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Spartan Daily

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SJSU to purchase more evacuation chairs

Same device used to help student get out of King Library after earthquake

By SARAH KYO
Staff Writer

SJSU will purchase more Evacu-Tracs, devices used to help evacuate people from multi-storied buildings, thanks to \$98,670 of allocated funds in SJSU's 2007-2008 fiscal budget.

The devices can be found near stairwells in multiple buildings on campus.

Marty Schuler, director of the Disabilities Resource Center, said a plan to install Evacu-Tracs throughout campus has been in the works for four years in three phases.

Besides being used to evacuate people with disabilities from buildings, Schuler said Evacu-Tracs can be used for able-bodied people who

might be injured during an earthquake or a fire. The device grips to the steps of stairs, allowing one person to wheel another person step-by-step down a staircase. They can also be pushed to transport people from one place to another on a more flat surface.

These devices are such that they are very secure and light enough that a person with very minimum training, can operate them, Schuler said.

"In fact we found during the earthquake someone with no training who was a fellow student actually was evacuated by another student," Schuler said.

Schuler was referring to an incident printed in the Oct. 31 issue of the Spartan Daily in

which a student, Wilson Kong, helped another student, Abdullah Mojaddidi, evacuate from the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library with the Evacu-Trac after a 5.6 earthquake.

Calvin Lee, a senior forensics science major, said before the current Evacu-Tracs, there were other types of evacuation chairs installed on campus, such as one that involved a few people carrying the evacuee and another that ran on an actual track.

"The Evacu-Tracs are kind of the newest type of evacuation chairs available," Lee said. "They have their own brakes and everything. It's a lot safer than having three people carry

See CHAIR, page 4

University responds to more threats

By MICHAEL RIZZO
AND CHRISSEY RAMONEDA
Staff Writers

Reports of threats and intimidation in the residence halls over the past month prompted a university statement two weeks ago admonishing residents of campus housing to build better conflict resolution skills and diligently report violations of the Student Conduct Code to appropriate officials.

"We take reports of threats and intimidation extremely seriously, with heightened precaution after the Virginia Tech tragedy and other similar cases," Vice President Veril Phillips wrote to campus residents via e-mail.

The statement was quick to differentiate between two reports of threats — one recently in Joe West Hall and one more than a month ago in Lou Henry Hoover Hall.

Lolenielou Atienza was arrested Oct. 29 after a male resident of Joe West Hall reported several direct threats made to his life — two in person and one on a voicemail message.

"You disrespectin', brah. I'm comin'," the message said, according to Sgt. Michael Santos, of the UPD investigations unit.

Santos said Atienza suspected the Joe West Hall resident of pranking her several times and vandalizing her property, which led to two heated verbal encounters where Atienza acknowledged making direct threats to the resident's life.

Misdemeanor charges were filed against Atienza Nov. 2, and the university filed a "criminal, no-trespassing order" against her. She was not allowed on any CSU property until today.

In his e-mail, Phillips said this incident was "substantially differ-

ent" from what happened weeks earlier in Hoover Hall, "which involved two students who allegedly made general threats."

Alfredo Balderamos was accused on Sept. 29 of threatening the use of guns to "go Virginia Tech" on a fellow resident. His roommate, Nathan Oliveira was accused of intimidating a potential witness during an investigation into the accusation.

The results of a judicial conference found Balderamos responsible for making general threats.

Balderamos is still prohibited from entering campus because he chose not to accept the university sanctions proposed at that conference. A judicial hearing is scheduled for Nov. 16.

University investigations found Nathan Oliveira not responsible for threats or intimidation of a potential witness. But UPD's investigation process included a search of his room, where a small amount of alcohol was found.

Oliveira accepted the sanctions proposed for that violation of the Student Conduct Code and was allowed to return to his residence hall Oct. 25.

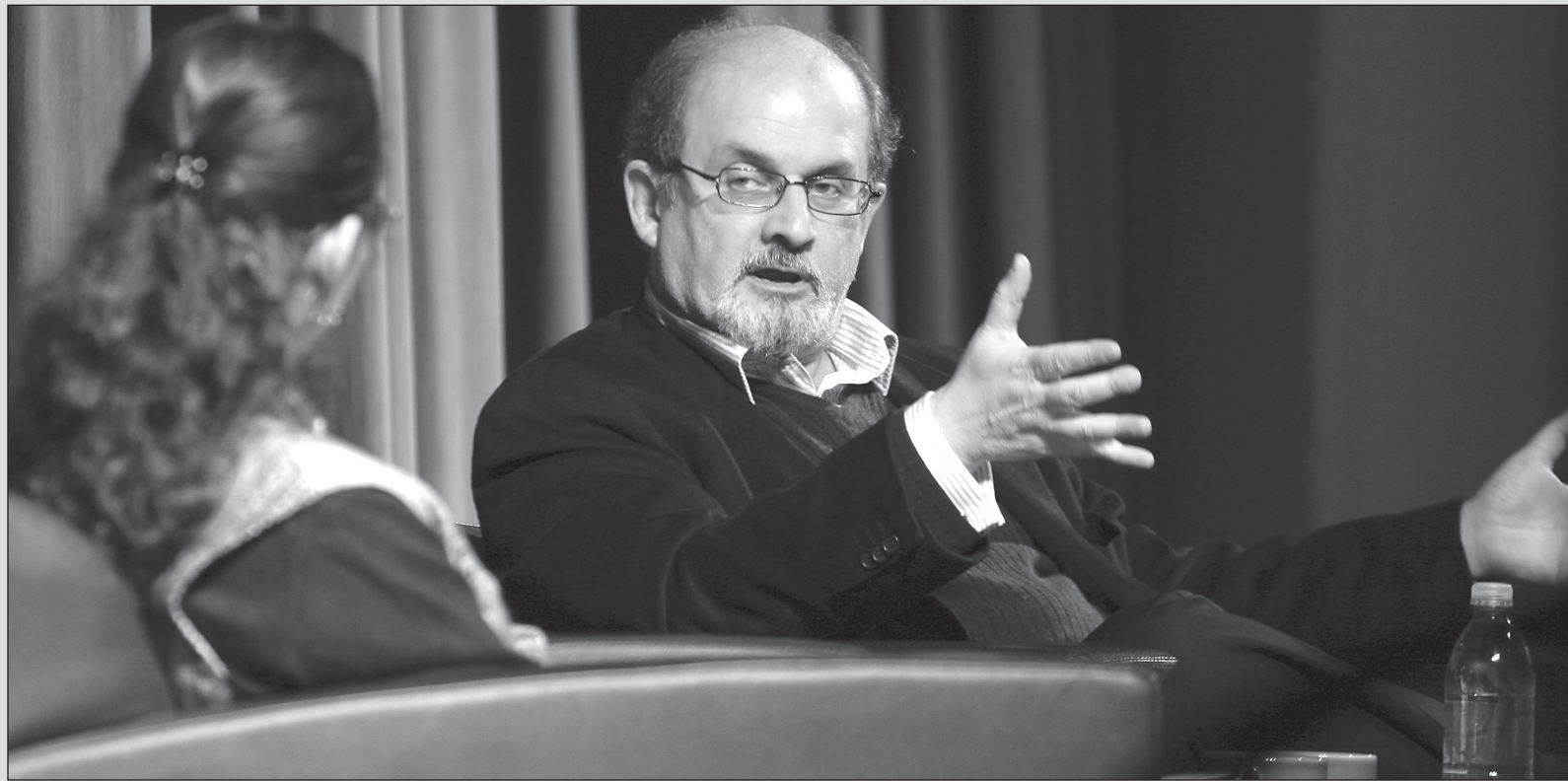
Phillips' statement alluded to two types of responses the university has to incidents such as these that occur on campus.

Judicial processes were initiated in both situations. Phillips said the process gives the accused the "opportunity to respond to allegations." And, in hopes of preventing more instances of threats and intimidation, the SJSU Mediation Center will organize a series of workshops addressing "safety and conflict resolution."

The Judicial Process

President Don W. Kassing said

See CODE, page 3



ERIC AUSTIN // Special to the Daily

Salman Rushdie engaged in a public Q&A session with English Associate Professor Revathi Krishnaswamy, who uses Rushdie's work in her classes.

Salman Rushdie visits campus

Famous author discusses his craft, death sentence issued by Iran

By BRIANA HERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

Controversial author Salman Rushdie spoke to SJSU students and faculty in Morris Dailey Auditorium Thursday, Nov. 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Rushdie, writer of such books as "The Satanic Verses" and "East, West Stories," was introduced by Center for Literary Arts co-directors Kate Evens and Kelly Harrison as well as his interviewer, Revathi Krishnas-

wamy, an SJSU English professor.

After his introduction, Rushdie delivered a 30-minute speech on his journey as a novelist, the subject matter of his books, and his personal style as a writer. This was followed by an on-stage interview with Krishnaswamy and a question-and-answer session that concluded the event at 9 p.m.

During the interview, Rushdie was asked about the death sentence he was placed under by then-Iranian leader Ayatollah Kho-

meini for blasphemy after publishing "The Satanic Verses" in 1988.

"I was shocked," he said. "Of course I was. It was unexpected simply because it had never happened before."

Rushdie spoke of fundamentalism and violence in today's society as well as feminism in his books.

During the interview, the audience was

See AUTHOR, page 2

San Jose: No. 6 most expensive college town

By LEAH BIGELOW
Staff Writer

A recent survey by the Coldwell Banker College Home Price Comparison Index showed that San Jose ranked No. 6 in the nation's most expensive college towns.

"San Jose is way too expensive," said Ashley Visneski, a junior kinesiology major. Visneski said she and her husband own their home, and both of them work to help pay for it.

Colleen Berndt, an economics professor at SJSU, said via e-mail that it is 80

percent more expensive to live in San Jose, based on the Cost of Living Index.

The cost of living in San Jose is calculated at 180 percent, Berndt said. She said the Cost of Living Index is obtained by calculating and averaging prices and then indexing those at 100 percent.

"Cities are always more expensive than small towns," said SJSU President Don Kassing.

He said he is not surprised that San Jose placed sixth on the list based on the cost of

See SIXTH, page 5

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- \$1.38 million, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Ma.
- \$1.3 million, University of Southern California, Los Angeles
- \$1.3 million, University of California, Los Angeles
- \$1.28 million, University of California, Berkeley
- \$1.14 million, San Jose State University, San Jose

<p>NEWS</p> <p>A.S. HOLDS THREE-DAY OPEN HOUSE</p> <p>Members of SJSU's student government invite students into the house to learn more about what they do.</p> <p>PAGE 4</p>	<p>SPORTS</p> <p>STUDENT MAKES NATIONAL TEAM</p> <p>A sophomore civil engineering major plays his way onto the Afghanistan National Basketball team.</p> <p>PAGE 7</p>	<p>STUDENT LIFE</p> <p>U.S. SETS NEW STD RECORD</p> <p>Cases of Chlamydia, Gonorrhea and Syphilis are on the rise, and more than one million cases of Chlamydia were reported last year.</p> <p>PAGE 8</p>	<p>OPINION</p> <p>GET OFF MYSPACE! THE 12-STEP PROGRAM</p> <p>Alright, there isn't a program. But MySpace is ruining the life of one Daily writer.</p> <p>PAGE 9</p>	<p>ONLINE</p> <p>SLIDE SHOW: SALMAN RUSHDIE AT SJSU</p> <p>Controversial author spoke at SJSU — students saw a different side to the writer and his humor.</p> <p>THEPARTANDAILY.COM</p>	<p>INDEX</p> <p>Classified.....8</p> <p>Cartoon.....9</p> <p>Columns.....9</p> <p>Comments.....9</p> <p>Crossword,Sudoku.....8</p> <p>Sparta Guide.....2</p> <p>Sports.....7</p> <p>StudentLife.....8</p>
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SPARTA GUIDE

Write letters to the editor and submit Sparta Guide information online. Visit our Web site at www.thespartandaily.com. You may also submit information in writing to DBH 209.

Sparta Guide is provided free of charge to students, faculty and staff members. The deadline for entries is noon three working days before the desired publication date. Space restrictions may require editing of submission. Entries are printed in order in which they are received.

TODAY

Any Soldier Care-Package Drive

The Delta Zeta sorority is sponsoring a care package drive for soldiers on active duty. Donations of personal hygiene products, snacks, and fun stuff like magazines and games would be greatly appreciated. Delta Zeta is working with AnySoldier.com to send the care packages to soldiers who get little, if any, mail. Donations can be placed in the blue and gold box found in the Student Involvement office in Clark Hall, Suite 140 any time between Thursday, Nov. 7 and Tuesday, Nov. 20. For more information, contact Kathryn Linder at kathrynmarie86@gmail.com.

Centering Prayer: A Time of Quiet Prayer and Meditation

Every Wednesday at 12:15 p.m., SJSPIRIT holds a prayer and meditation session in the Spartan Memorial Chapel. For more information, contact Chaplain Roger at (408) 605-1687.

Associated Students Open House

From Nov. 13 to 15, the Associated Students will be holding an Open House at the Associated Students House on the Paseo de San Carlos all day long.

Internship Week - Student Panel

Learn internship strategies from students in a variety of liberal arts fields. Nov. 14 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the Umunhum Room, Student Union. For more information go to www.careercenter.sjsu.edu.

Feminist & Catholic Mass

Spartan Chapel, 5:15 p.m. Every Wednesday. All are welcome at the table! Victoria Rue, Roman Catholic woman priest, presiding. For more information, contact Dr. Victoria Rue at victoria@victoriarue.com.

Nov. 15

Employer Information Session - Southland Industries

Mechanical Engineering and Civil Engineering students are invited to join Southland Industries for lunch and learn about internship and full-time opportunities from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in the Ohlone Room, Student Union. For more information, contact Sherri Bowman at sherri.bowman@sjsu.edu.

Internship Week - Employer Panel

Employers will be on hand to share their tips on how to maximize opportunities and gain meaningful internship experience from noon to 2 p.m. in the Umunhum Room in the Student Union. For more information, go to www.careercenter.sjsu.edu.

National Marrow Donor Program Registry

From 9 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. in the Student Union, the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) and San Jose State University are encouraging all ethnically diverse students to join in a mission to save lives by joining the NMDP Registry. SJSU and Nu Alpha Kappa is hosting a drive. To find out more about unrelated transplantation as a life-saving therapy, becoming a marrow or blood stem cell donor, donating umbilical cord blood, and other ways to help, please visit www.marrow.org, or call Cynthia Carlson at 510-495-4021.

150th Anniversary Deans' Speaker Series: Silicon Valley Leaders Symposium

From 12 to 1 p.m. in the Engineering Auditorium, Room 189, Dr. T.J. Rodgers Founder, President & CEO of Cypress Semiconductor will speak. This event is free. For more information, contact Ahmed Hambaba at ahmed.hambaba@sjsu.edu.

Nov. 17

Friends of the King Library Booksale

From 1 to 5 p.m., the Friends of the King Library are having a bag booksale. The revenues from these sales are donated back to the library for use in sponsoring a variety of community and literacy projects. All hardcover books are \$1 and softcover books are 50 cents. A bag booksale will follow Sunday. For more information, contact Jennifer Davis at jennifer.davis@sjsu.edu.

Nov. 18

Friends of the King Library Booksale

From 1 to 5 p.m., the Friends of the King Library are having a bag booksale. Just \$5 for all the books you can fit into a large paper bag provided by the staff. The revenues from these sales are donated back to the library for use in sponsoring a variety of community and literacy projects. For more information, contact Jennifer Davis at jennifer.davis@sjsu.edu.

AUTHOR // About 800 people attended event

Continued from page 1

asked to write down its questions on pieces of paper, which were collected and handed to professor Krishnaswamy to direct the audience's questions.

Center for Literary Arts co-director Harrison said questions were dealt within this fashion to avoid a number of problems that come with audience participation. She said sometimes audience questions can be repetitious or irrelevant.

"Sometimes people will ask totally random questions like, 'What is your favorite color?' 'Do you have a dog?'" she said. "It's basically so the event will run smoothly. That's all."

Harrison said both she and co-director Evans collected audience questions and selected and organized the best ones for Krishnaswamy to use. She said in large events such as Rushdie's appearance, it is typical to deliver audience questions this way.

The question that ended the night was, "Can literature change the world?"

Rushdie answered, "No. It can't change the world, but it can change people. I don't want books to change the world. It's hard enough to understand the world."

Dan Vo, a senior English major, attended Thursday night's event as an extra credit assignment for his poetry class.

"I thought it was pretty cool," he said. "I liked the end with the Q&A."

Though Vo attended for a school assignment, he paid the \$10 admission fee for SJSU students.

"It's 10 bucks," he said. "It's not a big deal."

Duncan Lange, marketing and events manager for Associated Students at SJSU, said the Rushdie event was sponsored by Associated Students who mainly had a hand in advertising.

"I thought it was successful," he said. "We had a really good turnout. I think having someone on Rushdie's level on campus was the most important thing."

Lange said, however, that final income figures for the event are not yet available but that 700-800 people attended.

Harrison said, however, "We pretty much know when we bring in somebody like Rushdie that we won't make money off the event. For us, it is never a money-making endeavor."

The Center for Literary Arts uses fundraising and grants to finance an author's fee for appearing on campus, Harrison said. It is when the amount cannot be fully covered by such means that students are then charged to attend.

"This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students," she said. "Nowhere else would you be able to see Rushdie for 10 bucks."



ERIC AUSTIN // Special to the Daily

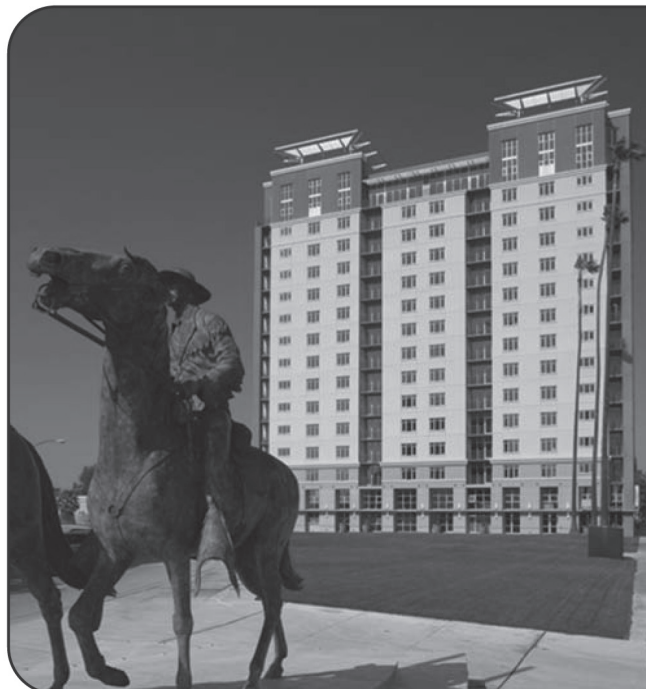
Fans of Salman Rushdie line up for a book signing after his speech on Thursday at the Morris Dailey Auditorium.

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Carmina Burana

CHAIR // Evacu-Trac device not available in Campus Village for fear of vandalism

Continued from page 1

someone down."

Lee is an instructor with a program through the University Police Department called the Community Emergency Response Team.

Spencer Wong, an emergency services assistant, said the Los Angeles Fire Department formed the Community Emergency Response Team program in 1985 after an earthquake hit Mexico.

"They saw a lot of people were willing to come forward and help, but they weren't prepared, and they were ill-prepared and a lot of them ended up getting hurt," Wong said. "So we now have the CERT program they developed, which is a community emergency response team."

Wong teaches free, three-day CERT classes especially aimed toward students, faculty and staff members. Part of the training is to teach people how to use the Evacu-Tracs, which can be found in white boxes in buildings throughout campus.

Schulter said there are about 45 chairs currently located throughout the campus, while 40 to 50 chairs may be added during the last phase, depending on the prices of the chairs.

In addition, Schulte said there are plans to possibly purchase a Super-Trac, which would cost \$10,000 to \$12,000.

Unlike the Evacu-Trac, the Super-Trac can transport a person and his or her wheelchair during an emergency.

The Super-Trac can also be used in other situations, said Lucille M. Surdi, an American with Disabilities Act compliance specialist.

"In non-emergency situations, when you have an elevator just stuck and broke and you have

someone on the third floor, that would be the apparatus that we would use," she said.

Wong said Evacu-Tracs are not displayed in Campus Village.

"The reason the Evacu-Tracs are not available in Campus Village is not really due to a funding issue," Wong said. "It is an issue of abuse."

Wong said some students often tamper with fire extinguishers, hoses and alarms already present in Campus Village.

He said this is the same reason why automatic external defibrillators, devices used on people experiencing cardiac arrest, are also not present in Campus Village.

Wong said these safety devices can cost up to \$3,000.

According to a letter from the Accommodations Review Board, an Evacu-Trac Chair costs \$2,450.

"We know that the very first thing students will do with them is abuse them, like they do with fire extinguishers and other safety devices inside their building," Wong said.



PHOTOS BY HANNA THRASHER // Spartan Daily

An Evacu-Trac is a chair used to help evacuate disabled people down staircases in buildings during an emergency.

Wong said there have been discussions about storing the Evacu-Trac somewhere considered "safe" such as a residential adviser's room, especially if a disabled student is living on that floor.

"But for the most part we haven't been willing to go that far yet because the counterargument is if it's locked away in a RA's room, only the RA has access to it and not everybody else," Wong said. "What happens if the RA is not there?"

Raymond Ho, a junior mechanical engineering major, is an instructor in the CERT program. Ho said more people should be aware of where Evacu-Tracs are located and should read the instructions posted on the boxes.

"People pass by them, but not a lot of people pay attention to them," Ho said. "But those of us who are trained in them actually tend to notice them and know where they are, so we can get to them pretty quickly."

Associated Students opens its doors to students, public

By **CHRISSEY RAMONEDA**

Staff Writer

The Associated Students at SJSU began holding its first annual informational open house Nov. 13, continuing through Nov. 15, at the A.S. House located in front of Duncan Hall, near the Fourth Street Garage.

"It's good for them to see where the student leaders they elected work," said Clifton Gold, the marketing and events coordinator for A.S.

"A lot of people walk by this house and wonder what it is," Gold said. "It's not a big scary house. They think it's either something really fancy or haunted."

During the afternoon of the first day, however, no students were seen taking the tour.

"We hope to make this thing bigger as the years go by," said Christy Riggins, the administrative assistant to the A.S. government. "What we can't do this year, we'll do next year."

Planning for the open house began a month ago and they hope to have more pictures and publicity for the event in the future.

The A.S. House was built in 1904 and was named



HANNA THRASHER // Spartan Daily

The A.S. House is hosting an open house that lasts through Thursday, allowing students and faculty to see board rooms, offices and a display of services the Associated Students provide.

the "The Scheller House" after Victor Scheller, a lawyer who lived there with his sister and her husband.

"My group did some of the research," Riggins said. "We were able to secure some old photos from the History San Jose Museum."

The house was eventually purchased by SJSU, and the campus grew around it. In 1991 it was vacated, and the university put it up for sale for \$1 if the buyer would then move it off campus. No offers came forward.

There was an attempt to demolish the house in 1994, but the San Jose Preservation Council considered it a historic building, Gold said.

In 2000, A.S. decided to fund the \$2.3 million to renovate the house, and it became its headquarters, as well as housing for the executive director's office, government administration, the Marketing and Events department, and the Information Technology department.

The tour includes 15 stops, starting with the executive director's office, the many rooms throughout the house and ending with the president's of-



HANNA THRASHER // Spartan Daily

Clifton Gold, a senior public relations major and marketing/event coordinator for Associated Students explains a display set up for the A.S. House open house, showing the plethora of events and services the A.S. provides. The open house is being held through Thursday.

Each stop has an informational sign explaining what the room was before renovation, what it's used for today and the departments that work in it, Gold said.

"I think it's a great idea, a great way to have students come into the house," said Benjamin Henderson, A.S. president. "We have information on the legislative branch and the executive branch. We also have directors here. We're all going to be here giving information to students."

There are departmental displays throughout the tour explaining the A.S. affiliated centers on campus and how students can use them.

The "Fireside Room," a meeting room on the first floor, as well as the A.S. boardroom located on the second floor, are open to any students who need a room to conduct meetings. And when the "Fireside Room" is not in use, it is available for students to study, Gold said.

During the open-house tour, the boardroom table is set up with an individual box for all 13 A.S. directors, as well as the president, vice president and financial controller. The boxes have a picture of each officer, as well as a brief explanation of what his or her position entails.

The boxes have a slot where students can leave comments, questions or suggestions for each officer.

"That way you're able to have direct communication with them," Gold said.



HANNA THRASHER // Spartan Daily

A gavel was displayed at the head of the Associated Students board of directors table on Tuesday at the A.S. House during an open-house tour.



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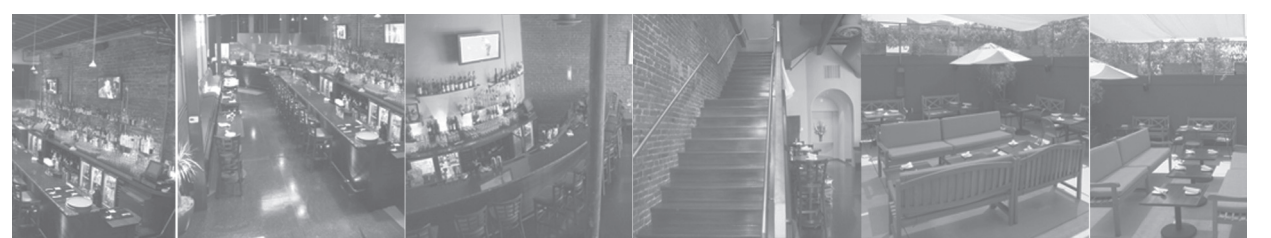
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Colleges Against Cancer club sets up events to raise money for breast cancer research

PHOTOS BY BETH SHAPIRO // Special to the Daily



Maeley Roberts, a junior nursing major, and Brad Kompelien, a junior communications major, sell baked goods to raise money for breast cancer research. The Colleges Against Cancer club set up the "bounce your boobies against breast cancer" event to raise awareness for the disease. The event also included an Astro Jump, a bean bag toss and self-exam demonstrations. Pink ribbons and stickers were also distributed.



Mark Stickler, a junior math major, calls his mother to tell her to get a mammogram. The club members encouraged passing students to call their mothers, aunts and grandmothers to remind them to get checked for breast cancer.



Brian Coughlin, a senior business major, demonstrates how to search for lumps using a silicon breast.



Mark Stickler, a junior math major, and Gabriel Galaza, a senior majoring in radio, television and film, play in the Astro Jump set up by the Colleges Against Cancer club. Students were encouraged to "bounce their boobies against breast cancer" to raise awareness for the disease.

Netflix \$1M prize still available for better movie software

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Netflix Inc.'s system for recommending movies to its subscribers is proving tough to beat, as thousands of engineers and statisticians have discovered after long hours of research.

Hoping to widen its lead in the online DVD rental market, Netflix last year dangled a \$1 million reward to anyone who could improve upon the Los Gatos-based company's current movie-recommendation software by at least 10 percent.

The prize remains on the table, Netflix said Tuesday, for the more than 27,000 contestants from more than 160 countries who have entered the quirky coding contest so far.

To keep the programmers motivated, Netflix is handing out at least \$50,000 annually to whoever has come closest to the 10 percent improvement.

Netflix will give its first "progress prize" next week to three researchers at an AT&T Inc. laboratory in Florham Park, N.J.

The team, consisting of Yehuda Koren, Robert Bell and Chris Volinsky, spent more than 2,000 combined hours poring through data to develop a method that improved upon Netflix's movie recommendations by about 8.5 percent.

The judging was done using a program that quantifies how well the recommendation systems predict which movies will be liked or disliked by a profiled consumer.

Because the AT&T trio did much of their Netflix work as part of its job assignment, the \$50,000 award is being paid to their company, which plans to donate the money to charity.

Although his team is near the 10-percent target, Koren said he isn't sure the goal is reachable.

"Getting the first 5 percent (of

Netflix is handing out \$50,000 annually to whoever has come the closest to the 10 percent improvement

improvement) is a lot easier than the last 5 percent," Koren said.

Even if they don't continue their work on the Netflix project, the AT&T research team plans to release their findings next week. Their insights conceivably could help other competitors in the contest to win the \$1 million prize.

Netflix plans to blend some of the AT&T research team's suggested improvements into its movie-recommendation software early next year, said Jim Bennett, a vice president who oversees the system.

The current system draws upon about two-billion movie ratings collected from the more than 10-million consumers who have subscribed to Netflix's service at some point during the past eight years.

Netflix ended September with about seven-million subscribers, giving the company a substantial lead over its nearest rival, Blockbuster Inc., which has 3.1 million online customers.

SIXTH // Census Bureau says groceries, transportation, housing more expensive

Continued from page 1

things such as housing and gas.

The Cost of Living Index released by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2005 said the cost of groceries in San Jose was 46 percent more expensive than average, transportation was 7.2 percent higher and housing was 157 percent more expensive.

According to the report, "a 2,220-foot, 4-bedroom, 2-1/2-bath home with a family room and two-car garage would average \$150,000," in Muncie, Ind., home of Ball State University. That city was first on the list of the most affordable college market for home prices.

The price of that same home in San Jose would be \$1.14 million, according to the survey. Berndt said the average apartment rental is about \$1,230 per month.

Some students choose to live at their parent's home to avoid paying the high costs of downtown housing.

"I think it's cheaper for me to live at home than pay for the dorms," said Kathryn Ilagan, a freshman nursing major.

President Kassing said the on-campus housing options are very competitive with rent prices for areas surrounding the school. He said these prices are also very similar to what other California State Universities charge.

According to the Campus Village Web site, a single occupancy apartment costs \$3,994 per person a semester. A November 13 craigslist.com listing had a two-bedroom, one-bath apartment in downtown San Jose available for \$5,375 during that same time frame.

There are benefits to living in a city with a higher cost of living, Berndt said. She said that although it is pricier to live in this area, "our salaries are higher here as well."

The appeal of San Jose's good weather and booming economy are two reasons why people are willing to pay more to live here,

Berndt said.

"San Jose is well located for someone searching for a job," Berndt said.

She said the city has a thriving high-tech industry, and for those who cannot find a job in the area, it's an easy commute to other big cities, such as San Francisco, Oakland and Santa Cruz.

Berndt said some cities have a less expensive cost of living, "simply

to make up for those other aspects of life which it cannot provide."

Stanford's home city of Palo Alto, topped the index for the third year in a row, with housing prices averaging \$1.67 million. Also placing ahead of San Jose were Berkeley, as well as two areas of Los Angeles, where the University of Southern California and University of California, Los Angeles campuses reside.

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Protect yourself; chlamydia stats reach an all-time high

By MIKE STOBBE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA (AP) — More than one million cases of chlamydia were reported in the United States last year — the most ever reported for a sexually transmitted disease, federal health officials said Tuesday.

"A new U.S. record," said Dr. John M. Douglas Jr. of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

More bad news: Gonorrhea rates are jumping again after hitting a record low, and an increasing number of cases are caused by a "superbug" version resistant to common antibiotics, federal officials said Tuesday.

Syphilis is rising, too. The rate of congenital syphilis — which can

the year before.

The count broke the single-year record for reported cases of a sexually transmitted disease, which was 1,013,436 cases of gonorrhea, set in 1978.

Putting those numbers into rates, there were about 348 cases of chlamydia per 100,000 people in 2006, up 5.6 percent from the 329 per 100,000 rate in 2005.

CDC officials say the chlamydia record may not be all bad news: They think the higher number is largely a result of better and more intensive screening.

Since 1993, the CDC has recommended annual screening in sexually active women ages 15 to 25. Meanwhile, urine and swab tests for the bacteria are getting better and are used more often, for men as well as women, said Douglas, director of the CDC's Division of Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention.

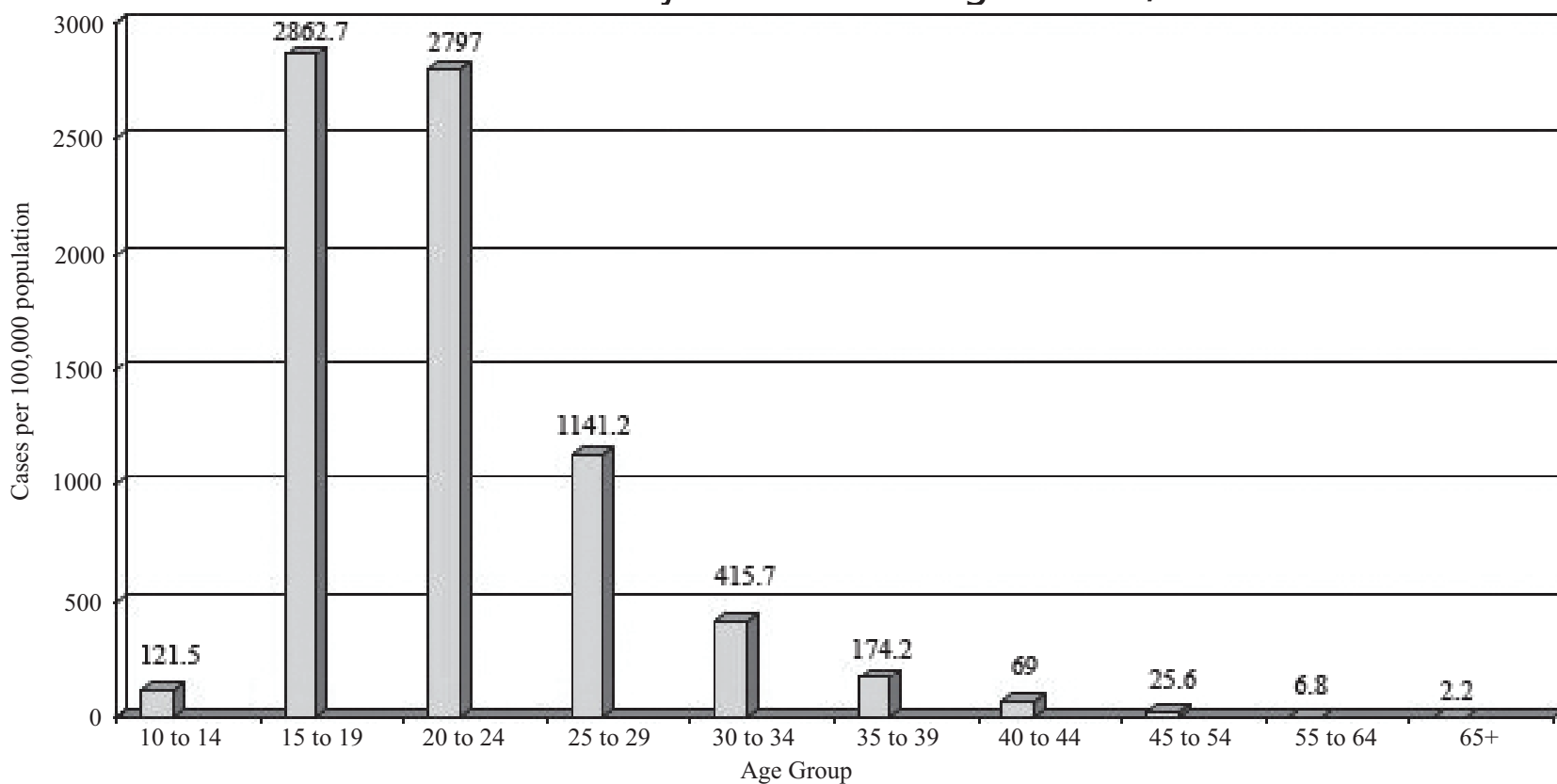
About three-quarters of women infected with chlamydia have no symptoms. Left untreated, the infection can spread and ultimately can lead to infertility. It's easily treated if caught early.

Health officials believe as many as 2.8 million new cases may actually be occurring each year, he added.

Chlamydia infection rates are more than seven times higher in black women than whites, and more than twice as high in black women than Hispanics. But it's a risk women of all races should consider, CDC officials said.

"If (health care) providers think young women in their practice don't have chlamydia, they should think again," said Dr. Stuart Bernman, a CDC epidemiologist.

The gonorrhea story is some-



SOURCE: WWW.CDC.GOV

Chlamydia infection rates are more than seven times higher in black women than whites, and more than twice as high in black women than Hispanics.

deform or kill babies — rose for the first time in 15 years.

"Hopefully we will not see this turn into a trend," said Dr. Khalil Ghanem, an infectious diseases specialist at Johns Hopkins University's School of medicine.

The CDC releases a report each year on chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis, three diseases caused by sexually transmitted bacteria.

Chlamydia is the most common. Nearly 1,031,000 cases were reported last year, up from 976,000

what different.

In 2004, the nation's gonorrhea rate fell to 112.4 cases per 100,000 people in 2004, the lowest level since the government started tracking cases in 1941.

But since then, health officials have seen two consecutive years of increases. The 2006 rate — about 121 per 100,000 — represents a 5.5 percent increase from 2005.

Health officials don't know exactly how many superbug cases there were among the more than 358,000 gonorrhea cases reported in 2006. But a surveillance project of 28 cities found that 14 percent were resistant to ciprofloxacin and other medicines in the fluoroquinolones class of antibiotics.

Similar samples found that 9

percent were resistant to those antibiotics in 2005, and 7 percent were

About three-quarters of women infected with chlamydia have no symptoms. Left untreated, the infection can spread and ultimately can lead to infertility.

resistant in 2004. The appearance of the superbug has been previously reported, and the CDC in April advised doctors to stop using those drugs against gonorrhea.

Douglas said it doesn't look like the superbugs are the reason for gonorrhea's escalating numbers

overall, but they're not sure what is driving the increase.

Other doctors are worried. The superbug gonorrhea has been on the rise not only in California and Hawaii, where the problem has been most noticeable, but also in the South and parts of the Midwest.

"Suddenly we're starting to see the spread," Ghanem said.

Syphilis, a potentially deadly disease that first shows up as genital sores, has become relatively rare in the United States. About 9,800 cases of the most contagious forms or syphilis were reported in 2006, up from about 8,700 in 2005.

The rate rose from 2.9 cases per 100,000 people to 3.3, a 14 percent increase.

For congenital syphilis, in which babies get syphilis from their mothers, the rate rose only slightly from the previous year to 8.5 cases per 100,000 live births.

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AIDS/HIV information, tests, individual counseling and group presentations are provided by health educators and peer counselors. Confidential testing is also available for a fee. Anonymous testing is available on site provided by the Santa Clara County Health.

SOURCE: WWW.SA.SJSU.EDU/STUDENT_HEALTH



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