Cal Poly floats to the top at Rose Parade

IN ARTS, 6
Tim Miller

Both Cal Poly campus’s collaborated on their float “Jungle Cuts,” which was the first float to win two awards at the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena this New Year’s Day.

For the second year in a row the Cal Poly float won the KTLA Viewers Choice Award; this year they also won an award from the Tournament of Rose’s Committee, the Bow Hope Humor Trophy. Cal Poly won the Viewers Choice Award with 20,798 votes only 401 votes more than the next closer float by RFD-TV. Last year, the first year the Viewers Choice Award was given, there were only 16,619 total votes cast.

Jane Theobald, the program leader for the rose float program and landscape architecture junior, said it felt really good to beat out floats designed by professional float makers.

The only thing that Theobald said she remembered when the float went by was “screaming my head off.”

“Once the float goes past the TV camera I’m done, the head of the giraffe can fall off for all I care,” she said.

This year’s theme for the parade was “2010 A Cat Above the Rest,” so the Cal Poly design featured a monkey giving haircuts to a variety of animals including a zebra with a spiked purple Mohawk and a lion with a perm. The float also featured several mechanical elements including a toucan flying around a tree and a monkey swinging from a tree as well as a waterfall.

“Jungle Cuts” was the 62nd float to be made in a collaborative effort between the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and Cal Poly Pomona campuses. The work for the float is split evenly between the two campuses said Brandon Schmiedeberg, landscape architecture senior and lead float designer. In late October, the San Luis Obispo half of the float is taken down to the Pomona campus and the San Luis Obispo team members go down every weekend to work on the float.

Mary Young an agriculture system and management senior was the float driver as well as the construction chair. Driving the float was very stressful because Young had to stay up most of the night before parade to move the float into place, she said. Young is able to see directly in front of the float but uses an observer on top of the float to look for possible obstacles outside of the driver’s line of sight.

The San Luis Obispo and Pomona campuses alternate providing the float driver and observer every year. Theobald said that around 1,000-1,500 volunteers came to help the float builders during “Deco Week.” “Deco Week” is the week before the parade which all of the flowers are put on the float. Michelle Altholm, landscape architecture junior and assistant program leader said “Deco Week” is her favorite part of the building the float. “I love Deco Week, it’s the most stressful and crazy week and it’s so much fun,” she said. Schmiedeberg estimated that he put in more than 1,000 hours of work on the float himself, while...
Float  
continued from page 1
Thebild said she put in around 700 hours of work. The team does take some time off working on the float during finals week but they make up for it with all the time they spend during the first two weeks of winter break, she added. Schiedeberg will be the lead designer next year to mark his fourth year working on Cal Poly's float. He has already received the theme for next year and has begun to create the design.

"Next year's float will be the most important to me because it's my last float," Schiedeberg said. But he still expects to be in Pasadena at the end of December in the years to come volunteering on the float, he added.

Executions  
continued from page 1
Liturgy over that possibility of "cruel and unusual punishment" has halted and delayed executions across the country and has reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Executing drugs is the most "problematic" drugs was a good day that should be applauded, said death penalty exponent Debra Denno, a professor at the Fordham University School of Law. But, she said, "it's not just about the drugs."

It took executions about 30 minutes and several failed attempts before they successfully inserted an IV line in Binns' vein, she said. And the state's backup plan involved injecting two drugs "never injected into a human being, ever, in an execution" directly into muscle tissue, she said.

She questioned why Ohio had turned to the new method. Experts have said that the sedative dosage used as the first step in the three-drug method was more than enough to kill a person. The main drawback, they said, to using only one drug was that it would take much longer than the three-drug method.

But Binns succumbed in about 10 minutes, about how long it's taken for inmates to die under the more established method.

"That was too easy," a relative of the woman he was convicted of killing was quoted as saying afterward.

Missouri's lethal injection protocol has weathered a number of challenges, some regarding the three-drug method and some regarding the competency and training of execution personnel. Last year, the state carried out its first execution without studying the new method.

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WASHINGTON — After meeting this afternoon with top security officials, President Obama is scheduled to announce tougher airline security measures in the wake of the Christmas Day incident.

President Barack Obama talks about a meeting with top security officials in the Grand Foyer of the White House on Tuesday.

Obama poised to announce tougher airline security rules

Michael Muskal and Mark Silva

Washington Post

The United States. Although authorities said he smuggled an explosive device aboard the craft, but the bomb only ignited, causing a fire.

Obama, who was on vacation in Hawaii, attended two meetings, the first into how the materials were smuggled through security and a second into how the watch lists of potential terrorists are maintained.

Abdulmutallab’s father, a prominent Nigerian banker, had warned authorities that his son was being radicalised, but Abdulmutallab was not added to the no-fly list, and so was able to keep his U.S. visa.

A year ago, the TSA has already directed airlines to give full-body, pat-down searches to U.S.-bound travelers from Yemen, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and 11 other countries.

Obama is scheduled to announce more stringent airline security and other counter-terrorism operations in the Grand Foyer of the White House on Tuesday.

The U.S. military has backed the decision of ousted Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s government to its efforts to bring al-Khazali inside the political process and has said the League of the Righteous hated its attacks against the Americans last spring.

Security experts are translating into life-threatening one-way tickets to homeland and a long-term lock.

A report from Human Rights Watch released in the spring found that one out of five “criminal aliens” deported from 1997 to 2007 had been in the country legally. Many, like Simmie, have known America as home for decades. “I’m living in limbo,” said Simmie, 61, whose friends raised thousands of dollars to hire a lawyer to fight his deportation.

Simmie apologizes for the drone-driven, but he denies he was guilty in the other cases.

After leaving Great Britain with his family and as a child and settling in Sunnyvale, Calif., Simmie joined the Marines as a teen and did two tours in Vietnam. But he never became a U.S. citizen in part because his Scottish father felt his son should remain true to his heritage.

It was a costly decision. After Simmie didn’t respond to a 2003 notice to appear in immigration court (the story he didn’t get the notice), he became a fugitive and was arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in October and locked up in a county jail, which has a contract with ICE to house its prisoners.

Like Simmie, longtime San Jose residents Hassan Alipakir and Victor Garabey were thrown into similar predicaments. Alipakir, 49, is an Iranian immigrant who was jailed because of a three-decade-old charge that he contends was false. Garabey, 45, is a Mexican immigrant who says he woke up to find himself serving when he suddenly became homeless.

This is why we have become enmeshed in an immigration system that has mushroomed since Congress passed its last major immigration bill in 1996. Since then, the number of detainees has grown fourfold as new biometric technology, huge databases and more boots on the ground have made it easier for ICE to track down immigrants with criminal records.

While the 1996 immigration reform law was widely hailed as a get-tough measure on illegal immigration, one of its more controversial provisions allowed for relatively minor offenses to be grounds for deportation of noncitizens. The Human Rights Watch report found that 77 percent of legal residents had been deported for nonviolent offenses.

If immigrants have been in the United States fewer than five years, they are subject to deportation for use of marijuana, a single crime of “moral turpitude,” a broad term that includes shoplifting and possession. If they have been in the country longer than five years, they can be deported for either an aggregated felony

The case of the fifth hostage remains unknown, although he is believed to be dead.

The U.S. military has backed Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s government in its efforts to bring al-Khazali inside the political process and has said the League of the Righteous hated its attacks against the Americans last spring.

Khazali had been held since March 2007 in the kidnapping and killing of five U.S. soldiers in the southern city of Kut in January of that year. His supporters kidnap­ ped the Britons to bargain for his release. At the time Americans accused Khazali of working in direct collaboration with Iran’s Quds Force, a wing of the Revolutionary Guard.

The U.S. military believes that Muskal was held for at least part of the time in Iran, but a senior Iraqi official said the hostage had likely been held in Iraq for most of it.
Briefs

State

WASHINGTON (MCT) — Deport
the 20,000 drunken driving arrears in San Mateo County and the Bay Area this holiday season. California, according to preliminary numbers, but official arrears across the state continue to grow while also causing them to trim their budgeting. And state lawmakers are in a hurry to clear those who are behind the wheel and over the limit not too long and shorter this year. But it will be hard to find for sure until the final numbers come in over the next few days.

San Mateo County, police arrested 210 drivers on suspicion of driving under the influence this year compared with 271 last year. Daly City police Sgt. Dave MacInnis said.

VACARNO MCT) — The animal
on the注意事项 for the Treatment of Animals (PETA) has sent a letter to a veterinarian who advised Kevin Johnson asking him to prohibit horse-drawn carriages on city streets. The letter makes the request after a horse-drawn carriage was hit by a car in December in Old Sacramento. The horse and passengers were injured.

Deport

continued from page 3

or two crimes of moral turpitude. "We're not talking about Jeffery Delmore or Charles Mansor here," said El-Masri, referring to an attorney who helped the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco. She argues that the punishment is disproportionate with criminal records — deportation and separation from families — is considered disproportionate to the offenses.

ICE officials argue that getting a green card, and a "conditional agreement" and that immigrants have to take responsibility for their actions. "The vast majority of immigrants who come here comply with laws, lead productive lives and contribute to society," said Venus Kric, a spokeswoman for ICE. "But if you come here as a guest of this country and you break our laws, you risk forfeiting the right to remain here."

El-Masri's case is bizarre.

He came to the United States on a student visa in June 1979, while Iranian students were still holding Americans hostage in the U.S. Embassy. In December of that year, while taking English classes in Oklahoma City, he was arrested and charged with a $30,000 deposit to buy a car. When he later changed his mind and asked for a refund, Abpikar was told by the disappointed salesman called the cops and accused him of calling in a bad check.

Ultimately, he says, he never spent time in jail, and an attorney told him that since the matter had "gone away."

He went on to get a bachelor's and master's degrees from San Jose State University, worked in high-tech industries and in real estate, and applied for citizenship in 2004. When the application form asked whether he had ever been convicted of a crime, he didn't mention the Oklahoma accident. Two years later, the federal government accused him of lying on his citizenship application — a felony — and put him into deportation proceedings. He spent 16 months as a detainee, mostly in Santa Clara County Jail.

When in custody, Abpikar, who also has a 1999 conviction for shoplifting, located his old Oklahoma records and found that he pleaded guilty in the case and was given a two-year suspended sentence. Under the United States immigration law, according to immigration attorney Roger Simonic sits in the visitor center at the Santa Clara County Jail in San Jose, Calif., Wednesday, December 16, 2009. Simonic is a Scot tish immigrant and Vietnam veteran who was convicted of multiple drunken driving offenses.

Google unveils potential iPhone rival

A super phone

Google unveiled its newest smartphone on the market.

The goods

• Runs on Android 2.1
• GPS navigation
• Screen resolution: 720 x 480
• $179 with two-year service plan
• $529 with no plan
• 1GB Flash capacity, with 4GB card can be expanded to 32GB
• Battery
On 3D networks, in hours
Talk time
Standby
Internet use
Video playback
Audio playback
250
6.5
4.5
7
20

A look at Google's new Nexus One phone, which has similar features to Apple's iPhone including video capturing 20 frames per second.

John Letzing

SAN FRANCISCO — Google Inc. on Tuesday unveiled its bold er effort yet in the market for advanced mobile phones that connect to the Internet: a new device that the company will sell directly to consumers to challenge Apple Inc.'s popular iPhone.

The new phone, dubbed Nexus One, is being manufactured by Taiwanese firm HTC. The device is based on Google software and was designed in tandem with the search giant.

While a number of devices based on Google's software have already been released, the Nexus One represents a significant challenge to the established model of selling mobile phones. That's because Google is taking a direct role in selling the Nexus One, including "unlocked" versions that aren't provided with service plans from specific wireless carriers.

In a relatively unfamiliar role for the company, Google is selling the Nexus One through an online store starting Tuesday, where both unlocked versions and those provided with service from T-Mobile USA Inc. are available. Google said that versions with support from Verizon Wireless in the United States, and from Vodafone Group PLC overseas will be available in the future.

Apple's iPhone is currently provided exclusively in the United States with service from AT&T Inc. with.

• Nexus One belongs in the emerging category of devices that Apple, as the two settle into more direct competition.
• Nexus One offers a potential iPhone rival for S.529, and that the model could don't see it as a threat; I think this is a competitive marketplace.

Apple's CEO Eric Schmidt resigned from Apple's board of directors in August, and the two firms have been drawn into territorial spats in the mobile market.

For example, Google has alleged that Apple rejected its Google Voice application, which enables mobile users to call that bypasses traditional telecom networks, from use on the iPhone.
all, of his captivity.

The official described Khazali's relationship with Iran as one of mutual interest, and no different from that existing between al-Sadr's Mahdi Army and Tehran.

The League of the Righteous, the Mahdi Army and even Sunni groups get support from Iran," said the official, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the issue. "They are different in the levels of cooperation."

He compared Khazali's situation to that of Qais al-Iryadi, a party leader who had fought Saddam Hussein before 2003.

"No doubt all the armed groups, especially the Shiites, have done training there. They (the Iranians) train them on how to abduct, and plant explosives," the official said. "They need to know how to use the tactics. Why else did Daidukh with Khazali if not for training," he added, in reference to Ali Mahmoud Daidukh, a member of Lebanon's Hezbollah who picked up with Khazali by U.S.-led forces.

Daidukh remains in U.S. custody but is expected to be handed over to the Iraqis soon.

Despite the Karbala killings, the U.S. military has offered tacit support to Iraq in its intentions to rehabilitate Khazali.

"The way you end these kinds of conflicts, the way you end these kinds of wars... is by individuals ultimately reconciling. That process is one we have supported and the Iraqi government has supported as well," Gen. David H. Petraeus said on a visit last week to Baghdad, when asked about Khazali's transfer to Iraqi custody.

Al-Mahdi's circle has weighed Khazali, 39, as an alternative to the volatile al-Sadr, according to the Iraq official. Al-Sadr disappeared from public view more than two years ago and is believed to be studying in Iran.

One former al-Sadr supporter has described his former leader as surrounded by advisors with close ties to Tehran who have isolated him and mixed their own statements in his name.

Khazali boasts the pedigree to challenge al-Sadr due to his history as one of the closest aides to al-Sadr's father. Grand Ayatollah Mohamed Sadeq al-Sadr, who was killed in 1999, Khazali served as a right-hand man to the younger al-Sadr in the first year's after the U.S. invasion in 2003, as the pair built upon the legacy of the father for championing the rights of the Shiite underclass.

Khazali has also been described as a key leader in the al-Sadr movement's fight against U.S. troops in the city of Najaf in the summer of 2004 and later helped lead the Mahdi Army's battle against Sunni militants. That fight turned into civil war, and caused many Sunni Iraqis to view him as a man with blood on his hands.

At the end of 2006, Khazali and al-Sadr bickered over the cleric's decision to implement a freeze on armed operations at the start of the U.S. military troop buildup, according to government officials and al-Sadr supporters. The rupture would only become official after Khazali was arrested.

In addition to Khazali, several senior al-Sadr aides have left the movement to form their own political parties in the last two years. They cite their unhappiness with the current circle around al-Sadr and its lack of direction. (Fahhrideen, a special correspondent, reported from Najaf, Iraq. Raheem Salam and Usama Redha in Baghdad contributed to this report.)
Robin Hood, Batman, James Bond. Three timeless names that are amongst the most frequently portrayed characters in cinema history. Still, none hold a candle to Arthur Conan Doyle's legendary detective, Sherlock Holmes.

The Guinness Book of World Records consistently has him as the "most portrayed film character in history," with 75 actors playing the part in over 211 films. His most recent depiction in film comes in the form of director Guy Ritchie's "Sherlock Holmes," released this last Christmas.

The less I thought about Arthur Conan Doyle's original Holmes, the more I liked Ritchie's adaptation. The movie is filled with the director's trademark sensational visuals and editing techniques along with over-the-top characters, an engaging soundtrack and noteworthy performances.

The movie stays true to many of the traditional aspects of the novels, including the 221B Baker Street address and playful relationship between Holmes and Watson. All of the original Sherlock novels involved different situations that all follow the same story arc: bad guy arrives in London, no one can solve the case; Sherlock is hired, case closed. "Sherlock Holmes" again follows this plot line, but provides its own modern take through the use of impressive computer generated imaging and uniquely choreographed action sequences.

Sherlock Holmes has been played memorably by the likes of Charlton Heston, Michael Caine, Frank Langella, Roger Moore and Christopher Plummer. Robert Downey Jr., a phenomenal natural actor who was unfairly forgotten in the past decade, has turned in both blockbuster and Oscar-worthy performances in recent films like "Iron Man," "Tropic Thunder," "The Soloist" and "Zodiac." Downey's Sherlock has the skills and physique of an expert martial artist, ingenious methods of detection and a wonderful sense of humor.

In the film's entertaining opening sequence, our two heroes frantically make their way through the streets of London in a successful attempt to apprehend a menacing satanic lord named Lord Blackwood, played by British actor Mark Strong. Blackwood is sentenced to death by hanging and is eventually sealed in a coffin deep inside of a tomb, only to later reappear and continue terrorizing London. This of course causes Scotland Yard to again enlist in help from Holmes and Watson.

Each of our main protagonists must deal with their own personal problems, which come in the form of women. Holmes' love interest is see Sherlock, page 8.

Jude Law, Robert Downey Jr. and Rachel McAdams star in "Sherlock Holmes" (above from left). Below, Downey Jr. (left) plays the film's title role with Law as Holmes' sidekick Watson (right).

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**Themes of love and death intertwine in eerie novel**

Reading Between the Lines

Melinda Trueleg

Audrey Niffenegger, who recently became known for her work "The Time Traveler’s Wife," has triumphed again with her latest novel, "Her Fearful Symmetry." Set in London, Highgate Cemetery to be exact, Niffenegger weaves connections between notes, stories, and even ghosts. The novel revolves around the relationships between two sets of twins, a bond that is often thought of as one of the strongest and unbreakable. However, through Niffenegger reveals how these deep-seated bonds can be overthrown, we are left to question the relationships within the novel; if such a strong bond can be jilted, what are we to expect from other relationships? While the novel appears to be about symmetry and pattern, it is actually a story about finding individuality amidst the confusing and often dangerous boundaries of familiar, friendly, and even erotic, relationships.

The two American twins at the heart of this novel, Valentina and Julia, move into a flat willed to them by their recently departed Aunt Elsa (their mother’s estranged twin sister). The news of an estranged godparent (their mother’s estranged twin) has triumphed again with her latest novel, "Her Fearful Symmetry." Set in London, Highgate Cemetery to be exact, Niffenegger weaves connections between notes, stories, and even ghosts. The novel revolves around the relationships between two sets of twins, a bond that is often thought of as one of the strongest and unbreakable. However, through Niffenegger reveals how these deep-seated bonds can be overthrown, we are left to question the relationships within the novel; if such a strong bond can be jilted, what are we to expect from other relationships? While the novel appears to be about symmetry and pattern, it is actually a story about finding individuality amidst the confusing and often dangerous boundaries of familiar, friendly, and even erotic, relationships.

The American twins move into the flat. While the flat is on the border of a cemetery, it is not exactly a normal living situation. While the flat itself is beautiful and full of antiques and priceless books, the inhabitants of the building are normal. In the downstairs flat is Robert, Elsa’s former lover, who establishes a unique relationship with Valentina. In the upstairs flat is Martin, a man who suffers from obsessive compulsive disorder and agoraphobia. Martin is trying to piece his life together after his wife finally cannot take the circumstances of his diseases any more and leaves him and moves to her native country, Holland. Julia, driven by curiosity, develops a relationship with Martin while she is left more and more to her own devices while Valentina spends more time with Robert.

Finally, and most importantly, the most unique inhabitant of the building is the ghost of Elsa, who is trapped inside the flat. These relationships grow and develop. Niffenegger creates new bonds while others become weaker, forcing the reader to question the normal perceptions of what constitutes a strong relationship. By the end of the novel, the only character who has a clear sense of direction is the ghost of Elsa, throwing the other characters into a confusing search for identity and purpose that will surprise and confuse the reader up until the very end.

While "Her Fearful Symmetry" appears to be a novel about a pairing and symmetry, it is actually about how twisted our perceptions of the concepts of sisterhood, love and death actually are. Although there are still the familiar elements of love, coming of age and family, Niffenegger artfully presents them in ways that turn them on their heads, transforming this novel from a simple story about life and death into a statement on forging an identity that is actually quite extraordinary.

Melinda Trueleg is an English graduate student and Mustang Daily's book columnist.

**World Poetry Slam Champion headlines Another Type of Groove**

Leticia Rodriguez

Award-winning poet and World Poetry Slam Champion Joaquin Zihuatanejo will be the featured poet at the Multicultural Center's Another Type of Groove (ATOG) event tonight. Zihuatanejo has performed on HBO's Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry, and has won poetry slams nationally and internationally. This will be his first time performing at Cal Poly.

Zihuatanejo grew up in a barrio in east Dallas and later became a English and creative writing high school teacher. He has also published three poetry collections and has an album of spoken word poems called "Barrio Songs. A Spoken Word Collection" that he said are meant to be about the voices of his youth. Zihuatanejo said that a lot of his poetry has been influenced by his childhood and the people who surrounded him.

"I was blessed to sort of be raised in a setting that was kind of filled with poems. From my grandfather's garden to the wild field," he said. "I surrounded myself with storytellers as a child constantly."

The Multicultural Center's (MCC) coordinator Reneda Campbell wants students and community members who attend to draw inspiration from Zihuatanejo's depiction of barrio life and Chicano culture. "I just want students to hear a different perspective. I think a lot of times they don't experience that here. I want them to hear from someone of color."

Event coordinator Jesse Urrutia described Another Type of Groove as a way for students and community members to freely express themselves in an artful way. The event has two open-mic sessions for anyone wanting to share their poetry, and a disc jockey who plays music during the show's intermission.

Urrutia said: "It’s almost like a social relative tool to kind of move people and promote social change. It’s pretty amazing."

see Poet, page 8
Sherlock

continued from page 6

the decently and tough American firm Adams, played by Rachel McAdams ("The Notebook," "Wedding Crashers"), who is described as the only person to have ever outacted the detective. Watson's future wife, Mary Morstan, played by Kelly Reilly ("Pride and Prejudice"), seems a little in over her head and is being courted by Watson against Sherlock's wishes.

It's hard to imagine the performance of any of the actors in this film being much better. As mentioned before, Downey shines in the lead role. His performance has already garnered him a nomination in the upcoming Golden Globe awards, and through the use of the British accent he mastered back when he played Charlie Chaplin in an Oscar nominated role along with his signature sarcasm, it's easy to see why. Jude Law ("Cold Mountain," "The Talented Mr. Ripley") is equally humorous and well cast in his impressive role as the side-kick Watson, creating a supporting character that is almost as significant as the lead. The performance that will undoubtedly go relatively unnoticed is that of Mark Strong as the sinister villain Blackwood. A personal favorite of mine, Strong is one of England's rising stars, and with praised performances in "Nanucket," "Body of Lies" and Ritchie's last directing effort "RocknRolla," it won't be long until he is a household name.

Guy Ritchie's four most famous films, "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels," "Snatch," "Revolver," and "RocknRolla," all in essence have the same stories and are not too distinct from each other, which is not necessarily a bad thing. Many critics have acknowledged his talent but also have been doubtful of his abilities to stray away from the funny British gangster movies he has gained fame for. In my opinion, he has silenced those critics with "Sherlock Holmes." While it does share many similarities with the four before mentioned films, including his frequent use of slow motion sequences and recognizable faces, it definitely is in its own always different... in a good way.

Alex Peterson is a biological sciences sophomore and Mustang Daily news editor.

"Avatar" may gain top revenue crown

Russ Brit

Continued from page 1

LOS ANGELES — Maybe James Cameron really is the king of the world after all.

A dozen years after the director of "Titanic" made that famous exclamation at the Academy Awards — after claiming Oscar gold on top of box-office riches for the epic romance and highest-grossing movie of all time — Cameron just might top himself.

His first feature since "Titanic," the box-office smash "Avatar" could well be on pace to beat the $1.84 billion in worldwide revenue that the earlier film set during its run in late 1997 and early 1998.

Distributed by Twentieth-Century Fox, "Avatar" has the vaunted $1 billion mark in domestic and overseas revenue in just 17 days, a pace believed to be unprecedented, even for "Titanic." (Fox is owned by News Corp., which also is the parent company of the "Avatar" grosser, News Corp., also is the publisher of this report.)

The story of humans invading a distant planet to mine a plentiful supply of a rare mineral, "Avatar" has tongues wagging over its groundbreaking special effects. What's even more jaw-dropping for box-office watchers is the "Avatar," and of course, the power that the film has maintained.

"Avatar" didn't set any records during its first weekend in theaters after debuting Dec. 18. It brought in $77 million in domestic receipts, healthy though not astounding.

It lost less than 2 percent of that business Christmas weekend, and dipped only another 10 percent during New Year's weekend. Most films are considered to be healthy if they manage anything less than a 50 percent drop from their first weekend to their second. Dipping just more than 11 percent from the first to the third is unheard of, according to Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office analysis for Hollywood.com.

"This is just unprecedented," he said. "I had to do a double take. I thought it was a misprint." Dergarabedian, however, isn't ready to hand the all-time box-office title to "Avatar" just yet. "Second place is guaranteed. I'm not sure about first place.

"Avatar" is pretty much assured of beating the second-place holder, the 2003 release "Lord of the Rings: Return of the King" from Warner Bros., the studio's New Line Cinema unit. That film made $1.13 billion over a four-month run. As of Monday, "Avatar" had reached an estimated $1.02 billion in just 17 days.

But it's a big, $200 million leap from "Lord of the Rings" to "Titanic." Dergarabedian said "Avatar" still would have to claim the worldwide box-office that "Titanic" held. Second-place film, "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" got due during its three-month run. Today's box office flame out much faster than they did when "Titanic" was released.

Still, the legs of "Avatar" are much stronger than any film in recent history. "Avatar" has already exceeded the $1 billion box-office tally from the most recent biggest hit, "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen," and another 43.2 percent in its third,

"Avatar" also enters what is traditionally a kickstarter month for film releases after the Christmas rush, which could work in its favor.

"It certainly has a chance to do it this year," Gray said. "It probably stands the best chance of any picture since 'Titanic.' But it's too early to say for sure. 'Avatar' is only playing during the holidays."

One thing is certain, Gray says. While "Avatar" is unable to match "Titanic" revenue record, it will be tough, and there is little hope for "Titanic" in attendance. Ticket prices were $13.85 in the late 1990's, and there is no way "Avatar" will exceed that.

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America's blessings should inspire change in the world

I would like to wish you a beloved Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I trust your winter break was well spent with family and friends. I was certainly blessed this break. Though our celebration was simple — healthy conversation over a delicious home-cooked meal — I am humbled to consider the condition of life outside the civilized world.

Even in the wake of recent terrorist attacks, the United States is stable and secure, unlike countries such as Sudan, South Africa and Somalia. We are safe, unlike these countries as well as others like them that exist in a state of instability. The Marxist concept that people must work to cut at the most primitive level, true. Without real and relevant motivation, there is no incentive to work. Fortunately, in capitalism, this motivation is raised to a higher level by personal property.

In our society, motivation to be involved in government process has been lost to prime-time television and replaced by lifetime politicians who promise to solve our problems with increasing government size. As a culture, our drive to obtain personal property, financial freedom and make a positive impact on humanity has been substantially impacted by the comfort of our recliners. Inconceivable that our government was built on the very principles of hard work and personal responsibility we seem to despise today.

As we enter the new year, I urge you to reflect on the words of G.K. Chesterton, who, when asked to comment on the primary problem with the human condition responded, "I am." With this simple response, Chesterton cleverly pointed out mankind's imperfect nature. It follows logically, that if we exist in a state of imperfection, man will not do good, but remain wallowing in imperfection. Therefore, I challenge you to answer Kenneth's great call: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." by turning off your TVs and putting away your iPads. Fight for stability in Darfur, donate against hunger and inspire the intellect.

Nathan Tao is a computer science junior and Mustang Daily political columnist.

I applied to Cal Poly because it's close to home and a great school, but one of my problems with it is that it's so far from Orange County/Los Angeles. And now the dean has confirmed my fears are justified, "they are not aware of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo." That's a pretty powerful statement, a statement you probably don't want to make if you want people to go to your school.

And Robert, it will never be like those places. Plus, UCLA doesn't even have a undergraduate school of business.

—Best Response to "Offensivals College of Business looks to bolster reputation."

NOTE: The Mustang Daily features select comments that are written in response to articles posted online. Not all responses are printed, the Mustang Daily prints comments that are coherent and foster intelligent discussion on a given subject.
Alice gives some good advice for us all.

Edited by Will Shortz

**The New York Times Crossword**

No. 1202

**Across**
1. witch burrito
4. In an ask, say
5. Monopoly maker
14. Actress Lupino
15. Debtor’s worry
17. Bill Gates
19. Fuddy-dud
21. “That’s a joke
23. Turkish V I. P
24. Lead role on
25. Sidewalk stand
28. Banshees’
31. Kojak’s rank
34. Does dock work
39. Comedic soldier
40. “Wiseguy” actor
41. Sections of
42. Advice to the
43. Ten
44. Like Steve Jobs
45. Carrier with a
46. FIFA Player of
47. Words to estate
48. Dodgers
49. Big Indian
50. Like a good deal for both sides
51. Man
52. Fr. holy woman
53. Brian who
54. Miss World USA
55. Trivia or
googol
57. Game with 32
65. Fr. holy woman
66. Friends of “What’s My
67. Prefix with skid
68. Big
69. Attached, in a
70. New driver, typically
71. Madame

**Down**
1. Beard in a jar;
2. Dropping cause in the
3. Salt, symbolically
4. Nancy’s friend in
5. Get out into the
6. Sometimes-split
7. Son of Seth
8. Start of an
9. Mother of Peer
10. Hard to make out
11. Composer
12. History.
13. Workplace
14. Item often worn
15. Fluffy-diel
16. Snarling canine
17. Scale of seashells
18. More than just
20. Primary strategy
21. Kojak’s rank
22. Adams who co-
23. “Back to the Future” bully
24. “Weeeply” actor
25. Sections of
26. Like Steve Jobs
27. Nila companion
28. Chinese New Year’s
dish
29. Pastoral piece
30. “Back to the
31. Like a good deal for both sides
32. Anne who
taunted Group
33. Pastoral piece
34. Does dock work
35. “Back to the Future” bully
36. Pikake garland
37. Actress Carter
38. Blotter abbr
39. Comedic soldier
40. “Wiseguy” actor
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googol
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The thing I'm most pleased about from the season is the fact that our talk now is about 'we can and we will'... It's not, 'Oh well, this happened, here we go again.' That kind of B.S. It's, 'We can and we will.' That's really a big deal.

— Tom Cable
Oakland Raiders head coach

Wrestling
continued from page 16

Champions, a 18-4 record this season, is a two-time Pac-10 champion and placed seventh in the 2008 NCAA Championships to earn All-Americans honors.
Both Novachkov brothers and Pami are 3-0 in dual meets so far this season.
Russell 174-pounder Ryan DesRoches, 21-6 on the year with 14 pins, is ranked for the third time this season by D1CollegeWrestling.net, moving up two positions to No. 23. He placed second in the Reno Tournament of Champions, fourth in the Missouri Open and won five of seven matches at the Las Vegas Invitational.

In the Pac-10 individual rankings released Tuesday, Filip Novachkov is ranked No. 1 at 141 pounds, Boris Novachkov is ranked No. 2 at 133, Chase Pami is No. 2 at 157, Ryan DesRoches is ranked No. 2 at 174 and two Mustangs are ranked No. 3 — Eric Maldonado at 149 and Ryan Smith at 197.

Cal Poly (3-2), which fell to top-10 teams Oklahoma and Oklahoma State last week, hosts North Dakota State (2-3) for its first home meet of the season Saturday at 5 p.m. in Mott Gym.
Wrestling makes national noise

Despite losing a pair of dual meets last week, the Cal Poly wrestling team inched upward in the national polls, ranked Nos. 14, 16, 19 and 21 this week.

Coach John Azevedo's Mustangs are ranked four positions higher than last week according to Win Magazine (No. 14). The Mustangs are also ranked No. 16 in the InterMat tournament rankings, No. 19 as voted by the National Wrestling Coaches Association and upgrade spots to No. 21 by DCCollegeWrestling.net.

Cal Poly is ranked No. 31 in Win Magazine's tournament powder index.

Four Mustangs are ranked in their respective weight classes.

Junior fullback Jordan Yocum rushed for 467 yards off 115 carries last year with one touchdown.

The junior established career highs with 27 carries and 130 yards at Ohio on Sept. 19 and added 119 yards on 24 trips against Montana on Oct. 10. For his fourth-career 100-yard game, Yocum also has six catches for 87 yards in the 2009 season.

As a sophomore in 2008, he rushed for 353 yards and three touchdowns, including two scores against Idaho State. Yocum also returned two kickoffs and notched eight total tackles (five solo) on defense.

Junior fullback Jordan Yocum rushed for 467 yards off 115 carries last year with one touchdown.

Mustang 141-pounder Boris Novachkov is ranked No. 5 by DCCollegeWrestling.net, Amateur Wrestling News and InterMat and No. 8 by Win Magazine. A junior, Novachkov was an NCAA qualifier a year ago who placed third in the Missouri Open and is 15-4 on the year.

At 133 pounds, sophomore Chase Pami is ranked No. 5 by DCCollegeWrestling.net, Amateur Wrestling News and InterMat and No. 8 by Win Magazine. Pami knocked off 18-1-1 after capturing the title at 133 in both the Missouri Open and Las Vegas Invitational and placing second in the Reno Tournament of Champions, was an NCAA qualifier in 2008 and redshirted the 2009-09 campaign.

Both Novachkov, wrestlers have one third-place Pac-10 finish to their credit.

Cable optimistic for next season

The former No. 1 overall pick JaMarcus Russell was benched this season after the starting the first nine games.

Steve Corkran

Cable optimist in times

When Raiders coach Tom Cable assembled his team for the last time this season, it wasn't long before the talk turned to next season, when he expects the groundwork laid in the past two years to reap dividends.

Cable didn't want his time talking about winning back-to-back games, surpassing the five-victory mark for the first time since 2002 or just showing some improvement.

"Next year, there can only be one goal," Cable told his players Monday, "that's to be a playoff team." Cable felt as if he had a playoff-caliber team this past season were it not for the substandard play of quarterback JaMarcus Russell.

Impressive victories over the Philadelphia Eagles, Cincinnati Bengals, Pittsburgh Steelers and Denver Broncos bolstered Cable's claim. However, those wins were overshadowed by losses to the Kansas City Chiefs, Cleveland Browns and Washington Redskins, none of whom won more than five games.

Such better-shelter play, in addition to their 5-11 record, suggests the Raiders just aren't talented enough to be a successful team.

"Ever the optimist," Cable sees things differently. He views the inconstancy as a sign of a team learning to win, one shedding the layers of pessimism spawned from seven straight double-digit losses since 2002.

Before long, he says, the close