San Luis Obispo’s spring break escapes

By Lauren Nowenstein
Mustang Daily

Spring break is coming and camping is an alternative for those who want to get away from San Luis Obispo but do not want to spend a lot of money.

Darren Connor, the coordinator for the Craft Center and Poly Escapes, said it is possible to go camping for three days and spend only $50 to $100.

“It can be as expensive as you make it, or it can be very inexpensive,” Connor said. Costs depend on the location and on materials needed for the trip.

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Hikers get adventure fix from Poly Escapes

Outdoor planners offer trips out of the Central Coast

By F. Xavier Lanier
Mustang Daily

Cal Poly students don't have to go far to find a good place to hike during spring break. Poly Escapes can help plan a variety of hiking trips.

"We have a bunch of trip leaders who know all the trails around here," said Mike Tran, a Poly Escapes volunteer and marine biology senior. "If we don't know a certain trail, we have guides full of hiking guides."

For a day trip, Tran recommends Montana de Oro, off Los Osos Valley road in Los Osos.

"Trails at Montana de Oro are real scenic and by the beach," Tran said. Another popular destination is Los Padres National Forest, which surrounds San Luis Obispo. There are Los Padres destinations to the east, north and south of San Luis Obispo.

"It includes Big Sur with redwoods, the Macaenas are with arid landscapes, and 9,000-foot peaks with snow," said Mike De Anton, a Mountain Air Sports employee and philosophy senior.

Even if you don't have experience, the Los Padres area is a good place to start.

"Three- or four-mile hikes are good for just starting," De Anton said. "If you've been doing it for a while, hikes go upwards of 25 or 30 miles per day. The average person hikes a mile about every 90 minutes."

De Anton suggests spring break trekkers bring proper equipment.

"Don't wear open-toed shoes. Make sure they're comfortable," De Anton said. "If it's rough terrain, wear boots with a stiff sole."

CAMPING

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Ken Hoffman, an environmental engineering junior, said at Escape Route — located across from 2nd Edgars — students can rent a variety of camping-related equipment including lanterns, tents, sleeping bags, stove, foam pads, coolers and cross-country skis. "We rent just about everything you need, besides clothing," Hoffman said. Most items are reasonably priced.

It costs about the same price to rent a kayak from Poly Escapes for the whole weekend as it would to rent one in Morro Bay for a few hours. Since Poly Escapes is closed during finals week, students must rent equipment before 4:00 p.m. on Friday of the last week of classes. However, students get to keep all the equipment for finals week for free.

"Our prices are as low as you'll find them," Connor said.

Students can also rent equipment from local stores. Connor said students looking to rent backpacks should visit Mountain Air Sports and snowboard seekers should go to Granite Stoneway Mountaingear.

"The people at both those shops are really nice and easy to work with," Connor said.

Before planning a camping trip, students need to consider what types of food, shelter and clothing are appropriate for the area.

"It really pertains to the specifics of the trip you're on," said Ian Forbes, a biology sophomore, who is involved in the Poly Escapes program.

For example, Hoffman said students going backpacking need to pack food items that don't weigh much, such as ramen and noodle mixes.

Hoffman said students should remember to bring clothes made of fabrics that dry easily and are warm, such as fleece and wool.

"Anything that comes out of your washer almost dry is great camping equipment," Hoffman said.

Poly Escapes sponsors three trips during spring break that are still open to Cal Poly students. There is a rafting and camping trip to the Owyhee River on the Oregon/Idaho border which costs $230, a skiing trip in the mountains of Utah, which costs about $130 plus food, and a canyoneering trip in Utah that costs about $122 plus food.

The outings will be led by two trained trip leaders. To sign up for any of them, students should go to the Escape Route.

Hoffman, who is co-leading the canyoneering trip, said about half of the people going on the trips don't know anyone when they sign up. He prefers to lead trips for people he doesn't already know and who do not know a lot about camping. Hoffman said he wants to teach other people about camping and give back a little of what he has learned from being in Poly Escapes.

"I try to give people a good experience in the outdoors," Hoffman said.

For those that don't want to go with an organized group, there are several good campgrounds within a few minutes to a few hours of Cal Poly. Connor said that campgrounds in Big Sur, such as Creek and Pfeiffer State Park, are good places for students to visit. At the Creek Creek site, Connor recommends that students take a 45-minute hike up Cone Peak.

"The views from Cone Peak are excellent," Connor said.

Hoffman considers Big Sur the best place to go because information about it is readily available.
Slide away spring break on the slopes

By Rachel Robertshaw

For many Cal Poly students, spring break means another opportunity to hit the slopes.

With finals done and a week off school, there are plenty of options for what to do over Spring Break. Some Cal Poly students take advantage of the time to spend it skiing or snowboarding.

When it comes to deciding where to go, students have many preferences. In California, many head to Tahoe or Mammoth, while others choose to stay closer to home and go to Sierra Summit, north of Fresno.

Cal Poly kinesiology sophomore Melissa Thorp said she is only planning a short ski trip over the break.

"We’re going to Sierra Summit because it’s closest," she said. "It’s not my favorite place to go snowboarding, but it’s close enough for a one-day trip. It’s all a matter of funding."

Sierra Summit is about four hours away from Cal Poly, located north of Fresno off Highway 168. The small resort has five chair lifts. Summit now offers season passes that are good for the remainder of this season and all of next season for $199.

Members of the Cal Poly ski team will be spending the last weekend at Mammoth Mountain competing in their last race of the season. The team currently ranked second in the Southern California Ski Conference, according to former president of the ski team Chris Weijsand. He said that there will probably be about 20 to 25 members on the trip as well as many spectators.

"Since it’s the last race of the season, it’s kind of late for anyone to join," he said. "But we always welcome our team members to bring a friend along."

Mammoth Mountain is south of Yosemite, in the Sierra Nevadas.

One of the most popular resorts is Lake Tahoe, which features 16 major resorts along the lake. This includes Heavenly, which has the West coast’s largest snowmaking system. Many students are attracted to Tahoe because its many resorts are not far from the casinos.

Other students plan longer ski trips that involve a plane ride, a hotel reservation and a lot more cash. Popular destinations include Aspen, Colorado, and Whistler, Canada.

Poly Escapes, located in the University Union, has a ski trip planned over the break, to Salt Lake City, Utah.

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Police call assault a hate crime

By Andrea Parker

Cal Poly police are investigating a campus assault they believe is a hate crime.

According to investigator Ray Bennett, an African-American woman was confronted by a man about 11:05 a.m. Feb. 26 between the Library and the Student Union. The suspect reportedly walked up to her and said a derogatory statement about her ethnic background. He then spit in her face and walked away, apparently accompanied by a few other men.

The suspect is described as a 5-foot-10-inch white male in his twenties, with a medium build and short, dirty blond hair. He was wearing a black T-shirt with short sleeves and dark blue jeans.

The victim, whose name is not being released, is planning to file charges with the district attorney if a suspect is arrested. Bennett said the assault could be prosecuted for possible civil rights violations.

"We’re in the process of viewing video coverages provided by El Cerro security in the area," Bennett said. "Anyone with information is asked to call Bennett at 756-6660."
Take time to relax and find yourself

A student at a college, we are more aware of crises than most people. Our lives are structured around the activities that come and go in the quarter system. It is time now for a break. I would like to recommend a moment of contemplation regarding some approaches for getting the most out of this brief release.

I view spring break as an opportunity to repair, to heal, to reassess, to plan, to regulate, to experiment... it reminds me of another cycle of thought and design. We work each day and get physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted. Our brain then sorts out all the crap and it reminds me of the mother cycle we go through: dreaming. We learn, we think, we sort out all the crap and it reminds me of the mother cycle we go through: dreaming.

We learned and tillers out what it feels is important and what isn't. I believe the college experience can get better and better instead of forcing you to want it to be over as soon as possible.

I know a lot of people will immediately escape into oblivion as soon as this quarter is over. The escape can take the form of a restful vacation, visiting family, doing a lot of drugs (I personally know a few people intent on recreating 'Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas'), or doing absolutely nothing that makes a mark on their daily lives. That is not a bad thing. It is necessary to clear your mind of all the unnecessary information that has built up over the last few months. But you also have to take into consideration what you have learned and what information you should keep. You shouldn't reward your brain for getting you through finals week by destroying it! If you simply forget everything, then you will make the same mistakes that make the college experience more stressful than it needs to be.

What is more important than information regulation is focusing on who you are. It is great hanging out with friends and celebrating your accomplishment. You should also hang out with yourself, though, and spend some quiet time thinking about what you want and where you are going. Use this brief opportunity to center yourself and ground yourself. If you have a firm foundation of who you are and what your philosophies on life are, then it is far less likely you will be hurt or stressed out by unexpected experiences. Play your life like a jazz musician. You must learn about yourself as much as possible (as a musician would become proficient with a song or a period, and then you will be able to instantly improvise (act) according to the music (experience) that comes about. We all are living in a fast-moving world. You can spend your life struggling against the current or you can relax and let the energy of life and humanity carry you to where you were meant to be. Use the energy around you for your health. It is so quiet, and if you listen to your surroundings, then you will hear what is best for you. See you next quarter!

Jon Wilson is a philosophy senior.

Hate crimes of any form will not be tolerated at Cal Poly

Editor:

Two weeks ago, on February 26, an unknown male suspect accosted a Cal Poly female student as she was standing outside the Sandwich Place near the Lighthouse. During the incident, which took place at approximately 11:05 a.m., the suspect allegedly used a racial epithet and spit on the student. While the reported action constitutes a case of simple assault, University Police are treating the occurrence as a "hate crime." The incident is currently under investigation by University Police and Student Affairs and anyone in the area at the time of the assault is requested to call either department with any information that might assist the investigation.

This unfortunate incident prompts me to remind the campus community that intolerance and violence have no place at Cal Poly, and the University rejects all forms of bigotry and abuse — physical or otherwise. The alleged incident was not only an unlawful act, but also was a violation of the University’s own codes of conduct. Discriminatory hate speech and violence undermine and stand in stark contrast to the fundamental values held by this institution. At the very essence of our identity as a learning community, Cal Poly is obligated to be one of civility, respect and trust. Cal Poly continues making every effort possible to provide a campus environment free from bigotry and violent behavior. It is vital, though, that every member of the community plays a role in this effort by taking every step possible to repudiate the type of action this incident represents. We encourage you to join us as we strive to create an environment that guarantees not just the personal safety of each member of the community, but also one that fosters tolerance and respect among all of us.

Paul Zingg is the Provost of Cal Poly.

Reed’s remarks clarified by on-line transcripts of talk

Editor:

You may be aware that CSU Chancellor Charles Reed spoke to Cal Poly’s President’s Cabinet on Sunday, March 7, and that during the question-and-answer portion of his presentation the chancellor made comments regarding the CSU faculty that have been viewed as negative. In the days since the Cabinet meeting, we have been in communication with the Chancellor to seek clarification of his comments. To help the campus community better understand the full context of his remarks, Cal Poly has placed a transcript of Chancellor Reed’s speech on the University’s web site at http://www.calpoly.edu/~communic/communic/comm.htm. In addition to the transcript, the chancellor has shared a response to concerns that have been raised surrounding his speech, which is on the same web site.

In our many opportunities to talk with the Chancellor since his arrival, he has frequently stated his great respect for the faculty’s hard work, extraordinary accomplishments and dedication to the CSU and its students. We would also like to reaffirm that our own sincere respect and appreciation for the work and commitment of the faculty at Cal Poly go beyond statements to this effect. For whatever we say is rooted in a fundamental understanding of the nature of a university, namely, a community of people and ideas. And the high reputation which Cal Poly particularly enjoys flows from the people who deliver our academic programs — the faculty — and the form and focus of our curricula — the ideas of "learn by doing" and placing students first. We are connected in a culture of the highest quality and committed to work with all members of our university to build upon what we have already achieved together.

We hope you will take the opportunity to read the full transcript of Chancellor Reed’s remarks in the context of the President’s Cabinet program.

Warren J. Baker, Cal Poly President and Paul Zingg, Provost.
Merit pay is the core issue of contract disputes

Editor:

While the chancellor may take issue with the position of the faculty, relative to merit pay, there is no reason for him to trivialize either their contributions or their efforts. The core issue is the merit pay plan, versions of which are currently in place for both faculty and staff. This is a complex and difficult issue that is not addressed with great care and with due respect to those who may present opposing points of view.

Compensation is one of the most difficult problems for our society and economic systems. We will not pretend to have the answers, but the problems are obvious. Athletes and corporate executives make huge amounts of money, while teachers and others who provide essential services make far less. Extreme examples include agricultural workers and those who care for the elderly. These people do jobs that are arguably among the most difficult for wages that in many cases are at the subsistence level, if that.

Merit-pay systems are not new. Some have been very successful. Others have been grossly unfair. New ones spring up from time to time in this country and around the world. The variations in these schemes are endless. A major factor is the percentage of an individual’s pay that derives from commissions, bonuses, merit increases or other incentives. Another key factor is the ability to measure “output.”

Merit pay has not had a history of great success in government or education. In fact, the civil service system arose out of a desire to eliminate abuses related to the political “spoils” system and “corruption.” Nevertheless, it is clear that we would be better off if we could devise a method through which superior contributors could be rewarded accordingly. While nobody disputes this, many question our ability to devise such a scheme, and the faculty are reasonably skeptical about the latest effort by the California State University system.

My hope is that everyone involved can take a step back, recognize the complexity of the issues and the fact that honest differences of opinion are bound to arise and may not be easily resolved, and consider the positions of others as valued contributions to the discussion, rather than personal attacks. In this regard, it would be helpful if we could all be more temperate and thoughtful in stating these positions and avoid statements that are likely to give offense to other parties to the discussion.

Bob Dignan is the director of Fiscal Services.

Lack of respect for Poly professor is unacceptable

Editor:

I have recently sat through a series of Cal Poly lectures in which the professor does not speak English fluently. There has been a general sentiment, which has grown dangerously throughout the class, that it is acceptable to treat this professor with disrespect, because the professor has difficulty conveying thoughts clearly and consequently due to a lack of English proficiency. It enables me to see this as an instance of higher learning.

Part of it, admittedly, may be due to the professor’s lack of teaching experience, but I think there is a deeper problem. Ignorance. Ignorance of the state, self-sacrifice and dedication the professor has overcome to learn this country’s official language and be in the present position — in the honest pursuit of the “American dream.” I cannot blame these students if it is just ignorance, but our purpose at this university is education — an education composed not only of our chosen material, but the education we acquire through daily interactions with other human beings.

The importance of a college campus of diverse thoughts, backgrounds and cultural identities is crucial to the future of our society. Our generation will have the reigns of this country, and now, with the interdependence of global markets and worldwide communication, we will have a hand in the reigns of the world. The future belongs to those students, however insensible they may seem, become dangerous if they are left unchecked. These are the same social instabilities which have made it acceptable for our state to pass bills such as Proposition 227.

By the time we wake up as a generation and open our eyes, we will have to deal with the violent erosion of social trust in our cities due to the so-called leaders of our society who live in the quietly-gratifying gated communities of suburban America to finish their existence “in peace.”

We need the most talented young individuals and minds of our society to put down the substances and “tone” (racism, sexism, etc.) and actively pursue the responsibility for the world we are entering. The deepest issues of our society need to be addressed now. We cannot continue to place a Band-aid on a mortal wound and expect to progress as a people and a nation.

Diegos Zavala is a mechanical engineering senior.

We are all different people

Editor:

There has been a lot of talk lately about the issue of diversity. While I think that a white person can learn something from a Hispanic person, I also think a white person from down- San Francisco can learn just as much from a white person from a rural area of the valley. We are all different. We can all learn from each other no matter what race we are.

Joe Demers is an architectural engineering freshman.

Letter policy

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Opinion
Sports

Owners on the verge of awarding the next football franchise

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Within the next few days, 31 football team owners meeting in Arizona are scheduled to vote to put a new NFL franchise team in either Los Angeles or Houston.

There have been reports that the decision has already been reached to award the league’s 32nd team to Los Angeles, reports denied by all sides.

There are strong signs that L.A. will get the nod, but a decision won’t be final until the league’s sometimes unpredictable group of owners approve it.

The expansion committee is set to meet Sunday in Phoenix, with its recommendation to be presented to all the owners early next week.

NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue said recently that he expects the league to name a city, but not an ownership group, during the meetings.

Houston, which has just one ownership group bidding, may thus be out of the running. Another indication is that Rob McNair, who heads the effort to bring a team back to Houston, is shopping around for an existing franchise.

Although he said he hasn’t given up on the possibility of funding the expansion team, McNair has sent letters of inquiry to teams in nine other cities.

There are two groups in Los Angeles competing for a team: one headed by Hollywood filmmaker Michael Ovitz that wants to build a new stadium in suburban Carson, the other led by real estate developer Ed Roski and billionaire Eli Broad, seeking to return a team to a remodeled L.A. Coliseum.

If the NFL does the expected and picks Los Angeles, the league then will have to decide which of the L.A. ownership groups (or any others that might want to get into the game — bidding against each other for the franchise).

As a measure of the price tag, Cleveland paid $530 million for an expansion team, and the current bid for the Washington Redskins is $800 million.

Carolina Panthers owner Jerry Richardson, a member of the expansion committee, said he would be surprised if other groups interested in owning a team didn’t surface, regardless of which city was picked.

There has even been speculation that the two present L.A. groups might join their efforts, although there would be obstacles to such a merger.

Several factors would seem to make Los Angeles a shoo-in. The area is the nation’s second largest TV market (compared to Houston at No. 11), is highly visible as America’s “entertainment capital,” and, with nearly 17 million potential customers for jerseys and other team paraphernalia, is an area the NFL may need more than it needs an NFL team.

Richardson said during a visit last week to Carson that he didn’t expect the league would expand beyond 32 teams “in my lifetime, and I’m 62.”

H.L.A. is the place that would leave the NFL without a home team in the No. 2 TV market for the foreseeable future, costing the league megabucks in TV contracts and merchandising.

Tagliabue, who flew over the proposed Carson site in a helicopter with Richardson last week, called Ovitz a visionary and mentioned that the NFL needs to think “entertainment.”

At the same time, he ticked off concerns aKnit the proposed remodeling of the Coliseum, including parking space and the financial package.

Richardson noted that the Coliseum already lost two NFL teams, the Rams when they moved to Anaheim, and the Raiders.

The Los Angeles area hasn’t been without a team since 1995, when the Rams left Anaheim for St. Louis, and the Raiders returned to Oakland.
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The “Sweet Science” has turned very sour recently

There is something rotten in the state of boxing. Once called the “Sweet Science,” our pugilistic past time has degenerated into rowdy branch between thugs and team pugs.

Frazier-Holfield will rumble with Lennox Lewis Saturday in a match that will snatch the world champ title for the first time since Riddick Bowe had the undisputed belt in 1992.

Lewis, holder of the WBC, championship, is the only boxer who can challenge the supremacy of Holfield, the WBA-IBF champ. Some boxing analysts are calling this match one of the biggest of the decade, and definitely the best since Holfield dethroned Tyson.

Yet the proponents for the match is misleading. Holfield vs. Lewis is the most prominent fight in recent memory because there aren’t any decent challengers.

The roll call of champions for the last 10 years sounds more like a gang of battles from Mother’s Tavern, with stories like Michael Moorer, Frank Bruno, Bruce Seldon and Oliver McCall. Due to the lack of good fighters, people get excited when pairs like Andrew Golota best up on the local kickboxing instructor or Mike Tyson slaps and puffs and then bites someone’s ear off. It makes a fine fare for the days when boxers were kings, and glowing men like George Foreman and Joe Frazier bulldogged the mat and each other in epic matches that made movies. Back them, pre-match hype still referred to coughing up a nickel to look at your friendly Playboy, and the world stood still for the heavyweights to clash.

Thirty years ago, a fight brought out more stars than the sun going down. When Frazier squared off against Ali for the first time, on March 8, 1971, the match had so many celebrities in attendance that Frank Sinatra volunteered to take pictures for Life Magazine. The historic pairing of Frazier, the hand-punching left-hander from Philadelphia, and Ali, the greater heavyweight in history, enthralled the nation three times. Each fight went down as one of the best in this century, and two legends were born.

The competition was better then, too. George Foreman, Ken Norton, Larry Holmes and Leon Spinks all fought at the same time as Ali and Frazier, and sometimes beat them. It’s a contrast to today, when our champions can hardly get past stifles like Vaugn Fox, which was the case with Holfield last September.

A long time ago, boxers would accept their victory or loss with dignity. Now everyone wants the fight, especially at every Tyson match. The majority of boxing as a sport has died away, leaving washed-up old men to flail for long-lost glory. To paraphrase a Simon and Garfunkel song, “Where have you gone, Joe Louis? A nation turns its lonely eyes to you.” I guess the champions have left and gone away.

Chris Arns, who wouldn’t ever repeat this to Holyfield’s face, can be reached at carnis@polymail.calpoly.edu

Women’s lacrosse looks to make Final Four

By Jen Stevenson

Despite a few setbacks this year, the Cal Poly women’s lacrosse team hopes to be heading to the Final Four at the end of the season.

The Mustangs were in the throes of decision until they suffered a double upset last weekend at Arizona and Clemson, dropping them to 6-3.

Although team members were kept by their love, they never really concerned.

“We were out of sync,” co-captain Kim Lintell said. “We weren’t playing as a team.”

Coach Gary Jensen said he couldn’t pinpoint who the team faltered.

“It’s hard to say what happened,” Jensen said. “It was a combination of many things — injuries, discipline and I think we just were lacking a bit of teamwork, which is see LACROSSE, page 7

Big West play begins

By Jen Stevenson

Senior pitcher Mike Zirelli was named Big West Pitcher of the Week.

Zirelli leads the Mustangs in wins (4), innings (41.1) and strikeouts (40). He is second on the team in earned run average (2.65) and has 3.16 walks per nine inning ratio.

Zirelli improved to 4-0 for the season. On March 6th the pitcher threw eight innings with 14 strikeouts, at least one in every inning.

Cal Poly is currently 9-8 overall, and will open the Big West Conference season at Pacific this Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 1 p.m.