Off the straight and narrow
Exploring Cal Poly's spectrum of sexuality

Genevieve Loggins
STUDENT LIFE

Adjusting to Cal Poly can be challenging for new students, but those whose sexuality falls outside the heterosexual sphere often have even more hurdles to overcome.

When history senior Jay Ledbetter walked into an elective course, it didn't matter whether the professor refers to Ledbetter as a he or a she, the student prefers to be referred to in both.

"I like both and she is interchangeable, and I don't care anybody because I like both. I don't want one or the other. But it's hard when people don't know what to use," Ledbetter said. "I really don't care when you call me, most people switch all the time and I never correct them."

Ledbetter came to Cal Poly as a transfer student, and by the end of the first quarter, came out as a lesbian. About a year later, she realized that her gender identity was fluid, and began identifying as a transgender or gender queer person.

"Basically, I told everyone that I knew I was a lesbian, and the more people that know, the better," Ledbetter said. "Once I was out, I was fine not hiding it, but my gender identity was something I needed to understand."

When Anthony Rust came to Cal Poly as a freshman, he found that adjusting to college life was almost like starting all over again. The Pride Center helped him with coming out and acted as a place for acceptance.

"I wasn't out in high school, so coming to college made it interesting," Rust said.

Ledbetter quickly became involved in Cal Poly's Pride Center, an organization in Student Life and Leadership whose aim is to support and raise awareness about issues of sexuality and gender identity.

One student becomes comfortable with their sexuality, the Pride Center helps in the beginning and transitioning to a new LGBT lifestyle. However, before that establishment is made, people often feel lost and hopeless, Ledbetter said.

"Cal Poly is good once you have that queer connection, for a lot of students it can be a scary place, and a very homophobic place," she said. "I like wherever I turn on campus I know at the queer community, and how to handle coming out. PRISM is a project Ledbetter has been working on for two years, acts as a counseling tool to deal with coming out issues.

"Some people who have been out in high school come to college and it makes them feel like they're back in the closet," Ledbetter said.

She started PRISM as a side project in the Pride Center as a place for students to feel comfortable with expressing their identities. When students find a community they're comfortable in, a burden is lifted.

"You don't have to fit in one box or another. We try hard to break down stereotypes," Ledbetter said. "People who seek out help from PRISM don't have to share their identity, and counseling too become a popular way to face issues people are dealing with."

For the more serious issues, there are experts ready to handle any situation that existing counselors can't.

"There is always a group of people ready to counsel and a group of people that are in training," Ledbetter said.

"After we come to these events it feels really good, because these students didn't know these issues and now they do from a -

diversity on campus series

Big summit, small hopes: leaders meet on economy

Tom Raum
TECHNOLOGY

LONDON (AP) — Desperate but divided on ways to lift their nations from economic misery, world leaders convened for an emergency summit Tuesday holding scant hopes of finding a magic bullet solution for the crisis that brought them hurrying to London.

Even as President Barack Obama and the others were arriving, the U.S. acknowledged it allies would not go along with a massive burst of stimulus spending, while Europe was forced to be budgeted from hopes for tighter financial regulation.

Indeed, leaders are trumpeting the limited common ground they could reach, including more money for the International Monetary Fund and closer scrutiny of hedge funds and tax havens. As for the broader issues, they're hoping for the best — or at least that they will do no harm.

With turbulent world markets watching closely, the stakes are high, especially for America's new president, stepping onto the world stage for the first time to deal with the economic crisis and to meet face-to-face with many other leaders.

One global change is being acknowledged. The forum for grappling with world economic problems has grown beyond the established eight post-war economies that have dominated previous economic summits — the U.S., Britain, Germany France, Japan, Canada, Italy and Russia. Now, 20 nations are coming together to deal with the growing economies such as China, India, Brazil and Saudi Arabia — important players in any effort to coordinate economic policy — sitting as full negotiating partners.

"For the first time, there's a recognition that major emerging markets and developing countries have a critical role at the table," said Mike Froman, a White House international economic advisor.

But will that mean action to stop a global downward spiral?

Froman acknowledged that there have been few examples of international gains in times of crisis. "The depression was made 'great' by the lack of cooperation," he said, noting that nations like to keep control over their own fiscal and monetary policies.

And global leaders were quarreling up to the last minute before the summit.
Summit
continued from page 1
Gordon Brown and the presidents of Russia and China.

The world economy is in far worse shape than when the group of rich and developing countries last met in November and set lofty goals for international cooperation.

Trade is deteriorating, protectionism is on the march and joblessness is rising. Street demonstrations have increased, and widespread protests are expected in London this week.

Brown, the host, had initially trumpeted the gathering as "a new Bretton Woods — a new financial architecture for the years ahead."

But the meeting was shaping up as bearing little similarity to the 1944 conference in New Hampshire where the winners of World War II gathered to set postwar global monetary and financial order.

Brown's spokesman said the prime minister had spoken briefly by telephone on Tuesday with Obama, who was on Air Force One.

"It's an opportunity for both of them to take stock of where we were," Brown's spokesman Michael Ellman said.

World Bank President Rob­ert Zoellick called for the G20 to back a $50 billion liquidity fund to keep global trade moving. In rich countries, he said, "people talk of bonuses or no bonuses. In parts of Africa, South Asia and Latin Amer­ica, the struggle is for food or no food."

London does not have a good history for successful economic summits. One held in London in 1933, attended by more than 3,000 world leaders and financial officials — although not President Franklin D. Roosevelt — met for six weeks and then gave up.

Still, most leaders were upbeat Tuesday as they headed to Lon­don.

"It is important and necessary for the summit to take credible dec­isions which will help to halt and reverse the current slowdown and to instill a sense of confidence in the global economy," said Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Summit partners will meet for dinner on Wednesday evening, then hold a business meeting on Thursday.

A draft of the communiqué cir­culating ahead of the meeting sug­gested that global leaders will em­brace stimulus spending totaling about $2 trillion. But that includes a number of measures already an­nounced.

Leaders of European countries, led by Germany's Angela Merkel, continued to resist calls for more stimulus and for printing money as the U.S. Federal Reserve and the Bank of England have done to try to jump-start a recovery.

Memories of the hyperinflation in the 1920s in Germany that gave way to the rise of Adolf Hitler's Nazi party still haunt modern-day Germany.

On Wednesday, Obama will have separate meetings with Brown, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, and with Chinese President Hu Jintao.

With Moscow, the agenda will include disputes over energy. Rus­ sia's continued opposition to U.S. missile defense sites in Eastern Eu­ rope and warhead cutbacks. Obama has indicated less enthusiasm for the missile system than predecessor George W. Bush, raising hopeful expectations in Moscow. But Russian leaders have engaged in tough talk lately in terms regaining their own status in the world, posing an early test for Obama.

Obama's meeting with Hu is likely to touch on recent Chinese concerns about the safety of its vast holdings in U.S. Treasury bonds, given dollar-easing U.S. stimulus programs. China surpassed Japan last year as the largest holder of U.S. debt, and any Chinese flight away from those investments would rock global markets.

On the way to Europe, Obama aides made clear expectations have been lowered.

Instead of focusing on the ad­ditional stimulus spending the U.S. had sought, White House press secre­tary Robert Gibbs emphasized what already has been accomplished. G20 nations have spent so far an amount equal to 1.8 percent of their collective gross domestic product, he said, calling that "a sig­nificant commitment."

Gibbs also said he expects a joint pledge that the leaders will act fur­ther if developments warrant, and he said that commitment satisfies Obama. He also touted new regu­latory proposals and the intention to boost contributions to the IMF.

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AmeriCorps/Cali Poly Student Life and Leadership
Dept. of Social Services, County of San Luis Obispo
Peace Corps
Economic Opportunity Commission of San Luis Obispo
Family Care Network
Options Family of Services
SARP Center
Student Conservation Association
Teach for America
Transitions Mental Health Association

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Experts: Cult member not insane despite odd plea

A former religious cult member who helped starve her son to death believes he will be resurrected, but legal experts say her extreme faith doesn't make her criminally insane.

The mother made an extraordinary deal with prosecutors Monday that her guilty plea to child abuse resulting in death will be withdrawn if her 1-year-old son, Jason Thompson, comes back to life. Law experts and psychiatrists said there was no problem with the agreement because Ria Ramkissoon, 22, was mentally competent and freely entered into the deal, and extreme religious beliefs aren't deemed insane by law.

"To say that someone is crazy because they have beliefs is very difficult," said Dr. Jonas Rapport, a retired forensic psychiatrist and the former chief medical officer for Baltimore Circuit Court. "If I believe that God wants me to starve my child, that gets close to the edge, but it's very questionable as to calling that an illness that would exonerate someone for a crime."

The boy died more than two years ago when cult members stopped feeding him because he refused to say "Amen" after a meal, according to a statement of facts. His body was hidden in a suitcase packed with mothballs and fabric softener sheets behind a home in Philadelphia for more than a year.

On Monday, Ramkissoon answered a series of questions from Baltimore Circuit Judge Timothy J. Doory about whether she understood what she was doing when she pleaded guilty. A court psychiatrist wrote she was both competent to stand trial and criminally responsible for her son's death.

Workers say Obama treated autos worse than Wall St.

Jeff Karoub

Many assembly line autoworkers reacted with skepticism and anger Monday to the Obama administration's tough tactics, which stoked long-simmering feelings that the people who put the country on wheels get treated differently than the wizards of Wall Street.

"It's the age-old Wall Street vs. Main Street smackdown again," said Dan Freidline, president of a union local in Lordstown, Ohio, where GM produces the Cobalt and Pontiac G5 fuel-efficient cars.

While CEO oustings haven't been widespread among the banking industry, the government did in September reserve the right to remove senior management at American International Group Inc. as part of an agreement to give the insurer $85 billion in emergency aid. AIG Chief Executive Robert Willyham stepped down as part of that company's bailout package, and the government hand-picked his successor.

Also, banks don't have the union and legacy costs that the automakers do, which make their products more costly versus foreign rivals.

President Barack Obama said he was "absolutely committed" to the survival of a domestic auto industry that can compete internationally. He raised the possibility of controlled bankruptcy for one or both of the troubled automakers.

Obama said the administration will offer GM "adequate working capital" during the next 60 days to produce an acceptable reorganization plan. The government gave Chrysler LLC 30 days to overcome hurdles to a merger with Fiat SpA, the Italian automaker.

Many workers say the government hasn't dictated such terms to the companies. Obama's actions come amid public outrage over bonuses paid to business leaders and AIG executives.

"To see the very people that drove this economy into the ground be rewarded through bonuses while receiving tax dollars is just galling," said Dan Maloney, a machine repairman at auto supplier Delphi Corp's plant in Rochester, N.Y., and a union local president. "In light of that, the administration is taking it out, I believe, on the automobile sector."

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Pistachio warning could signal food safety shift

Workers at Setton International Foods Inc. head back to work after a pistachio warning could prompt a nationwide pistachio recall says it believes the salmonella contamination is likely not from a human or animal source inside their plant.

Garance Burke

It could take weeks before health officials know exactly which pistachio products may be tainted with salmonella, but the US Food and Drug Administration issued a sweeping warning to avoid eating the products and disposing of them.

The move appears to indicate a shift in how the government handles food safety issues — from warning until contaminated food surfaces one-by-one and roking that more people have become sick from the problem right away, even if the message is vague.

Officials wouldn’t say if the approach was in response to any perceived mishandling of the massive outbreak recall that started last year, only that they’re trying to keep people from getting sick as new details surface about the California plant at the center of the pistachio scare.

What’s different here is that we are trying to be proactive and not waiting until the news breaks to get a message out,” said Dr. David Acheson, FDA’s assistant commissioner for food safety. “This is the logical advice to consumers is, say ‘OK, consumers, put pistachios on hold while we work this out.’ We don’t want you getting sick.”

Dr. Joshua Shireman, the president’s new acting commissioner who started Monday, made it clear staff needed to move quickly, Acheson said.

The agency announced Monday that Setton Pistachios of Terra Bella, Inc. the second-largest pistachio processor in the nation, recalled more than 2 million pounds of its roasted pistachios.

Suspect nuts were shipped as far away as New York and Mexico, Acheson said, and federal inspectors found “OK, consumers, put pistachios on hold while we work this out.”

The FDA learned about the problem March 24, when Kraft notified the agency that routine product testing had detected salmonella in roasted pistachios. Kraft and the Georgia Nut Co. recalled their Back to Nature and Nambro Pistachio brands.

Kraft spokeswoman Laurie Guarnieri said her company’s auditors visited the plant early last week, and observed employee practices where raw and roasted nuts were not adequately segregated and that could explain the possible contamination.

She said she didn’t know specifically what they saw.

Federal inspectors last visited the plant in 2003, and the California Department of Public Health was told in 2008 by state plant health officials that routine product testing had not detected salmonella, but one worker remained in limbo on grocery shelves.

Company officials said Tuesday they didn’t know how many pistachios may have been contaminated by salmonella-tainted raw nuts they were processing at the packing facility.

Roasting is supposed to kill the bacteria in nuts. But problems can occur if the roasting is not done correctly or if roasted nuts are re-exposed to bacteria.

The firm sells in California-grown pistachios to giants of the food industry such as Kraft Foods Inc., as well as 36 wholesalers across the country.

“OK, care about our business and our customers greatly,” said Lee Cochen, the production manager for Setton International Foods Inc., a sister company to Setton Pistachios. “We’ve never had an illness complaint before but obviously this affects the whole industry. It’s not good.”

California supphes 99.99 percent of the US pistachio market, according to the California Pistachio Board.

“What’s scary is that it’s after the nuts have been processed, that when it’s getting in us, so it really makes you wonder,” said Marica Rowland, an avid pistachio eater in Apache, Fla.

The FDA said about 20 people had been sickened, including a couple who were hospitalized, the agency said.

Kraft spokeswoman Laurie Guarnieri said her company’s auditors visited the plant early last week, and observed employee practices where raw and roasted nuts were not adequately segregated and that could explain the possible contamination.

She said she didn’t know specifically what they saw.

Federal inspectors last visited the plant in 2003, and the California Department of Public Health was informed about the problem last year. Acheson said Federal officials made note of several problems — an open door into one of the nut rooms, and an employee wearing street clothes that weren’t adequately covered — but nothing that posed a food safety threat.

Acheson said management corrected the problems that day, and said he did not have access to California inspectors’ records.

Gohm said the plant had never had an illness complaint. Followed industry health guidelines and had its large metal side and warehouse inspected regularly, but refused to provide additional details or records.

and what many workers are at the president’s unduly harsh treatment. Obama’s actions might not have a lasting effect on voters.

“it will be accepted, grudgingly perhaps, but accepted by anybody and everybody with a brain in their heads,” said Bill Ballenger, editor of a Michigan political newsletter and a former Republican state lawmaker.

Still, Bill Rasmussen of Public Sector Consultants, a Lansing-based nonprofit think tank, said Obama’s actions carry some risk.

“I think this could have some impact four years from now if the state’s economy doesn’t begin to turn around,” he said. “Michigan’s unemployment rate rose to 12 percent in February, marking the eighth straight monthly increase. Workers watched Obama on large-screen TVs in the lobby bar of a hotel in Detroit’s Renaissance Center, home to GM’s headquarters. Several wearing GM badges declined to comment afterward, but one man whose fortunes are nearly as tied to GM as its employees expressed hope for the future of the company and industry.

“We definitely are a morale in the right direction,” said Tony Kenos, who owns a restaurant and real estate development firm in the building. “Something has to happen.”

In Ohio, Gov. John Kasich agreed that Washington just might get it right — if only because the stakes are too high to fail.

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Wednesday, April 1, 2009
WORD ON THE STREET

“How did you spend your day yesterday?”

“I don’t have Internet so I came to use the Internet to do some research for my architecture project and Skype with my parents.”

—Paul Diaz, architecture sophomore

“I laid out in the front of Yosemite Hall and read a book for nutrition and went to the gym.”

—Heather Donovan, nutrition freshman

“I went to Pismo and played volleyball, barbecued and visited with friends.”

—Zachary Dietz, philosophy senior

“I spent the day at the beach and came to work at Julian’s Café.”

—Shannon Allen, animal science senior

Nuts

continued from page 4

Several plagues on the firm’s office walls showed the firm won industry awards for food safety excellence. No illness have been tied to contaminated pistachios. Two people called the FDA complaining of gastrointestinal illness that could be associated with the nuts, but the link hasn’t been confirmed, Acheson said. While consumer advocates praised the government’s swift action, they said the psycho-racial illustration that more oversight was needed.

“It is encouraging that this response was so quick, but we need to move to a system that focuses on prevention through the entire food production process,” said Jeff Levi, executive director of Trust for America’s Health.

You passed your final. Will you pass the Ultimate Test?

Briefs

State

SPRECKELS, Calif. (AP) — A violent sexual predator has been released from a state hospital and is living in a Salinas Valley vineyard home about eight miles south of Spreckels.

James Lamb molested more than 50 children in rural Spreckels.

Superior Court Judge Richard Carris says Lamb will be monitored by a GPS system and he’s prohibited from using a computer or a car.

It’s been nearly two years since the 51-year-old Lamb was ordered released under California’s Sexually Violent Predator program.

SACRAMENTO (AP) — California has banned use of a voting machine produced by a Texas company, saying it contains serious software flaws.

Secretary of State Delia Brown announced Tuesday that she had withdrawn approval for Premier Election Solutions’ Global Election Management System version 1.18.19.

She said the machine contains a software error that can delete a first batch of optically scanned ballots without alerting election officials.

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — One family offered their home to anyone left homeless by flooding, even sharing their security entry code. When another couple lost their house, total strangers showed up at their hotel with chicken dinners, brownies and quilts.

In the neighborhood, spirit synonymous with North Dakota, some people have given out their phone numbers on radio talk shows, offering shelter to any listeners in need.

BOSMERE, N.D. (AP) — High wind expected from the storm was the biggest worry for flood-ware Fargo on the eastern edge of North Dakota. Monday’s storm closed hundreds of miles of highway and shuttered government offices and schools. At least five deaths were blamed on the storm.

The National Weather Service posted blizzard warnings across sections of the Dakotas, Wyoming and Montana. It said more than 16 inches of snow had fallen by early Monday night in the Bismarck area, only about 2 inches away from tying the record 103.66 inches set during the winter of 1996-1997.

International

MOSCOW (AP) — Imprisoned former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky returned to a Moscow courtroom on Tuesday for a new trial on multibillion-dollar embezzlement and money-laundering charges that his lawyer called "crude."

The politically charged trial will go a long way toward forging the image of Russia under President Dmitry Medvedev.

BEIJING (AP) — China on Tuesday denied a research report's contention that a China-based computer spy ring stole sensitive information from thousands of hard drives worldwide, calling the accusation a lie meant to feed anxiety over Beijing's growing influence.

In the government's first reaction to the report, Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said the conclusions were symptomatic of a "Cold War" that came people over no "obviously beyond the scope of the Chinese government's control.

The report by the Information Warfare Monitor added to growing concerns that China has become a center for cyber-warfare, spying and crime.

SACRAMENTO (AP) — The state's largest newspaper has laid off 25 newsroom workers, including most of its copy editing staff, as part of a plan to trim 10% of its workforce.

The Sacramento Bee laid off the workers last week, according to a memo from publisher Charlie Lamphier. The paper has 450 workers in Rancho Cordova.

The layoffs come at a time when newspapers have been cutting back on staff in a bid to save money and offset declining advertising revenue.

The Bee, which is owned by Gannett, said it would cut its newsroom staff by about 25% after announcing in February that it would consolidate its newsroom into one building.

The paper will continue to publish its Sunday paper and its online edition, Gannett said in the memo.

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CT scan reveals hidden face under Nefertiti bust

Patrick McGroarty

BERLIN — Researchers in Germany have used a modern medical procedure to uncover a secret within one of ancient Egypt's most treasured artworks — the bust of Nefertiti has two faces.

A team led by Dr. Alexander Huppertz, director of the Imaging Science Institute at Berlin's Charite hospital and medical school, discovered a detailed stone carving that differs from the external stucco face when they performed a computed tomography, or CT, scan on the bust.

The findings, published Tuesday in the monthly journal Radiology, are the first to show that the stone core of the statue is a highly detailed sculpture of the queen, Huppertz said.

"Until we did this scan, how deep the stucco was and whether a second face was underneath it was unknown," he said. "The hypothesis was that the stone underneath was just a support."

The differences between the faces, though slight, creases at the corners of the mouth, a bump on the nose of the stone version, suggest to Huppertz that someone expressly ordered the adjustments between stone and stucco when royal sculptors immortalized the wife of Pharaoh Akhenaten 3,300 years ago.

"Changes were made, but some of them are positive, others are negative," Huppertz said.

John H. Taylor, a curator for Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum in London, said the scan raises interesting questions about why the features were adjusted, but that answers will probably remain elusive.

"One could deduce that the final version was considered in some way more acceptable than the 'hidden' one, though caution is needed in attempting to explain the significance of these changes," Taylor wrote in an e-mail.

The bust underwent a similar CT scan in 1992. But the more primitive scanner used then only generated cross sections of the statue every .5 millimeters, not enough detail, Huppertz said, to reveal the subtlety of the carving hidden just 1-2 millimeters under the stucco.

Egyptologist Ludwig Borchardt discovered the bust in 1912 and added it to Berlin's Egyptian collection on Museum Island, a cluster of five neoclassical art halls that make up one of the city's most familiar landmarks.

Currently on display at the Altes Museum, the bust will move next door when the Neues Museum reopens in October after a lengthy restoration by British architect David Chipperfield.

In 2007, Wildung denied a request from Egypt's antiquities chief to borrow the bust for an exhibition, saying it was too fragile to transport. Huppertz said the results of his scan added credence to that claim.

Taylor, the British Museum curator, said the better understanding of the bust's structure will also help preserve it.

"The findings are particularly significant for the information they shed on the constructional process and the subsurface condition of the bust, which will be of value in ensuring its long-term survival in good condition," Taylor said.
Twitter could be the demise of tabloid magazines

Candids photos, home-made video, details of their personal lives—what more could celebrity-crazed America want from their favorite stars? And even better, all that voyeuristic content is being produced by the celebrities themselves, posted to the Internet instantaneously.

With the publishing-made-easy format of the social network, Twitter gives celebrities their own voices and the ability to connect directly with their fans—instantly and whenever they want.

Back up, what is it?
Twitter is a micro-blogging Web site. Unlike Facebook or Myspace, there are no photo albums or walls, just 140 character status updates that can be made from the web or a cell phone. It’s painfully simple, but highly effective.

Once you sign up for Twitter, you can “follow” other people. You don’t have to know them personally, you just have to be interested in what those people are talking about. Twitter is all about the conversation.

Celebrities on Twitter
By using Twitter, celebrities don’t have to go through a public relations person or hold a press conference or a backstage event to talk to fans or clear up rumors. Celebrities can just be themselves and say what’s on their minds.

And that’s just what they do.
"You have two choices on a boat rocking in rough seas," musician-songwriter John Mayer tweeted Monday evening while traveling. "Think about getting sick or play Van Halen and pretend it’s an amusement park ride.”

Mayer twitters so frequently that it cost him his relationship with Jennifer Aniston (a non-twitterer), but that’s another column in and of itself.

Other stars in the Twitterverse are Ashton Kutcher and his wife Demi Moore, Fiddy, Jimmy Fallon, Shaquille O’Neal, Lance Armstrong and Ellen Degeneres, just to name a few of the most popular.

Authentic vs. ghost tweeterers
First we need to make a distinction. There’s a difference between true celebrity Tweeterers and celebrities who hire public relations staff to update their Twitter (and you can always tell the difference). All of the aforementioned tweeterers update their own accounts from their computers and cell phones.

Britney Spears and Barack Obama are examples of famous people who don’t maintain their own accounts.

"Make sure you guys vote for Britney in Time Magazine’s 100 most influential people!" tweeted her manager, Adam Leber, last week.

Spears’ account is updated very infrequently and by people other than herself, thus eliminating the freedom factor. It’s far less interesting than authentic tweeterers who let us into their minds and lives without the oversight of managers.

How celebs are connecting to their fans

see Twitter, page 8
More than Marvel's Batman clone

So I figured that it is a new quarter and it's time for me to do something new—Review a Marvel comic. For all of you Marvel comics fans out there, I'm sure, but most of the comics that Marvel puts out are, well, crap.

I understand the appeal of big-name heroes, like Captain America, Spiderman, and the like, but when you get right down to it, modern Marvel comics have been plagued by awful writing. Marvel isn't alone in this endeavor, but it seems to be the rule rather than the exception for Marvel comics as of late. I mean, how many X-Men titles can you possibly have at once? And don't even get me started about the recent universe-wide event, "Secret Invasion."

However, I have to admit, I've been a big fan of Marvel's re-examination of its characters dating back to the superhero comics' weaker years, the '70s and '80s, that of Moon Knight.

Moon Knight appears to be direct knockoff of DC's greatest detective, Batman. Like Batman, Moon Knight fights crime at night, uses an array of gadgets, like the all too similar moon shaped "batirangs," has a secret lair under his mansion and so on.

But there are some immense differences between Moon Knight and Batman. For all people as gory as his origin. Prior to Moon Knight's hero days, he was an ex-military mercenary, working for men without a conscience. On his last such mission, the would-be Moon Knight, whose real name is Marc Spector, refused to bow to the whims of his would-be nemesis Bushman, and was murdered in an Egyptian tomb of the god Khonshu, the god of Vengeance. Eying to the tomb, Khonshu offered Spector a second chance at life, his rotar in this world, at the price of exacting his vengeance upon evil men.

Thus Moon Knight is a moral quandary. To keep the blessing of Khonshu, he must kill evil men, but in doing so he questions the justice of his own actions. And the questions continue: Is Marc Spector truly speaking to a long forgotten Egyptian god of vengeance, or is he merely mad? Are the alter-egos Spector has created beneficial to his battle against evil, or are they helping him lose his grasp on reality? Can Moon Knight bridge the gap between his command to kill evil men, and his own moral concerns.

As you can probably see, Moon Knight is not just a crappy Batman, but a glimpse into the human psyche. I was really astonished by this when I first picked up issue No. 1 of the new Moon Knight series back in 2006. I was even more taken aback when I picked up the collected issues of the first Moon Knight series, and realized how good they were back when Marvel and DC were plagued with stupidly, anti-drug propaganda and horrible plot lines.

If you like me and have a grudge against recent Marvel comics, or just want to read something a little different than the typical superhero story, where villains get punched in the face over and over, then pick up a copy of collected Moon Knight stories, either "Moon Knight Volume 1," or "Moon Knight The Bottom." You won't be disappointed. Well, unless you think comics are dumb. Then you might be.

Jon Monteth is a history center and Mustang Daily's comic book columnist.

Twitter

continued from page 7

Katie Tamse, a student in Maryland, recently received a custom-made Twitter background from Meyer himself.

"I am looking for someone that I can design a Twitter page for," Mayer tweeted. "Best reply wins a one-week subscription to his Mayercraft concert — including backstage access. The two winners had their photos taken by Mayer and posted to his Twitter.

What it means for tabled.

There's a whole new relationship developing between the comic book people and the stars. Although it wasn't be enough to put the tabloids out of business yet, the potential is there.

Celebrities are filling the voyeuristic void fans crave without being filtered through the sensationalism of mass media.

From their cell phones and within their homes, celebs are posting photos and videos from their lives. The best example of this is Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore, who stream live video from their home via a cell phone camera. Through Twitter, celebrities are showing us the thoughts that tabloid-based "friend-of-a-friend" sources could never reveal. We're hearing about their lives straight from their mouths (or keyboards, rather).

And then there's the flip side: They're reading about our lives at the same time. Unlike a tabloid that exploits the famous in a one-way channel, Twitter allows for the two-way interaction.

So while the death of the tabloid or "Entertainment Tonight" newswoman is up to the distance, it's not impossible. As the Internet continues to evolve, it will only open more doors for the famous and the rest of us to communicate freely.

Lauren Rahain is a journalism sophomore and the Mustang Daily online and multimedia editor.
What's in a degree?

An education by other means could be worth as much

Don't Tread on Me

by Jeremy Hicks

Today, let us be bold and venture a question which is almost taboo to our social class: Is the college degree worthwhile?

Many more students are attending college than any time in history. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, almost 70 percent of recent high school graduates matriculate at some college or another. Politicians and educators hail this as an absolute success, a trend which we should devote our nation's resources towards accelerating and to recognize.

But such an endeavor lacks some basic ingredients of common sense. Believe it or not, the college degree holds little utility for most careers. It is best reserved as a special and costly option for those with particularly keen academic appetites or those in pursuit of careers requiring years of rigorous specialization, like medicine.

For the rest of us, those of average intelligence, average aspirations, and failed to toil in average careers, the college degree is a bit of a waste, to put it mildly. The majority of college graduates will tell you this without hesitation. Their degree has little to no relevance to what they spend their careers doing.

Whatever particular knowledge and skills required are generally imparted by what they spend their careers doing. In most cases, the places that charter schools have worked the best are in wealthy minority areas like Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C. They are not academically, the tool of the (Cal Poly) liberal arts major. A decent high school education would have been perfectly sufficient to equip us for our future careers. We certainly have a high school degree and a successful, comfortable career.

I hate to bruise that expansive sense of entitlement that has been so carefully cultivated along your trajectory to college, but despite what you may have been told, you're not going to graduate with the knowledge and skills required for free at the library. You've spent a lot of money on education, but very little claim it or not, the college degree holds little utility for most careers. It is best reserved as a special and costly option for those with particularly keen academic appetites or those in pursuit of careers requiring years of rigorous specialization, like medicine.

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Movies
from the most recent James Bond films to get his heart racing.
For some of the softer hearts out there, because they still exist in the sports realm, a few recommended movies are "Love and Basketball" and "Hitch." "I also like chick flicks like 'Hitch.'" Hanson said. "Just kidding, but I do like 'Hitch.' Is that a chick flick?"

Will Ferrell, left, poses with his wife, Ferrell is a favorite among many Cal Poly athletes who enjoy his offbeat comedy.
Athletes bit by comic bug

Laughter is a well-known remedy for pain and stress, and it's no wonder why Cal Poly athletes across all sporting fields appreciate the release therapy that comedy provides.

Between juggling the pressures of life, school, and sports, athletes have little time to themselves, and even less time to ditch the anxiety that comes along with it. But when they throw on "Pineapple Express," or even just a clip of "Frank the Tank" sneaking down the halls into the gymnasium, everything is suddenly forgotten as laughter ensues.

"Movies like that help me relax before a big game," junior baseball player Adam Buschini said. Included as a beneficial side-effect of comedic relief is bonding.

Mam friendships were started because of a shared laugh and some of those laughs were evoked because of a hilarious quotation. Some of the most recognized and enacted lines come from comedic giant Will Ferrell. Senseless ramblings like, "If you aim first, you're last," "Honey, is KFC still open?" and "shake and bake" are ranked near the top of the athletes' list.


After a careful examination of the list, many can agree that most of the films mentioned have little redeeming social value. Unless, of course, two brainless buddies traveling across the country to return a briefcase to a Mary Samsonite, whose name is confused with the manufacturer of the luggage piece, has some underlying theme that was never recognized. In short, it's the dumb movies that get the best response.

"My favorite movie out right now is "Step Brothers,"" junior baseball player Wes Dorrell laughed. "We all like it on our team. We like all the dumb movies."

And most other athletes would agree. "The unrealistic, outrageous, "did they just say that?" comedies are among the most-loved genres. Action movies come in a close second, followed by sports-drama and the lone vote cast for horror films, but even that was for the laugh."

"Me and my friend in high school used to go to the movies to make fun of [horror films]," junior basketball player Becky Tratson said of movies like "Miracle." Among the preferred movies were "Dumb and Dumber," "Gladiator," "H  Seconds" and "Any Given Sunday" were also considered as some of the best inspirational movies.

Before a game, though, players don't want to have to sit through all the dialogue and uneventful scenes to get their adrenaline pumping. They want fleeting scenes from opening to closing credits. According to freshman basketball player Dylan Koyer, one of the best movies to satisfy that need is "Rambo." However, sophomore football walk-on Joe Burrell preferred "Step Brothers," "Beverly Hills."

"I'm just hoping," Izzo said after his team beat Louisville to punch its ticket to Detroit, "we're a silver lining in what's been kind of a cloudy year for us. I'm hoping that we're the sunshine... something to embrace." Nothing against the other coaches and teams arriving in the Motor City later this week to decide college basketball's champion. Jim Calhoun, Jim Wright and Roy Williams are good guys all, and their squads, Connecticut, Villanova and North Carolina, respectively, are better than Michigan State -- or paper. Of course, so were the Louisville Cardinals.

Besides, none of them can do as much for the city state and even the NCAA this year as Izzo and his kids already have.

In a corner of the world all too familiar with bad news, he's been nothing but good since the day he got the job in East Lansing about 90 miles from Detroit. Izzo won a national title in 2000 and is taking Michigan State to the Final Four for the fifth time since 1999, mostly with recruits drawn from the upper Midwest. That he was doing his part to boost the state's fortunes even before that.

Izzo grew up in a town of 15,000 that sits hard by the mines in the Upper Peninsula's Menominee Iron Range. The place was about hard work, a habit Izzo comes by honestly. His great-grandfather was a miner, his grandfather a shoeemaker and his father a handyman.

In high school his best friend was Steve Martucci, who went on to coach the NFL's 49ers and Lions and now works at TVT Productions. Together they took Izzo Mountain High to a regional final as juniors, but with his team trailing by one point and no