FROSH TRIPLETS MAKE SPLASH!

THEY GET TRIPLE-TAKES wherever they go.

But, Cal Poly freshmen Andrew, Stephen and Chris Hurko take the stares in stride. They know you don’t see triplets every day. In fact, they’re pretty sure they’re the only triplets on campus.

Though technically “fraternal” triplets, the Hurkos appear identical, with their wispy sun-bleached hair, blue-green eyes, lanky frames and shy smiles. The connection doesn’t stop there. All three are majoring in business, and they’re all members of the Cal Poly swim team. They live together in a condo off campus and like the same food. They appreciate much of the same music — all like Coldplay, but only Andrew will listen to country western.

And they have the same taste in clothes. As youngsters, their mom dressed them alike, but each had his own “color” to help even their parents tell them apart. Andrew, the oldest, wore yellow; Stephen, blue; and Chris, red.

Even today, if they go their separate ways in a store, they’ll meet at the checkout counter with the same shirt or shoes. “It’s really pretty ridiculous,” laughed Stephen. Or was that Chris?

They are quick to debunk the popular myths about triplets. “We don’t have a special psychic connection, each of us can function just fine without the other two, and we are individuals, not just one-third of a group,” said Andrew.

The triplets admit to being good kids who attended Catholic school, where the nuns left no room for error. “We’ve always stood out,” Andrew said. “We got noticed for any little slip. If one was bad, we all were considered bad.”

After graduation, the three say they just might go into business together. “We have the same interests and the same degree,” Stephen said. “We trust each other.” — Susan McDonald
HATCHING A HEALTHIER EGG

WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU CROSS AN EGG WITH A TOMATO? An even better excuse to have scrambled eggs for dinner.

Research by Cal Poly Professor Liz Koutsos and graduate student Jake Olson has resulted in eggs fortified with cancer-fighting lycopene. Lycopene is the pigment that makes tomatoes red. It's also an anti-oxidant shown to deter prostate and colon cancer and reduce the risk of breast cancer.

Koutsos holds the Foster Farms endowed professorship in Poultry Science in Cal Poly's Animal Science Department. Her specialty is avian immunology, and she's interested in researching how natural substances in foods affect bird health and well-being. Her latest research focuses on natural substances which cause color in foods -- many of which also convey health benefits.

Lycopene is one of them. While researching whether a lycopene-fortified diet conveyed any health benefits to poultry, Koutsos and Olson came up with another idea. "No one had ever tried to make an egg with lycopene in it," Koutsos said. Under her supervision, Olson made it the topic of his senior project.

After experimenting with adding tomatoes to chicken feed, professor and grad student discovered that feeding chickens tomatoes translated into spectacularly crimson bird droppings, but no lycopene-enhanced eggs.

Then they discovered that purifying and stabilizing lycopene in a specific formula and adding it to hens' diets does produce lycopene-enhanced eggs.

The eggs taste and look like regular eggs, except for a slightly more golden hue to the yolk, and they contain beneficial amounts of lycopene. Koutsos and Olson and Cal Poly have applied for a patent on their lycopene-feed recipe and the method for producing the health-enhanced eggs. Once granted, Cal Poly will begin producing and selling the enhanced eggs through the Cal Poly Eggs enterprise project. Other egg producers wishing to produce and sell the lycopene-enhanced eggs will be able to apply for a license to do so through Cal Poly. — Teresa Hendrix

"The noblest of all dogs is the hot dog; it feeds the hand that bites it." — Lawrence J. Peter

LEGEND HAS IT THAT BASEBALL GREAT BABE RUTH once downed 24 hot dogs between games of a double header.

Baseball and hot dogs. They're an American tradition. They go together like movies and popcorn. Or Cal Poly and learn by doing.

Typically a concoction of beef, pork and spices, the hot dog is a not-too-distant cousin of the sausage. Long, short, thick, thin, from the tiny cocktail weenie to the robust knockwurst, hot dogs have been an American favorite for decades. Never mind that that they are said to have been developed in Frankfurt, Germany, more than 500 years ago.

Germans might have created the frankfurter, but every quarter at Cal Poly, students in Bob Delmore's meat science class re-create it. No matter that the delectable dogs have come under fire in recent years. Myths abound about the alleged ingredients in the meaty mixture. Associate Professor Delmore aims to dispel those myths.

"The much-maligned hot dog is made simply from the trimmings of the sides of beef and pork that we fabricate in class," Delmore says. "Meat and spices, plain and simple."

Anyone who's tasted the spicy treat knows it's anything but plain. — Jo Ann Lloyd

Editor's Note: Although Cal Poly hot dogs are not sold to the public (they are made strictly for class instruction and consumption), other Cal Poly meats, including beef, pork and lamb; chops and steaks; ham, bacon and smoked turkey are available for purchase from noon to 5 p.m. Thursday and Friday in Room 107 in the Food Processing Building on campus. For more information, contact Bob Delmore at (805) 756-2254 or rdelmore@calpoly.edu.