

# THE COUGAR CHRONICLE

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS, INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

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## SPORTS



3 - This issue's Athlete Spotlight features CSUSM basketball player, Jacob Ranger. Read about why he loves the sport and his thoughts on the team's upcoming season.

## FEATURES

4 - With the end of classes on the horizon, finals are swiftly approaching. Read here about ways to keep stress levels low during finals week.

And

5 - With the end of the year approaching, think about new years resolutions and how they may or may not be completed. Read about how looking at past resolutions can influence your future ones.

## OPINION

6 - Will the world end on Dec. 21, 2012? Did the Mayans have it right? Read one student's opinion on how he perceives the Mayan myth to be true.

And

Read a farewell note from a graduating senior here in this issues editorial. Read about the many people and organizations that help enrich students college experience

## A & E



8 - Did you know that Christmas has officially arrived in San Marcos? Read about the holiday festivities at San Marcos City Hall.

## OUR NEXT ISSUE

See you in 2013



## North City development taking off

By AMIRA EL-KHAULI  
OPINION EDITOR

While students have battled freeway and construction traffic on or near campus all semester, they can be reassured that the best is yet to come in time. San Marcos plans on developing a University District with a North City development area, part of which begins construction February 2012.

The Quad, the new student dormitory building

which is across the street from the main campus and located on Barham Drive, is the first phase of what will come to be known as the North City development, a part of the new San Marcos University District.

On Nov. 28 the city of San Marcos accepted a \$1 million grant from California Natural Resources Agency to help construct part of this district.

This grant goes toward restoration of habitat and

construction of a multi-purpose trail alongside San Marcos creek.

Part of the construction will include 308 new 'beds' opening at The Quad, which will open for fall of next year. Priority applications will be accepted until March of 2013 and are reviewed upon a first come, first serve basis.

The entire University District will be 194 acres near CSUSM, in which NORTH CITY CONTINUED ON 2.

North City promises to be a hip, happening hub of mixed-use residential, retail and commercial space, attracting people of all ages and stages who want to live where they work, and stay where they play. The compact area - its location at the epi-center of North County, amazing access to existing mass transit - combined with our visionary, sustainable urban design, will create a true City Center for northern San Diego County.

Left: North City's mission statement from their website, <http://northcityco>

## Students 'struggle to find classes for spring

CSUSM's priority classes are going fast

By JESSIE GAMBRELL  
Co - A & E EDITOR

With the spring semester class registration open since Nov. 15, classes have been filling up fast, leaving some students feeling the pressure of getting classes they both need and want to take.

With the implement of the unit cap for the spring 2013 semester, set to be lifted Dec. 17, many students are trying to take the classes they need, classes that fit into their schedules and take the maximum amount of units to graduate on time and as quickly as possible.

"There is a new Sociology of Immigration class that I was looking at and wanted to take, but it didn't fit into my schedule. I really wanted to take it though because it looked interesting," student Angie Curiel said.

"Right now, there are a few classes that are looking quite full, but most do not have many students waitlisted. In many cases, where sections are full, there are other sections of the same class with seats CLASSES CONTINUED ON 2.

CSUSM classes that are being offered for the first time this spring

**BIOL 320:**  
Anatomy and Physiology of the Speech and Hearing Mechanism

**CHEM 318:**  
Chemistry of Wine and Beer

**COMM 405:**  
Feminist Rhetoric

**DNCE 200:**  
Movement Awareness

**EDST 643:**  
Using Mobile Technologies for Teaching and Learning

**KINE 318:**  
Sport, Games, and Culture

**TA 304:**  
Acting Shakespeare

**VSAR 331:**  
Art, Science and Technology

Please check class times and unit information on [mycsusm.edu](http://mycsusm.edu).

## To park or not to park?

Buying a parking pass is cheaper than paying a ticket

By MELISSA MARTINEZ  
News Editor

Deciding to spend their money on books or a parking pass can be a tough decision for most students and their financial academic planning.

With the strict regulations enforced this semester in parking lots on and around campus, students are beginning to consider whether investing in a parking pass for the se-

mester will be cheaper than paying hundreds of dollars in tickets and towing fees.

Previously, students resorted to parking in the lots of Palomar Pomerado Health center to avoid paying for passes, however PPH began enforcing their parking regulations this semester and towing unauthorized vehicles, pushing the students back to parking lots on campus.

"I realized that I'd rather

park off-campus and walk an extra ten minutes than pay the ridiculous parking pass fee. As a student, I can't afford extra expenses on top of increasing tuition" said senior, Brandon Torres.

However, since the beginning of a new semester also means new books, new printer ink, warmer clothes and of course, summer classes to save up for, buying a parking PARK CONTINUED ON 2.

## Building update: University Student Union



Design & Construction Schedule: February 2012: Construction Begins.  
September 2013: Anticipated Construction Completion. January 2014: Anticipated Occupancy.



**NORTH CITY FROM 1.** North City will be the largest development. North City is currently being zoned for mixed use, which means that there will be both residential and commercial properties, with student housing as a large and important part of the area.

North City will be geared to the student population as a "Live, work, play hub with restaurants and retail that are student-serving in nature." Communications Officer with the City of San Marcos, Jenny Windle said.

The city plans show that The Quad is slated to be on the corner of Campus Way and North City Drive.

This means that Barham Drive, which is where The Quad is currently located, will have a name-change as part of the development. In preparation, students should become familiar with all routes to campus, to avoid future confusion and construction.

The University District is a part of the city's efforts to create a popular and thriving central downtown region.

The area will eventually

merge with and be touching the Creek District, an effort to preserve and appreciate the natural environment of San Marcos.

For example, new developments will be considered pedestrian-oriented.

For now, businesses can find more information at northcity.co; students can find more information at thequadsanmarcos.com; and residents may be interested in looking at the University District Specific Plan and the San Marcos Creek Specific Plan at san-marcos.net.

**CLASSES FROM 1.** available," assistant vice president of planning & academic resources Dr. Graham Oberem said.

With the impact of many of CSUSM's majors, finding open classes for students to get the classes they need for their degree requirement can be difficult.

"Some of this might be related to sometimes being more convenient than other times. That said, I can tell you that lower-division science GE classes are very full as usual, with quite a few people wait-

listed," Oberem said.

As of Friday Nov. 30, all GES 100, 101 and 102 classes are full, with most classes having ten or more students sitting on the waitlist.

"I find that the ones that are most desirable are the ones that are required, like GES (General Education Science) 102. I just got in that class after three years of trying," student, Ally Gunzelman said.

**Did you get the classes you needed?**

Take our online poll at [csusmchronicle.com](http://csusmchronicle.com)

**PARK FROM 1.** permit is usually not a priority. Though many can agree that a \$9 parking permit for the day is much cheaper than a \$50 ticket.

However, permit prices regularly are \$338 for general parking or if you're only on campus a few times a week. The \$9 a day price might warm some wallets.

With some students receiving the \$249 Prop 30 refund, some might find it easier to invest in a campus parking pass next spring.

## JOIN THE COUGAR CHRONICLE!

We're looking for motivated student's to join our staff for Spring 2013. Writers, photographers, columnists, graphic designers, cartoonists and social media managers needed.

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## Go Cougars!



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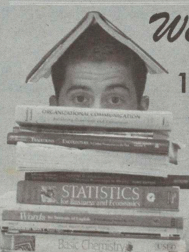
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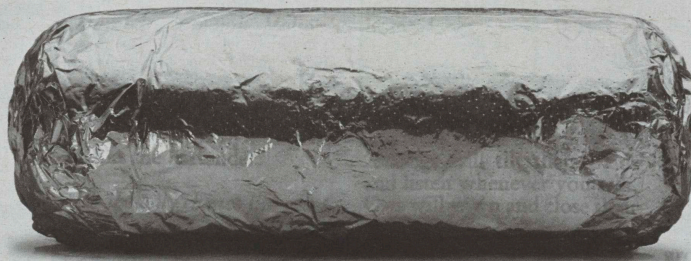
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# THE HEART BEAT: Athlete Spotlight: Jacob Ranger

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S IN YOUR OCEAN?

By CURTIS BOVEE  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

If you are an avid beachgoer, it is inevitable that you are going to contract some sort of illness due to environmental and human contamination.

World beaches and oceans certainly aren't the cleanest playgrounds on Earth and they expose you to many viruses, parasites, and bacteria. In addition, ocean water becomes contaminated with sewage storm run-off and oil, making you more susceptible to getting sick.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, microorganisms can enter through the oral route (ingestion), through the eyes, ears and nose, or through an open wound. Common more-serious illnesses you are at risk for include hepatitis A and MRSA, giardia, leptospirosis and many others.

According to Surfers Against Sewage, surfers are three times more likely to contract hepatitis

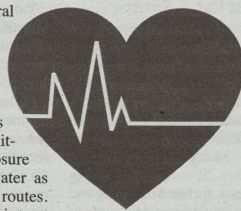
A than the general public. Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the hepatitis A virus and can be transmitted through exposure to contaminated water as well as many other routes. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is caused by an infection most often resistant to antibiotics—a huge problem for ocean enthusiasts, especially surfers. Individuals who engage in ocean sports are more susceptible to getting MRSA from the ocean due to entering the ocean with open wounds. MRSA has been cultured near shores and in storm and sewer waters, imposing a huge risk of entering the ocean after a heavy rainfall.

Parasites and bacteria cause other illnesses like giardia and leptospirosis, respectively. It is especially common in places without proper sanitation to come into contact with

bacteria and parasites, which will cause serious and uncomfortable complications.

Everyone is susceptible to these infections after entering the ocean; however, it is important that you take necessary preventive measures. These include good hand washing and hygiene practices, and ensuring that you don't enter the ocean until 48 to 72 hours after a heavy rainfall.

Understanding that the ocean contains contaminants detrimental to your health and taking necessary precautions will ultimately increase your time to use it as your playground.



By KATLIN SWEENEY  
FEATURES EDITOR

Senior Jacob Ranger is a communications major and a shooting guard on CSUSM's basketball team. He has big goals and looks forward to another season with his teammates.

**Question: When did you start playing basketball?**

Answer: I first started playing basketball when I was in the third grade with my dad teaching me the game. This then led to me joining a club team in Santa Barbara, in the fourth grade.

**Q: What first attracted you to the sport?**

A: I was first attracted to the sport of basketball by how fast it was compared to all the other sports that I tried to play. It was the most fun for me.

**Q: What has your experience with the team at CSUSM been like so far?**

A: The experience with my team here at CSUSM has been wonderful. We are like a family away from our own families. We are all like brothers to one another.

**Q: What are your goals for this season?**

A: My goals for this season are to reach the tournament and win the NAIA national championship.

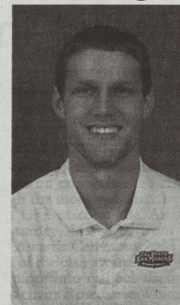
**Q: What is your favorite thing about basketball?**

A: My favorite thing about basketball is competing against other teams and beating them.

**Q: Who are your biggest supporters?**

A: My biggest supporters are my family. They have been by my side through thick and thin and have supported me ever since I started playing the game.

**Q: What is the best advice you ever received from a coach, supporter,**



etc.?

A: The best advice I received is that hard work outworks talent when talent doesn't work hard, from my dad when I was little.

**Q: Do you plan on pursuing anything basketball-related after college?**

A: I plan on pursuing basketball after college, whether it's coaching the game or continuing playing the game.

## Third time's a charm for CSUSM Softball

By ALEX FRANCO  
SPORTS EDITOR

For the better part of the last three seasons, CSUSM softball has dominated the NAIA circuit, winning the A.I.I. conference title and reaching the NAIA final four, in back-to-back seasons. The Lady Cougars enter the 2013 ranked number one in the preseason polls for only the second time in the program's history.

"I feel confident going into this season. My expectations are to be in that national championship game on May 29," Head Coach Dave Williams said.

With the team containing returning players and having a good amount of

playoff experience, Coach Williams' team looks to improve on last season's spectacular 55-6 season.

"There's a belief that we need to work hard for next season, and I'm impressed with the hard work that everyone put in this fall," Williams said.

A player to look out for this coming season according to Coach Williams is returning All-American senior pitcher, Courtney Allen. Allen led the team in Earned Run Averages last season and leads a group of strong pitchers. Coach Williams says the team will rely heavily on Allen after star player and All-American, Alyssa Dronenberg, graduated at the end of last season.

"Team Leader and starting shortstop, Alex Miller will [also] play a big role this season, and help keep the punch in the lineup, we are gonna be very athletic and fast this year," Williams said.

The must-watch games of the season are the Best of the West Tournament to open the season and the span midway through the season where the team will face several tough opponents in three straight home games, March 26-28.

The Lady Cougars softball season begins in early February.

Watch for coach Williams and his team to make headlines early and often throughout the season.

## Baseball aims for the top of the mountain

By ALEX FRANCO  
SPORTS EDITOR

Last year's baseball season didn't end the way head coach Dennis Pugh and the rest of the Cougar community hoped it would have, with an early exit out of the NAIA tournament.

Coach Pugh has high hopes for this year's team to make a run for a national title.

"We were disappointed last year with the early loss. We want to at least make the nationals this year. We are deeper in pitching and should make up for not being as deep in offense," Coach Pugh said on this year's expectations.

tations.

The Cougars are returning this season with last year's A.I.I. conference pitcher of the year and NAIA All-American selection, James Dykstra, who Coach Pugh said they are very fortunate to have back this season. Dykstra pitched lights out last season, and will carry the CSUSM pitching staff that the team will rely on this year.

The team also returns with center fielder Kyle Secciani and third baseman Kyle Belzer, a first team conference selection last season.

Coach Pugh comes into this season with a bevy of new transfers ready to

make an impact on the Cougar squad. "It was a great recruiting season. With the transfers and recruits, we are a better team this year," Pugh said.

The Cougars start the season with a tough test on Feb. 1 against conference foe and highly talented Concordia, which Coach Pugh said is a good way to start the season off and get into it with a tough matchup like this one, and is a must-watch game for all.

With the team's deep pitching staff, and once they get going offensively, the Cougars should be a force to be reckoned with in the conference and beyond.

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## CSUSM takes UCSD by storm in DJ competition

By JESSIE GAMBRELL  
Co-A & E Editor

CSUSM took its top DJ artists to compete against UCSD in the Red Bull DJ Master competition held on Tuesday, Nov. 13, at Pacific Beach Bar & Grill.

The competition consisted of head-to-head competitions 25 minutes long, where CSUSM and UCSD students got to vote on who they thought was the best DJ by casting their vote into the top of a Red Bull can in front of each DJ.

There were three DJs from each school,

CSUSM was represented by Prodigy, Slection & REEKZ (DJ duo) and Justin Campbell & Dropset (DJ duo).

UCSD was represented by Ceasefire, Philly, and Chai Tea. UCSD DJ's were all part of a campus DJ club called the Deejays & Vinylphiles Club.

By the end of the night, the results came in with CSUSM on top. DJ Prodigy came in third place, Justin Campbell & Dropset came in second and Slection & REEKZ won first place. This meant that CSUSM had the best DJs of the night,



defeating the UCSD competition.

CSUSM got to take home the Red Bull DJ Master Gold Record Trophy and a pair of Red Bull Music Academy headphones. The CSUSM DJs did their school proud and now hold the rank of best campus DJs in San Diego county.

## Avoiding finals stress Ways to keep from getting overwhelmed

By KATLIN SWEENEY  
Features Editor

Make sure your study habits are not only effective, but perfect for you.

As exam week is approaching, students are beginning to stress out over essays and finals preparation. Here are some ways that you can avoid becoming overwhelmed:

### 1. Maintain Organization & Goal Lists

Before you even begin to study for finals, mark a calendar with all of your finals dates, important due dates and anything you may forget. Prepare a study schedule with individual goals for every day you plan to prepare, that way you do not become too overwhelmed and know what you can accomplish each day before drifting off to sleep.

### 2. Eat Healthy

When studying for exams, healthy eating is a must. While the ice cream and Bagel Bites look appetizing, your mind works much better when you are eating food that helps you think instead of making you tired. Try snack food alternatives like grapes, yogurt, carrots or salads. Almonds, peanuts, walnuts and cashews especially are known for being good sources of energy. Trading in the M&M's and candy bars for healthy alternatives might sound like a hassle, but by the time your exams come up, you will be feeling much more awake and alert.

### 3. Get Hydrated

Although it can be tempting to take a Starbucks on campus, try to avoid the sugary frappachino and coffee runs. Getting yourself hydrated with beverages like water and

tea are a much better alternative than sodas and energy drinks that bring your energy down after a short period of time. Your body functions best when you drink a lot of water and spending hours studying will definitely leave you needing something to get hydrated.

### 4. Don't Study Yourself Out!

While preparing for your final may require three hours of hard-core studying, do not forget to take breaks to clear your head. One of the easiest ways to remember to do this is by studying for fifty minutes out of every hour, then taking the remaining ten minutes off for a break. If you remember to pace yourself versus trying to cram all of your studying into one giant block, you will find that you are more successful.

### 5. Stop Looking at the Computer

When taking those study breaks, make sure that your activities include things away from the computer. Whether it is taking a walk around your neighborhood or dorm building, stretching or going to the gym, moving around will get you re-energized to keep studying. Avoid turning on the video games, television, Facebook and cell phone, even during study breaks, to make sure that you do not turn that ten-minute break into a five-hour distraction period.

### 6. Make a Motivation Playlist

In between study blocks, turn on a playlist of songs that will motivate you to keep working after your ten minutes are over. Here are some to get you started:

"Hey Jude" by The Beatles

"Eye of the Tiger" by Survivor

"We Are the Champions" by Queen

"Stop and Smell the Roses" by Ringo Starr

"Things Can Only Get Better" by Howard Jones

### 7. Sleep is Important

Even though studying is a crucial part of preparation for finals, sleep is just as important. While it is recommended that a college student get eight hours of solid sleep, when you are restricted to less, make sure to get five hours at the worst. Anything less than that will prohibit you from performing your best on exams, as well as keep you feeling drained throughout the day. When possible, try to take power naps in between study blocks or in place of a ten-minute break. Make sure to limit yourself to thirty minutes at the most, otherwise you may end up sleeping through your study time.

### 8. Keep a Positive Attitude

If you go into studying thinking negatively about what you need to do, chances are you will have a harder time focusing and being motivated. Whether by putting together a study group, visiting the Math Lab or Writing Center to get help on difficult assignments/concepts, or going to office hours to talk to your professor about the exam, find ways to make sure that you are not so bummed about the work that you cannot get enough done.

Whatever methods you choose to use, make sure to stay motivated and focused for your finals. Good luck!

## Ideal Christmas gifts

What CSUSM students want to give and receive

By KATLIN SWEENEY  
Features Editor

When buying gifts for friends, roommates, family members or significant others, many worry about finding the 'perfect' gift.

Many students on campus have said that they look forward to giving and receiving a wide variety of presents this Christmas. Here are some possible ideas for gifts that you can either buy for someone else or that you can add to your own wish list.

Technology items remain some of the most desired Christmas gifts every year. At the top of CSUSM students' wish lists are phones and cameras. Pre-health science major Gabriela Castro Manchaca, wants a new cell phone and students like history major Kiara Sontay and nursing major Maria Martinez, both want to receive a camera.

"I want the iPhone because there are so many apps that go along with it, but mostly because of the front-facing camera," biology major, Darlene Patham said.

Video games and laptops are also among the most wanted Christmas gifts by students.

Political science major Darius Pinckney and business major Elmer Pablo both would want to receive new video games for Christmas. Undeclared major Natalie Tamjid would like to receive a Wii and computer science major Eduardo Perez hopes to receive a new laptop.

"I [also] would like a new laptop," psychology major Vanessa Nunez agreed. "The one I have is pretty old and slow."

Nursing major Ashley Carrillo considers shoes her ideal Christmas gift. Pre-health science major Tiffany Casares, undeclared major Salina Nava and human development major Maria Lupe Loera all put clothes at the top of their wish lists.

"I prefer getting gift cards so that I can buy clothes myself. Gift cards are the best because then I have the ability to choose which stores to shop at and which clothes I want," business major Gabri Provencio said.

Other students say that they look forward to more unique gifts. Human development major Alyssia Baldan wants a cat. Pre-health major Loren Callahan wants season tickets to the LA Kings. Kinesiology major Byrnaadeen Far-raye would like more vinyls for her record player. Human development major Alyssia Aejaona hopes for a GPS for her car and business major Raychel Allen would be happy with 'Mac n' Cheese' and other snack foods for her dorm.

While all of these students had their own reasons for wanting their particular ideal Christmas gift, each of them echoed the idea that the gift was more special when it was tailored to their personality. Regardless of what you purchase for your loved ones, choosing a gift that showcases your knowledge of who they are will mean much more to them than if they were to receive a generic Christmas present. When shopping at the store this month, keep that person's individuality in mind.

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# Old year's resolutions 'Pause for paws'

How reflecting on the past resolutions can influence 2013's

By KEANDRE WILLIAMS-CHAMBERS  
COPY EDITOR

The 2013 year is just over the horizon and it's almost time to have a new set of goals to complete.

But before you make those new resolutions, it may be a good idea to evaluate the resolutions you made last year.

New Years is a time of looking forward and taking any mistakes you've made in the past and finally applying the lessons learned. However, in order to complete this endeavor, you would need to keep in mind your performance from the last year.

Ask yourself: do you remember your resolutions from January, 2012? And if you do, how long did you keep those? Did you stay true to them, or did you decide they were impossible? And most

importantly, were they realistic enough that you could stay to it?

Second year student Maribel Olea contemplated these questions deeply. She recalled making wishes for the ending year, which did eventually come true.

"Well, I remembered that I wished to be more open and meet more people, [and] to be closer to people. It forced me to get out my comfort zone. It took a long time, but each time I tried, things got better," Olea said.

Effort was an important part on the completion of Olea's goals. She made her goals something that were both realistic and attainable, which made them much more likely to come to pass.

Second year student Karen Guzman remembers her New Years resolution

clearly.

She made her goal wide enough in terms of time so that she could give herself the time and focus to achieve it, but made it specific and important enough so that she could not lose sight on it.

An important thing to note when making your resolutions for the New Year is to make certain that they are attainable.

Don't over-think a goal, because the likelihood of it coming to pass will dim as time goes on. It'll require too much effort. Make it simple, make it sweet. Let yourself want it enough to work for it, but make it sweet enough so that you won't lose interest. And most of all, make it something worthwhile.

The more value you place on it, the more likely you'll want it and regret it if you don't try for it.

By KATLIN SWEENEY  
FEATURES EDITOR

If you have been spending long hours studying for your finals and are already feeling the stress, "Pause For Paws" is the study break for you.

On Dec. 6, students will be visited by the members of Love on a Leash: Foundation For Pet-Provided Therapy. There will be a dozen certified therapy dogs of all sizes from the foundation on campus. These animal 'therapists' are specialized in helping students get their minds stress-free to relax for a few hours.

CSUSM is one of many

college campuses that are using animals to help students cope with the pressure to do well on exams.

"Many campuses in San Diego, including SDSU, and around the country have similar events. Yale Law School library even provides a dog-lending program!" Outreach Librarian Melanie Chu said.

For the fourth consecutive semester, Kellogg Library is bringing these therapy dogs on campus to give students a study break. CSUSM considers helping their students succeed while making sure they do not become overwhelmed is one of their top priorities when it

comes to exam time.

"Numerous research studies have shown that the simple act of petting a dog releases the 'feel good' hormone, oxytocin, and lowers blood pressure. Therapy dogs work with nursing homes, hospitals, veterans, public libraries—so we wanted to bring them to CSUSM too!" Chu said.

Make sure to take the necessary study breaks to keep yourself refreshed and focused for your upcoming finals. Pause For Paws will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday Dec. 6 at the third floor main entrance to Kellogg Library near Starbucks.

**What are your 2013 resolutions?  
Share yours on our Facebook Page**

## Jessie's Recipe Corner: Butterscotch Haystacks

By JESSIE GAMBRELL  
CO-A & E EDITOR

These one-of-a-kind winter cookies are a must-have at Christmas parties. Being that they look so fancy and festive, not to mention how delicious they are. They are so fun and easy to make, it's not even funny.

What you'll need:

- A double-boiler, or means to melt butterscotch - Cooking parchment paper - One bag (11oz.) of butterscotch chips  
- 6oz. of Chow Mein noodles - Half a bag of mini marshmallows - 6oz. of cocktail peanuts

Instructions:

1.) Put a small amount of water into a large pot and light the fire to a low heat. 2.) Dump bag of butterscotch chips into double-boiler (or second, smaller pot) and place in the pot in the other pot of boiling water. 3.) Stir periodically until all of the chips have melted and become one solid mass. 4.) Dump the Chow Mein noodles, peanuts and marshmallows into a mixing bowl. 5.) Then scoop out butterscotch into mixing bowl. 6.) Stir together gently until the butterscotch has been mixed through all of the dry ingredients. 7.) With a fork and spoon, grab clumps of batter into "haystack" shapes onto parchment paper (parchment can be placed on counter or cookie sheet) and let cool.

After about 20 minutes, they should be firm enough to place on a serving dish to take to friends and relatives as a festive dessert for a Christmas party or get-togethers. Wasn't that easy!



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## A farewell note

By AMIRA EL-KHAOUI  
Opinion Editor

This is the last week of school, not including finals week. For some, this is the last step in their undergraduate career. Provided I have no unexpected surprises in the next few weeks, I will be joining the ranks of the CSUSM alumni.

I used to say that I would graduate; god-willing and time-permitting.

Finally, the moment has materialized. I have one more paper to turn in and two finals to take. It may seem like a light load but getting to this point has been both difficult and rewarding.

Classes are enough of a load. For those of you

know, I am also a single mother. I started going to college in 2004. Eight years later, I get to complete my goal.

Hopefully, my story is not a bore. I intend to relay a few facts of life that got me to where I am today.

I have been working since I was 16 years old. By 2006, I was making \$18 an hour, more than double the current minimum wage. At that time, I took my savings and began a study abroad experience. In 2008, I could barely find work at \$10 per hour for positions that either had the same or more responsibilities.

Furthermore, schools were impacted and I had to re-apply for admission.

By 2010, I had a child and I went back to school. The job that I had at the time was so stressful that I was having health problems during my pregnancy. My health issues drastically diminished the moment I stopped working. At that moment, I made a pact with myself to strive for excellence and well-being. Education would be a large part of achieving that goal.

First and foremost, I want to thank every professor I have had the pleasure of meeting here. I want to thank you for every assignment, every lecture, and every grade I have received; because even the grades that are not up to par provide opportunity for improvement and learning.

I want to thank every organization on campus and

the people that work here for every opportunity and accommodation that students are provided.

I even want to thank Parking and Commuter Services for offering half-price parking passes half-way through the semester. Quite frankly, I cannot afford to pay full-price.

As the cost of higher education continues to increase, I want to encourage students to take advantage of the programs that they may not know are available to them. The church that is across the street, on Barham Drive, will give you free food. Free food, dude.

In the same respect, I want to thank every campus organization that offers free food and other items throughout the year. It is a great way for students to get a little some-

thing while they are learning about the opportunities available to us here. We have an amazing array of campus-sponsored groups and there is something for everyone.

Be sure to get involved at CSUSM because there is nothing like having a passion for education and a feeling like you belong somewhere. Never underestimate the importance of bringing your passion for life to your schoolwork.

In the same respect, don't let your relaxation activities fall by the wayside. Go grab a drink with friends. Watch television. Surf the internet. Be athletic. Keep a journal. Doodle. The knowledge that you gain with these activities will supplement everything that you do in school and life.

Most importantly, stay

in school and stick with it; while you are at it, try everything that you can manage to try, time-permitting.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, roughly 30 percent of people graduate college with a bachelor's degree. Almost eight percent have a masters and only three percent have a Ph.D. And according to the news, the top one percent of the wealthiest people in American control the largest portion of money, stock, property and business.

Hmm. Challenge accepted! I wish everyone here that kind of success. See you on the other side CSUSM.

**Congratulations to all  
Seniors who are  
graduating this fall!**

## The heart of Christmas

By JESSIE GAMBRELL  
Co-A & E Editor

from the true meaning of Christmas.

As I am sure many of you have wondered, just what exactly does the word "Christmas" mean?

Well it is simple really, all it means is "Christ," "Mass." The mass of Jesus Christ, the celebration of his being; or to be precise, the celebration of his birth into this world.

According to Gallup.com, over 78 percent of all people in the U.S. are Christian, which is no wonder as to how this celebration became to be so big.

Every year around this time, we start to prepare for the holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years; but the actual holiday of Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus, despite all that advertisements, media and commercialization make it out to be.

According to commercials and retailers, Christmas is a time of year to share gifts, time with family and merriment.

It is usually filled with yummy cookies, snowmen and above all, Santa and his reindeer.

The notion of spending hours of money, stress and time trying to race around to find the right presents for our loved ones is getting away

If we take a moment and look into what exactly it is we are celebrating, then it might have more meaning to us and won't be (as it is for some) a stressful, sometimes lonely time of year. Having that "center" that purpose in life to know that it isn't just us in this life that we have to worry about, but to know that we aren't alone, to know that someone is out there looking out for us.

The celebration of Christ-mass is the birthday celebration of that person who is your salvation, companion, and protector. No matter who you are, where you come from, or what you believe; God will always be there for you. He does not judge you, but loves you! Without the love and sacrifice He has given us, we would have no meaning and no happy ending.

So, the next time you say "Merry Christmas," just think to yourself how wonderful this world is because of His existence and the tremendous sacrifice He made on the cross for us. The sacrifice He made to open the pearly gates of heaven to us that we may have a fighting chance to prove ourselves in this life to deserve the treasure that awaits us in the next.

Merry Christmas!

## Will the world end on December 21, 2012?

By KEANDREE WILLIAMS-CHAMBERS  
Copy Editor

We are almost there. The last month of our lives has come upon us all, or so we have been told.

According to the lore we have heard over the past year and beyond, the Mayan calendar ends this December 21, 2012, and with it, the world that we have known.

Now, I am not very briefed on this subject, but there is one thing I am certain of. There have been many different hypotheses on the end times of this mortal world.

There was the Y2K phenomenon that predicted the downfall of man due in part to our dependency on technology. Twelve years later, we're still here.

There was buzz about the Rapture occurring in both May and October of

2011, the day or days in which divine judgment would be brought upon mankind. The only judgment seen was those that judged the prediction as inaccurate.

My point is, each one had reasonably logical thinking and a good amount of backing. However, each one presented a good amount of speculation that was essentially based on the premise of "if this is true, then..."

So, let's go about that premise. Let's think of what might happen should the end of the Mayan calendar accurately predict the end of the world. What could really be done about it?

The apocalypse is not something any group of men could prevent in any way, especially considering that it marks a divine force that is both outside

and towering over the realm of man.

Let's presume it happens. It's unstoppable and uncontainable. Not a single soul is spared. Can we comprehend that being the end? Or will there be something after? The concept of time is something that man struggles with, and life encompasses that. Every person has at least had some sort of consideration as to the possibility of life being either unending or continuing after death.

This, of course, goes into the realm of religion, but I am far from an expert on that field.

But let's consider this. There are many possibilities, and the only way to truly know is to see the "other side" firsthand, supposing there may or may not be one. I wouldn't know. I haven't died yet,

and I hope not to for a reasonable while (knock on wood).

But whether or not the end of the world decides to grace us, we still have to consider that there are days before it. Are that many people that concerned? I doubt it. With the Christmas hype still going on strong, people seem to care more about that than the supposed coming end. It could be people's wishful thinking, or maybe even doubt, but I see it as people truly not caring about the coming end of the world. The habit has set in to not really believe each and every theory of the end. Heck, I even laughed at the premise of the apocalypse.

If it happens, it will happen. I'll have no quarrel with it because there is little I can do about the matter.

## Letter to the Editor: Library now offers extended hours

The following is in response to an article written by Juliana Stumpp on Oct. 25 regarding decreased study hours in Markstein Hall and across campus, called "Lights out at Markstein Hall hampers study hours."

We in the library appreciate Juliana Stumpp's article pointing out the problems of finding late night study areas on campus. Your library is offering extended hours this semester beginning Nov. 26 through Dec. 9, Monday - Thursday 7 a.m. - 10 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. The second floor study area is also open early at 6 a.m. Monday - Thursday Dec. 3 - Dec. 13. Exact hours are on the webpage (<http://biblio.csusm.edu/>) too, so check it out. You might also be interested in using a library group study room. The Media Library rooms have computers and facilities to practice presentations and the fifth floor study rooms can be reserved from the library web site.

Please let us know what you think by leaving a message on the library webpage's Have an Idea? Link (<https://microsites.csusm.edu/idea-box/>).

Susan Thompson  
Access Service Coordinator, CSUSM

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Wendolyn Serrano

Dane Vandervelden

ACADEMIC ADVISOR  
Pam Kragen

CONTACTS

[csusm.cougarchronicle@gmail.com](mailto:csusm.cougarchronicle@gmail.com)

[cougarchron.layout@gmail.com](mailto:cougarchron.layout@gmail.com)

[cougarchron.news@gmail.com](mailto:cougarchron.news@gmail.com)

[cougarchron.sports@gmail.com](mailto:cougarchron.sports@gmail.com)

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Office Phone: 760 - 750 - 6099

Office Fax: 780 - 750 - 3345

Our office is located in Craven 3500

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Letters to the Editor should include a first and last name and should be under 300 words, submitted via email. It is the policy of The Cougar Chronicle not to print anonymous letters. The Cougar Chronicle reserves the right to reject any Letter to the Editor for any reason.



## COUGAR SHUFFLE

By JESSIE GAMBRELL  
Co-A & E Editor

'Tis the season to be jolly! It's Christmas time and it's time to bust out the old Christmas songs that we only get to enjoy one season a year. Without fail, Christmas music always gets me excited and joyful, ready to have a good time and get cozy in front of a warm fire with a cup of hot cider in my hands. So, here is a playlist for you to keep in mind this Christmas season.

**"Sing We Now of Christmas"**

A classic carol that has a haunting (Tim Burton) feel to it, you will find yourself humming it all Christmas long. Barlow-Girl did a remixed version of this song on their Christmas CD, 'Home for Christmas' (2008) that mixes "Carol of the Bells" and "Sing We Now of Christmas."

**"Baby It's Cold Outside"**

My favorite version of this song is by Rod Stewart and Dolly Parton from his album, 'Stardust: The Great American Songbook Volume III.' Their voices together create something beyond words. This song is a fun one to listen to and gives a little spice to your Christmas mood.

**"Little Drummer Boy"**

This classic song by Josh Groban, featuring Andy McKee, from his Christmas album, 'Noel' (2007), will get you excited for Christmas and dancing to the rhythm as you chant along to the wonderful lyrics Groban sings. His voice is spectacular!

**"Pat-A-Pan"**

This is happy, joyful and cute song by David Archuleta from his first Christmas album, 'Christmas from the Heart' (2009). This is an uncommon song with a pop twist that will get you off your seat.

**"Santa Baby"**

Michael Bublé does a very tasteful version of this classic Saxony Christmas song on his album, 'Christmas' (2011). But, the best is by the original singer, Eartha Kitt, with her smooth, riveting voice carrying the feel of this classic sexy song about Santa.

**"Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"**

This wonderful classic Christmas song which has carried the mood of the season throughout the ages was sung originally by none other than "Dorothy" herself, Judy Garland. It can be found on various Christmas CDs, one of which being 'Traditional Christmas Classics' (1989).

## Holiday ArtWalk in Restaurant Row

By JESSIE GAMBRELL  
Co-A & E Editor

In light of the fast approaching holiday season, San Marcos City Council and Old California Restaurant Row put on a wonderful Holiday ArtWalk, which took place on Sunday, Dec. 2 from 1 - 5 p.m. on Restaurant Row.

There were many vendors of various specialties such as jewelry, hats and scarves, pottery, photography, individualized stationary, mosaic pieces, paintings and drawings, among other specialty items all made by local crafters.

"This is our fourth time coming [to the ArtWalk] and it's been slow, there were a lot more college



Photo by Jessie Gambrell

students here last month and the month before that." To Ends of the Earth jewelry and gourd crafter, Rosalyn Hackworth said.

A live band, "Soul Malady," performed from 4 - 5:30 p.m. featuring guitarist and former stu-

dent, Manny Sanchez and drummer and current student, Nikola Pantic.

"We have different genres, I call it a "fusion," we try to get a mix of reggae, latin and jazz," Pantic said.

The Old Restaurant Row

ArtWalks happen every Sunday of every month and admission is free. If you would like to attend the next ArtWalk, you can find more information at: [www.san-marcos.net](http://www.san-marcos.net) or contact Marilyn Huerta at 760-744-9000.

**'ABC Family's 25 Days of Christmas'**  
What movies CSUSM students are looking forward toBy KATLIN SWEENEY  
FEATURES EDITOR

The month of December brings colder weather, hot chocolate, comfortable sweaters and "ABC Family's 25 Days of Christmas."

Many CSUSM students consider ABC Family's holiday specials and featured movies a staple in building up the excitement for the Christmas season. The "25 Days of Christmas" will feature classics such as "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas," "The Santa Clause" and ABC Family's new original musical, "The Mistle-Tones." There will also be network televi-

sion film premieres such as, "Despicable Me" and "Disney's A Christmas Carol."

The most anticipated films of "25 Days of Christmas" vary among the CSUSM students:

"I'm most excited for "Mickey's Christmas Carol" because I loved watching it when I was little and still do," nursing major, Kristin Donato said.

"Mickey's Christmas Carol" airs at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 10.

"I would have to say [I'm excited for] "Elf" because I haven't seen it in several years and it always make me laugh," kinesiology major, Sophia Juarez said.

"Definitely "Elf" because anything with Will Ferrell is hilarious," kinesiology major, Ashley Farol agreed.

"National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" is the most outrageous comedy, and most of all Chevy Chase!" undeclared major, Nick Wigchert said.

"National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" airs at 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 21 and at 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 25.

"Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas" because it's kind of a tradition in my family on Christmas to watch it every year," liberal Studies major, Samone Senior said.

"Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas" airs at 7 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 17 and at 7 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 23.

"Polar Express" because I remember reading the book when I was in fifth grade when it came out and I've just loved it ever since. I also like the graphics," business major, Brando Casino said.

"Polar Express" airs at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 6, at 9 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 13 and at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 19.

"ABC Family's 25 Days of Christmas" began on Dec. 1 with "Elf" and will end on Christmas Day with "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE COUGAR CHRONICLE

**'The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey'**By JESSIE GAMBRELL  
Co-A & E Editor

It has been nine years since the last film of the trilogy, "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" hit theaters, and now on Friday, Dec. 14, the prequel to the "Lord of the Rings" series will hit the big screens.

"The Hobbit" book will be presented as a set of three movies. From the same makers as the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, so you can expect the same feel and quality of production. Get ready to be immersed into the fantastical world of the writer of the book series, J.R.R. Tolkien's "Middle Earth."

Director Peter Jackson is a die-hard fan who even has his own "Hobbit Hole" house in New Zealand, the film location of the mov-

ies. He managed to capture the amazing world that Tolkien had created in the books, bringing it to life through the magic of cinema and delivering the feel of Middle Earth as if you were walking through the beautiful fields and mountains.

The plot revolves around Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman), a hobbit who comfortably lives in the quiet village of the Shire that rarely ever sees any action at all.

A fellow wizard, Gandalf (Ian McKellen) convinces him to go on a journey to the Lonely Mountains to help a fellowship of dwarves win back their stolen treasure from the greedy dragon, Smaug.

Through their adventure to the mountains, they come across many chal-

lenges and enemies that they must fight off and survive to get to their destination.

The "Lord of the Rings" trilogy was such a big hit in the theaters as well as on the shelves, the gross revenue being \$2,915,155,189 in the U.S., according to askville.com by Amazon.

"The Hobbit" was originally written by J.R.R. Tolkien as a storybook for his children, when it was accidentally read by a publisher who was quick to publish it.

The tickets are said to be selling out quickly, so get your tickets in advance to see the film on opening night or any time soon after.

For more information on "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey," visit their website at: <http://www.thehobbit.com>

**The comic book corner:****'Winter's Edge No. 1' and 'FF No. 1'**By FAITH ORCINO  
CARTOONIST

Last February, publisher Vertigo released a special 100-page collection of short stories featuring the main characters of various comic book series such as "John Constantine" and "Death" to name a few.

As the title infers, all of these one-shots revolve around the winter and holiday seasons. While some have a light-hearted feel, others take a darker twist, a normality for Vertigo comics. The writing staff includes iconic Neil Gaiman, and veteran Garth Ennis. For more information, visit your local comic vendor or visit ver-

tigocomics.com.

"FF No. 1" Review - Familiar Faces Take Over the Future Foundation Warning: This article contains spoilers to recent story arcs.

Comic art couple Michael and Laura Allred return to Marvel Comics with the relaunch of "FF," "FF," or better known as the "Future Foundation," began in 2010 when the "Fantastic Four" wanted to create a new organization after the departure of "Johnny Storm" in "Fantastic Four" Issue No. 587. With the old team now reunited, Reed Richards finds out that they must leave the foundation and hand over the commands

to someone else.

The team consists of "Medusa," "Ms. Thing," "She-Hulk," and leader "Ant-Man." It is an interesting mix of "fantastic" veterans who must now help teach the young geniuses while protecting the earth from harm. People question the appointment of "Ant-Man," for it is Scott Lang's return after losing his daughter, Cassandra Lang ("Stature") during "Avengers: Children's Crusade."

Read "FF" Issue No. 1 to find out how the foundation got their new members and their reactions. For more information, visit [marvel.com](http://marvel.com) or your local comic vendor.



## Student A: "The Early Winter" by Faith Orcino



Good luck on your finals and hope you enjoy your winter break!

Cougar asks...  
What are your plans for the holiday break?BY ALISON SEAGLE  
STAFF WRITERAimee Tsunekawa,  
communications:  
"Graduating and interning."Trevor Molina,  
business:  
"Maybe travel."Adrienne Ulep,  
business:  
"Going home to hang  
out with family."Ed Vasquez,  
human development:  
"Go to Mammoth to go  
snowboarding with friends. It's  
my favorite place to go."Duc Ngo,  
applied physics:  
"Going to Oregon to visit  
my brother, Six Flags and  
Big Bear."Xhosma Arenas,  
undeclared:  
"Hang out with my family  
and visit with friends."

## HOT OFF THE REEL

'Les Miserables' A dramatic remake that will whisk you away

BY JESSIE GAMBRELL  
Co-A & E Editor

"Les Miserables" premieres Tuesday, Dec. 25 and is an adaptation from the longest running Broadway play. The film is full of passion and raw emotion from start to finish.

"Les Miserables" first hit the stage in France in 1980. Originally a French fictional novel written by Victor Hugo and published in 1862, the American translation was not published until 1879, carrying over 1,200 pages.

This upcoming movie boasts an all-star cast; with Hugh Jackman as lead role and ex-convict, Jean Valjean who tries to make right in the world, Russell Crowe as the French guard, Javert who hunts Valjean. Anne Hathaway as tragic factory worker Fantine, Amanda Seyfried as the haunting charac-

ter of Fantine's daughter, Cosette, Helena Bonham-Carter and Sasha Baron Cohen as the swindling, ragamuffin innkeepers, and Eddie Redmayne as the valiant fighter and love interest of Cosette, Marice.

The movie keeps very closely to the Broadway version of the story, being a classic Broadway musical, and is full of the wonderful songs and ballads such as "I Dreamed a Dream," "On My Own," "Empty Chairs at Empty Tables" and "Bring Him Home."

This movie is already being considered for nomination of "Best Film of the Year" since it is going to be released late like director Tom Hooper's last Academy Award-winning film, "The King's Speech" two years ago. Hugh Jackman and Anne Hathaway are also being considered for nomination for the best

actor and actress.

The film and actors warrant the high praise, they are receiving due to the never-before-seen "live" singing on set. The actors had an earpiece in their ear for each song, the melody was only played on a piano to help guide them along, but everything else was up to them. The rest of the orchestra was added in later.

This has never been done before in a motion picture film, which gave it a uniqueness and genuine quality.

"Les Miserables" will definitely be one of the movies that people, of all ages will want to see this Christmas break.

Although be warned that with its highly intense and dramatic and sometimes violent scenes, it would probably not be a good idea to take anyone under teenage. Use your own discretion.

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## Santa lights up San Marcos

BY ALISON SEAGLE  
STAFF WRITER

Red lights were flashing on the fire truck as it rolled up to San Marcos City Hall on Saturday night, Dec. 1.

Kids and kids-at-heart alike were waiting with anticipation for Santa to climb the ladder to light the Christmas tree in front of City Hall. After Santa reached the top of the ladder, the crowd counted down and then the tree was lit, starting off the holiday season for the San Marcos community.

There was no shortage of Christmas decorations, crafts, activities or kids at the City of San Marcos' "Santa's Magical Village" this past Saturday. Inside City Hall, there were dozens of Christmas trees decorated and lit as part of the "Festival of Trees," which was presented by the San Marcos Senior Services Foundation. The trees had been lighting up the hallways of City Hall since Nov. 19 - Dec. 2.

The trees also provided many of Saturday night's guests with ideal backdrops for family photos.

Outside City Hall, local youth entertained everyone with Christmas tunes. The ensembles that performed included the San Marcos Youth Orchestra, San Elijo Middle School Jazz Band, and the San Marcos High School Jazz Band. Their joyful, jazzy music filled the air, as did the delicious smells from the food trucks. From pizza to burgers to Mexican food and more, there was something for everyone to choose from to satisfy their appetites while enjoying the festivities of the evening. As for dessert, there was a booth for kids to make their own mini gingerbread houses!

Inside the Community Center, craft vendors filled the hallways and various rooms throughout. Shoppers could find many colorful displays of jewelry, hats, scarves, decorations, and other items to help them check off their

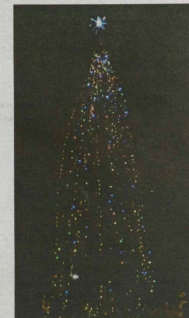


Photo by Alison Seagle

Christmas lists. There was even a room filled with games and activities for the kids to play with and the opportunity to meet Santa, to whisper to him what they wanted for Christmas, and get their picture taken.

It was pretty easy to tell from all of the "Oohs," "Ahhs," and cheers that on this Saturday night, everyone who attended enjoyed themselves and both were and are happy that the Christmas season has finally arrived.