

WEATHER

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A&E, PAGE 4

Student improv group plays
role in real lifeFlash mob aims to bring together
community by breaking everyday
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Volume 136, Issue 19

Protesters stand firm with Wisconsin

Ron Gleeson
Staff Writer

Hundreds of people supporting local labor unions took to the steps of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library Tuesday, holding signs that read “We are all Wisconsin,” to demonstrate that the budget problems in Wisconsin cannot spread to California.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker has proposed a budget that will issue \$1.5 billion in cuts that would have been used to aid public schools and government without any tax or fee increases, furloughs or layoffs, which would be paid for by cuts to pensions and health care for government employees.

Junior sociology major Sandra Huerta said the plight of the workers in Wisconsin is much like the battle students at SJSU and other CSU campuses are fighting.

“This is all one struggle,” she said. “It’s about solidarity between us students and workers being affected by this budget crisis. We will be in their position one day as employees. We need to support them today and now.”

Steve Preminger, director of union community resources for the South Bay labor Council, said this should not be happening in Wisconsin, nor anywhere else.

“We want Wisconsin to know that their voices are being heard,” he said. “They need to know that the rest of the country thinks what they are going through is unjust.”

Walker has also called for cuts and changes that will affect residents across Wisconsin, from students and participants in the SeniorCare prescription drug plan to poor families receiving health care or welfare from the state.

Along with cuts to the budget, Walker is attempting to limit collective bargaining rights for union members, something completely uncalled for, said council President Ron Lind.

“It’s about workers fighting for other workers,” he said. “An injury to one is an injury to all. This type of involvement by union members is a turning point for labor unions.”

Walker, however, said this budget reform will see its worst times in the present, but will be for the overall betterment of the state’s future.

“The facts are clear,” he said. “Wisconsin is broke. We are returning to frugality and making long-term decisions to balance our budget now and, more importantly, into the future. We will do the heavy lifting to protect our children and grand-children from having to make the hard decisions that were once avoided.”

If Walker’s effort to pass the budget succeeds, this type of legislation could spread to another state and local governments, including California, said Clark Williams, a Wisconsin native and current vice president of Santa Clara County Democratic Party.

“Elected officials will be looking for reaction from people regarding this budget,” he said. “Another politician adopting the same style of budget reform is not that far off.”

Steve Kline, a union member and

see **PROTEST** page 2

Courtesy: San Jose State University

An artist’s architectural rendering of the planned sports facility upgrades in South Campus.

Planned sports facility upgrades include new football complex

Kyle Szymanski
Senior Staff Writer

Shortly after Athletic Director Tom Bowen was hired six years ago, he said he had a vision about upgrading some of the athletic facilities on campus.

Today, that vision is slowly becoming a reality.

Bowen said plans are in the works to construct a building behind the north end zone of Spartan Stadium, a field house and upgrades to the tennis courts and softball field at the 73-acre South Campus.

The privately funded project is estimated to cost \$17 million. Bowen refused to say when he expects the project to be completed.

“We do not feel like we are part of an arms race,” he said. “It is not something I have to do. It is something I want to do to continue to enhance the experience for student athletes, the student population, club teams and intramurals.”

The project will feature a 70,000-square-foot field house that can be used by all Division-I sports teams, intramural squads, club-sports teams and Olympic

sports at SJSU, Bowen said.

The field house will encompass indoor basketball and tennis courts, and be two football fields long and a football field wide with an all-purpose floor.

Gymnastics head coach Wayne Wright said he doesn’t know much about the specifics of the plan, but is hopeful his team will be able to use the facility for practice and competition.

“I think it is good for us in terms of recruiting,” he said. “A lot of kids are looking at new facilities. Just to think that is on the back burner is unbelievable.”

The field house will be joined

by a 21,000-square-foot building that will sit behind the north end zone at Spartan Stadium.

The two-story end zone building will house new training, medicine and locker rooms on the first floor and an open ballroom-style facility with cantilever-club seating on the second floor.

“With new facilities comes new equipment,” said senior safety Duke Ihenacho. “When you look around the country at some of the schools with new fa-

see **UPGRADE** page 3

Thermal systems level out campus temps

Heating and Cooling Plant
relies on steam, water
to stabilize building climatesFrancisco Rendon
Staff Writer

Whether the forecasts show sunny skies or snow, students, faculty and administration experience the heating and cooling systems within buildings.

Beneath the ground however, there is a system of tunnels connecting each classroom to the Heating and Cooling Plant.

Chris Nordby, associate director of plant operations, said the heating and cooling systems are well-equipped to deal with the changes in temperature, because the pipes are made of carbon steel, which stay the same temperature, all the time and are

underground.

“SJSU is a small city with 5 million square feet of building,” Nordby said. “A lot of times people say ‘I complained it was cold and nobody showed up,’ but a lot of times work is being done in the basement or on the roof.”

Students reported various levels of satisfaction with the computer-controlled systems in different buildings.

Senior, child and adolescent development major Monica Vazquez said Sweeney Hall was always a comfortable temperature.

Within the plant, steam of up to 390 degrees Fahrenheit, along with electricity for the campus, is generated in the Cogeneration Plant, Nordby said.

The steam is then moved to separate buildings, and used to heat water, which warms the air in an entire building.

The cooling system operates similarly, but uses water to cool the air, rather than steam.

There are many backup plans in place to ensure that things continue operating, he said.

The Heating and Cooling Plant has three backup boilers and five different water-chillers capable of providing water for the air conditioning systems.

SJSU is capable of generating its own electricity and starting up the various heating and cooling systems in case of a blackout, Nordby said.

The temperature in each classroom is monitored by the thermostat, and heated or cooled depending on outside temperature, the temperature of the building and how many people are in the room, he said.

“If you get a bunch of students packed into a classroom, even if it’s 40 degrees outside, you may need air conditioning,” Nordby said.

Mark Robertson, a graduate student in history said the air conditioning in Dudley Moorhead Hall can be difficult for students

see **HEATING** page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

International

Libyan rebels ambivalent about U.S. military aid

Compiled From
Los Angeles Times

BENGAZI, Libya — Libyan President Moammar Gadhafi's forces have surrounded Tarek Zawi's hometown of Zawiya, he suspects, to stop shipments of food and medicine from coming in.

When the rebel fighter steps outside his home to defend the city — which has been in rebel hands for more than a week — from the nightly attacks, it's always on an empty stomach.

Yet in a phone conversation, Zawi, 19, was slow to embrace help from the West to end the battle for control of Libya.

After a long pause, he finally agreed that one act of military assistance would be welcome.

"Kill Gadhafi and get it over with," he said. "The Libyan people declared what they want: more freedom. A lot of people shouldn't have to die for that."

That reluctant call for help is spreading quickly across oil-rich Libya, even as rebels are deeply sensitive about foreign intervention. Many Libyans had hoped that the Gadhafi regime would be gone by now. That it isn't has forced the rebels to wrestle with whether foreign intervention would help or hurt their movement.

Whether the U.S. or other powers would in fact intervene is far from clear.

The U.S. has dispatched two amphibious assault vessels loaded with hundreds of Marines, but Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at a Pentagon news conference Tuesday that their purpose would be strictly humanitarian.

Yemeni president: Israel, U.S. destabilize Arab world

Compiled From
McClatchy Tribune

SANAA, Yemen — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh delivered a fiery speech Tuesday blaming Israel and the United States for destabilizing the Arab world, saying the anti-government protests in his capital were being run by the White House.

Saleh's accusations marked a departure for the president, a longtime ally of the United States in the war against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and the recipient of hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. military aid in recent years.

"Every day we hear a statement from (President Barack) Obama saying, 'Egypt you can't do this, Tunisia don't do that,'" Saleh told students and professors at Sanaa University. "What do you have to do with Egypt? Or with Oman? Are you president of the United States or president of the world?"

The remarks coincided with an anti-government protest that drew about 10,000 people to the streets of Sanaa, the capital, where an influential cleric, Sheik Abdul Majeed Zindani, called for the people of Yemen to replace the government with an Islamic state, raising both cheers and concerns from the assembled crowd representing a diverse cross section of the country.

Zindani, a cleric with a henna-dyed beard whom the U.S. considers a terrorist, was a spiritual mentor to Osama bin Laden but has publicly rejected terrorism.

He called on Saleh to grant the protesters' "legitimate demands and rights."

Although he has been a supporter of Saleh for many years, he is the latest of several leaders to defect from the embattled president.

National

Bernanke: Budget cuts would threaten economy

Compiled From
McClatchy Tribune

WASHINGTON — Steep spending cuts proposed by Republicans in the House of Representatives would slow the nation's economic growth, cost jobs and work against the Federal Reserve's efforts to stimulate the economy, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke warned lawmakers Tuesday.

The nation's prosperity would be better served by Congress and the White House agreeing on credible legislation to reduce the federal deficit and debt over a longer period of five or 10 years, he told the Senate Banking Committee.

On an issue of more immediacy, Bernanke said recent rising oil and gasoline prices were unlikely to stall the strengthening economic recovery or lead to significantly higher inflation.

But if those prices go considerably higher and stay there, he said, that would reduce consumer spending on other goods and slow the broader economy.

Bernanke was asked repeatedly about GOP proposals to trim anywhere from \$60 billion to \$100 billion in government spending during the current fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30.

These cuts would do little to bring down long-term budget deficits, but would slow the economic recovery, he cautioned.

"The long-term imbalances are not just a long-term risk. They're a near and present danger," he said, warning that investors may demand a premium to hold future U.S. debt.

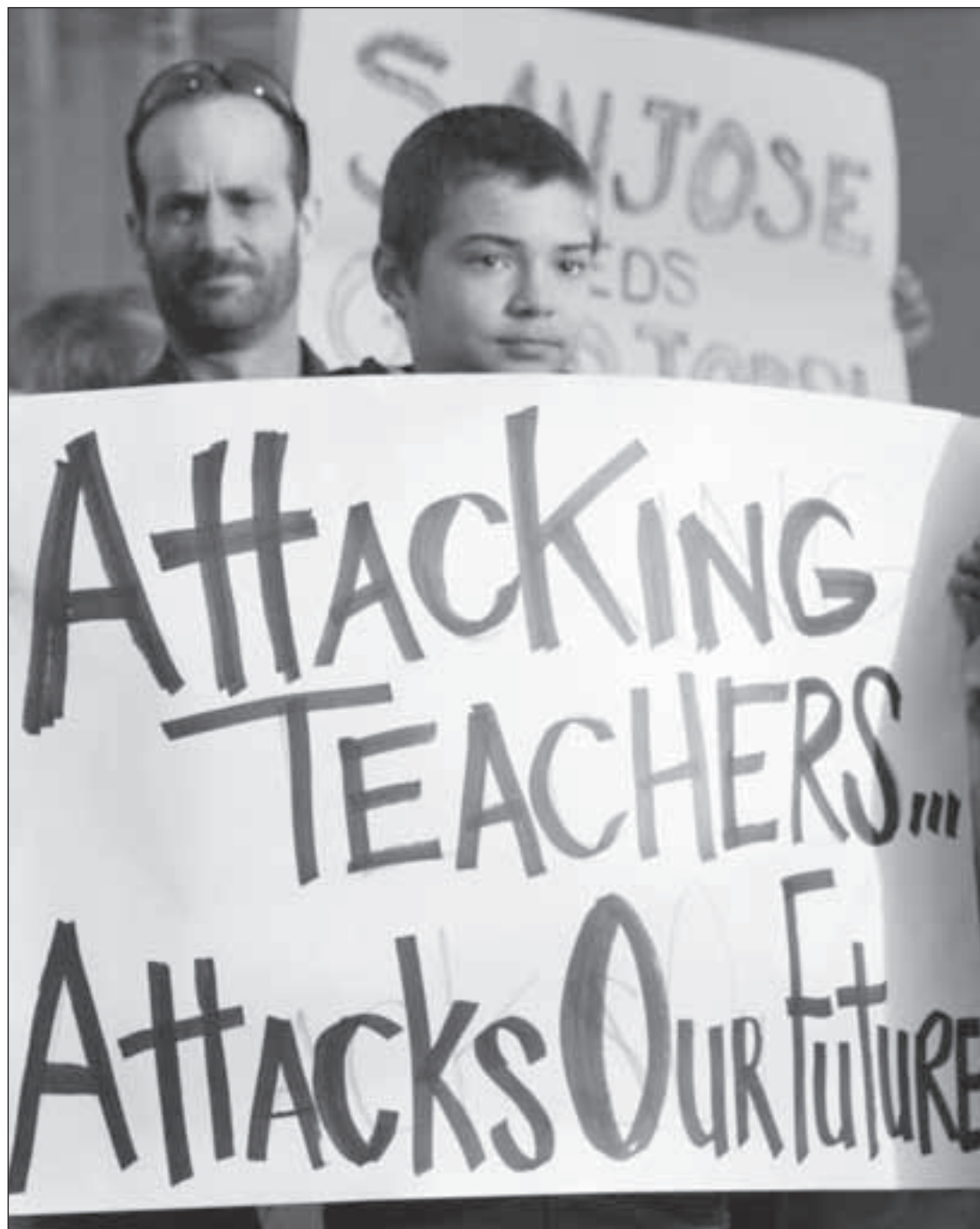


Photo: Michelle Terris / Spartan Daily

People of all ages came out to fight against Wis. Gov. Scott Walker and his attempt to eliminate collective bargaining rights at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library Tuesday.

PROTEST

From Page 1

citizen of San Jose, said he sees along the same lines as Williams.

"There is a real parallel between Wisconsin and San Jose," he said. "(Walker) is taking it upon himself to turn his problems into workers' problems. (San Jose Mayor) Chuck Reed could do the same."

In the wake of the budget proposal in Wisconsin, all 14 Democratic senators in Wisconsin have fled their offices to prevent

the vote on the budget from happening, Pr-eminger said.

"We want Wisconsin workers to see their struggle as something we honor and respect," he said.

Williams said this budget proposal is a violation of thousands of workers' rights and will do little to calm the storm in Madison, Wis.

"The proposed budget will take away the rights of 175,000 workers in Wisconsin," he said. "It goes against the basic principles of American people, and it's something that won't solve all the state's budget problems. But worst of all, I fear that this budget mindset could easily spread to another state."

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CAMPUS IMAGES



Photo: Jesse Jones / Spartan Daily

Michael Young and Kathy Nguyen play games with a child by the Central Classroom building on Tuesday.

HEATING
From Page 1

to tolerate.
 “This year it’s been fine, but last year it’s always quite hot,” Robertson said. “It’s (only) this building, no other building I’ve been in.”
 Each building has an air handler machine to regulate how much air is recirculated and how much new air is let in, all of which is monitored by machines, Nordby said.
 Nordby said according to regulations

issued from the president, buildings could never be heated above 68 degrees Fahrenheit or cooled below 78 degrees Fahrenheit.
 Junior nutrition major Regina Licican, said the temperature in MacQuarrie Hall was often changing in many small ways.
 “It varies,” she said. “(And) it’s kind of random.”
 John Skyberg, director of facility maintenance and construction services for facilitated development and operations, said that despite the extreme changes in temperature, the heating and cooling systems were operating without any known errors.

UPGRADE
From Page 1

cilities, they are doing real well.”
 The second floor will be open for use by anyone on campus, and includes suites with a view of the field at Spartan Stadium that will be used by the athletic director and the university president, Bowen said.
 “All students can make use of it, so I think it is a great idea,” said undeclared freshman David De La Cruz.
 The end zone building will also act as a new and bigger home for SJSU’s Sports Hall of Fame, highlighted by a tribute to NFL Hall-of-Famer Bill Walsh, who played for SJSU and went on to coach the 49ers to three Super Bowl wins.

vestment to SJSU athletic facilities took place in 2001 when Alan and Phyllis Simpkins paid to have the Simpkins Stadium Center and the Koret Athletic Training Center built, Bowen said.
 The Simpkins Center, which currently houses an academic center and training, medicine and locker rooms will be reconfigured into a full academic center

for SJSU’s 427 student athletes, he said. The locker room will be used to accommodate visiting teams.
 Bowen said the current economic climate is ideal for building because the price of building with bricks and mortar has decreased as the general economic climate has declined.
 He estimates the end zone building to cost between \$10 and \$11 million, the field house to cost between \$5.5 and \$6 million and the scoreboard to cost between \$250,000 and \$800,000.
 Bowen said he expects the field house to be one of the most occupied facilities on campus, to be used five to six days a week.
 “It has been a labor of love for a long time, and now we are ready to go,” he said.

“It has been a labor of love for a long time, and now we are ready to go.”

Tom Bowen
Director of athletics

“Every time the athletics department has been able to add or upgrade facilities there has been a general positive feeling among people who support San Jose State,” said sports information director Lawrence Fan, who has been at the school since 1980.
 The funding from the project will also be used to place a new scoreboard in Spartan Stadium, enclose the tennis courts along Humboldt Street, install lights on the women’s softball field and replace the field’s fence line, Bowen said.
 The next step in the completion of the project is to find financial donors, Bowen said. It is estimated that multiple donors will contribute to the fund, with some donating as much as seven figures to secure naming rights.
 “We really do have this beautiful footprint down here that has not had any capital investment since 2001,” he said.
 The last major capital in-

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Emotions factor into eating habits, says nutrition team

Shirene Niksadat
Staff Writer

It’s the middle of the night, you’re steadily making your way through a 10-page “Effects of Volcanic Ash on Plant Soil” paper and you get up to take a break.
 Sooner or later you find yourself in the kitchen — you’re exhausted, you’re stressed out and you’re looking to make yourself feel better, if only for a moment. Enter the gigantic bag of potato chips, leftover fast food or tub of ice cream.

Whatever your preferred poison may be, it’s called emotional eating and you’re not it’s only victim.

The Nutrition Education Action Team on campus is on a mission to help students combat mindless, emotional gobbling. In conjunction with the Student Health Center and the Peer Health Education Workshops, the team aims to teach students a healthier, more mindful approach to eating.

In their Tuesday workshop, “Mindful Eating,” presenters Hector Diaz and Stephanie Monterroza educated workshop participants on the full spectrum of aspects dealing with emotional eating: what causes it, how to avoid it and how to identify when you are engaging in it.

About 20 people showed up for the workshop — of those, a large portion were participants in the 2011 Spartan Wellness Challenge.

Senior kinesiology major Shane Faudinola said aside from the workshop being a suggested component of the Wellness Challenge, he was genuinely interested in the topic.

“I thought the different strategies presented to control your cravings were pretty interesting,” he said.

Diaz explained that emotional eating is a result of built up ties we all have between our emotions and food.

“You associate food with reward and as treat or something to make you feel better,” he said. “So when you’re bored, stressed, sad, or even just grazing, you’re looking for that ‘feel good’ feeling.”

In one of the exercises during the workshop, Diaz and Monterroza presented the group with two tanks, Tank A and Tank B.

Participants were first asked to help fill Tank A with examples of physiological signs your body gives you when you are hun-

gry. Answers ranged from grouchiness and weakness to stomach growling and slight headache.

They then were asked to list for Tank B emotions that they experience in their everyday lives. Joy, anger, boredom, loneliness, sadness and excitement were a few of the responses.

Monterroza reminded the class that only the feelings in Tank A can be satisfied by food. The emotions in Tank B can benefit from other healthier options to cope with them including exercise, meditation, listening to music or talking to friends.

Janet Yuriar, a senior justice studies and sociology double major, said she wanted to learn about how to balance meals more effectively throughout the day. After meeting with a dietician on campus, she was encouraged to attend the workshop.

“It was definitely a helpful workshop,” she said. “It reinforced the idea of consciously modifying food portions and the importance of eating on time.”

The second half of the workshop centered around the relationship between extreme hunger and extreme fullness.

Diaz and Monterroza explained that when you skip meals throughout the day you are effectively starving yourself. In doing this, you are more inclined to binge eat later — overstuffing yourself with

a larger meal and usually in quicker succession, giving you the ever-dreaded “food baby.”

Sluggishness and feelings of guilt usually follow quickly afterwards, they said.

Sharath Raju, a graduate student in electrical engineering said he can relate to the swinging pendulum found between extreme hunger and fullness.

“If I’m especially crammed with classes and I miss my time to eat, I’ve got three more class periods before I get another chance,” he said. “By then, I’m going to eat whatever I can get my hands on.”

The workshop came to a close with the 5 Principles of Intuitive Eating — rejecting the crash diet mentality, honoring your hunger and making peace with food, challenging current food myths, feeling your fullness and coping with emotions without the aid of food.

“Making people aware of their eating habits is the first step,” Diaz said. “Correlating the emotions we’re going through that cause us to eat and approaching them differently is next.”

“If I’m especially crammed with classes and I miss my time to eat, I’ve got three more class periods before I get another chance, by then, I’m going to eat whatever I can get my hands on.”

Sharath Raju
Graduate,
Electrical engineering

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■ PROFILE

Student improv group plays role in real life

Shirene Niksadat
Staff Writer

Senior communications major Maija Panger is on a mission to make you smile, laugh, stare in confusion or simply stop and notice the world around you.

Panger was inspired by the improvisation antics of well-known, nonprofit, public performance group "Improv Everywhere," and she wants to bring that same lighthearted spirit of tomfoolery to the San Jose State campus.

Panger proudly wears the title of president and founder of the new student group, appropriately named "Made Ya' Look." The aim of the group is to bring together a community of people all willing to partake in one collective conspiracy to break the social scripts we live our daily lives in.

By bringing together all different types of people, Panger is hoping to create and take part in a variety of "missions" aimed at giving observers a laugh and an experience all in one go. She plans to do so by coordinating group stunts of partial improvisation involving seemingly unrelated people in random public spaces.

"It's partly a commentary on the social scripts we all live by," Panger said. "We walk around with our heads down, absorbed in our cell phones and no one ever really breaks out of the norm."

The term flash mob is defined as a group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place and perform an unusual and sometimes seemingly pointless act for a brief time and then disperse just as suddenly. In line with the nature of flash mobs, often the underlying goal of "Made Ya' Look" events is simply for the purpose of entertainment or satire.

Past stunts have included everything from an SJSU faculty member dressed as a turkey being chased around campus by hungry "pilgrims" to a member publicly auctioning her belongings in order to afford a sandwich and Odwalla at Tully's Coffee.

More recently, the group suddenly broke into song in the Student Union food court as part of one of their practices. Maintaining their roles, members deliver lines or interactions all in deadpan delivery and refusing to break role. With no bow at the end or attributing signage

of any sort, members disperse almost as suddenly as they formed.

"I think a lot of people want to perform," said Marjorie Hazeltine, an enthusiastic "Made Ya' Look" faculty adviser. "Especially in a way that doesn't feel like 'Oh, I'm doing Shakespeare on a stage.'"

As a communication studies professor specializing in performance studies, Hazeltine is a wealth of information when it comes to the art and playful nature of improv and flash mob-oriented stunts.

Performance in nonperformance spaces makes way for disruptions in normal day-to-day settings that force people stop and make people notice the world around them, she said.

By witnessing these seemingly pointless and often kooky acts all at the same time, communities of people are being built spontaneously, she said.

"It's like, 'Wow, we all saw this today, together, at the same time,'" Hazeltine added.

She stressed the role these random stunts play in involving people with one another, reminding them that they are all sharing the same space.

Of course, for all great stunts to surprise and bewilder, there must be some level of anonymity maintained. Students who wish to become involved in "Made Ya' Look" missions can attend regular meetings held every Tuesday night at 6:30 in Hugh Gillis Hall room 231.

Meetings are a forum for new ideas and inspiration for stunts and for technique practice. On occasion members will go out into public spaces to practice ideas so as to measure reactions, review and revise for the final stunt.

"It's up to the students to decide their dedication," said Panger. "If you come to all of the meetings every Tuesday night, you will obviously be more privy to all of the detailed information."

Panger and Hazeltine both identify the group as being partial improvisation because there is some planning involved. Rather than aiming for an exact execution of rehearsals, practices serve as a barebones guideline for members to get comfortable with the stunts' concepts, allowing them to be more creative later.

Hazeltine explained that the point of this is to help encourage group cohesiveness through small test runs.

"You never know what's going to happen

"... If we can put a smile on someone's face, make them laugh or even just bring something new to their day, then it's a reward for everyone."

Maija Panger

Senior communications major



Photo: Jesse Jones / Spartan Daily

Faculty member Marjorie Hazeltine prepares for Made Ya' Look on Tuesday night.

when you get out there," said Panger.

"Made Ya' Look" has a Wiki website and a Facebook page that are accessible only to dedicated members of the team.

For those interested and passionate about the idea of these fun "guerilla type" public interventions, getting involved is as easy as showing up to meetings regularly and participating. The more cohesive the group is, the more the group can work as a unit and feed off each other's creative improvisations, Panger said.

"Why do we do it? Well, just because," she said. "We like to do things people don't see every day and if we can put a smile on someone's face, make them laugh or even just bring something new to their day, then it's a reward for everyone."

In pursuit of a spirit of a merry benevolence, "Made Ya' Look" helps to break people out of unconscious thought processes that occupy many people's daily lives.

By partaking in these harmless public distractions, the group plays on the emotions of bystanders whether it is through subtle social commentaries or stunts done "just for fun." Panger hopes students around campus will eventually begin to look forward to the next "Made Ya' Look" event, eagerly anticipating the next stunt.

In achieving this, the group will be building communities through an infectious enthusiasm for the organized antics while simultaneously bringing joy to the performer and the onlooker alike.

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 SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS

■ GYMNASTICS

Extraordinary skills spotlight senior gymnast

Katie Jo Merritt showcases a number of different gymnastics techniques that set her apart from the competition

Melissa Sabile
Sports Editor

In a sport where most collegiate gymnasts are essentially performing the same skills, senior Katie Jo Merritt stands out in competitions.

Though she only competes three of the four gymnastics events, Merritt's tricks on those events are unlike most of her peers.

"She's a twister, that's for sure," said junior Aubrey Lee. "She has consistently unique skills and that brings a lot to the team. She's one of our top competitors on three events. It's going to be hard to fill her place next year."

Head coach Wayne Wright said Merritt has been an asset to the team throughout her four years at SJSU.

"I think Katie Jo is an exceptional gymnast," Wright said. "She has a lot of different skills, especially on vault and beam. On vault she does a round-off full, back flip off — pretty much the same thing she does on beam that she's transferred over to vault. And she's able to do them very well."

Merritt, who competes for the Spartans on vault, bars and beam, said most of her obscure skills come from her inability to perform the original move when she was first learning how to do them.

"On vault, I do a Yurchenko," Merritt said. "I do a full twisting back handspring onto the table. I tried regular Yurchenkos, just a round off back handspring, but I couldn't do it. So, we went to something weird and it worked."

She said on bars, her modified skill is called a Shaposhnikova, where she does a free hip circle around the low bar and releases to catch the high bar.

"When I do it, I catch in a mixed grip," she said. "So I let go of a hand and do a one-armed swing. I learned it in club because I was having trouble catching the normal way, so we went to a made up way and it works really well for me."

Junior Katie Valleau said Merritt's gymnastics are unusual and exciting.

"When I came in as a freshman, I had no idea any of the skills she was doing," Valleau said. "They were foreign to me. On her vault, she twists on instead of twisting off which is pretty weird. Same on bars — she catches her Shaposhnikova in an awkward way, but she does it so well so the judges respond to that because they've never seen stuff like that."

Valleau said having new and obscure skills is important in the sport.

"In gymnastics, especially at the collegiate level, everyone's doing the exact same things," she said.

"Like on vault, everyone does a layout full so that gets boring for (the judges). I think if they see something else that's worth a 10, they're going to be like, 'Wow, that's amazing,' and they will score her higher."

In addition to vault and bars, Merritt has some distinguished skills on balance beam as well.

"On beam, my series and my leap and my dismount are all pretty different," Merritt said. "I do what's called a tour jeté on beam which is worth a D, which is the second highest value for a skill."

"... she catches her Shaposhnikova in an awkward way, but she does it so well so the judges respond to that because they've never seen stuff like that."

Katie Valleau
Junior

With a combination of difficult dance skills throughout her routine along with a complicated series of back flips on the four-inch-wide balance beam, Merritt dismounts with a full twisting back handspring into a layout full twist.

"It's an E, which is the highest value you can do in gymnastics," she said. "For me, it's like doing the easiest skill in the world, but it's usually pretty impressive to everybody."

Wright said the full twisting back handspring is one of Merritt's best skills.

"You don't see that a lot, it is unique," Wright said. "It's her signature skill. It's a skill that we've never had an athlete do before."

Despite her unconventional gymnastics moves, Wright said Merritt's leadership is part of what makes her a good gymnast and team captain.

"It's always difficult to find good leaders in anything that you do," Wright said. "Katie has emerged to being one of the best team captains that we've had since I've been here at San Jose State, in terms of leading the team in the right direction and showing them what it's all about."

Teammates Lee and Valleau said Merritt's goal setting and bold personality are what help drive the team to success.

"She's not afraid to put her opinion out there," Lee said. "She's

going to do what it takes to make the team good, whether it makes people like her or dislike her. She's really good about putting the team before a friendship."

Valleau agreed, adding that Merritt is usually the one who pumps up the team before a competition.

"She's a really good leader," Valleau said. "She knows her goals and is really set on them. She expresses them really well and tells us what to do to get there."

Respect and fairness are qualities Wright said are hard to find in athletes, but said Merritt possesses them.

"She's somebody that's going to be able to stand up during the good and the bad and tell another teammate when they're not doing what they're supposed to be doing," Wright said. "She's a real good leader and has been a good thing for us at San Jose State in her four years here."

Merritt said she doesn't have a favorite event to compete on, but she loves them all for different reasons.

"I love vault because it's really easy, it's quick, it's exciting and I can just stand there and then run and let it happen," she said. "Bars has always been my best event, my strongest event and one of my favorites because you always like something that you're good at. I've really grown to love beam. It's the event that I can treat like floor — something I can perform on."



Photo: Donovan Farnham / Spartan Daily

Senior Katie Jo Merritt has been competing for the Spartans since 2008 and performs on vault, bars and beam.



Photo: Donovan Farnham / Spartan Daily

Senior Katie Jo Merritt warms up her double-back dismount off the bars during the Spartans' meet against Stanford on Feb. 5.

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Having them both: The benefits of dating several guys at once

Helga Pataki, resident badass of the once-popular kids program, “Hey Arnold,” always carried one burning secret with her.

She ruled the playground, knocking off the milk cart, “collecting” lunch money and routinely casting fear into the hearts of kids in the furthest reaches of the blacktop.

All the while, she harbored an unrequited and undying affection for her one true love, Arnold.

Ladies, you and I may have more in common with Helga than we might think or care to admit.

Though we may not be collecting chewed specimens to build a bubblegum shrine in the likeness of our loves — let’s hope — we can all relate to getting a little kooky over a love interest.

Let’s face it, shame and ego aside, we are all familiar with that obsessive feeling that can take hold when you really like someone — the one that compels you to check your e-mail, cell phone and Facebook in rapid rotation every 20 minutes or so until something of interest develops.

It’s that same feeling that makes your friends roll their eyes in tortured silence as they humor your endless recounting of each encounter with your new love interest.

It is this same all encompassing surge of emotion and attention that can, and often will, make itself apparent to the object of your desire, effectively smothering any real chance you may have had of actually dating him.

Fixation on finding “the one” can send anyone rushing into a dead-end romance, eager for something, anything, to work out.

Dating several guys at once can be a creative alternative to an emotional dependence on one guy that we sometimes concoct when looking to fill a romantic void.

There’s an alternative — Playing the field forces you to slow your roll and take the time to weigh the pros and cons while getting to know each of the guys. You can do all of this

without the unnecessary pressure of pinning down one potential mate.

When you’re looking for a new blouse, do you buy the first one you pick up? Not to fully equate dating guys with a seemingly frivolous thing like shopping, but “trying on” or “trying out” blouses and men to find the best fit isn’t a completely ridiculous idea, is it?

Because your attention and your emotions are not solely focused on one guy, unreturned phone calls, hot and cold text message conversations, and whose status he happens to like on Facebook no longer throws you as hard. Each guy is only one of the guys you are dating and therefore the stakes are lower.

Dating around, unfortunately, can look a lot like sleeping around — this does not have to be the case.

The decisions you make with the people you are dating are entirely your own, however I have to warn you — taking things to a sexual level definitely and inexplicably complicates things.

Like it or not, taking that step affects the dynamics of the relationship, both emotionally and socially.

Social and religious conditioning has ingrained with all of us a supposed right to label those individuals who may have been around the block once or twice in drastically different ways, depending on gender. Females earn the title of town bicycle or Jezebel, while males bolster a more high-five worthy Don Juan reputation.

Another benefit to casually dating more than one guy is the confidence that ensues after attaining several options — this confidence ultimately causes you to exude even more appeal. You are prone to being more relaxed and comfortable in being yourself, which only furthers your attractive pluck and easygoing nature in the eyes of your date.



Shirene Niksadat
Staff Writer

Keep in mind that if you’re willing to date around, you should also be willing to tell the guys you are dating that you are seeing other people at the same time.

This immediately lets the guy know that you are entertaining other options and ensures there will be no misunderstandings in the future or feelings of dishonesty and guilt.

The guys who can’t handle casually getting to know you while keeping intimacy levels light are probably looking for only one thing or are overly possessive — neither of which are very attractive traits.

A guy who develops genuine feelings for you over a period of dating will make it clear to you if he doesn’t want either of you seeing other people.

Until that point is reached by either party, then it’s a free-for-all.

Casual dating can do wonders for your self-esteem and also help to weed out unfit options, which in other situations might have seemed like your best bet.

In this alternative style of dating, the losers will eventually fall away. The guy you’re dating can rise to the occasion and tell you how he feels and what he wants, or he can slowly phase out of your life respectively. Step up or step off, I like to call it.

Ladies, if you’re going to venture into the land of weighing your options and considering a variety of personalities, try to remember that a skill for multitasking does not necessarily guarantee an ability to compartmentalize.

Within a few months, it should be somewhat clearer if there is a guy you prefer above the rest.

If you feel like you are starting to have a genuine connection with one of the guys that sets him apart from the rest, be upfront with

him. Keeping the other guys around as a leverage for power is not only unattractive, but, at its core, it is plainly a defense against disappointment.

When one guy doesn’t work out and happens to be the one you had developed real feelings for, don’t keep the other guy(s) around as a cushion for your bruised ego. If there’s no connection and you had already ruled them out, sticking with the winner by default only increases your dependence on him and insecurity in yourself, landing you right back into those old obsessive tendencies that plagued you in the past.

In the first fickle months of dating someone new, a game is sometimes played.

This game, full of calculated countermeasures, sly text message responses and constant appraisals and evaluations of the other person’s actions make for an unhealthy relationship from the start. These actions are aimed at gaining the metaphorical upper hand and safeguarding oneself against getting hurt. Quite frankly, they are exhausting.

Why not date a variety of people, spontaneously spending time and getting to know different personalities as you go? If you are young and don’t necessarily know what you want or need in a relationship, as many of us are, then why not allow yourself time to discover what works for you.

You’ll meet a wider variety of guys who will each have a diverse set of interests, giving you a bigger array of personalities to either grow to love or to leave behind.

Playing the field in the early stages of dating ensures that when you choose someone to become more serious with, it was a decision made without haste and after some contemplation.

Facebook stalking, bubblegum shrines and pestering text messages

aside, where does this leave us? Perhaps on a level playing field with our male counterparts who have, in large part, been perfecting this method of courting for years and years.

“Let’s face it, shame and ego aside, we are all familiar with that obsessive feeling that can take hold when you really like someone.”

“Why not date a variety of people, spontaneously spending time and getting to know different personalities as you go?”

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Vote avoids government shutdown as budget fight continues

McClatchy Tribune

WASHINGTON — Tuesday's vote in the House of Representatives to keep the federal government funded for two weeks is the first step toward averting a government shutdown starting Saturday, but it leaves the major differences between Republicans and Democrats over taxes and spending unresolved.

It also leaves tremendous uncertainty about what may happen next — whether the government will shut down later this month, or next, for want of funds, and whether the opposing sides ever can devise a long-term plan for reducing the national debt.

Tuesday's vote is little more than "kicking the can down the road," said veteran budget analyst Charles Kohnsberg.

The House voted 335 to 91 to keep the government running until March 18, while cutting \$4 billion. Voting yes were 231 Republicans and 104 Democrats; six Republicans and 85 Democrats voted no.

The Democratic-run Senate plans to vote Wednesday or Thursday on the two-week funding plan. Unless it passes, government funding runs out March 4.

The House last month approved \$61 billion in cuts through the rest of fiscal 2011, which ends Sept. 30, but the Democratic-run Senate is unlikely to concur, leading to the two-week temporary solution while they seek common ground on the rest of the fiscal year.

Ultimately, the fight over short-term spending is the year's first act in a more consequential drama — how to reduce federal debt over the long term. So far they've concentrated only on cutting non-military domestic discretionary programs that make up only 12 percent of the budget.

They haven't touched the big-money programs that drive up budget deficits — Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and defense — not to mention possibly raising taxes to help end deficits.

But lawmakers face two looming deadlines: The federal authority to borrow will run out later this spring, and fiscal 2012 begins Oct. 1. Both deadlines will force Congress to confront tax and spending choices again.

The longer lawmakers deal with this year's spending, the less time they'll have to craft a serious plan to address long-term issues, observed longtime budget analyst Stan Collender. Another worry is that this short-term debate will stiffen both sides, making later negotiations more difficult.

"We're frustrated that there's such a hue and cry over a very small part of the budget. It reinforces the perception that the problem is just waste, fraud, and abuse," said Robert Bixby, the executive director of the Concord Coalition, a budget watchdog group. "In some ways, it's a substitute for a more serious budget debate they need to have."

Both sides Tuesday amped up their already-loud rhetoric. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky called the House vote "an opportunity for House Democrats to admit the status quo isn't working."

Democrats fired back, warning that if severe cuts are adopted, 2011 will be remembered as the year "right-wing extremists defied com-

mon sense," said Rep. Ted Deutch, D-Fla.

The two-week cuts would affect a wide array of programs, including eliminating \$1.24 billion for eight programs that Obama didn't propose funding in his budget proposal for fiscal 2012, which starts Oct. 1.

Among them: Election assistance grants, an agriculture loan subsidy program, four education programs — including aid to smaller learning communities — and some federal highway money.

Also cut would be \$2.7 bil-

lion for earmarks — lawmakers' pet projects back home — including Army Corps of Engineers construction, border patrol, some Federal Emergency Management Agency programs, Labor Department salaries and expenses, and education programs.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, said he backed the two-week measure, but his patience is ebbing. "It's going to get tougher, not easier," he said. "There are some of us out there who won't play this game of \$4 billion every two weeks."

The Senate, he said, must agree to substantial spending cuts. "There's plenty of time for wheelchair races," Chaffetz said of the more senior Senate. "It's time to get down to business."

Few appeared eager for a shutdown — or at least for being blamed for one.

"The goal of House Republicans is not to shut down the government, but to rein in the out-of-control spending that is devastating our economy," said Rep. Renee Ellmers, R-N.C.

Rep. Scott DesJarlais, R-

Tenn., said "It would never be our goal to shut the government down," but added that he and other GOP freshmen are "going to continue to push for what we were elected to do — cut spending."

The White House suggested Tuesday doubling the length of the temporary fix to four weeks and the spending cuts in that time to \$8 billion. But House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, rejected the idea, saying it should have been floated sooner, not the day of the vote.

White House Press Sec-

retary Jay Carney said the administration thinks a shutdown — or constant threats of a shutdown — would hurt the economy and anger voters.

He said that President Barack Obama doesn't want "a toll booth, where we are negotiating again and again on continuing resolutions to fund the government for two weeks or another short-term period."

There may be a process where we do that once or twice, but the focus needs to be on the longer-term deal."

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