Many stay home as banks defer some evictions

Alana Semuels
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — It’s been 16 months since Eugene and Patricia Harrison lost the mortgage on their Perris, Calif., home. Eleven months since the notice got slapped on their front door, warning that it would be sold at auction.

A terse letter from a lawyer came eight months ago, telling them that their lender now owned the house. Three months later, the bank told them to pay up or get out by the end of the week.

Still, they remain in the yellow ranch-style home they bought seven years ago for $128,000, with its views of the San Jacinto Mountains. They’re not planning on going anywhere.

“We’re kind of on pins and needles, but who’d want to leave when you put this kind of energy into a house?” said Eugene Harrison, 70, gesturing toward a bucolic mural of mountains, stream and flowers the couple painted on the living room wall.

Throughout the country, people continue to default on their home loans — but lenders have backed off on forced evictions, allowing many to remain in their homes, essentially rent-free.

Several factors are driving the trend, industry experts say, including government pressure on banks to modify loans and keep people in their homes.

And with a glut of inventory in places like Southern California’s Inland Empire, Nevada and Arizona, lenders are loath to depress housing prices further by dumping more properties into a weak market.

Finally, allowing borrowers to stay in their homes helps protect the bank’s investment as it negotiates with the homeowners, said Gary Kirshner, a spokesman for Chase bank, a major lender.

“If the person’s in the property, there’s less chance for vandalism, and they’re probably maintaining the house,” he said.

Economists say the situation won’t last forever, but in the meantime the “amnesty” may allow at least some homeowners to regain their financial footing and avoid eviction.

In the Inland Empire, an estimated 130,000 homeowners are living rent-free, according to economist John Hwang, who based that number on the difference between loan payments and rental values.

see Evictions, page 3
Kit Schimandle, a former Cal Poly student, met her boyfriend during the first month of school, and by May they both decided it would be a good idea to live together the following year. By June they had broken up but still remained friends, and for the next months, their relationship was on-and-off.

"I started dating someone else so it was really awkward, and then I brought a boy home and he got really pissed. I avoided all full quarter, but it was hard talking to my boyfriend with him around, and I didn't want to move," Schimandle said.

They put two beds in the room they shared in their Mustang Village apartment, but when the situation became too uncomfortable for Schimandle, she asked her parents to pay for the rest of her lease and moved into Poly Canyon.

"Now I don't know why we both thought it was going to last," she said. "We never did get along, and that's why we are still friends today, but we weren't working together in a relationship."

She said living together isn't for everyone, and couples planning to move in together should have a back-up plan just in case things don't work out.

After a couple breaks up, choosing who gets the apartment becomes the next issue. McNamara Realty office manager Monica Guevara said they have rented several apartments to couples, and they have never had any difficulties with the partners trying to get out of their leases.

"Usually when that happens, they don't get new roommates and they finish up the year. They are all aware of their lease terms so they don't try to get out of it," Guevara said. "It is life, and not everyone stays together, but for the most part, we have good experiences with couples and no police have ever been involved."

The number of cohabiting couples in 2007 was 6.4 million, a 22 percent increase from the previous year, according to USA Today. Also, the number of cohabiting couples made 10 percent of all couples in the U.S., including those married and engaged.

The data showed that half of the non-married couples now living together had never been married previously and were under the age of 30.

Despite statistics and research done by organizations like Columbia University that show only 26 percent of women and 19 percent of the men marry the person with whom they were cohabiting, living together is something that many couples still consider.

After moving out and then back in with their families, Cal Poly journalism senior Alexia Assom and her boyfriend Keith Santoianni were both ready to be on their own again.

"At least for me, I just really wanted to live on my own, and living with him was already like having a roommate, so it would be like living with a friend rather than someone random," Assom said.

They had been dating for a little over a year when they decided to live together. Santoianni said the idea came up casually, and despite having had a bad experience co-habiting with another girlfriend, he knew this time was going to be different.

"I was nervous at first 'cause I'd never lived with a boyfriend before, but for our part it just felt natural just coming home, having him be there. It made it a lot easier to have our separate lives,'cause we knew we would be coming home to each other," Assom said.

When asked if the couple had any problems since moving in, she said while they have argued, they are not different from any other couple, and Santoianni said the biggest conflict the couple has faced was just deciding where to live.

"I grew up in Morrow Bay and she grew up in Los Osos, and I hated Los Osos, but we moved to Los Osos," Santoianni said.

More evidence is provided by another firm, ForeclosureRadar, which says it now takes an average of 229 days for a bank to foreclose on a home in California after sending a notice of default, up from 146 days in August 2008.

"For some reason, banks are being more lenient with homeowners who are behind on their loans," Sharga said. "Whether it's a strategy to try and done down the volume of foreclosures or simply a matter of the banks being able to keep up with volume is something that banks only know for sure.

Lenders say the trend reflects their efforts to work with borrowers to modify loans to avoid foreclosure. Bank of America "continues to exhaust every possible option to qualify customers for modification or other solutions," spokeswoman Johanna Barnes said.

"Some lenders are making it a policy to partner with delinquent borrowers," Critz said this month that it would let borrowers on the brink of foreclosure stay at their homes for six months, whether or not they make payments, if they turn over their property deed.

Such policies may partly reflect the fact that lenders can't keep up with all the foreclosures, some say.

"The mortgage lenders are so backlogged that some people are able to slip through the cracks," said Kathryn Davis, a real estate agent at America's Real Estate Advocates in Compton.

That was apparently the case for the Harrisons, who were told at various times that their house had been sold, that it belonged to someone else and that it was empty.

"It's been frustrating, a real major pain in the butts," said Eugene Harrison, a nondenominational minister with a clipped mustache and a slender laugh.

The Harrisons missed their first payment in October 2008, shortly after Patricia Harrison, 57, lost her job as a healthcare aide and her husband's part-time towing work dried up. "They said they applied for a loan modification with Countrywide Financial (once acquired by Bank of America) but were told that they couldn't receive one until they were three months behind on their payments.," Harrison said.

In April 2009, they received a notice warning them that their property "may be sold at a public sale," and in June, they were told their house was a bank-owned property.

See Evictions, page 9
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A day in the life of a city’s homeless camps

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Some days, Michelle Mead waits in line for two hours for a shower at Economical Social Ministries. If she has to wait two hours so she can stand under the warm water and try to wash away the campfire odor that has attached itself to her clothing and her hair, she will.

It’s not as if she has a lot of Options. Homeless and unable to find a job, she relies on a network of social services to provide her with most of life’s necessities: food, water, clothing. But homeless campers say there aren’t a lot of places where a person can just drop in and grab a fast shower. It’s just not that easy.

In fact, little seems easy about living in the camps — despite help from at least a dozen agencies and churches, and an unprecedented outpouring of direct donations of food, clothing, firewood and other items to the campers.

“Being homeless is a full-time job,” says Cindy, a 45-year-old who has been camping near America the Beautiful Park since August. It’s not just about getting a shower. It’s about walking long distances in the bitter cold for a meal at the soup kitchen or Springs Rescue Mission — and having to eat on the street if the soup kitchen is closed.

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It’s about finding the resources to do laundry. It’s about tracking down birth certificates to get an ID so they can compete for one of the scarce jobs in town. It’s about staying warm and finding bathrooms. It’s about trying to find time between grabbing meals and showers to even look for a job.

Almost every neighborhood has an eclectic mix of people and personalities. There’s the guy who built the stone fire pit, a white bear that sleeps in the driveway.

But the similarities in how the campers live from day to day are striking, starting with shelter. Like most people, Michelle Mead, most sleep in tents, though some campers are fine with nothing more than a two-person tent. Some, however, have created a virtual condo. Stephanie Roberts, 21, lives in a big tent with her boyfriend. Inside is a full bed, chair and propane heater. They’ve decided not to go to the slumber because they’re comfortable where they are.

It’s just like any other home,” she says. Then there’s “Miss Kitty,” a spread — a tent nestled inside a roughly 7-by-12-foot space defined by four walls of tarp and a dirt floor. The man who built the structure also built an impressive stone fire pit inside, which she uses for heating and cooking.

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Michelle Mead, pictured Jan. 13, calls a homeless camp along Shooks Run near S. Corona and Fountain streets home in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She admits living in a tent has eliminated a lot of stress in her life.
Homeless
continued from page 5

"I've got one of the best tire pans around," Miss Kitty says proudly. Miss Kitty and several other campers have an extra tent for storage. She uses hers to keep firewood dry. Others pack extra blankets, food and clothing in storage tents.

The campers get their tents, sleeping bags, propane heaters and other accommodations from a variety of sources: social service agencies, friends, friends of friends, other homeless campers and people from the community who come to the camps with donations.

Charles Henry Derners owned the blankets, Coleman stove and even his 1965 Corvair. "If we don't watch out for each other, no one is going to get hurt," he says.

The Day Begins

From the moment they wake up, many campers have one sure destination in mind: the Marian House soup kitchen. Those with grills or propane stoves might heat up some instant coffee first or grab a snack from whatever food they have stockpiled in their camps.

But most rely on Marian House for their first real meal of the day, and most will walk there regardless of the weather. "I go there to get a balanced meal," says Mead, who walks from her camp to the soup kitchen.

The soup kitchen doesn't open until 10:30 a.m. so Mead walks her dog, Joker, takes care of some errands and puts in some volunteer hours that are required for her food stamps. She used to get up at 4 a.m. to look for day labor jobs, "but there aren't any," she laments. It's a common refrain among campers.

Others have had better luck at diners, labor contracts, Denny's, get-up at 5:30 a.m. and drive to get to the Apprentices Personal Business Training for an assignment. During a recent spell of better cold weather, he got work at Memorial Hospital near downtown — a job that required him to get up at 3:30 a.m. so he'd have time to walk the five miles to the hospital and get to work on time. "I'm a 'Frumpy King,'" who lives in a camp just south of the one Miss Kitty and Mead call home, starts his morning scraping — riding his bike with a small trailer behind it, and picking up cans and other metal — before going to the soup kitchen.

At one camp near the westside San Luis Obispo, several of the people start their morning going to the store's bathroom to use the toilet, shave and clean up at the sinks. Then they'll clean up their camp from the night before. Because they're too far to go to the Marian House, they get provisions from the Westside CARS pantry or Safeway, then cook the food over a fire.

"If you go hungry in Colorado Springs and you're homeless, you're stupid," says Bob, a 58-year-old former Marine who has been homeless since October.

Afternoon Arrives

After lunch, some of the campers head to Pismo Library to get warm, read the paper and log on to the computer to check e-mails or look for jobs. Bob says he's been looking away at the library looking for a job as a mechanic but hasn't had any luck. "You can't get a job to save your soul," he says. "You've got to get positive." Mead says her job search is hindered by a lack of transportation. She's gotten bus passes from social service agencies, but said a person has to have an appointment with a clear destination before getting a pass. That means she can get a pass for a job interview, she said, but not one to get applications.

Another poor/Marian House destination is the mostly Ecumenical Social Ministries, which is about the only place in town where some people who aren't in shelters or long-term programs can bath. But only two stalls are available, and the hours are limited: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday. Even with a 15-minute-per-person limit, the lines can get long — especially in winter, because campers wait to shower until late in the day when temperatures warm up. ESM officials say only about 34 people can get showers.

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Bob, walking to the Marian House and waiting for a shower, "takes up a good part of the day" and cars into town she might speed looking for a job. Those who can't get a shower at ESM might use a bathroom at a park, convenience store or other destination where they might speed looking for a job. Those who can't get a shower at ESM might use a bathroom at a park, convenience store or other destination where they might speed looking for a job. Those who can't get a shower at ESM might use a bathroom at a park, convenience store or other destination where they might speed looking for a job. Those who can't get a shower at ESM might use a bathroom at a park, convenience store or other destination where they might speed looking for a job. Those who can't get a shower at ESM might use a bathroom at a park, convenience store or other destination where they might speed looking for a job. Those who can't get a shower at ESM might use a bathroom at a park, convenience store or other destination where they might speed looking for a job. Those who can't get a shower at ESM might use a bathroom at a park, convenience store or other destination where they might speed looking for a job. Those who can't get a shower at ESM might use a bathroom at a park, convenience store or other destination where they might speed looking for a job. Those who can't get a shower at ESM might use a bathroom at a park, convenience store or other destination where they might speed looking for a job.
FDA recalling dips, dressings and soup mixes over salmonella fears

Andrew Zajac

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration Thursday announced a potentially massive recall of foods made with a commonly used food additive that may be contaminated with salmonella.

The additive, hydrolyzed vegetable protein or HVP, is used in thousands of foods but so far has not been linked to any illness and currently presents a low risk to consumers, according to FDA officials.

But the agency isn’t taking any chances. It has asked food producers to check inventories for products that used recalled HVP and has established a searchable consumer database for what it produced would be a growing list of recalled foods.

Only a few specific brands of chip dips, salad dressing, soup mixes and other foods have been recalled since the contamination was discovered last month, but “we expect this to get larger over the next several days to several weeks,” said Jeff Farrar, FDA associate commissioner of food safety.

The tainted HVP was made at a plant operated by Basic Food Flavors Inc. of Las Vegas and was discovered when a company customer notified the FDA it had received a batch of the additive and reported finding salmonella.

FDA inspectors subsequently discovered salmonella bacteria on plant equipment. Basic Food subsequently announced a recall of all past and powdered versions of HVP manufactured since Sept. 17, 2009.

Company president Kami Patel did not return a telephone call seeking comment.

The FDA identified the salmonella’s genetic fingerprint, enabling the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to confirm that this strain has not caused illness so far.

Salmonella causes infections marked by diarrhea, vomiting, fever and abdominal pain. Healthy people generally recover without treatment, but salmonella can kill the very young, the elderly and people with weak immune systems.

Officials said the HVP was shipped in batches of 50 pounds or more but they didn’t know how much tainted product the company shipped. Farrar said most of the tainted additive would not be harmful because it was used in food preparation processes involving high heat or other procedures that would kill the salmonella bacteria.

Additionally, the ingredient, which is made of soy, corn and wheat, typically appears in very small quantities in individual food items. The lack of illnesses traceable to the contaminated additive points to a relatively low risk, Farrar said.

But understanding the potential seriousness of the outbreak, both FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg and the agency’s No. 2 official, Joshua Sharfstein, spoke at a telephone news conference.

Sharfstein said FDA reacted quickly, but he and Hamburg said the incident highlighted the need for passage of pending food safety legislation that would give the agency more tools to prevent outbreaks instead of reacting to them.

Sharfstein added that one of the lessons is that risk-reduction strategies that aim to prevent foodborne illness should be based on solid science, not scare tactics.

The legislation has been stalled in the Senate since last fall. It would give the FDA the power to order recalls on its own authority, instead of pressuring firms to do so.

Robert Brackett, chief science officer for the Grocery Manufacturers Association, a leading food trade group, praised FDA for acting with a sense of urgency.

The FDA has left it up to the food industry to determine if a particular product has been made in a way that would kill salmonella contamination, Brackett said.

In addition, it’s up to companies to decide whether to keep a product on the market if the consumer preparation process, such as boiling of a soup mix, would kill salmonella, he said.

As they interviewed dozens of people living in tent camps around Colorado Springs, Gazette reporters were able to obtain full names in some cases, but in others, encountered people who requested that their full names not be used. Some were embarrassed to be identified. Others feared discovery by relatives, or the law. Others had reasons that couldn’t be ascertained.

We have taken the campers at their word about their names, and have granted anonymity when requested.)
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Evictions
continued from page 1

The bank sent a notice by FedEx in October demanding $3,000, and when the Harrisons called to discuss this notice, they were told they had four days to vacate the house. Panicked, they arranged to stay with family in New Mexico and started packing their things, filling their garage with boxes of books, camping equipment and art. But no one came to kick them out.

“We were afraid to leave the house, afraid the sheriff was going to come,” said Patricia Harrison, an amateur painter.

After contacting consumer advocates about their situation, the Harrisons decided to stay put. Soon after, two men in a white pickup truck showed up at the house and peeped in the windows, telling the Harrisons that they thought the house was abandoned.

The Harrisons suspected they were planning to move in themselves and chased them away.

The couple don’t want to leave but are in the midst of a running dispute with Bank of America about the terms of their loan modification.

Although the Harrisons’ future is uncertain, industry observers agree that the rent-free life can’t last forever. As home values climb, banks will find it financially advantageous to foreclose on delinquent borrowers and sell their properties.

“In many cases, particularly in California, people owe a boatload of payments, and no bank is going to forgive that,” said Guy Cecala, editor of Inside Mortgage Finance, a trade publication.

In Diamond Bar, the Fragueres family is finally moving on after living rent-free for 18 months. Job loss and other setbacks prevented them from paying their mortgage, but they say they didn’t hear anything from the bank, First Franklin, until a real estate agent showed up at their door last month saying she was going to sell their house.

Sandy Fragere wasn’t surprised that it had taken the bank so long to ask them to move.

“I don’t think they really knew what was going on or who was there,” she said.

Next stop for the Fragueres is a hotel, where they plan to stay for two weeks until their apartment in Chino Hills is ready for them to move in. Their dogs are being boarded and their belongings stored until they can retrieve them some day. Their children, ages 8 and 9, are being steriled for more instability.

The Fragueres have started saying goodbye to their neighbors, adding yet another empty house to a block that has already seen two other families forced to pack up and leave.
WASHINGTON — In a pinch of bright news for the economy, the East Coast snowstorms that paralyzed transportation and shut down thousands of businesses last month did far less damage than expected to the nation's labor market, allowing the unemployment rate to hold steady at 9.7 percent.

Some economists had forecast that the blizzards would result in a setback on the jobs front, with unemployment jumping and payroll losses reaching 75,000 or more.

Certainly, the recovery remains slow and uneven after the worst recession in more than a half-century. And by any standard, the number of people out of work for more than 26 months has been slow to come back, raising concerns about the durability of the economic expansion.

On balance, professional forecasters are expecting economic growth to drop to about 3 percent in the first quarter and for the balance of the year — a relatively slow pace that won't add much fuel to hiring.

Employers have been reluctant to hire because of weak sales, tight credit that's restrained expansion, increased productivity — more goods from current workers — and uncertainties about government policies on health care, energy and taxes.

All that has prompted fears that the broader economy could backslide.

"In terms of self-sustaining growth in the economy, it's hard to see how you can do that without creating jobs," said Dean Baker, director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington. Despite the better-than-expected employment report for February, he noted, the economy needs to add some 125,000 jobs just to keep pace with the labor growth and hold the jobless rate from rising.

The United States has lost 8.4 million jobs since December 2007.

Last month, the construction industry dropped another 64,000 jobs. Analysts viewed many of those as victims of the weather. The Labor Department's payroll jobs data are seasonally adjusted, but those statistical adjustments are based on past average fluctuations, and last month's snowstorms were hardly normal.

But Ken Simonson, chief econometrician for the construction data firm, said employers may have been powering through the bad weather, knowing that the government was keeping a close eye on the jobless rate.
Friday, March 12, 2010

Rate

continued from page 10

omint at the Associated General Contractors of America, said the industry would have lost about two million jobs last month even if the storms had not paralyzed activity in the East.

"I do expect a lot more (federal economic) stimulus money to turn into construction jobs in the coming months," he said. But "we're not yet at bottom."

About one out of four construction jobs were lost during the recession and unemployment in the industry now hovers at about 37 percent.

Friday's report did reveal some positive trends. Manufacturers added 48,000 jobs in February, bringing to 284,000 the number employed those who have jobs but say they missed work because of weekend weather factors, even if they were unpaid.

Weather wasn't a major factor in the Labor Department's unemployment numbers, which are based on a separate national survey of households that counts as unemployed anyone who has lost or quit a job in the past four weeks and is available for work.

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WORD ON THE STREET

“What are your plans for housing next year?”

“Graduation! I am going to live at home with my parents and share a room with a dog half my size.”

“Kind of a loaded question. I don’t know if I am staying where I am or if my family is finding renters.”

“I am staying where I am in Murray Station.”

“I am going to be moving off campus.”

“I have no idea. I have three months to decide but maybe Chicago.”

“Probably going to stay in Poly Canyon.”

“One of the apartments in Poly Canyon. Right now we are in a dilemma though.”

“I believe we are looking into Poly Canyon.”

“I am still scrambling; it is hard to find a devoted group to stick together through the application process.”

“I am moving possibly to the LA area.”

“Probably going to stay in Poly Canyon.”

“Without a doubt. I am staying where I am in Murray Station.”

-Scott Bailey, architecture senior

-Jessica Sherbon, electrical engineering senior

-Lindsay Gadlich, business administration junior

-Justin Finch, business administration junior

-Matt Deimanowski, graphic communication senior

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-Compilled and photographed by Jessica Barba
State

SAN LUIS OBISPO (MCT) — A Nipomo man was sentenced Thursday in 18 years to life in state prison for the molestation of his niece over the course of three years.

The girl told her mom what was happening, and Lealcalderon told sheriff’s investigators that he may have penetrated the girl twice when they were playing “house,” but said he didn’t rape her, according to the District Attorney’s Office.

Prosecutor Greg Desat negotiated the plea agreement that led to the sentence with defense attorney Michael Adams. Lealcalderon pleaded no contest to the felony crimes of molestation of a minor, the state’s first black governor, who argue that a military official’s claim of sexual misconduct by a child younger then age 14 and sexual penetration with a child younger than age 10.

FRESNO (MCT) — A trial began this morning for a Fresno man accused of killing another man in the parking lot outside the Chuck E. Cheese restaurant in northwest Fresno. Named George Mancilla, 24, is accused of gunning down Victor Reyna Cedano, 29, in September 2008.

Fresno County Superior Court judges have to decide whether Mancilla is guilty of murder, as the prosecution contends, or the lesser charge of manslaughter, as the defense has said the number of missing was far from complete. Some of Baird’s favorite tips include using the wire racks from an old refrigerator as cooking racks for baked goods, and donating old towels to animal shelters, which use them for dog baths.

But not everything can be salvaged. Band warns against reusing towels to animal shelters, which use them for dog baths.

For everything else, repurposing often requires a little washing up and a touch of imagination. The next time you’re contemplating giving something the old heave-ho, here are 10 tips to give it new use.

1. OLD DISHES, NEW PLANTS

Filling large outdoor planters with soil for a small plant can be costly. Pieces of a broken clay pot or ceramic dish help drainage and prop up undersized plants. Place shards at the bottom of a large pot until almost half the pot is full. Add a layer of plastic foam pieces or a mixture of gravel or pebbles (you can also use filler from old aquariums or wine corks), and then fill with potting soil.

2. OLD BRANCHES, NEW DECOR

If you’re trimming trees to prepare for the growing season or cleaning the yard, save long fallen twigs or branches that are in good condition. Tie in a bunch and let dry completely by the garage. Spray paint them in a touch of imagination. The next time you’re contemplating giving something the old heave-ho, here are 10 tips to give it new use.

Cleaning house without the garbage, finding new uses for old things

Amanda Kwan

Springtime is here again, and with it the annual tradition of cleaning house that doesn’t have to mean big bag after bag of garbage.

Given fears of a recession and worries about overflowing landfills, there’s new incentive to find second lives for many household items.

“We can’t afford to keep living disposable lives,” said Lori Band, a co-author of “Don’t Throw It Out: Recycle and Reuse to Make Things Last,” a compendium from Yankee magazine. “It makes sense for all of us to be more careful about how we spend money.”

Some of Band’s favorite tips include using the wire racks from an old refrigerator as cooking racks for baked goods, and donating old towels to animal shelters, which use them for dog baths.

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white, silver or gold and display in a vase or large urn as indoor de­corations.

3. OLD MAILING TUBES, NEW WINE RACK

ReadyMade, a savvy do-it-yourself magazine, suggests making a wine rack with mailing tubes and an old milk crate from your college dorm years (or a box that’s at least 12 inches in depth). Measure the depth of the crate and cut the tubes to this length with sharp scissors. Stack the tubes in the crate and turn the crate on its side on a flat surface. Each cub­by hole can fit a wine bottle. Be sure to store the crate in a dry, cool area.

4. OLD PENS, NEW SILVER­WARE

Forks, spoons and knives with broken handles can get new bodies from old pens, according to aspal Marwah and Sarah Hunt of Vancouver. They’re winners of ReadyMade’s MacGyver Challenge, a monthly contest that challenges readers to find innovative ways to reuse com­mon objects. To make their pen cut­lery, discard everything inside the pen except its tube and cap. Fill the tube with hot glue, shove in the heads of the cutlery, and let dry.

5. OLD SHOWER CURTAIN, NEW GRILL COVER

Got a stained or tired shower cur­tain? Baird suggests using it as a wa­terproof cover for outdoor furniture or a grill.

6. OLD PAPERWORK, NEW DOG BED

Shredded paperwork from your home or office shredder, small rugs or bath mats, and old towels can be donated to local animal shelters. The paper and bath mats make beds for dogs and cats, and towels are needed to wash animals.

7. OLD BINDER, NEW CD CASE

Watch this: Three-ring binders from yours or your children’s old school days can house CDs or DVDs that’ve lost their cases. “Don’t Throw It Out” says to store them in album refill pages for 5 x 7 photos.

8. OLD SOCKS, NEW ORNA­MENT SAVER

Save old socks or ones that’ve lost their partner to store delicate Christmas ornaments. You can also use socks to stuff the insides of shoes so they don’t lose their shape in stor­age.

9. BROOM

Revitalize an old broom by cov­ering the bristles with ruined panty­hose. Cut a piece from the leg, and stretch it over the broom’s bristles. The nylon’s static will attract lint and small dust particles as you sweep.

10. OLD BOOK, NEW SAFE

Make a safe out of an old hard­cover textbook or outdated encyclo­pedia. “Don’t Throw It Out” suggests opening the book to a spot at least one inch from the back. Prop the book open with a pencil and a straightedge to mark a rectangle in the middle of the page. Cut out the rectangle with a craft knife — score the edges heavily, and you’ll be able to cut through several pages at a time. Repeat until you’re about to cut into the back cover. Place a piece of cardboard or a thick piece of scrap paper over the cover so that you don’t cut into it.

The Graduate

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Poly wine and vit finds success through students

Rhiannon Montgomery

Cal Poly wine and viticulture students are working to keep the ancient celebration of fermented fruit alive.

The relatively new program has turned students from 'cellar-rats' into successful winemakers rivaling programs at Fresno State and the University of California, Davis.

Nick Davis, 2007 wine and viticulture graduate and co-owner of TWINPOMS wine, said with the connections to the local industry, Cal Poly offers unique opportunities in the wine-making business.

"Cal Poly will be the top-notch facility in the next few years because of the experience opportunities," Davis said.

Davis said the programs at Fresno and U.C. Davis don't have the local trade to support a large number of students looking for work or internships. There are more 4-H wineries in San Luis Obispo County, giving students the opportunity to work in their major.

Anthony Youton, Davis' former classmate and the owner of Kinero Cellars wine, said Cal Poly's internship requirement gives students a leg up in the industry. He said the university gets support from local wineries like Orcutt Road Cellars, where Cal Poly wine is made.

"You hit the ground running. You can walk into the winery knowing how to do everything," Youton said.

The programs' three concentrations encompass all aspects of wine production and management. Enology is about the science of winemaking, viticulture focuses on the vineyard and the agricultural business concentration highlights the ins and outs of working in the wine industry. Jeff Onysko is vice president of the Vines to Wine club and a wine and viticulture senior. He said the program emphasizes what it's like to be in the real-world industry.

Part of that real-world experience comes from learning from professors who have worked in the wine business, Onysko said. He said teachers have the knowledge to take students from "grapes to glass." Davis, Youton and Onysko said they believe the hands-on experience and connections are what make the program special.

Youton and Davis said they took those connections and the learn-by-doing philosophy with them and used it to start their own businesses. They both said they didn't have the capital to be traditional winemakers. There's a saying in the industry that it takes a large fortune to make a small fortune.

They are blazing new paths in the business to side-step the capital issues. These small start-ups don't have their own wineries, tasting rooms or major distributors. They buy their fruit from growers and make the wine at established crushing facilities.

Youton said he still keeps his day job as winemaker at Dernier Cellars, but was able to start his own label in the summer of 2008 when a friend at Villa Creek offered to let him make wine at their facility, where he started as a cellar-rat after graduating.

He isn't alone in finding success outside the box in the short time since he graduated from the program. Davis said he and co-owner Brian (also his twin brother) took a chance to find their niche in the industry so they could be standouts.

With more than 1,200 facilities making wine in California get-

...
While most dorm rooms are reserved for individual students, some campuses have family dorms for couples and their kids.

Eric Ferreri

DURHAM, N.C. — Maeve Cook-Deegan will have plenty of new experiences when she heads off to college this fall. But dorm life won't be one of them.

Maeve, a 17-year-old Durham Academy senior, has already spent six years living in a Duke University residence hall as the daughter of one of the university's 13 faculty-residence professors. Which means she's already had a few "crazy college kids" moments.

Exhibit A: "I walked out the door yesterday and there was a guy with his shirt off," Maeve recounted recently. "And his friend was reading what people had written on him the day before."

Such is life in Alspaugh dorm on Duke's East Campus, Maeve's home.

see Dorms, page 19

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Draperies are back

Designers are using draperies to transform the interior of a room.

Stacy Downs
REAL ESTATE NEWS

After more than a decade, draperies are finally getting their curtain call.

Windows for years were unadorned, except for subtle shades or sheer lined blinds. Now the fabric is back, even in minimalist interiors.

"Draperies add elegance while softening the room, making it cozier," said interior designerSheri Worth of Overland Park, Kan.
"They also hide ugly views and create privacy. I think people have come to realize that it's boring, and when windows are naked, they're truly naked."

The main reason Worth appreciates draperies: For $300 or so, they can transform a room.

"That's the least expensive thing you can do besides paint," she said. "It's certainly less expensive than remodeling or moving into a new home."

However, Worth cautions clients about using too trendy with draperies, because the price tag can add up.

"You don't necessarily want the latest color or pattern, because you don't want to change them out every three years," she said. "Stick with classics, maybe even solid colors, unless you can seat. If you do want something trendy, buy a pillow or candle to set the color."

How about height?
Worth says to hang a drapery rod at least 4 to 6 inches above the window trim — ideally just below the ceiling trim — to make a room appear grander yet create a cocoon-like corners. 

"Roellchen thinks the bottom of draperies should sit on the floor or come just above it."

"You don't want to be covered, yards and yards of puddling," she said. "That would be a throwback."

What's hot?
Fabrics: Bigger prints, especially geometrics such as damask patterns. There's a lot of banding, where one fabric softens a solid color. It's also combined with another fabric (sometimes prints).

Trims: Wooden beading, capitol shears and brushed fringe.

Styles: Side panels. For top treatments, spare cornices — no valances. Grommets at the top give the drapes a casual feel. French pleats add some fullness to panels.

Hardware: Nothing fussy, industrial hardware. Silver-colored and oil rubbed bronze finishes are popular. Mixing metals lends a warmer, more lived-in look.

Tiebacks: Metal holdbacks are more popular than traditional fabric ties or tassels, though for a sleek and casual appearance, panels usually hang without tiebacks.

Draperies Shopping: The Five Essentials
1. Fabric samples such as a furniture arm cover.
2. Paint swatches of the wall colors.
3. Photos of the room, especially the windows.
4. Pictures from design publications showing draperies. Look for:
5. Measurements if you're buying Drapes, page 19

McNamara Daily Arts

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since she was 12. She lives there with her parents, Bob and Kathryn, and their dog, Oshie, a friendly mixed breed named for a Swiss lake.

For Maeve, Duke dorm life was a dramatic change from the suburban bliss of Annapolis, Md., where the family lived before Bob Cook-Deegan was recruited away from a Stanford University program in Washington. She left a neighborhood where her best friend lived next door and moved into a cramped room at the back of the Cook-Deegan compound, a retrofitted apartment fashioned from several standard dorm rooms.

The apartment is long and narrow, with a spacious kitchen, a cozy living room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a giant dog bed for Oshie.

For Maeve, life has been one slow transition. When she moved in at age 12, she got funny looks from students who might have mistaken her for a student's little sister. As she grew, she began to fit in more. Now 17, she's just a year or two younger than some of her classmates.

Still, she doesn't mix with them much. In fact, the most interaction she has with students is during fine arts and music classes, which often come on weekends or late at night.

"This year hasn't been so bad," said Maeve, who will enroll at the University of Southern California in the fall. "They've learned how to use the campus cops."

Dorm life can be frustrating at times. It's hard to direct friends to her room, which is packed with furniture in the back of the campus. And when they do visit, they risk a parking ticket from the campus cops.

Round-The-Clock Job

In exchange for free housing, utilities and wi-fi, Cook-Deegan is both a formal and informal adviser to the 120 students who live in Alspaugh.

The formal: He helps organize dorm events, outings and educational activities, though he has no official disciplinary duties. The informal: He becomes a crisis counselor on occasion when an overstressed student bangs on the door in the middle of the night.

It's an arrangement he likes. He routinely chats with his students, and when they camp out in Kentucky for weeks to score coveted basketball tickets, he brings them coffee and doughnuts. But while he's a familiar enough presence in the dorm that students refer to him simply as "BCD," there are boundaries.

"I'm not one of the gang," he said. "There's a definite disconnect between the student and the faculty. Every year, I do have very close friendships with students, but it's not the same as the relationship with students, but it's not the same as the relationship with students, but it's not the same as the relationship with students at home."

Crim Chai lived in Alspaugh as a freshman and enjoyed having a faculty member living among the students. Chai, now a senior, said it was nice to have an adult adviser close by, and seeing a professor outside the classroom set students at ease.

"You're seeing him in a different setting, and you meet his family and his dog," she said. "We'd eating pizza in the common room, and Oshie would come in and try to get a piece of pizza."

Dorms

When he was recruited to Duke, he insisted on living with his family in a dorm, in an attempt to recreate the experience he had as an undergrad at Harvard, where faculty members live in "houses" with students and act as advisers. The idea is to eliminate barriers between faculty and students and enhance the academic experience.

"I figured this would be the most efficient way to learn this new universe," he said. "I learn a lot more about the students hanging out with them and then eating breakfast with them."

The faculty-in-residence model is not common at Triangle universities, though N.C. State started a program this year aimed at bringing a faculty member to live in a residence hall.

Dining

While some Duke dorms feature foosball tables, the back of the campus is a hotbed for eateries and patterns, styles and sizes to choose from but limited sizes.

Prices

• Ready-made ($20 to $100 per panel): Selection of panel colors and patterns, styles and sizes vary from store to store.
  - Non-custom ($100 to $150 per panel): Hundreds of fabrics and styles to choose from but limited sizes.
  - Custom (typically $200 and up per panel): Designed to be as tall, lined and pleated as you want and in any fabric.

Making It Personal

Interior designer Sherry Worth found inexpensive ready-made draperies she loved at Ikea. The problem: to reach the floor, they needed to be more than 10 feet long. Because 124-inch panels weren't available, she found a coordinating fabric she liked and sewed it to the Ikea panels. To conceal the seams, she added button fringe trim.

Drapes

continued from page 18

Prices

continued from page 17

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House decorations that won’t break the bank

Raquel Redding
MUSTANG DAILY

Moving out of the parents' house means a blank slate. A whole room, or house open for interpretation is exciting, but a lot of house decor can be expensive. From Ross to World Market, this is a guide to decorating on a budget.

Students and non-students go through a process of gradually accumulating items throughout the years. From old roommates' furniture to the mirror found on the street with a "free" sign, picking up random items is inevitable. Making the random work to create a cohesive living room, or an eclectic bedroom can depend on a few good pieces to tie them all together.

There is a wide range of shops in San Luis Obispo. There is the expensive World Market, and there is the less pricey Ross.

Starting with World Market, which is located off of Madonna Road, there is a wide array of decor from couches to candles. Store manager Gillian Mote said that World Market tries to have a wide variety of eclectic pieces to choose from.

"We shop the world so consumers can enjoy the product and feel like they are on vacation," Motes said. "Unique, authentic, affordable, and many other countries. From rugs, pillows, candles to lighting, the market has one of the most thorough selections to choose from.

"I like to be a year behind in stuff, I don't want to be with the Jones.' I'd rather buy items when I generally like them, not when they are cool."

—Fritz Light
Cal Poly graduate student

Environmental management sophomore Christina McAdams said that she prefers to go to Bed Bath and Beyond for items, but only when she can afford it.

"I go to Ross because I can still get decent stuff at a good price," McAdams said. "But if I'm looking for something specific, then I have to spend more money."

Ross is one of the most inexpensive stores in San Luis Obispo.

"When Cal Poly students make the move from the dorms to off-campus housing, many of them are excited at the chance to own pets, which is forbidden in the dorms. Many house and apartment leases, however, do not allow pets either. Some students will accept the condition so they can move into the house or apartment they want. Others get more creative. If students really want to own a pet once they move off-campus, they can try to make other ar-

Owning a pet in college is sometimes easier said than done

Erin Hurley
MUSTANG DAILY

Some Cal Poly students feel that a house just isn't a home without a pet. However, having the comfort of a pet is often easier discussed than obtained. Many San Luis Obispo houses and apartments do not allow renters to own pets, and students usually have to choose between giving up the pet or giving up the house.

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see Pets, page 22

Welcome to San Luis Obispo's newest and nicest apartment community!
Pets
continued from page 21
rangements. Sometimes renters are willing to discuss the possibilities of small or well-behaved pets, but others refuse to consider any kind of pets. This motivates some students to try to keep pets without the renter knowing.

Molly Wagner, a junior science major, was willing to make sacrifices to keep her beloved cat. In her search for a house last spring, Wagner began by only looking at houses with leases that allowed pets. This severely limited her choices, but she finally succeeded in finding a house on Backen Street that allowed her to keep her cat. However, Wagner said she would not have a restrictive lease keep her cat out.

“T would have been willing to hide my cat if I hadn’t found a lease that allowed pets. I definitely choose my cat first!” Wagner said.

Sometimes hiding a pet works, and sometimes it doesn’t. A small pet can be easy to hide from a landlord, but a more conspicuous pet like a cat or a dog that needs more space can be difficult to keep hidden. It’s unfair for landlords that renters are keeping a pet in secret, they may terminate the lease and leave the renters without a place to live.

Keeping a pet off-campus can be extremely rewarding, but it can also prove to be costly. Pets need many of the same things as students: food, shelter, medical care and social contact. Students with pets have packed with classes, sports, jobs and social activities can find it hard to give pets what they need. Many students also do not have much extra money for pets after groceries, rent and other costs.

According to PetEducation.com, the initial cost of buying a puppy can be up to $1,000, and the costs of taking care of and raising the dog for an average lifespan of 14 years can range from $4,000 to almost $59,000. The cost of owning a cat can range from an average lifespan of 14 years can range from $4,500 to over $10,000.

The Cal Poly student had an unusual experience with a pet. Journalism junior Alexandra Jacopetti lives in the Tri Tetra complex on Junipero Road near Los Osos Valley Road. The complex does not allow pets, but they must weigh less than 25 pounds. The complex also charges renters an extra fee for keeping pets. Jacopetti, who has known De Toleso renters who owned a puppy that was under 25 pounds at the time they first rented their apartment, but the puppy soon grew too large, and they were forced to move. Jacopetti is hesitant to make a commitment that could threaten her living situation.

“The rules for owning a pet are a little extreme, and I’d really like to have a pet, but personally, I wouldn’t break the lease rules unless I really wanted that kind of pet,” Jacopetti said.

Owning a pet is also a concern for students who are about to make the move off-campus. Environmental management and protection sophomore Molly Nilsson has known 1) e Tolosa rented her apartment, but she also proved to be costly. Pets need care for students who are about to make the move off-campus. Environmental management and protection sophomore Molly Nilsson is in the midst of searching for a place to live off-campus next year. Nilsson said that owning a pet would depend on the lease.

“Depending on what the lease allowed pets, I’d definitely consider a cat,” she said. “If it didn’t, I don’t know if it would go to all the trouble of taking care of a pet and hiding it. It’s a lot of work.”

Being a good tenant requires common sense

Raquel Redding:
Managing Director

Being a good tenant can mean a lot of things, like paying rent on time and being quiet, but there are other qualities that are sought by renting companies. To rent a place, whether it’s an apartment or a house, there are certain things to keep in mind in order to be a good tenant.

While these are not exact rules, it may be helpful to follow these guidelines. Mustang Village general manager Kathy Baker said being a good tenant goes beyond paying rent, although that certainly helps.

“Be respectful of those who live around you and the spaces your actions have on others. For example, from having a party and being loud, to a gusting parking spaces, can affect other tenants,” Baker said. “We forget those kind of things sometimes, these niceties.”

Baker is not alone in emphasizing respect for neighbors and other people. Child development senior Heather Hiratani said to be conscientious of others, and be proactive about the space you’re living in.

“If on the top floor, don’t make a lot of noise or jump around, and if you have to use the stairs, don’t look into other peoples apartments,” Hiratani said. “Have a good system. Take care of things. Do the basics.”

The basics, according to Hiratani and fellow student, mechanical engineering sophomore Jorge Angel, are cleaning and being clean — for example, taking out the trash when it’s full. Angel currently lives on Poly Canyon, and he said one of the biggest concerns for him is noise. “Produce low noise levels at night, because people could be studying or going to bed,” Angel said.

Bothering neighbors is not the only thing that Angel worries about. Since Poly Canyon comes furnished, he said that taking care of the furniture is something that also makes a good tenant.

“Taking care of the apartment and making sure not to disturb any of the furniture or walk,” Angel said. “The better you leave it at the end the better it is for you.”

Getting the deposit back is an occurrence to be a good tenant because the damages done to the apartment when the tenant moves out will come out of the deposit. Baker said a good tenant communicates as well as with the manager and keeps them informed of what’s going on.

“If there’s something wrong with the apartment, let them know so we can fix it,” Baker said. “A leak under the kitchen sink could turn into mold or rot out the wood, which would turn into a major repair that could have been prevented. Good management is a chance to fix a problem.”

California West, Inc. property supervisor Elle Malicoat said she receives a certain amount of respect from the students when it comes to the apartments or houses being rented out.

Have a good system. Take care of things. Do the basics.

— Heather Hiratani
Child development senior

A “good tenant pays their rent on time, complies with the rules of the rental agreement, is responsible and considerate to their neighbors and doesn’t cause their property manager any grief,” Malicoat said. “I expect my tenants to live in their apartments or houses the same way they would live in their parents house.”

For Malicoat, respect is something that goes both ways in the renting process. She said 90 percent of their tenants are students and Cal-West tries to meet all their tenants with respect as well.

At some point in their lives, most people will have to rent a place to live. As Baker said, renting is a part of being in the real world, so you might as well have a good tenant’s history.

“Basically, if you don’t give us a reason to come after you, you’re a good tenant,” Baker said.

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Johnny Depp gives another memorable performance in "Alice in Wonderland"


Rick Bentley

LOS ANGELES — No actor working today has so many oddly costumed, weird-looking and strange characters as Johnny Depp. There may be a slight madness to his method of creating such memorable roles as Edward Scissorhands, Capt. Jack Sparrow, Willy Wonka and now the Mad Hatter in his new film, "Alice in Wonderland." But Depp's soft-spoken and unassuming manner makes people feel comfortable and believe in him.

Veteran producer Richard Zanuck, for example, says he slept well before shooting a film with Depp because he can count on the actor setting a positive tone on the set.

Depp's unpredictable demeanor is apparent in how he views his career. Despite more than $5 billion in tickets sold for his films, Depp still around. It's been a kind of set.

"What I took away was this strange, cryptic nuggets he threw at me," says he is amazed he's still a working actor setting a positive tone on the set.

"I had no idea where anything was going. I thought they were asking questions that couldn't be answered or making statements you quite don't understand," Depp says.

Depp remembers reading the Lewis Carroll classic when he was a boy, and had just re-read it before getting the call from Burton for the latest film version of "Alice in Wonderland."

"Alice in Wonderland" is his seventh collaboration with director Burton.

One reason Burton says he enjoys working with the three-time Oscar nominee is the actor's dislike of seeing himself on screen. That means the director never has to worry about his star getting temperamental about how a scene was shot.

Each time Depp agrees to star in a Burton film, his biggest fear is that he won't be able to come up with a character that's different enough to please the director. This time, their collaboration was on creating a key player in the mad tale: the Mad Hatter.

Zanuck compares Depp's way of creating a character to a factory, in that he puts together an assortment of elements to create a product the public longs to buy. For the Hatter, Depp did watercolor drawings of the character's look, which were almost identical to what Burton had in mind — a result of sharing so many collaborations.

Instead of having Hatter just being a hyper-nuts character, Depp plays him as someone who has extreme emotional swings that can go from light-hearted levity to dangerous rage.

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Tacos have become a universal food

Lee Svoboda Dean

You can find tacos in some Mongolia, Amsterdam, Adis Ababa and Australia — even in outer space (the latter thanks to NASA). They have, in fact, become ever-present in the hamburger.

And that’s the rub. They no longer seem Mexican, but American, says Jeffrey Pilcher, a University of Minnesota history professor who will give a talk about “Planet Taco” on Tuesday.

Indeed, the taco revolution spread globally — and extraterrestrials — via entrepreneurial Americans and U.S. companies, not Mexicans. That might explain why, in part, the rest of the world looks at our over-stuffed hard-shell taco spilling over with lettuce, tomatoes and Cheddar cheese and thinks “American.”

Not so coincidentally, Mexican immigrants almost always went to the U.S. Pilcher noted. If Americans hadn’t traveled with their tacos, he would be offering a very different history lesson.

Fifty years ago, Mexican food could be found only in Mexican California or the Southwest, including small roadside stands where tacos were sold. Los Angeles phone books from 1950 reflect the abundance of these taco spots. These were the very early days of food franchises. Ray Kroc started the McDonald’s chain in 1945.

Glen Bell, the founder of Taco Bell and a fellow Californian, had an idea. Today we think of tacos as the lowest common denominator of Mexican food — well, maybe that would, or should, be nachos — but he was cutting-edge at a time when immigration was often in need of work. And they did what immigrants often do: when they land in another country, open a restaurant. In Australia, it was a hippie, with a work visa who needed to be self-supporting and started the Pacifico Cafe with tacos galore. In Queensland, Australia, the oldest Mexican restaurant — Taco Bill — was founded by another Californian who brought with him a tortilla press and the launch of the first complained.
Roger Ebert gives tea parties thumps down

Scot Collins

LOS ANGELES — Who is the biggest scourge of the tea party movement these days? It might be film critic Roger Ebert, who lately has been tweeting brickbats at Sarah Palin and other right-wing politicians in between rendering verdicts on the latest movies.

Over the last few weeks, Ebert has used his busy Twitter page to give the tea party belittling nicknames, predict it will quickly fade and opine that "a loud movement is not the same as a mass movement."

"I write about the TePee because it's so sad how they've been manipulated to oppose their own best interests," Ebert said in an e-mail, using his latest epithet for the tea party followers, "I am a liber­al.

His thoughts have earned him 1.8 million followers on Twitter and around 300,000 so-called fans from conservatives who accuse him of elitism and trashing ordinary Americans. More notable than the political spat, though, is what it says about the rapidly evolving media and Ebert's place among them. Because of his decades of TV appearances, including with his late partner Gene Siskel, Ebert is perhaps the only critic in America who really has a household name.

But due to complications from cancer surgery in 2006, he has been unable to speak. The story of his recent battle, along with a portrait that revealed his surgically ravaged face, recently appeared in Esquire. Tuesday, he appeared on Facebook, Twitter, and other applications, like a word game.

"It's an art form," he said in an e-mail interview with The Times. "Having said more than once 'I told you so,' I now feel it is a splendid discipline ... I link to Twitterverse or doing his reviews and opining that 'a loud movement is not the same as a mass movement.'"

What especially irked some conservatives was that Ebert used a nickname for tea party followers that has also long been slang for a sexual act. When Ebert tweeted that he was unaware of the term's pornographic connotations, Big Hollywood countered that he had referred to such a context in past movie reviews.

But Breitbart adds that the current fad ultimately proves how much power has shifted to new media and away from mainstream outlets, such as newspapers, where Ebert has reviewed movies for more than 40 years.

"I am a proponent of Roger Ebert using Twitter to express his opinion of ours," Breitbart said. "It's a testament to the new media. Where is he having a bigger impact, in the Twitiverse or doing his reviews of movies?"

Ebert admits he was slow to appreciate Twitter and is now a "fan. It's an art form," he said in an unusual interview with The Times. "It encourages minimalism, almost like a word game.

"Having said more than once 'I will never be a twit,' I now feel it is a splendid discipline ... I link to the great writing on the web. I also like to link to the unique, the beautiful, the weird."

"That day is sad for me," he said, "when a newspaperman fears to tweet."
Dining out may contribute to increased calorie intake

Jeannine Stein

Americans are eating out more and more. According to the National Restaurant Association, 49 percent of every food dollar in the U.S. is now spent in restaurants, up from 25 percent in 1955.

What that means is we have less and less control over just what goes into our food — and the numbers, now available per laws in states including California, are sometimes shocking.

Even healthful-seeming selections can pack a calorie-, fat-, salt- or sugar-laden punch.

Salads, long touted as a virtuous choice, are a prime example.

At IHOP, the grilled chicken Caesar salad has 1,210 calories, far more than the patty melt, which comes in at 750 calories. At Baja Fresh, a chicken tostada has 1,140 calories and 14 grams of saturated fat.

If you figure that the average person needs 2,000 calories a day, it's sobering to learn that more than half that amount can easily be consumed in a restaurant breakfast alone. And don't forget sodium. The recommended daily limit is 2,400 milligrams a day (1,500 milligrams for those who are middle-aged, are in certain ethnic groups or have conditions such as high blood pressure). Many restaurant dishes contain more than you should have in a whole day.

Restaurants are beginning to create lower-calorie items or are highlighting their existing more-healthful items. Restaurant executives stress that this has been prompted by customer preferences and shifting dining trends, not by existing or pending menu labeling legislation. (Some nutrition experts suspect that new laws and the possible federal mandates waiting in the wings are more influential than companies want to admit.)

The Cor ar Bakery Cafe recently listed 100-plus combinations of menu items that come in at less than 600 calories, such as an Asian wonton salad and cheddar broccoli soup, or a tuna salad sandwich and Caesar salad.

Applebee's has its new "Under 500 Calories" menu, offering grilled shrimp and slant rice, asparagus pepper corn steak, and grilled djin chicken and portobello.

Starbucks lately began touting its "skinny" drinks, which are less than 100 calories, such as the skinny vanilla latte and the skinny cappuccino dolce latte, plus its new under-400-calorie hot panna sandwiches.

Cheesecake Factory has a few "weight management" dishes that are lower in fat and calories, and the company recently introduced a small plates and snacks menu, with smaller-portioned items such as mini corn dogs, shrimp scampi crostini, arugula salad and crispy fried cheese — not all of those, however, are low in calories.

Some chains restaurants have

Romano's Macaroni Grill chain was drugged by the consumer advocacy group Center for Science in the Public Interest years ago for its heavy sauces and fatty, meat-centric entrees, but since Chief Executive Brad Blum came on board in 2008, the chain has cleaned up its act.

Yes, the Alfredo is still there (the sauce alone is 610 calories and 31 grams of saturated fat), but so is a honey balsamic chickens at 540 calories and 5 grams of saturated fat (side dishes included) and a scallop and spinach salad at 360 calories and 4 grams of saturated fat that includes the dressing, and pollo caprese pasta at 550 calories and 5 grams of saturated fat. Some favorite dishes have slimmed down: eggplant parmesan went from 1,270 calories to 880.

It's not clear what see Calories, page 25
Krysten Cary keeps softball close to her heart

Senior first baseman Krysten Cary and her teammates have fin-
ished pre-game warm-ups. Fans are filling the seats and the game is
starting in a few minutes, but she doesn't feel quite ready. Something
is missing. She runs on her iPhone and selects the four-song
playlist that has become essential to every pre-game warm up for the
last four years.

Through her earphones, Lu-
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Cary said she only feels confortable stepping on the field after listening to the “cheesy” mus-
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“It’s part of my routine now,” she said. “It’s like, ‘OK, now I’m ready
to play.’”

Last year, Cary led the Big West with 14 home runs and a .619 slug-
ging percentage, all are statistics that
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“I don’t look at numbers; I don’t keep track of that kind of stuff.
Whatever I can do to help the team is what I’m most concerned about.
If that means getting a walk, that means getting a walk. Or if it means
making a play, throwing it to first — that’s what I’m going to do.”

Cary’s mother, Vicki, has sup-
ported her daughter through her
long-term commitment to softball and said she admires the focus she
dedicates to whatever she wants to
accomplish.

“It’s this consistent dedication that
she says San Luis Obispo possesses, which is different from her home in
Orange County.

Cary’s love for the game solidi-
fied around the age of 10, a few
years after she first started playing.
Her favorite part of softball, the
mental aspect, took its roots very fast
before she started playing for Cal
Poly.

“I think I was four and my dad was playing wiffle ball with me on
the front lawn — they always tell
me this story because they think it’s hilarious. My mom asked me,
“What position do you want to
play?” And I said, ‘Hitter!’ I love to
hit. I think because hitting has a lot
of the mental aspect.”

Away from the plate Cary plays first base, where she says she relies
solely on instinct.

“You get to to think about it at
practice, but when you’re in game situation, it’s all reactionary and I
love it,” she said.

Cary has created a strong con-
nection to pitcher Anna Cahn, who
is going into her third year on the
team. Cahn said this connection has
brought them closer both as team-
mates and as friends.

“She’s been there to help me
calm down if I’m not doing too
well,” Cahn said.

Now in her last season of Cal Poly softball, Cary feels like the
“mama duck” as the oldest member of
the team that is largely made up
of underclassmen. Cahn said Cary’s
leadership qualities and quiet con-
tinued to be very important
after losing last season’s seniors.

“She’s really been there and she’s
someone that you can come and
talk to if you have a problem,” she
said. “She’s also an amazing softball
player and just all around a really
great person.”

As an outgoing, friendly, fun
and caring person, according to her
mother Vicki, people are naturally
drawn to her.

“She’s a really good friend,” she
said. “I feel like she’s a good friend
to me and I’m a mom.”

When she’s not conditioning,
practicing or playing, Cary makes
as much time for her friends as
possible. With her friends and three
roommates, Cary spends her time
shopping downtown or watching
movies like her all-time favorite
“The Sandlot” and romantic com-
edies, her most recent obsession.
She enjoys the quiet, homie feel
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She enjoys the quiet, homie feel

First baseman Krysten Cary led the Big West with 14 home runs and .619 slugging percentage last season.
Her 14 home runs rank as the second-highest single-season total in school history.

Senior first baseman Krysten Cary and her teammates have fin-
ished pre-game warm-ups. Fans are filling the seats and the game is
starting in a few minutes, but she doesn’t feel quite ready. Something
is missing. She runs on her iPhone and selects the four-song
playlist that has become essential to every pre-game warm up for the
last four years.

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dacious tells her to shake her money
maker, and three songs later, it's
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Cary’s mother, Vicki, has sup-
ported her daughter through her
long-term commitment to softball and said she admires the focus she
dedicates to whatever she wants to
accomplish.

“Physically, she has the skills,” Vicki Cary said. “Some people are
just natural athletes, but more than
that I think it’s the hard work she’s
put in. Not only did she love play-
ging the game, she loved practicing. She was always willing to put in 100
percent.”

It’s this consistent dedication that
she credits to her accomplishments.

“It’s a sense, you just have to hold
on to that because some people take
it as, ‘it’s my job, I have to do it,”
Cary said. “But if you look at it as,
you want to, and you want to be
here, and you love the game, and you
love the challenges it throws at
you, then nothing is ever going to
get you down. It’s hard sometimes,
but you learn to deal with it, and...
Cary
continued from page 27
ball, horseshoes and hiking, she also
uses it to relax and lay down with
a book.
At home, Cary likes to make
family-style dinners with her room­
mates, usually of Mexican food.
“We always do family dinners
as much as possible, which sounds
so funny because you’d think that
doesn’t really happen with college
students since we’re always on the
turn,” she said. “But, as soon as I
get home from practice at 6, we’re
making dinner together and we sit
down at the table and eat togeth­
er.”
Cary also likes to arrange similar
dinners and activities like hiking to
encourage team bonding.
“I love getting people together
and just hanging out,” she said.
“Just to get away from the softball
field and chat about life and boys
and whatever else.”
She, Cahn and other girls from
the team occasionally get togeth­
er and make “Juicy Lucy’s” — a
cheeseburger with cheese melted
into the meat, inspired by the TV
show “Man v. Food.”
“They’re just really delicious
cheeseburgers and we make them
and hang out sometimes,” Cahn
said.
Cary looks back on her experi­
ence at Cal Poly with teammates
and friends with nothing but grati­
fication as her collegiate life comes
to an end.
“They say time flies when you’re
having fun, and I’ve been having so
much fun,” she said. “It’s kind of cra­
y because it’s not like I’m coming
back in the fall to finish up school,
I’m done with school and I’m done
with softball. I think that’s the most
nerve-racking thing — that’s all
coming to an end, but I couldn’t
have picked a better place to spend
these four years. I love it here, and I
love the team.”
After graduating in June with
a degree in kinesiology, the exact
route of her future is undecided,
but said she knows softball coach­
ing will undoubtedly be a part of
it. She and her friends will spend
some time relaxing and traveling
following graduation, after which
she looks toward becoming a high
school health teacher or obtaining a
master’s in public health and either
returning to Orange County or San
Luis Obispo.
Vicki acknowledges that finding
employment is difficult for anyone.
She is certain that Cary will find
something she can be happy with.
“She hasn’t defined her focus so
narrowly that she couldn’t take ad­
vantage of another opportunity be­
cause it’s not directly applicable to
her degree,” Vicki Cary said.
“Mama duck” leaves Cal Poly
softball behind with an optimistic
attitude and the same passion that
has enabled her to dedicate herself
so completely to the game. But not
before she has three last months of
more challenges, more victories,
more losses and more time playing
what she calls her second love.
“We’ll miss it,” Vicki said. “It’s
been such a great positive experi­
ence over the years that she’s going
to finish her college career without
any regrets.”
The economic troubles of the last year had many consumers looking to escape with a glass of wine. But they wanted to imbibe on a budget.

Wine makers and importers gathered this weekend for the South Beach Wine & Food Festival said Friday that while the volume of bottles sold remained relatively constant in 2009, the average price per bottle declined.

"It's the mix that has changed," said Mel Dick, president of the wine division at Southern Wine & Spirits, the festival's sponsor. "People were definitely trading down at all levels to more of a comfort zone. There was great success at the lower prices and much less success for the higher-priced wines."

In 2009, sales of wines priced at $25 and above dropped 30 percent nationwide, according to Nielsen. While global wine sales increased, California wine shipments fell for the first time in 16 years.

Dick and others agree that strongest demand was for wines at $10 or less a bottle.

That was a boon for brands like Gnarly Head, which saw business jump 30 percent in 2009, said Jeffrey Lubin, brand manager. Gnarly Head is best known for its Old Vine Zin, which sells for about $10 a bottle at retail.

"The brand was growing already, but the economy really helped ignite it," Lubin said. "It's got a flavor profile that is designed for the masses. It's very easy drinking."

To appeal to that budget-conscious consumer, all of the wines that importer Frederick Wildman and Sons is showcasing at this weekend's festival are under $15, with most under $10. But the selection includes wines from France, Argentina and Italy.

"Before consumers would spend money on expensive wines just because they loved it; now that's only on special occasions," said Odila Galen-Noel, assistant vice president with Frederick & Wildman and Sons out of New York.

"We figure today that people want to explore something they can drink on a daily basis."

The good news for 2010 is that many industry professionals see early indications that consumers are feeling a little more confident about the economy and are willing to fork over a few more dollars. That's inching up demand for wines between $30 and $15 a bottle at retail and helping to bring back wine sales at restaurants, hotels and bars.

"In January we started to see a nice shift," said Ben Kornol, sales director of fine wines in Florida for Constellation Wines. "Restaurants are seeing much more foot traffic, which helps sales."

Wine makers like Eros Spinozzi from Italy also have found that in this competitive market it takes increased creativity to find ways to differentiate themselves.

"At the end of the day, most of the wines on the shelf from Italy look boring," Spinozzi said. "We were looking for a way to make the bottles more appealing to the consumer and be able to compete against the California and South African wines."

Spinozzi believes the new labels have helped.

The number of bottles his company Cuorerosso Vintners sold in 2009 was flat, although his dollar volume was down about 30 percent.

"With the same money that they used to buy one bottle," he said, "now they're buying two."
Jerry McDonald

Forty-niners general manager Scott McCloughan isn't losing any sleep over what will likely be a dramatically different NFL financial landscape.

Teams with older stadiums and smaller revenue streams, such as the Raiders and 49ers, could in theory, be outspent by teams with deeper pockets.

McCloughan can barely stifle a yawn.

"We're going to go forward as if there is a cap," McCloughan told reporters at the recently concluded NFL scouting combine in Indianapolis. "We're not considered to be a big free agency team, anyway. It's not going to change our spending one way or the other."

The Raiders, meanwhile, are silent on the matter, but they are operating much the same as they did last year when a $128 million cap was in place.

They locked up their two most significant unrestricted free agents, using the exclusive franchise tag on defensive lineman Richard Seymour at a cost of $12.38 million and signing kicker Sebastian Janikowski to a four-year, $36 million contract with $9 million guaranteed.

A year ago, they spent big to retain cornerback Nnamdi Asomugha (three years, $45.3 million) and punter Shane Lechler (a contract nearly identical to that of Janikowski).

Going with known commodities came a year after an ill-fated spending spree that included the signings of Gibril Wilson and Javon Walker and a trade for DeAngelo Hall.

Neither Bay Area team is expected to make a serious run at the big-ticket items in unrestricted free agency, Carolina defensive end Julius Peppers and Arizona linebacker Karlos Dansby.

The talent pool thinned considerably because of changes in spending one way or the other. It's not going to change our spending one way or the other."

The talent pool thinned considerably because of changes in free agency resulting from the uncapped year. Instead of players being eligible for unrestricted free agency after four seasons, they now need six.

That means 212 players who were hoping to be unrestricted free agents as of 9 p.m. Thursday are now restricted free agents, giving their clubs the right of first refusal and draft pick compensation depending on the level of contract offered.

Denver, for instance, issued a first- and third-round tender to linebacker Elvis Dumervil, who led the NFL in sacks with 17. A four-year veteran, Dumervil would have been an unrestricted free agent in previous years, going to the highest bidder with no strings attached.

But in this uncapped year, Dumervil can solicit offers from other teams to bring back to Denver. The Broncos can either match the offer or accept first- and third-round draft picks in return.

The 49ers retained linebacker Ahmad Brooks with a second-round tender and kept David Baas, a guard and center, with an original-round tender, which means the second-round pick in 2005 would bring a second-rounder in return if the 49ers don't match the offer sheet.

While restricted free agents have rarely moved in past years, the dearth of unrestricted free agents could bring some offer sheets if teams target a specific player they think is worth more than the draft pick they'd lose to get him.

Expect most teams to be conservative as they survey the new landscape.

"You always see some teams going with known commodities, but it's not going to change our spending one way or the other."
Tampa Bay Kays.

Probably, five weeks of the season," reaching the ALCS. Sweeping Boston in three games and six innings and left losing, 5-2. But as the Angels wrapped up the AL

earned-run average was a stellar 1.73.

zmir started Game 4 against the Yankees at Angel Stadium and was put the hay in the barn, so to speak, helping overall strength to get more pop and consistency with his pitch.

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SPINNING OFF FROM PAGE 29

jump out there and make some moves, but with the uncertainties of whatever's going on the amnest, I think people will be cautious," New York Giants general manager Jerry Reese said.

Other issues relating to free agency in an unpinnnapped year.

The final eight teams remaining in the postseason will probably be watching from the sidelines.

New Orleans, Minnesota, Indianapolis and the New York Jets can't sign an unrestricted free-agent unless they lose one of their own to another team. Cutting a player and having him sign elsewhere does not count. It has to be an expired contract.

If one of these free agents does leave, they can't sign a new unrestricted free-agent contract bigger in the first year than the one the departing player received.

San Diego, Baltimore, Arizona and Hollis also must lose a free-agent to sign one, but they are allowed to pay one unrestricted free agent a salary of $3.5 million or more in the first year of the deal.

While there is no salary cap, there is also no floor. Teams can spend a little as they want on salaries.

Teams may be reluctant to pay the kind of huge upfront money given in years past because of the threat of a lockout by ownership that threatens the 2011 season.

Once a signing bonus is paid, it's gone. Teams could employ a strategy of making a scheduled bonus payment during a potential work stoppage, at which point they wouldn't have to pay.

It's a good time to dump bad contracts.

No cap, no more bonus accelerations. In past years, signing bonus money was spread out over the length of the contract even though it was paid immediately. Remaining years were counted against the cap if a player was cut before the end of the deal.
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