Bomb scare evacuates UPD

The University Police Department was evacuated after calling the bomb squad when a backpack was found outside Police Chief Bill Watton's office at 8:30 a.m. Monday.

The bomb squad was called because UPD police officers did not feel comfortable with the situation, Watton said. The bomb squad initially X-rayed the bag and still did not feel comfortable opening it. So a bomb squad robot was sent in to open the bag and found a laptop and audio visual wires inside the backpack.

The road between the police station and the Corporation Administration building was closed off to all vehicles and pedestrians with orange cones and police officers standing at the entrance to Safety Way. A corporation employee said they were advised to stand away from windows.

"Likely what happened was an employee just found it and left it outside the police office," Watton said.

The backpack was found beyond the door meant for authorized personnel and Watton said it could have been there over break when he left the office on Wednesday at 6 p.m. Watton said the area beyond the door is a private area but that it is not always locked. Watton added UPD will try and return the backpack to its owner.

Leticia Rodriguez and Tim Miller contributed to this report.

Library houses winged friends

Bats, Birds and Bees all find their way into Robert E. Kennedy Library

Paige Malone Hernandez

UPD STAFF REPORT

You can find birds, bees, bats and owls in the pages of books at the Robert E. Kennedy Library. Sometimes, you can also see them flapping or buzzing in the stacks.

"I've caught them in my hand before," Holly Richmond, interlibrary services assistant, said.

Richmond has been working at the library for 13 years and has had to deal with birds on a few occasions during her career.

Sometimes sparrows, pigeons and small black birds get in through the second floor of the library, because the trees outside are so close to the windows, she said. Birds will nest in trees, then fly into the library where they get stuck.

Birds outside the library gates will hop right through the front door but most often they are chased out by students or staff, Richmond said.

Harvey Mushman, San Luis Obispo resident, who uses the library's computers two to three times a week, caught a dove on the fourth floor in late October.

The bird was trapped and Mushman was trying to catch it because he didn't want it to suffer from "flying into windows." After a few seconds, he was able to catch the bird and safely release it out of the window.

The owl was really sad ... he hit his head on the window and broke his beak.

—Holly Richmond

interlibrary services assistant

CSU Trustees gets new member and chair

Will Taylor

The California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees appointed Herbert Carter board chair after the resignation Jeffrey Bleich who was named the Ambassador to Australia by the Obama administration on Nov. 18. Governor Schwarzenegger also appointed a new student trustee, Curtis Schlafinan of CSU Fullerton, on Nov. 20.

The Board of Trustees, which develops policy across the 23-campus CSU system, appointed Carter from his vice president position, which he had held since 2008. He has been part of the Board since 2004.

Carter has been involved in the CSU system for 35 years in a variety of administrative positions, according to a CSU press release.

The chair is "vital in leading the other trustees and policy direction of the entire board," CSU spokes­man Erik Falls said. He added that Carter has been a strong leader already.

The Board of Trustees, which is composed of 25 members, executes and controls policies across the entire CSU.

"The trustees would see any policy decision from say setting the alcohol policy to say the naming of a building from donations to the formal budget requests," Falls said. "They are really instrumental when it comes to all those policies."

The student trustee position, to which Schlafinan was just appointed, holds all the same powers and privileges as the other trustees once they enter their second year of a two-year term. Student trustee terms are staggered and Russell Statham, a master student in business administration at Fresno State University, is now in his voting year as the student trustee.

Statham said the vote is just a minor part of the position.

"Your vote is a very small component of so many ways," Statham said. "So many things happen outside of our meetings."

Outside meetings, sitting on California State Student Association (CSSA) and shadowing administration and faculty members are all duties that Statham said he undertakes. He said he is confident that Schlafinan will be a good successor.

"Curtis is a very thoughtful person and I think he'll do a great job representing CSU students," he said. "I told him he will be one of the most challenging positions that he'll hold in his life with the budget shortfall that we face."

Statham said that Bleich picked a hard one to leave.

"It's obviously quite bittersweet," he said. "He was an inspiration to a lot of us and we're excited for him."

Bleich, who was a litigation partner at Munger, Tolles & Olson law firm in San Francisco from 1995 through 2009, over President Obama when Bleich was going to Harvard University for his masters in public policy according to the U.S. Department of State and said that he was also a contributor to President Obama's 2008 presidential campaign.

"But any time you lose a leader there's going to be an organizational adjustment," Statham said. "We have a great new chair for our board."

Cal Poly Professor Robert Koob said that it is too early to tell how Carter is doing in his new position.

The policies that the Board of Trustees or set are broad and any guidelines under which Cal Poly and the other campuses operate, Koob said.

"The policies effect us day-to-day only in the way it sets boundary conditions," he said. "A good example is the student fees last summer. Their actions matter, but it is not a direct control."

The next Board of Trustees meeting is in January.

Under present law there are 25 trustees (24 voting, one non-voting). Five Trustees are ex-officio members the governor, the state controller and the state treasurer. The six remaining trustees are appointed by the governor, confirmed by the State Senate, and serve eight-year terms.
Rising debt threatens to derail Congress on just about everything

David Lightman
ACCENT ON WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON — The Senate began debate Monday over the future of health care in America that’s likely to go on for weeks, but behind the scenes, lawmakers are struggling to resolve some more explosive issue: how to pay for all their ideas. Federal budget deficits remain at record highs. The national debt is $15.2 trillion; Congress must vote soon to let it go higher, or else the Treasury won’t be able to issue new debt. President Barack Obama is expected to announce Tuesday a plan to send an additional 30,000 to 35,000 American troops to Afghanistan, which will require more spending. Despite the Obama administration’s promise of a new era of fiscal responsibility, seven of the 12 major appropriations bills that set federal spending — including those that govern the budgets of the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services and Transportation — still haven’t passed Congress. Those agencies have been operating since Oct. 1. It’s a stopgap resolution; the next one expires Dec. 18. Add to this the $848 billion 10-year cost of the Senate health-care proposal, and it appears that “it’s all starting to come crashing down in one big mash,” said Mary MacManus, the president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a Washington watchdog group. Moderates and conservatives are urging the creation of a commission to study and recommend deficit-cutting strategies. Public support is strong. A survey Nov. 16-18 of 700 registered voters commissioned by the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, a fiscal watchdog group, found that 66 percent said Washington officials weren’t paying enough attention to budget issues, up 10 percentage points from February. In Phoenix, a bipartisan commission to tackle the deficit and debt problems. “The bottom line is that the American electorate is way ahead of Washington policymakers,” said David Walker, the foundation’s president and chief executive officer. A bipartisan group of 10 senators wants to attach an amendment that would create such a commission to the bill to raise the federal debt ceiling above $12.1 trillion, expected in mid-to late December. Separately, Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad, D-N.D., and Sen. Judd Gregg of New Hampshire, the panel’s top Republican, have proposed creating a deficit reduction task force that includes congressional and administration officials. Congress could be required to vote quickly on its proposals, amendments probably wouldn’t be allowed and it would take a three-fifths majority to win approval. For now, virtually requiring bipartisan support. Reid is talking to colleagues about the idea, but it has a formidable opponent: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., who thinks the existing process is adequate to address such issues. There are few politically viable fiscal alternatives, said Isabel Sawhill, a senior fellow in economic studies at Washington’s Brookings Institution, a center-left research center. “We’re not going to be able to raise taxes, and the president has all but taken that off the table,” she said. “Social Security would be very tough to take price hikes, and defense spending is going up, not down.” Unless some sort of new budget process is created, Sawhill said, legislation to raise the federal limit could be impaired. Obama could find a rough fight over Afghanistan funding, and the already shaky status of health care legislation could get even more wobbly. The health care legislation is designed to pay for itself. The Senate bill would impose a 40 percent excise tax on high-cost health insurance policies and increase the Medicare care payroll tax, now 1.45 percent, to 2.95 percent on single people with wages of more than $190,000 annually and joint filers who earn more than $320,000. The health bill that the House of Representatives passed would impose a 3.5 percent income tax surcharge on adjusted gross incomes of more than $650,000 for singles and $1 million for joint filers. The money from the initiatives is supposed to go toward making health care more affordable, however, not reducing the budget deficit. The bipartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the fiscal 2010 deficit should be nearly the same as last year’s record $1.4 trillion. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., told colleagues Monday that they’re in for a long, hard fight on health care as debate formally opened. “Let’s discuss the specifics of this bill, not the whispers and wild rumors,” he urged. “While we will disagree at times, let us at least agree doing nothing is not an option.” This has to be done in a way that’s fiscally responsible,” Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., said of the health care bill. “It has to be done in a way that is effective.” "If not, there ought not to be legislation passed, in my judgment..."
Obama faces high stakes in new Afghan policy

Steven Thomma and Nancy A. Yousef

WASHINGTON — With eight years of blood and treasure already spent and perhaps his presidency hanging in the balance, President Barack Obama will tell the world Tuesday how he will escalate the war in Afghanistan — and how he hopes his risky decision will lead finally to a path home for U.S. forces.

The stakes of his decision — ordered into effect at 5 p.m. EST Sunday in the Oval Office — are enormous, and the challenges of making it work are daunting. He’ll speak at 8 p.m. EST Tuesday from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

Perhaps his toughest task will be to explain, perhaps even persuade, his fellow Americans that it is in their best interests to send in more troops now, nearly nine years after the launch of the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan.

Pressured byallegations of corruption and the Taliban’s apparent ability to continue fighting, Obama has been forced to respond to mounting criticism and questions from fellow Democrats that he should bring the first American troops home before the November elections.

In a sign of the president’s deep concern, he is expected to announce the authorization of new advisers, trainers and perhaps engineers to support Afghan forces. He’s also expected to discuss his plans to introduce more than 3,000 new military trainers in the next year.

But Obama has said he is not planning to increase the number of combat troops now fighting in Afghanistan, a move that could have significantly expanded the footprint of American forces.

Obama appeared Saturday to rule out an announcement that he would deploy thousands of American combat troops to Afghanistan in the months ahead.

He’s not expected to announce any increase in U.S. combat forces, which already number about 97,000. A move to increase combat forces would be a dramatic change from Obama’s past statements, which have called for a reduction in the number of combat troops deployed in Afghanistan.

Obama is set to speak to West Point cadets via satellite in an unprecedented move that could signal the high stakes of his decision and his personal commitment to the war effort.

For the U.S., the stakes are high. Obama has long argued that a failure to strengthen the Afghan government, which is expected to take full control of Afghanistan next year, could result in a collapse of the nation’s security forces that could lead to a resurgence of al-Qaida-led terrorists and a dangerous regional chain reaction.

With his decision, Obama will have raised the profile of the Afghan war ahead of midterm elections and in the run-up to a presidential election. His critics say the war is too costly, poses a danger to American security and should be halted now.

The president is expected to outline his goals for the war and his plans for American forces in Afghanistan. He is also expected to announce the withdrawal of nearly 20,000 U.S. forces by August 2011, though some will likely remain to train the Afghan forces and support them in their fight against terrorists.

Obama is also expected to announce that the U.S. will keep 50,000 or more American troops in Afghanistan after 2011, perhaps for years to come.

The decision seems aimed at convincing Americans and his own political base that he is committed to working to end the war.

But Obama is already facing a showdown with Congress over his proposals for the new assistance.

If the president is to increase training in Afghanistan, he will need the support of top members of both parties on Capitol Hill, who have said they want to see more progress in the war before approving any new aid.

While the telephone call between Obama and parliamentarians from the NATO countries in Afghanistan revealed no new details on his plans, it suggests a growing coordination of the American military strategy with that of its allies.

U.S. allies in NATO have already agreed to increase their troop levels in Afghanistan, and Obama’s decision is expected to push them to increase their military efforts even further.
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Now that PolyRatings has been relaunched as CalPolyRatings, will you use it?

"Definitely, it's good to get back on there and see how good my professors are for next quarter."

-Vinay Clauson, mechanical engineering senior

"I tried to use it in the past but it wasn't working. It's helpful but only if everyone uses it."

-Heather Wilson, industrial engineering freshman

"Yeah, I used to use it in the past and was sad when it was down when I needed to take my last GE. I only have one quarter left so I'm already set."

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"It's probably the most important decision in his career," said Karen Von Hippel, a scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a center-right research center in Washington. "There are so many moving parts that need to be aligned...I think we can do it, but it's a huge challenge."

Obama on Sunday summoned the members of his top military and security team to the White House to give them the final go-ahead on his plan. As McClatchy Newspapers first reported on Nov. 7, it would bolster the current 68,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan with another 30,000 to 35,000, to be deployed starting early next year.

After meeting with top officials from the Pentagon and White House staff, Obama spoke with Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal later Sunday evening via teleconference from the White House Situation Room. It was McChrystal, the top commander in Afghanistan, who requested additional troops to institute a new counterinsurgency strategy that would fight the Taliban while shoring up the Afghan government and Afghan forces.

As part of that, Obama will announce a planned expansion of the Afghan army to 240,000 and the Afghan police to 160,000 by October 2013.

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Why you broke up last week: Case study of the “turkey drop”

DISCLAIMER: Article is based not on my personal experience, but those of friends. So don’t blame me…

Thanksgiving break is a traditional time of gains for college students — in weight, sleep or both. However, for freshmen and transfers, it's a traditional time of loss as well. During this festive time of year, a high number of breakups occur between these students and their significant others back home. Urban Dictionary calls this phenomenon the “turkey drop.” Basically, college turns an ordinary relationship into a two-and-a-half-month time bomb, which few couples are able to diffuse.

see Turkey, page 8
Nontraditional documentary delves into the realm of true love

Rick Bentley

Coming Tuesday on DVD is "Paper Heart," a "hybrid documentary" that features real interviews with people talking about whether love exists mixed with a fictional storyline about love skeptic Charlyne Yi falling for actor Michael Cera.

The project started off as an idea from Yi, sparked by conversations with her older friends, to make a traditional documentary. The questions she had about love had more to do with how a person knows when they have found true love and whether divorce means there never was true love in the relationship.

Once Yi started talking with filmmaker Nicholas Jasenovec about the project, he suggested 90 minutes of people talking about love might not be too interesting. It was his idea for the Yi-Cera storyline to serve as an arc to hold together the interviews.

"People keep asking me if this is my showcase. I never wanted to be on screen," says Yi, who reluctantly

Michael Cera and Charlyne Yi star in "Paper Heart," a documentary about whether true love really exists.

~ A El ; ^  ^  v

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Love continued from page 7

agreed to be on screen after some convincing by the director.

The Los Angeles native has had small parts in films like "Semi-Pro" and "Knocked Up." Most of her career has been on stage. She performed in the New York Comedy Festival and HBO's U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen.

Interviewing was a new job for Yi. Although some of her subjects met with a casting director before Yi and her crew rolled into cities like Nashville, Lubbock and Oklahoma City, all of the responses were genuine. "I wanted to treat them with respect because they trusted me. I can't believe they invited me into their homes. I didn't want to do something like 'Borat.'" Yi says referring to the ambush style of interviews for films by Sacha Baron Cohen.

Because I'm not a dick and I want to do it right and break up in person, that's why. For most students, Thanksgiving is the first opportunity to return home since September, which theoretically would mean a happy reunion of the lovebirds. Happy reunions that quickly shatter into breakups. Even if the breakup isn't premeditated, the contact could backfire. If you think that one date can somehow fix your problems, than prepare to be sorely disappointed. Besides being awkward because of the long separation, the reunion could reveal how much a couple has changed, or how little magic is still there.

Turkey continued from page 6

For example, let's pretend I had a boyfriend in high school. We'd gotten together in May or so and had been absolutely happy ever since. We realize that we're going to separate colleges but neither of us abandons our choice to tollmv the relationship. We know that maintaining the relationship is an even worse idea.

Along comes Week of Welcome. Thrust into a group of 15 strangers, it's difficult not to meet new people. I meet even more people the next week — in classes, in my dorm, at the dining hall ... wherever. I like talking to some of these people, and we do other things together. Suddenly, I have friends and we have fun together. I tell my boyfriend about all of this, and listen to stories of his new friends. We know that we can't just be loners in love, but it's hard to make time for both friends and one another. His friends think he talks to me too often; my friends think my boyfriend sounds like a loser. We have less and less in common, as we have different majors. Calls become less frequent. We start wondering what the other is doing.

One night, I go to a party and have what he sees as a little too much fun. A picture on Facebook shows a guy with his hand on my shoulder. My boyfriend wants to know who he is. He's just a friend, and I say so, but he doesn't believe me. Although I'm not cheating on him, the idea is looking more and more attractive; what with the abundance of new men all around. Who's to say that they wouldn't be better boyfriends since I have never given them a chance? Did I decide on my one true love too soon? Especially since we don't trust each other anymore, it can't be healthy, right? And who needs all this drama when I have school to worry about? I start to consider a breakup.

But why Thanksgiving break?

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In the spirit of Thanksgiving, I'd like to take this opportunity to focus on what's right with our country. In my family, during Thanksgiving dinner we go around the table and say what we're thankful for. So rather than critique things or express what I'd like to see in the future, I want to focus on the things that I'm proud of and thankful for right now.

I'm thankful for our media. Whether you like getting your news from the television, newspaper, radio or the Internet, we have quite the abundance of choices in the United States. Thank goodness we don't live behind the great firewall of China or have the system the Iranians do where the government has blocked sites like YouTube, Twitter and Facebook in the past. It's easy to take for granted all the information we have access to since there's so much information out there that we can easily get our hands on. Even the fact that you can go into the school library and pick up a copy from a newspaper from a country on the other side of the world as we really go to shows you that we do have a lot of freedom when it comes to the press and media.

I'm thankful for our Constitution. The more I learn about the Constitution the more I come to appreciate it and what it set out for our country. It describes core rights that we have that are essential for our freedom and well being. These rights are not always respected as they should be but we can always point back to the Constitution as the supreme law of the land and remind people of our rights as both human beings and Americans. It was written so the people could be the masters of it, and as such it's relatively easy to understand even without a law degree and it's not too lengthy. The Constitution in my eyes is one of the most powerful and important documents ever written.

I'm thankful for our judicial system. I know it's not perfect but overall I'm very happy with it. The idea that we are judged by our peers is a powerful concept. In a world where public outrage is easily formed, it's reassuring to see that usually cooler heads prevail and arguments are head in a court of law. The rule of law is a great thing and without it life would be very unstable and much more difficult for all of us.

I'm thankful for all the land that makes up the United States; what a diversity of terrain we have from Alaska down to Florida. Even in San Luis Obispo you can go down town for a more urban setting or head just a few miles where the government has blocked information? Why not just do it immediately? What is gained by waiting? If you're going to form a union don't you want to get out, clearly stated that "he Ryan Soqui" may be in the San Luis Obispo area" and the subject line was "Crime Alert — Timely Warning," which doesn't seem to be consistent with Chief Walton's statement. For the police to take so long to get information out to the public is ludicrous.

"If it's reasonably determined that they are not in the area, then we will wait to tell students about the crime." —Chief Walton

Why wait? If you're going to tell us about an armed and dangerous parolee, why not just do it immediately? What is gained by sitting on the information?

—Aaron

In response to "BLOG: Emergency Alert System isn't used"

The e-mail notification, which took roughly 18 hours to get out, clearly stated that "He (Ryan Soqui) may be in the San Luis Obispo area" and the subject line was "Crime Alert — Timely Warning," which doesn't seem to be consistent with Chief Walton's statement. For the police to take so long to get information out to the public is ludicrous.

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NOTE: The Mustang Daily features select comments that are written in response to articles posted online. Though not all the responses are published, the Mustang Daily prints comments that are coherent and foster intelligent discussion on a given subject.

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Monday, December 1, 2009

OPINION/EDITORIAL

Americans still have plenty to be thankful for

Aaron Berk

The Libertarian Torch

Forbld Blvd. meets Los Osos Valley Road and it's like you're in a totally different setting with all the open land. We have a lot of great national parks in addition to access to two oceans and many terrific lakes in between.

I'm thankful for our innovative spirit. In a country where refrigerators, motorcycles, jeans, airplanes, supermarkets, masking tape, chemotherapists, transistors, de-fibrillators, cable television, credit cards, barcodes, the polio vaccine and even spandex were created, you have to see that we're a pretty innovative country. These innovations are beneficial to literally billions of people around the world and help improve our quality of life. I can only imagine what we'll invent in the future that will further improve our lives.

Last but not least, I'm thankful for my greater family that is formed, which took roughly 18 hours to get out, clearly stated that "He (Ryan Soqui) may be in the San Luis Obispo area" and the subject line was "Crime Alert — Timely Warning," which doesn't seem to be consistent with Chief Walton's statement. For the police to take so long to get information out to the public is ludicrous.

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Why wait? If you're going to tell us about an armed and dangerous parolee, why not just do it immediately? What is gained by sitting on the information?
Smith
continued from page 12

Davis and wideout Michael Crabtree, had gone to the 49ers coaches and lobbied to open up the offense a little more, use the spread formation more often and not be as run-focused.

Much to the lobbyists' surprise, the 49ers coaches didn't kick them out of the lobby. Davis said that when the offensive game plan was presented to the team Wednesday morning, this was his reaction: "I smiled."

The plan, you see, called for the 49ers to be more wide open, right out of the gate. Smith passed on five of the first six plays, three of them from the shotgun formation. The drive led to only a field goal.

But Davis and (what) Michael Tabtree had four more catches Sunday. A couple of them were strong and sexy, worthy of his first-round selection.

It's impossible not to notice how much more space he's created for Davis and the other 49ers receivers since he showed up in late October.

Crabtree also dropped a pass in the end zone on what Smith later called his best throw of the day. Because of that rookie muff, Crabtree merely had a good game instead of a great one.

But if this had been his 11th game as a 49er instead of his sixth, he might not have dropped the pass.

2. How much of the 49ers' defensive struggles have actually been the fault of the team's short-possession offense?

The 49ers had superior possession time Sunday, which has been the case in all five of their victories. Only a fool would not make the connection between that and the 49ers' defensive performances in those games, as well.

Numbers don't tell you everything. But at least in the statistical sense, this team's success is far more dependent on how its defense performs. In the 49ers' five victories, the defense has allowed an average of seven points per game. In their six defeats, they have allowed 29.6 points per game.

One possible reason?

When the 49ers' offense goes three-and-out, by the second half, the 49ers' defense goes onto the field with less energy. Does Bly, making his first start for the team at cornerback Sunday, affirm that theory while praising the 49ers' offense?

"Any defense is helped by any offense that stays out there longer," Bly said. "When the defense comes off and we sit there for 10 seconds, that was the case today."

4. If the 49ers fall short of making the playoffs, will they look back with regret on their early reluctance to be less run-fixated offensively?

They should. Of course, Shaun Hill was the starting quarterback in September under new offensive coordinator Jimmy Raye. But could the 49ers have done in September what they did Sunday?

"I don't know that would probably be a better question for Shaun to answer," Smith said. "But I think we're fully capable of it. There's a learning curve with it. The first year together, doing things, there's always going to be some type of learning curve."

The next and most important questions are whether the curve continues, and whether the Alex Smith who shows up next week in Seattle was the same one we saw Sunday at Candlestick. Fascinating answer to come.
Mark Purdy
SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

SAN FRANCISCO — Apologies to Alex Smith. Really. Seriously.
Last week in Green Bay, the 49ers quarterback was awful in the first half, threw a crucial interception in the second half and raised serious doubts about whether he could ever be an effective NFL starter again.

Never mind.
Sunday afternoon at Candlestick Park, Smith reversed the equation.

He reverted it so severely, some of us suffered whiplash. Smith had his best game as an NFL starter in a 20-3 victory over Jacksonville.

He had zero interceptions, two touchdown passes and a sweet 96.8 passer rating.

What happened?

“I just feel better about seeing what I see out there,” Smith said afterward. “Understanding it, trusting it and pulling the trigger.”

Trigger-happy Alex? My goodness. There’s a phrase that none of us ever expected to use in a column about Smith.

However, as has been the case throughout this unusual season, the 49ers raise more far questions when they win than when they lose. And these were Sunday’s head-scratchers:

1. Has it really been the system holding back Smith all along, not his own play?

2. The performance against the Jaguars makes you wonder. After the Green Bay loss, Smith and two of his receivers, tight end Vernon

Niners, Smith raise more questions in victory