Obama pushes for health care reform

Thomas Fitzgerald

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — President Obama sought to inject a note of urgency into his push for health care legislation during a rally Monday at Arcadia University in Glenside, Pa., blasting the insurance industry for recent huge premium increases while hitting Washington politicians for dithering.

Shaking his jacket before a crowd of 1,800 in the university's gym, the president made a passionate plea for public support. He dismissed those, including members of his own party, who say overhauling the health care system could cost Democrats their majorities in Congress in the Nov. 2 midterm elections.

"We've been talking about this for a century ... If not now, when? If not us, who?" Obama said. "I don't know how health care reform will play politically, but I know it's the right thing to do."

Obama slammed Republicans for their so far unanimous opposition to the Democrats' proposals, saying they had failed to act when they controlled Congress.

"I got all my Republican colleagues out there saying, well, no, no, no, we want to focus on things like cost," the president said. "You had 10 years. What happened? What were you doing?"

He said insurers should no longer be able to deny coverage for preexisting conditions, drop coverage when a policyholder gets sick, or jack up premiums. "We allow the insurance industry to run wild in this country," Obama said.

The health care package stalled in Congress after Democrats lost their 60th seat in the Senate in a Massachusetts special election, and amid growing concern about the potential $1 trillion cost. Opponents say the legislation would amount to a government takeover.

Under scoring the passions aroused by the issue, about 200 conservative activists from the tea-party movement protested outside the Arcadia gym, while a smaller group of proponents competed with them in chanting and waving signs.

Obama's brief campaign-style trip came at the beginning of a pivotal week, as Democratic leaders ready the legislation for a final vote. The Congressional Budget Office is expected to release a fiscal analysis of the bill later this week, and Obama is scheduled to travel tomorrow to Missouri, an electorally important swing state like Pennsylvania.

Under Democrats' strategy, the House is to pass the version of the legislation the Senate approved last year, then vote on a separate bill that modifies some provisions. The Senate would then take up the House bill, and both chambers would pass a compromise that both sides can accept.

The staff works about a year in advance with the departments to plan the yearly schedules that include every class and every section offered by the school. But their responsibilities are primarily behind-the-scenes. Susan Olivas, the interim associate registrar of curriculum and scheduling and the scheduling office supervisor, said her office is student-oriented.

"Our job really is to plan each quarter to give students as many class options as possible while dealing with instructors' needs," Olivas said.

The scheduling office has no initial influence over the classes that are offered every quarter — their work depends on the requests of about 86 departments across campus.

"In February, the academic department schedulers are finishing their schedules for next fall based on their budgets and present and projected enrollment," Agostini said.

The staff works about a year ahead with the departments to plan the upcoming quarters. After each department submits the classes they think current proposals don't do enough.

In favor of health care reform proposals now being discussed

 Favor 41%
 Oppose 47%
 Not sure 11%

In general, Do you favor or oppose the health care reform proposals now being discussed?

The total in favor

 Favor 59%
 Oppose 31%
 Not sure 10%

In favor of health care overhaul

 Favor 41%
 Oppose 47%
 Not sure 11%

Of those who are opposed

 Favor reform, but think current proposals don't go far enough 37%
 Oppose reform and think current proposals go too far 54%
 Not sure 10%

In favor of health care overhaul

 Favor 59%
 Oppose 31%
 Not sure 10%

NOTE: Figures don’t total 100 percent due to round off error.

Source: McClatchy Poll

TOMORROW: Sunny High 63° Low 46°
 Jobs tickling up in many states; jobless rates, too

Kevin G. Hall

WASHINGTON — Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia posted gains in employment in January, the Labor Department reported Wednesday, providing further evidence that the economy is slowly gaining momentum.

The state-by-state January employment report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics clarifies and deepens the national employment data released last week, which suggested that employers have stopped firing workers and are starting to hire.

In January, the BLS said, California led all states in employment growth with 32,000 net new jobs. Illinois and New York state followed with respective net gains of 26,000 and 25,500, and the state of Washington followed with 18,900. Eighteen states saw employment decrease, and one state saw no change.

"The fact that you have three important and largely service-based economies showing gains may tell us that we have a broader recovery emerging, and this may be a bit of a bright light here," said Steve Chalise, a managing director at forecasting firm Moody's Economy.com.

"And the economy is rebounding, but it also suggests that the national jobless rate could rise again," Chalise said. Michigan again led all states with an unemployment rate of 14.3 percent in January, followed by Nevada and Rhode Island at 13 percent and 12.7 percent, respectively. South Carolina followed at 12.6 percent and California at 12.5 percent.

The jobless rates in South Carolina and California reflected contemporary record highs, as did the rates in Florida (11.9 percent), North Carolina (11.1 percent) and Georgia (10.4 percent). On a brighter note, 25 states posted jobless rates that were sharply lower than the national average. North Dakota had the lowest unemployment rate, at 5.4 percent, followed by Nebraska and South Dakota, which respectively had rates of 4.6 percent and 4.8 percent.

The most positive news in Wednesday's report was the indication of new hiring in large, economically important states. "At least until recently, some of the larger states were some of the weaker economies, in general," Chalise said. "The recovery was really strong in the South and Midwest, and those weaker economies are starting to catch up with the rest of the country.

"The recession there was very shallow in some of these states, and it recently concluded that at the end of last year, 20 states had emerged from recession. Economists overwhelmingly think that the national recession has ended, but the formal declaration of that comes months later from the National Bureau of Economic Research."

Wednesday's news was a bit darker on state unemployment rates. Thirty states and the nation's capital reported an uptick in their jobless rates. Only nine states saw jobless rates fall, and 11 saw no change. The national unemployment rate stood at 9.7 percent in January and February.

"The unemployment rate is rising in many states because workers who gave up and exited the labor force are seeking employment again as the economy resumes growing. That means there's greater confidence that the economy is rebounding, but it also

Scheduling

they want to offer, based on their needs and budgets, the scheduling office then allocates classrooms and time slots.

Some professors often rush to blame the office for huge class sections that can affect how they are taught material, but the reality is that every quarter, there are roughly 110 available classrooms on campus and about 4,100 class sections that need a space to be held.

When there is a high demand for a certain class, the sections will usually be larger. Also, when there are not enough resources for every section, the scheduling office will combine class sections to accommodate more students. Large classes are harder to find a room for, since there are only a few rooms with a capacity of more than 100 on campus.

"It's not the perfect scenario for anyone, but it's what has to be done. I think it must be hardest on the teachers," events scheduler Jill St. John said.

Agostini said she believes the scheduling office is also held responsible for classes scheduled at inconvenient times because they "don't want to protest what the teachers,

The scheduling office also tries to schedule classes at times that accommodate the special requests of teachers and give them time to prepare.

"The most difficult part of scheduling classes is when teachers request class times that deviate from the standard time pattern, but if they really need a special time, we try our best to work it out," Agostini said. "Sometimes we also get last-minute requests from teachers to change rooms, which are harder to work with."

Some professors feel frustrated about the class options they have to choose from since they don't understand the difficulty of the scheduling office's job.

"Our office works very hard to understand the scheduling office's job," said Brian Kennedy, who teaches French and used to be the modern languages and literatures department head. "We have directly involved in the process between departments and the scheduling office.

"The department head takes teacher requests and arranges the 'ideal' schedule to send to the scheduling office. Sometimes the office sends back requests saying they couldn't be accommodated, but they give us no other options," Kennedy said. "I think it's better not to protest what scheduling gives us. It's a tricky process for them, I don't know how they do it all."

The scheduling office is not involved at all with decisions about final dates, Agostini said. The office staff is informed of the state requirements only two months before the school year begins. Final dates are required in the schedule office as well, and the office staff has become used to rearranging to get their work done.

"We don't hear about any final dates until July, and it's something that can't really be negotiated," Agostini said.

Working a year in advance leaves time for the scheduling office to make adjustments as well. The staff is prepared to deal with sudden conflicts with the departments and phone calls from students and teachers during the busiest times of the year. However, the staff said specific scheduling questions are better addressed to the department schedulers.

"The first two weeks, the weeks during registration and the week before finals tend to be the times..."
Office

we receive the most phone calls about schedules," Agostini said. "Most calls from students are complaints about needing bigger classrooms and teachers tend to complain about class times."

When the staff thinks about how funding for the school may affect scheduling in the future, they are just as anxious as students, Agostini said. "We will hear about next year's budget in May, but even then, nothing is final. We can hope and begin to plan for the best, but the truth is we really are at the mercy of the budget."

St. John said. "We're willing to work with whatever happens."

The future of the class scheduling office is never certain, they are at the mercy of the budget," St. John said. "While most of their responsibilities depend on decisions made in other areas of the school, work in the university class scheduling office is never done. However, the staff has long since found a structure to handle all the details.

"We all really work well together and have each other's backs if someone needs help," St. John said. "Only time will tell what will happen with scheduling in the future, but we're willing to work with whatever happens."

Obama

continued from page 1

to finance the overhaul would slow economic recovery and prove unpopular with their constituents. Rep. Jason Alonzo, D-Pa., of suburban Pittsburgh, who voted no when the House passed its initial health care bill in November, has expressed concerns about the latest proposal.

"We're all very concerned about abortion language in the measure that could cost the support of some Democrats who oppose abortion rights," Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper, D-Pa., has said.

Conservatives also persist over abortion language in the measure that could cost the support of some Democrats who oppose abortion rights. Rep. Patrick Murphy, D-Pa., a member of the Blue Dog caucus of locally conservative Democrats, votes for the House bill last year, and faces a strong challenge this fall. A spokeswoman said Murphy would read the final language of the new proposal before making a commitment.

Obama expressed little patience yesterday for what he called the "sport" of politics. He cited letters he has received from cancer survivors burdened with debt and from ordinary people priced out of the market for health insurance, worried about putting their families at risk.

"So what should I tell these Americans?" Obama said. "That Washington is not sure how it will play in November? That we should walk away?"

He said it was time for people to Congress to "make a decision" and take a stand. Obama urged his listeners to knock on doors, make phone calls and support the overhaul.

Sen. Arlen Specter, D-Pa., who accompanied Obama to Arcadia along with other state Democrats, said later Obama's remarks there were "the most fiery I've seen him since the early campaign."

Gredlock in Congress over health care has raised the stakes for the Democratic Party, Specter said. "The bill is really a test of whether the Congress — whether we can govern," he said.

Rep. Jim Gerlach, a Republican who represents the neighboring South Congressional District, disagreed. "The legislation taxes business owners and individuals too much over 10 years and puts too much power in the hands of government," Gerlach said in a conference call after the event.

Obama spoke before a cheering, foot-stomping crowd with a large number of Arcadia students. Some of the biggest cheers came when he touted a provision in his proposal that young people could be covered under their parents' plans until age 26.

"That resonated with Jackie Sontz, 20, a chemistry major whose brother, 22, lost his job and his insurance. "I don't think he understands the severity of not having insurance," Sontz said. And, she added, "I'm afraid that's going to happen to me. I'm not 100 percent sure I'm getting a job when I graduate."

After the event, Trisha Urban, 33, of Hamburg, Pa., hurried out to her car in a race to get there before her daughter, Cora, 13 months, began to cry.

"My husband died on the day she was born," said Urban, who had been invited to attend by Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa. She and her husband, Andrew Urban, had insurance, she said, but when he was diagnosed with a heart condition and started needing regular medical care, their coverage was dropped.

They struggled to keep paying the bills, but Andrew Urban decided to skip his last doctor's appointment because they couldn't pay for it. Less than a month later, on Feb. 5, 2009, Trisha Urban found her husband unconscious in their home as he suffered into labor. She was unable to revive him.

"If he could have gone to the doctor, I'm sure he wouldn't have made a world of difference."

Jane Von Beigun and Kristine E. Holmes contributed to this article.

We've been talking about this for a century ... If not now, when? If not us, who?

—President Obama

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"So what should I tell these Americans?" Obama said. "That since the early campaign."
Wolves may have killed teacher in Alaskan village

James Halpin

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Authorities were in an Alaska Peninsula village this week investigating whether a 52-year-old school teacher, found dead off a road leading out of town, was killed in a wolf attack, according to state and local officials.

The body of Candice Berner of Slippery Rock, Pa., was discovered Monday evening off a roughly 7-mile gravel road leading to the Chignik Lake airstrip.

Berner’s father, Bob Berner, reached in Pennsylvania on Tuesday night, said Alaska State Troopers told the family their daughter had been killed in an “animal attack, possibly a wolf attack.” Troopers told him it was highly unusual and still under investigation, with the body on its way to Anchorage for an autopsy, he said.

“I don’t think there’s any decision yet as to whether it was predation before or after death,” Woods said. “In other words, the (woman) might have died of something else and wolves might have found the body.”

An interim special education teacher based in Perryville, Berner had just arrived in Chignik this week to work at the school there, said Lake Peninsula Borough School District Chief Operating Officer Rick Luthi, who is in King Salmon.

Berner had apparently been killed in the past few hours, he said.

Local residents have been concerned about recent wolf activity in the area, but she probably didn’t know that because she had just gotten to town, Luthi said.

Just a few hours later, about 6:30 p.m., someone on a four-wheeler came across some blood along the road and discovered the remains had been pulled into tall brush, maybe 10 to 15 yards off the road, Luthi said.

Berner had apparently been killed within the past few hours, he said.

Chignik Lake, with a population of roughly 100, is on the south side of the Alaska Peninsula 13 miles from Chignik and 474 miles southwest of Anchorage.

Unlimited wolf trapping is permitted in the area from Oct. 1 to April 30. Hunting regulations allow 10 wolves per person per day from Aug. 10 to May 25, said Fish and Game spokeswoman Jennifer Yuhlas.

“These are regulations set by the Board of Game and the liberal allowance of harvest denotes (an) incentivized program to harvest wolves in that Unit,” Yuhlas wrote in an e-mail.

Fish and Game officials would not comment on Berner’s cause of death or say whether predation by another animal, like a bear, might have been involved in the case of death, saying the investigation is ongoing and that they are awaiting the results of the autopsy.

Spokeswoman Megan Peters said the body was found on regional corporation land within the borders of the Alaska Peninsula Wildlife Refuge and therefore was not in federal jurisdiction, said Bruce Woods, spokesman for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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Wolves

continued from page 4

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There is an "extremely high" density of brown bears in the Chugach Lake area, but it is somewhat rare for bears to be out, said retied Fish and Game biologist Mark McNay, who has studied wolf attacks in North America.

It is prime mating season for wolves — a time when a lot of individual wolves could be out looking for mates and when young wolves recently separated from their packs could be wandering, he said.

"Those types of animals may be more likely to attack because they're naive, they haven't ever associated with people," McNay said. "There have been some cases where those types of wolves have chased and bit people." 

Wolf attacks on domestic animals in Alaska are not uncommon. A pack of wolves, at least some of them rabid, killed about a half-dozen sled dogs in Marshall in October 2007. Beginning a month later, Anchor age saw a series of wolf encounters that left three dogs dead and several others wounded. Wildlife officials at the time speculated the pack, led by a hungry leader, was targeting easy meals.

But violent encounters with people are more rare. Last September, a rabid wolf attacked a hiker along the Kuskokwim River near Kalskag, biting the man in his leg before being shot to death. The hiker lived.

In April 2000, a radio-collared wolf repeatedly bit a 6-year-old boy playing with a group of elders at a logging camp northwest of Yakutat. The boy was not seriously injured.

Then in July 2006, a wolf attacked a schoolteacher walking off the Dalton Highway, along the Arctic Circle. The woman suffered cuts and gashes to her legs but survived.

McNay, who now lives in Kansas, is the author of a 2002 study published by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game that examined 80 wolf-human encounters in North America, nearly half of which involved elements of aggression among the subjects.

The cases in which wolves are most aggressive are the cases involving wolves that have become habituated to people, he said.

"There's only been one other case of a fatal wolf attack by a healthy, wild wolf in North America, and that happened in 2005 in northern Saskatchewan," McNay said. "It is extremely rare. There have been other cases, of course, of wolves behaving aggressively toward people.

"The frequency of these cases seems to have increased in the past decade or so."

FEELING SICK?

Think you'll miss class?

Wolves

continued from page 4

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Clunkers
continued from page 5

cars, Fish said.
Maritz’s study did not change minds at Edmunds.com, the popular car buying Web site that analyzed Cash for Clunkers sales last year. Edmunds.com estimated only 125,000 incremental sales from the program.
Edmunds.com chief executive Jeremy Stetcyl said his firm examined auto sales data and patterns from last year, while Maritz surveyed consumers.
“I think what’s missing from their study is what would have happened without Cash for Clunkers,” he said.

State

SAN LUIS OBISPO (MCT) — An autopsy was scheduled for yesterday to determine the cause of death of a man who was found dead Monday afternoon in Prieto Creek near Isla Loma Park in Prieto Beach. Police on Tuesday did not identify the man, though they said he is a local resident. Prieto Beach Cmdr. Jake Miller said police have received no reports of missing persons matching his description, nor have other agencies in the county.
A hobbyist photographer came across the man’s body about 3:20 p.m. It was 80-100 yards east of the Highway 1 overpass at Prieto Creek, Miller said. He was described as white and in his 40s. The body had been in the creek for more than two days, but less than two weeks, Miller said.

SAN FRANCISCO (MCT) — This year’s Atlantic hurricane season could be “extreme” with several major storms hitting the U.S., AccuWeather.com meteorologists warned Wednesday.
“This year has the chance to be an extreme season,” Joe Bastardi, chief long-range meteorologist and hurricane forecaster at AccuWeather.com, said in a statement. “It is certainly much more like 2005 than 2004 as far as the overall threat to the United States’ East and Gulf coasts.”

National

CHICAGO (MCT) — A judge on Wednesday accepted a request from a man convicted of a 1978 murder to drop much of the controversial evidence pointing to his innocence that was dug up by Northwestern University journalism students.
Judge Diane Gordon Cannon agreed to drop the evidence from a motion for a new trial filed by Anthony McKinney.
She asked that McKinney sign an affidavit stating he understood the consequences, explaining that he is being treated in a psychiatric ward.
McKinney was convicted of the 1978 shotgun slaying of a security guard and has spent more than 30 years in prison for a crime Northwestern journalism students and their professor say he did not commit.

WASHINGTON (MCT) — The Senate Wednesday is expected to pass a $50 billion package aimed at helping jobless people get more benefits and businesses hire more workers, but only after controversy over the bill’s cost and impact.
Some experts hailed the measure as an important stimulus. “We’re starting to talk real money,” said Chad Stone, chief economist at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

International

IRAN (MCT) — Oil major Royal Dutch Shell and oil-trading giant Vitol have suspended gasoline sales to Iran, as policy makers explore fresh options in an effort to curb the country’s nuclear program.
Royal Dutch Shell spokesman Rainer Winnenriedt told MarketWatch that the oil major is not exporting gasoline to Iran. He declined to say how much gasoline Shell has typically sold to Iran, or how long ago the company stopped selling gasoline to the country.
BP, Reliance Industries and others have stopped selling fuel to Iran prior to Shell’s move.

EGYPT (MCT) — Egypt’s top cleric, Sheik Mohammed Sayed Tantawi, a controversial figure throughout the Islamic world, died of a heart attack Wednesday while on a visit to Saudi Arabia. He was 81.
Tantawi was the “grand sheik” of al Azhar, Sunni Islam’s principal center of scholarship and faith, a millennium-old institution that President Barack Obama described as a “beacon of Islamic learning” during his trip to Cairo in June.
Critics, however, faulted Tantawi for his close ties with former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Briefs

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"Side Show" invites students to come look at the freaks

Sean Hannahan

From the eerie start, "Side Show," a four-time Tony nominated musical opening tonight at Cal Poly, is disturbingly intimate as the lights gradually illuminate a stoic crowd of carnie-staring at the audience, inviting them to "come look at the freaks."

Set around a circus company — including the familiar acts of fortune-teller, bearded lady, contortionist and even a fat lady — the show explores the true story of conjoined-sisters, Daisy and Violet Hilton, who struggle to identify their own lives apart from 'circuit freaks' and maneuver into vaudeville superstardom during the 1930s.

"Side Show" examines how society exploits people for wrong reasons.

"I have always been very sensitive to people with disabilities, the struggles they are faced with, the amazing things they are capable of," said Raquel Jarman, a theater senior who is directing the show for her senior project.

But the process for the Hilton sisters doesn't develop in Rogers and Hammerstein fashion, Jarman said, as it was originally written in 1977 by Henry Krieger (music) and Bill Russell (book and lyrics).

A couple of entrepreneurs rescue the sisters from an abusive, drunk boss and make them famous, but at a cost more than the group bargains for — a theme Jarman has seen in her own life.

"Nobody in their right mind would direct a musical (as a senior project)," Jarman said. "I haven't slept more than four hours in weeks."

Jarman, music senior Morgan Hunt, along with choreographer, theater junior Natalie Roy, have been working with the cast of 16 and a small orchestra since December. Complicating the process, the group held rehearsals in the computer science building while the Cal Poly Black Box theatre — The Davidson Music Center, room 212, where the show will take place through Sunday — was occupied by "Julius (Caesar)" rehearsal and class lectures.

Moving into the actual performance space was critical to bring all the elements together in front of an audience — an opportunity the actors benefited from at Monday evening's "dress-rehersal" rehearsal, Jarman said.

The creative team had to go through the appropriate channels for department approval and pay a high price for royalties. Just for permission, they had to pay $11,000, but they had help from the department and family members.

All in all, the senior project is more than some expected it to be.

"It's much better than I expected it would be during the first several weeks," said biochemistry and chemistry senior Victoria Doroski, who plays Violet. "The cast is extremely talented and the show has taken shape the way it needed to."

For the audience, there is a heavy pull into the world of the freaks. There is a natural, obvious connection to Daisy (theater senior Ashley Merchak) and Violet, two sympathetic but outlandish characters who leave the audience distant but concerned.

"The show shuffles between turmoil and tranquility, constantly in contrast," Doroski said.

The love interest, Buddy Foster (theater junior Max Sopkin), finds himself in the same predicament, he can love her as she loves him, again a feat more than what he bargains for. The writer toys with the audience, asking them to connect with Foster's quirks, humorous charm, only to later disregard his own struggle to accept Violet and her other half Daisy's interest, Jerry Connor (music graduate Rory Frater), finds himself in the same predicament.

"Daisy and Violet are very two-dimensional. You see the girls in black and white, but it's the witnessing of the gray — the struggle, the hope that is in these two," Merchak said.

But the show is more about what the audience sees in itself by looking through the lens of the characters.

see Side Show, page 11...
SLO International Film Festival
to take over downtown Friday

March 12-21, 2010
San Luis Obispo International Film Festival

The festival will feature a variety of film styles, from short films and documentaries to one shot in SLO County.

Will Taylor

Actors, directors, producers and movie junkies will flock to town to participate in 10 days of movies, events and workshops for the 16th annual San Luis Obispo International Film Festival on Friday.

The festival is bigger and better than ever, festival director Wendy Edson said. She estimated the festival attendance has doubled since she took over the directorial job in 2007. About 8,000 people are expected to attend, actors such as Josh Brolin and Alan Arkin.

"It's really starting to feel like a real film festival," she said.

Events range from movie showings, to question-and-answer sessions with filmmakers, to wine tastings and musical events.

Movie showings are the main focus. Filmmakers such as Ash Adams, a writer, director, producer and actor, who, at the age of 18, acted at the Little Theatre in San Luis Obispo, will show their film Adams' film "Once Fallen," about the filmmakers and putting together an arena so that they come together and talk about film without the politics and without the pressure to say things or do things (from Hollywood). I think San Luis Obispo is offering that sort of platform."

Director and actor Aaron Metchik, whose film "10 Years Later" was set entirely on the Central Coast with a mixture of Los Angeles and local cast and crew, will open the festival on Friday as a world premiere. Metchik lived on the Central Coast from age 6 to 18 and said it was great to come back to film and then get the opportunity to show his film.

"I have a strong connection to the area and the people there and so many people were involved, I'm happy to show what we have accomplished," he said. "The Central Coast support was very important to allow us to film there."

Metchik said the San Luis Obispo area was perfect for his film because of the small towns and beautiful surroundings. He said the crew felt much more like a family because they were on location and their outside doors weren't there to drag people away. The film was meant to take place in "small town anywhere America."

The beautiful and unparalleled surroundings are one thing supposed set San Luis Obispo apart from other film festivals. Lindsey Miller, director of marketing for the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce, said the festival is meant not only to highlight movies and the people who make them, but the San Luis Obispo area as well.

"I think the great thing about the event is the focus is on unique venues in unique ways," Miller said. "Events are held at ranches, wineries and theaters like the historic Fremont. It's a great way of showcasing not only movies but the county as well."

The influx of movie-goers to San Luis Obispo gives a significant boost to the local economy, Miller said. March is considered off-season in town, and hotels, restaurants and stores are happy to see the business.

"These are people traveling with money," Miller said. "They're people that are coming and participating in what SLO has to offer; they're spending money in the town."

The event is one of the biggest gatherings not only in the city of San Luis Obispo, but in the county as well. Tourism is the number one money-maker in the city, Miller said.

Miller also noted that the geographical location of San Luis Obispo is perfect for the festival. People can make a short weekend-end trip from Los Angeles or San Francisco without flying.

Film tickets and information about the festival are available online at www.slofilmfest.org.

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Beer column

Beer columnist enjoys his final exbeerience

Seefeld stuff stuff stuff. What's wrong? I'll tell you what's wrong. This is my last beer column. The last time I will pen the Beer Me section of your Thursday newspaper. I know, I know; I'm going to miss you too.

Also, the end is here — I am graduating. I would quote a bunch of songs that talk about new beginnings and changes but that would be lame and weird. So I won't.

First of all, I embark on the last part of my journey through beers, I would just like to say it has been a great exbeerience with you all.

Enough of that. There's so little to do and so much time. Wait, scratch that — reverse it. This week I went back into the archives of this column online in search of beer tasting requests from readers.

For the most part, I've got them covered with the following three beers. Sadly, I was not able to try the Costco's variety pack, for if I did, I would very likely not be able to finish the column in any coherent fashion. What I did decide to try were beers from Unibroue, our local Downtown Brew and the brave and uncanny Dogfish Head.

Alright, let's get started. The first beer I tried was the Monster Mash from Downtown Brew. This is quite a dark beer, that's for sure. It has a very distinct flavor — almost overpowering. I might describe it as coffee beans salvaged from the wreckage of Cafe San Luis (R.I.P.) Not as chocolate as I was hoping, but it was a little late in the season, so maybe the batch is a little old and the smoky/coffee flavor takes over.

Next up is the Punkin Ale. This was the first beer produced by Dogfish Head and was actually made before Dogfish Head even opened. It was created for a pumpkin recipe contest held at the annual Punkin Chunkin. What's this Punkin Chunkin thing?

We'll see. It's a grand event where people get together and launch pumpkins as far as they can. Sweet.

Anyway, this beer pours with little head that is off-white. It has an aroma of predominantly pumpkin and brown sugar. The taste is much the same.

For being a 7 percent alcohol by volume (ABV) pumpkin ale, it is incredibly smooth and very flavorful. As it is, it could be double the brown sugar in it which is used in the fermenting process, the beer is quite smooth and quite so much so. It also has a nice touch of spices (allspice, cinnamon and nutmeg, among others) online.

And finally, we have the Trois Pa-tois (two pea-)tole, made by Unibroue (pronounced "well I don't really know, but it is pronounced "troh pie sos" that grows between your eyebrows). This is one dark, strong beer.

A nice process of "the dorky black," according to the Unibroue site, it is also surprisingly smooth.

The aroma is very nice and an expected flavor follows, though it is much more powerful. While it does have quite a kick, it is, again, quite smooth.

Before I sign off, I wanted to re­mind you all of the upcoming Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce Beer Fest and Chili Cook-Off this Satur­day. Also, there is the California Fes­tival of Beers (and golf tournament), coming up in May. As many of you know, the regular tickets are already sold out. Lucky for you, there are still plenty of $150 golf cart seats that include much, much more. And for you golfers out there, the "Beer Lover's Golf Pass" gets you all that and entry into the golf tournament for a bar­gain price of $200! Whoo.

Now for those of you who are like me and enjoy beer, but not for $75 for 13 tasting-sized glasses, head to your local liquor store and grab fewer beers for cheaper and enjoy them with some other thirsty friends. You'll probably even remember what they all taste like.

Well anyway this is it. I am gradu­ating at the end of this quarter and will become a working man. Hopefully this is the end. But don't be sad, it's also the beginning of a new life — the "...dawning of the Age of Aquarius," as they said in the 60s. It's time for "ch-ch-changes (turn and face the strange) — ch-ch-changes, just changes to 1970's untold magical".

It's time for me to get out of here and let someone else take over. After all, "every new beginning comes from some other beginning". So if you think you want to take over and have a great exbeerience during your time here in college — highly recommended going on magically, and apply to be the new (and improved) beer columnist. Umum, Don't drink and drive.

Adam Platzk is a business administra­tion senior and Mustang Daily beer columnist.

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Award-winning composer to guest conduct concert

Leticia Rodriguez
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Award-winning orchestral composer and conductor Frank Ticheli will be a guest conductor at the Cal Poly music department’s annual Winter Band Concert performed by the Wind Ensemble and Wind Orchestra this Saturday.

The winter concert will be Ticheli’s first appearance at Cal Poly and the last winter performance for director of bands William Johnson. Johnson, who has been at Cal Poly since 1966, said he has been working to get Ticheli to come for approximately five years but, due to time conflicts, wasn’t able to schedule him until this past summer.

“He is considered one of the great wind band composers in the entire world,” Johnson said. “I’ve known him for a long time. He’s in constant demand all over the world as a composer and a guest conductor. So we’ve talked him into coming to Cal Poly and spending a couple of days with us.”

Ticheli’s ability to fuse different styles of music into one composition, creating a more exciting experience for the audience, is what Johnson said puts him in such high demand. It’s also the reason the concert will solely feature works composed and conducted by Ticheli, a rarity because most performances involve compositions from multiple composers. Johnson said the reason for this is it’s hard to create a diverse set with just one composer, because most composers stick to a similar pattern with their work.

“Ticheli’s eclectic style of composition is what wind ensemble director Courtney Wolfe enjoys. Wolfe, a music senior, compared Ticheli to film composer John Williams, the man behind the Star Wars theme song. She said in the way that people hear the Star Wars song and connect it to Williams, so do many people with Ticheli’s work.

“As a musician, Ticheli is known for his eclectic style of composition. He fuses different elements into one, and it’s an honor to have him.”

— Courtney Wolfe

Music senior

He’s a wonderful composer, and it’s an honor to have him.

— Courtney Wolfe

Music senior

Ticheli’s work has been performed in stadiums across America and Europe, and Johnson said he is most excited about hearing his newest composition, “Angels in the Architecture.”

“It’s different from any of the other pieces I’ve heard him write, and it’s dramatic. It’s extremely dramatic. I’m looking forward to hearing him conduct it,” Johnson said.

The song, defined as “operatic” by Ticheli, stars soprano and tenor, and Ticheli said in his program notes that the song is meant to unfold as a “dramatic conflict between the two extremes of human existence — one divine and one evil.”

“The opening, with the soft voice of a singer, is meant to represent the angel and the divinity of humans. As the singing fades out, a stream of fast-paced and loud instruments ‘sneak in’ to represent darkness, death and spiritual doubt.”

“There are sounds that are not typical of a wind band, especially the opening,” Ticheli said. “There’s an extra quality to it that I think, is just something that I find appealing, and I think the audience will enjoy it.”

For Ticheli, simply making music with others who are as passionate as himself is enough.

“The joy that I get comes from the music and sharing the music with my fellow human beings,” he said. “The music that I do is all instrumental or mostly instrumental, and what I love about it is it expresses things and takes us to places that words can’t touch. It is a place that is wholly occupied by music, and it transcends words. You thank your lucky stars that you’re a musician.”

The concert begins at 8 p.m. March 13 in Homan Hall at the Christopher Cohan Center. Tickets are available at the Performing Arts ticket office for $8 and $9/9 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays or by phone at 805-756-2787.

Side Show
continued from page 9

“There is this great invisible device in the show that gets (the audience) to realize they are looking at themselves. It’s like a mirror-effect on the audience,” Jarman said. “Very powerful.”

“Side Show” opens tonight at 7 p.m. in the Black Box theatre and runs through Sunday, Mar. 14. Show times are Thursday through Saturday at 7 p.m., Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m.

For tickets, contact Christina Ventera, 415-672-0970 or cventera@usa.com. Tickets may also be available at the door before each performance for $8.
Opinion/Editorial
Thursday, March 11, 2010
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Concert over for-profit earmarks are an indication of politicians’ interests

As a political junkie, I have learned over the years that politicians are not a polite topic of conversation.

Actually, it’s an unpopular topic of discussion — especially among college students. People largely regard politicians as corrupt, self-interested and detached from the average American. And they’re right. American politics is riddled with corruption, cynicism and self-ambition.

When I think too much about the brokenness of our political system, I begin to fall prey to apathy; the essence of a representative democracy. Recently, I began to consider how Immanuel Kant’s categorical imperative relates to our political system. When politicians choose corruption, they are choosing corruption for American society.

One way politicians have engaged in corruption in American politics is through earmarks. Prior to Wednesday, politicians were able to take incentives from for-profit private contractors in the form of gifts and then in turn, reward those for-profit companies with no-bid contracts for construction and other jobs built into various bills passed through Congress. These no-bid contracts built into bills are earmarks.

The Washington Post reports that the 2010 budget probably included over $1 trillion of these earmarks for private businesses, amounting in billions of dollars. One infamous earmark was Alaska’s $400 million “bridge to nowhere” in 2005. According to the Washington Post and Reuters, earmark spending increased dramatically under the Republican Party from 1994-2006.

And due to the ethics scandal surrounding Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-N.Y.) for accepting trips from corporations, democrats had a major political incentive to pass an earmarks reform bill. Passing this earmarks reform bill places a lot of pressure on Republicans now, who must decide whether they will elect to stop taking earmarks altogether in order to improve their image with the American public. Earmarks are nearly as unpopular with Americans as politics itself.

The new rules that passed Wednesday would not entirely restrict earmarks. In fact, Alaska’s “bridge to nowhere” would still be a permissible earmark under the House’s new rules. Nevertheless, had these new rules been implemented before the last year, Reuters reports that about 10 percent of the earmarks would have been blocked.

I am not anti-earmarks. I think that states should be able to have federal funds for improvement projects. But these aren’t the earmarks targeted by these rules. These earmarks rules are geared toward ending politicians’ practices of garnering perks from private corporations, and in turn providing these corporations with taxpayer dollars.

Without checks on these politicians and rules in place to restrict this behavior, corporations would have too much influence on American politics. People become apathetic when the government interferes with private business. When private business interferes with politics, is it just as egregious?

The fact that the House passed this revolution to end for-profit earmarks gives me hope — even if it was done under political pretenses. House democrats should be applauded for ending earmarks and cracking down on corruption.

But it’s time for the Senate to make the same commitment. While the House, under Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s (D-Calif.) leadership, is making progress to change the perception of politics, the Senate is free to choose not to end for-profit earmarks.

I’m going to pay attention to who advocates ending earmarks and who remains silent. Jesus once said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” While Jesus is infinitely greater than politicians and his statement is intended to encourage people to set their eyes on heaven, not on the material things of earth, his statement reveals a truth about political corruption. Paying attention to what politicians seem to value says much about where their interests lay. If they fail to end earmarks, perhaps their interest is in making a buck, not changing the status quo.

Stephanie England is an English sophomore and Mustang Daily columnist.
Thursday, March 11, 2010

www.mustangdaily.net

MUSTANG DAILY

OP/ED

Elections show how far Iraq has come

When the history of the U.S. war in Iraq is written, Sunday's parliamentary election may well provide the final chapter. The national vote in which minority Sunni Arabs cast ballots along with Shias and ethnic Kurds could be a marker for the end of the seven-year war, although not for the end of the nation's sectarian conflict.

Thirty-eight Iraqis died in Baghdad elections violence, a relatively light toll compared with the bloodletting of recent years: tens of thousands of Iraqis have died since the war began in March 2003. Once the election day rockets and bombs cleared like some sort of morning weather front, Iraqis turned out in large numbers to cast their ballots — about two-thirds of the country's eligible voters.

A successful election neither justifies the original U.S. invasion, which was conducted on false pretenses, nor does it guarantee Iraq's democratic government, but it is positive news for President Obama and for U.S. combat troops out of Iraq in August and to withdraw the rest of U.S. forces by the end of 2011.

Although sectarian struggles were key factors in the campaign, and undoubtedly many voters cast ballots along ethnic and religious lines, Iraqis should take heart in the fact that their own security forces capably provided protection for the overwhelming majority of the 10 million voters who once again opted to seek political power through peaceful means. They should celebrate the fact that Sunni Arab parties chose to participate rather than boycott the election as they did in 2005.

No party is expected to win a majority of the 352 seats in parliament, so Prime Minister Nouri Maliki will continue as head of a caretaker government as the party that wins the most seats tries to form a new coalition government. If the last parliamentary election is any indication, negotiations could take months, leaving a dangerous power vacuum that insurgents surely will try to exploit to fuel sectarian tensions. It is in the interest of all Iraqis, therefore, for the parties to make the necessary compromises and alliances to put a new administration in place as soon as possible.

Iraqis want and deserve control over their own future. We hope that a new government will strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law while providing new opportunities to resolve some of the country's long-standing problems. Iraq has yet to decide, for instance, who will control the Kirkuk region, how to apportion the country's precious oil revenues and how much authority will rest with the central government over its divided regions. The United States should offer counsel when asked and, otherwise, stand back and wish them wisdom in governing.
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Giants’ Pablo Sandoval pushes squad past Cubs

Andrew Baggarly

MESA, Ariz. — If you marvel over Pablo Sandoval’s plus-size exploits on the baseball field, you should have seen him as a pudgy 7-year-old.

Carlos Zambrano did.

“It’s always been like that,” the Chicago Cubs’ All-Star pitcher said.

Sandoval used to hang around the older kids on the baseball fields in Carabobo, Venezuela. By the time he was 14, he was catching Zambrano’s side sessions.

“It didn’t matter that Zambrano was five years older and pumping 97 mph fastball.

They remain close. More than once this spring, Sandoval has broken bread at Zambrano’s house. And when Sandoval called him Wednesday at HoHoKam Park, Zambrano served up exactly what he wanted.

“It was 2-0, behind in the count,” Zambrano said. “I tried to run a fastball in there.”

It ran right onto the Panda’s bat for a grand slam in the Giants’ 5-1 victory over the Cubs Thursday at the start of the spring. And it was a tidy reminder of what might happen if Sandoval’s gifted eye-hand coordination, gets himself into hitter’s counts.

“It just made me appreciate the man team,” said a smiling Sandoval. “The city where I live, they create big guys.”

When Sandoval faced Zambrano in the first time last Septem-

ber, he was overeager. He struck out, grounded out twice and lined out. So he doesn’t plan to gloat over his grand slam in a Cactus League game.

“I’ll go with the line, win three consecutive games, and I got my pitch.”

Sandoval showed improved plate discipline last season. He boosted his average pitches per plate appearance (3.44 from 3.11 in 2008) and swung at fewer offerings out of the strike zone (41.5 percent from 53.8).

He was especially patient in the second half. Sandoval drew 26 walks over the first four months (in 399 plate appearances); he matched that total in August and September (in only 234 plate appearances).

He hit .330 in his first full sea-

son. And there’s reason to believe he’ll be better.

“Yeah, yeah,” Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. “This spring, you see him taking pitches where last year at this time he’d be swinging. That comes with experience for any hitter. You’ve got to remember he hasn’t been playing that long.”

Not long in the United States, anyway.

“I know that guy is something special,” Zambrano said. “You had to see the guy when he was 12 or 13 years old. You can see the talent of any young kid. He’s going to be good, man. He’s going to be one of the best hitters in the National League.”

Sandoval would tag along to practices with his older brother, Michael, who’s now a farmhand in the Giants system. Zambrano quickly took a liking to the high-energy kid.

“Because he saw the potential I bad,” Sandoval said. “He started talking to me, give me little tips on what the situation is like in the U.S.”

Late on, Zambrano followed Sandoval’s progress when he played for the local team sponsored by the national oil company. It was the same uniform that Zambrano wore as a teenager.

Has Sandoval always been big?

“He was always... strong,” said Zambrano, judiciously.

Of course, Zambrano is 6-foot-5 and 255 pounds, no treat to have as an airplane steward, either.

“Heh,” said a smiling Sandoval. “The city where I live, they create big guys.”

When Sandoval faced Zambrano in his first full season as a Giant last year.

Sandoval was asked if he looks off me? One. In spring training.

The key against any ultra-tal-ented hitter, whether it’s Bonds or Sandoval, is to get ahead.

“If it’s 0-2,” Sandoval said, “I don’t get that pitch.”

For UCLA’s Tyler Honeycutt, it’s always overtime

Chris Foster

LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES — Tyler Hon-

eycutt, a nocturnal gym rat, has

finagled his way into Pauley Pa-

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Honeycutt’s midnight madness

offered an escape route. The
time he was 14, he was eateh-

Honeycutt said. “We want to finish over .500, but we defi-

nely want to win the tournament.

“Mom, I’m going to be taller than you and I’m going to be a bas-

ketball player at UCLA.”

However, just as that goal was about to be reached Honeycutt was sidelined with a back injury that kept him sidelined all summer. He wasn’t even allowed to shoot a basketball. It was a tough order for a guy who wouldn’t eat dinner until around midnight, when he re-

turned home from the gym.

Then, after he did come back, the leg injury kept him out at the start of the season.

“It just made me appreciate basketball more,” Honeycutt said. “I still went to the gym, but every day I had to watch the guys playing basketball and there was nothing I could do.”

There is now. Honeycutt’s play in conference landed him on the Pacific 10 Conference’s all-fresh-

man team.

Credit, in part, those late nights at Pauley Pavilion for that.

“I got to know the guy who let me in after intramurals were done at 11 p.m.,” Honeycutt said. “If he wasn’t there, there was a student worker I could call. He is there until 1 a.m.

“That’s what I did in high school to get here. That’s what I’m going to do to get better.”

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In his first start of the season, pitcher D.J. Mauldin pitched five innings and allowed three runs and five hits.

What happened last night? It's a question most college students often ponder as hits and pieces of the night flash through your head like faint pictures from a broken projector.

This is how the Mustang baseball season has been so far. The box score is there, but the final numbers often spring questions.

Cal Poly lost two of three to San Francisco! Where did Mitch Hanger come from? J.J. Thompson is playing shortstop.

What is going on?

Cal Poly is currently sitting with a 6-6 record after the first couple weeks of the season. Rolling off a record-breaking season last year, the Mustangs have yet to post a winning record. Before the series victory against Northern Illinois, the Mustangs had not won a series all season.

We are just scuffling right now,” head coach Larry Lee said at Monday’s press conference. “We are not playing to our capabilities.

Recently, Cal Poly has turned its problems on the diamond around.

Wednesday, Cal Poly defeated Northern Illinois 12-5. The Mustangs didn’t waste time and rushed out to a 3-0 lead. After Northern Illinois responded with a three-run effort in the third, the Mustangs responded with five more runs off four hits, in the bottom half of the inning.

Down the stretch, the Mustangs added four runs in the seventh to complete the sweep.

On Tuesday, the Mustangs posted seven runs on seven hits in the first inning to rush out to a 7-0 early advantage.

In the seventh inning, sophomore Jordan Hadlock hit a triple that brought home two, bringing the score to 13-2.

Cal Poly didn’t look back as it went on to win 13-3.

The recent success has masked early-season struggles by the Mustangs, but even with the losing record, the early season schedule has brought some surprises.

Freshman Josh Hadlock became the first player this season to record four hits in a game against Northern Illinois on Tuesday.

“It felt good to be able to string a few hits together,” Hadlock said. “I tried to hit the ball hard and stay focused.”

Hadlock is hitting .700 this season.

Jeff Dunham

July 22

Kenny Loggins

July 30

In his first start of the season, pitcher D.J. Mauldin pitched five innings and allowed three runs and five hits.

Freshman Mitch Hanger has also turned some heads at the plate this season. Hanger, who was drafted by the New York Mets out of high school, is hitting .381 with nine RBIs and two home runs.

On the mound, sophomore pitcher Mason Radeke (3-0) has headed a struggling pitching corps this season. On Tuesday, Radeke pitched four innings, allowed one run and struck out eight. This season, Radeke has compiled 23 strikeouts in just more than 18 innings.

But the success the sophomore has had can’t be said about the rest of the pitching staff.

“Right now we’ve a little suspect in (starting pitching), but we are also suspect in our bullpen,” Lee said. “We just don’t have, at this time, guys that are reliable.

The Mustang rotation came into the week with a 6.17 ERA.

“They are going to continue to get thrown out there. Hopefully, through the course of more games and as the season progresses, more season will be added in the mix.”

Houston’s pitching staff hasn’t faced the same obstacles.

The Cougars do not hold a pitcher with an ERA above four. Junior right-hander Chase Deppey leads the team with a 1.29 ERA and Monday their third starter, Michael Goodnight, was named the C-USA Pitcher of the Week. Goodnight helped the cougars record a 1-0 win against No. 3 Texas last week at the Houston College Classic.

Houston has started off the season 5-5 and the Cougars are coming into this weekend’s series holding a team .304 batting average through 10 games. Junior Joel Audley leads the team with a .412 batting average and a .647 slugging percentage.

A season ago, Cal Poly held one of the most potent offenses in the country; the numbers haven’t been the same this season. But with recent offensive showcases against Northern Illinois, Cal Poly may have found its groove at the plate.

“Hopefully we can start putting pieces of the puzzle together and play a better brand of baseball,” Lee said.

—Brian De Los Santos and Michael Akana contributed to this article