

Drunk campus?

CSUSM receives \$48,000 to combat alcohol abuse

BY AMIRA EL-KHAOULI
Pride Staff Writer



Photo by Michael Dolan / The Pride

Surveys: \$6,000. DUI Checkpoints: \$8,000. Alcohol EDU: \$20,000. A goal of reducing the number of alcohol-related incidents among college students: Not quite priceless, but \$48,000.

Starting the first of February, CSUSM was on of the ten state campuses sharing a \$750,000 CSU Alcohol and Safety (CSU ATS) grant, which was administered by the Office of Traffic and Safety (OTS), part of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. The program was funded by \$74.2 million in traffic safety funds that were awarded to 277 California state departments last year. CSUSM received \$48,000 of this money.

In order to receive a portion of this grant, each campus had to apply and come up with a proposal unique to their campus. Out of the 23 CSU campuses (the nation's largest university system), 18 applied for the mini-grants.

The other nine participating CSU campuses are Bakersfield, Chico, Dominguez Hills, Fullerton, Pomona, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Sonoma and Stanislaus. The CSU ATS program is being directed by Perry Angle, who is working with Dave Doucette, the OTS regional coordinator.

"We screened the applications in November and we were looking for

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Students to vote on new sports fee

March referendum will include a mandatory athletics fee

BY ELIZABETH BALDWIN
Pride Staff Writer

In March, Cal State San Marcos students will be asked to vote on a new mandatory \$40 fee to fund intercollegiate athletics.

According to Steven Nichols, director of athletics, the fee would enable intercollegiate athletics to expand our current sports programs and add new programs in the near future. Right now intercollegiate athletics offers men's and women's golf, cross-country and track and field. The new fee will allow the program to include men's and women's baseball, softball, soccer and women's volleyball.

Currently, the athletics department is funded through the Instructionally Related Activities fee (IRA) and the CSU General Fund. Athletics receives approximately \$200,000 from the CSU General Fund and

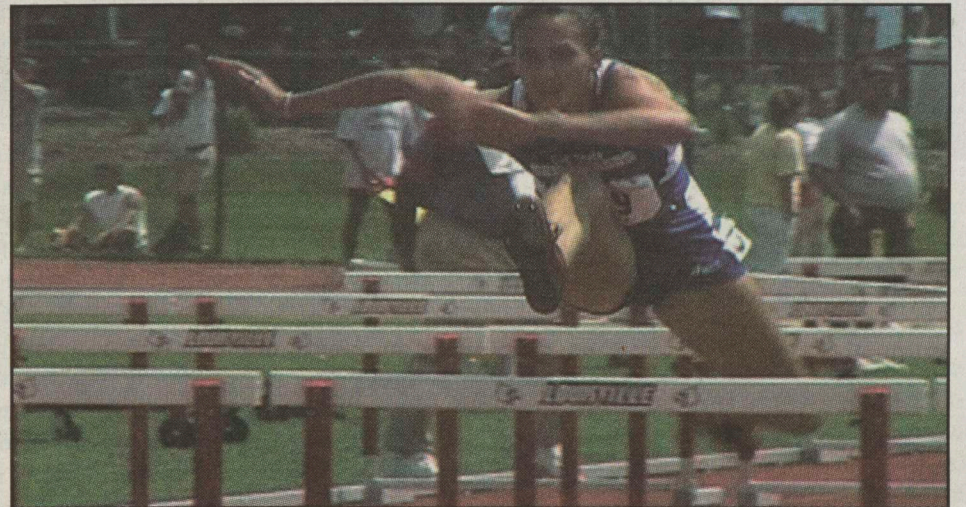


Photo courtesy of CSUSM Athletics Department

anywhere from \$12,000 - \$32,000 from the IRA fee.

The amount received by the IRA fee is determined by the number of students enrolled each semester and the number of campus organizations applying for funds.

If the referendum passes, the athletics department will be looking at an increase of \$296,000 per semester.

"If the fee does not pass, we can't sus-

tain the sports that we have. I'm not even thinking that way. But yes, something will have to give. We would've had to cut a sport if President Haynes had not stepped in and allotted more money to supplement the only \$12,000 we received from the IRA," said Nichols.

Nichols believes expanding the athletic

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State of the campus address

Academic excellence announced as first priority

BY YVONNE BRETT
Pride Staff Writer

Students and faculty gathered on the mezzanine steps under a threatening gray sky on Thursday, February 17, to listen to the first annual "State of the Campus Address." ASI sponsored the event and provided sandwiches and sodas for those who came to hear the panel members give five minute speeches and answer questions.

Bob Sheath, Provost of Academic Affairs, opened with his speech that addressed the vision of the school. He outlined the academic blueprint of an eight-year plan to expand the academic programs at CSUSM. A ripple of applause burst from the audience when he announced that the new Busi-

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Photo by Yvonne Brett / The Pride

In the presence of greatness

Rekowned poet Ishmael Reed fills Arts 240 for poetry reading

BY YVONNE BRETT
Pride Staff Writer

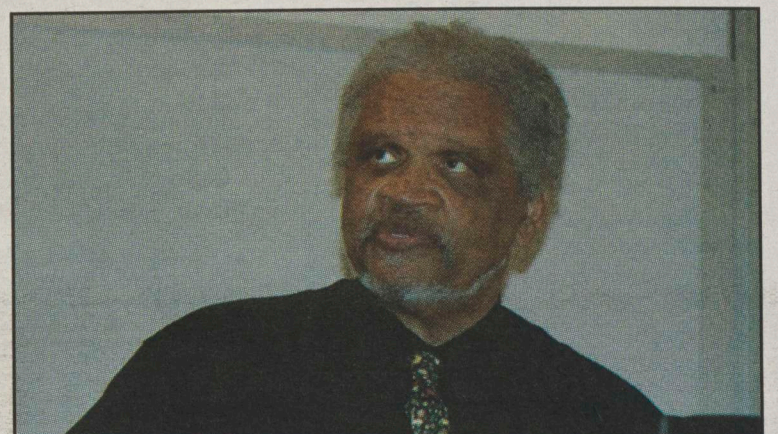
A buzz of excitement filled the air as every seat in the auditorium was claimed and the latecomers lined the steps. Over 250 people squeezed into Arts 240 last Tuesday to hear Ishmael Reed read selections from his newest collec-

tion of poetry. Students, professors, and even President Haines were part of the audience that came to experience the magic of the Pulitzer Prize nominated author. CSUSM student Natasia Luna said that Reed's poetry presented, "modern issues in a humorous, poetic and contemporary way that people of all ages

and races could relate to." This seemed to be the general feeling of the audience as they honored him at the end of the evening with a standing ovation.

Dr. Susie Lan Cassel welcomed the audience and also recognized the ten sponsors that helped bring

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Photos courtesy of Susie Cassel

The Pride

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a specific program that would affect the community and meet a specific student need," Angle said. "Each proposal needed to be innovative and student-oriented and could make an impact in the short time it has."

He is referring to how the program ends in December of 2006. The program officially started in January when there was a training session at CSU Fresno, where headquarters is located for the program.

"The actual grant has already started," Angle said. "But paperwork still needs to be filled out. Hopefully, you'll see some action in spring, which is really a target time. The activities we'll be doing will relate to many of the activities students do in the springtime when the weather gets better, like spring break and parties."

According to Angle, this all started in 2001 when the chancellor of the CSU schools, Charles Reed, was affected by an alcohol-related death of a Chico State student.

"He felt he needed to do more for the safety of his students," said Angle.

This led to a grant called the Sober Drive Initiative that lasted two years and ended just this January. CSUSM applied for this grant and did not get it.

Fast-forward to today and CSUSM will begin administering the first phase of its program shortly. This will be a series of three short surveys over a period of two years. Motivation for students to take these surveys will be a random drawing of 20 \$100 gift certificates to the book store on campus. This survey will ask



Photo illustration by Phoenix Lindgren / The Pride

such questions as "Where do you most often consume alcohol off-campus?" and "Have you ever driven after drinking alcohol?"

This grant has led to several students wondering why CSUSM needed to apply for the grant.

"I don't think we have (and alcohol problem) compared to what other schools have," a freshman who lives on campus said.

"People shouldn't be driving drunk," Nate Falzon, a commuter said. "It doesn't matter where they go. What's the point of them targeting a school?"

According to Jonathan Poulard, dean of students, associate vice president of student affairs and chairman of the Substance Abuse Advisory Committee here, part of the reason that CSUSM applied for the grant was because roughly only seven percent of students live on campus and the majority of students commute. The campus just does not know the habits of its students.

"Being a young institution, we felt that we could be more proac-

tive instead of reactive," Poulard said. "In other words, why wait around for a problem to happen? We want to help students make informative decisions and get ahead of the game."

Contributors to the grant are Poulard, Jessica Ripley, Marian Novak and Doug Miller. All are members of the Substance Abuse Advisory Committee.

The grant cites the OTS website and the American Medical Association, respectively, as sources for its data that "After years of declining alcohol-involved traffic fatalities, California experienced a 32 percent increase in persons killed in alcohol-involved collisions between 1998-2002. A new study finds that colleges with multiple alcohol-prevention policies on and off campus have a lower drinking rate and reduced alcohol-related problems."

Information gathered from the surveys will be compared with collected data from the San Diego County Last Drink Surveys, in which someone who has received a DUI is asked where they had their last drink, in addition to community complaints and law enforcement intelligence. This will be done to "identify the highest-risk alcohol licensed establishments patronized by our students."

Then, six student risk assessors will evaluate these high-risk areas, partnership will be strengthened between campus police and local law enforcement

to increase the visibility of DUI checkpoints around areas frequented by students and AlcoholEDU, or some other like program, will continue to be administered to incoming students.

According to the grant, "The media advocacy component will focus specifically on involving the University's campus newspaper 'The Pride.' The department will invite reporters to accompany them on 'ride-alongs' to experience drunk driving and other alcohol related crimes through the eyes of a patrol officer. Additionally, the Chief of Police will submit Op-Ed articles to 'The Pride' addressing DUI."

Obviously, the program here is very different from all other participating campuses, like SDSU, for example. Each campus had the ability to decide which of the seven program objectives they wanted to incorporate into their program.

The overall objectives of the CSU ATS grant are to improve and/or develop partnerships with law enforcement; assisting campuses in developing or improving on-line personal drinking assessment programs; providing support to campus peer educators; and working with media throughout the state and at each campus to publicize the funding of the project, keep the public informed of its intent and progress, and to inform the general public about other alcohol items and events.

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ness building would be opening in January 2006, the College of Health and Human Services would begin in July of 2006, and a new Sociology building would open in 2010.

"I am glad to hear that the nursing program is finally coming," said Matthew Garvin, a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon who also hopes to get into the nursing program. "I volunteer at a hospital and I know how much the county needs nursing services."

Karen Haynes, University President, remarked that it was almost the one year anniversary of her first day on the job. Haynes emphasized the three important building blocks for the university. The first and most important one is "academic excellence," so that the school will send out well-prepared graduates. The second building block is "intellectual and cultural activities," not only for the campus, but also for the people in the community. The third block is "civic leadership," which is important because it makes the school more visible and helps it to grow. Haynes commended the students for the 73,000 hours of community service that have been recorded and performed by 15,000 students.

As the raindrops started to fall and umbrellas began popping open, Haynes said, "The motto, 'We're building a place for you' is dated. I think Cal State San Marcos is the place."

Jackie Trischman, Chair of the Academic Senate, was the next to speak. Her fact-filled report related that this semester CSUSM faculty taught over 600 courses and there were over 1150 class sections offered. She also announced that two new minors, Global Studies

and German were going to be offered, and 151 new course proposals were being reviewed. Trischman said that the goal for the school is to, "Help you decide not only what you want to be, but who you want to be when you graduate."

"It is good news about the new classes they will be offering," said Biochemistry major Euphemia Uhegbu. "It was also good that they talked about solving the problems with the increased traffic because of the student growth."

As the final speaker, ASI President Manal Yamout thanked the audience for staying even though it was starting to rain. Yamout emphasized how she has seen the level of student involvement increase over the last few years as the campus has grown and encouraged students to run for office in the upcoming ASI election. ASI has had a very busy year registering over 800 students to vote, lobbying at the state capitol for student rights and arranging many campus events such as the upcoming Academic Freedom Forum which will be held March 22.

"After the formal speeches, the panel accepted questions from the audience regarding how the university is going to handle the traffic issues, improve the academic advising department and deal with budget constraints. President Haynes was asked about the controversial bill SB5, which she denounced as an ill-thought out bill that clearly does not understand what universities are about and misrepresents what faculties are hired to do. As the rain began to fall in earnest, it was announced that all of the questions would be posted and answered on the ASI website which can be found at: www.csusm.edu/asi.

Bush budget cuts; Higher education wins, K-12 education loses



Photo illustration by Phoenix Lindgren / The Pride

BY PATRICK B. LONG
Pride Staff Writer

President Bush's budget plan has some changes planned that could affect Cal State San Marcos. In his plan, he sets out a map to eliminate debt by severing programs that cost the taxpayers money.

The majority of actual budget cuts that are proposed by Bush are intended for K-12. His plan is to phase out money to inner-city schools that receive incentives, on top of what other schools receive, to educate disadvantage kids. In turn, Bush is holding teachers accountable for teaching students. The down fall will be the future. The programs being cut help underprivileged K-12 students prepare for higher education. Currently, these programs allow students as young as fourth grade visit colleges to perk their interests.

The overall plan in higher education is to maneuver some federal loans to grants. The Pell Grant would eventually receive a boost for students, upping it \$500 to \$4,550. The money would come from phasing out The Perkins Loan. Both of these programs

are geared towards low-income students and are beneficial for their education. The Perkins loan phase-out would save a \$4.3 billion dollar deficit in the budget.

The Perkins loan has many benefits to it. First, if a student refinances their loan later, the paid off Perkins Loan money goes back to the school. Since this is the case, Cal. State San Marcos has Perkins Loan money at least until 2006. The Interim Director of Financial Aid and Scholarship Office, Addalou Davis, said that for Cal. State San Marcos, Pell Grants will be better as long as they do not phase out too. Pell Grants do not have to be paid back and Cal. State San Marcos does not have to put in 1/3 for matching, as they do for Perkins Loans. Depending on the school and the programs you offer, this proposal is either good or bad. Davis stressed was, "They are just proposals." By the time the final budget is approved, it will look totally different.

One program that is taking a hit with budget changes is the Federal Work Study (FWS). "It's a valuable program for students to learn their job." The school is now receiving half of the federal

money is was receiving. Without this program, many students will not be able to train in their major before graduating.

All the explanation in the world will not do any good if students do not sign up for the programs. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) is an online application to all of the programs offered. There is a deadline of March 2 filling to receive initial awards. The key word in FASFA is free. Students must find the federal website that ends with .edu.gov. Otherwise, private companies will charge them to fill it out. If students are uncertain which website to use, they can find the website on the Cal State San Marcos main site by searching FAFSA or through the financial aid page. Also, students should periodically check on the status of their file on the website.

There are other programs available for student financial aid. Fastweb.com is one way to search a private website for other types of scholarships. The financial aid office for Cal State San Marcos, located at Craven Hall Fourth Floor, Room 4204, has a plethora of information regarding programs and scholarships for college. The staff is also available to assist anyone with questions on how to fill out forms and deadlines.

To fill out a FASFA got to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. For more information on FASFA or Federal Work Study contact Financial Aid located at Craven 4204 or online at <http://www.csusm.edu/finaid/>.

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programs to include spectator sports will help instill a sense of campus unity. "I love the sports we have now, but they are not spectator sports. It's really hard to watch a cross-country meet, so we want to bring sports that have spectator appeal," said Nichols.

CSUSM has approximately 80 students participating in inter-collegiate sports. "By the time all the new sports have kicked in, it would double or triple our current size," said Nichols.

Nichols added, "If we have more recognizable sports teams, it will make the degree more valuable because people have heard where you've graduated from."

"Personally, I'll gain nothing as a student," said Linda Dellen, literature and writing grad student.

"Since I did my undergrad at a school that had a rich athletic tradition, I support the referendum as I know the positive aspects it can bring to student life," said Ian Gould, ASI post baccalaureate representative.

"Our office only offers neutral information so students can make an informed decision," said Francine Martinez, vice president of student affairs. "I think students need to get this information so they can make their voices heard on whether or not this is an important initiative for them," said Martinez.

Information about the athletics fee referendum is available through student affairs. The athletics department plans to campaign for the new fee in the next coming weeks with classroom presentations and student forums. Students will vote on the fee March 21-24. The complete athletics fee referendum can be found at www.csusm.edu/student_affairs/athletic_vote.

The Pride denied ballot access

BY PHOENIX LINDGREN
Pride Staff Writer

Next month, Cal State San Marcos students will be asked to vote on a new mandatory \$40 fee to fund campus Athletics; they will not be asked to vote on a new mandatory \$2.50 fee to fund the student newspaper.

The Pride submitted a fee proposal last fall that would have generated approximately \$18,000 per semester to cover production costs of the weekly student-run, student-written newspaper, eliminating budget gaps caused by relying on the Instructionally Related Activities (IRA) fee, which nearly ended production of The Pride in 2003.

"As it stands right now, The Pride is not going to shut down; we can survive on what we get from IRA," said Elizabeth Baldwin, Pride Co-Editor-in-Chief. "What I mean by survive is black and white, eight pages, all semester."

When asked what the fee would have meant to The Pride, Baldwin was matter-of-fact.

"The immediate impact that the fund would have made on the newspaper would have been an immediate jump to a consistent twelve pages a week with color--every single week--minimum," said Baldwin.

Mike Dolan, Pride Co-Editor-in-Chief, also saw the Pride proposal in terms of other groups on campus vying for IRA funds.

"To get The Pride away from the IRA funding would have opened up funding for more activities on campus, and provided more autonomy for The Pride," said Dolan.

Both Dolan and Baldwin believe the switch to color would

have had an increasingly positive effect.

"Having color in a newspaper always increases readership. We had projected doubling our circulation immediately to 5,000 copies--eventually distributing off-campus; right now we don't even have a stand at the Field House," said Baldwin.

The addition of color and increased circulation would have meant an increase in advertising rates, which would have allowed The Pride to buy things like office furniture and computers, and send more students to journalism conferences. Baldwin was emphatic that the fee was strictly limited to covering production costs.

"We were asking students to pay for the cost of the printed paper they pick up," said Baldwin.

In a memorandum dated January 14, 2005, Pride editors were informed of President Haynes' decision not to solicit input from students on The Pride fee proposal.

"I was very shocked," said Baldwin. "I was shocked because I felt like we put together a very thorough proposal. I was shocked because we were only asking for \$2.50, and the fact that we were modeling a program that's already been in place at Sacramento State, where they've (their newspaper program has) flourished."

"That's the system," added Dolan. "We did our best--we went through the system. The President thinks Athletics has more of an impact on the campus."

When asked how she felt about the Athletics proposal going forward, Baldwin was stoic.

"I personally feel athletics is a good thing for a campus, but I'm just so shocked. I really don't think this is like the newspaper versus the athletics department. What we were asking for is so much less--why couldn't we be on the ballot together?" said Baldwin.

It has since been confirmed that Haynes' decision not to include the student newspaper fee proposal on the March ballot



Photo illustration by Jason Encabo / The Pride press time.

went against the recommendation of the Student Fee Advisory Council (SFAC), which has a student majority membership and is chaired by Francine Martinez.

"The counsel did recommend (to President Haynes) that the student newspaper fee be included on the ballot; we think it's important that students weigh in (on the issues)," said Martinez.

When asked how frequently the University President has exercised his or her power not to accept the SFAC's recommendation, Martinez responded that former President González did so twice during his six years at CSUSM, "on two different recommendations--a (mandatory fee) referendum recommendation and on a user fee adjustment." Haynes' decision not to allow students to vote on the student newspaper fee would be her first exercise of that power; Haynes had been president of CSUSM for less than one year at the time of her decision.

Haynes was unavailable for either an in-person or a telephone interview, but did answer several questions via email. When asked why she didn't include The Pride proposal on the referendum, Haynes expressed concern over the current climate for increasing student fees.

Haynes stated that, "the Chancellor's Office (where the final decision is made regarding the establishment of new student fees) has requested that campus Presidents exercise close scrutiny in establishing new mandatory fees." The Pride has requested confirmation of this directive from Chancellor Reed's office, but it was not received prior to

Both Haynes and Martinez believe that passage of the Athletics fee could benefit The Pride by freeing up IRA funds from Athletics. In addition, Haynes stated that, "The IRA fee will be assessed this spring to determine if increasing this fee could support the newspaper at a higher level."

The IRA fee has not been increased since its establishment in 1991.

Haynes denied that The Pride's coverage of Michael Moore last semester influenced her decision.

When asked if the fee would have meant an increase in salaries for editors of The Pride--which currently range from nothing for Copy Editor to \$2,500 for Co-Editor-in-Chief per semester, Baldwin said, "No--the fee proposal was only to cover the actual costs of printing."

The Athletics Department has other ideas about spending their potential referendum windfall. According to the Athletics Fee Referendum Voter Information web page prepared by the Student Fee Advisory Council (http://www.csusm.edu/student_affairs/athletic_vote.htm), the proposed mandatory \$40 Athletics fee will generate nearly \$300,000 per semester, most of which will pay the salaries of additional coaching staff. Athletics hopes to increase staff salaries from \$40,000 per semester to nearly \$200,000 per semester as it adds five new sports to the four it currently offers.

Pride staff writer Phoenix Niesley Lindgren can be reached at lindg004@csusm.edu.

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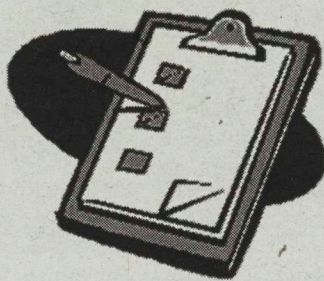
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Inside the lines

The sports scoop on and off campus

BY BRITTANY S. FREDERICK
Pride Staff Writer



Whoever coined the phrase 'it's just a game' was, in my estimation, wrong. Whether it's a major sporting event or something else, sports is something that brings people together, and that's why it's my business. From campus athletics to major sports, I'll be bringing it all to you with the inside view of a professional sportswriter and the watchful eye of

a lifetime athlete.

Introductions aside, let's talk about the action.

For those of you like me who are wondering where the highlight reels went, I have a solution: ASI intramural sports. They're not that big and they won't guarantee you infamy, but they will give you a good time and a chance to get your game out of the closet. Intramural dodgeball is on the home stretch of a season that ends February 23, but you can catch the last matches on Monday and Wednesday from 4-6 p.m. in the Clarke Field House gym. These guys throw hard and will make you laugh even harder – and if you swing by, you'll find me right in the middle of them. Following that, flag football starts on the 25th and ultimate frisbee is also planned. The sports may be unconventional – but so are the people. If you have the time, you can't go wrong.

There's also big news out there for you professional sports fans. For those of you who missed it, Charger quarterback Drew Brees won the 2005 Pro Bowl quarterback accuracy contest with 130 points, almost

double the score of second-place finisher Peyton Manning. Brees, along with fellow representatives LaDanian Tomlinson and Antonio Gates, helped contribute to the AFC win at the Pro Bowl on Sunday. Look for the Chargers to place the franchise tag on him after a Comeback Player of the Year performance.

Football fans will also want to check out the NFL Network. Despite the season being over, the network provides plenty of varied entertainment from both on and off the field. Watch for their "Point After" program, which contains hilarious sound bites from coaches.

In baseball, Padres season tickets officially go on sale on the 19th, and Friar fans will want to jump on that since season ticket pre-sales and last weekend's pre-sale have sold plenty of tickets already. The 2004 Padres proved they were contenders, and 2005 will build on that, so get down to Petco Park from April on if you can.

Just because the major sports are over – and that now officially includes hockey – doesn't mean there's not action. Teams will be making moves in all sports, so

keep your eyes and ears open. You never know what you might learn.

That said, I'll see you next week for another breakdown of the sports action on and off campus. Until then, I leave you with wisdom from Tony Gwynn: Just go out and play.



Image courtesy of Brittany S. Frederick

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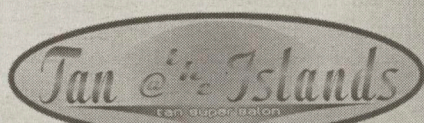


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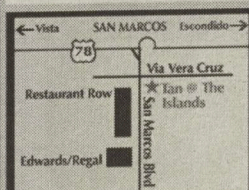
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GEL course requirement

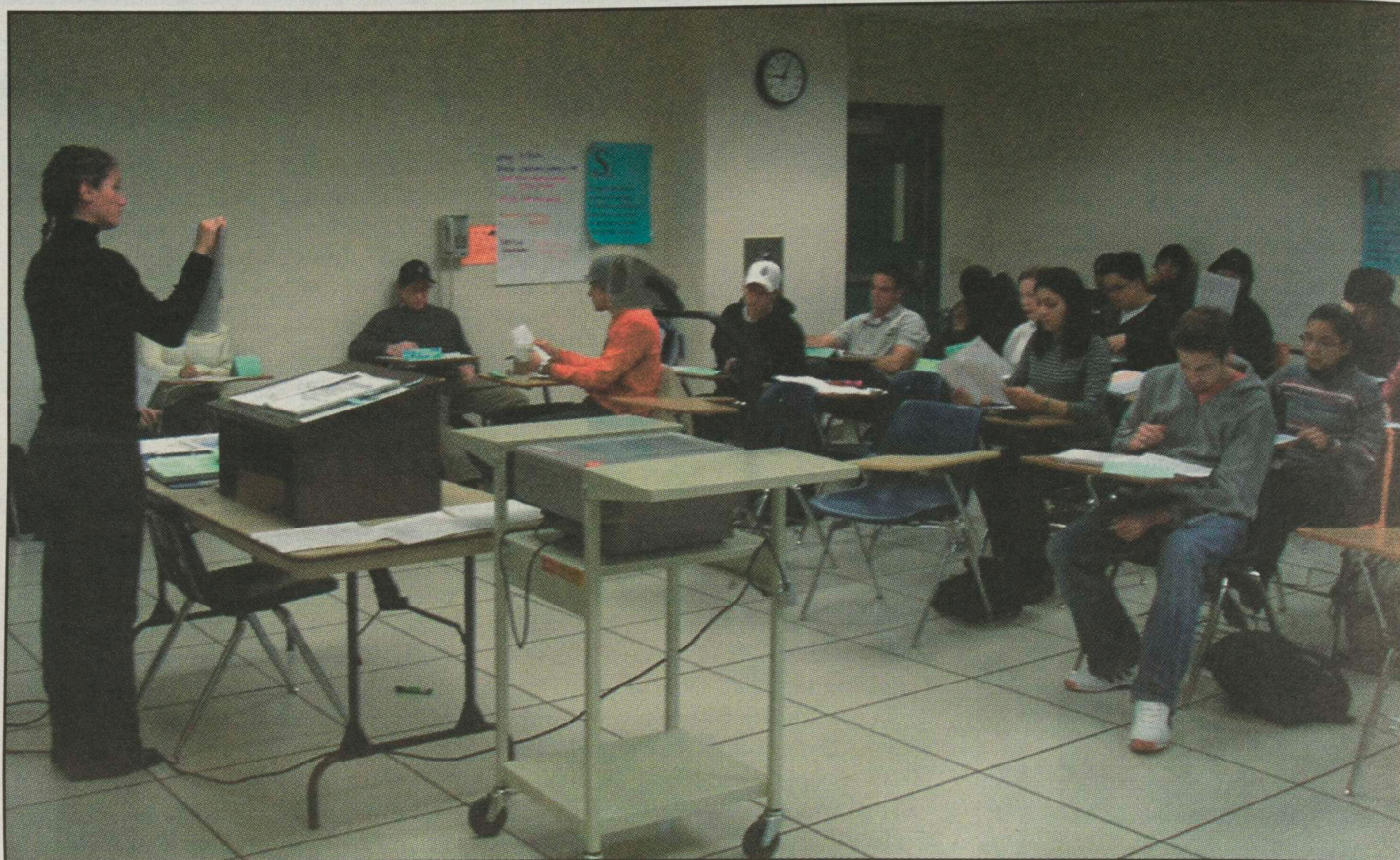
Teaching freshman to be well-rounded citizens

BY BRYAN MASON
Pride Staff Writer

Most students are confused, others are angry, but despite the feelings involved with the course, it is the end result that has an impact on the students of Cal State San Marcos. The General Education Lifelong Learning or GEL is a class that is aimed at making freshman learn studying tools, and also become well-rounded responsible citizens.

First off, GEL was first introduced into the campus curriculum in 1995, when the first freshmen were enrolled at the campus. The course was intended to get students involved with the campus; and it was designed to help with academic discipline; help students to choose a major, and finally to assist students in the retention of knowledge gained from their courses.

In spite of the objectives of the class, which seem like a great way to start off freshman year; the students of CSUSM aren't too thrilled about GEL. Students around campus feel that getting into college itself means that we can successfully manage time and study, some of the basic teachings of the class. But is there more to this class than meets the eye? After an interview with Joanne Pedersen, Ph.D. the Associate Director for First-Year Programs, she said, "The purpose of GEL is to enhance student success." This seems like a pretty large goal at hand and one that is quite intangible at the freshman level.



GEL students sit attentively during lecture.

Photo by Jason Encabo / The Pride

Mark Thomas, a student at CSUSM said, "I just don't understand why we have to pay for a class that the majority of students don't need to take." Despite having to take a class such as GEL to complete a government required course, it should be a class that is worth taking, but most students do not feel that way while taking the class.

"Studies done by multiple universities," Pedersen said, "show that 30-40% of students drop out between

their freshman and sophomore year." Pedersen later went on to say that with programs like GEL, studies show that students are less likely to drop out and receive a better GPA throughout their college life. With this knowledge in hand it seems that GEL is a spot on perfect example of a freshman general education course. But students still aren't happy with the initial impact of the course. Before dreading going to class, think of how this class will benefit your

This course was intended to get students involved with the campus

future. Due to the simple topics at hand, or the things that all freshman "think they automatically know" coming into this new school, it seems that students aren't taking this course seriously. Yet in the long run this course will help students no matter how they feel in the present time. Down the road it could help students like Mark to acquire a job with skills he learned in the class.

So before the class is judged by its surface, kind of like a book is judged by its cover, sit down and listen to the professors and hear what they have to say. Maybe new students will retain some of that knowledge. After all that was the goal of the course in the first place.

REED, from page 1

Ishmael Reed to CSUSM as part of the Arts & Lectures series. Dr. Sam Hamod, a creative writing professor and a good friend of Reed's, unabashedly introduced him as, "one of the world's greatest writers."

Poetry is at its best when it is read aloud, and Reed captivated the audience with his rich, booming voice. He shared poems from a new album that he is producing called, "Bad Mouth," which is being distributed by Blue Note Records. The appreciative crowd burst into laughter at many of his one-line poems such as; "Van Gogh killed himself because he felt that sooner or later his paintings would be displayed in Las Vegas," or "I'd rather have my short term memory back than an El Dorado Cadillac." His longer pieces titled; "In a War Such Things Happen," and "Wanting to be a Right Wing Family Values Type of Man," were heartily applauded as the audience absorbed the underlying meanings of his satirical messages. Student Bellamy Walker said that, "It was really amazing to hear such an intellectual speak on our level and about our issues for black Americans."

After reading his poetry, Reed held a question and answer session. When asked how he finds his ideas, Reed stated that he gets them from many different places because he gets asked to do so many different things. This variety is good because writing in different forms helps to unblock your mind. In addition to his books he has written numerous essays, opinion pieces, and five plays. His next project will be to write a book about Muhammad Ali and his spiritual beliefs.

Sonia Gutierrez, a former CSUSM grad student said, "I am a great admirer of African American literature and that is where I find my own voice." Gutierrez, who now teaches at Palomar College, had cancelled her evening class to come and hear Reed speak.

After the lecture Reed stayed and graciously signed autographs for the many admirers of his craft. His visit was definitely one of the highlights of the activities celebrating Black History Month at CSUSM.



Photos courtesy of Susie Lan-Cassel

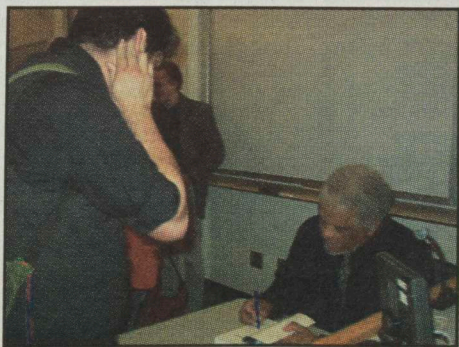
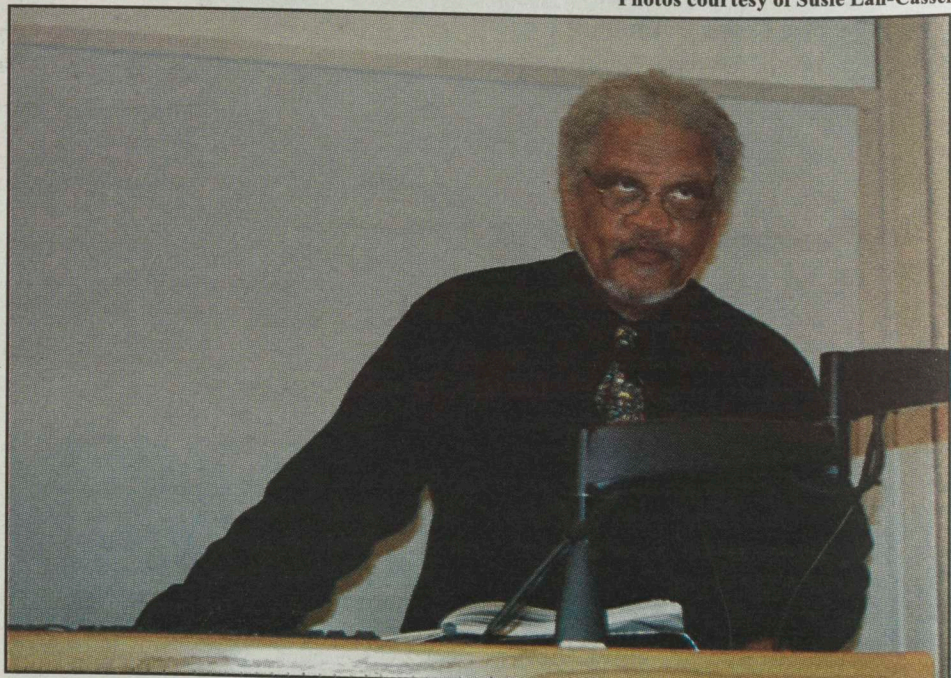


Photo by Yvonne Brett / The Pride

Transition team at CSUSM

VUSD students interact with campus life

BY THOMAS F. GORMAN III
Pride Staff Writer

Areli, J.R., Justin, Bruce, Vianey, Rusby, Armando, Marcella, and William are the students who help keep our campus clean. These students are part of a transition program run through Vista Unified School District in conjunction with the Facility Services Department of CSUSM.

The transitional program itself has been in operation on campus for ten years with the main focus being a way for the students involved to gain life skills,

practice personal autonomy, and learn work habits such as following directions and seeing a task through to the end.

Students involved in the transition program work Monday through Thursday from 7:15 a.m. until 1:15 p.m. Depending upon where the students live, their day begins anywhere from 5:30 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.

Once on campus, the students, accompanied by their teachers Steve Molina and Dora Stabinski, meet in the dome and receive their duties for the day. The student's main duty is to clean campus but

Molina said "the students do what ever is asked of them and there is always variation."

Like most eighteen to twenty-two year olds, the student's favorite part of the day is break time. This gives the students a chance to eat lunch in the Dome and gain additional social skills through interaction with the student population here on campus. The students involved with the transitional program are excited with the opportunity of being able to interact with other students and observe day to day campus life.

All students involved in the transitional program were enthusiastic with the only complaint being witnessing other students litter and disrespecting our beautiful second home.

"This is an excellent opportunity for them to develop life skills and we also get to benefit from them," said Chuck Walden, director of facility services. "I think they are a great group of young people."

The transitional program is both innovative and outstanding for all parties involved. So next time you see these students keeping our campus clean give them a smile, hug, or a high-five and express to them our gratitude for a job well done.



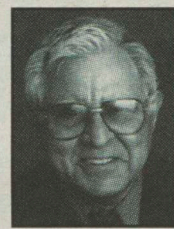
Photo by Loriann Samano / The Pride

Rodolfo Acuña to come to campus

Founder of Chicano Studies speaks as part of Arts and Lectures series

BY ADIA BESS
Pride Staff Writer

As part of the Arts and Lectures series, Dr. Rodolfo Acuña, a man not afraid to challenge the status quo, will present a lecture titled "In Search of Chuhuita".



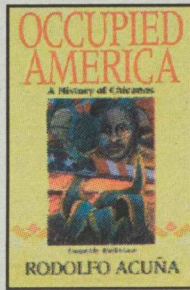
that give him this title. Acuña has authored over fifteen books dealing with racism, discrimination and oppression of the Chicano people. One of his most popular books, "Occupied America: A History of Chicanos", is used in race and ethnic studies courses nationwide and is named "the most renowned text in Chicano History". This book is a comprehensive overview of Chicano history including the role of race and gender in forming the Mexican-American identity.

His passion and expertise in Chicano and Latino History is duly noted in academia as well as among M.E.Ch.A members

throughout the United States. Irene Gomez, president of Mecha at CSUSM, has this to

say about Acuña's visit; "It is real privilege having one of our Chicano leader and founder of Chicano studies in our nation, here in our campus. Mecha is looking forward to hear him speak, not only Mecha students but all CSUSM students, Latinos in particular will be honored to have him speak to us on Thursday of this week. He has opened many doors for other Chicanos in the nation and have influenced younger generations to learn more about chicanismo."

Although Acuña's blunt style of writing and speaking may be uncomfortable to some, it is needed to be heard by all. His lecture will help provide insight into ideas about racism and color blindness in America which will spark conversation and questions among those who attend. Acuña will be speaking on February 24 at 7:00 p.m. in Arts 240. Seating will be limited, so early arrival is recommended.



Priority President Evan Trown meets with The Pride

BY ZACHERY SIMON
Pride Staff Writer

The fickle Gods of Time and Information always seem to make themselves scarce when students consider joining a campus club. Still, those searching defiantly for a group to exercise their beliefs, rather than merely their tastes, might take a moment for any of the three Christian organizations here at CSUSM.

To help provide some guidance, The Pride has conducted interviews with two club leaders and hopes to include the third as well. This week we'll be sharing our conversation with Evan, president of 'Priority Christian Challenge', following up next week with Paul from 'Christ on Campus'. The questions were intended to give students, and perhaps the leaders themselves, a better idea of the beliefs that govern these clubs.

Evan Trown's first hello into the tape recorder is nervous, new to the format, but a pleasant humor suppresses any shyness.

Let's get some background on the club, how long has it been active here at CSUSM?

Priority started about 5 years ago, and I've been here for two.

How long have you been the president?

Actually I just started in December. So I was the vice president last semester, and then got promoted.

Was this a democratic process? How did that go in terms of the ranking?

Pretty much is...if you feel like you're called upon to be in a position of leadership then you, like, apply for it and then pretty much if you want to be it...theen you are. (laughs) Our president graduated in December, and I decided that I would

like to be president, and that I felt like God was telling me to...to step up into the next position of leadership.

How does your club approach recruitment?

Pretty much we just try and make sure that we are open and available to anyone on campus who wants to be involved, just try and, um, just try and create some campus awareness for our club and just get members through that way.

What do you feel is your role within the campus community?

As a club I feel like our role is just to make Christ's presence on this campus known, and really to, um, just create just a place whether through our club or where students can come and just feel the love of Christ and just hang out with other people on campus.

Thank you.

What do you think is the best part about running a Christian organization in the 21st century?

Well At least for us here on this campus in the United States I feel like we're just blessed because we can have this room to have this club on our campus. I don't know I just love the fact that we have the freedom to meet and talk about god on our public school campus.

How would you compare your organization to other spiritually centered youth organizations?

I think it's pretty much the same, I mean I know there's two other Christian clubs

on campus and we actually go to one of the other clubs and we are almost identical in everything we do, um, we all believe the same thing, the three clubs on this campus do anyway, and um basically we just provide dif times and dif locations where people can come to meet.

How much do...excuse me, how much 'does' your-your organization, uh, community, aid...that kind of external helping out? How much community aid do you think your organization provides?

Um, probably not as much as we should be or would like to be. We don't have as many members as we would (chuckles) like

to or as we've had in the past, so its hard to be -as- involved in the community we do um were involved in the sexual responsibility week that's... next week, I think, um, we try and do some out-

reach things outside of the campus but mostly our focus is on this campus and spreading the word of Christ to the students that are on this campus.

Now, what would you say are some of the benefits and some of the setbacks of attending a secular university?

Um -benefits- would be that it's more-open there's a lot more students here that that you can reach um from a Christian perspective and that enables you to have the opportunity to-to witness and share the gospel with more people. Probably some of the setbacks would be just the uh (chuckles a breath) the unsaved people



Photo courtesy of Priority Christian Challenge

that um oppose the things that our clubs does and just the difficulties and the whole process of having to go through the secular campus, uh, rules and regulations before we can have any sort of events.

Thank you...Um, Gettin down to the final questions here. Does your club have a unified concept of heaven?

I think so, most of us, uh, were, well a lot of us were raised in church settings, so most of us have some preconceived notions of everything, that basically what we learn in our club, from past church experiences and what not, so really think do have kinda...a common belief in what heaven is, and that kind of a thing.

Do people who die having rejected Christ go to Hell?

I believe so, yes. We um as a club and as an individual believe that um people who have not asked Christ to...have a personal relationship with them are going to Hell. And that...I mean that says so right in the bible, so.

Okay um, the final question, I know you mentioned earlier there were two other Christian...oriented clubs on campus. Why do you think there are three separate organizations?

You know a lot of people ask us that question and we even ask ourselves that question sometimes. Mostly, it's because we're each funded by a dif church. So, our club is funded by a Baptist organization, and Christ on campus, the other club is sponsored by the Episcopal church, and Intervarsity has its own backing from, I don't know, they're like a huge organization. So, pretty much because we all have these different funds it actually allows us to have um various times that we can meet that can meet the needs of all the students on campus.

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"Jill Scott - Beautifully Human Words and Sounds"



Cody Wilkinson

"Dropkick Murphys"



Mike McDonald

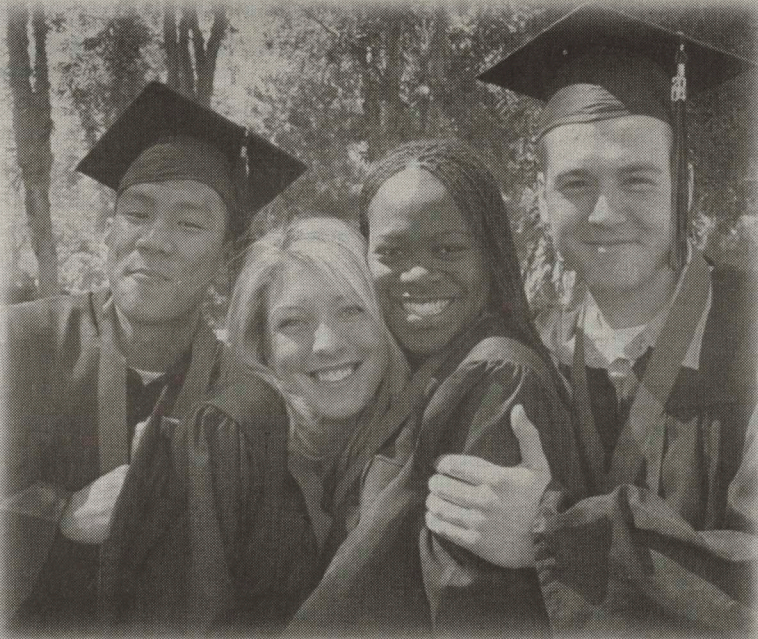
"Sage Francis - A Healthy Distrust"

"Incubus - Make Yourself"



Holly Veneracion

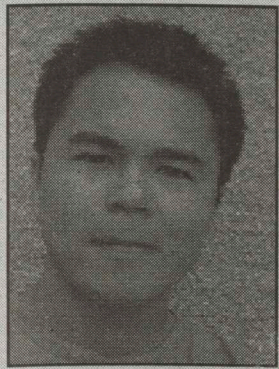
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OMBUDSMAN'S Notes



By JASON NICHOLS
Pride Ombudsman

I can take off that fatty clock 'round my neck and let up on Chez. The News did well last week. I won't go Public Enemy on our News editor this time. He's moved up from Dan Rather to Jon Stewart status in my book.

I'll get to those praises later. For now, my Chuck D eyes are on last week's Opinion page.

What the hell was that?!

The Social Insecurity 'debate' suffered from serious probs of the Sally Field Sybil sort. I realize the Democrats were stomped by the Grand Ole Elephants and have been struggling to find their identity, but I'm sure it's not what was portrayed in last week's issue. "From the Left/From the Right" was nothin' of

the sort. It should'a been titled "From the Extreme Right/Then Right Again."

Now, I'm an Independent cause I could give a hoop-nah-nah 'bout party loyalties. But, after readin' what fell under the 'Left' column last week, I had to rub my eyes and triple check the by-line.

I was shocked to discover it wasn't Bill O'Reilly.

Amira El-Khaouli needs to give serious consideration to changing party lines, cause she's definitely in the wrong camp. Move past GO and collect a Libertarian's card cause even Republicans would step back from the words you pumped out.

Being in college sipping down Venti ex-laxes, having neither kids nor a Beamer don't necessarily make you a liberal, Amira. You may do like them, you may look like them, but you ain't them.

When your words make Phoenix seem like the Green Party, you've got issues.

And Amira's column last week ain't even the real thorn in me bum-bum. It's the fact that our Editors-in-chief who've taken over the Opinion pages, either don't read what's getting

pasted in the tree-skins, don't know their right from their left, or don't give a damn what's getting put down under those distinctions. Let me clear it up for you:

Left: "Social Security good."

Right: "Social Security bad."

And in the future, you may want to know that generally speaking...

Left: "Bush is an idiot."

Right: "Bush may not have 'invented the Internet,' but I know where he stands."

Left: "The war is for oil."

Right: "Like that's a bad thing?! You planning on asking the Spotted Owl to give you a ride?"

Left: "Sponge Bob and Tinky Winky have the right to suffer the marriage penalty on taxes."

Right: "Sponge Bob and Tinky Winky can have a civil union, but no way will they get 'til death do us part."

Everyone else: "Dude, it's a talking sponge that wears pants and an overweight purple thing with a boob-tube in its belly. Ya'll are freaks!"

Here endeth the lesson.

Now, onto praises.

Jason Williams finally spoke. It's about friggin' time. A lot has been said on his behalf in

this paper, and Chez did a damn fine job of getting it straight from the source. And let me just say, whether you take Williams' side or not, you have to give the dude credit for having the mahooshkas to put himself on the public opinion slab.

There's a lot of talking heads on this campus that abuse this paper to give their nickel opinions five-dollar words. (Count me amongst 'em.) But Williams ain't one of us. Until Chez's article last week, Williams had avoided attempts for an interview. To grant one in the face of an investigation that found Baker and Poncherello were okay to put the cuffs on, shoots down all theories that suspected Williams was doing this just to pull a 'Get Out of Jail' free card. My ethereal hat goes off to Chez and most of all to Mr. Williams.

Thank you.

And I'd like to throw in Matt Schramm with that gratitude for his front and center article on the "Advising problems." It wasn't News to me, cause along with my Lit. studies on big words abusing French dudes who say 'History is narrative,' I've been pursuing a major in that 'narrative.' (I'm a History/Lit major if you're missing the point.)

An experience akin to custody visits with divorcing parents.

Either way, I've been just as much a victim of the advising woes of History freaks as the rest of me classmates. Matt balanced those woes with the reasons for them. Something that tends to be lacking in our news stories. I felt no manipulations or bias, though I know Schramm is a classmate and so faces the same advising probs. It was nice to get a balanced perspective on the situation that didn't place blame on the Advising office who've been doing their best to tackle that Beast that came from Sacramento. (Budget cuts.)

Well, that about does it for this tale of woes. I'm off to shop for an iPod so I can join Julie in our contempt for Apple's customer service. While it works I'll be listenin' to Fanstasia Barrino as I wait for another chance to laugh at Simon's ability to turn narcissistic pop-star hopefuls into blubbering crybabies. Gee, can you guess which guilty pleasure I enjoy. Nichols out.

nicho028@csusm.edu or pride@csusm.edu

Bush budget

...More that meets the eye

BY CHRISTINE BALDWIN
Pride Staff Writer

Reading from the White House's official website (www.whitehouse.gov) about Bush's proposal for the '06 Department of Education budget, you'd get warm fuzzies about the millions he's putting into education. After further research, however, those warm fuzzies might turn into knots of icy cold pricklies.

The website provides a description of the budget's purpose, which is to cut the current deficit in half by 2009. There are highlights that focus on the President's numerous increases to education, and every other department. The Department of Education link discusses the major focuses in the new budget which include increasing Title I funds (money to schools in lower

income areas to improve their test scores), and expanding No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to high schools to help at-risk youth stay in school. Furthermore, Bush is proposing to increase federal Pell Grants to low income college students. Hooray! At first glance, the budget sounds wonderful.

But wait a tick...I'm not a fan of the Bush, something must be awry.

I did some researching on my own and found that Bush's new budget proposal for education is not all it's cracked up to be.

The Department of Education has a proposed 0.9 percent decrease to \$56 billion, which is a \$530 million cut from last year. That means education is actually going to get less money than it did last year, and in previous years. On the other hand, Bushy has proposed to increase mili-

tary spending by 4.8 percent to \$419.3 billion, which is a \$19 billion increase from last year. The military and education both have different scales, it does cost more to defend the country then it does to educate, but that's not the point I am trying to make. The point is that the military is receiving a significantly larger percentage of money compared to education. In my opinion, that says something about the value of education versus the value of national defense/Iraqi liberation.

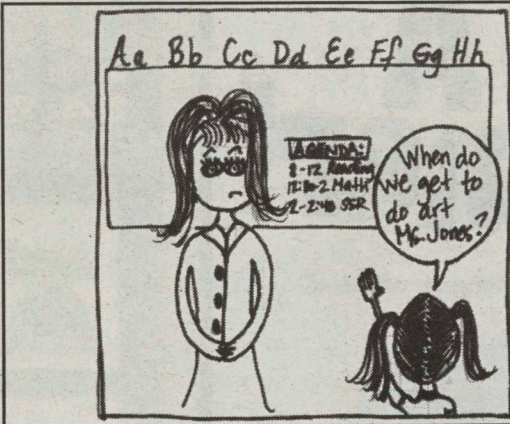
I think it's great that the President wants to cut our debt in half,

but at the expense of education? Some of the programs that are going to be cut from schools are vocational programs at the high school level, Safe and Drug-Free School grants, money for technology, Upward Bound programs for inner-city youth, and the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program (ESSCP). By cutting the ESSCP, students are going to lose counseling and mental health services and school counselors will lose their jobs. Counselors are crucial for academic success especially for students with learning disabilities.

Comic by Christine Baldwin / The Pride

I have to wonder why implement NCLB into high schools? Isn't there already enough pressure to get into college without the undue stress of annual standardized tests? Bush's purpose is to narrow the achievement gap between richer districts and poorer districts. I agree with what Bushy has to say about quality education, narrowing the achievement gap and providing equal education to children of all backgrounds...I just disagree with the way he goes about doing it. There is no incentive for high school students to do well on yearly standardized testing, in fact the worse they do, the more money their school will get with Title I funding. It is still their SAT scores that are going to get them into college.

Well, I will benefit from Bush's Pell Grant increase (it pays to not be employed and to be a full time student), but I just don't see how elementary and secondary schools are going to benefit.



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A shot of whiskey with a university bureacratic chaser

BY MICHAEL DOLAN
Pride Staff Writer

If you have been at Cal State San Marcos for a few years, you will undoubtedly remember the CORE survey of 2002. The CORE survey examined the drinking habits of CSUSM students. Not surprising, we learned that there was not a significant problem with excessive alcohol consumption at our school. (Who could forget the mouse pads and posters blasting us with statistics designed to make us think otherwise before having that third or fourth drink when out on the town?)

Why is it that CSUSM has now received a \$48,000 portion of a state grant designed for alcohol and traffic safety? It seems to me that if there is not a significant problem with drinking on campus, and the student population in general cannot be categorized as "problem drinkers," then what exactly will the University implement with this money?

According to the January 31 press release announcing this award, the money will go to further surveys and research aimed "to identify the highest risk alcohol-licensed establishments patronized by San Marcos students." These 'problem' bars in the community will then be subject to "comprehensive risk assessment inventories"

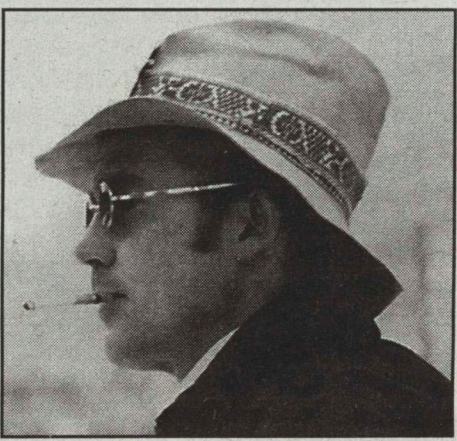


Photos by Michael Dolan / The Pride

that will give the University information to dissuade students from going to those places. In addition, the bars that are identified as problematic will find themselves in a Big Brother dragnet as the University teams with local law enforcement "to increase visibility of DUI checkpoints in and around areas frequented by students." Am I the only one who is creeped out with a chill of fascism?

First off, the University must back off. If students are of legal drinking age and are respected as individuals, then the choices they make are their own. If they want to go to a bar and drink, the University should not interfere. If they want to test the waters and run the DUI gauntlet, then let law enforcement do their job without the information of where and when students will be drinking being handed to

them by the University. This is the worst kind of liberal left 'we know what is best for you' combined with fastidious right 'you will fall in line and do what we say is right' I have seen proposed on our campus. I drink in San Marcos often at places I can safely assume will soon be 'problem' bars. I drive home from these bars. I am a responsible adult of 28 years and know when not to drive home after drinking. I do not, however, look forward to ditching checkpoints on my way home so that I can avoid an arbitrary and static BAC standard which if I exceed will land me in jail. This is soon the reality, though. I hope the University reconsiders its priorities. Failing that, I hope the people stand up and call for responsible accountability of their tax dollars from where this grant money originates.



Hunter S. Thompson

In drunken memory of Hunter S. Thompson (1937-2005) for without the Technicolor of his Gonzo journalism, the news and the world would still be in black and white. --Michael Dolan

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"Nobody Knows"



BY ZACHARY J. SIMON
Pride Staff Writer

It's an independent foreign film. Double whammy.

You don't recognize any of the actors AND you have to read subtitles.

Who would suck their salty fingers to that, even if the popcorn were as free as the admission?

Granted, the trappings of the f-word can lend a positive bias, even to reviewers who get it all the time (not this one), but thankfully the theater was packed with enough chatting teenagers to bring the cynicism up on par. That these teens were mostly Asian and the film set in modern Japan should make no difference; a trendy young target audience member really could hold still for this one.

"Nobody Knows" held an advance screening at the Landmark theaters in Hillcrest last Thursday, and wasn't worth



Photo courtesy of IFC Films

the drive for being free, or for being so much 'deeper' or 'more profound' than the average Hollywood release.

Somewhere between a "Sesame Street" intermission and "The Lord of the Flies," it managed an unselfconscious subtlety for what might seem too long or, even more seat-shifting, too real. A few repeated symbols and formulaic resolutions disrupt the flow, but plot and emotion both remain so unpredictable that it would be a shame to watch the trailer, or even give away a synopsis.

"Nobody Knows" is strongly recommended for anyone who thinks they have everything figured out about family values and nothing to gain from 'art' movies.

For show times see www.landmark-theatres.com and, for those who enjoy it, look for 'Grave of the Fireflies' as another example of how the Japanese can handle any film genre that floats their way.

"Nobody Knows" starts a very limited one week engagement at The Ken Cinema, Friday, February 25.

Snoop Dogg is right:

Everybody needs a Sidekick

BY AMIRA EL-KHAOULI
Pride Staff Writer

Play that funky music white boy, play that funky music right...

Maybe it's just the excitement of having a new cell phone, but I couldn't help myself: I had to have that famous Wild Cherry song as my ring tone on my Sidekick II.

Yes, that's right a bunch of celebrities asking each other how much a pad of butter is got to me. It just looked ridiculously cool. And Paris Hilton pimped hers out with a crystal studded lining.

Now, I don't know how I even survived without one. It's a little bigger and heavier than all those flip phones that everyone has, but it has just about everything in it.

The feature that the manufacturers have been advertising like crazy is the full keypad. No more pressing a number three times to get that desired

letter. The keypad is hidden underneath a screen that flips out. Big screen; so many possibilities!

That screen really comes in handy when cameras are restricted from a concert for example. Just laugh when that stranger right next to you pulls out a tiny little screen on their flip phone.

Then you can bust out your Sidekick and, shabam, you are now the coolest person there. Then the band sees the large screen all the way from the stage and invites you to their limo after the concert.

You really hit it off with the lead singer and he proposes to you on-stage at the Grammy's. Sidekick II, \$495. Having an

ultra-envious relationship with a rock star, priceless.

Okay, maybe this phone isn't that good, but it's pretty damn close.

Come on, anything that looks like a little Game Boy has to be. You can even get that old-school '70s style video game where your ship has to shoot the asteroids. It's called "Rock & Rocket" on the phone.

Then, there's text message, AOL Instant Messenger (AIM), T-mobile (T-mobile email) and the Internet on here. It even functions as a PDA. Oh yeah, it's a phone too.

That Internet really comes in handy when you're lost and you need MapQuest, or you need to quickly log onto cliff-

notes.com to read about a book for lit class.

A warning though: anything Internet related does not work in the Kellogg library. Unfortunately, that includes AIM. T-mobile can never find a network in there.

My other complaint is that I experience my phone freezing. It wouldn't do anything--not even shut off. I have to note how unhelpful tech support is. They told me I needed to get a new phone.

I didn't believe them and I had my phone working again in a half hour. I didn't remember exactly what I did though. If it happens to you, just try pressing the shut-off button several times, using the reset underneath the screen, or popping out the Sim card briefly.

So what are you waiting for? Go find a deal on the phone so that you don't have to pay full price. Because Snoop Dogg is right, "Everybody needs a Sidekick."



Photo courtesy of T-Mobile



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CALENDAR Of Events

Tuesday, February 22

American Indian Student Alliance meeting--free pizza
7-7:50pm, Clarke Field House, room 108

Progressive Activists Network meeting
4pm, University Hall 449

College Democrat meeting
7pm, The Dome

College Republicans meeting
9-10pm, Churchill's Pub, 887 West San Marcos Blvd.

Wednesday, February 23

Human Development Club Lecture Series--free food and beverages
3pm, Clarke Field House, room 110

Sigma Iota Epsilon meeting for business students
5:30pm, Grappa Restaurant

"Ray" at Cougar Movie Series--\$2 students, \$3 faculty/staff, \$4 guests
8pm, Clarke Field House, Grand Salon

Thursday, February 24

Pre-Health Society meeting, featuring a speaker from Core Learning discussing the GRE and GMAT--free food
11am-11pm, Academic Hall 407

Black History Month College Bowl--students test their knowledge of Black history
11:45am-1pm, Mezzanine

"Ray" at Cougar Movie Series--\$2 students, \$3 faculty/staff, \$4 guests
6pm, Clarke Field House, Grand Salon

Arts and Lectures Series--"In Search of Chuahita" a lecture by Rodolfo Acuna--free
7pm, Arts 240

Progressive Activists Network meeting
7pm, Mocha Market Place, San Marcos Blvd.

Priority Christian Challenge meeting--a guest speaker will compare Christianity, Islam, and the Jewish faiths.
7pm, Commons 206

Friday, February 25

Black History Month brunch--free
9:30-11:30am, Clarke Field House, Grand Salon

"Ray" at Cougar Movie Series--\$2 students, \$3 faculty/staff, \$4 guests
7pm, Clarke Field House, Grand Salon

Monday, February 28

Arts and Lectures Series--"Ghostlight" a film tribute to Martha Graham--free
5pm, Arts 240

Tuesday, February 29

Progressive Activists Network meeting
4pm, University Hall 449

College Democrat meeting
7pm, The Dome

College Republicans meeting
9-10pm, Churchill's Pub, 887 West San Marcos Blvd.

Send information for The Pride Calendar of Events to pride@csusm.edu with "Calendar" in the subject.

Viva San Marcos!

ASI hosts Casino Night in the Field House

BY YVONNE BRETT
Pride Staff Writer

What happens in the Field House, stays in the Field House.

All that was missing was the noisy clamor of the slot machines when the ASI sponsored Casino Night last Thursday. Participants were handed \$500 in play money as they came in the door, which they traded in for chips to play poker, roulette or blackjack. Dealers in white shirts and bow ties from Casino Magic ran the tables.

Erik Groset, the Director of Social Programming for ASI was in charge of the event, attended by around 200 people.

"I couldn't have done it without the help of the ASI Program Board," said Groset. The group is planning another evening within the next few months that would feature poker games.

Mike Louzek, waiting for a spot to open up on



Photos by Yvonne Brett / The Pride

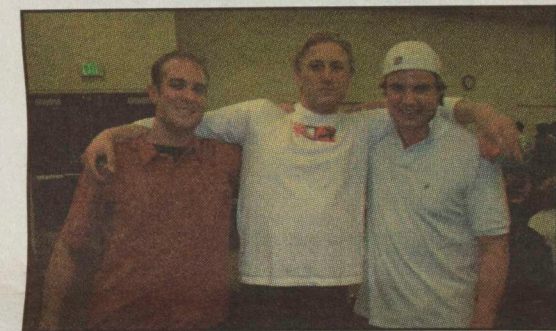
one of the popular poker tables, said he was, "winning massive amounts of money and having lots of fun."

As they finished playing, players traded their chips for raffle tickets that they could put in boxes to win prizes. Drawings were held at the end of the evening and lucky winners went home with prizes like: a trip for two to Laughlin, the Halo 2 game for X-Box, a George Foreman grill, a cordless mouse, an I-Pod Shuffle, and many more.

Travis Roger, who attends Palomar, but lives in the UVA was checking out the prize table with his roommate J3rgen Havre who is from Bergen, Norway.

"I am having fun enjoying the American lifestyle," said Havre. He laughingly added that he is, "looking for an American sweetheart to bring back to Europe."

Casino Night was a lot of fun because you didn't have to drive to Vegas for five hours, if you lost your shirt they gave you a free one, and heck, you weren't losing real money anyway.



Mike Louzek, Travis Roger, and J3rgen Havre



Keanu is wooden as "Constantine"

Neither Milton, nor Heaven, nor Hell can save DC Comics adaptation

BY PATRICK B. LONG
Pride Staff Writer

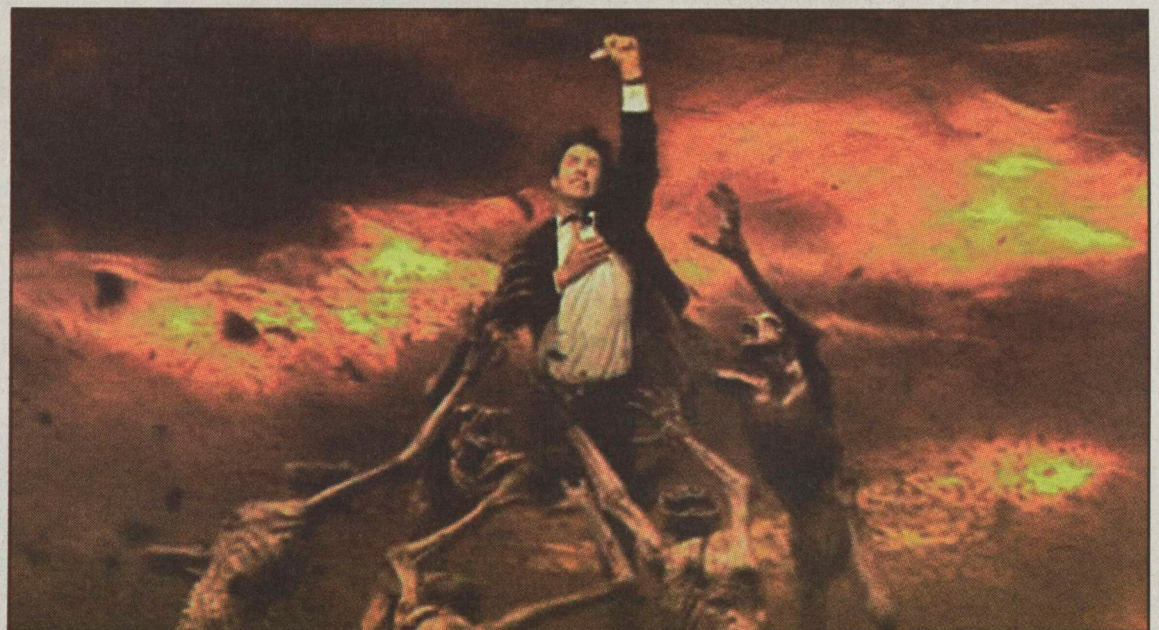


Demons. Brimstone. CGI. John Constantine (Keanu Reeves) is a self-appointed agent of demon exorcism in this DC comic book adaptation of "Hellblazer."

"Constantine" is a carry-over of John Milton's epic, "Paradise Lost," about a war between Heaven and Hell. In the story, humans are supposed to be left alone to their own devices and without direct intrusion from either Heaven or Hell. Each side tries to collect as many souls as it can, and the one with the most souls wins. Milton, a pro-Protestant, would not be too keen on the

idea that the Catholics of Constantine are the heroes.

Constantine was born with a gift that he doesn't understand. He eventually attempts suicide but doesn't succeed and returns to Earth after a spell in Hell. Catholic doctrine states that suicide is a one-way ticket to Hell, so Constantine develops his skill of sending demons home in order to secure a ticket into Heaven. He is recruited by Angela (Rachel Weisz), to solve the unanswered question of why her sister committed suicide. Along the way, they battle demons with weapons



Photos courtesy of Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.

of angelic origin.

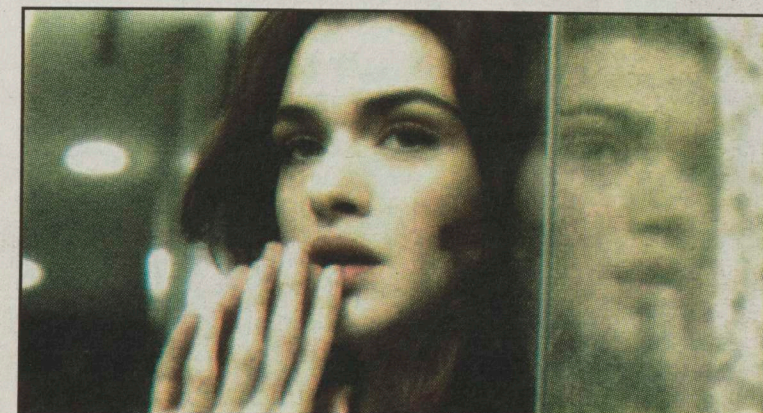
The highlights of the movie are the special effects and action. If the plot is overdone, or even confusing, the action should keep you entertained. It received an "R" rating and maybe saved the movie for me. A "PG-13" would have been too boring with the bad acting and old plot. It has some gory scenes that may even rival that of "The Exorcist," but is counteracted but a lot of dry, dark humor by the character Constantine. The story is far from original, and has been better explained. In fact I could count the number

of movies it borrowed from, like "The Prophecy", "Blade" and even "Dogma."

As usual, Reeves pulls a sub-par performance, I still don't understand why someone with the personality of a wooden doll seems to keep getting work. I do give him credit for trying a character with a morose sense of humor, but he delivers it with force. Even Weisz seems to be brought down by Reeves and acts below her norm. There was a surprising performance by rock star Gavin Rossdale of Bush. He brings an eerie performance to

the demon Balthazar.

If the movie's purpose was to produce an original story with a great plot or even good acting, it failed. If its purpose was to make an action film based on a comic book, with decent special effects, then it did a good job.



					WEAK
					SO-SO
					DECENT
					GOOD
					GREAT