Students help relocate coral tree

Shannon Boren
MUSTANG DAILY

Cal Poly students experienced a rare sight Wednesday morning when a 25-ton coral tree was moved from the Environmental Horticulture Science (EHS) unit. Though it was transferred just down the road from its original position, the endeavor allowed students to learn about successfully relocating such a large tree and all the work the process entails.

Students from a variety of majors, including landscape architecture, construction management and EHS, all witnessed the event and learned more about the project from the Valley Crest Tree Company.

"I don't think there would be another time I'd be able to see this prior to entering the professional world," said EHS junior Damica Maxwell. "It takes so many people and so much teamwork. It was pretty amazing.

"According to Bert Richardson, a Valley Crest employee who was part of the moving team, the process began Monday morning when the tree was root pruned and boxed in preparation for the transfer. On Tuesday, the box was undermined to give it a bottom, and on Wednesday a crew was brought in with an 80-ton crane to complete the process.

Students were included in various stages of the move, but were most involved in soil clean-up and observation. A large portion of the work was considered too dangerous for students and left to the professionals.

Overall, the relocation went smoothly, though the crew did encounter a few bumps in the road.

"We had to bring (the tree) past three sets of wires that were lower than the top of the tree," Richardson said. "The wires were lifted with poles so that we didn't damage them, but also so the tree won't hurt in the move."

Patrick Wiley, an EHS senior, was glad to be a part of the experience.

"We kind of just helping out around here," he said. "We've learned how to properly take care of a tree, how big a project like this is and what the time commitment it takes to be successful."

According to Wiley's estimates, about 100 people were present for the move. The crowd included students, professors and professionals who enjoyed a barbecue and a presentation hosted by Valley Crest about the landscape industry.

Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., greets supporters as she makes a campaign stop at Herrera's Mexican Cafe in Dallas on Tuesday.

WASHINGTON — Hillary Rodham Clinton declared Wednesday that her primary victories in Ohio, Texas and Rhode Island had reordered the Democratic presidential race in her favor. A resilient Barack Obama countered with fresh pledges of support from superdelegates and said his lead remained intact.

One day after his worst showing in a month, Obama blamed negative attacks by the former first lady for his defeat and quickly made good on a promise to sharpen his criticism of her.

But there was no disputing he had missed a chance to drive her from the race. Or that in contrast to the Republicans, who have settled to their households. "Children are the truly innocent victims here," Raub said. "We work with the kids to show them they have a choice and they don't have to repeat the cycle."

see Tree, page 3

see Primaries, page 2

Women's shelter program holds fundraiser

Angela Watkins
MUSTANG DAILY

In a time when women's shelters are having more funding difficulties than usual, a local tradition will come in useful.

The San Luis Obispo Women's Shelter will host their 21st Annual Phills' Musical Revue this weekend to serve the Women's Shelter Program of San Luis Obispo.

The program serves the city of San Luis Obispo as well as the communities in the southern part of the county. The shelter offers a safe house, counseling, transitional housing, and other services for victims of domestic violence.

Although the shelter is the only resource in its kind in between Santa Maria and Paso Robles, it is suffering heavily from the slowing economy and budget cuts on both the state and federal level, said Beth Raub, a volunteer coordinator for the women's shelter.

Funds from the revue will go into the shelter's general fund which is used to fill any cracks left after government grants are depleted. Unfortunately, this year is shaping up to have a lot of cracks.

Last month, President Bush decided to cut the Violence Against Women Act Program budget — a large source of funding for women's shelters — by one-third and completely eliminated the budget for the Victims of Crime Act. The VOCA cut will be especially felt by the San Luis Obispo shelter and might lead to them ending their program for children of domestic violence, Raub said. The program offers free counseling and other services for children under 17 who have suffered from abuse in their households. "The children are the truly innocent victims here," Raub said. "We work with the kids to show them they have a choice and they don't have to repeat the cycle."

see Women, page 3
Primaries
continued from page 1

dozens contests on the calendar. It takes 2/3 to win the nomination.

That left weeks for public campaigning, millions more to be spent on television ads, probably one more debate and plenty of private jabbing of party leaders, the superdelegates who attend the convention but are not chosen in primaries or caucuses.

About 350 of them remain uncommitted, enough to sway the nomination in the unlikely event they decide to line up behind one candidate or the other.

"We are vigorously talking to the uncommitted automatic delegates. The Obama campaign is doing the same thing," Harold Ickes, a Clinton adviser, told reporters.

There was also talk of arranging for makeup primaries or caucuses in Michigan and Florida, two states that were stripped by the Democratic National Committee of delegates for holding elections early in defiance of party rules.

The two states' governors, Republican Charlie Crist in Florida and Democrat Jennifer Granholm in Michigan, issued a joint statement calling on party officials "to resolve this matter and to ensure that the voters ... are full participants in the formal selection of their parties' nominees."

While the Democratic Party stripped the two states of their delegates as punishment for holding primaries too early, Republicans cut the two delegations in half.

Of more immediate concern for Clinton and Obama are the Wyoming caucuses, scheduled for Saturday, with 12 delegates at stake, and the Mississippi primary next Tuesday, with 33 more.

Obama has plans to campaign in both states, but it appeared Clinton would focus her energy on the Pennsylvania primary on April 22. It boasts 158 delegates, the largest prize remaining on the calendar.

Both Clinton and Obama made a round of morning interview programs as their campaigns entered a new phase.

The former first lady said McCain's ascension meant Democratic primary voters were looking at the race through a new lens. "It is now about who is strongest against the Republican nominee, John McCa­lin," she said on CNN. "You know, people who voted a month ago didn't know who the Republican nominee was going to be."

"They didn't perhaps factor in that it will be about national security," she said of the fall campaign.

McCain is a former Vietnam War prisoner, a veteran of more than two decades in the Senate, with long experience on the Armed Services Committee. One of the hallmarks of his campaign has been his support for the Iraq War, and he frequently tells audi­ences he supported an increase in troop strength before President Bush announced one a little over a year ago.

Clinton forcefully injected national security issues into the Democratic campaign in Texas with a television ad that did not mention Obama, yet questioned whether he was prepared to handle a crisis if the phone rang in the White House at 3 a.m.

Obama, on a long flight home to Chicago from Texas, told report­ers he believed criticism like that helped send him to defeat.

"What exactly is this foreign policy experience?" he asked mock­ingly. "Was she negotiating treaties? Was she handling crisis? The an­swer is no."

Obama also attributed his defeat in part to more skeptical news cover­age, "Many of you in the press corps had been persuaded that you had been too hard on her and too soft on me," he said.

His aides signaled a more ag­gressive tone ahead when they distributed a memo saying Clin­ton was trying to answer potentially embarrassing questions by keeping her and her husband's tax returns for the past several years private.

Clinton's communications di­rector, Howard Wolfson, quickly, saying returns for the years since the Clintons left the White House would be released around April 15.

"Instead of making false attacks, we urge Senator Obama to release all relevant financial and other infor­mation related to indicted politicalesor Tony Rezko," Wolfson added, referring to a former fundraiser for the Illinois senator who is on trial for corruption.

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Birth control price hike affects female college students

Mica Vincent

As if taking birth control didn’t come with enough side effects, here’s a new one: empty wallet syndrome.

Since January 2007, the prices of prescription contraceptives at health centers across the nation have increased, sometimes tripling in cost, according to Cal Poly Health Services Director Martin Bragg.

Thanks to a few lines of legal jargon in the Federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, students no longer benefit from pharmaceutical contracts with college health centers that used to provide low-cost prescriptions.

According to Bragg, this was most likely an oversight by lawmakers.

“Any action of that magnitude has unintended consequences,” he said.

Even so, students will have to pay the price.

“It seems like college students, who have limited means, are going to be most affected by the cost,” said general engineering freshman Melissa Lund. “It doesn’t make any sense.”

According to Bragg, many women start using prescription contraceptives in college and tend to stick with the brand that works for them. Therefore, he said, the contracts actually benefit pharmaceutical companies.

While he has not yet heard of a student ceasing use of her birth control altogether because of the price hike, he is still working to make the Cal Poly Health Center a Family Planning, Access, Care and Treatment (Family-PACT) provider. Family-PACT is a state program that offers free and low-cost family planning services to men and women, including birth control and counseling.

Bragg explained that students would have to meet several requirements to be eligible for the program, such as earning an annual income lower than $19,000, having no insurance or needing to keep family planning services private from the policy holder.

“I think a significant proportion of our students would qualify,” said Bragg, who is trying to make the program available to students by the summer.

“By and large, we have very good prices on most of our pharmaceuticals — including birth control,” he added.

“Even though prices have gone up, they’re still good compared to what most pharmacies are charging.”

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Susie Brans

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Musical performances, dancing and an opening performance of “Stepping Out with My Baby” starring KSBY anchor Tony Capella.

“The more of a Las Vegas show,” Humphrey said. “We worked on the show year-round and it is a really great show.”

The show will also feature city council members and county supervisors, and this year the revue will include more technology, especially in the show’s surprise ending.

Humphrey said, “Our ending is going to be really great. We are getting too big for the spot it was in and being crowded out by an oak tree whose branches were interlocking with it.”
The discovery could have major implications for land-use decisions if the wolverine is declared an endangered species, a step the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering. **OAKLAND (AP)** - A prominent software programmer accused of killing his estranged wife says the two cared about each other, but weren't compatible.

The 44-year-old Reiser is charged with killing Nina Reiser, his 40-year-old wife, but wasn't compatible. The identical triplets were born on Feb. 27, 2006 Labor Day weekend.

The Hawai'i Club was created at the beginning of this quarter, and with some hard work and good vibes, it will continue long after they graduate. "It's a good way to meet people, not only those who are from or lived in Hawaii, but others that are interested in what we have to offer," Yuen said.

"Everyone I've met from Hawaii is so awesome, and they have such a chill vibe; it was just something I really wanted to be a part of," Baniaga said.

"There isn't a set agenda for the meetings. Mostly the officers come up with the different topics for each week, or members request certain topics for us to research and talk about," Yuen said.

"We want to get the word out that we are here, and there is no membership fee to be a part of the Hawaii Club; all you need is an interest in Hawaiian culture. There isn't a set agenda for the meetings. Mostly the officers come up with the different topics for each week, or members request certain topics for us to research and talk about," Yuen said.

"We want to get the word out that we are here, and we want to make the club sustainable, as well as doing community service with a Hawaiian vibe," Goto said.

"The club's goal is to get students interested in the club and to have a luau every year to celebrate Hawaiian traditions. "There is a friendly welcoming vibe, and the club doesn't judge you if you're not from Hawaii. Plus, you don't have to wear a shirt," Baniaga said.

**Web Poll**

**Mustang Daily**

**Aloha: Welcome to Hawai'i**

Raiza Canelon

"A lot of the Japanese and Chinese immigrants in Hawaii ate Spam during the plantation days and packed it into their lunches. It also got another boost in Hawaii during World War II," Yuen said.

Goto's favorite Spam meal is Spam and Musubi, which is nori seaweed wrapped around Spam and rice with soy sauce.

Biologist student Anthony Baniaga joined the club because he loves the Hawaiian spirit, and his roommate is from Hawaii.

"Everyone I've met from Hawaii is so awesome, and they have such a chill vibe; it was just something I really wanted to be a part of," Baniaga said.

"The Hawaii Club members meet from 8 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays and discuss different aspects of Hawaiian culture. Their meetings include music, presentations and recipes, and attendees can learn a lot about Hawaii from those who have lived there and experienced it themselves. There is no membership fee to be a part of the Hawaii Club; all you need is an interest in Hawaiian culture. There isn't a set agenda for the meetings. Mostly the officers come up with the different topics for each week, or members request certain topics for us to research and talk about," Yuen said.

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International Briefs

JERUSALEM (AP) — The moderate Palestinian leadership agreed under heavy U.S. pressure Wednesday to resume peace talks with Israel, dropping a demand that Israel first reach a truce with Islamic Hamas militants acting as spoilers.

It left open the question of how both sides will eventually confront Hamas militants in charge of the 1.4 million Palestinians — nearly half the population — living in the sealed-off Gaza Strip.

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — OPEC on Wednesday accused the U.S. of economic “mismanagement” that it said is pushing oil prices to record highs, rebuting calls to boost output and laying blame at the feet of the Bush administration.

Oil prices surged past $104 a barrel for the first time after the OPEC announcement and the release of a U.S. government report showing a surprise drop in crude oil stockpiles.

OSLO, Norway (AP) — The world must deal with climate change now — or pay a much higher price later, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said Wednesday.

In two decades, unchecked environmental damage could leave half the world’s population without adequate drinking water, the OECD’s secretary general, Angel Gurria, said Wednesday.

“Climate change is mankind’s most important challenge. We know the enemy: It is named carbon,” he said.

BEIJING (AP) — The Chinese premier said Wednesday that Beijing is taking steps to ensure that its product safety regulations meet international standards, signalling another phase in China’s wide-ranging campaign to repair its battered reputation as an exporter.

China’s exports have come under heavy scrutiny in the past year after potentially deadly levels of chemicals were found in good ranging from toothpaste to toys to a pet food ingredient.

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — President Hugo Chavez said Wednesday that “we want peace,” but that Colombia and its allies in Washington represent war — and that perennial conflict with the United States is inevitable.

“It must be said: They, the empire and its lackeys are war,” Chavez said in a televised speech, his first since Colombia alleged that documents seized from a leftist rebel’s computer prove the Venezuelan leader has been supporting the guerrillas for years.

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Mustang Daily News
Wire Editor: Christina Casci

www.mustangdaily.net

Thursday, March 6, 2008
When most people hear the phrase "religion in modern music," their thoughts immediately turn to the '90s influx of Christian-rock bands, or bands like Creed, which claims to be Christian whenever convenient and then denies the title when it doesn't work to its benefit.

Yet from Ray Charles to Madonna, religion has influenced popular music since its creation. Pop music had its start in churches, where gospel music abandoned the word "God" and turned into soul. And the ideas and images of faith and different religions remain a prevalent topic in modern society, making them equally prevalent in modern pop culture and music.

Although using religious imagery in song lyrics is hardly a new idea, punk-rock band The Thermals have taken the concept and twisted it in such a way that some find it sickening. Much like the work of artist Mark Bryan (featured in yesterday's "Religion & Art" series), The Thermals use religious imagery to comment on what it feels is the government's use of religion as propaganda for war.

The Thermals' most recent album is a 2006 punk-rock anthem calling for the separation of church and state titled "The Book, The Blood, The Machine," a reference to the Catholic sacrament of Eucharist. The album, bleeding with religious imagery, had fans writing in asking if The Thermals were a Christian band.

But with lyrics like "Locusts, tornadoes/crosses and Nazi halos" and "A giant fist is out to crush us," The Thermals are anything but Christian rock.

Although lead singer and guitarist Hutch Harris emphasized The Thermals are not an anti-Christian band, its lyrics are a far cry from the likes of Creed, which sings, "I close my eyes, begin to pray / then tears of joy start down my face."

Mustang Daily caught up with Harris, a writer who has trouble keeping Catholic imagery out of his lyrics, while he was writing his new album. He hopes this one will be religious-free ... but no guarantees.

Mustang Daily: What kind of roles do you think religion, spirituality and music play in defining a person's life?

Hutch Harris: Well let's start with religion; I mean, I think the statistic is something like 97 or 96 percent of Americans believe in God, so everyone has religion. Everyone has music in their life. ... Music is just so important to people, ever since you're a little kid — I mean, for most people, for me, of course, you can't imagine your life without it, and it's so attached to your memories. It's inescapable.

MD: You kind of grouped spirituality and religion together —

do you think those are kind of the same thing?

HH: For some people, they are; for some people, they're obviously not. It depends if you want to describe religion as "organized religion." For us, when we attack religion, it's not attacking spirituality; it's more against the corruption that you find in organization.

MD: I feel like a lot of your lyrics say that there's too much religion in the government, so I'm going to play devil's advocate here: If religion is a part of modern society and pop culture, shouldn't the government reflect modern society and pop culture?

HH: Um, no. (laugh) I don't think so. The goal is really to serve society and serve the civilians in the best way possible. It's usually not happening that way, but that's what it's supposed to be. And I think — this is tough — I don't want to even know if the president believes in God or not. I just want him to do his job well, you know? Just serve the society.

MD: I don't even really believe that Bush or Cheney, or anyone there — I mean, if they're really Christians or if they're religious then they're just total hypocrites because they're just spreading all this shit around the world. They're really violent, evil people. It doesn't go with any religions that I've ever heard. It's more to us, that they're using religion to hold power and to keep the donations coming in, because that's where the money comes from. It think it's more that they use it, than that they actually are religious.

MD: I found it kind of ironic that your lyrics paint the image of a destructive, cruel God and that people are shocked by that. Yet when you look at the Bible, in the Old Testament God is kind of destructive and can be cruel. Are you just interpreting the Bible as you see it?

HH: That record is heavy on the Old Testament; all of the imagery is Old Testament. There's really no New Testament; there's no turning of the other cheek on that record. I think maybe we shouldn't have put Jesus on the cover because ... it really doesn't have much to do with Jesus. It's really about Old Testament God. And God was real, you know, he was fucking angry for most of the Old Testament.

MD: From what you've expressed in other articles, it seems...
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**KCPR SOUND CHECK**

Every week, KCPR, San Luis Obispo, 91.3 FM, adds a selection of the new and latest music to its ever-growing library. Below are five of these “adds” to the station this week. You can hear this music showcased on New Releases, which airs Mondays from 10 a.m. until noon or on any of the regular format shows.

Bill Dixon with Exploding Star Orchestra — “s/t” (Thrill Jockey)
Free, improvisational jazz taken to new heights by an ensemble featuring some of Chicago's best.

Glass Candy — “Beat Box” (Italians Do It Better)
This prolific and consistently cutting edge British duo.

The Dodos’ — “Visitor” (Polyvinyl)
Kendal and B Macro with a host family

Bill Dixon with Exploding Star Orchestra — “s/t” (Thrill Jockey)
Free, improvisational jazz taken to new heights by an ensemble featuring some of Chicago's best.

Autrechre — “Quarantine” (Warpy)
Technically stunning electronic manipulations of sound by this prolific and consistently cutting edge British duo.

The Dodos — “Visitor” (Thrill Jockey)
This drum and guitar duo by San Luis Obispo some street cred last spring on their way to the top. Recommended if you like Animal Collective.

The Ruby Suns — “Sea Lion” (Sub Pop)
All over the place, this pop group stretches their influences from tropicalia to mariachi to indie pop.

Paul Cambon and Brian Cassidy are KCPR’s music directors.

**Thermals**

continued from page 7

like you have a complicated relationship with God and spirituality. What do you believe?

HH: Not much. I can't say one way or the other. I haven't been convinced. I guess. I don't know if I ever will. But I had this point in my life where I believed in a higher power. And I even liked organized religion at that point — I was really into my Christian church in high school... I have a problem with organized religion; that's completely separate of my faith. My faith is just something that I don't know if I'll ever have, but I had something in the past. I've had a love of faith before, but it's not like I believed and then lost my faith. It's more that I've never been fully convinced.

MD: Growing up Catholic, you've had a lot of connections to religion and religious symbolism throughout your life. Do you think that's why you tend to focus on that in your writing?

HH: Yeah. Actually we're writing a new record right now, and I've specifically tried to not focus on that. The last record we did was really heavy on religion and then both records before that one — you know, it's hard to keep it out of the lyrics. Yeah. That stuff's just always kind of floating around in my head for better or for worse. It was definitely close to the point of overkill on that last record so far as politics and religion so... on the next record I'm going to try and distance myself from that.

MD: Do you think Christians or other religion groups may be offended by your lyrics on this last record?

HH: We've gotten so much mail that's been positive, from people who are Christian and from people who basically feel the same way. I do... They feel like people like George (W.) Bush give them a bad name and give Christians a bad name.

A lot of people have written in to us — and this still happens. This happened really frequently in the past two weeks for some reason — a lot of people were writing to us asking if we're a Christian band. That started since the record came out. It means, it's not a non-Christian record; this record is a political record that really is just driven by the point that church and state are separated less and less and that's a bad thing. So a lot of people listen to that and listen to the record and think we're a Christian band.

But there have been a couple of people who have been angry and who wrote to us and think we're just bashing anyone who believes in God, which is crazy, and I wouldn't do that because most people do (laugh). I think if they listened to the lyrics closer, anyone who was upset would see that it's not just punk-rock religion-bashing, that there's more of a point to it.

MD: What's your opinion of Christian-rock bands?

HH: I don't like Christian-rock bands. (laughs) I haven't heard that many. I remember like a few from when I was in high school. I think that that's really against the point of the rebellious side of rock 'n' roll. Hopefully, Mostly it's just not good music. The lyrics like "he lifts me up" and shit like that, I just really don't like the way it sounds.

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I don’t hate musicals; I actually love them. I only hate that, until recently, I was embarrassed to come out to you about it. Indeed, I own the soundtracks to Hamilton, David Hasselhoff and singers I now consider uncool today. I own the soundtracks to Hamilton, David Hasselhoff and singers I now consider uncool (I own the soundtracks to Hamilton, David Hasselhoff and singers I now consider uncool) today. 

Perhaps musical film has re-emerged because of the kind of talent present in an industry where actors become singers (Lindsay Lohan, David Hasselhoff and singers become actors) because of the kind of talent present in an industry where actors become singers (Lindsay Lohan, David Hasselhoff and singers become actors) because of the kind of talent present in an industry where actors become singers (Lindsay Lohan, David Hasselhoff and singers become actors) because of...
I’m deleting you from my friends list

My goal today is not to inundate you with endless complaints about Facebook etiquette (for more on the topic, see Every Conversation I’ve Ever Had). Rather, I’d like to take a moment to polish my own statue and talk about an accomplishment I recently made within the realm of the Facebook universe: I recently gave about 40 of my “friends” on Facebook (“The Hipster’s MySpace!”) the axe. Also, I understand that while I call this an accomplishment, it really means nothing in the fictional social universe that is casual online networking.

Now, some people may find themselves distraught when they log onto their Facebook profiles and find that their presence no longer graces the News Feed on their home page. No longer will they have the pleasure of knowing “James Koman wrote I am writing something pointless on Facebook (“The Hipster’s MySpace!”) the axe.” Also, I understand that while I call this an accomplishment, it really means nothing in the fictional social universe that is casual online networking.

Now, some people may find themselves distraught when they log onto their Facebook profiles and find that their presence no longer graces the News Feed on their home page. No longer will they have the pleasure of knowing “James Koman wrote I am writing something pointless on Facebook (“The Hipster’s MySpace!”) the axe.”

No longer will they be able to peer into my life like a fly on the wall or creepy voyeuristic stalker, which is why I should apologize to these 40 persons who have recently been axed.

But before you attempt to re-add me as a friend just to leave a sardonic message on my wall, please let me explain my reasons.

1. I Haven’t Talked to You in Over a Year

If anyone would like to explain to me how you can have a casual relationship with an individual without any form of communication, I’ll nod politely without actually listening to you. We all know you don’t need to actually see a person to share a relationship with him or her.

If you’re like me, the prospect of talking to a person — especially a member of the opposite sex — is a frightening and daunting prospect. That’s why I write this column, as a cover for my own crippling social insecurities. I regularly resort to alternative modes of communication with my associates, such as e-mail, various hand signals through the window of my car, and short text calls.

Yes, with this behavior, you’re wondering how I had 40 friends on Facebook to begin with. SCREECH! I figure that if we haven’t communicated in over a year, we probably weren’t that close to begin with.

2. Our Interactions Were Strictly Academic, and It Is Unlikely We Will Be In The Same Class Again

I have a bad habit of befriending every laboratory and project partner I’ve ever worked with on Facebook. Most of this stemmed from my freshman and sophomore years, when the number of friends you had on Facebook was the most accurate gauge of coolness. Now, having asserted myself at the apex of Cal Poly coolness standards (see previous paragraph “why I write this column”), I can finally shake these lovely people from my body like leeches after a dive in the swimmin’ hole. Thanks for calculating velocity of somebody else’s wall!'' or that “James Koman is attending Someone Else’s birthday party that you were not invited to!”

3. I Have Zero Emotional Connection to You

Some people who I came across on my list I couldn’t even remember how I came to add them on Facebook in the first place. Their faces were startlingly alien, with some ravishing beauty, but strange nonetheless. Sorry folks, but this takes more than a pretty face to keep me as your friend. I often require some sort of Herculean athletic feat, or a batch of cookies.

Also, there were many people with whom I’ve not communicated as far back as freshman year. However, I do have heartwarming memories of their heartwarming personas that still manage to warm my heart when my heart needs warming. These memories usually consist of inside jokes, or times when the person hurt themselves and I laughed at their misfortune (see second-most previous paragraph “why I write this column”). Good times, good times.

For those of you who have survived my first wave of destruction, you are safe for at least another six months. To the rest of you, I encourage you to free yourselves from Facebook friend clutter. With this purging I feel refreshed, like those celebrities who go on detox diets, only to replace delicious salty meals and sweet desserts with highly addictive drugs.

And to the people I have dismissed from my friends list, I wish to cause you no offense. I hope you find success, wealth and spiritual fulfillment on whatever path you pursue in life, as long as it’s honest success and wealth, or somehow profit from it. In that case, please add me on Facebook.

James Koman is a biology junior and a Mustang Daily humor columnist.
How to really save a life

"Life is about choices and the sad reality is that innocent people sometimes have to suffer the consequences for others' irresponsibility."

It was broad daylight. As she rounded the corner, she turned and smiled at us — that was the last time I ever saw her alive. Less than a minute later, while stopped at a red light, she was thrown across the intersection.

Sometimes the sound of the metal crunching still wakes me up at night. I watched them pull her from the car: so beautiful, so young, so much taken away in an instant.

I've kept my mouth shut for too long. Too many times I've overheard some of my own friends say things like, "Yeah, I probably shouldn't have driven home from the bars last night, but at least I didn't get caught."

Statistics from the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) estimate that approximately 2.1 million people in the college age demographic admit to driving under the influence each year.

Yeah, sure we've heard it all before, but why then are more than 2 million of us still choosing to get behind the wheel after drinking? It isn't about not getting caught, because even if you don't, you still risk your own life and the lives of others.

MADD also found that in 2006 approximately 17,602 individuals were killed in alcohol-related accidents. This, on average, accounts for one death every 30 minutes.

There are many alternatives to drunk driving, especially in a city like San Luis Obispo. Arranging a ride ahead of time, calling a friend, heading out for a cab or even walking home are all simple options.

BBC News had a special that exposed common excuses drunk drivers present to justify driving. These include statements such as, "I've only had a couple," "I've had a big meal and, my personal favorite, "I won't get stopped."

Breaking it down, it seems that many people choose to drink and drive because of three factors: they don't recognize their own limits (understanding what it means to be under 0.08), they ignore how alcohol affects their body and they exhibit the invincibility complex.

No matter what the excuse or how many times you've gotten away with it in the past, it only takes one time to change your whole life or destroy someone else's.

At the time of her death, my friend was thinking about prom, graduation and making it to the finals in track, but someone who made a very poor choice obliterated her entire future.

Life is about choices and the sad reality is that innocent people sometimes have to suffer the consequences for others' irresponsibility.

So next time you're under the influence and debating whether you should drive home, please consider whose son, daughter, brother, sister or friend you could be putting at risk, and put your keys down. Be responsible. Driving under the influence isn't worth risking a life, so please show a little respect. It may not erase the past, but it will definitely protect the future.

Coral Snyder is a journalism senior and a Mustang Daily columnist.

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Basketball
continued from page 16

Santiago
continued from page 16

The upset of the Highlanders broke a four-game losing streak for the Mustangs host Long Beach State (8-18, 6-8) at 7 tonight in Mont Gym.
Santiago believes the team needs to "stay healthy" and "keep playing together" to stay in a winning mode. "I think when we tend to play individually — try to do more on one-on-one stuff — that's when we fall apart as a team," she says. "When we stick together and everyone is healthy and playing, that's when we come through with the big wins."
Although a freshman, Santiago, a kinesiology major, has big plans for the future. She has hopes of playing basketball after college, possibly overseas, but is waiting to see how things go in the next four years.

In addition to "stay healthy" and "keep playing together," Santiago said, "I'm basically making a new team and forged fond memories at (Cal Poly)."
"It's so much fun with the team," she says. "I'm basically making a new family here and doing all kinds of new stuff — stuff that I would never do if I wasn't playing basketball."
Ahead of the curve

Cal Poly freshman forward Kristina Santiago has settled in as a key contributor as the Mustangs look to earn first-round bye at Big West Conference Tournament

Jessica Ford

Kristina Santiago has been called "T" since she was a child, a nickname her parents gave her. Since then, she's emerged as a formidable force on the basketball court, and is now a freshman forward for the Cal Poly women's basketball team.

The 6-foot-2, Santa Maria native began playing pick-up games at Cal Poly when she was still in high school, and her familiarity with Cal Poly and her teammates has allowed for a smoother transition from high school to college basketball.

When I actually got here (to Cal Poly), it was a lot easier because I knew them better and knew the style of play better," Santiago says.

However, she has seen a large increase in intensity since joining the Mustangs.

"Everything is ... a lot more structured and organized — a lot more disciplined," she explained.

That adjustment hasn't prevented her from making an immediate impact, though. Playing in 26 of the Mustangs' 27 contests this season, she's posted averages of 5.3 points and four rebounds in just 14.7 minutes per game while shooting 46.6 percent from the floor. In a 74-72 overtime loss at at-place UC Santa Barbara on Feb. 16, Santiago had team highs of 19 points and 14 rebounds.

Her 44.6 minutes per-40-game mark is a team best, and with 62 blocks, she's the only freshman in the Big West Conference top 10 in that category, in which she ranks 10th.

However, she originally did not want to attend Cal Poly, because of San Luis Obispo's close proximity to Santa Maria.

"After I made my visit, I just loved it," Santiago says. "The more I thought about it, the better I figured it would be (to attend Cal Poly). I would be close to my family and friends. It's far enough, but not too far.

Santiago, a Righetti High graduate, grew up with basketball on her mind and credits her dad for much of her interest in the sport.

"He was an awesome basketball player," she says. "I always hear stories from him. We went to the same high school. So it's like, he has all of these awards and records. He has always been the one to push me and influence me."

Mustangs head coach Faith Mimnaugh, who calls Santiago "one of the best athletes" in the program's history, has nominated her for Big West Freshman of the Year.

Santiago, 18, feels honored but remains humble.

"Awards have never really been my thing," she says. "I just like to play basketball and have fun. I wouldn't be too disappointed if I didn't get it, but of course I'm going to keep working hard."

When told that Mimnaugh has described her as a "monster" on the court, Santiago was not surprised.

"A lot of my coaches have always described me as that," she said. "I think it's just because I pretty much try and do it all — get on the boards, score, run, try and cover all aspects of the game, not just my position."

A teammate of hers, junior forward Lisa McBride, described "T" as "one of a kind."

"She brings a lot of fire (to the team) because she has some great moves, great rebounds and great catches that pump the team up," McBride said.

After battling a few illnesses, including the stomach flu and a shoulder injury that kept her out for a week, Santiago has helped lead the Mustangs later in the season.

With a 54-52 win at third-place UC Riverside on Feb. 27, the fifth-place Mustangs (16-17, 7-7) are still in contention for a first-round bye in the Big West Tournament, which takes place from Wednesday to March 15 in Anaheim.

Cal Poly forward Kristina Santiago's 10.9 rebounds per 40 minutes are a team-high, and she's the only freshman in the Big West top 10 in blocks per game.

Men's golf wins fifth tournament championship

For the fifth time in school history, the Cal Poly men's golf team won a tournament title, claiming UC Riverside's Brice Classic on Tuesday. Four Mustangs finished in the top 20 for victory at Oak Valley Golf Course in Beaumont.

Junior Michael O'Brien came in third by carding a 70 in the final round to finish with a 221 total, just a stroke behind freshman Nick Pasz and senior Spencer Paschall, both Highlanders.

The Mustangs, who won 15 of 20 games at the four-day, 54-hole event, topped second-place UC Riverside by eight strokes on the 70-02-yard, par-72 layout.

Freshman Jared Knight and senior Bryce Wagner tied for seventh with a 226, and senior Bobby Nyberg tied for 17th with a 230 to round out the Mustangs' top-15 quartet.

Freshman Bayon Piero completed Cal Poly's scoring by finishing in a 10-place draw with a 240. The Mustangs will host the Laguna Gripl Cal Poly Invitational at Cypress Ridge Golf Course in Arroyo Grande from March 27-28.

Men's basketball

Mustangs look for upswing heading into tournament

Donovan Aird

**Tonight**

The Cal Poly women's basketball team faces Long Beach State in Big West Conference play at 7 p.m. in Mott Gym.

**Next game**

Cal Poly, which was outscored 37-18 in the second half of its 68-47 loss to Pacific on Saturday, has forced to shorten its backcourt rotation in the absence of junior guard Chaz Thomas, who's missed for consecutive games due to an ankle condition.

"We just didn't have enough left in the tank in the second half," Bromley said. He added, though, that Thomas could return tonight.

"He's getting up there with Long Beach State (and maybe even some more minutes to participate in the game," Bromley said.

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