Wheelchair Foundation holds event to raise money to send wheelchairs to Ethiopia
By Katie Schiller
MUSTANG DAILY STAFF WRITER

The Cal Poly chapter of the Wheelchair Foundation will hold its second Gift of Mobility benefit, "A Taste of the World," from 4 to 8 p.m. Saturday to send wheelchairs to Ethiopian land mine victims. The silent and live auction will take place at the Monday Club on Monterey Street in San Luis Obispo. Trips, gift certificates and other items will be up for bids.

"We have items ranging from vacations to Palm Springs to bottles of wine," said Erin Jackson, international business senior and team member.

California state champion auctioneer and Cal Poly alumna Jim Glines will conduct the live auction.

The benefit will feature exotic hors d'oeuvres to give bidders "a taste of the world." The recipes for the food will come from countries around the world.

"...For classical music lovers, this is the finest there is. These guys are superstars in the string quartet world." - Alyson McLamore, Music department faculty member

"We've never found the right quartet to perform at Poly. They will perform at the Cal Poly Theatre tonight at 8.

Director of Cal Poly Arts Ralph Hoskins organized the event after multiple for reaching perfection, but rarely achieved.

World-renowned string quartet to perform at Poly
By Jenni Mintz

Perfection: A status frequently attempted, but rarely achieved. However, for the Quartet String Quartet, flawlessness is expected and often reached.

The quartet is recognized internationally for their performances and their dedication to reaching perfection.

"It's not just about the music. It's about the chemistry of the players as well," said Erin Jackson, international business senior and team member.

The quartet's music has been described as "flawless" and "charming." They have performed at numerous prestigious venues and events, including the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the United Nations in New York City.

The Quartet String Quartet is comprised of four talented musicians who have dedicated their lives to perfecting their craft. Their repertoire includes classical, contemporary, and world music, and they are known for their ability to adapt and reinterpret pieces to suit their unique style.

The Quartet String Quartet will perform at the Cal Poly Theatre tonight at 8.

"...For classical music lovers, this is the finest there is. These guys are superstars in the string quartet world." - Alyson McLamore, Music department faculty member

"We've never found the right kind of occasion where we could afford to play what they customarily do."

see QUARTET, page 7

U.S. troops roll to edge of Baghdad
By David Espo

Army forces launched a nighttime attack on Saddam International Airport just outside Baghdad on Thursday and fought running battles with Iraqis along the city's southern fringes.

"A vise is closing on the threat of chemical-weapon attacks," said President Bush today after a meeting with Marine commanders at Camp Pendleton. "The battlefield was filled with Iraqi tanks that were systematically destroyed in the battle.

Two weeks into the war, American commanders reported a string of successes — on the battlefield and within an Iraqi population initially reticent about embracing invading troops. Kurdish fighters in the north chipped in, when a top leader suggested they may agree not to seek control of the northern city of Kirkuk.

Despite declarations that tough fighting lies ahead, the nation's top military officials indicated there may not be an all-out battle for Baghdad. Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, suggested isolating members of the old regime in the capital — cut off from the country — with an "interim administration" in place to begin work on a postwar government.

There were battlefield setbacks, as well. An Army soldier investigating a destroyed tank in central Iraq was killed by friendly fire when he was mistaken for an Iraqi, the military said. Two Marines were killed and one injured in the close-quarters fighting in Iraq. A U.S. soldier was killed by a roadside bomb.

The toll of American troops dead passed 50.

see BAGHDAD, page 2

If these walls could talk

Mechanical engineering senior Sara Coleman writes on a wall on the top floor of the University Union, on which students can write their thoughts on the war in Iraq.
BAGHDAD
continued from page 1

and Bush visited Camp Lejeune, N.C., which has lost 13 ... more than any other installation. "He's in heaven," the commander in chief told the family of one fallen Marine, "such a bright young man." To the cheers of thousands earli­er in a speech, he vowed victory, "Fight them with your hands. Give exhortations in Saddam's name."

Iraq's regime.

But the daily urgings seemedincreasingly at odds with the mili­
gary situation across the country, and Myers said Saddam had lost the center of Basra, and warplanes attacked the airport in Baghdad."

As conventional units fought
to the far north, U.S. special
forces and Kurdish militiamen cap­tured a close-in facility where they could airlift equipment and troops.

But its capture would give the regime had urged the population not to interfere with the operations of American or British forces. A small group of Iraqi defenders had been holding out inside the city in a mosque, considered a Shiite holy site, and local clerics said one religious leader had recently arrived in hopes of arranging for their safe passage out of the shrine.

Details were sketchy on the attack on the airport in Baghdad. But its capture would give American and British troops con­trol of a close-in facility where they could airlift equipment and troops.

‘That's all right,' he added, "I'm going to talk about the war."

Iraqi intelligence complex. Die­hard defenders have held out for
days inside the city of 1.3 million.

American officials cited continu­ing examples of Iraqis cooperating with invading troops. In Najaf, they said a prominent cleric under house arrest by the Iraqi govern­ment had urged the population not to interfere with the operations of American or British forces. A small group of Iraqi defenders has been holding out inside the city in a mosque, considered a Shiite holy site, and local clerics said one religious leader had recently arrived in hopes of arranging for their safe passage out of the shrine.

Details were sketchy on the
attack on the airport in Baghdad. But its capture would give
American and British troops control of a close-in facility where they could airlift equipment and troops.

For the first time in the war, large parts of Baghdad lost electricity. The cause was not known, and Myers, the Joint Chiefs chairman, told reporters at a Pentagon brief­ing that Americans had "not tar­geted the power grid in Baghdad." Ground forces closed in on Baghdad from separate southern approaches, the Army from the southeast and Marines from the southwest, in advances begun Tuesday night.

American and British heli­copters and fixed-wing aircraft bombed positions in Kut, and Marines and Iraqis lobbed grenades at close quarters.

Between 10 and 15 Iraqi armed only with rifles charged Marine tanks in the suicide charge. Two Marines died in the fighting — and a medic who tried to save one of them was mortally wounded. Rescue equipment on the spot.

Army forces roled past dozens of dead Iraqi soldiers and bombed-out tanks in the suicide charge. Two Marines died in the fighting — and a medic who tried to save one of them was mortally wounded. Rescue equipment on the spot.

Army forces roled past dozens of dead Iraqi soldiers and bombed-out tanks in the suicide charge. Two Marines died in the fighting — and a medic who tried to save one of them was mortally wounded. Rescue equipment on the spot.
In talks, Powell fails to narrow gap over U.N. role in postwar Iraq

By Barry Schweid

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Secretary of State Colin Powell told Washington's European allies and friends Thursday that the United States — not the United Nations — must have the lead role in Iraq's postwar reconstruction, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said.

Powell's comments clashed with the view in European capitals that the recommendation of Iraq should be led by the United Nations, not the United States or Britain, which went to war in March. Powell's visit to Europe is part of a larger push by the Bush administration to win support from its European allies.

"We must stabilize Iraq and the region," Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer of Germany said. "The United Nations is the only international organization that can give legitimacy to this." Powell said during the downplayed the differences, saying he expected a "constructive" meeting and a report back to (President Bush) what he heard. We are still examining the proper role for the United Nations.

National/International News

BY Kとりえ　WASHDNGTON - The Bush administration tried to downplay an effort Thursday by Secretary of State Colin Powell to press European leaders Thursday to assume a more permanent role in Iraq's postwar reconstruction, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said.

"I believe the U.S. has a role to play," the secretary of state said. "I believe the nature of that role is under discussion here in the council and in other capitals." Powell told British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw during a meeting Thursday that Powell would be open to European participation in the reconstruction of Iraq, but that his primary goal was to win support for the United Nations' role in the mission.

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 depressed" the idea of Iraq, it's a matter of conscience that the United Nations would be involved in this, and that the United Nations would be the lead role for the Iraqis, by the Iraqis." Powell said during the downplayed the differences, saying he expected a "constructive" meeting and a report back to (President Bush) what he heard. We are still examining the proper role for the United Nations.

U.S. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said at the world body's headquarters Thursday that "the idea of U.N. involvement in post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq is an issue under discussion." He said that while there was no common view on any U.N. role in postwar Iraq, Powell's talks were held "without acrimony." Powell told British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw that the United States was "open to European participation in the reconstruction of Iraq, but that his primary goal was to win support for the United Nations' role in the mission.

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Arts & Culture

Television

War impedes TV sweeps; people sitting on couch

By Sharon Gayle Tanenbaum
Washington Science News (New York U)

(U-WIRE) NEW YORK — In a time when war coverage is so extensive that Americans can actually explain the difference between Basra and Baghdad, many students continue to tune in to favorites like "Friends" and "American Idol" for a break from the breaking news.

"You reach a certain point where you need to watch something else," said Habiba Mandour, a junior in Arts and Science. "There's only so much bombing and explosions that you can watch.

Although millions of viewers like Mandour rely on cable news channels such as CNN for war coverage, round-the-clock programming has reached the point of saturation. As a result, many viewers have been channel surfing, resulting in a ratings drop of some top 10 favorites. The Nielsen Media Research ratings for two weeks ago, which included the first days of war, showed a drop of almost 30 percent of viewers for "Friends."

Even with the drop, entertainment programming continued to dominate the list — not war coverage.

"This is not like Sept. 11, when we were glued to the set," said Robert Thompson, director of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture at Syracuse University. "The fact that a rerun of "Friends" and "American Idol" for a break from the breaking news.

"It provides a nice distraction," said graduate student Matthew Roy, who is rooting for the University of Kansas. "But you're not completely isolated. If anything major happens, they'll break to Dan Rather.

CBS's decision to cut some games in favor of war news, however, may be a moot point. Cable news channels have already claimed their stake on the subject, and Fox and CNN's coverage of war coverage to cut some games in favor of war news, however, may be a moot point. Cable news channels have already claimed their stake on the subject, and Fox and CNN's coverage of war news.

With the war on the rise, people find themselves glued to war coverage, ignoring the regularly scheduled "must see TV" offerings.

...Continued on page 5

Music

Ataris bring fresh sound to aging punk scene

By Pablo Saldana
The Owls (S. Florida)

(U-WIRE) TAMPA, Fla. — With several indie releases and a half-decade of constant touring, the Ataris venture out with their first major label record, "So Long, Astoria." Spending the majority of 2002 writing and recording this record undoubtly caused some of their fickle fans to lose interest.

"So Long, Astoria" picks up where the band's last indie release, "End Is Forever," left off. The record offers nothing new to fans acquainted with the group's previous efforts except for an abundance of more mature themes, which in some cases hinder "Astoria" from becoming a great pop-punk record.

The record's overblown productions are a change from 2001's "End Is Forever," which had a more experimental and fresh feeling.

Upon first listen, "Astoria" doesn't offer any songs as instantly gratifying as "San Dimas High School Football Rules" was to their 1999 effort "Blue Skies, Broken Hearts ... Next 12 Exits." "Astoria" does deliver a head-bobbing cover of Don Henley's "Boys Of Summer," though.

Kris Roe wrote all the original material at home in Indiana to reflect his childhood and the experiences he gained. The leadoff single, "In This Diary," paints the picture of his typical summer and the revelation that growing up is better than being grown up.

After receiving a letter from a dying fan in Australia, Roe wrote one of "Astoria's" finest tunes, "My Reply." The song mixes poignant lyrics that don't depress the listener and music that captures the feeling reflected through them, creating a song that is a welcome antidote to the current pop-punk scene (i.e. Green Day's "Dookie" and Blink-182's "Enema of the State").

"Unopened Letter To The World" is a perfect example of how the band uses lyrics to describe settings and their meaning reflected through them, creating a song that is a welcome antidote to the current pop-punk scene (i.e. Green Day's "Dookie" and Blink-182's "Enema of the State").

"The Saddest Song" explores new territory for the band, tackling the issue of fatherhood. The track is the album's emotional center and is included in two versions. The second is a stripped-down acoustic version that serves as a bonus track that also wraps up the 57-minute record.

"So Long, Astoria" holds its own against modern pop-punk classics such as Green Day's "Dookie" and Blink-182's "Enema of the State." Although it is not a revolutionary record that will change the face of popular music, it is a giant leap forward from the singles from All-American Rejects and New Found Glory.

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By John Duda

May 19, 2003

The Ojai (85 South Florida)

Somewhere between the beginning and end of the new Vin Diesel movie, "A Man Apart," the question of how this movie was ever made has to arise. In the film industry, an idea for a movie is first conceived, developed and written, then pitched to executives whose job it is to determine whether or not the "idea" is worth the investment. The Drug Enforcement Agency named Vetter's wife is mistakenly killed. Another, this has been done before. This movie is about a man in the film industry, an idea for a movie is first conceived, developed and written, then pitched to executives whose job it is to determine whether or not the "idea" is worth the investment.

By Christy Lemire

May 19, 2003

Vin Diesel looks back at his choices and comes to discover his movie suck.

The first and foremost problem with all of this is that, on one level or another, this has been done before. This movie is about a man in the film industry, an idea for a movie is first conceived, developed and written, then pitched to executives whose job it is to determine whether or not the "idea" is worth the investment.

Unfortunately, none of it is done very well. Granted, the audience will gasp when they see some of the more graphic scenes, but for the vast majority of the movie, Vin Diesel looks back at his choices and comes to discover his movie sucks.

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Yitz Griffin fancies himself the heir to Richard Pryor's comedy throne, with material that originates from a bleak, abusive childhood. But he has nothing new to say with his concert film, like Pryor did with 1979's "Live in Concert." Griffin's imitation -- more misses than hits, really -- has more in common with Martin Lawrence's similar stage rant in last summer's "Rudolph."" The first and foremost problem with all of this is that, on one level or another, this has been done before. This movie is about a man in the film industry, an idea for a movie is first conceived, developed and written, then pitched to executives whose job it is to determine whether or not the "idea" is worth the investment.

There is virtually no reason to see this movie, ever. The mistakes and ill-conceived ideas are numerous, starting from the birth of the movie. The enduring qualities are non-existent. It's just not worth the time or money.

Director George Gallo repeatedly cuts away from the stage to shots of audience members holding up Griffin's jokes -- sometimes before he's even delivered the punch line -- as if we need to be convinced that Griffin is funny. His funniest jokes are his cleanest.

His concert film, like Pryor did with 1979's "Live in Concert," Griffin's imitation -- more misses than hits, really -- has more in common with Martin Lawrence's similar stage rant in last summer's "Rudolph."" The first and foremost problem with all of this is that, on one level or another, this has been done before. This movie is about a man in the film industry, an idea for a movie is first conceived, developed and written, then pitched to executives whose job it is to determine whether or not the "idea" is worth the investment.

The drama that was inserted into the movie to give it depth only makes it more ridiculous. The opening voice-over given by Vin Diesel looks back at his choices and comes to discover his movie sucks.

The first and foremost problem with all of this is that, on one level or another, this has been done before. This movie is about a man in the film industry, an idea for a movie is first conceived, developed and written, then pitched to executives whose job it is to determine whether or not the "idea" is worth the investment.
Opinion

The middle of the class is where it's at

The first week of classes is here again and, more importantly, this week holds the pivotal question: Where is the ideal seat to make the quarter not suck? For the most part, where students choose to plant their tushes on the second day of class seems random. Actuall)y, it's all about location.

There is the front of the class, where there is more freedom to voice an opinion like a brown-noser or braving the projectile spit from an enthusiastic professor. However, choosing a seat at the back of the class almost instantly signifies an unwilling participant who o1y comes to watch the professor or to observe or occasionally doze off. Now the middle — that's mainly safe haven, in a superficial way, what kind of student is it?

There's another component that may be thrown into the crucial decision making of finding the right seat: Who are the familiar faces in class? Everyone knows who you know and who you don't. Sitting near the boring lecture seems a little bit hit. It's always nice to have a friend next to you to quickly chat with during a break or enlist partner for a quick classroom exercise.

Well, I'm here to say the middle is the safe haven to establish, in a superficial way, what kind of student you are. Every archetype is dealt fairly and honestly. Taking random seats in class is that way. Not to mention, it's far from your desk, so you may not have to look at your own work all day. If you want a seat up front, that's a risk you'll need to take. But in the end, that's always the seat you want to have.

Letters to the editor

Bush's policies should be about peace

Editor,

It is vital to me that a world community could rally around such an unjust war, one that will take the lives of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians. The Bush administration holiers about weapons of mass destruction and the world threat created by Iraq's evil tyrant, Saddam Hussein. North Korea and China, who already have nuclear weapons and significant military capability to wage war against any country in the region.

Iraq is a war that can be won, because that is the only reason it is being waged as we speak. This is not just a war about oil. This is a war about Euro-American imperialism, the underlying cause of terrorism. This is a war about racial and religious prejudices. For some reason, the world did not learn from World Wars I and II. Korea and Vietnam that war is not the answer.

It is the United States that placed Saddam in power. It is the United States that trained and supplied Osama bin Laden. Maybe one day the world will find out what a war about oil really means.

President Bush says that his foreign policy is not about protecting economic interests or expanding borders and cultural hegemony, but rather about finding peace and tolerance for all its members. Don't let fear and ignorance stop you, readers, from your civic duty to make the world a better place.

Once someone has been molested, his or her brain becomes wired a little differently than the average person. The damage is permanent. That's why stopping molestation is so important. As long as we have molestation victims, we will have molesters. Only through sympathetic counseling with victims can we begin to effectively fight the disease of molestation.

I would vote a response if you have time.

Buster Freeman is a agricultural systems management freshman.

Department of emergency

Editor,

As a graduating journalism senior who has endured four years of the department's steady downward spiral, I recommend that anyone considering transferring into the department, or those in the process of doing so, make a step farther. Transfer schools.

With the exception of the solid writing foundation I have gained from core writing classes, the department has contributed nothing to my education other than poor professionals trained wanna be professors and the loss of an accreditation. The journalism department has merely forced its students to supplement its curriculum in classes offered by departments like business administration and business. Those departments provide students with adequate resources, excellent advising and opportunities that prepare and educate students rather than leaving it to students to figure it out for themselves, just as the journalism department does.

My experiences in those departments, as well as a personal drive to seek hands-on experience in the San Luis Obispo community, are where I obtained the skills that will enable me to get a job in the journalism industry, not a degree from the Cal Poly Journalism Department.

To those of you who are considering transferring to the department that is currently in a state of emergency and has resided in that state for quite some time, take a look from a senior's that been through it all. Get out while you can.

Jennifer Thomison is a journalism senior.

Letter policy

Letters become the property of the Mustang Daily, Mustang Daily reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, punctuation and length. Letters, commentaries and cartoons submitted must be the work of Mustang Daily students. Letters submitted must be 250 words or less. Letters, commentaries and cartoons submitted must be submitted electronically at Mustang Daily. Please limit le n gth to 250 words. Letters should include the writer's full name, major and class standing.

Letters to the editor

April 4, 2003

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Cockroaches never die ...and one died in your corner.
News

Kendra Smith
Friday, April 4, 2003

WHEELCHAIR
continued from page 1

such as Peru and Ethiopia, where the foundation has provided wheelchairs in the past. The chapter would like to raise $35,000 this year to cover the cost of the benefits and to send 280 wheelchairs to Ethiopia. Last year the foundation met its goal of $18,000, which funded 240 wheelchairs to Peru.

"Ethiopia has a large number of land mine victims, and the Wheelchair Foundation hasn't delivered that many wheelchairs to them," Jackson said.

Once the delivery arrives in Ethiopia, local agencies distribute the wheelchairs to those in need, Metcalf said.

The family of founder Ken Behring sponsored two students who accompanied the delivery to Peru last year. The Cal Poly chapter was the first college chapter of the Wheelchair Foundation. Behring's speech in April 2001 inspired the students to help the cause, Metcalf said.

"As one of the icons in classical quartet music, I wanted to see them at Cal Poly before they retire," Hoskins said. "The name may continue, but it won't be the same. I'll be a different brand."

The performance will feature compositions by Beethoven, "As one of the icons in classical quartet music, I wanted to see them at Cal Poly before they retire."

Ralph Hoskins
Cal Poly Arts director

QUARTET
continued from page 1

receive," Hoskins said. "We've stretched financially to make it happen this year because while they are an ensemble that has never played better, their retirement is not far off." Three of the four quartet members have played together since 1964. The group is made up of Arnold Steinhardt (violin), John Davly (viola), Michael Tree (viola) and Peter Waley (cello).

Hoskins said it will not be long before one or two of the core group members retire.

"The quartet has received many eminent accolades, including the first New York Seal of Recognition in 1982. In 1992, the quartet became the only quartet to receive the Award of Merit from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters in New York City.

"It is quite an accomplishment for Cal Poly Arts to bring the String Quartet to the Central Coast," said Lisa Woske, marketing coordinator for Cal Poly Arts. Without charitable donations, Hoskins' dream of having the Guarneri String Quartet at Cal Poly may never come true.

"We have generous contributors who make up the difference between ticket sales and expenses," Hoskins said.

They all have excellent technique, wonderful tone, the best instruments, make excellent choices for their repertoire and are well-balanced with their instruments." Ralph Hoskins
Cal Poly Arts director

Hoskins said, "We would like to acknowledge our sponsors of the event, Lynn Mahoney Ekegren and statistics professor Jay and his wife, Carol Devore. They contributed a large amount."

Tickets for the concert are $28 and $34. There will be a student rush, where all seats available one hour before the show are $5 for students only. Student discounts are available, and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Ticket Office today from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. To order by phone, call 756-2787.

"What really makes them unique is an almost intuitive teamwork," Hoskins said. "They play like one instrument. It's noticeable. You can hear it. They all have excellent technique, wonderful tone, the best instruments, make excellent choices for their repertoire and are well-balanced with their instruments."
Cal Poly Baseball

Mustangs open Big West play today

By Andy Fahey

MUSTANG DAILY STAFF WRITER

The Cal Poly baseball team has already played 32 games this year, but today marks the beginning of a new season. The Mustangs kick off Big West Conference play with a three-game series against UC Riverside beginning tonight at 6.

Ploy (18-13-1) comes into the series on a four-game winning streak. The Mustangs' sweep of Southern Utah last week came in a pair of doubleheaders and was highlighted by the first Cal Poly no-hitter in 32 years. Freshman Garrett Olson went 7 1/3 innings and sophomore Tony Saige finished off the Thunderbirds to preserve the no-hit effort in last Friday's 7-0 win in the second game of the doubleheader.

In addition to the quality pitching, the Mustangs bats exploded for 33 runs on 62 hits in the series. “Offensively we've stepped it up quite a bit, but we still need to prove we can beat a quality pitcher,” head coach Larry Lee said. “Defensively we’ve worked real hard at times, but have a tendency to self-destruct.”

Junior outfielders Sam Herbert and Pat Breen lead the offensive attack for the Mustangs. Herbert recorded six hits in game one of the series against Southern Utah and has boosted his batting average to a team-high .404. Breen also had a strong road trip, with three home runs and seven RBIs.

“Herbert and Breen have been our most consistent players throughout the series,” Lee said. “He has been hot since day one. He's really our catalyst at the top of the lineup. If he has a good day, we're going to have a good day offensively.”

But the pitching, can suddenly spark the Mustangs.

“Breen is our impact player who with one swing of the bat has been able to change the complexion of the ballgame,” Lee said.

The Mustangs are anxious to come back to Baggett Stadium after playing 14 of their last 16 games on the road in conditions that were not always baseball-friendly. “In Nebraska it was cold, and it snowed in Utah,” second baseman Adam Leavitt said. “It will be nice to have a three-game series here at Baggett. The weather will hopefully be cooperative.”

The Highlanders enter the Big West opener as the league’s best hitting team at .338. Ryan Harvey leads the offensive barrage with a conference-best .464 average and is followed by teammates Randy Blood (.384) and Beau Walden (.383). Although they are focused on the series at hand, the Mustangs can’t deny that the postseason is weighing on their minds.

“Realistically for us, we know that we need to either come in first or second in order to make the playoffs and attend a regional,” Lee said. “As a team, we think that’s definitely a goal that’s within our reach.”

Finishing atop the Big West, however, does not figure to be an easy task. The conference figures to be amongst the toughest in the country. “That’s what separates Fullerton and Long Beach from everybody else,” Lee said. “Their staffs are as good as anybody in the country. It's going to take a great performance on our behalf if we are going to beat that caliber of teams.”

From this point on the Mustangs should be playing with a sense of urgency, Lee said. “We have the ability to play a lot better,” he said. “We need to play our best baseball at this particular time. Any loss from now on out will be crucial.”

The Mustangs hope to sweep their second straight series this weekend at home against UC Riverside.

After Cinderella run, best is yet to come for Poly athletics

great things often go unnoticed.

When I first learned I'd be doing this column a few weeks ago, a number of different sentiments passed over me: Excitement, nervousness, nausea.

I also felt somewhat disheartened.

There are so many sports I can't write much about.

It seemed when I started considering many of my column options that every sport I felt passionately about had already ended. I wish I could forecast the success I envision for next year's football team. I don't care if they win or lose as long as I get the chance to write about it. Then there's men's basketball.

For anyone who spent last quarter semester in a Siberian prison or elsewhere far, far away from Matt Gym, it hopefully comes as no surprise that the Mustangs came close to winning the Big West Tournament and qualifying for the "Big Dance" — the NCAA Tournament.

Cal Poly went on a Cinderella run through the Big West Championships but it ended against Utah State, as the Aggies beat the Mustangs 57-54 March 15 in the tourney finale.

What a season, though. Forget Cal Poly finished an unspectacular 16-14 but soon enough was led by one of the league's best hitting teams. Herbert and Breen have been our most consistent players throughout the series. Herbert and Breen have been our most consistent players throughout the series.

"Dennis is just one Mustang big man who passes outstandingly, and for better or worse, Schilling reminds me of a swingman version of Memphis Grizzlies guard Jason Williams. He's an explosive driller leading both to brilliance and occasional erratic play. No matter what, the core of the team has ample time to work out its few kinks. I predict the 2004 Mustangs to make the NCAA Tournament.

Not long ago, I moped at basketball. No matter what, the core of the team has ample time to work out its few kinks. I predict the 2004 Mustangs to make the NCAA Tournament. I remember attending a preseason exhibition and thinking, "Damn, these guys are loaded," as I fueled through the media guide with bits of returning stars like Vannie Dennis and Jason Allen alongside those of big-name transfers like swingman Shane Schilling (Minnesota) and power forward Dabry Kamara (University of Portland).

The situation for next season is not markedly worse. Schilling could join Dennis on the All-Big West first team. Rebounding presence Phil Johnson will also be back. Only the guard core is graduating.

Games will be interesting without anyone who the best team in "Big Dance" — the NCAA Tournament. But the pitching, can suddenly spark the Mustangs.

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Shot-putter Stephanie Brown heads into the track season having placed third at the indoor national championships in Daytona Beach with a career-best throw of 17 feet, 28" meters. The baseball team has won four straight to improve to 18-13, and the Mustangs go up against 22-6 UC Riverside this weekend.

Then there's the nationally ranked team which I'm technically a part of: The triathlon team. I practice very, very rarely, but nationals and Wildflower are within the next month. At the very least, I'll have the inside track on each race, even if I have to be revived halfway through. I'm sure there are other dynamic teams and players out there, hard at work and worthy of press.

"There's no real weakness in the conference," Lee said. "Their staffs are as good as anybody in the country. It's going to take a great performance on our behalf if we are going to beat that caliber of teams."

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No. 8 Long Beach State also slides into league play with solid pitching and consistency. 'Right-hander Budd Weaver has compiled a 6-2 record so far and has nine strikeouts in just 57 1/3 innings, while junior southpaw Abe Alvarez is 5-0 with a 2.40 ERA. "That's what separates Fullerton and Long Beach from everybody else," Lee said. "Their staffs are as good as anybody in the country. It's going to take a great performance on our behalf if we are going to beat that caliber of teams."

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