



SJSU football
crushed at
homecoming by
Aggie stampede
Sports, p. 3

INSIDE



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- P. 4 A&E: Christina Molina writes that the Wayans Brothers new show at the San Jose Improv is a hit
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CAMPUS

Students get fired up



Students watch as a Fire Pixie performer breathes fire at SJSU Fire on the Fountain Festival at Tower Lawn on Thursday. Photo by Basil Sar / Contributing Photographer

SEE PHOTO STORY ON PAGE 6

COMPETITION

SJSU forensics team earns second place at tournament

By Celeste Lodge
@celestelodge

The SJSU Forensics Team finished strong at its second tournament and received second place out of the four year universities for the Sweepstake Award.

The tournament was Friday and Saturday and was held at Santa Rosa Junior College.

About 12 other colleges attended the tournament including San Francisco State University, which received first place in the Sweepstake Award, UC Berkeley, Diablo Valley College and Butte College.

The Sweepstake Award is cumulative of all the points each teammate received in his or her events to gauge which school scored the highest overall.

"I think it's a reflection of how hard we've been working," said senior English major Katrina Swanson. "I'm really proud of the team."

Every member of the SJSU Forensics Team who attended the event received at least one award.

"The team did very well overall," said Matt Zweier, fifth year communication studies student. "Most people were nervous going into their events and not sure how they would do, but they ended up winning in a wide variety of categories."

Both Swanson and Zweier have been team members for three years.

The teammates competed in many different events including debate, impromptu speaking, communications analysis, prose, duo, poetry, extemporaneous speaking and the after-dinner speech.

Chantel Steburg and Katelin Zweifel-Korzuchin, who joined the team this semester, received first place in the novice duo event.

"We've been working really hard on the piece, and I feel like it paid off," said Steburg, a senior communications studies.

Zweifel-Korzuchin also received fourth place for top speaker in the novice parliamentary debate event.

"I was really shocked," said Zweifel-Korzuchin, a sophomore advertising major. "I wasn't expecting to place at all, especially not in the top four."

Ryan Gallagher received fourth place in novice prose.

Gallagher is a junior business management major and has been on the team for two years.

David Jaques received third place out of about 30 people in the novice impromptu event.

Jaques is a senior radio, television and film major and has been on the team since last semester.

This was Onofre Galvez's first

tournament, and he received third place in the novice poetry event.

In the open debate event, Zweier and his teammate Avesta Sabetian took second place, Zweier took first for the overall speaker, Swanson took second for overall speaker and Sabetian took fifth for overall speaker.

Gallagher was a finalist in open extemporaneous.

Gallagher gave a speech about passing Proposition 34 to eliminate the death penalty.

"It's a controversial issue that has good evidence for and against it," Gallagher said. "I was able to give articulation with strong evidence for my stance which made it an enjoyable speech to give."

Swanson received second place in the open extemporaneous event and Sabetian received third.

"Because it's the first time I'm competing in the higher up level making it to finals is very exciting," said Sabetian, a senior industrial engineering major.

In the open impromptu event, Swanson took first and Zweier took second place out of twelve competitors.

"I typically don't make it past preliminary rounds in impromptu speaking," Zweier said. "So to make it past that and to get second was really big for me."

Zweier spoke about the importance of communications studies for bettering the world and Swanson spoke about how people aren't doing enough for the environment.

"We need to do a better job of taking care of the earth and I got to tie in a lot of examples that I care about," Swanson said.

Swanson also received first place in the open communication analysis event.

Her speech focused on how people have been making fun of Hilary Clinton because she doesn't wear any makeup.

Her point was that women don't have to dress nicely in order to be great.

"I've been working really hard on the communication analysis," Swanson said. "This is the first time I've gotten a good placing on that."

Swanson said the team is improving and she is looking forward to the next tournament.

"There will be more schools at the next tournament, so we'll see a bigger challenge," Swanson said. "We've got our work cut out for us, but I think we have high hopes after coming away from this tournament so successfully."

Celeste Lodge is a Spartan Daily staff writer. Follow her on Twitter @celestelodge.

CULTURE

Student Union plays host for Indian festival at 'Raas Garba'

By Thyra Phan
@ThyraPhan

Dressed in shades of crimson and blue ghagra choli and kurta pajamas, more than 150 people danced, clapped and banged sticks in celebration of the goddess, Durga, at "Raas Garba" Saturday night, hosted by the Indian Student Organization.

Raas garba is a style of dance that originated in Gujarat, India, which involves the clapping of hands (garba) and the banging of sticks (sticks), according to Vineet Kothari, alumni adviser for the Indian Student Organization.

Ghagra choli is a traditional Indian dress worn by women, consisting of a scarf, top and long skirt, according to Sandeep Kylas, vice president of ISO.

The dresses come in rich, earthy colors and adorned with lavish sequins. These are paired with an array of gold and silver bangles on the wrists and chunky earrings and necklaces.

A kurta is a long tunic worn by men, which is paired with pants called pajamas, he said.

"Red is a prominent color and symbolic for the goddess," Kylas said. "Yellow symbolizes turmeric, which is used when you do a prayer to god."

"This cultural celebration means I get to meet other Indian people, and we get to celebrate and worship our gods," said freshman Jinal Ahir.

She said the style of garba dancing is simple and involves a lot of arm

SEE RAAS GARBA ON PAGE 2



Attendees dance raas garba, a style of dance that originated in Gujarat, India Saturday at the Student Union Barrett Ballroom. Photo by Basil Sar / Contributing Photographer

Raas Garba: Attendees enjoy night of culture and tradition

FROM PAGE 1

movement such as clapping and snapping.

The band, Dr. Sharvari Dixit and Troupe, played a medley of "traditional, folk Indian music," according to Kothari, with a steady beat on two drums and four melodic voices.

Dancers sashayed and swayed their arms as they formed a large circle in the Barrett Ballroom at the Student Union.

According to Shruti Sheth, an attendee, dancing in a circle symbolizes the battle between good or evil.

"The goddess is in the center, and everyone dances in a circle," she said. "We all synchronize and move forward in circles."

As a sign of respect, dancers are required to remove their shoes.

"Whenever we go to temples or people's houses, the first thing we do is take off our shoes," Ahir said. "Our shoes are dirty - we want to be respectful and clean by taking off our shoes."

According to freshman Mirat Panchal, the celebra-

tion of the Navaratri festival differs greatly in the United States than in India.

"We try to make it similar by following the same routine of dancing," she said, "But it's more intense in India because it lasts more than a week."

At SJSU, the celebration lasts one night, for about five hours, but she said the length of celebration for Indians may vary, depending on their location in the United States.

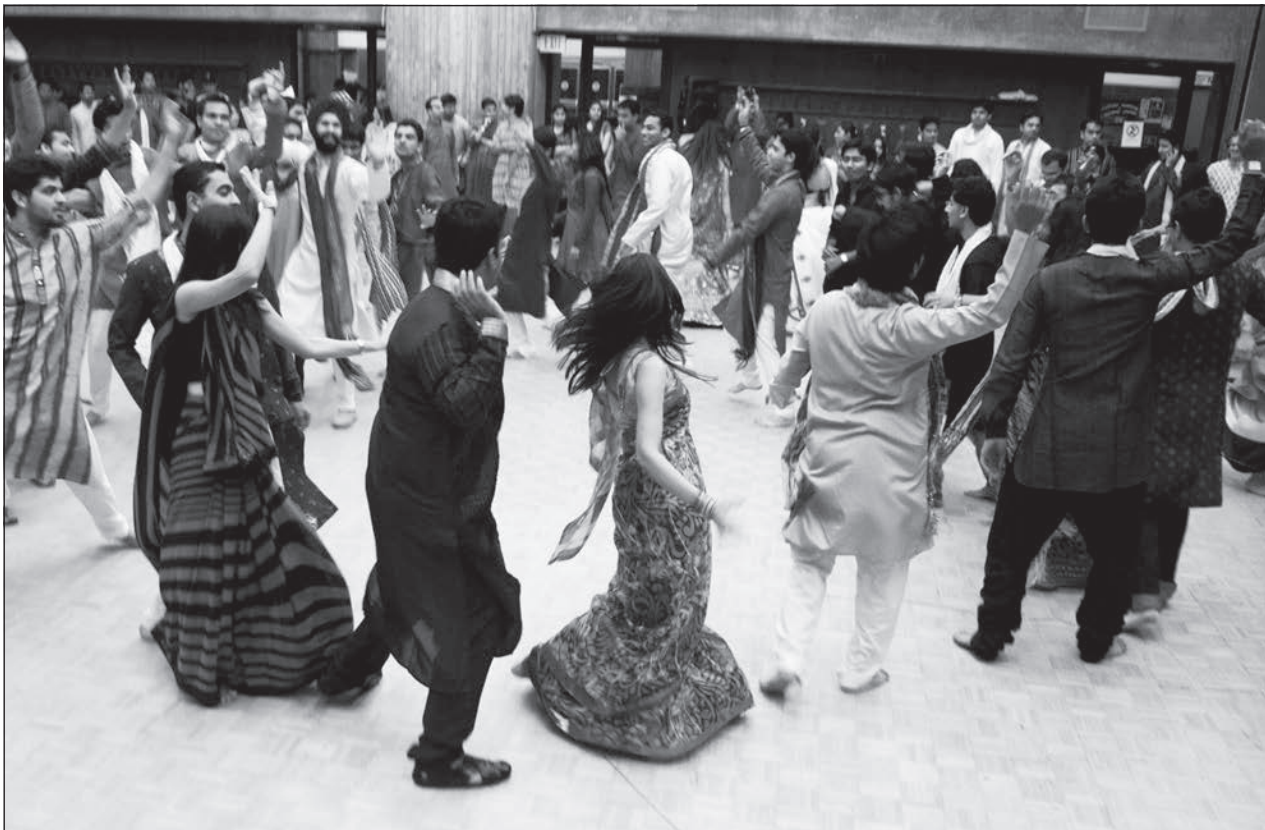
In India, the Navaratri festival is celebrated for nine nights, according to Kothari.

"We celebrate each night for the goddess, Durga," he said. "She has nine different forms, and each form is dedicated for each night."

"Although my family is not here with me tonight, raas garba brings people together," Panchal said. "The people here believe in the same thing you do."

Ahir said the celebrations begin and end in puja, or prayer, and everyone surrounds a portrait of the goddess as they sing a song similar to a hymn.

Candles surround the portrait, and the flames of the



Men and women dance in a circle around one another at the Student Union Barrett Ballroom Saturday to celebrate the Navaratri festival. The Indian Student organization hosted the event. **Photo by Basil Sar / Contributing Photographer**

wick represent the god Agni, according to Kothari.

A rangoli - a design made out of brightly colored powder - surrounds the portrait of the goddess.

For the duration of the Navaratri festival, participants

may choose to fast, according to Kothari.

"People eat once a day, and there's certain things they don't eat," he said. "They try to eat more fruits but not wheat or rice."

After the ninth day, a large

feast is consumed. According to Ahir, some of the foods served are kitri, rice with different curries on top and puri, fried flatbread.

For dessert, she said mango ras or mango juice, and gulab jambu, sweet rice, are served.

"I feel like I'm in India, and I'm dancing with my friends," said Sheth. "The celebration is not different in the United States - it feels like home."

Thyra Phan is a Spartan Daily staff writer follow her on Twitter @ThyraPhan.

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UTAH STATE 49, SJSU 27

SJSU win streak snapped at four in homecoming loss

By Dennis Biles
@Denny149

Riding a four game winning streak coming into Saturday's contest against Utah State, the Spartans were looking to keep their momentum going while also solidifying their bid for a bowl game. Unfortunately, a swarming Aggies defense refused to oblige, racking up a school record 13 sacks as they dominated the Spartans 49-27.

"It was great execution on their part, while we just had a few mishaps," junior defensive back Bene Benwikere said.

On a day in which both defenses played a subpar game, the Aggies attack simply proved to be too much for SJSU to handle.

After taking the opening kickoff and driving 67 yards in 12 plays, the Spartans drive was stalled at the Utah State 8-yard line, resulting in a 25-yard field goal by freshman kicker Austin Lopez, giving SJSU an early 3-0 lead. It would turn out to be the only lead they would have in the game.

The Aggies wasted little time in making a response, taking the ensuing possession and marching 86 yards

in 13 plays culminating in a 17-yard touchdown toss from sophomore quarterback Chuckie Keeton to senior wide receiver Chuck Jacobs to give Utah State a 7-3 lead.

Keeton would have his way with the Spartan defense all afternoon, using his quick feet to elude defenders and keep plays alive while leaving Spartan pursuers grasping for air.

Junior quarterback David Fales would have no such luck with the Aggies defense as he was dropped to the turf 13 times, the most sacks SJSU has surrendered since giving up 10 to Stanford back in 2008.

"I trust my O-line, they did a good job, they (Utah State) just threw a couple different looks at us," Fales said. "We've got to communicate. We've got to look at the film and see what they did and make adjustments."

After getting the ball back after a SJSU punt, the Aggies scored another touchdown in just under one minute, thanks to a 47-yard pass from Keeton to senior wide receiver Matt Austin on the first play of the drive to put Utah State at the Spartan 6-yard line. Austin would grab a 5-yard touch-

down pass three plays later to make it 14-3 Aggies.

Utah State would widen their lead at the start of the second quarter on a 50-yard touchdown run by senior running back Kerwynn Williams for a 21-3 Aggies lead.

A shanked punt by junior punter Harrison Waid gave the Aggies excellent field position at midfield, and Utah State would score another touchdown on a 21-yard strike from Keeton to make it 28-3.

The Spartans would finally answer back a few minutes later as Fales connected with junior wide receiver Kyle Nunn for a 3-yard touchdown to make it 28-10.

After finally managing to halt a Utah State drive and forcing a punt, Lopez booted a 26-yard field goal to make it a 28-13 ball game.

After forcing another Utah State punt, Fales directed a precise two minute offense, attacking the right sideline with quick passes to manage the clock and move the ball down field.

The Spartans hit paydirt when Fales hooked up with junior wide receiver Noel



SJSU wide receiver Noel Grigsby dives for a pass in the endzone but is unable to make the catch during the Spartans loss to the Utah State. Photo by Raphael Kluzniok / Contributing Photographer

Grigsby for a 20-yard touchdown just before the half to make it 28-20.

With the grab, Grigsby became the school's all-time leader in receiving yards.

On the third play of the second half, Williams busted through the defense for an 86-yard touchdown run to put Utah State up 35-20.

The Aggies defense then did their part, bringing down Fales with eight sacks in the second half to keep the SJSU offense in check for the rest of the game. A 4-yard touch-

down pass from Fales to Grigsby would be all the scoring the Spartans could muster for the rest of the game.

"We just messed up on a few things on both sides and they took advantage," junior linebacker Keith Smith said. "We tried to fix them, but by then it was too late."

Utah State had no such issues, as Williams carried the ball 15 times for 175 yards and three scores.

"We made mistakes when they didn't," junior linebacker Vince Buhagiar said. "We just

have to come out in practice with a chip on our shoulders. We need to work harder."

Utah State would add two more scores, one in the third and the last in the fourth, to close out the scoring at 49-27.

The Spartans will look to get back on the winning side of the things as they hit the road to take on the University of Texas-San Antonio Roadrunners.

Dennis Biles is a Spartan Daily staff writer. Follow him on Twitter at @Denny149.

SJSU 2, SEATTLE 1

Women's soccer team earns second conference win over Redhawks

By Thyra Phan
@ThyraPhan

The women's soccer team secured a win after a grueling game against Seattle University's Redhawks, winning 2-1 at Spartan Stadium Sunday afternoon.

According to head coach Jeff Leightman, the Redhawks were "a dangerous team," especially since they hold a series lead with a 4-2-2 record against SJSU.

However, due to the Spartans' perseverance, Leightman said the team made its "first multi-goal game since Bakersfield."

Despite numerous attempts to bury the ball into the net, neither Spartans nor Redhawks scored a goal in the first half of the game.

About 20 minutes into the game, freshman goalkeeper Zoe Makrigrannis saved a goal after Redhawks sophomore forward Stephanie Verdoia attempted to drive it into the net.

Makrigrannis saved another shot from Redhawks junior midfielder Heather

Thomas 43 minutes into the first half.

"I think we controlled the tempo and dictated the game-play (of the first half)," Leightman said, "But they're really good so we couldn't let them settle (into) our rhythm."

A minute and 24 seconds into the second half of the game, junior midfielder Megan Molina scored the first goal in a direct free kick, scoring her second goal for the season.

About 28 minutes into the second half, SJSU freshman defender Rachel Docherty secured the second goal off the corner kick, assisted by sophomore forward Gabriella Stange.

Docherty sent the ball flying into the net over the Redhawks' heads, making it her first goal of the season.

"It feels great," she said on her first goal. "The win feels even better though for sure — we really needed that win."

With four minutes left in the game, Seattle University's junior midfielder Julia Besagno scored a goal from



Senior forward Michelle Haughey takes the ball down the field in the SJSU women's soccer team's victory against Seattle University. Photo by Jason Reed / Contributing Photographer

a penalty kick.

Two of the shots were made by freshman forward Alyssa Montejo, who recently recovered from an injury but said she did her best to persevere.

SJSU's women soccer has

an overall record of 4-10-1, and 2-4-0 in WAC.

"We kept it together the full 90 minutes," Docherty said. "I think the passion and heart was there more than normal, and that's what did

it for us in the end."

Coach Leightman said the games this season have been tough. "We've been playing some good soccer and just not getting the results that we deserve," he said. "Today, we

finally scored first and that just made such a difference."

He said a tactical change in game-play helped the team and "playing with the lead is much easier than trying to play from behind and chase the game."

"If we can keep our energy up and heart in the game, then we have the talent to do it," Docherty said. "It's just a matter of showing up (to) the game and getting the job done."

Leightman said he hopes the win will give the team confidence.

"This will give us what we've been lacking," he said. "Being able to score will give us more spring in our step."

The soccer team's next home game is on Sunday at 1 p.m. against Sacramento State.

Thyra Phan is a Spartan Daily staff writer. Follow her on Twitter at @ThyraPhan.

Check out the men's soccer team Sunday game coverage on spartandaily.com

SJSU ASSOCIATED STUDENTS César E. Chávez Community Action Center

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Film: Fists of Freedom
12pm-2pm | @ MOSAIC

16 Election Debates 2012
All in Engineering Rm. 189
Measure D & Proposition 30
9-10:15am
Propositions 34, 35, & 36
1:30-2:45pm
Community Debate:
Measure D & Proposition 30
7-9pm

17 Legacy Week Rally & John Carlos Keynote
12pm-1:15pm | @ Statues
SJSU All Community Photo with John Carlos
1:15pm | @ Statues
John Carlos Book Signing
The John Carlos Story: The Sports Moment that Changed the World
1:30-2:30pm | @ Statues

18 Poverty Under The Stars
Tent Setup 12pm/
Program 6-8pm | @ Statues
Guest Speakers and performances followed by movie and campus sleep out.
Sleepout Until 9am | @ Statues



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COMEDY REVIEW

Shawn and Marlon Wayans bring on the laughs at SJ Improv

By Christina Molina
@ms_cmolina



A charming crowd gathered for well-known comedians and brothers Shawn and Marlon Wayans for their opening night at the San Jose Improv Thursday evening.

The theater was filled with anxious and excited guests who were served dinner and drinks prior to the show.

According to the hostess, the balcony seating was closed, but the entire lower level was filled with 270 attendees.

The host of the evening warmed-up the crowd with a solid 15-minute opening act that was based on his hometown of Brooklyn and his impression of San Jose.

By 8:30 p.m., it was showtime and the crowd had built up enough anticipation to keep the cheers and roars going while Marlon Wayans walked to the stage down the middle aisle through the crowd.

Marlon's 45-minute stand-up was gold, with hilarious and sometimes controversial jokes on a range of topics from the Jerry Sandusky case to famous musicians and athletes.

His act would not be complete without Marlon's flamboyant impersonations and silly voices, mocking notable names like Jay-Z, Justin

Bieber and Hulk Hogan. Marlon shined with his crude language and inappropriate gestures, all of which enhanced his jokes and imitations of celebrities.

It wouldn't be improv without some impromptu material, which was graciously provided by a few audience members. One gentleman, who both Marlon and Shawn recognized as "Kat Williams' dad" was a good sport while being ridiculed on his distinct look and style.

Marlon ended his act with an animated Hulk Hogan mimic by ripping his shirt off and wishing all a good night.

While this was Marlon's first visit and performance in San Jose, brother Shawn Wayans has been in the South Bay before and expressed his excitement to be back.

"I am so glad to be here (in San Jose)," Shawn said to the applauding crowd.

Although Marlon had a little more charisma with his comedy, Shawn did not disappoint during his hysterical act that lasted more than an hour.

Shawn was superb in describing the troubles of today's society such as the irony of degrading rap and hip-hop music and the women who love it.

He also got personal, mentioning his three children — two girls and one boy — and his failed relationship, which led to some very funny relationship advice.

From sex, money and



Shawn and Marlon Wayans performed four stand-up comedy shows from Thursday Oct. 11 to Sunday Oct. 14 at San Jose Improv. Photo courtesy of islandmix.com

communication, or lack thereof on all accounts, Shawn was blunt and brilliant on the faults of both genders involved in commitment.

Shawn and Marlon Wayans are the two youngest brothers within a long line of family members known for their comedic fame.

Therefore, it was no surprise that Shawn mentioned his prominent older

brothers, actors and comedians Damon and Keenan Wayans.

The show closed with the host of the evening saying a few last words and inviting VIP ticket holders to stick around for a meet and greet with both brothers.

Clarie Darnell, publicist for Shawn and Marlon Wayans, said the comedy act aims to appeal to the college demographic.

Even though the audience consisted mostly of adults — all of whom were over 21 — there were a few tables occupied by younger people, which proved how outstanding the Wayans brothers are at appealing to all adult age groups.

The comedy club, located on Second and San Fernando streets, hosted the brothers the entire weekend with single stand-up performances

on Thursday and Sunday night, and two shows on both Friday and Saturday evenings.

San Jose is just one of the many stops for the Wayans brothers' comedy tour, including other California cities as well as Florida and New York.

Christina Molina is the Spartan Daily communications director. Follow her on Twitter at @ms_cmolina.

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UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

7	3							5
	2			1	7	3		6
	6				8	7		9
				2				3
			3		4			
6				5				
5		7	4					9
3		1	2	9				8
	9							3 4

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

How To Play

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3 by 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively. Check back daily for new sudoku puzzles and solutions.

Previous Sudoku Solution

9	3	4	5	8	7	1	2	6
8	1	2	4	6	3	9	5	7
6	7	5	1	9	2	3	8	4
3	5	7	6	4	9	8	1	2
1	2	8	7	3	5	6	4	9
4	9	6	2	1	8	7	3	5
2	6	1	8	7	4	5	9	3
5	8	9	3	2	6	4	7	1
7	4	3	9	5	1	2	6	8

Today's Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14												
17					18							
23	24	25										
29												
33												
39												
44												
53	54											
58												
61												
68												
71												

Previous Puzzle Answer:

1. OF VENTRICLE
 2. EXIT
 3. DREARY
 4. POET
 5. SINAI
 6. PHENOMENON
 7. FAIR
 8. ISSUE
 9. RESPONDED
 10. JEOPARDY
 11. STOCK
 12. VALUE
 13. TILL
 14. REPLIES
 15. MIDTERMS
 16. FINAL
 17. GARB
 18. COSTA
 19. SOL
 20. CHIEF
 21. LOOKS
 22. INTENTLY
 23. CLIQUE
 24. PART
 25. GEARWHEEL
 26. CLUMSY
 27. FRYING
 28. STAY
 29. GOING
 30. BISQUE
 31. HOLDER
 32. MADE
 33. CORRECTIONS
 34. WESTERN
 35. ELVIS
 36. BUENOS
 37. DENTIST
 38. EXPERTISE
 39. MEXICAN
 40. SNACKS
 41. JOPLIN
 42. WOODSTOCK
 43. STRAIGHT
 44. CONCEAL
 45. ACTUAL
 46. PLANS

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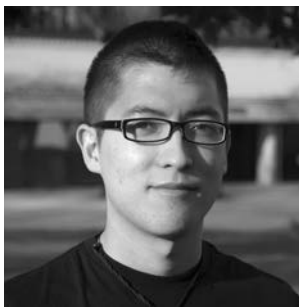


For voters, the lesser evil is no longer good enough

With Election Day coming ever closer, it's time for undecided voters like myself to make up our minds on who to vote for president.

On the left, we have President Barack Obama, a liberal who has failed for the most part to bring that "change" and "hope" we all desired from him when he took office by continuing policies such as Bush tax cuts and the war in Afghanistan and carrying out drone warfare in the Middle East.

On the right, we have Mitt Romney, a conservative who has flip-flopped on almost every debated issue in these elections and has failed to concretely prove to me that he stands for anything other than "I'll say anything to become president."



Wesley Dugle's column appears every Monday.

To say I'm jaded about my options would be an understatement.

But this is the America we live in today, where we are given a multitude of things to choose from in almost everything we do, except for when we vote for our politicians.

Popular logic says one should simply vote for the lesser of two evils, or basic-

ly whomever is less terrible than the other guy.

While in my view Obama is the less terrible of the two, after four years since I voted in the last election, I'll probably not vote for him again and am more likely to be voting for a third party this year.

Now I can hear a lot of you conservatives and liberals out there going, "Why would you throw away your vote like that? They have no chance of winning!"

There is no reason for me to vote for someone I don't want for president even if I'm less inclined to vote for the other guy.

The problem with the "lesser of two evils" argument is while you may get the guy you voted for in office, you still don't get the President

you really wanted.

This is the issue presented to many undecided voters like myself right now, with third parties being given so little a chance of victory, we are forced to choose between two options we don't feel strongly about.

Friends and family keep telling me to vote one way or the other by advocating strongly for Romney or Obama, but more often they go for the "You wouldn't want Romney/Obama in office, right?"

Basically, there is acceptance among many of my peers and family that it's a matter of who is less terrible in their eyes than who is the best option to help this country get out of its doldrums. I'm tired of this argument and frankly I can't understand why people continue to vote this way.

If democracy is about telling the government what you want to see done in society, then why are jaded voters continuing to tell the government that the two options we are given are good enough?

By voting for the lesser of two evils, we are telling the government we are fine with the status quo, so keep churning out bad politicians.

Then the politician you voted for screws things up

and people come back for the next election four years later jaded and pissed off, wondering why things went wrong.

This isn't progressive thinking, it's damn psychotic!

Elections shouldn't be like choosing between Coke and Pepsi when you may really want Dr. Pepper.

I understand that third-party candidates such as Libertarian Party candidate Gary Johnson and Green Party candidate Jill Stein have no chance of winning, but a vote for either of these people will mean more in the long run for the advocacy of third parties than an apathetic vote for Romney or Obama would.

It's obvious neither of these third-party candidates will win, but if enough people show they are fed up with the two-party system and vote for either of them, then

it at least gets the ball moving on change in our election system.

It's better than casting a lazy vote for the status quo, right?

Elections shouldn't be like choosing between Coke and Pepsi when you may really want Dr. Pepper.

If you don't feel strongly about either Obama or Romney as president then don't vote for them.

It's that simple.

While I haven't decided who I will vote for in this election, I'm 99 percent certain I will not be voting for either Obama or Romney.

Unless one of them restores the polar ice caps, ends all wars for eternity or gives me a million dollars, I don't see myself voting for either of them come November.

So if you find yourself jaded like myself about politics in this country, don't cast a vote for the same old thing come Election Day.

Get out there, get educated and see if a third-party candidate fits you better because the two party system is failing us and it's time to enact real change in Washington.

Wesley Dugle is a Spartan Daily Production Editor. Follow him on Twitter at @WesSideStories.



Poll-dancing: Understanding bias and errors in election figures

Over the last several years I have studied statistics, analyzed government data regularly and produced charts and infographics for local and national newspapers.

I've found the majority of the polls and surveys done today have major problems, and their results are often confusing – most indicatively, presidential polls.

In this time I've grown fond of data. With confidence I say I love math and good numbers, such as those of the U.S. Census or the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

They operate with large budgets, pull from large samples and often employ hundreds of people, creating scientific studies that are interesting, testable and useful. Those numbers are what we seek – but aren't always what we get.

And though I analyze and vet survey data, I believe readers don't understand how these polls are conducted and what they entail.



Leo Postovoit's column appears every Monday.

Because of media outlets' concision goals and the space constraints of newspapers, we take only limited looks at studies, and we leave out most of the quantified data.

The analysis of any snapshot data (and supposed "levels of confidence" with proposed "accepted" margins of error), often leads to a fraction of data that seems to say,

"It's conclusive!" or "This is probably relevant!" though you should realize that it's could be a bunch of misleading malarkey.

Turn on any news television broadcast and immediately you'll hear a presidential race statistic that seems potent and relevant.

A staunch conservative and a loyal liberal will claim (with the same shaky validity via a "recent statistic") that both of their candidates could equally be president – Public Policy Polling says Obama is going to sweep, yet Gallup says Romney is going to upset.

Why? A lot of this is because most people wouldn't be bothered to spend the 30 seconds to talk to a pollster. The Pew Research Center recently said its response rate has fallen from 36 percent to just 9 percent in the last eight years.

Regardless, some scientists march on in the quest of finding good numbers. Nate Silver, famed presidential polling expert and author of The New York Times' FiveThirtyEight blog, is one of these people.

Widely considered to be one of the true experts in psephology, or the scientific prediction and study of elections, he accurately predicted 49 out of 50 states' outcomes in 2008, and regularly pores over dozens of statistical methods of measuring this race and publishes this daily.

One such analysis is how he describes the aforementioned difference between the differing polling agencies. He says the "house effect" consistently pulls agencies in certain ways, and in doing so, says that some data can still be extrapolated from all of this.

However, he agrees there are obvious discrepancies in this year's data depending on if a polling house exclusively uses landline phones to collect their data.

The National Center for Health Statistics stated in 2011 that one in three people had only wireless phones, and that an additional one in six receive all or almost all of their calls despite having a landline, which leaves half of the potential sample size simply ignored.

The Pew Research Center, similarly, noted frustration with polling during the 2010 midterm elections. They stated that because of this cellphone skew, election polls may be biased – with a bump of as much as six points toward Republicans.

A recent Slate article on this topic cites that though surveys are "probably more reliable on the whole than they were 30 years ago," and though they have so many problems in accuracy, and though technology may be a challenge, we're doing better and getting better all the time.

Or, if you're crazy and you can pretend to reject all hypotheses, patterns and trends, you can take the data collected by 7-Eleven Inc.

They're running an ongoing presidential poll that tabulates your vote depending on which coffee cup you get – a red one or a blue one.

Besides the obvious bias that the poll is only conducted among those who purchase a coffee from 7-Eleven stores, which are usually in mostly urban areas of only 34 states (and Washington D.C.), it is amusing to look at the data.

They somehow tabulate that several states – such as Texas, Arizona and South Carolina – are "blue" states, which have not happened in decades for presidential elections, if ever.

While I love coffee and I love this idea, people don't go to 7-Eleven for good coffee. Apparently, they say their data has been "predictive" in the 2004 and 2008 elections as well.

I'll listen to the Nate Silvers of the world, but I can't really agree (or disagree) with any poll that says, "This person or this proposition is surely going to win!"

The simple fact is we won't really know how any poll is – all of these are but first drafts of public opinion – until the Election Day actually happens. Don't wait with bated breath.

Leo Postovoit is the Spartan Daily Production and Art Director. Follow him on Twitter at @postphotos.

Did we make you smile, sniffle, smash your screen or scratch your head?

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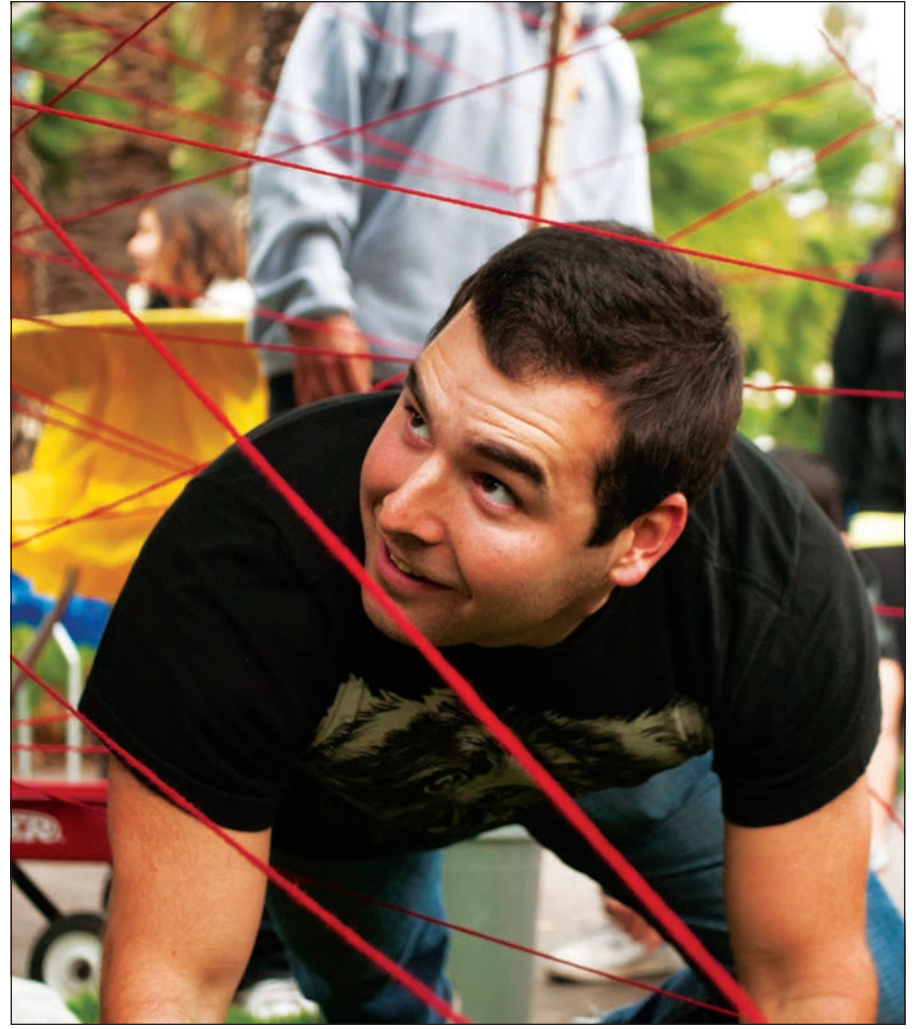
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CAMPUS

Fire on the Fountain

Week of school spirit capped off by annual student festival

Photos by Basil Sar



Top right: A student attempts to complete the “String Challenge Game” at Tower Lawn during SJSU’s Fire on the Fountain Festival.

Top Left: Grupo Folklorico y Sol puts on a performance in the evening for students.

Center: Students cheer on a Fire Pixie performer as he runs by and interacts with the crowd.



Above: Sammy Spartan attempts to woo a member of Grupo Folklorico y Sol during the evening.



Second from bottom: Despite the rain, students still put on velcro vests and participated in the “Velcro jump.”



Bottom: Members of SJSU’s wushu club put on a performance for students in the evening Thursday.