Please pay at the pump

**SLO gets attention for its gas prices, some of the highest in the country**

Alicia Freeman
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San Luis Obispo County has the third-highest priced gas in the nation.
As of March 9 gas prices in the county are at $3.963, falling only behind (but nearly matching) San Francisco at $3.969 and Santa Barbara County at $3.964, according to an AAA report.

Liam Kilgallon, a former Cal Poly student, said he cannot believe the rapid rise in prices.

“It seems like the price goes up 5 cents every time I look,” Kilgallon said.

According to an AAA Fuel Gauge Report Overview by Avery Ash released March 7, the turmoil in Libya, as well as other Middle Eastern and North African countries, has caused the rapid rise. Libya reportedly “produces 1.6 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil — 2 percent of global oil consumption,” causing prices to rise in fear of a shortage, though this shortage has not happened yet. In the face of this crisis, some Americans are pushing for President Obama to dip into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), an emergency reserve of more than 720 million barrels for the United States.

Brittany Renfro, an English sophomore, said she tends to wait to get gas in cheaper areas, unless she’s forced to get gas in San Luis Obispo. Yet, the high prices have made her reconsider whether or not to drive around town, Renfro said.

“The gas prices really make me double think about if it is really necessary for me to drive someplace,” Renfro said. "But I do not think the gas prices will keep me from driving, unless they continue to rise."

Cal Poly students to swim with turtles

Anieca Ayler
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A volunteer study abroad program scheduled for this summer will give students the opportunity to work with, and learn about, sea turtle conservation and explore the Oaxaca Coast in Mexico.

The Sea Turtle Rescue and Eco-cooperative Tour, hosted by Viva Study Abroad, is a Morro Bay-based company that offers education and cultural volunteer programs with an emphasis on Latin American culture, language and people.

During the tour, students will visit several businesses in Oaxaca that have adopted environmentally-stable practices.

This will simultaneously broaden the participants’ cultural perspective, help the Oaxacan people economically and give the students an opportunity to work directly with nesting sea turtles,” said Emily Taylor, a biological sciences professor who will attend the tour this year.

Viva Study Abroad, working in conjunction with the National Mexican Turtle Research Center, is located in Oaxaca and closely monitors the Olive Ridley sea turtle, the most abundant sea turtle species in the world.

No one is allowed on that beach without permission.”

The Olive Ridley sea turtle, as well as other sea turtles, are highly endangered. The Olive Ridley sea turtle, for example, has the distinction of being the only sea turtle species to come ashore to lay eggs in the western hemisphere.

Students on the study abroad program to Oaxaca, Mexico will help staff at the National Mexican Turtle Research Center to protect the area from poachers, move turtle eggs to higher ground and measure the turtles, among other tasks.

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see Turtles, page 2
Turtles
continued from page 1

as every other species of sea turtle, is endangered because of human interference, Taylor said. Destruction of nesting beaches, exploitation by people eating eggs and adult turtles, drowning in the nets of fish crawlers and dying from eating plastic bags mistaken for jellyfish, all play a factor in sea turtle endangerment. The Oaxaca program focuses on helping and learning about the reproductive cycles of the turtles, so they may have a better chance to repopulate.

"The students will help Mexican scientists collect data on nesting turtles, patrol beaches at night to look for turtles and deter poachers and learn firsthand about the Olive Ridley sea turtle," Taylor said.

The 12-day trip is divided into two phases. During the first five days, students will explore the Oaxaca area and visit local eco-cooperatives, such as a facility that makes peanut butter or an iguana sanctuary. During this time, students will reside in environmentally-friendly hotels known as eco-lodges.

Feuerberg includes the exploration phase in the program because she said the students have to learn the time to get to know the area that she herself has been traveling to for 20 years. She also wants them to learn about the sustainable practices in a place they wouldn't necessarily expect.

Feuerberg said when killing sea turtles became illegal approximately two decades ago, the Oaxacans, who depended on turtle meat for food, were forced to find new ways to support their livelihood. The eco-cooperatives the students will be visiting on the tour are examples of the Oaxacans' resourcefulness to survive.

The second phase will start with a training session with the Sea Turtle Conservation Project before participants begin to work and come into contact with the sea turtles. The night will be spent on an organic coffee farm in the tropical mountains. Then, the volunteer component of the trip begins. Students will spend the last five days working with the biologists, veterinarians and full-time staff of the National Mexican Turtle Center to help revitalize the Olive Ridley sea turtle population. They will help protect the area from poachers, collect eggs and move them to higher ground, measure the turtles and their nests (these in-

"Every year is slightly different," Feuerberg said. "It's very cutting edge; it's very new and not offered anywhere else. This is actually an opportunity to stay, learn and feel like you're making a difference."

Feuerberg said she also hopes "arribada" will occur during their trip. Arribada is an annual natural phenomenon in which thousands of sea turtles simultaneously come to the shores of Oaxaca to lay their eggs sometime between the months of August and November. While last year's group did not get to witness this event, they did interact with the turtles on the beach.

A participant of last year's trip, biological sciences junior Shannon Gonzalez, said she was able to help some newly-hatched sea turtles find their way to the ocean.

"It was an amazing experience to put a baby turtle in the ocean," Gonzales said. "They were so cute!"

Gonzalez found the experience very enlightening. Always an animal lover, especially of reptiles, Gonzalez said the tour was an interesting opportunity to learn about an animal in a country she hadn't visited in many years.

"At one point, we got to swim with the sea turtles," Gonzales said.

Her tour was structured similarly to this year's, with an initial exploration phase followed by the volunteer phase. One of the eco-cooperatives she and her group visited during their exploration was a cosmetic cooperative that specialized in making cosmetics from natural ingredients and native plants. This cooperative is also scheduled for this year's tour. She also enjoyed learning about the local culture and the people, who she said were very friendly. She even learned some of the Spanish she had lost since high school, and enjoyed working with animals and seeing the exotic plant life. And despite the heat, humidity, rain and surplus of mosquitoes, she said the trip was "super fun."

Animal science sophomore Jeffrey Westling, who also went last year and is an avid conservationist and admirer of Latin America, said his experiences made him want to visit Mexico as well.

"I learned (as I learn whenever I go to Latin America) how beautiful life is," Westling said. "The people of Latin America have contributed to floor me with their unrelenting kindness, love and humble nature when they have so little — that and how important conservation is and how beneficial it can be for a rural community like Mazunte or Escobido, where we traveled in Oaxaca."

He, too, said interacting with the sea turtles was one of his favorite parts of the trip, and is returning this year.

"It is such an eye-opening experience which is so valuable," Westling said.

More information can be found on the Viva Study Abroad website. The deadline to register for the tour is April 1.

Gas Prices
continued from page 1

But not all feel the same way. Renfro Kilgallon said even with the excess fuel cost, he will not stop driving. However, he said he is not excited about the price of an upcoming trip to San Diego, which also has a high average regular gas price of $3.946.

With the fear of a shortage, gas prices have risen all over the country, according to AAA. However, California and Hawaii currently have the highest state averages with $3.92 and $3.929, respectively, for regular gas. Nevada has the cheapest regular gas average at $3.215. With the continuing unrest in the Middle East, the AAA Fuel Gauge Report suggests these averages seem likely to continue increasing.

Cameron Simpson, an English junior, said he tries to avoid driving whenever possible. When he was forced to commute for work, the gas cost "really added up," which detered him even further from driving now. Nevertheless, the relatively small size of San Luis Obispo makes driving around town not that bad, he said.

"As high as the gas prices are in SLO, I feel like all of the essentials are located close enough that it isn't really that big of a deal," Simpson said. "The easy access to public transit to and from campus also helps."

Even the cheaper gas stations appear to have higher costs for drivers. In fact, Will Powers, a local resident, picked the San Luis Obispo Cenusa in February, claiming they misrepresented their prices as the lowest in town. At the time, the gas prices were in the $3.30 to $3.50 range.

When it came down to it, Renfro said she had to weigh the price of having a car with the luxury of it, but decided to bring her car to campus.

"When I decided to have a car on campus, I knew that it would cost a great deal of money, but for me the cost is outweighed by the freedom I get from having a car," Renfro said.
Word on the Street
What are your plans for spring break?

"Working — I might also go salsa dancing or surfing."
— Carlos Olvera, mechanical engineering senior

"Either jury duty or going to L.A. to see my dad."
— Shannyn Winkel, nutrition junior

"Touring with the Cal Poly choir, then Disneyland and then maybe San Diego or going home."
— Gurneer Deol, civil engineering junior

"I'm going home to hang out and catch up with friends."
— Issa Jules, environmental management senior

"I'm just going on a short trip to San Francisco."
— Shilpa Joshi, food science junior

"Just relax — probably just hang out with family and friends."
— Claudia Perez, golf engineering junior

Proposed bill would extend oil drilling in Gulf

Maria Recio
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

Senators said Wednesday a bill extending exploratory leases in the Gulf of Mexico will encourage drilling — and bring down the price of oil.

"All offshore energy producers in the Gulf of Mexico are currently being penalized for the mistakes of a few companies responsible for the Deepwater Horizon accident," said Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, referring to the April 20, 2010, BP drilling rig explo-

sion that sent oil flowing into the Gulf of Mexico. A little more than a month after the blowout, the Interior Department issued a six-month moratorium on all deepwater offshore drilling.

"The drilling moratorium forced energy producers with exploratory leases to sit idle while still having to pay the expenses of the lease and their employees," Hutchison said. "This is fundamentally unfair."

Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., is a co-sponsor of the legislation.

"It's time for this administration to be a better partner to this industry," said Landrieu, who's been a vocal critic of the Obama administration's handling of the spill and the drilling ban.

The Lease Extension and Energy Security Act, or LEASE, would give energy companies affected by the drilling moratorium an additional 12 months on their leases to make up for the lost time. The bill has been referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, where it will draw opposition from environmental groups. The bill's fate in the full Senate is uncertain.

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Senate rejects spending bills, deliberations begin again

David Lightman
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

The Senate on Wednesday soundly rejected two partisan bids to cut federal spending this year, doing so in a way that should clear the way for serious bipartisan negotiations over a budget compromise before the government runs out of money at the end of next week.

Both proposals needed 60 votes to pass, and neither came close. Republicans wanted to cut $61 billion from the current year’s spending, while Democrats wanted a test of how their $6.5 billion counteroffer would fare.

The Republican plan lost 56-44, with all 44 votes supporting it from Republicans. Opposing it were 51 Democrats, two independents and three Republicans.

The GOP senators who voted no on the plan were conservatives Jim DeMint of South Carolina, Mike Lee of Utah and Rand Paul of Kentucky. They wanted even deeper cuts. The Democratic proposal got fewer votes, losing 58-42.

The 42 yes votes were from 41 Democrats and one independent, but 10 Democrats joined 47 Republicans and one independent to oppose the plan.

Few were pleased with the choices. “Both bills are dead, and they deserve to be dead,” said Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., who voted against both proposals. “One bill cuts too little. The other bill has too much hate. Neither one is serious.”

Budget deliberations now are expected to follow several paths. One is a resurrection of talks led by Vice President Joe Biden. Republicans in the House of Representatives are currently preparing another short-term budget bill that would reportedly cut about $2 billion per week from spending while keeping the government running until mid-April.

All the cuts, as well as those rejected Wednesday, would come from only a small piece of the budget, non-defense domestic discretionary programs, which make up only 12 percent of federal spending.

Many lawmakers would prefer a longer-term agreement that would target the big-budget programs that drive up federal debt, including Medicare and the military, even though they’re popular with voters.

“It’s time we come together and we solve these big problems,” said Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla. “It means some senators are going to lose their seats if they decide to do the best, right thing for America.”

However, Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad, D-N.D., was upbeat after Wednesday’s votes.

“We need recognition that we need a comprehensive, 10-year plan, and in talking to my colleagues, it’s apparent there’s growing momentum in that direction,” he said.

Any such pact would face its toughest path in the Republican-led House. On Feb. 19 it approved the $61 billion in domestic cuts for the seven remaining months of this fiscal year. The cuts include gutting such programs together as job training and employment grants, health centers, high-speed rail, border security, diplomatic programs and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. In a statement of official policy Wednesday about that House bill, the White House said such cuts were unacceptable.

“If the president is presented with a bill that undermines critical priorities or national security through funding levels or restrictions, or if it contains earmarks or curtails the drivers of long-term economic growth and job creation while continuing to burden the future generations with deficits, the president will veto the bill,” the White House budget office said in a statement.

Both bills are dead, and they deserve to be dead. One bill cuts too little. The other has too much hate. Neither one is serious.

— Senator Ben Nelson
D-Nebraska

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Thursday, March 10, 2011
U.S. action to help Libyan rebels may still be an option

David S. Cloud
Los Angeles Times

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates is not opposed to military action to protect rebels in Libya, including a no-fly zone, but he wants to explore the possible consequences of intervening in the crisis, Gates’ spokesman said Wednesday.

Gates “has not staked out opposition to any particular course of action,” Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell told reporters traveling with Gates.

Morrell was addressing questions about Gates’ position on creation of a no-fly zone that have arisen since he warned Congress against “loose talk” of such a move and noted that any effort to patrol Libyan airspace would probably have to be preceded by a bombing campaign to neutralize its air defenses.

Gates is heading to Brussels for a North Atlantic Treaty Organization meeting Thursday and Friday, where Libya is expected to be a major topic of discussion.

He was in Afghanistan on Monday and Tuesday to attend meetings with U.S. commanders, troops and Afghan officials.

On Wednesday, he is scheduled to attend a ceremony for the incoming head of U.S. Africa Command in Stuttgart, Germany, and fly to Brussels, where NATO is headquartered.

As reports of airstrikes against rebels in Libya have continued in recent days, the White House has emphasized that a no-fly zone is one of the options it is considering along with NATO allies. Gates has said little publicly about the idea since his congressional testimony.

“Are we committed to providing the president with the full range of options for him to consider, including a no-fly zone?” Morrell said. “But (Gates) also sees it as his responsibility to provide the president and his national security team with the potential consequences of military action.”

He played down reports of splits over how to respond to the Libya crisis among members of Obama’s national security team.

“I don’t know that there is the distance that some of you perceive there to be between (Gates’) position and others in the administration,” Morrell told reporters.

Analysts and retired Air Force officers say enforcing a no-fly zone over Libya would be difficult without U.S. involvement. It could require hundreds of fighter aircraft and refueling tankers, an operation that could exceed the capabilities of Britain and France, which have been the most vocal NATO governments calling for an international response.

The White House must also weigh the risk that Libya might try to shoot down U.S. aircraft and of getting involved in an internal civil war that could continue for weeks or months. Even if a no-fly zone doomed Libyan airstrikes against rebels, it would not necessarily shift the tide of the fighting, which could potentially leave the U.S. and its allies involved in a protracted intervention.

U.S. air transport planes have moved hundreds of refugees who had fled to Tunisia to escape the fighting.

That is not a view shared by the Pentagon, which was preparing a list of military options regarding the situation in Libya, and that Gates would outline the risks of taking action as part of those discussions.

“We are committed to providing the president with the full range of options for him to consider, including a no-fly zone,” Morrell said. “But (Gates) also sees it as his responsibility to provide the president and his national security team with the potential consequences of military action.”

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“I don’t know that there is the distance that some of you perceive there to be between (Gates’) position and others in the administration,” Morrell told reporters.

End of the U.S. space shuttle program

California’s largest U.S. space shuttle program

Los Angeles Times

San Bruno gas explosion that killed eight people and destroyed 38 homes.

The Obama administration estimates that 82 percent of the nation’s public schools could fall short of federal standards this year, grades that are not only embarrassing but also mean government intervention for some of them. In a report to Congress on Wednesday, Education Secretary Arne Duncan was urging Congress to change the federal standards so that failing grades are awarded only to the schools most in need of help.

Pakistani leadership

A suicide bomb attack on a funeral held by an anti-Taliban tribal militia killed at least 34 people and injured more than 40 others Wednesday in northwest Pakistan, prompting militia leaders to angrily rebuke the government for failing to provide enough support for their battle against insurgents.

Members of the militia, known in Pakistan as a lashkar, complained that local officials had not provided any security for the funeral.

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www.mustangdaily.net
Reggae band Iration will end its two-month tour in San Luis Obispo tonight and tomorrow. Iration bassist Adam Taylor said finishing the tour here made sense for the band. "We wanted to end the tour with SLO because it's a place that we all love, and we wanted to make it special," he said.

The Hawaiian natives releasing their first album "No Time for Rent" in 2007, and have been climbing the charts ever since, with hits such as "Cookie Jar" and "Fall-ing." With the release of its album "Time Bomb" a year ago reaching No. 2 on Billboard's reggae album charts and several other tracks peaking on iTunes and Billboard lists, Iration has been building up quite the momentum.

The momentum isn't running out, either. Their most recent EP "Fresh Grounds," released in February, already experienced some success with the track "Summer Nights" reaching No. 2 on the iTunes reggae singles chart.

Taylor said the group's goal has always been to do well on the music charts. "It's a surprise, but it's something we've been working toward our entire career," Taylor said.

He also said their success is reflected in other ways. "It's translating with the crowds, and we're able to play bigger shows," Taylor said. "We feel really blessed and thankful that we're able to experience this success."

Fans have been noticing the band in Santa Barbara while members were attending college around the area. What started in 2001 as two guitarists and a set of drums grew to include a bassist in Taylor by 2002. By 2008, the band was complete with keyboardist Cayan Blevins, drummer Joe Dickens, vocalist and guitarist Michah Pu­eschel and dub controller Joe King.

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Fans have been noticing the band's rise in popularity as well. Mathematics sophomore Mike Ion said the band is indeed trying to appeal to a larger audience, most apparently with the release of "Fresh Grounds." The band wanted to experiment with more musical styles. "It has a wide array of music — we're an acoustic band and acoustic guitar," Taylor said. "We want to remain unique but stick to the fundamentals of reggae, so we're experimenting with different styles within that genre. It's cool to go out of our comfort zone." And so far, audiences have received the new sounds with open ears.

One track "No Letter," which is an acoustic song, has been a hit among crowds so far, Taylor said.

Civil engineering freshman Alan Blevins said the fact that Iration experiments with sounds within reggae is what distinguishes them from other reggae bands. "They have so many different sounds," Blevins said. "They have the rock sound sometimes, sometimes the Bob Marley reggae sound. Just the variety is what makes them unique. I really like all the songs on the new album. They went all out on this one."

So why does the Iration sound resonate so well with San Luis Obis­po — enough to support two shows? Ion said it comes from the sheer en­joyment of reggae music. "Reggae is the type of music that a lot of people enjoy — it's not too loud and over the top," Ion said. "It's just feel good music. So no matter what genre is your favorite, everyone seems to like their stuff."

Sanderson attributes it to the crowd connection. "Iration has always been a SLO staple," Sanderson said. "They performed earlier in the year and at UU hour and they had a huge crowd. We've always given them our support and I don't think it'll stop." Tickets for both all-ages shows are available in advance for $18 at Boo­Boo Records or at ticknertwcb.com, and are $20 at the door. Doors for tonight's show open at 8 p.m., and at 6:30 p.m. for tomorrow's show.
Students host sea life event at Avila Beach

In the tradition of finding innovative ways to explore their senior projects, Cal Poly students Natalie Do and Rebecca Leong are no exception. The two communication studies seniors will put on the event "Find Oz and Lula" at the Avila Beach Sea Life Center Saturday afternoon.

The family-based event is a scavenger hunt which takes kids around the small Avila Beach community to find Oz and Lula, the two new clownfish the center is welcoming as a new exhibit. Attendees will be given a map leading them to various locations — such as Avila Grocery, the Marine Mammal Center and Hula Hut — to find clues revealing the location of the new critters.

Leong said she got connected to the Sea Life Center last year through the small Avila Beach community to find Oz and Lula, the two new clownfish the center is welcoming as a new exhibit. Attendees will be given a map leading them to various locations — such as Avila Grocery, the Marine Mammal Center and Hula Hut — to find clues revealing the location of the new critters.

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Sea Life
continued from page 7

a friend. She then contacted the executive director of the center, Priscilla Kiesig, to pitch some ideas about a fundraiser.

"I contacted Priscilla and she said they don't really do anything like what we wanted to do and they only really do one fundraiser a year," Leong said. "So we met with her (at) the end of fall quarter and brainstormed ideas for what we could do. She said that they were bringing in a clown-fish exhibit at a small sea life center came about during a brain-storming session.

"We were sitting in the car, thinking of ideas and then it hit me — Finding Nemo," Do said. "So that's where we came up with the name. They're going to name the fish Ot and Lulu."

One of the main goals of the event aside from the hunt, is raising awareness for the existence of the Sea Life Center, which is located next to Pirate Park on San Juan Street. However, another main goal got in the way of this one before they could embark on creating awareness: raising funds for the center.

"The Sea Life Center isn't that well-known, so people don't want to invest their money in something that they don't know about," Do said. "It took a lot of convincing."

Also, the center is a non-profit organization, so the women had to start from scratch with a budget of $0. Being the first event of its kind for the Sea Life Center, the newness of it left donors skeptical at first.

"Having this new event was a struggle because people are hesitant because they don't know what it's about, so that was difficult," Leong said. "Because it's a new event, people are reluctant to donate."

However, the women managed to get five solid sponsors — the participating businesses in the scavenger hunt — as well as a few monetary donations.

"It was a struggle, but we managed and we're actually staying under budget and donating, as of now, $500 to Sea Life Center," Leong said. "That's not even including the ticket sales."

Despite their financial road bump, the women said they hope the event will bring outsiders into the small Avila community, and more importantly, raise sea life awareness.

"By having this, it's going to draw people there and see how the animals need care, so hopefully that will draw in membership," Do said.

The Sea Life Center is also looking to promote more family-oriented events in the future. Volunteer and Cuesta College student Sierra Stockton said she hopes this event will lead to more awareness about the possibilities within the center.

"It's something that really needs to be shared," Stockton said. "It's a little jewel in Avila that a lot of families — once they know about it — I think will access it and use it."

Volunteer Shannon Patterson said she's hoping for a big turnout for the event.

"I think it's going to be a lot of fun for the kids," Patterson said. "If I know if I was a kid, I'd totally be all over that."

As far as promotion goes, the girls have covered all aspects. But if they were going to do it again, Leong said to start as early as possible.

"I think it's been hard doing it in one quarter — it's just a lot to do in 5 months," she said.

Do said this experience — both incorporating a senior project as well as personal satisfaction — has helped shape the path she hopes to follow in her career after graduation.

"Doing this event and planning it strengthened only my liking for this. Just learning a lot about the event planning process has excited me about a career," Do said.

The event will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tickets will be sold at the door for $5; members and children under 3 are free.
Conservatives searching for anyone but Romney

President Obama launched a vi­cious, underhanded attack on one of the leading contenders for the 2012 Republican presidential nomination last month: he praised former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney for launching a state-administered health-care plan. I agree with Mitt Romney, who recently said he’s proud of what he accomplished on health care in Massachusetts,” Obama told the nation’s governors.

Romney supporters winced, but his potential rivals for the Republican nomination were delighted. They’ve already taken to calling “RomneyCare,” to remind conservatives that this is a “truce” on social issues to focus on deficit reduction, he was roundly condemned by social conservatives. Moreover, Huntsman, a former diplomat, has kept cultural issues prominent in his speeches: last week he said (wrongly) that Obama had improved high all 20 months until the election. But this ought to be one of the best opportunities for a tough speech on fiscal concerns. When Daniels recently called for a “truce” on social issues to focus on improving economy — it could be a big opportunity with conservative credentials.

There’s a big opportunity for anyone with conservative credentials who isn’t named Romney.

The country’s in a conserva­tive mood. Republicans just won a landslide victory in last year’s con­gressional elections. The unemploy­ment rate is likely to remain stubbornly high at 20 months until the presidential election. Defeating an incumbent president is never easy, but this ought to be one of the best chances in a generation. If only conserva­tives can settle on a champion, that is. Some potential champions ap­pear unlikely to run. GOP strate­gists say there’s no sign that former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, a potential front-runner, is preparing a campaign. Newt Gingrich, the “ObamaCare” law they loathe. The “like the ‘tea party,” the Obama

There’s a big opportunity with conservative credentials. Former Arkans Gov. Mike Huckabee is widely popular, but he talks fer­vently, and convincingly, about how much he enjoys not being a candidate. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich announced last week that he was “seriously explor­ing” a candidacy, but all he dis­played, aside from a new website, was continued uncertainty. Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, who won atten­tion for a tough speech on fiscal responsibility last month, took a step back from candidacy last week, saying his home state’s budget crisis might get in the way of saving the rest of the nation.

That process of elimination has led Republican strategists to begin focusing on two politicians who, though unknown to most Ameri­cans, at least appear serious about pursuing the nomination: Missis­sippi Gov. Haley Barbour and for­mer Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty. Both are orthodox conservatives who, unlike Romney, never passed a healthcare law, supported a fed­eral bank bailout or governed where same-sex marriage was legal. Bar­bour, a former lobbyist and chairman of the RNC, is a prodigious fund­raiser, a useful skill for any national candidate. Pawlenty, who calls him­self a blue-collar “Sam’s Club” Re­publican, has built a solid following among conservatives in Iowa, where next year’s first caucuses will be held in February. One danger for the party, though, is that the nominating pro­cess could erase one of the lessons of last year’s victory: that Republicans can win amid independent voters when they focus on fiscal concerns and downplay social issues such as abortion and gay marriage.

When Daniels recently called for a “truce” on social issues to focus on deficit reduction, he was roundly condemned by social conservatives. Meanwhile, Huntsman, a former diplomat, has kept cultural issues prominent in his speeches: last week he said (wrongly) that Obama had improved high all 20 months until the election. But this ought to be one of the best chances for a tough speech on fiscal concerns. When Daniels recently called for a “truce” on social issues to focus on improving economy — it could be a big opportunity with conservative credentials.

The American people don’t seem to dis­like him as a human being.” “If you have 12 louses, the one who’s the most moderate may end up a winner,” he said. “But it doesn’t seem to be easy to defeat Obama,” he warned. “Defeating an incumbent is tough. He has a dedicated, committed base that seems to be holding. The American people don’t seem to dis­like him as a human being.” "It can be done," he said. "It de­pends on who we nominate." On the other hand, with an over­crowded Republican field, a polariz­ing GOP primary battle, a White House that’s heading back toward the center — and, perhaps, a slowly improving economy — it could be a good year for Obama after all.

— Doyle McManus

Los Angeles Times columnist

THE WORLD IS BUZZING ABOUT THE WEDDING OF THE CENTURY!... NORMALLY I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE ROYAL WEDDINGS... BUT MARRIAGE MIGHT SETTLE HIM DOWN ENOUGH TO PLAY A FULL SEASON!!

Editorial page

English 0:00

Thursday, March 10, 2011

Volume LIX, No. 47, 03/11

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Softball set for two games against Notre Dame Sunday

RYAN SIDARO

Softball is heading home. After four tournaments and 20 games, the Mustangs will play their first games at home this weekend, a double-header against Notre Dame. This season hasn’t exactly been kind to the Mustangs. Cal Poly has a 3-17 record but will have a chance to turn it all around at home on Sunday. The Mustangs’ first game will start at 1 p.m. and the second at 3 p.m.

Wrestling continued from page 12

nals of the Pac-10 tournament.

“We didn’t come with the intensity to compete,” DesRoches said. “1 didn’t wrestle to take it from them. We kind of wrestled hoping that everything would fall into place.”

Fortunately, he rebounded for a third place finish after a 5-4 victory over Lucas Episcopuca.

He will not be the wrestler on everyone’s radar in Philadelphia, but that has not dulled Des-Roches’ confidence.

“Anybody can be beat,” Des-Roches said. “It’s about whoever shows up that day and wants it more. I know I can beat anybody, I just have to do it.”

The 165-pound junior will have a chance to walk the talk as he will attempt to pull the upset of the day in his first round match against the No. 2 seeded Andrew Howe of Wisconsin.

For 197-pounder Ryan Smith, it looked like déjà vu. He lost his final match, a true fourth match, in the Pac-10 tournament for the second year in a row, leaving his fate up to the NCAA selection committee.

In 2010, Smith lost a true second match and had his opportunity to wrestle at nationals “taken” from him, as he describes it.

In 2011, Smith took it back. He placed fifth but wrestled stiffer competition, which was probably his saving grace in the eyes of the tournament committee, who punched his ticket to nationals on Wednesday.

“Making it to the NCAA tournament is a stepping stone, a step in the right direction in advancing to my goal and my dream of being a national champion,” Smith said. “It’s definitely a good feeling to have finally gotten here considering seasons I’ve had (in the past where I’ve gotten injured early).”

To turn that dream into reality will involve going through top-seeded Cam Simeon of Cornell in the opening round.

Neither heavyweight Arturis Disney, who lost back-to-back matches in the Pac-10 tournament, nor 133-pound redshirt freshman Brandon Rocha made the committee’s cut.

If there is one thing Perry has been clear on throughout the year, it is his ultimate goal for his wrestlers.

“It’s about winning,” Perry said. “Winning is the most important thing when you’re in sports. Maybe as a coach there’s morals and things you teach kids along the way, but at the end of the day when kids graduate and walk off the campus, you want them to feel good about what they’ve accomplished, and to me, that means being a national champion.”

UCLA continued from page 12

his coaching, a challenge given the Bruins are a team of self-professed goobers who like to eat chicken, chili cheese fries, horse around during media conferences and shave each other’s heads into mohawks.

“I’m about to start my barber-shop called Honeycuts,” sophomore forward Tyler Honeycutt, the team hairstylist, joked earlier this season.

The childishness has manifested itself on the court in repeated lulls and an inability to play consistently hard for two halves. Howland responded by coaxing and cajoling, holding his players accountable but not overreacting to turnovers or bad shots.

“He’s on me all the time whether I’m on a high or a low,” Nelson said, “just encouraging me or just telling me to keep doing what I’m doing, so he’s just been a big help.”

Known for his icy exterior, Howland has run an emotional gamut recently. He cried after walk-on Tyler Trapani made the final basket in Pauley Pavilion, the arena Trapani’s great-grandfather John Wooden made famous, before its renovation.

A week later, Howland kissed a reporter on the forehead, fulfilling his promise to do so if the Bruins won 22 games.

“I don’t always show my emotion,” Howland said later. “You don’t always get to see it.”

THIS WEEK IN CAL POLY ATHLETICS

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WE ARE THE MUSTANGS
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For co-head coach Mark Perry, describing the Cal Poly wrestling team's No. 6 finish in the Pac-10 Championships as anything other than disappointing would be an understatement. Coming off one of the best seasons in a decade, going 9-3 in dual meets, the Mustangs were unimpressive, sending only one wrestler to the Pac-10 finals.

But after a dismal performance, the Mustangs are sending four wrestlers to the NCAA Championships in Philadelphia March 17 to March 19.

Cal Poly's lone Pac-10 champion was junior 141-pounder Boris Novachkov, who won one point over three matches and took home the title for the second year in a row. The victory cemented his place in the national championships, giving Boris a No. 3 seed in the tournament.

"(Boris) put himself in this position by making his mind up last year after NCAA's, and he committed himself in the spring and in the summer and that's why he's (a number three seed)," Perry said. "He's done a hell of a job all year."

But after a dismal performance, Perry also said that Boris, who placed seventh last year, has a legitimate shot at being a national champion in 2011. The last time a Cal Poly wrestler took home the ultimate crown was in 1976 when Mark DiGirolamo won it all.

The only wrestler Boris has lost to this year is Kellen Russell of Michigan, who earned the top seed after an undefeated season. Being on opposite sides of the bracket, the two would only meet in the championship final, if or both lost in the early rounds and were forced to the losing side of the bracket.

Conspicuously left out of the field of 33 wrestlers in the 149-pound weight class was senior Filip Novachkov, who was denied a final chance to wrestle for a national title. Filip moved up two weight classes last year in the season, from 133-pounds, but a No. 3 finish in the Pac-10 was not enough for him to go to the NCAA's.

Barrett Abel was the only other Mustang to earn an automatic bid, placing third, but Abel dwells on the fact that he was not able to pull off an upset against Interama's No. 4 Bubba Jenkins of Arizona State. He tied the match at two going into the final period, but Jenkins escaped early in the third period and hung on for the victory.

Abel said he lost some of his composure in the final two minutes, allowing Jenkins to win, but is mostly pleased with his game plan for the match and would relish another shot at the Sun Devil. In the first round, Abel will face Johnny Greiheimer of Edinboro who is 25-13 on the season.

Ryan DeRoches also earned an at large bid to the NCAA Championships for a second straight year, despite suffering an upset loss to Trevor Hall of Cal State Bakersfield in the semifinals.

Cal Poly sends four wrestlers to Philly
By Ryan Shiardo

Howland has UCLA back on track

Ben Bloch
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES — The "standoffish" coach shrugged off a disdain for zone defenses and instructed his players to use one.

The "inflexible" coach cried in the locker room, then broke down twice when meeting with the media.

Watch Ben Howland long enough this season, and the UCLA basketball coach just might shatter a few perceptions about the man who has brought the Bruins back from the brink of irrelevancy.

His team is 22-9 and a trendy pick to win the Pacific Life Pac-10 Conference tournament it opens Thursday evening, only one year removed from a 14-18 season. UCLA is winning with a team that features no seniors, two juniors and one coach who is unfraid to reverse long-held philosophies if he thinks it will benefit his team.

"He is changing and adapting to the personnel we have to give our team the best chance to win," said longtime assistant coach Scott Garson. "Anybody who is saying he is inflexible or stubborn doesn't know what he is talking about in terms of changes, especially this year with this team."

Long a proponent of hedging, in which a defender runs to cut off a player moving around a screen, Howland realized that system was ill-fitted to the personnel he had to work with this year. Howland instructed Smith to stay back closer to the basket early in Pac-10 play.

The coach later used the same scheme with all of his post players, solidifying a defense that has propelled the Bruins to 13 victories in their last 16 games while holding opponents under 40 percent shooting 10 times during that stretch.

"If you looked at our team and the way we played defense three years ago to now, it's different," Howland said. "And I still think our defense is good. I think we've really improved, especially since finally making that change" in defending screens.

Howland also removed the foul-prone Smith from the starting lineup because he believed officials like to set a tone by calling fouls early in games. After fouling out in back-to-back games he started early in conference play, Smith has fouled out only once in his last 15 games coming off the bench, and that was in overtime against California.

Smith and fellow Bruins big man Reeves Nelson have often left opponents in a fouled mood because of Howland's insistence on working the ball inside to utilize his two best scoring options. Gardner said the inside-out philosophy has been emphasized even more than it was when UCLA had Kevin Love, an eventual NBA lottery pick.

"Once me and Josh get going down there," said Nelson, the Bruins' leading scorer, "it opens things up for our shooters."

Conversely, Howland has utilized a small, three-guard lineup against teams that play zone defenses because it has allowed UCLA to attack more efficiently on offense.

The Bruins even came out in a zone themselves in the second half of a game against Cal because Howland, who typically abhors zones, wanted to keep Smith and Nelson from fouling out. The Bruins rallied to force overtime before losing by four points. Howland has had to adapt to his players as much as they have to

See UCLA, page 11

Baseball set to host LMU for four games

Ryan Shiardo

The Cal Poly baseball team (4-6) continues its homestand this weekend, where the Mustangs host Loyola Marymount for a four-game series. The Mustangs are riding a four-game win streak, after sweeping Valparaiso last weekend and defeating Fresno State 11-4. With the Lions (9-4) dropping three of their last five games, the Mustangs may be able to continue their hot streak. Cal Poly will play its first game Friday, have a double-header Saturday and finish on Sunday.

See Wrestling, page 11

RYAN SHIARDO MUSTANG DAILY