Many stay home as banks defer some evictions

Alana Semuels
LOS ANGELES — It’s been 16 months since Eugene and Patricia Harrison last paid the mortgage on their Verona, Calif., home. Eleven months since the notice got slipped under their door, warning that it would be sold at auction.

A terse letter from a lawyer came eight months ago, telling them that their lender now owned the house. Three months later, the bank told them to pay up or get out by the end of the week.

Still, they remain in the yellow ranch-style home they bought seven years ago for $125,000, with its views of the San Jacinto Mountains. They’re not planning on going anywhere.

“We’re kind of on pins and needles, but who’d want to leave when you put this kind of energy into a house?” said Eugene Harrison, 70, gesturing toward a bonsai mural of mountains, stream and flowers the couple painted on the living room wall.

Throughout the country, people continue to default on their home loans — but lenders have backed off on forced evictions, allowing many to remain in their homes, essentially rent-free.

Several factors are driving the trend, industry experts say, including government pressure on banks to modify loans and keep people in their homes.

And with a glut of inventory in places like Southern California’s Inland Empire, Nevada and Arizona, lenders are loath to depress housing prices further by dumping more properties into a weak market.

Finally, allowing borrowers to stay in their homes helps protect the bank’s investment as it negotiates with the homeowners, said Gary Kindtner, a spokesman for Chase Bank, a major lender.

“If the person’s in the property, there’s less chance for vandalism, and they’re probably maintaining the house,” he said.

Economists say the situation won’t last forever, but in the meantime the “amnesty” may allow at least some homeowners to regain their financial footing and avoid eviction.

In the Inland Empire, an estimated 100,000 homeowners are living rent-free, according to economist John Hening, who based that number on the difference between loan

see Evictions, page 3
College couples shack up

Jessica Barba

Kit Schimandle, a former Cal Poly student, met her boyfriend during the first month of school, and by May they both decided it would be a good idea to live together the following year. By June they had broken up but still remained friends, and for the next month, their relationship was on-and-off. “I started dating someone else so it was really awkward, and then I brought a boy home and he got really pissed. I avoided it all fall quarter, but it was hard talking to my boyfriend. I wasn’t really aware of my lease terms so they didn’t try to get out of it,” Guevara said. “It’s life, and not everyone stays together, but for the most part, we have had good experiences with couples and no police have ever been involved.”

The number of cohabiting couples in 2007 was 6.4 million, a 22 percent increase from the previous year, according to USA Today. Also, the number of cohabiting couples made 10 percent of all couples in the US, including those married and engaged. The data showed that half of the non-married couples now living together had never been married previously and were under the age of 30. Despite statistics and research done by organizations like Columbia University that show only 26 percent of women and 19 percent of the men marry the person with whom they were cohabiting, living together is something that many couples still consider.

After moving out and then back in with their families, Cal Poly jewelry senior Alisha Axsom and her boyfriend Keith Santoianni were both ready to be on their own again. “At least for me, I just really wanted to live on my own, and living with him was already like having a roommate, so it would be like living with a friend rather than someone random,” Axsom said.

They had been dating for a little over a year when they decided to live together. Santoianni said the idea came up casually, and despite having had a bad experience cohabiting with another girlfriend, he knew this time was going to be different. Axsom agreed. “I was nervous at first ‘cause I’d never lived with a boyfriend, but for our part it just felt natural just coming home, having him be there. It made it a lot easier to have our separate lives ‘cause we knew we would be coming home to each other,” Axsom said.

When asked if the couple had any problems since moving in, she said while they have argued, they are no different from any other couple. Santoianni said the biggest conflict the couple has faced was just deciding where to live. “I grew up in Morro Bay and she grew up in Los Osos, and I hated Los Osos, but we moved to Los Osos,” Santoianni said. “Next as the couple prepares to move into a new apartment in Morro Bay, Santoianni said living with Axsom has worked out better than he had imagined. “I wouldn’t see it any other way.”

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delinquencies and foreclosures. Industry experts say it’s difficult to say how many families are in that situation nationally because only banks know for sure how many customers have stopped paying entirely. But Berle Sharga of Irvine, Calif., RealtyTrac data tracker notes that the number of loans in which the borrower hasn’t made a payment in 90 days or more but is not in foreclosure is at 5.1 percent nationally, a record high. And yet the number of foreclosures last year was 2.9 million, below the 3.2 million that RealtyTrac economists predicted.

More evidence is provided by another firm, ForeclosureRadar, which says it now takes an average of 229 days for a bank to foreclose on a home in California after sending a notice of default, up from 146 days in August 2008. “For some reason, banks are being more lenient with homeowners who are behind on their loans,” Sharga said. “Whether it’s a strategy to try and keep up with volume is something that banks only know for sure.”

Lenders say the trend reflects their efforts to work with borrowers to modify loans to avoid foreclosure. Bank of America “continues to exhaust every possible option to qualify customers for modifications or other solutions,” spokeswoman Jennifer Brown said. “Some lenders are making it a policy to partner with delinquent borrowers. Citibank said this month that it would let borrowers on the brink of foreclosure stay at their homes for six months, whether or not they make payments, if they turn over their property deed.

Such policies may partly reflect the fact that lenders can’t keep up with all the foreclosures, some say. “The mortgage lenders are so backlogged that some people are able to slip through the cracks,” said Kathryn Davis, a real estate agent at America’s Real Estate Advocates in Comuna.

That was apparently the case for the Harrisons, who were told at various times that their house had been sold, that it belonged to someone else and that it was empty. “It’s been frustrating, a real major pain in the butt,” said Eugene Harrison, a nondenominational minister with a clipped mustache and a sudden laugh. The Harrisons missed their first payment in October 2008, shortly after Patricia Harrison, 57, lost her job as a healthcare aide and her husband’s part-time towing work dried up. “They said they applied for a loan modification with Countrywide Financial (since acquired by Bank of America) but were told that they couldn’t receive one until they were three months behind on their payments.” In April 2009, they received a notice warning them that their property “may be sold at a public sale,” and in July, they were told their house was a bank-owned property.
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A day in the life of a city's homeless camps

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Some days, Michelle Mead waits in line for two hours for a shower at Ecumenical Social Ministries. If she has to wait two hours so she can stand under the warm water and try to wash away the campfire odor that has attached itself to her clothing and her hair, she will.

It's not as if she has a lot of options. Homeless and unable to find a job, she relies on a network of social services to provide her with most of life's necessities: food, water, clothing. But homeless campers say there aren't a lot of places where a person can just drop in and grab a fast shower. It's just not that easy.

In fact, little seems easy about living in the camps — despite help from at least a dozen agencies and churches, and an unprecedented outpouring of direct donations of food, clothing, firewood and other items to the campers.

"Being homeless is a full-time job," says Candi, a 45-year-old who has been camping near America the Beautiful Park since August.

It's not just about getting a shower. It's about walking long distances in the bitter cold for a meal at the soup kitchen or Springs Rescue Mission — and having to eat on the agencies' schedules. It's about tracking down birth certificates to get an ID so they can compete for one of the scarce jobs in town. It's about staying warm and finding bathrooms. It's about trying to find time between grabbing meals and showers to even look for a job.

First Things First

Almost every neighborhood has an eclectic mix of people and personalities. There's the guy with the beautiful lawn and the well-kept house, while three doors down is the person with nothing but dandelions and an old beater in the driveway. Down the block is the mental with the annoying partner, and across the street is the generous woman who always brings by plates of brownies or cookies, but whose cluttered yard looks like a 24/7 garage sale.

So it is with the clusters of tents. Some are tidy — or as tidy as they can be on muddy, icy patches of land with little room for storage. Some are eyesores that could be declared Superfund sites. Some are party dens. Some provide a haven for people who want to be left alone, while others foster a sense of family.

The lesson: You can't paint the camps and the people who live in them with one brush.

Multi-tenant living

Like Mead, most sleep in tents, though some tuck bedrolls and sleeping bags under lean-tos made from tarps, tree limbs and string. Some campers are fine with nothing more than a two-person tent. Some, however, have created virtual condos.

Stephanie Roberts, 21, lives in a big tent with her boyfriend. Inside is a full bed, chair and propane heater. They've decided not to go to the shelter because they're comfortable where they are.

It's just like any other home," she says.

Then there's "Miss Kitty's" spread—a tent nestled inside a roughly 7-by-12-foot space defined by four walls of tarps and a dirt floor. The man who built the structure also built an impressive stone fire pit inside, which she uses for heating and cooking.

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MISS KITTY, pictured Jan. 13, calls a homeless camp along Shooks Run near S. Corona and Fountain streets home in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She admits living in a tent has eliminated a lot of stress in her life.
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"I've got one of the best fire pits around," Miss Kitty says proudly.
Miss Kitty and several other campers have an extra test for stor­
age. She uses hers to keep firewood dry. Others pack extra blankets, food and clothing in storage tents.

The campers get their tents, sleeping bags, propane heaters and other accoutrements from a variety of sources: social service agencies, friends, friends of friends, other homeless campers and people from the community who come to the camp with donations.

Charles Henry Demers owned the blankets, Coleman stove and lawn chairs he brought to his next­side camp when he became home­less, but he had to borrow a tent from a friend.

At Miss Kitty's camp, where Me­
chelle Mead also lives, there's also a lot of sharing.

"We all have to take care of each other. We share blankets and food," said her 58-year-old neighbor, Earl.

"If we don't watch out for each other, no one else is going to.

The Day Begins

From the moment they wake up, many campers have one sure desti­nation in mind: the Marian House soup kitchen. Those with grills or propane stoves might heat up some instant coffee, fire a grill or grab a stack from whatever food they have stockpiled in their camps.

But most rely on Marian House for their first real meal of the day, and most will walk there regardless of the weather.

"I go there to get a balanced meal," says Mead, who walks from her camp to the soup kitchen.

The soup kitchen doesn't open until 10:30 a.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. on Sun­days, so Mead walks her dog, Biker, takes care of some errands and pays volunteer hours that are a requirement for her food stamps. She used to get up at 4 a.m. to look for day labor jobs, "but there isn't no work," she lamented. It's a common refrain among campers.

Others have had better luck at day labor centers. Demers, 48, gets up at 5:30 a.m. most days to go to Apprentice Personal waiting for an assignment. During a recent snap of bitter cold weather, he got work at Memorial Hospital near downtown — a job that required him to get up at 5:30 a.m. so he had time to walk the five miles to the hospital and get to work on time.

Alvin "Tramp" King, who lives in a camp just south of the one Miss Kitty and Mead call home, starts his morning scrapping — riding his bike with a small trailer behind it, and picking up cans and other met­als — before going to the soup kitchen.

At one camp near the west-side Safeway, several of the people get their morning started by going to the store's bathroom to use the toilet, shave and clean up at the sinks. Then they'll clean up their camp from the night before. Because they're too far to go to the Marian House, they get pro­visions from the Westside CAKES pantry or Safeway, then cook the food over a fire.

"If you go hungry in Colorado Springs and you're homeless, you're stupid," says Bob, a 58-year-old for­mer Marine who has been homeless since October.

Afternoon Arrives

After lunch, some of the camp­ers head to Pensco Library to get warm, read the paper and hope on the computer to check e-mails or look for jobs.

Bob says he's been plugging away at the library looking for a job as a mechanic but hasn't had any luck.

"You can't let it get to you," he says. "You've got to keep positive." Mead says her job search is hin­dered by a lack of transportation.

She's gotten passes from social service agencies, but said a person has to have an appointment with a clear destination before getting a pass. That means the person can get a pass for a job interview, she said, but not one to gather applications.

Another post-Marian House de­stination is the nearby Ecumeni­cal Social Ministries, which is about the only place in town where people who aren't in shelters or long­term programs can baths. But only two washers are available, and the hours are limited: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mon­day-Friday. Even with a 15-minutes per-person limit, the lines can get long — especially in winter, because campers want to shower well ahead of the day when temperatures warm up.

ESM officials say only about 34 people a day get grab showers.

For Mead, walking to the Mar­ian House and waiting for a shower "tak[es] up a good part of the day" and cars into town might she speed looking for a job.

Those who can't get a shower at ESM might use a bathroom at a park, convenience store or other store.

Hob says he's been plugging away at the county library looking for a job, but he hasn't had any luck.

After lunch, some of the camp­ers head to the library to get warm, read the paper and hop on the computer to check e-mails or look for jobs.

"We're like a family," Garrett said.

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FDA recalling dips, dressings and soup mixes over salmonella fears

Andrew Zajac
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration Thursday announced a potentially massive recall of foods made with a commonly used food additive that may be contaminated with salmonella.

The additive, hydrolyzed vegetable protein or HVP, is used in thousands of foods but so far has not been linked to any illnesses and currently presents a low risk to consumers, according to FDA officials.

But the agency isn’t taking any chances. It has asked food producers to check inventories for products that used recalled HVP and has established a searchable consumer database for what it predicted would be a growing list of recalled foods.

Only a few specific brands of chip dips, salad dressing, soup mixes and other foods have been recalled since the contamination was discovered last month, but “we expect this to get larger over the next several days to several weeks,” said Jeff Farrar, FDA associate commissioner of food safety.

The tainted HVP was made at a plant operated by Basic Foods Inc. of Las Vegas and was discovered when a company customer tested a batch of the additive and reported finding salmonella.

FDA inspectors subsequently discovered salmonella bacteria on plant equipment. Basic Foods subsequently announced a recall of all past and powdered versions of HVP manufactured since Sept. 17, 2009.

Company president Kans Patel did not return a telephone call seeking comment.

The FDA identified the salmonella’s genetic fingerprint, enabling the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to confirm that this strain has not caused illness so far.

Salmonella causes infections marked by diarrhea, vomiting, fever and abdominal pain. Healthy people generally recover without treatment, but salmonella can kill the very young, the elderly and people with weak immune systems.

Officials said the HVP was shipped in batches of 50 pounds or more but they didn’t know how much tainted product the company shipped. Farrar said most of the tainted additive would be killed by the company’s customers as they processed it, and that the salmonella contamination was discovered before the products left the facility.

But underscores the potential seriousness of the outbreak, both FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg and the agency’s No. 2 official, Joshua Sharfstein, said at a telephone news conference.

Sharfstein said FDA reacted quickly, but he and Hamburg said the incident highlighted the need for passage of pending food safety legislation that would give the agency more tools to prevent outbreaks instead of reacting to them.

The legislation has been stalled in the Senate since late fall. It would give FDA the power to order recalls on its own authority, instead of pressuring firms to do so.

Robert Brackett, chief science officer for the Grocery Manufacturers Association, a leading food trade group, said FDA for seeking a product for a wholesale recall.

The FDA has left it up to the food industry to determine if a particular product has been made in a way that would kill salmonella contamination, Brackett said.

In addition, it’ll be up to companies to decide whether to keep a product on the market if the consumer preparation process, such as boiling of a soup mix, would kill salmonella, he said.
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The bank sent a notice by FedEx in October demanding $3,000, and when the Harrisons called to discuss this notice, they were told they had four days to vacate the house. Panicked, they arranged to stay with family in New Mexico and started packing their things, filling their garage with boxes of books, camping equipment and art. But no one came to kick them out.

"We were afraid to leave the house, afraid the sheriff was going to come," said Patricia Harrison, an amateur painter.

After contacting consumer advocates about their situation, the Harrisons decided to stay put. Soon after, two men in a white pickup truck showed up at the house and peeped in the windows, telling the Harrisons that they thought the house was abandoned.

The Harrisons suspected they were planning to move in themselves and chased them away.

The couple don't want to leave but are in the midst of a running dispute with Bank of America about the terms of their loan modification. The bank says it mailed them documents this month.

Although the Harrisons' future is uncertain, industry observers agree that the rent-free life can't last forever. As home values climb, banks will find it financially advantageous to foreclose on delinquent borrowers and sell their properties.

"In many cases, particularly in California, people owe a boatload of payments, and no bank is going to forgive that," said Gay Cecala, editor of Inside Mortgage Finance, a trade publication.

In Diamond Bar, the Fragueres family is finally moving on after living rent-free for 18 months. Job loss and other setbacks prevented them from paying their mortgage, but they say they didn't hear anything from the bank, First Franklin, until a real estate agent showed up at their door last month saying she was going to sell their house.

Sandy Fragueres wasn't surprised that it had taken the bank so long to ask them to move.

"I don't think they really knew what was going on or who was there," she said.

Next stop for the Fragueres is a hotel, where they plan to stay for two weeks until their apartment in Chino Hills is ready for them to move in. Their dogs are being boarded and their belongings stored until they can retrieve them someday. Their children, ages 8 and 9, are being steered for more instability.

The Fragueres have started saying goodbye to their neighbors, adding yet another empty house to a block that has already seen two other families forced to pack up and leave.
Unemployment rate unchanged at 9.7%

Don Lee
WASHINGTON — In a pinch of bright news for the economy, the East Coast snowstorms that paralyzed transportation and shut down thousands of businesses last month did far less damage than expected to the nation’s labor market, allowing the unemployment rate to hold steady at 9.7 percent.

Six months or longer remains high: 7.6 million workers, fall into this category.

Some economists had forecast a setback on the jobs front, with unemployment jumping and payrolls falling by 40,000 or more.

Certainly, the recovery remains slow and uneven after the worst recession in more than a half-century. And by any standard, the economy actually might have shed jobs were it not for the bad weather that shut down businesses and transportation for several days in the mid-Atlantic region.

Revised data said the economy shed 26,000 jobs in January and 199,000 in December, when the unemployment rate was 10 percent. Including February, payrolls have fallen 25 out of the past 26 months.

"The job market appears to be on the mend, even though it's a fairly slow process," said Gary Burtless, a former Labor Department economist and now senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington. In particular, Burtless was encouraged that the number of long-term unemployed declined slightly last month after a long string of rapid increases.

The latest snapshot of the labor market, which for most people is the single most important economic indicator, came against a backdrop of mixed reports recently on key engines of the economy.

The housing market has cooled after a burst of sales in the second half of last year driven largely by the first-time homebuyers’ tax credit.

Construction remains in the doldrums as high vacancies and sluggish rents continue to depress office, retail and apartment building. And consumer confidence has been slow to come back, raising concerns about the durability of an economy that relies heavily on personal spending.

On the other hand, business investment in equipment and software have been rising, and manufacturing is growing again. U.S. economic output expanded at an annualized rate of 5.9 percent in the fourth quarter. But most of that was due to short-term boosts as businesses restocked inventories that had been allowed to dwindle during the recession — as well as to stimulus funding that has been supporting business and consumer spending.

On balance, professional forecasters are expecting economic growth to drop to about 3 percent in the first quarter and for the balance of the year — a relatively slow pace that won’t add much fuel to hiring.

Employers have been reluctant to hire because of weak sales, tight credit that’s restrained expansion, increased productivity — more goods from current workers — and uncertainties about government policies on health care, energy and taxes.

All that has prompted fears that the broader economy could backslide.

“In terms of self-sustaining growth in the economy, it’s hard to see how you can do that without creating jobs,” said Dean Baker, director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington. Despite the better-than-expected employment report for February, he noted, the economy needs to add some 125,000 jobs just to keep pace with the labor growth and hold the jobless rate from rising.

The United States has lost 8.4 million jobs since December 2007.

Last month, the construction industry dropped another 64,000 jobs. Analysts viewed many of those as victims of the weather. The Labor Department’s payroll jobs data are seasonally adjusted, but those statistical adjustments are based on past average fluctuations, and last month’s snowstorms were hardly normal.

But Ken Simonson, chief economist at Reed Construction Data, was encouraged that the fraction of businesses that had been reporting an increase in orders was up to 38 percent from 35 percent, which was the low point last month.

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Rate

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omiss at the Associated General Contractors of America, said the industry would have lost about that many jobs last month even if the storms had not paralyzed activity in the East.

"I do expect a lot more (federal economic) stimulus money to turn into construction jobs in the coming months," he said. "But we're not yet out of the woods.

About one out of four construction jobs were lost during the recession and unemployment in the industry now hovers at about 27 percent.

Friday's report did reveal some positive trends. Manufacturers added 1,000 jobs last month — positive but tiny after a 20,000 gain in January, which was the first upturn after factory payrolls plunged by more than 2 million during the last two years of the recession.

Some of the gains have come from General Motors, Caterpillar and other companies that have re-called laid-off workers lately.

The temporary-help industry, widely seen as a harbinger of broader hiring, expanded by an additional 48,000 jobs in February, bringing it to 284,000 the number added since September.

Weather wasn't a major factor in the Labor Department's unemployment numbers, which are based on a separate national survey of households that counts as unemployed those who have jobs but say they missed work because of weather factors, even if they were unpaid.

Analysts regard the payroll data as more reliable. But both sets of data have weaknesses, especially at turning points in the economy.

Forecasters are projecting the unemployment rate to rise in the coming months. A separate Labor Department measure of unemployment and underemployment that includes part-time workers who want full-time jobs, rose to 16.8 percent last month from 16.5 percent in January.

Melody Boyd, of Los Angeles, has been officially out of work since August 2009. Her unemployment benefits expire near the end of the month. But next week, Boyd said she has an interview for a job in the accounting section of a health care firm. It's her first interview in months.

"I have a spark of hope," she said.

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**WORD ON THE STREET**

"What are your plans for housing next year?"

"Graduation! I am going to live at home with my parents and share a room with a dog half my size."

- Scott Bailey, architecture senior

"Kind of a loaded question. I don't know if I am staying where I am or if my family is finding renters."

- Jessica Sherbon, electrical engineering senior

"I am staying where I am in Murray Station."

- Lindsay Gedlich, business administration junior

"I am going to be moving off campus."

- Justin Finch, business administration junior

"I have no idea. I have three months to decide but maybe Chicago."

- Matt Delmanowski, graphic communication senior

"Probably going to stay in Poly Canyon."

- Chris Liao, aerospace engineering freshman

"One of the apartments in Poly Canyon. Right now we are in a dilemma though."

- Yasathy Ram实惠ty, computer engineering freshman

"I believe we are looking into Poly Canyon."

- Sarah Brown, architecture sophomore

"I am still scrambling; it is hard to find a devoted group to stick together through the application process."

- Kelsie Abele, architecture sophomore

"I am moving possibly to the L.A. area."

- Brianna Loudmouth, nutrition senior

**COMPILED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY JESSICA BARBA**
State

San Luis Obispo (MCT) — A Nipomo man was sentenced Thursday to 18 years in state prison for the molestation of his niece over the course of three years.

The girl told her mother what was happening, and jail deputies told sheriff's investigators that he may have penetrated the girl twice when they were playing "Homes," but said he didn't rape her, according to the District Attorney's Office.

Prosecutor Greg Deent negotiated the plea agreement that led to the sentence with defense attorney Michael Adams. Lealcalderon plead- ed no contest to the felony crimes of committing a lewd act on a child younger then age 14 and oral penetration with a child younger then age 10. ... 

Fresno (MCT) — A trial began this morning for a Fresno man accused of killing another man in the parking lot outside the Chuck E. Cheese restaurant in northwest Fresno. Manuel George Mancilla, 24, is accused of gunning down Victor Reyna Cedano, 29, in September.

Fresno County Superior Court judges have to decide whether Mancilla is guilty of murder, as the prosecution contends, or the lesser charge of manslaughter, as the defense has asserted.

Briefs

National

Washington (MCT) — The Obama administration finds itself in an uncomfortable position of considering whether to reverse its politically-charged policy on where to try Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind of the 9-11 terror attacks.

Ever since the announcement that Mohammed would be tried in a civilian court in New York City, the administration has been caught between irate Republicans, who argue that a military trial is more appropriate, and human rights activists, who praised administration officials for fulfilling their pledge to do what they believe to be morally right.

... 

New York (MCT) — New York Gov. David Paterson, his confidence apparently buoyed by a show of support from influential black leaders, said Friday that he will not resign despite facing two scandals, withering support from the public and a shaken staff.

Paterson spoke briefly outside his Manhattan office, a day after the Rev. Al Sharpton convened an emergency meeting of black political and civic leaders to decide whether they should urge Paterson, the state's first black governor, to quit. The meeting ended with a call for Paterson to remain in office.

International

China (MCT) — China announced Thursday the smallest increase in its defense budget in years, in an apparent attempt to reassure international fears that its military is growing too powerful.

Coming after almost two decades of double-digit increases, the relatively modest 7.5 percent increase in the budget to $78 billion also highlights the Chinese leadership's stated commitment to channel funding to social programs.

... 

Chile (MCT) — The Chilean government said Thursday that correcting errors in tabulating the victims in Saturday's devastating earthquake may reduce the relatively modest 7.5 percent toll to 315 from 565.

SOU people were confirmed dead. The death toll there was revised significantly following after almost two decades of double-digit increases. The government is growing too powerful.

We can't afford to keep living disposable lives," said Lori Baint, a co-author of "Don't Throw It Out: Recycle and Reuse to Make Things Last," a compendium from Yankee magazine. "It makes sense for all of us to be more careful about how we spend money."

...
white, silver or gold and display in a vase or large urn as indoor decorations.

3. OLD MAILING TUBES, NEW WINE RACK

Real-Made, a savvy do-it-yourself magazine, suggests making a wine rack with mailing tubes and an old milk carton crate from your college dorm years (or a box that's at least 12 inches in depth). Measure the depth of the crate and cut the tubes to this length with sharp scissors. Stack the tubes in the crate and turn the crate on its side on a flat surface. Each tube by hole can fit a wine bottle. Be sure to store the crate in a dry, cool area.

4. OLD PENS, NEW SILVERWARE

Forks, spoons and knives with broken handles can get new bodies from old pens, according to Jaspal Marwah and Sarah Hunt of Vancouver, the winners of Real-Made's MacGyver Challenge, a monthly contest that challenges readers to find innovative ways to reuse common objects. To make their pen cutlery, discard everything inside the pen except its tube and cap. Fill the tube with hot glue, shove in the heads of the cutlery, and let dry.

5. OLD SHOWER CURTAIN, NEW GRILL COVER

Get a stained or tired shower curtain? Bird suggests using it as a waterproof cover for outdoor furniture or a grill.

6. OLD PAPERWORK, NEW DOG BED

Shredded paperwork from your home or office shredder, small rugs or bath mats, and old novels can be donated to local animal shelters. The paper and bath mats make beds for dogs and cats, and towels are needed to wash animals.

7. OLD BINDER, NEW CD CASE

Watch this: Three-ring binders from yours or your children's old school days can house CDs or DVDs that've lost their cases. "Don't Throw It Out" says to store them in album refill pages for 5 x 7 photos.

8. OLD SOCKS, NEW ORNAMENT SAVER

New old socks or ones that've lost their partner to store delicate Christmas ornaments. You can also use socks to stuff the insides of shoes so they don't lose their shape in storage.

9. BROOM

Revitalize an old broom by covering the bristles with ruined pantyhose. Cut a piece from the leg, and stretch it over the broom's bristles. The nylon's static will attract lint and small dust particles as you sweep.

10. OLD BOOK, NEW SAFE

Make a safe out of an old hardcover textbook or outdated encyclopedia. "Don't Throw It Out" suggests opening the book to a spot at least one inch from the back. Prop the book open with a paperweight. Use a pencil and a straightedge to mark a rectangle in the middle of the page. Cut out the rectangle with a craft knife — score the edges heavily, and you'll be able to cut through several pages at a time. Repeat until you're about to cut into the back cover. Place a piece of cardboard or a thick piece of scrap paper over the cover so that you don't cut into it.
Poly wine and vit finds success through students

Rhiannon Montgomery

Cal Poly wine and viticulture students are working to keep the ancient celebration of fermented fruit alive.

The relatively new program has turned students from ‘cellar-rats’ into successful winemakers reading programs at Fresno State and University of California, Davis. Nick Davis, 2007 wine and viticulture graduate and co-owner of TWINPOMS wine, said with the connections to the local industry, Cal Poly offers unique opportunities in the wine-making business.

“Cal Poly will be the top-notch facility in the next few years because of the experience opportunities,” Davis said.

Davis said the programs at Fresno and U.C. Davis don’t have the local trade to support a large number of students looking for work or internships. There are more than 400 wineries in San Luis Obispo County, giving students the opportunity to work in their major.

Anthony Youton, Davis’ former classmate and the owner of Kincro Cellars wine, said Cal Poly’s internship requirement gives students a leg up in the industry. He said the university gets support from local wineries like Orcutt Road Cellars, where Cal Poly wine is made.

“You hit the ground running. You can walk into the winery knowing how to do everything,” Youton said.

The programs’ three concentrations encompass all aspects of wine production and management. Enology is about the science of winemaking, viticulture focuses on the vineyard and the agribusiness concentration highlights the ins and outs of working in the wine industry. Jeff Onysko is vice-president of the Vines to Wine club and a wine and viticulture senior. He said the program emphasizes what it’s like to be in the real-world industry.

Part of that real-world experience comes from learning from professors who have worked in the wine business, Onysko said. He said teachers have the knowledge to take students from “grapes to glass.” Davis, Youton and Onysko said they believe the hands-on experience and connections are what make the program special.

Youton and Davis said they took those connections and the learn-by-doing philosophy, with them and used it to start their own businesses. They both said they didn’t have the capital to be traditional winemakers. There’s a saying in the industry that it takes a large fortune to make a small fortune. They are blazing new paths in the business to side-step the capital issues. These small start-ups don’t have their own wineries, tasting rooms or major distributors. They buy their fruit from growers and make the wine at established crushing facilities.

Youton said he he still keeps his day job as a winemaker at Denner Cellars, but was able to start his own label in the summer of 2008 when a friend at Villa Creek offered to let him make wine at their facility, where he started as a cellar-rat after graduating.

He isn’t alone in finding success outside the box in the short time since he graduated from the program. Davis said he and co-owner Brian (also his twin brother) took a chance to find their niche in the industry so they could be standouts.

With more than 1,200 facilities making wine in California, getting your DOC is more important than it used to be, Youton and Davis’ don’t have their own wineries, tasting rooms. They both said they wanted to be a winemaker and believe the program will play a huge part in fulfilling that goal.

“I would love to make some wine, have people enjoy it and, of course, make money,” Onysko said.
Unconventional dormmates:
Campus families break the norm

While most dorm rooms are reserved for individual students, some campuses have family dorms for couples and their kids.

Eric Ferreri
DURHAM, N.C. — Maca Cook-Dorgan will have plenty of new experiences when she heads off to college this fall. But dorm life won’t be one of them.

Maca, a 17-year-old Durham Academy senior, has already spent six years living in a Duke University residence hall as the daughter of one of the university’s 13 faculty-in-residence professors.

Which means she’s already had a few “crazy college kids” moments.

Exhibit A: “I walked out the door yesterday and there was a guy with his shirt off,” Maca recounted recently.

“And his friend was reading what people had written on him the day before.”

Such is life in Ainsworth dorm on Duke’s East Campus, Maca’s home.

see Dorms, page 19

Yeah, even really smart guys do really dumb things. Like that ill-advised leap off the end of the pier. You need to know your limits.

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MUSTANG DAILY
ARTS

Draperies are back

Stacy Downs
REAL ESTATE NEWS

After more than a decade, draperies are finally getting their curtain. Windows for years were undecorated, except for subtle shades or sliding blinds. Now the fabric is back, even in minimalist interiors.

"Draperies add elegance while softening the room, making it cozy," said interior designer Sherri Worth of Overland Park, Kan. "They also hide ugly views and create privacy. I think people have come to realize lace is boring, and when windows are naked, they're truly naked.”

The main reason Worth appreciates draperies is because the price tag can add up. "You don't necessarily want the latest color or pattern, because you don't want to change them out every three years," she said. "Stick with classics, maybe even solid colors, unless you can see. If you don't want something trendy, buy a pillow or a cord in the last color.”

How about height?

Worth says to hang a drapery rod at least 4 to 6 inches above the window trim — ideally just below the ceiling trim — to make a room appear grander yet create a cocoon-like corners.

Koellchen thinks the bottom of drapery panels should skim the floor or come just above it. "You definitely don't want to leave yards and yards of padding," she said. "That would be a throwback.”

What's Hot?

Fabrics: Bigger prints, especially geometrics such as diamond patterns. There's a lot of banding, where one fabric (often a solid color) is outlined with another fabric (sometimes prints). Trims: Wooden beading, capitol shades and brushed fringe. Styles: Side panels. For top treatments, spare cornices — not valances. Gunnmetrs at the top give the drapes a casual feel. French pleats add some fullness to panels. Hardware: Nothing Industrial, industrial rods. Silver-colored and oil-rubbed bronze finishes are popular. Mixed metals lend a warmer, more lived-in look. Tiebacks: Metal holdbacks are more popular than traditional fabric ties or tassels, though for a sleek and casual appearance, panels usually hang without tiebacks.

Drapery Shopping: The Five Essentials: 1. Fabric samples such as a furniture arm cover. 2. Paint swatches of the wall colors. 3. Photos of the room, especially the windows. 4. Pictures from design publications showing drapery looks you like. 5. Measurements if you're buying the drapes yourself.

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Dorms
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Since she was 12, she lives there with her parents, Bob and Kathryn, and their dog, Oshi, a friendly mutt named for a Swiss lake.

For Maeve, Duke dorm life was a dramatic change from the suburban bliss of Antioch Park, Ill., where the family lived before Bob Cook-Deegan was recruited away from a Stanford University program in Washington. She left a neighborhood where her best friend lived next door and moved into a cramped room at the back of the Cook-Deegan compound, a retrofit apartment fashioned from several standard dorm rooms.

The apartment is long and narrow, with a spacious kitchen, a cozy living room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a giant dog bed for Oshi.

For Maeve, life has been one slow transition. When she moved in at age 12, she got funny looks from students who may have mistaken her for a resident's little sister. As she grew, she began to fit in more. Now 17, she's just a year or two younger than many students.

Still, she doesn't mix with them much. In fact, the most interaction she has with students is during fire drills, which often come on weekends or late at night.

"This year hasn't been so bad," said Maeve, who will study at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland this fall. "They've learned how to use the microwave."
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Raquel Reedding
MUSTANG DAILY

Moving out of the parents’ house means a blank slate. A whole room, or house open for interpretation is exciting, but a lot of house décor can be expensive. From Ross to World Market, this is a guide to decorating on a budget.

Students and non-students go through a process of gradually accumulating items throughout the years. From old roommates’ furniture to the mirror found on the street with a “free” sign, picking up random items is inevitable. Making the random work to create a cohesive living room, or an eclectic bedroom can depend on a few good pieces to tie them all together.

There is a wide range of shops in San Luis Obispo. There is the expensive World Market, and there is the less pricey Koss.

Starting with World Market, which is located off of Madonna Road, there is a wide array of décor from couches to candles. Store manager Gillian Mote said that World Market tries to have a wide variety of eclectic pieces to choose from. “We shop the world so customers can enjoy the product and feel like they are on vacation,” Motes said. “Unique, authentic, affordable, and many other countries. From rugs, pillows, candles to lighting, the market has one of the most thorough selections to choose from. Cal Poly double master student Fritz Light said he likes to shop at World Market after a holiday or sale. “I like to be a year behind in stuff. I don’t want to be with the Jones’. I’d rather buy items when I generally like them, not when they are cool.”

Light, who is double mastering in biology as well as agriculture, said that budget has a lot to do with how he picks and buys things. Price and personal budget was a common factor that students took into consideration when purchasing items for their rooms. Environmental management sophomore Christina McAdams said that she prefers to go to Bed Bath and Beyond for items, but only when she can afford it. “I go to Ross because I can still get decent stuff at a good price,” McAdams said. “But if I’m looking for something specific, then I have to spend more money.”

Ross is one of the most inexpensive stores in San Luis Obispo for their rooms. Environmental management sophomore Christina McAdams said that she prefers to go to Bed Bath and Beyond for items, but only when she can afford it. “I go to Ross because I can still get decent stuff at a good price,” McAdams said. “But if I’m looking for something specific, then I have to spend more money.”

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Owning a pet in college is sometimes easier said than done

Erin Hurley
MUSTANG DAILY

Some Cal Poly students feel that a house just isn’t a home without a pet. However, having the comfort of a pet is often easier discussed than obtained. Many San Luis Obispo houses and apartments do not allow renters to own pets, and students usually have to choose between giving up the pet or giving up the house.

When Cal Poly students make the move from the dorms to off-campus housing, many of them are excited at the chance to own pets, which is forbidden in the dorms. Many house and apartment leases, however, do not allow pets either. Some students will accept the condition so they can move into the house or apartment they want. Others get more creative.

If students really want to own a pet once they move off-campus, they can try to make other arrangements. For students who really want to own a pet once they move off-campus, they can try to make other arrangements. For students who really want to own a pet once they move off-campus, they can try to make other arrangements. For students who really want to own a pet once they move off-campus, they can try to make other arrangements.
Pets continued from page 21
renters. Sometimes renters are willing to discuss the possibility of small or well-behaved pets, but others refuse to consider any kind of pets. This motivates some students to try to keep pets without the renter knowing.

Molly Wagman, a nutritious sciences major, was willing to make sacrifices to keep her beloved cat. In her search for a house last spring, Wagman began by only looking at houses with leases that allowed pets. This severely limited her choices, but she finally succeeded in finding a house on Bosco Street that allowed her to keep her cat. However, Wagman said she would not have her a restricted lease keep her cat out.

"I would have been willing to hide my cat if I hadn't found a lease that allowed pets. I really choose my cat first," Wagman said. Sometimes hiding a pet works, and sometimes it doesn't. A small pet can be easy to hide from a landlord, but a more conspicuous pet like a cat or a dog that needs more space can be difficult to keep hidden. If a landlord discovers that renters are keeping a pet in secret, they may terminate the lease and have the renters without a place to live.

Keeping a pet off-campus can be extremely rewarding, but it can also prove to be costly. Pets need many of the same things as students: food, shelter, medical care and social contact. Students with hectic lives packed with classes, sports, jobs and social activities can find it hard to give pets what they need. Many students also do not have much extra money for pets after groceries, rent and other costs.

According to PetEducation.com, the total cost of buying a puppy can be up to $1,000, and the costs of taking care of and raising the dog for an average lifespan of 14 years can range from $4,000 to almost $39,000. The cost of owning a cat over an average lifespan of 14 years can range from $4,500 to over $18,000.

Ever Cal Poly student had an unusual experience with a pet. Journalism junior Alexander Jacobetti lives in the De Tolosa complex on Tunisi Road near Los Osos Valley Road. The complex does allow pets, but they must weigh less than 25 pounds. The complex also charges renters an extra fee for keeping pets. Jacobetti has known De Tolosa renters who owned a puppy that was under 25 pounds at the time they first rented their apartment, but the puppy soon grew too large, and they were forced to move. Jacobetti is hesitant to make a commitment that could threaten her living situation.

"The rules for owning a pet are a little extreme, and I'd really like to have a pet, but personally, I wouldn't break the lease rules unless I really wanted that kind of pet," Jacobetti said.

Owning a pet is also a concern for students who are about to make the move off-campus. Environmental management and protection sophomore Molly Nilsson is in the midst of searching for a place to live off-campus next year. Nilsson said that owning a pet would depend on the lease.

"If the lease allows pets, I'd definitely consider a cat," she said. "If it didn't, I don't know if I would go to all the trouble of taking care of a pet and hiding it. It's a lot of work."

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Being a good tenant requires common sense

Raquel Redding

Being a good tenant can mean a lot of things, like paying rent on time, and being quiet, but there are other qualities that are sought by renting companies. To rent a place, whether it's an apartment or a house, there are certain things to keep in mind in order to be a good tenant.

While these are not exact rules, it may be helpful to follow these guidelines. Mustang Village general manager Kathy Baker said being a good tenant goes beyond paying rent, although that certainly helps.

"Be respectful of those who live around you and the impacts of actions have on others. In particular, things like having a dog and being loud, to a guest using parking spaces, can affect other tenants," Baker said. "We forget those kind of things sometimes, these niceties."

Baker is not alone in emphasizing respect for neighbors and other people. Child development senior Heath Hirama said that owning a pet is also a concern for students who are about to make the move off-campus. Environmental management and protection sophomore Jorge Angel, an engineering sophomore and he said one of the biggest concerns for him is noise. "Produce low noise levels at night, because people could be studying or going to bed," Angel said.

Bothering neighbors is not the only thing that Angel worries about. Since Poly Canyon comes furnished, he said that taking care of the furniture is something that also makes a good tenant.

"Taking care of the apartment and making sure not to disturb any of the furniture or walls," Angel said. "The better you leave it at the end the better it is for you."

Getting the deposit back is an incentive to be a good tenant because the damage done to the apartment will come out of the deposit. Baker said a good tenant communicates well with the manager and keeps them informed of what's going on.

"If there is something wrong with the apartment, let them know so we can fix it," Baker said. "A leak under the sink could turn into mold or not out the wood, which would turn into a major repair that could have been prevented. Give management's chance to fix a problem."

California-West, Inc. property supervisor Ellie Malykont said she expects a certain amount of respect from the students when it comes to the apartments or houses being rented out.

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— Heath Hirama
Child development senior

"A good tenant pays their rent on time, complies with the rules of the rental agreement, is responsible and considerate to their neighbors and doesn't cause their property any grief," Malykont said. "I expect my tenants to live in their apartments or homes the same way they would for their parents' house."

For Malykont, respect is something that goes both ways in the renting process. She said 90 percent of their tenants are students and Cal-West tries to treat all their tenants with respect as well.

At some point in their lives, most people will have to rent a place to live. At Baker said, renting is a part of living in the real world, so you might as well have a good tenant's history.

"Basically, if you don't give us a reason to come after you, you're a good tenant," Baker said.

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Johnny Depp gives another memorable performance in “Alice in Wonderland”


Neglecting to read the Lewis Carroll classic when he was a boy, and had just re-read it before getting the call from Burton for the latest film version of "Alice in Wonderland.

"What I took away was this strange, cryptic nuggets he threw in there. I became fascinated by them because they were asking questions that couldn't be answered or making statements you quite don't understand," Depp says.

"Alice in Wonderland" is his seventh collaboration with director Burton.

One reason Burton says he enjoys working with the three-time Oscar nominee is the actor's dislike of seeing himself on screen. That means the director never has to worry about his star getting temperamental about how a scene was shot.

Each time Depp appears to star in a Burton film, his biggest fear is that he won't be able to come up with a character that's different enough to please the director. This time, their collaboration was on creating a key player in the mad tale, the Mad Hatter.

Zuckuck compares Depp's way of creating a character to a factory, in that he puts together an assortment of elements to create a product the public longs to buy. For the Hatter, Depp did watercolor drawings of his idea for the character's look, which were almost identical to what Burton had in mind — a result of sharing so many collaborations.

Brent Eberhardt defines what it means to have an open mind.

"Money is a concern and is a factor, when I build my own stuff, it's cheaper than buying from a store. A lot of students come in here to create their own things," Schneider said. "Canvas and paint is a big buy, but it's not every day that we sell the furniture."

Decorations continued from page 21

that offers decor, Ross Soylines Manager Julie Wooley said Ross has many stores in the student buying anything from sheets to towels, the basic necessities.

"Ross is great because you can't find anything we have cheaper anywhere else," Wooley said. "If you have something specific in mind though, chances are you are not going to find it; you have to have an open mind."

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Brendan Eberhardt said that he mainly does architecture junior year

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Tacos have become a universal food

Lee Svitak Dean

You can find tacos in outer Mongolia, Amsterdam, Adulis Abalu and Australia—even in outer space (the latter thanks to NASA). They have, in fact, become as ever-present in the hamburger.

And that’s the rub. They no longer seem Mexican, but American, says Jeffrey Pilcher, a University of Minnesota history professor who will give a talk about “Planet Taco” on Tuesday.

Indeed, the taco revolution spread globally—and extraterritorially—via entrepreneurial Americans and U.S. companies, not Mexicans. This might explain why, in part, the rest of the world looks at that overstuffed hard-shell taco spilling with coleslaw, lettuce, tomato and Cheddar cheese and thinks “American.”

(Not-so-incidentally, Mexicans migrate almost exactly to the limits of States, Pilcher noted: If Americans hadn’t traveled with their tacos, he says, he would be offering a very different history lesson.)

Fifty years ago, Mexican food could be found only in Mexico, California or the Southwestern, including some roadside stands where tacos were sold. Los Angeles phone books from 1950 reflect the abundance of these taco spots. These were the very early days of food franchises. Ray Kroc started the McDonald’s chain in 1954.

Glen Bell, the founder of Taco Bell and a fellow Californian, had an idea. Today we think of tacos as the lowest common denominator of Mexican food—yes, maybe that would, or should, be nachos—but he was cutting-edge at a time when the rest of America was dining on turnip casserole, mac-and-cheese and cream of tomato soup.

Today foodies may sniff their noses and think “Taco Bell ruined Mexican food,” but Pilcher says, the chain simply franchised it. As for all those arched eyebrows and comments that Tex-Mex isn’t real Mexican, well, maybe that would, or should, be nachos—but he was cutting-edge at a time when the rest of America was dining on turnip casserole, mac-and-cheese and cream of tomato soup.

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Roger Ebert gives tea parties thumbs down

Scott Collins
Www.mustangedaily.net

LOS ANGELES — Who’s the biggest scourge of the tea party movement these days? It might be film critic Roger Ebert, who lately has been railing brickets at Sarah Palin and other right-wing politi­cians in between rendering verdicts on the latest movies.

Over the last few weeks, Ebert has used his own Twitter page to give the tea party bellowing nick­names, predict it will quickly fade and opine that “a loud movement is not the same as a mass movement.”

“I wrote about the TeaPee because it’s so sad how they’ve been manipulated to oppose their own best interests,” Ebert said in an e­mail, using his latest epithet for the tea party followers. “I am a liberal.”

His thoughts have earned him scorn from conservatives who accuse him of elitism and trashing ordinary Americans. More notable than the political spat, though, is what it says about the rapidly evolving media and Ebert’s place among them. Because of his de­cades of TV appearances, including with his late partner Gene Siskel, Ebert is perhaps the only critic in America who really has a house­hold name.

But due to complications from cancer surgery in 2006, he has been unable to speak. The story of his re­covery battle, along with a jarring portrait that revealed his surgically reshaped jawline, recently appeared in Esquire. Tuesday, he appeared on “Oprah” to unveil an electronic device that gives him back some vocal function. Given the fact that for years Ebert was never far away from a microphone, there’s irony in the fact that his current battle with the tea party followers is conducted in text only, with bite­sized tweets and blog posts.

Now the 67­year-old reviewer finds himself at the center of the debate over whether and how mainstream journalists — who have typically labored in silos of specialization and avoided any­thing that called into question a pose of objectivity — should mix it up in the woolly world of social media. Many large news­gathering organizations, including the Los Angeles Times, have rules governing reporters and editors use of Facebook, Twitter and other appli­cations.

Some experts say the time may be ripe to rethink such restrictions.

“‘In an era in which newspapers are in decline, any journalist who attracts attention in any area should be welcome,’” said Paul Levinson, a professor of communication and media studies at Fordham Univers­ity who is also an active Twitter user. “Journalists that keep re­porters penned into a small area never made much sense. The great­est journalists and writers were al­ways Renaissance men and wom­en, able to do many tasks.”

Andrew Breitbart, publisher of several influential conservative blogs including Big Hollywood, defends Ebert the new­media user while attacking Ebert the political thinker. Breitbart says that Ebert’s Twitter posts reveal a pannoning view of tea party adherents that serves as a “caricature of the liberal mind­set” and that the critic brings with “raw contempt for Middle America.”

What especially irked some conservatives was that Ebert used a nickname for tea party follow­ers that has also long been slang for a sexual act. When Ebert tweeted that he was unaware of the term’s pornographic connotation, Big Hollywood countered that he had referred to such a context in past movie reviews.

But Breitbart adds that the cur­rent fracas ultimately proves how much power has shifted to new media and away from mainstream outlets such as newspapers, where Ebert has reviewed movies for more than 40 years.

“I am a proponent of Roger Ebert using Twitter to express his point of view,” Breitbart said. “It’s a testament to the new media. Where is he having a bigger impact, in the Twitverse or doing his reviews of movies?”

Ebert admits he was slow to ap­preciate Twitter but is now a fan. “It’s an art form,” he said in an online interview with The Times. “It encourages minimalism, almost like a word game.

“Having said more than once ‘I will never be a twit,’ I now feel it is a splendid discipline … I link to great writing on the web I also like to link to the unique, the beautiful, the weird.

“That day is a sad day,” he said, “when a newspaperman fears to twit.”

Calories

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people are doing so far with the in­formation or how that might change when calories and fat grams appear right on your face on the menus in 2011, when the second part of the California law takes effect. Many parents, like Elizabeth Ehlers, din­ing on a recent day at Locos in Cul­ver City, aren’t very interested.

“I’m not going to study nutri­tional information when I go into a restaurant,” she said, and I already know pretty well what’s healthy, I don’t care how many grams of fat are in something. Grams of fat are not my life.” Kelly Brenwell, direc­tor of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale Univer­sity, says the same attitude prevailed when food manufacturers put nutri­tion information on grocery store items and yet shoppers tended to make little change with time.

“But the bigger benefit probably will be that restaurants will offer lower­calorie (dishes),” says Michael Jacobson, executive director of the consumer advocacy group Center for Science in the Public Interest. They may also decide to provide meals lower in salt and saturated fat, he says, and trim calories wherever they can from items already on their menus.
Dining out may contribute to increased calorie intake

Jeannine Stein
Los Angeles Times

Americans are eating out more and more: According to the National Restaurant Association, 49 percent of every food dollar in the U.S. is now spent in restaurants, up from 28 percent in 1955.

What that means is we have less and less control over just what goes into our food — and the numbers, now available per laws in states including California, are sometimes shocking.

Dining out may contribute to increased calorie intake tor those who are middle-aged, are suspect that new laws and the possible federal mandates waiting in restaurants, up existing or pending menu labeling legislation. (Some nutrition executives stress that this has been prompted by customer preferences and shifting dining trends, not by legislation. (Some nutrition experts suspect that new laws and the possible federal mandates waiting in the wings are more influential than companies want to admit.)

The Cor-Or Bakery Cafe recently listed 100-plus combinations of menu items that come in at less than 500 calories, such as an Asian wonton salad and cheddar broccoli soup, or a tuna salad sandwich and Caesar salad.

Applebee's has its new "Under 550 Calories" menu, offering grilled shrimp and island rice, asigno pepper corn steak, and grilled dioin chicken and portobello

Starbucks lately began touting its "skinny" drinks, which are less than 100 calories, such as the skinny vanilla latte and the skinny cinnamon dolce latte, plus its new under-400-calorie hot panini sandwiches.

Cheesecake Factory has a few "weight management" dishes that are lower in fat and calories, and the company recently introduced a small plates and snacks menu, with smaller-portioned items such as mini corn dogs, shrimp scampi crostini, arugula salad and crispy fried cheese — not all of those, however, are low in calories. Romano's Macaroni Grill chains has are d by the consumer advocacy group Center for Science in the Public Interest years ago for its heavy sauces and fatty, meat-centric entrees, but since Chief Executive Brad Blum has cleaned up its act, the Alfredo is still there (the sauce alone is 160 calories and 31 grams of saturated fat), but so is a honey balsamic chicken at 540 calories and 9 grams of saturated fat.

Whole foods include the dressing, and pollo capresi pata at 550 calories and 5 grams of saturated fat. Some favorite dishes have cleaned up, eggplant parmesiana went from 1,270 calories to 800.

It's not clear what

See Calories, page 25
Krysten Cary keeps softball close to her heart

Amelia Ayler

Senior first baseman Krysten Cary and her teammates have finished pre-game warm ups. Fans are filling the stands and the game is starting in a few minutes, but she doesn’t feel quite ready. Something is missing. She turns on her orange iPod nano and selects the four-song playlist that has become essential to every pre-game warm up for the last four years. Through her earphones, Lu-dare tells her to shake her money maker, and three songs later, it’s game time.

Krysten Cary says she only feels comfortable stepping on the field after listening to the “cheesy” music line-up she created her freshman year.

“If it’s part of my routine now,” she said, “it’s like, OK, now I’m ready to play.”

Last year, Cary led the Big West with 14 home runs and a .619 slugging percentage, all are statistics that mean little to her.

“I don’t look at numbers,” she said. “I don’t keep track of that kind of stuff. Whatever I can do to help the team is what I’m most concerned about. If that means getting a walk, that means getting a walk. Or if it means making a play, throwing it to first — if that’s what they need me to do, that’s what I’m going to do.”

Cary’s mother, Vicki, has supported her daughter through her long-term commitments to softball and said she admires the focus she dedicates to whatever she wants to accomplish.

“Physically, she has the skills,” Vicki Cary said. “Some people are just natural athletes, but more than that I think it’s the work she’s put in. Not only did she love playing the game, she loved practicing. She was always willing to put in 100 percent.”

It’s this consistent dedication that she credits to her accomplishments.

“In a sense, you just have to hold on to that because some people take it as, it’s my job. I have to do it,” Cary said. “But if you look at it as, you want to do it, you want to do it, and you want to be here, and you love the game, and you love the challenges it throws at you, then nothing is ever going to get you down. It’s hard sometimes, but you learn to deal with it, and you learn to respect and love it for what it is.”

Cary’s love for the game solidified around the age of 10, a few years after she first started playing. Her favorite part of softball, the mental aspect, took its root long before she started playing for Cal Poly.

“I think I was four and my dad was playing wiffle ball with me on the front lawn — they always tell me this story because they think it’s hilarious. My mom asked me, ‘What position do you want to play?’ And I said ‘Batter’... I love to hit. I think because hitting has a lot of the mental aspect.”

Away from the plate, Cary plays first base, where she says she relies solely on instinct.

“You get to think about it at practice, but when you’re in game situation, it’s all reactionary and I love it,” she said.

Cary has created a strong connection to pitcher Anna Cahn, who is going into her third year on the team. Cahn said this connection has brought them closer both as teammates and as friends.

“She’s been there to help me calm down if I’m not doing too well,” Cary said.

Now in her last season of Cal Poly softball, Cary feels like the “mama duck” as the oldest member of the team that is largely made up of underclassmen. Cahn said Cary’s leadership qualities and quiet confidence have been very important after losing last season’s seniors.

“She’s really been there and she’s someone that you can come and talk to if you have a problem,” she said. “She’s also an amazing softball player and just all around a really great person.”

As an outgoing, friendly, fun and caring person, according to her mother Vicki, people are naturally drawn to her.

“She’s a really good friend,” she said. “I feel like she’s a good friend to me and I’m a mom.”

When she’s not conditioning, practicing or playing, Cary makes as much time for her friends as possible. With her friends and three roommates, Cary spends her time shopping downtown or watching movies like her all-time favorite “The Sandlot” and romantic comedies, her most recent obsession. She enjoys the quiet, homey feel she says San Luis Obispo possesses, which is different from her home in Orange County.

Cal Poly’s proximity to the coast, Cary says, was an important factor that made the university a perfect fit for her. At the beach, she and her friends stay active with volleyball — see Cary, page 28.

First baseman Krysten Cary led the Big West with 14 home runs and .619 slugging percentage last season. Her 14 home runs rank as the second-highest single-season total in school history.
Cary continued from page 27

ball, horse shoes and hiking, she also uses it to relax and lay down with a book.

At home, Cary likes to make family-style dinners with her roommates, usually of Mexican food.

"We always do family dinners as much as possible, which sounds so funny because you’d think that doesn’t really happen with college students since we’re always on the run," she said. "But, as soon as I get home from practice at 6, we’re making dinner together and we sit down at the table and eat together."

Cary also likes to arrange similar dinners and activities like hiking to encourage team bonding.

"I love getting people together and just hanging out," she said. "Just to get away from the softball field and chat about life and boys and whatever else."

Cary looks back on her experience at Cal Poly with teammates and friends with nothing but gratification as her collegiate life comes to an end.

"They say time flies when you’re having fun, and I’ve been having so much fun," she said. "It’s kind of crazy because it’s not like I’m coming back in the fall to finish up school; I’m done with school and I’m done with softball. I think it’s the most nerve-racking thing — that’s all coming to an end, but I couldn’t have picked a better place to spend these four years. I love it here, and I love the team."

After graduating in June with a degree in kinesiology, the exact route of her future is undecided, but said she knows softball coaching will undoubtedly be a part of it. She and her friends will spend some time relaxing and traveling following graduation, after which she looks toward becoming a high school health teacher or obtaining a master's in public health and either returning to Orange County or San Luis Obispo.

Vicki acknowledges that finding employment is difficult for anyone. She is certain that Cary will find something she can be happy with.

"She hasn't defined her focus so narrowly that she couldn’t take advantage of another opportunity because it’s not directly applicable to her degree," Vicki Cary said.

"Mama duck" leaves Cal Poly softball behind with an optimistic attitude and the same passion that has enabled her to dedicate herself so completely to the game. But not before she has three last months of more challenges, more victories, more losses and more time playing what she calls her second love.

"We’ll miss it," Vicki said. "It’s been such a great positive experience over the years that she’s going to finish her college career without any regrets."
Average price per bottle of wine consumed drops

Elaine Walker

The economic troubles of the last year had many consumers looking to escape with a glass of wine. But they wanted to imbibe on a budget.

Wine makers and importers gathered this weekend for the South Beach Wine & Food Festival said Friday that while the volume of bottles sold remained relatively constant in 2009, the average price per bottle declined.

"It's the mix that has changed," said Mel Dick, president of the wine division at Southern Wine & Spirits, the festival's sponsor. "People were definitely trading down at all levels to more of a comfort zone. There was great success at the lower prices and much less success for the higher-priced wines."

In 2009, sales of wines priced at $25 and above dropped 30 percent nationwide, according to Nielsen. While global wine sales increased, California wine shipments fell for the first time in 16 years. Dick and others agree that strongest demand was for wines at $10 or less a bottle.

"That was a boon for brands like Gnarly Head, which saw business jump 30 percent in 2009," said Jeffrey Lubin, brand manager. Gnarly Head is best known for its Old Vine Zin, which sells for about $10 a bottle at retail.

"The brand was growing already, but the economy really helped ignite it," Lubin said. "It's got a flavor profile that is designed for the masses. It's very easy drinking."

In appeal to that budget-conscious consumer, all of the wines that importer Frederick Wildman and Sons is showcasing at this weekend's festival are under $1.3, with most under $10. Dick the selection includes wines from France, Argentina and Italy.

"Before consumers would spend money on expensive wines just because they loved it or now that's only on special occasions," said Olida Gallo-Noel, assistant vice president with Frederick Wildman and Sons out of New York. "We figure today that people want to explore something they can drink on a daily basis."

The good news for 2010 is that many industry professionals see early indications that consumers are feeling a little more confident about the economy and are willing to fork over a few more dollars. That's inching up demand for wines between $50 and $15 a bottle at retail and helping to bring back wine sales at restaurants, hotels and bars.

"So January we started to see a nice shift," said Brie Kontiol, sales director of fine wines in Florida for Constellation Wines. "Restaurants are seeing much more foot traffic, which helps sales."

Winemakers like Eros Spinozzi from Italy also have found that in this competitive market it takes increased creativity to find ways to differentiate themselves.

"That's why Spinozzi hired a Disney artist to do colorful labels for several of his more affordably priced wines like Gilu Pinot Grigio and Gru Montepulciano."

"At the end of the day, most of the wines on the shelf from Italy look boring," Spinozzi said. "We were looking for a way to make the bottles more appealing to the consumer and be able to compete against the California and South African wines."

Spinozzi believes the new labels have helped.

The number of bottles his company sold in 2009 was flat, although in dollar volume was down about 30 percent. "With the same money that they used to buy one bottle," he said, "now they're buying two."
Jerry McDonald
THE OAKLAND TRIBUNE

Forty-niners general manager Scott McLeod isn’t losing any sleep over what will likely be a dramatically different NFL financial landscape.

Teams with older stadiums and smaller revenue streams, such as the Raiders and 49ers, could be outspent by teams with deeper pockets.

McCloughan can barely stifle a yawn.

"We’re going to go forward as if there is a cap," McCloughan told reporters at the recently concluded NFL scouting combine in Indianapolis. "We’re not considering to be a big free agency team, anyway. It’s not going to change our spending one way or the other."

The Raiders, meanwhile, are silent on the matter, but they are operating much the same as they did last year when a $128 million spending spree that included the signings of Cibril Wilson and javon Walker and a trade for DeAngelo Hall.

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Neither Bay Area team is expected to make a serious run at the big-ticket items in unrestricted free agency, Carolina defensive end Julius Peppers and Arizona linebacker Karlos Dansby.

The talent pool thinned considerably because of changes in free agency resulting from the uncapped year. Instead of players being eligible for unrestricted free agency after four seasons, they now need six.

That means 212 players who were hoping to be unrestricted free agents as of 9 p.m. Thursday are now restricted free agents, giving their clubs the right of first refusal and draft pick compensation depending on the level of contract offered.

Denver, for instance, issued a first- and third-round tender to linebacker Elvis Dumervil, who led the NFL in sacks with 17. A four-year veteran, Dumervil would have been an unrestricted free agent in previous years, going to the highest bidder with no strings attached.

But in this uncapped year, Dumervil can solicit offers from other teams to bring back to Denver. The Broncos can either match the offer or accept first- and third-round draft picks in return.

The 49ers retained linebacker Ahmad Brooks with a second-round tender and kept David Baas, a guard and center, with an original-round tender, which means the second-round pick in 2005 would be a second-round pick in 2009 if the 49ers don’t match the offer sheet.

While restricted free agents have rarely moved in past years, the dearth of unrestricted free agents could bring some offer sheets if teams target a specific player they think is worth more than the draft pick they’ll lose to get him.

Expect most teams to be conservative as they survey the new landscape.

"You always see some teams..."
Kazmir tries to turn negative into positive

Jim Peltz  Staff Writer

TEMPE, Ariz. — Scott Kazmir spoke in a voice soft and low, but the feelings his words revealed were unmistakable.

"It was very frustrating, very frustrating," the Angels starting pitcher said of his sub-par performance in last year's American League playoffs.

And after the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim lost to the New York Yankees in the AL Championship Series, "I came into the off-season bitter, frustrated," the 36-year-old left-hander said in the Angels prepared to open this year's spring-training season Thursday against the Chicago White Sox. "I felt like I let the team down.

But that frustration lasted only a couple of days. Kazmir said, after which he decided to devote most of his off-season to a redoubled work regimen aimed at preventing another such breakdown.

It was a decision that "was almost immediate," even before the Yankees had finished off the Philadel phia Phillies in six games to win the World Series, he said. "I felt like, in certain situations, if I had done what I was capable of doing, it would have been a different outcome.

The outcome sought by the Angels and Kazmir, of course, was for the Houston native to bolster their shaky starting rotation and help lead them to the World Series. That's why the Angels traded three players last Aug. 28 to acquire Kazmir, an All-Star in 2006 and 2008, from the Tampa Bay Rays.

He then made six regular-season starts for the Angels and, despite a record of only 2-2 in that span, his earned-run average was a stellar 1.73 as the Angels wrapped up the AL West.

"He was a big part of why we led the world in pitching for the last probably, five weeks of the season," Manager Mike Scioscia said.

Then came the playoffs.

In a start against the Boston Red Sox in Game 3 of the AL division series, Kazmir gave up four runs in six innings and left losing, 5-2. But the Angels rallied to win the game, sweeping Boston in three games and reaching the ALCS.

In the championship series, Kazmir started Game 4 against the Yankees at Angel Stadium and was roughed up for four runs in four innings. New York went on to win the series, four games to two.

"I felt like my velocity was kind of touch and go," Kazmir said. "It was there, it wasn't there."

"I changed quite a few things in the off-season by how I approached my workouts and prepared for this season. I'm a lot stronger. I'm more focused. It's going to help me out repeating my delivery, getting more torque, more strength, have a little bit more on my fastball." Kazmir said.

"It's not like I never did anything during the off-season I worked out. But nothing like this, nothing where I was really on a strict regimen every single day.

"Sometimes, I'd do almost two-a-day, a day where you'd go in the morning, get your workouts done, and next thing you know a couple hours later you're out on the track doing mobility," Kazmir said. "I'd do all of them. They strengthen your delivery, it makes pitching so much easier.

Kazmir is getting help from Angels pitching coach Mike Butcher, who also guided Kazmir in 2006, when Butcher was pitching coach for Tampa Bay.

"Part of the process of pitching is feeling good about what you did in the off-season," Butcher said. "If you feel good about what you did, you put the bay in the barn, so to speak. Now you go out there and perform.

And Scioscia said there's no harm in using last year's playoff loss as an incentive to try harder.

"There's all sorts of aspects of how you deal with disappointment in this game," Scioscia said. "There are guys who use it for motivation. Some guys turn the page.

"But I don't anticipate anything lingering" with Kazmir, Scioscia said, adding that just like last fall, "we expect big things from him."
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