Speculation and unrest: setting the price of gasoline

Amber Kiwan
AMBERKIWAN.MD^MAIL.COM

As Cal Poly students go about their daily lives, attending class, studying and squeezing in time for extracurriculars, a series of events occurring somewhere far away is inevitably having an impact very close to home; specifically, at the gas station.

Gas prices are approaching record highs and California remains one of the most expensive places in the country to fill up.

Business Insider, a business news website, said $4 is the price tolerance threshold for consumer behavior change, and according to a Los Angeles Times article, California gas prices averaged $4.205 in the last week, $1.115 higher than last year.

Some fear prices will continue to rise, reach and possibly exceed, the record pricing high of $4.086 from June 2008.

The big question is who—or what—is to blame? Senator John McCain said President Obama was to blame for 2008’s record spike in gas prices, due to Obama’s opposition to drilling oil in the U.S. Most news organizations cite unrest in the Middle East as a primary cause. Others blame it on speculators, but rarely clarify what this exactly means.

Economics professor Eric Fisher said the economics of gas prices is something most people neither understand nor care about. But among those who do know and care, there tend to be strong differences in opinion regarding which factors are believed to be most important. This depends on the person’s political persuasion, their level of education or indifference and the media outlets they choose.

In general, the factors that influence fluctuations in gas prices can be broken down into four interrelated parts according to Fisher, political science professor Emmitt Evans and finance professor Herve Roche.

Supply and demand
Two opposing viewpoints exist regarding the idea of supply and demand and its impact on gas prices.

The first viewpoint is increasing supply and demand in the global market. The second viewpoint is that the factors that influence gas prices are driven by changes in local demand and supply, such as increases in oil production or decreases in oil demand.

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Bandaging the city budget

Josh Friedman
JOSHFRIEDMAN.MD^MAIL.COM

The San Luis Obispo City Council has two months to overcome a projected $4.4 million shortfall in the city general fund for the 2011-2012 fiscal year or be forced to operate on limited reserve money.

In advance of a June 21 deadline to adopt the 2011-2013 budget, which goes into effect July 1, the council must erase a deficit that grew from $3 million in December to the current $4.4 million mark in March.

Much of the growth in the budget gap can be attributed to plans to increase expenditures on operating programs by $2 million and on capital improvements by $1.5 million. Specifically, the capital improvement section of the budget includes $1.7 million for street cleaning, $350,000 for storm drain replacement and $175,000 for open space acquisition.

To overcome these increases in expenditures, the council plans to cut spending, primarily by slashing city employee salaries. A $2.1 million reduction in salaries has already been proposed, but city council member Andrew Carter does not believe that is enough.

"Two point one million dollars is way too small and not nearly aggressive enough," Carter said. "The number I came up with was $3.2 million."

Council member Kathy Smith agrees.

"I think the number 2.1 (million) is timid," Smith said. "We need to take a look at it being closer to 3.5."

Though spending cuts remain the focus of deficit reduction efforts, the council also opted to infuse a sizable total into the general fund by dipping into reserves.

Forgoing standard practice, the council decided to include the use of
Gas Prices
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demand and decreasing supply. Fisher said the growth of India and China is partly responsible for an increase in demand for oil. These two economic powers have grown exponentially larger than they were not too long ago, causing a huge spike in the global demand for oil. Meanwhile, some believe supply is going down. Although not everyone unanimously agrees, the International Energy Agency said the world has passed the point of “Peak Oil,” meaning the maximum level of extraction and production has been reached, and from now on, production will decline.

Fruzs said this means oil prices will continue to rise and subsequent wars over oil will continue to intensify.

The second viewpoint is the polar opposite. According to Business Insider, demand is decreasing due to the high prices, among other reasons (Japan’s slowing economic growth rate, etc.). Business Insider was not the only source to state the market has an overabundance of oil supplies.

The U.S. Crude oil inventory has reported growth in the past year and Saudi Arabia’s Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said the market is oversupplied. With this point of view, the argument for supply and demand is not the sole factor behind high gas prices, which means economists must focus on other factors to define rising costs.

Value of the dollar

The dollar is the currency used to trade oil on the global market. When the value of the dollar falls, foreign currencies become more valuable in comparison. Other countries are then able to buy more oil than they regularly can, driving up the demand and increasing the price in dollars.

Unrest in the Middle East

Political instability and unrest in oil producing countries has the potential to interrupt regular oil production and exporting. But, according to National Public Radio, John Hofmeister, founder and CEO of the nonprofit group Citizens for Affordable Energy and former CEO of Shell Oil, the unrest in Libya, Syria and other Middle Eastern or North African countries has not actually had much of an impact on oil production yet. The fact that it has the potential to do so creates irrational fears, which drives up the market prices, via speculators, which leads to the last cause.

Speculation on commodity market

While some view this explanation as a result of the other three factors, others view it as an equal cause, and still others see it as the primary cause of the price hike.

Regardless of the level of importance one places in the commodity market’s impact, it’s important to understand and is rarely explained in the mainstream media, probably due to the complexity of the market.

Commodities can be bought and sold on a market, such as oil, wheat or soybeans. When the concept of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and turning a commodity into a concept that can be bought and sold through Wall Street is introduced, “Speculators” were then introduced into this process. These figures served as a middleman to improve the buying and selling process. An example of this, from Harper’s Magazine, is if the corn producer had corn to sell, but no one came to buy it at that time, the speculative would purchase the corn and hold onto it. Then, when the cereal companies didn’t need corn, if there were no corn producers selling again, they could buy the corn from the speculators at a similar price.

The purpose of the speculators was to provide market liquidity, meaning that users always had the ability to sell for a reasonable price. Speculators were originally supposed to be across keeping the markets healthy and for this reason, had certain strict limitations placed on them.

Goldman Sachs, the global investment banking firm, created a loophole in these limitations on speculators. This gave speculators new powers and now instead of creating market liquidity, they could do the opposite: hoarding. Speculators purchase huge amounts of oil for the sole purpose of selling it for a much higher price, “Speculators are not contributing to society,” Roche said. “They are not at all interested in the things they buy, they just want to sell it later at a higher price.”

The entire process is then driven and intensified by the three other factors listed above. Roche used the example of trying to sell a used piece of paper.

“If someone tries to sell you a piece of paper, how much would you pay? Would you buy it for $5?”

— Herve Roche
Finance professor

Budget
continued from page 1

a one-time $1.6 million reserve to ease the spending caps and advancement of various city projects.

Continuous spending on “pet” projects, however, is creating concern about long-term durability of the city budget. Currently, two projects receiving significant attention are City Hall renovation and Laguna Lake dredging. Despite the present shortfall, the council is prepared to spend at least $100,000 on refurbishing the City Hall steps.

Mayor Jan Marx is adamant about doing so.

“When we had this recent rainy period, about 4 in 5 days afterward water was leaking through those steps,” Marx said. “I think it’s a good time to do it now rather than wait for some kind of failure of those steps in the future.”

Marx also said renovating the steps will demonstrate civic pride.

“It would be a great thing to do to celebrate the 60th anniversary of this building,” Marx said.

Vice mayor John Ashbaugh said he supports not only rebuilding the steps, but also an overall redesign of City Hall including a landscape plan for the City Hall plaza and modified entrances to both levels of the building.

“The opportunity should not be limited just to a replacement of our steps,” Ashbaugh said. “I would like to see us spend on a comprehensive redesign of our entrance, which may include wheelchair access from Onos Street.”

Ashbaugh said he supports a plan to spend close to $6 million during the next five years on dredging Laguna Lake. Dredging is required to prevent an eventual transformation from lake to swamp due to increasing buildup of sediments underneath the water.

Though this project may require residents surrounding the lake to raise a significant portion of that cost, the council wants to proceed with the dredging.

Ashbaugh said Council member Dan Carpenter said he is fairly supportive of dredging Laguna Lake, but his concerns about excess spending and budget sustainability are mounting.

Carpenter said he acknowledges the possibility of the termination of Measure V, the half-cent sales tax, as well as the chance of reduction in city employee concessions due to binding arbitration.

“I really want to look further down the line than one or two or five years (because of) this unfunded liability we’re going to have to face,” Carpenter said. “We’ve got to have some sort of contingency plan in place.”

Carpenter, who said he considered himself a fiscal conservative, does not approve of the developing trend of placing bonds “Bank-A-Dis” on a broken budget process.

“If we just try to close the gap every two years, how are we ever going to address the big picture down the line?” Carpenter said.

I want to look further down the line than one or two or five years.

We’ve got to have some sort of contingency plan in place.

— Dan Carpenter
San Luis Obispo City Council member

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Libyan rebels nearly drive all Gadhafi forces out of key port city

Rebels focused on expelling loyalist troops from the city of Misrata Saturday, cutting off supplies to weaken the pro-Gadhafi forces.

Ned Parker
Los Angeles Times

Rebel fighters drove Moammar Gadhafi's loyalist forces from all but one base in Misrata on Saturday and appeared to be on the verge of expelling all government forces from the besieged port city.

After furious street fighting, Gadhafi's troops abandoned a college and vegetable market that had been hubs for shelling the city. At least 24 rebel fighters were killed and an additional 70 wounded, doctors at Misrata's Hikma hospital said.

But even if rebels push all of Gadhafi's fighters from the city, Misrata remains surrounded by the Libyan leader's security units. The government could bomb the city from its gates if NATO is not effective in cutting off Gadhafi's supply lines.

To evade NATO attacks, Gadhafi has used civilian cars to transport troops and supplies over open roads, but rebels believe that NATO bombing runs have weakened Gadhafi's forces outside the city.

The battles on Saturday marked the culmination of the rebel fighters' strategy over the last month. They had sealed off Tripoli Street, the main commercial artery in Misrata, with sand-filled trucks to isolate Gadhafi's fighters and starve them of supplies. The strategy produced dividends as fighters first abandoned Tripoli Street's Tamim Life Insurance building Thursday. The Tamim building had been used to shower rockets, mortar rounds, gunfire and cluster bombs on central Misrata.

The port city rose up against Gadhafi as part of a popular revolt in mid-February and has become a symbol of the struggle against the Libyan leader.

Early Saturday, government fighters quit the city's vegetable market and regrouped at the old main hospital, which had been closed for renovations before the uprising began. At least 39 pro-Gadhafi fighters were killed in the fighting, a doctor said.

Rebel fighters also drove Gadhafi's troops from the city's Techni cal Institute.

As evening fell Saturday, government forces were on the defensive at the old hospital. A rebel fighter, Akram Hamid, said it was feared Gadhafi's men were using human shields at the medical complex, located on Tripoli Street.

At Hikma hospital, meanwhile, at least two rebel fighters were killed and an additional 70 wounded, doctors at Misrata's Hikma hospital said.

But even if rebels push all of Gadhafi's fighters from the city, shot in the leg by his commander when he refused to fight.

The Hikma hospital was pushed to the limit by the number of wounded on Saturday. A man with both his legs blown off was rushed to the emergency room but died on the operating table. Relatives hugged the bodies of dead fighters, some of them wrapped in pre-Gadhafi Libyan flags. A screaming little girl, who was wounded by a mortar blast, had Shapiro pulled from her forehead as her terrified parents watched.

The sight of newly liberated neighborhoods in Misrata was eerie. Until the day before, they had been occupied by Gadhafi's paramilitary forces. Outside the Technical Institute in eastern Misrata, buildings were burned and scarred by bullets. At one spot, rebels dug up two of their dead — they had been executed, their comrades said. The rebels shot their guns in the air as they loaded the bodies into a truck to take to the hospital.

In the courtyard of an apartment complex, a charred tank was on its side. There were sticks of explosives and unfinished bowls of rice left behind in many of the apartments and homes.

Hamid, the rebel, bragged that Gadhafi's forces had been taught a lesson since fighting broke out.

"They have suffered in Misrata," Hamid said. "God willing, this is almost over. They will be out of the city.

The Libyan deputy foreign minister, Khaled Kaim, said late Friday that NATO airstrikes had taken their toll on Gadhafi's forces. His comments came after the United States announced the start of Predator drone operations to help the North Atlantic Treaty Organization effort. Kaim said the government now intends to let local tribesmen deal with Misrata.

"They have suffered in Misrata. God willing, this is almost over. They will be out of the city," Hamid said. "I've heard he is preparing more Grad rocket trucks from south Libya."

They have suffered in Misrata. God willing, this is almost over. They will be out of the city.

— Hamid
Libyan rebel
**St. Louis tornado worst regional storm in decades**

Jennifer Mann
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

The National Weather Service reports the storm that ripped through the St. Louis region Friday was the worst it has seen in more than 40 years.

The last time the area saw such severe and widespread damage was on Jan. 24, 1967, when a tornado traveled 21 miles across St. Louis County following an eerily similar path.

That was the fourth-worst tornado in history to hit the St. Louis metropolitan area, according to the weather service.

"People are going to remember this for a long time," said Jim Sieveking, the lead forecaster at the National Weather Service in St. Louis.

A storm path producing tornadoes on Friday traveled from Maryland Heights all the way across the Mississippi River to Granite City, leaving destroyed homes, fallen trees and downed wires in its wake.

In path was only about five to 10 miles off from the tornado of 1967, Sieveking said.

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, smack in the middle of that path, was hit hard, losing part of its roof and seeing its windows shattered through-out the main terminal. There were multiple injuries, none serious. The airport closed down and officials are working to have it reopened by Sunday.

The weather service has confirmed tornadoes touched down in New Melle, Maryland Heights and Granite City.

Sunday tornadoes are not inspecting the damage, to confirm suspected tornadoes elsewhere along that storm route. Some said they will be looking for the telltale signs: convergent patterns in the damage, twisting and turning of the tree limbs, houses removed from their foundations.

He said forecasters are confident the tornado touched down in Maryland Heights, Bridgeton and Edmundson because at those points they were picking up on their weather radars the debris swirling through the tornadoes.

This storm was far worse than the one that hammered Sunset Hills on New Year's Eve, he said. The tornadoes then were from a squall line thunderstorm. Squall lines are famous for their damaging winds but don't usually produce tornadoes — and when they do, they are short-lived, he said.

Friday was a supercell thunderstorm, known for producing long path tornadoes, hail and damaging winds.

The 1967 storm first touched down in Chesterfield and headed northeast at 40 miles per hour. It was on the ground for 35 minutes, according to the weather service, and left a path of destruction between 50 and 200 yards wide.

There were 216 injuries and three fatalities. Property damage was significant, with 168 homes destroyed, 258 with major damage, and 1,485 with minor damage. At least 600 businesses were damaged or destroyed, the weather service reported.

The total damage was estimated to be around $15 million.

Forecasters at the weather service say the region may be at risk for more tornadoes Monday afternoon and evening, when a severe storm system is expected to move back in. Until then, the rain will continue, which has officials worried about flash floods.

"The biggest threat over the next 24 to 48 hours is how much has fallen," Sieveking said.

"Almost all the rivers are either in flood stage or they're going to flood stage just due to the rainfall we've received so far," he said. "You receive additional rainfall and that would just push the crest of the river higher."

**State**

**SACRAMENTO (MCT) —** A California congresswoman Friday called for an investigation into the actions of federal immigration officials, saying they lied about whether counties and states had the right to opt out of a controversial nationwide enforcement program that screens for illegal immigrants in local jails.

The so-called Secure Communities program, launched in 2008, was promoted to local and state leaders as a way to focus enforcement efforts on "serious convicted criminals." But the program, which uses fingerprint data, has come under fire because it has ensnared a high proportion of immigrants who have never been charged with a crime or who have been charged with minor infractions.

Critics say it discourages illegal immigrants from reporting crimes and opens the door to racial profiling.

**WASHINGTON D.C. (MCT) —** The Senate Ethics Committee's investigation into Sen. John Ensign's conduct related to his affair with a campaign aide will continue despite his decision to resign, the panel's leaders said.

"Out of an abundance of caution, we've suspended doing anything with cases involving these matters," Senate Ethics Committee Chairman James Inhofe, R-Okla., said last week.

In a terse statement, chairwoman Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and ranking member Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., said Ensign "made the appropriate decision" to step down, but they signaled the decision limit its but does not end their probe.

"The Senate Ethics Committee has worked diligently for 22 months on this matter and will complete its work in a timely fashion," the senators said.

Ensign's resignation takes effect on May 3, when the Senate is set to return from a two-week recess. On Friday, Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, a Republican, said that he would appoint a new senator before then, while calling initial speculation about whom it would be "premature."

**National**

**MICHIGAN (MCT) —** Controversial Pastor Perry Jones accidently fired his 40-caliber handgun while he was in the parking lot of a Sunset Hills, Mich., TV studio Thursday night, according to police.

The 59-year-old Florida pastor was getting in the passenger side of his car at 11:10 p.m. after an interview when the Taurus handgun fired, sending a bullet into the floorboard.

Sunset Hills Police Lt. Nick Louisia said Friday.

"Officers heard a gunshot, approached the vehicle, asked Mr. Jones if he was OK," the police said.

Officers took the gun and also found another gun near the 42-year-old driver. Both men were carrying valid Florida concealed weapon licenses, which are recognized in Michigan, said Louisia.

"It did not appear a crime had been committed," Louisia said, explaining that officers returned the weapons and sent the men on their way. As he entered a Dearborn, Mich., courtroom Friday, Jones told reporters that he had been up since 4:30 a.m and firing his gun was "an accident."

**ISRAEL (MCT) —** An Israeli man was killed and three other people were wounded Sunday when an Israeli military security officer fired open fire on a convoy of ultra-Orthodox Jewish worshippers on their way to an Islamic religious site in a Palestinian-administered area without permission and then ignored orders to stop, Israeli and Palestinian officials said.

The Jewish worshippers were attempting to make an unauthorized predawn pilgrimage to Joseph's Tomb, located in the West Bank city of Nablus.

The incident threatened to further heighten tensions in the West Bank between Jewish settlers and Palestinians. In the hours after the shooting, Palestinian youths clashed briefly with Israeli soldiers, who moved into the area to protect the tomb.

Preliminary reports suggest that Palestinian security officials fired warning shots in an attempt to stop the car after observing what they called "suspicious activity." They said the group — including about 15 people in three cars — ignored calls to stop and tried to evade checkpoints.

According to some Palestinian reports, the settlers were armed.

**International**

**IRELAND (MCT) —** Police in Northern Ireland on Sunday said they found bomb-making equipment in south Armagh. The discovery on Saturday night came after several weapons caches, which police think belonged to dissident republican groups, were uncovered in the county.

On Friday, police seized weapons and explosives from a storage facility in Omagh and arrested three men. A policeman was killed in a bomb attack in the area three weeks ago.

Northern Ireland went on full terror alert at the start of the Easter weekend, the anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising against British rule. Authorities also fear dissidents now have the capacity to carry out attacks on the British mainland.
Voters say state government should give up benefits to support California economy

Shane Goldmacher
LOS ANGELES TIMES

California voters want government employees to give up some retirement benefits to help ease the state's financial problems, favoring a cap on pensions and a later age for collecting them, according to a new poll.

Voter support for rolling back benefits available to few outside the public sector comes as Gov. Jerry Brown and Republicans in the Legislature haggle over changes to the pension system as part of state budget negotiations. Such benefits have been a flashpoint of national debate this year, and the poll shows that Californians are among those who perceive public retirement plans to be too costly.

Voters appear ready to embrace changes not just for future hires but also for current employees who have been promised the benefits under contract. Seventy percent of respondents said they supported a cap on pensions for current and future public employees. Nearly as many, 68 percent, approved of raising the amount of money government workers should be required to contribute to their retirement. Increasing the age at which government employees may collect pensions was favored by 52 percent.

Although pension costs today account for 8 percent of the state budget, they are putting local government under considerable financial strain, and analysis say effects on the state may not be far off.

"It's pretty clear that there's broad support for making changes in the area of pensions," said Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg, who co-directed the bipartisan poll for the Los Angeles Times and the Doleman College of Letters, Arts and Sciences at the University of Southern California.

Many public safety officers can retire at 50 with a pension equal to 3 percent of their final salary for each year worked. Many other state employees can retire at 55, with 2.5 percent of salary for each year worked. And tens of thousands of public workers may purchase "air time" — credits for years they do not actually work — to boost their retirement income.

Guaranteed pensions have flooded from corporate America in recent decades, replaced largely by 401(k) accounts that workers pay into and that rise and fall based on the fluctuations of financial markets. Voters back an integration of such plans into the government retirement system, with 66 percent supporting a blend of the traditional pension and a 401(k).

"It's just gotten way out of hand," said Beverly Marcella, a 67-year-old Democrat and retiree living in Tracy, in California's Central Valley. David Martinez, 59, a nonpartisan voter who lives in Rowland Heights, said existing retirement plans reflect a time when private-sector workers were afforded the same pension.

"It's come to the point where the government is paying much more than private industry is," he said. "It should be equal."

The public sentiment is a cause for concern for organized labor. Public employee unions that spent millions of dollars helping to elect Brown are working aggressively to keep their pensions intact. But the governor has made clear that he believes they must make concessions as the state struggles.

Art Pulaski, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, said the public is trapped in a "moment of envy" over benefits that he maintains are far from lavish. His union's position is that every worker should be entitled to a pension, not an unearned retirement reliant on Wall Street earnings. Policymakers should focus on winning back a stable retirement for private-sector workers rather than demobilize public employees, he said.

Some state and local public employee unions have already agreed to some changes, such as a delay in the retirement age for new hires.

"It's one thing for Republican governors in Wisconsin and Indiana to support these types of changes, but seeing this type of support from California voters, even California Democrats, is remarkable," said Dan Schnur, director of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics at USC and font GOP strategist.

Among Democratic respondents, 71 percent supported increasing retirement contributions for future hires and 66 percent backed a pension cap for both current and future workers. However, fewer than half of the Democrats surveyed favored cutting benefits and raising the retirement age for current employees.

Majorities of Republican and nonpartisan voters favored every potential money-saving pension change they were asked about. Linda DiValle, a Republican poltiser who co-directed the poll, said the results show that on the subject of retirement benefits, the public believes it is "unfair what the state employees have going for them."

Although Republicans have crusaded for years against what they view as bloated government pensions, California voters are not confident that they are best suited to tackle the issue. Only 29 percent said Republicans would best handle a revamping of the pension system, whereas 43 percent would prefer that an overhaul be left in the hands of Brown and his fellow Democrats.

And although voters strongly supported downsizing parts of the pension system, they were divided on whether most public employees were compensated appropriately. Forty-three percent said wages and benefits were too high; 33 percent said they were about right; 32 percent said they were too low.

The Times/USC Doleman College of Letters, Arts and Sciences poll surveyed 1,583 registered voters from April 7 to 17. It was conducted by a bipartisan team of polling companies based in the Washington, D.C., area: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, a Democratic firm, and American Viewpoint, a Republican firm.

The margin of error is plus or minus 2.53 percentage points. Some pension questions were posed to half the respondents and have a margin of error of plus or minus 3.58 percentage points.

It's pretty clear that there's broad support for making changes in the area of pensions.

— Stanley Greenberg
Democratic pollster

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Freshman takes on Open House

J.J. Jenkins is a journalism freshman and Mustang Daily freelance columnist.

What happened to my simple, quiet college town? That is the question I asked my friends last weekend as thousands of Cal Poly alumni, parents and potential students descended upon San Luis Obispo for Open House.

Being out of state, I never got the chance to experience the madness of Open House, and after seeing it first-hand, I'm kind of glad I didn't. The weekend is a showcase of all things Cal Poly and if you have a club you are already interested in, it's a perfect time to go talk to the members.

However, the plethora of booths means that the lower part of campus turns into a zoo and that is simply not my cup of tea. This time around, the chaos was unavoidable. Snack on campus with little hope of leaving. I watched the invasion of what I consider my home by strangers.

In my view, a college campus is unique because of its youthfulness. At what other time in your life are you so consistently surrounded by people your own age? Only seeing the occasional set of parents walking around campus reminds me that, yes, there are people in this world who do not think Tosh.0 is hilarious.

Yes, that changes Saturday as I set out for my daily run and started out on my normally peaceful jaunt through the horse unit and back toward the agricultural areas (I think I've become immune to the smell).

Usually seeing more than a couple people was out of the ordinary, but this time I found myself dodging through throngs of people having the heat and heading to the tractor pull.

On that note, what is the appeal of the tractor pull? To be fair, I have not seen this spectacle, though the various descriptions of the event combined with the deafening noise heard from my Cerro Vista apartment does not create something I'd pony up eight bucks for.

Thanks, but no thanks. I'll save that cash for a tri-tip sandwich from Firestone Grill, which will not poison my lungs for the day.

Narrowly avoiding running over multiple grandmothers sporting Cal Poly 1950 alumni pins, I returned to my apartment, cleaned up and made a quick trip to the booths of chaos.

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Christie D’Zurilla
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Mel Gibson, who’s been essentially mum since tapes of him ranting at Oksana Grigorieva were leaked last summer, has finally broken his silence, referring to the recordings as “one terribly awful moment in time, said to one person, in the span of one day” and something that “doesn’t represent what I truly believe or how I’ve treated my family.”

Gibson also said he didn’t care if he ever acted again.

In the Deadline Hollywood interview, coming at the May release of “The Beaver” looms, Gibson expressed regret and anger at himself but also held his ground about what people heard.

“You have to put it all in the proper context of being in an irrationally heated discussion at the height of a breakdown, trying to get out of a really unhealthy relationship,” he said.

The tapes, dramatically released one by one over the span of more than a week last July, eventually were revealed as having come from one day’s continuing argument. He told Deadline that the tapes had been edited.

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“Even if the judge hadn’t put some kind of court order on me, I think I’d stay mum on a lot of these things just out of consideration for Lucia and my other children and my grandchildren and friends. It doesn’t do any good.”

Lucia is Gibson’s 18-month-old daughter with Grigorieva.

“Maybe, when this is all over and, hopefully, justice is achieved. Maybe I could say something... a lot of damage has been done. I don’t want to add to it.”


Christie D’Zurilla
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Mel Gibson breaks silence

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Gibson also said he didn’t care if he ever acted again.

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Donald Trump unlikely candidate for GOP

Conservative Corner

Donald Trump unlikely candidate for GOP

Andrew Nenow is a wine and viticulture sophomore and Mustang Daily conservative columnist.

As President Obama approaches the last year of his term, there is a lot of focus on who will run against him in 2012. Among the candidates are household political names such as Mitt Romney, Mike Huckabee, Sarah Palin and Ron Paul.

But within this list there is one candidate that seems a bit out of the ordinary: Donald Trump. Without a doubt he’s a popular person, but is he really being considered to be President of the United States? As the CEO of the Trump Organization, a real estate developer, Trump has built a business empire that thrives (pun intended) the success of any other American businessman. With more than 14 Trump towers worldwide he is one of the most recognized names in the business. His net worth is a staggering $2.7 billion, putting him toward the top of Forbes list of richest people in the world. So he has been insanely successful and is obviously doing something right.

The reason Trump has gained so much support is because a lot of people feel the United States should be run like a large business, and who better than the master businessman? Who better than the man who understands how to run a large company through a struggling economy?

In light of all this, it’s no wonder Donald Trump is now a GOP frontrunner, but I believe people are overlooking many things. While everything looks good on paper, there is a lot to consider with a businessman of his kind.

In the end, his fame, fortune and success in general do not say anything about who Donald Trump is as a person. Say all you want, but as interested as people say they are in a candidate’s politics, they are twice as interested in their character.

I do not think anyone can deny that Obama’s popularity during the 2008 election stemmed from his fantastic speaking skills and family orientation. Another example is the fancy people created over the small fact that Obama was a smoker. Something completely unrelated to politics.

So now we put Donald Trump under the microscope. In the end Trump is nothing but a large ego.

Donald Trump unlikely candidate for GOP

Watch any of his shows, read any article or book about him and in the end he is all about the dollars and cents. The future of this country cannot be entrusted to a man with that type of mind.

Being a celebrity has only inflated his ego, which is a very dangerous quality for a person in power. To me it would seem that votes have a myriad of better options than a celebrity.

The last celebrity to be president, Ronald Reagan, had great success and is even considered by many to be one of the best presidents of all time. This offers hope that Trump could be successful as well, but there are many differences between the two stars.

Donald Trump has no past experience in politics and seems to have been hured into the conversation of president while Ronald Reagan held himself to become president. Reagan actually ran for president twice and failed before he successfully won over the American people.

This American fear that if people elect Donald Trump to be the leader of this great nation they will not fully understand the ins and outs of his politics. I am not sure if I will ever be able to get past the greed of a person like Trump and would be very concerned with him leading us.

Andrew Nenow is a wine and viticulture sophomore and Mustang Daily conservative columnist.

In the end, Donald Trump is nothing but a large ego. . . . and in the end he is all about the dollars and cents.

— Andrew Nenow

Conservative columnist

LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT... YOU'RE REPLACING MY SACRED EGG WITH A VOUCHER FOR AN EGG THAT'LL COST ME $6400 ??!!

You're welcome!
The Mustang Daily is looking to hire a part time graphic designer to work this summer (20 hours a week) and during the 2011-12 school year (5-10 hours a week). We’re looking for someone who can design print ads that will be placed in the Mustang Daily, as well as other promotional materials.

Design experience is a must! Ideal candidate is proficient in the Adobe Creative Suite and using Mac computers. Must be creative, be able to think outside of box and work well with others.

Hourly pay with opportunities for advancement.

If this sounds like a position for you, please email your resume and design samples to Advertising Coordinator, Stephanie Murawski at smurawsk@calpoly.edu

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"I don’t know, Igor... it seems kind of sacrilegious to do this around Easter."
Baseball

continued from page 12

Home runs turned everything around, but the ability for Cal Poly's hitters and pitchers to get hot at the same time has placed the team in a position to win the conference.

"It feels like the first part of the season never happened," Thompson said.

"We're the best team I've ever seen."

Fischback also threw seven strikeouts, including two in the first inning using what Lee said is his best pitch: the change-up.

However, starting pitching was not quite as solid Saturday, as Chase Johnson was pulled in the fourth inning after giving up three earned runs.

The Mustangs go on the road for the next two weekends where they will face Long Beach State and UC Irvine. The team is just 3-9 on the road this year, but third baseman Evan Busby said he is hardly concerned.

"At the beginning of the year, we weren't playing well no matter where we went," Busby said. "Now, we've gotten on our roll, so it won't matter (where we play)."

Softball

continued from page 12

through the left side and, in the seventh, she grounded to the pitcher, but allowed Sarah Carrasco to score from third to take the lead.

They wouldn't falter down the stretch.

The second game wasn't as close. Anna Cahn started the game and went 4 2/3 innings and gave up four earned runs off nine hits.

At the plate, the Mustangs couldn't match the 49ers. Cahn nailed a solo shot to right in the seventh — the Mustangs' only run — but it was already too late to mount a comeback.

Long Beach State pieced together two runs off two RBI hits, then Karli Sandoval hit a two-run home run to right center to cap a four-run rally in the fifth.

It got even worse. The 49ers added a two-run sixth and a one-run seventh to take the 7-1 win.

It sends the Mustangs home as losers of two of three games, but the win in the finale snaps the Mustangs' eight game losing streak as they head further into their conference schedule.

Next weekend Cal Poly will travel south to take on Cal State Northridge in a three-game conference series.

Men's tennis falls to UCI in season finale

A season full of win streaks ended on a losing note, as the Mustangs lost to UC Irvine 5-2 Saturday, ending Cal Poly's season short of a Big West regular season title and undefeated conference record. The Mustangs won the doubles point, but took just one match in singles play. Cal Poly did, however, claim the No. 2 seed in the Big West Tournament, which starts Thursday, earning them a bye.

THIS WEEK IN CAL POLY ATHLETICS

BASEBALL SERIES

Thursday - 6:00 PM
Friday - 6:00 PM
Saturday - 1 PM

CAL POLY vs.
Baseball

CAL POLY vs.
Softball

CAL POLY vs.
Softball

Admission is FREE for all Cal Poly Students
Like us on Facebook.com/calpolycampuspage
Cal Poly's bats woke up this weekend against Cal State Fullerton. In their two wins on Thursday and Friday night, the Mustangs outscored the Titans 11-4.

Going the distance

Radeke, Fischback toss complete games as Cal Poly takes two from conference-leading Cal State Fullerton

J.J. Jenkins

Not much concerns head coach Larry Lee at this point in the season — not even a 9-3 loss in the final game of a three-game set against No. 5 Cal State Fullerton. It could be because Lee and the Mustangs won their biggest series of the year against Cal State Fullerton at home this weekend. And they did so using one simple method.

Starting pitching.

Cal Poly had two pitchers toss complete games, as the Mustangs took two of three games from the Titans, marking the second series victory over Cal State Fullerton in close to 38 years.

“We accomplished what we needed to accomplish (in the series),” Lee said. “We put ourselves back in the game at this point in the season — not that we’re not concerned about ourselves.”

The Titans jumped on the board with their first hit of the night, an inside-the-park home run by J.J. Thompson in the eighth inning. The Mustangs were able to counter the home run with a sacrifice fly, then loading the bases off walks to Denver Chavez and Haniger. Eight consecutive balls thrown by the Titans forced home two more runs for Cal Poly and put the Titans ahead for good.

Shorstop J.J. Thompson was one of the beneficiaries of those RBI walks, although he went 0-for-3 on the night mapping his 11-game hitting streak. Thompson said he was sad to see the streak go but winning and building team confidence was far more important, especially during a key stretch of the season.

“We have a lot of confidence right now,” Thompson said. “I don’t think whether we win or lose tomorrow is gonna change the kind of confidence we have now.”

Thompson also said he could not pinpoint the exact moment the Mustangs started playing a lot better. The last couple weeks we just have a confidence about ourselves.”

The Titans jumped on the board first to start the sixth as Anthony Trajano singled to left field on a two out, two strike pitch — scoring Nick Ramirez from second base. Fischback was called for his first balk of the season during the next at bat, but a grounder to first got him out of the inning without further damage.

The Mustangs were able to counter in the bottom half of the inning using a DJ Gentile sacrifice fly to center to score right fielder Mitch Haniger. Gentile, the Mustangs designated hitter, is batting .273 on the season with 23 RBIs after two bunted in on Friday.

Cal Poly broke the game open in the following inning by pushing third baseman Evan Busby across the plate with a sacrifice fly, then loading the bases off walks to Denver Chavez and Haniger. Eight consecutive balls thrown by the Titans forced home two more runs for Cal Poly and put them ahead for good.

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