trend today are almost exactly where they were in December 1963, when Gallup first asked the question. Fifty-five percent of Americans in 1963 were hopeful that a solution to the race-relations problem would eventually be worked out. Now, some 46 years later, the hopeful percentage is an almost identical 56 percent."

Maybe that's why Obama titled one of his books "The Audacity of Hope." Americans were never more hopeful about race relations than when Obama, the son of a white woman from Kansas and a black man from Kenya, was elected president. A Gallup poll on Nov. 5, 2008 — one day after the election — found that 67 percent of Americans felt a solution to problems between blacks and whites would eventually be worked out. A year later, that figure has shrunk by ten percent.

In the 2008 poll, 70 percent of those questioned said they expected race relations to improve as a result of Obama's election; 28 percent said they expected race relations to get a lot better, and 42 percent expected things to get a little better. An additional 17 percent said they expected race relations to remain unchanged, and 10 percent expected them to worsen.

On the campaign trail, Obama audaciously raised hopes that he could close the racial divide in his Philadelphia speech on race, he said, "Race is an issue that I believe this nation cannot afford to ignore right now." He continued, "Contrary to the claims of some of my critics, black and white, I have never been so naive as to believe that we can get beyond our racial divisions in a single election cycle or with a single candidate — particularly a candidacy as imperfect as my own." As it turns out, far from moving beyond our divisions, America remains a sharply divided country even as it would seemingly be worked out.

Obama has for the most part studiously avoided directly addressing race during his time in office. The chief exception was a comment he made on a confrontation between Henry Louis Gates Jr., a black Harvard professor, and James Crowley, a white Cambridge, Mass., police sergeant. At a prime-time news conference, Obama accused Crowley of "acting stupidly" in arresting the professor for disorderly conduct after the two exchanged words and Crowley went to Gates' home to investigate a possible break-in.

Despite later softened his language, and invited Crowley and Gates to meet with him over beers at the White House. The president said, "My hope is that as a consequence of this event, this ends up being what's called a teachable moment." But nothing was ever taught by Obama or anyone else. In fact, blacks and whites were sharply divided over the incident. A Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll found that 39 percent of blacks faulted Sgt. Crowley, and only 4 percent blamed Gates. Among whites, it was the opposite: 32 percent said Gates was more at fault, while 7 percent said Crowley was. Race came up again when former President Jimmy Carter told NBC News, "I think an overwhelming portion of the intensely demonstrated animosity toward President Barack Obama is based on the fact that he is a black man." Press secretary Robert Gibbs quickly distanced the White House from the comment, saying Obama "does not believe that the criticism comes based on the color of his skin."

Despite such unequivocal statements, conservative commentators such as Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck have repeatedly tried to paint the president into a racial corner. Criticizing Obama's appointment of Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court, Limbaugh said Obama is the "greater being example of a reverse racist, or now he's a "progressive". Beck accused the biracial president of being a "racist" who has "a deep-seated hatred for white people and the white culture."

Fortunately, the improvement of race relations does not hinge on the attitudes of those on the fringes, left or right, or on President Obama, for that matter. His election a year ago did not usher in an era of racial harmony. It looks as if that's something we'll have to accomplish ourselves.
The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz  No. 1006

Across
1. "Chesnut" river in "The Phantom of the Opera" (movie title) (6)
2. "ADQ...
3. Onetime science magazine (6)
4. Philosopher with a "rap" (2)
5. "Lama Ding Dong" hit for the Edsels (1961 hit) (5)
6. Paper purchase (4)
7. Best-selling book (4)
8. Only common language with English (4)
9. "The Lord of the Rings" baddie (7)
10. 1961 hit language with English (4)
11. "Goddess of Discord" (8)
12. "B" initials (2)
13. Excellent choice (6)
14. Noon (6)
15. God of ancient Greek mythology (6)

Down
1. Goddess of death (9)
2. SPB... (3)
3. Burned ceremonially (9)
4. "Lord of the Rings" badge (9)
5. "I won't want to rear about it" (13)
6. "I don't want to rear about it" (13)
7. "I want to rear about it" (13)
8. "I'm going to rear about it" (13)
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For answers, call 1-800-285-5555. $1.49 a minute or, with a credit card, $1.49 + $0.55 per minute. Puzzles are available for the next 5 years. 1-888-PACROSS. "K" in a word. 1515 W. New York Ave., West Palm Beach, FL 33401. Puzzles are available for the next 5 years, 1-888-7-PACROSS. 14"x14" puzzles. The puzzles and places to purchase puzzles, or visit nytimes.com/crossword for more information. Online subscriptions: Today's puzzles and more than 2,000 past puzzles. nytimes.com/crosswords ($39.95 a year). Share tips: nytimes.com/crossword. Crosswords for young solvers: nytimes.com/learning/words.
Quarterback

continued from page 12

check every Sunday.

So when Manning and Philip Rivers met again five years later, I found myself hoping Eli got his consolation.

It looked bleak for San Diego, as LaDainian Tomlinson had just 22 yards rushing to lead the team. But Rivers led a dramatic late drive to give the Chargers a one-point win.

Score one for the good guys. But something tells me Manning wouldn't give it all up to go back and take his selfishness back. He's probably laughing his way to the bank in the back of a limousine while polishing his championship ring right now.

Wild no more

If there is a team in the NFL that doesn't need any redeeming, it's the Patriots. They win an average of what seems like 14 games a season.

But they let some games get away last year, particularly a game against Miami where the newly-coined Wildcat offense went berserk for 38 points and Bill Belichick's head exploded like in the movie "Scanners."

And although New England would win the rematch, the Wildcat again would pose problems.

I'm sure Belichick spent the majority of the offseason figuring out how to stop the Wildcat. He didn't need to work at all on his offense with Tom Brady coming back and with two of the best receivers in the league; he was left to ponder the crazy offense.

While the Dolphins threw in a wrinkle this year with rookie quarterback Pat White often times leading it — the Patriots didn't really let it get off the ground this time.

With the exception of a 10-play, 11-minute drive in the third quarter, the Wildcat sputtered most times in a 10-point loss.

But you know who I feel sorry for in this equation? Chad Henne. He runs on and off the field five or six times per drive. He's probably out of stamina by the time the first third down of a drive rolls around. And then half the time he gets on the field, he sprints out to a wide receiver position where he is promptly ignored by the defensive back who is already cheating away from Henne towards the line of scrimmage.

Just once I want to see them throw a wide receiver screen to Henne, or have him run a route.

Konnie Howren can actually throw the ball, and Pat White was a quarterback, so why not give it a shot?

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THIS WEEK IN MUSTANG ATHLETICS

FOOTBALL

SATURDAY, NOV. 14TH
VS. SOUTH DAKOTA,
6:00PM
SENIOR DAY
ALEX G. SPANOS STADIUM

W. BASKETBALL

SUNDAY NOV. 15TH
VS. NEW MEXICO STATE
2:00PM
HOME OPENER
MOTT GYM

WE ARE THE MUSTANGS

Vince Young went 12 of 19 for 172 yards with no turnovers against the 49ers last week. His total passing yardage marks his best this season.

Wild no more

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Konnie Howren can actually throw the ball, and Pat White was a quarterback, so why not give it a shot?
Mustangs host UC Irvine in semifinal match

Forward David Zamora is tied for seventh in points (15) and fifth in goals (6) in the Big West Conference.

When I heard earlier last week that they were going to wear them I thought we were just chumming the ghost of the infanumYiiccaneer. But with that loss, and the rest of the regular season behind them, the Mustangs look up into this week's postseason contest.

"We are playing our best soccer right now, and that's a good thing because it is now a one-game season ... we have the confidence now," Sigler said.

Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. on Wednesday. "Our only chance to make the NCAA playoffs is to win the Big West Tournament," Holocher said.

Women's soccer doesn't receive NCAA bid

Cal Poly women's soccer head coach Alex Crozier said his team was "hopeful" as it was awaiting the NCAA's decision. But hope wasn't enough. With 32 available at-large bids in 4,000 available at-large bids in 4,000.