

# President halts blood drives; policy questioned

By **KIMBERLY TSAO**  
 Staff Writer

The Food and Drug Administration has banned men who have had sex with other men from donating blood since 1983. But now, SJSU President Don Kassing is prohibiting any blood drives on campus because the FDA ignores SJSU's nondiscrimination policy.

Although the nondiscrimination and FDA policies are decades old,

Kassing stopped blood drives on campus just last week.

"A number of gay men complained for years," said Wiggy Sivertsen, former director of SJSU's Counseling Services. "The problem was we needed to get somebody to file a complaint with the Office of Equal Opportunity. Somebody finally did, so we were able to move."

The community can organize blood drives but not at SJSU.

"If the Stanford Blood Bank

wanted to bring their van down and park across the street, of course, they're more than welcome to do that," said Larry Carr, associate vice president for public affairs in the president's office.

For now, donating blood off campus is the only option for students, including Tau Delta Phi President Dominic Fass. His fraternity is planning a blood drive in March — off campus.

Michele Hyndman, Stanford

Blood Center's public relations manager, said that the center would hold blood drives near SJSU.

"Twenty percent of the blood we collect comes from students," Hyndman said. "Donating blood at a school blood drive is often the first time somebody is exposed to donating blood. It becomes a platform from which they become lifelong blood donors."

Hyndman said the Stanford Blood Center is concerned it will "lose out

on a generation of blood donors" by being prevented from collecting blood at SJSU.

Carr said the president's decision was not based on law.

"This is a decision for the president that's based on principles and values of the institution of San Jose State University," Carr said.

The FDA permanently prohibits gay men from donating blood.

See **BAN**, Page 2

## WHY NO BLOOD?

- **President Kassing's** decision pended on the nondiscrimination policy at SJSU.
- **The change was made** after discussions with representatives from the Stanford Blood Center and other officials.

## PRIMARY '08

# Mrs. Obama stops by SJSU

*Hopeful's wife speaks to a full house at the Student Union on Sunday night*

By **ANDREW HERNDON**  
 Staff Writer

Michelle Obama, wife of presidential candidate Barack Obama, spoke in front of an energetic crowd at the Barrett Ballroom in the Student Union on Sunday night.

She spoke about her support of public education, the need for better jobs and healthcare plans.

"You can send your kids to the neighborhood public school around the corner and be certain that they get a decent education like we did," Obama said.

Amid chants of "Yes we can" and "Obama '08" signs, she spoke of her and her husband's blue-collar roots.

"I talk about my upbringing because when I look at the life that I had growing up, it reminds me just how hard things have gotten for regular folks," Obama said.

Through anecdotes and personal experiences, Obama's message of last night's speech was for young men and women to aim for excellence.

"Don't ever let anybody tell you who you can be or what you can do," Obama said. "No matter what the outcome of this race is, we have to snatch the veil of impossibility off the heads of our children."

Some supporters stood outside the ballroom because the 900-person capacity was reached in standing-room-only fashion.

## SJSU STUDENT CLUB FOR OBAMA

Some students on campus have already decided for whom they will vote for in the upcoming presidential primary.

Tyler Wood, a senior psychology major, has been an active member in campaigning for Sen. Barack Obama.

"I think Barack Obama has the best chance of bringing the American people together," Wood said. "Even though he's a Democrat, he talks about bringing Republicans, and Independents and Democrats all together to work on common goals, and that's pretty inspiring...."

A member of the Democratic Caucus of SJSU, formed in Fall 2007, and Students for Barack Obama, Wood has been dedicating his time to supporting Obama.

Wood and five to 10 members of Students for Barack Obama: SJSU Chapter have received about 400 pledge cards from SJSU students promising to vote for the Illinois senator.

Wood described the members as "extremely dedicated volunteers."

Sarah Bronstein, sophomore political science major and president of the Democratic Caucus of SJSU, said the club has officially endorsed Obama.

See **OBAMA**, Page 2

## "Are Californians ready for change?"

— Sen. Hillary Clinton at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center



ANDREW VILLA / SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

TOP: Sen. Hillary Clinton spoke to thousands in downtown San Jose on Friday evening. Clinton was introduced to the crowd of more than 4,000 by Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the of the United Farm Workers. BELOW: A young Clinton supporter looks on with her mother at the rally.



ANDREW VILLA / SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

# Clinton urges San Jose: Lead way to the future

By **LIZA ATAMY**  
 Staff Writer

A rally of more than 4,000 Hillary Clinton supporters showed up at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center on Friday to cheer on the presidential hopeful.

"Si se puede!" was the chorus of the evening — "Yes we can!" the crowd chanted as United Farm Workers co-founder Dolores Huerta compared Clinton to the late Cesar Chavez.

"They both started their career going door-to-door and registering people to vote," Huerta said.

Supporting officials, such as Santa Clara County Assessor Larry Stone, were there to show their support.

"If there has ever been a time and opportunity for a woman to become president, it's now," Stone said. "Let's

break the glass ceiling."

Clinton arrived 30 minutes later than her scheduled appearance of 5:45 p.m., as the crowd grew anxious to listen to her take on issues such as health-care, the war in Iraq and taxes.

"I want to know what she's going to do for our country," said Marisa Melo, an SJSU student and coordinator for the Clinton campaign. "I want to know what she's going to do with the rebuilding of New Orleans."

When Clinton finally took center stage, she addressed the crowd: "Are Californians ready for change to take back our country?"

"This is a campaign to take back America because we know there isn't anything we can't solve," Clinton said.

"The future has been invented right here, in San Jose, in Silicon Valley and California. So let's show the world and

prove to ourselves that we're the innovators, we're the inventors, and we're the people who understand the future is what America is about."

Stephany Zapata, a junior hospital management major at SJSU said, "I've been following (Clinton) very closely since the beginning. I came here pretty much to meet my idol."

Clinton also got right into the matter of her plan to provide universal health-care to every child and every family in the country.

"Quality healthcare is a moral right, not a privilege," Clinton said.

Although she never mentioned her opponent's name, she emphasized that the other candidate's healthcare plan would "leave 15 million people out."

"I plan to cover everyone," Clinton

See **HIL**, Page 2

## INSIDE the DAILY

### A PERFECT SIX

Gymnastics team continues to roll to an undefeated season at 6-0.

See **SPORTS**, page 3

### IN A RUSH?

Fraternity and sorority members encourage students to take a moment to learn about their organizations.

See **STUDENT CULTURE**, page 4

### DONATING BLOOD

When it comes to saving lives, policy should play no part.

See **OPINION**, page 5



## MARCHING ONWARD

Dozens take a stand to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Saturday afternoon.

See full story tomorrow, page 1.

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# OBAMA | Group takes stand by endorsing

*Continued from Page 1*

"I knew that most of us were voting for Obama, and I thought, 'Why do we need to kid ourselves?'" Bronstein said.

"Why can't we just make a stand?" Bronstein said, "I think that our campus is really afraid to make a stand on issues."

The Caucus hosted Richard Danzig at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library last Thursday.

A political adviser for the Obama campaign, Danzig spoke for almost an hour in front of about 50 students.

Danzig attended Reed College, Yale Law School and was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford University. He served as secretary of the Navy under former President Clinton, according to his U.S. Navy biography.

Danzig raised topics ranging from the war in Iraq to illegal immigration to China.

According to Danzig, he wanted to be part of a campaign that could im-

prove the current state of the country.

"I don't think that Obama is some incredible miracle worker," Danzig said. "One of the attractive things about Barack Obama is that he's incredibly realistic."

According to Danzig, Obama is more "authentic and psychologically healthy" than any one he's seen in a presidential race.

When asked about illegal immigration, Danzig said that Obama's stance was to halt the constant blame on immigrants.

"You got to stop bashing illegal immigrants," Danzig said. "They're not the cause of ... our problems either economic or security. They're kind of a stalking horse or red herring."

Bronstein said she enjoyed the speech and felt that his presence can boost Obama.

"I thought it was amazing," Bronstein said. "He used to be an advisor for Bill Clinton, so a lot of people would kind of assume that he would jump on the band wagon of Hillary



IAN GARRUCHO / SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

Michelle Obama speaks on behalf of her husband, Barack Obama, to a packed crowd at the Student Union on Sunday night.

Clinton's campaign."

This was the first time that the club had a speaker, Bronstein said.

The Obama campaign called Bronstein, the Democratic Caucus' founder, to make the appro-

appropriate accommodations for Danzig to speak at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Bronstein said.

According to Bronstein, about eight club members volunteered at the Obama campaign office.

# BAN | Some question policy

*Continued from Page 1*

Blood banks, like the Stanford Blood Center, want improved questionnaires and a 12-month deferral on gay men — the same as other donors at risk.

"As long as that's remedied, then that gives us an opportunity to look at it again and how we would be able

to bring back and allow blood drives once again," Carr said.

Aside from sexual orientation, the FDA policy also does not allow people to donate based on particular medical conditions and disabilities.

HIV/AIDS is not just considered a medical condition. The California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA)

considers HIV/AIDS a disability.

"It is something that affects your life and how you can live your life," said Joni Marshburn, treasurer of the SJSU Disabled Students Association.

"Partially, it's because of the stigma surrounding AIDS. A lot of disabilities are associated with stigma."

Kassing's decision was based on nondiscrimination of sexual orientation because "that's how the issue was raised to us," Carr said.

But, Carr said, "We're not arguing what the FDA uses as its science, whether it's good or bad. We're not arguing that."

Some argue the FDA policy is unfounded now because there are antibody tests and nucleic acid tests that can detect HIV/AIDS.

There is a window period after infection, however, from 10 to 21 days, when an HIV-positive person could pass a test as "healthy."

President Kassing has sent a letter to the FDA commissioner, Andrew von Eschenbach.

"We hope that we'll get a timeline from them that will move quickly," Carr said.

"And get them to make some decisions quickly so we can once again hold blood drives here," Carr said.

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# HIL | 4,000-plus at rally

*Continued from Page 1*

said. "A country as rich as ours, we can be smart enough to figure out how to provide quality healthcare."

Clinton said she wants to be a president who puts the American people first.

"I want to end the war in Iraq and bring the money back and invest it in America," she said. "When Bush came into office, there was a balanced budget and surplus; now we are borrowing money from the Chinese to buy oil from the Saudis."

One SJSU student took particular interest in what Clinton had to say about the war in Iraq.

"She did a good job emphasizing that it's not going to be a piece of cake to bring the troops back," said Christina Bose, earth science major. "I think she wants everyone to know that she's supporting bringing the troops back ... even though it's going to be a long process."

Besides speaking about the war, affordable healthcare and tax credits, Clinton also covered the issue of school tuition.

"Let's make college affordable again," she said.

Clinton said that with completing two years of military service, young adults could be given the opportunity to go to college by making \$10,000 per year.

"Education is the passport to the

future," Clinton said. "Let's form new partnerships with educators, students and families and bring a 21st education system in America."

Michelle Shanelec, a senior history major said, "I thought she spoke really positively and was really upbeat. I especially like how she covered the way Americans see the world, saying it will be a sigh of relief when she comes into office."

Clinton emphasized restoring America's reputation in the eyes of the rest of the world. Her "old-fashioned idea" of appointing people in the government who are qualified for their positions is one way Clinton said she intends on restoring the country's credibility.

For Erik Tomafsky, a sophomore film major, this rally determined whether Clinton was his choice candidate.

"I wasn't quite a supporter until today," she said. "After what she said about helping college students, I would vote for her."

Calling the country the "innovation nation," Clinton said she was confident the United States could "compete with anyone in the world."

"I like what she said about not just putting a Band-Aid on everything," said Adriana Perez, a senior communication major, "but actually solving the problem."

theSPARTANDAILY.com  
See a video from the Hillary Clinton rally.

## SPARTA GUIDE

EVENT CALENDAR

<p><b>TODAY</b> Pride of the Pacific Islands <i>Dance practice in the Event Center, Studio A and B, from 8 to 10 p.m. every Monday in February.</i> Contact: Lisa, 925-639-6781</p>	<p><b>TUESDAY</b> Photography reception <i>In the Art building from 6 to 8 p.m.</i> Contact: Wendy Crockett, innie726@aol.com</p>
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\*\*\*An extended Sparta Guide will be in tomorrow's paper.

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 the order in which they are received. Submit entries online at [thespartandaily.com](http://thespartandaily.com) or in writing at DBH 209.

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**2nd Street Entertainment**  
*Presents*

**Voodoo Lounge**

Wed, Feb 6  
**ST. VALENTINES REGGAE SHOW WITH 40831, THE HOLD UP AIVAR, & SIDEWAYZ BURNOUTZ**

**Tres Gringos**  
BAJA CANTINA

Thu, Feb 7  
**VINYL LIVE WITH KID GUCH DJ MARC STRETCH & DJ HIGHGRADE NU-JAZZ, HIP HOP, DRUM & BASS**

Sat, Feb 9  
**ENTOURAGE STUDIOS PRESENTS SOULGO DJ J-QUEST, D-LUZION, & C-PLUS HIP-HOP, FUNK, SOUL, BREAKS, MASH-UP'S AND DANCEHALL**

**San Jose Bar and Grill**

<p><b>Tuesday, February 4</b> <b>FAT TUESDAY!</b> Get here early!!</p> <p><b>Wednesday, February 5</b> <b>WINGY TANGO WEDNESDAY</b> TRAILER PARK BISTRO</p>	<p><b>Thursday, February 7</b> <b>DJ GOLDENCHYLD</b> \$4 Dos Equis, \$5 Don Julio (Until Midnight)</p> <p><b>Saturday, February 9</b> <b>DJ D-ROC</b> Spinning Hip-Hop, Old Skool, Rock &amp; Mashups</p>
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**Tres Gringos**

<p><b>Tuesday, February 5</b> <b>FAT TUESDAY!</b> Get here early!!</p> <p><b>Thursday, February 7</b> <b>Jager Promotional Night!</b></p>	<p><b>Tuesday, February 12</b> <b>STARLIGHT JAZZ WITH JONAH &amp; TIMELESS</b></p> <p><b>Friday, February 15</b> <b>"Viva la Brat Pack" 80's Party!</b></p>
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## Students consider the Greek life



MICHELLE HORTON / SPARTAN DAILY

Fraternity and sorority members hand out fliers along Paseo de Cesar Chavez and talk to students about joining their organizations.

By **TARA DUFFY**  
Staff Writer

"Rush is the ultimate competition," said Ryan Fontillas, a member of Pi Kappa Alpha. "Our main goal is to get as many good quality guys into our fraternity that we can."

The first few weeks of each semester mark the start of rush, when fraternities and sororities try to recruit new members.

They set up tents and tables along Paseo de Cesar Chavez, in the Art Quad and in front of the Boccardo Business Complex. Members pass out fliers and answer questions from interested students.

Henry Ott of Beta Theta Pi said his fraternity is looking for guys that "have good leadership skills and that have some charisma and social skills."

Heather Erwin said a GPA of 2.7 is a requirement for her sorority, Alpha Phi.

Erwin's sorority sister, Elisabeth

Bonifield, described recruiting as "tough."

"A lot of people don't want to talk to you when they go by," she said. "It's tedious."

Students who would rather pass by tables had different reasons for why they were not fraternity and sorority members.

Jenson Lee, a sophomore mechanical engineering major, said he didn't have the time to join a fraternity. Meagan Wallace, who's double majoring in psychology and behavioral science, said she may consider joining a sorority.

"A lot of girls are unsure if they want to join or not," Bonifield said, "but after you talk to them about it, they get more and more convinced. It's not as stereotypical as people kinda judge it to be."

David Hu of Delta Sigma Phi said he doesn't find it hard to recruit people for his fraternity, which was recently established at SJSU.

"The men who will join this year will become the 'founding fathers' of Delta Sigma Phi," Hu said. "All these other fraternities have already been established. We want to provide tradition and the chance to build a legacy."

Hu said academics are the most important part of fraternity life. He said he doesn't consider his fraternity a "frat" because he associates that word with "treating women badly and doing stupid stuff."

"We are more interested in giving back," he said. An example of Greeks' involvement with community service, Fontillas said, is Pi Kappa Alpha's participation in Pat's Run, a 4.2-mile run for the Pat Tillman Foundation, which supports youth leadership programs.

Several of the fraternities and sororities are encouraging people to come and see what they are all about by hosting events during February.

"I encourage everyone that I talk to come out and try it," Erwin said. "I love it; I'm like so happy I did it."

thespartandaily.com

Watch a video about rush by Spartan Daily staff writers Dina Baslan and Tara Duffy.

### CAMPUS VOICES Do you want to go Greek?



"I'm not into that. It's just not my thing; I'm more of a loner. It's good for some people but not for me."

Sarah Benson  
senior, graphic design



"I'm planning on joining a business fraternity because it will look good on my resume."

Tony Ha  
senior, finance



"No, I don't like joining groups unless it has a purpose to meeting a specific goal. As far as I know, fraternities are just about socializing, and I'm in enough groups to do that."

Jeff Hughes  
junior, chemistry

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# Classifieds

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#### PREVIOUS SOLUTION

3	5	9	7	8	1	2	4	6
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**HOW TO PLAY**  
Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

## SUDOKU

Difficulty: 1 (of 5)

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1-26-08

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## TODAY'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

#### ACROSS

- Fernando band
- Office wannabe
- Urchin
- Bubble up
- Relish tray item
- Blarney Stone site
- Cato's year
- Peace Prize founder
- "White Wedding" singer
- Does road work
- Kind of knight
- Galleon cargo
- Cuff link
- Disproves
- Sci-fi characters
- Wrongly
- Organ valve
- Flamenco shout
- Head gesture
- Paperboy's beat
- Cotton seeder
- Fury
- Em, Bee, or Polly
- Devote, as time
- Computer networks
- Makes eyes at
- Island near Corsica
- Informal
- "Key Largo" actress
- Carriage horse sound (hyph.)
- They often clash
- box
- Go to earth
- Criterion
- Groovy
- Clapton or Seavared
- Tumblers' pads
- Lipstick type
- Smell

#### PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

YAK	PUMPS	AGOG
ODE	EMAIL	ELEGY
LIBERALLY	ALARM	
KEATS	LECTURES	
SUBROSA	RUES	
ENACT	PRISMS	
ZEN	SARAH	YOKEL
AXEL	RITAS	NINA
PARIS	DEBUT	NUT
SMOKER	RILES	
ERIN	TUNISIA	
TABLEAUS	DAWNS	
AGAIN	DIPLOMACY	
PUREE	ELGIN	RAE
SEER	STATS	MST

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- Pound on the door
- Lovely-dovey
- High-rise units
- vera lotion
- Claims
- Festive night
- Old communications device
- Kook
- Verdigris
- Heavy metal
- Pool table cover
- Bonsai and ikabana
- Cause a blister
- Polar explorer
- Sari sporters
- Atlanta university
- Waits
- Pilot's assent
- Brief sparkle
- Dispatches
- Marching band composer
- Winery cask
- Kind of rose
- Whack
- Soft drink order
- Picks on
- House addition
- Snack chips
- Grassy shoulder
- Water, to Pedro
- Young equine
- Ta-ta in Turin
- Scads
- Trevi Fountain coins
- Fat cat's friend
- Apple quantity
- Computer key

#### DOWN

- Nowhere near
- Doggie treat

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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#### CLASSIFIED AD RATE INFORMATION

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## Making a deadly situation worse



**KYLE HANSEN**

*Fighting Insanity*

When I was 13 years old, my dad was hit by a truck while riding his bicycle to work.

He was in the hospital for six weeks, literally tied to a bed so that his shattered bones could heal. He was black and blue from neck to knees, with one huge bruise caused by internal bleeding.

Luckily for my dad — and my whole family — a blood transfusion helped save his life.

Unfortunately, the next person who needs blood might not be so lucky. Hospitals have a constant need for more blood donations than they are currently getting.

There is almost never enough blood, and our university has made a deadly situation even worse.

With the simple action of sending an e-mail last week, SJSU President Don Kassing banned all blood drives on campus and sent a clear message that saving the lives of Bay Area residents is not important to this institution.

Kassing's decision is wrong and must be reversed immediately.

Students must protest this decree, first by complaining to the university through the proper channels and second by leaving the campus environment and donating blood elsewhere.

Kassing banned blood drives because the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's requirements for donating violate the university's nondiscrimination policy.

The nondiscrimination policy is important, but providing blood to those in need is more important. It is plain wrong to let political issues get in the way of saving lives.

The FDA's blood donation regulations are outdated and unfair. They do not allow any man who has ever had sex with another man to donate. Technology has improved; it is now possible to test blood donations for AIDS and other diseases, but the FDA has not updated its rules in years.

*It is plain wrong to let political issues get in the way of saving lives.*

The FDA policies need to be revised. It is unfair to keep gay men from donating when they can safely do so. But that does not mean that it is acceptable to deny someone else the right to live.

Keeping blood away from dying people is not a humane way to protest a federal policy.

Stopping blood drives on campus

will only make it harder than it already is to get life-saving blood to those who need it.

If my dad were in an accident today, would there be enough blood to meet his need? Would President Kassing have condemned my father to die?

What about the pregnant woman who is hit by a drunk driver and needs a pint of blood to save herself and her baby?

What about the 75-year-old grandmother who needs blood during her knee-replacement surgery?

What about the gay man who needs a blood transfusion every month as part of his treatment for AIDS?

What about the millions of other Americans who need blood transfusions every year?

Certainly not all of the needed blood comes from students donating at universities, but a lot of it does.

The last time I donated on campus, I had to wait two hours, even though I had an appointment. Once I finally got into the chair to give blood, I overheard the nurses complaining about how tired they were. Every time they go to a college they get too many people donating, they said as my blood flowed into a bag for someone else to use.

But there is still a constant need for blood.

According to the American Red Cross, someone in the United States needs a blood transfusion every two

seconds. Every blood donation can save up to three lives, but in Northern California alone, 350 people need to donate blood every day just to meet the needs of area hospitals.

The best way to protest Kassing's decision is by going to donate blood and helping to save the lives of those who are in desperate need. You can donate with the Red Cross, <https://www.beadonor.com>, or with the Stanford Blood Center, <http://bloodcenter.stanford.edu>.

If you are gay or otherwise ineligible to donate, you can still help. Continue to lobby the FDA to get the policies changed so that you can donate. In the meantime, encourage others to give blood. Volunteer to help at a blood drive or in some other way. There are better means of protesting unjust laws. Don't let other people suffer and die while waiting for the FDA to change.

Everyone should let President Kassing know his decision was a mistake. You can write to him directly at the university or you can submit a letter to the Spartan Daily.

And to whoever donated blood to my dad, thank you. I hope that my donations have saved someone just as your donation saved my family.

Thank you for donating.

*"Fighting Insanity" appears the first Monday of every month. Kyle Hansen is the editor of theSpartanDaily.com.*

## Super Tuesday: Take out the trash and vote



**KEVIN RAND**

*Morning Breath*

As I drive into my neighborhood Mondays after work, I'm always reminded that it's garbage night.

At the foot of each curb near every driveway, I see the green and blue bins: one is for trash, the other is for recyclables.

Like perfect little citizens, we are — doing our parts to separate our waste products.

Every residence, right up and down the blocks, participates in this weekly ritual.

We all know it's just the right thing to do. There's not much to question about separating recyclables from garbage; so we do it.

It's really an amazing effort if you think about it.

Will your blue bin full of plastic, aluminum and paper products have any impact toward protecting the environment?

It won't, but your recyclables along with your neighbor's and the rest of your city's will.

It's something we've grown accustomed to, and I believe it is has become a moral obligation for most of us.

I say this is on the eve of an historic day for the United States.

Millions will cast votes tomorrow for their presidential candidates of choice.

Yet I know that millions of people will also remain apathetic. They will feel that their votes don't matter when all added up.

These people might be jaded toward American politics, tired of choosing among a cast of more of the same.

Many of these same people put out their blue bins on Monday nights.

They drive down the freeway and see trash on the road's shoulder. They might even be starting to believe in global warming.

They still, however, put out their blue bins, even if their efforts seem all for naught.

It's difficult to fathom that we can vote today because the first Americans fought for that right.

The distance between the past and the present makes it easy for us to take our rights for granted.

The right to vote is a gift.

I never fought for it. You, presumably, never fought for it.

Voting is an option, like recycling is an option.

Nevertheless, establishing the

right to vote is one of the greatest institutions a society can establish.

I will vote in tomorrow's primary election.

My absentee ballot has been sitting on a stack of papers on my bedroom desk for the past few weeks.

For me, it's not so much about my vote being counted, per se. It's about participating in the gift of democracy.

It's really just a choice, like separating the trash from the recyclables.

My lone vote will be one among millions, and in November, many more millions.

In the 2004 election, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 64 percent of U.S. citizens 18 years old or over voted in the presidential election. That is about three out of five of those eligible.

*The distance between the past and the present makes it easy for us to take our rights for granted.*

It's difficult for me to stomach the argument that one vote doesn't matter, especially when I see five out of every five houses on my block with the recycling bin out on Monday evenings.

Obviously, it is laziness and apathy that leave two out of five of us at our homes on those election Tuesdays.

I don't like to call voting an obligation, because obligations can become tedious and can cause resentment.

I look at voting as a courtesy, while also understanding that it is unmistakably a privilege.

Leave the obligations in the blue recycling bin; and if recycling means even more to you than a duty, more power to you.

Voting is more than a "should-do," though.

If you're not registered for tomorrow's primary, consider registering for the November election.

Take whatever time your life allows for you to educate yourself about the candidates and issues.

Take your right to vote and use it, not because you should — but because you can.

*"Morning Breath" appears the first and third Monday of every month. Kevin Rand is the Spartan Daily executive editor.*

## Moving out might lose you more than money



**KRIS ANDERSON**

*The Decline of Mojo*

I hate living on my own. I really do.

Just before the opening kickoff of the "big game," I spent 15 minutes struggling to pull the cotton ball out of a recently opened bottle of Tylenol.

Why do they make those things so frickin' impossible?

I know it's for child safety, but that was hopeless.

If banks really wanted to install a foolproof alarm system, they just need to throw a giant cotton ball behind the door.

Imagine a so-far-so-good thief prancing around the lobby in his Richard Nixon disguise, yelling in his all-too-rehearsed bank robber voice and his oh-so-precise searing through the locks of the safe with some as-yet-to-be-invented laser, only to fling the alloy door ajar and stand agape, face to face with the Michelin-man-sized cotton ball, an impossible clot separating the thief from his treasure.

Plan foiled. Bank wins. And so does Tylenol.

Anyhow, the point is I don't hate living on my own; I just don't have much experience. I'm on Day 4 as we speak — no big deal.

I merely hate moving out, and not in the traditional sense of packing and unloading and carting abusively large furniture up cramped stairwells.

I'm referring to the sinking reaction that hasn't quite dissipated yet, the one that makes me feel like I'm in some mini slumber party in my new room and my mom will call any moment to yank me away

from my little vacation.

I almost dreamed about such a call: "Hey Kris, it's time to come home now. Dinner's going to be ready soon, and you still need to clean your room."

Home ... now? Really?

That's the hardest part. There is no more home now. There is no dinner; instead, there's Cup Noodles.

And so far, this experience is nothing short of jarring.

Last week, I woke up in my old room to the sound of my alarm bleating, and I was late again.

In a blind haze, I threw on my clothes, grabbed my backpack and some coffee and scurried out the door. Not only was sight unnecessary for this task, but so was responsibility.

"Eh," I would think. "I got coffee and granola bars downstairs. I'll just snatch and run."

*There is no more home now. There is no dinner; instead, there's Cup Noodles.*

In my new apartment, we have a coffee maker that isn't set up and we have an empty cupboard where coffee would surely go.

These are not the insolent ramblings of a coming-of-age college student.

This is the whining of a spoiled brat turned independent because \$20,000 in student loans didn't seem like a real thing two weeks ago. I could have just as easily pictured asking for 20,000 turkey sandwiches.

But now that debt is real, and I hate moving out.

Why do it anyway? Why consciously decide to toe the precipitous line of independence when the realm of coddling and allowance is still somewhat fresh?

There were no worries. No problems. No angry upstairs neighbors who conveniently slammed their

brooms on our ceiling, serving notice that we were too loud.

There were no heavy boxes or furniture to lug around. No stubbed toes. No mashed hands.

Why suddenly decide that it's a brilliant idea to leave a world where an extra \$80 meant new jeans or a video game?

Now, those extra twenties are earmarked for groceries — and toilet paper, come to think of it.

I should say that I'm 22 and have never really paid for much in my life.

Before now, I fronted a couple hundred bucks a month for a newish Volkswagen, until I lost my job in August and my mom leapt in to rescue me after I had already spent my \$80 on some sweet Volcom denims.

I realize now that this new landscape is markedly different.

The very same balcony my old room used to perch above is no more. My futon is no more. My closet, my bookshelves, my couch — no more.

Waking up Saturday mornings at the breakfast table violently chopping down biscuits and gravy — no more.

It's just like the movie "Garden State." Once you move out, home is a whole new place.

I just hope my mom doesn't mind me shopping in her kitchen.

But for the litany of demonstrative drawbacks of independence, only one thing matters so far: my independence.

I can't tell you whether it's worth it to live on your own — I can say that so far it hasn't been cheap.

*"The Decline of Mojo" appears every Monday. Kris Anderson is a Spartan Daily copy editor.*

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Letters to the editor must contain the author's name, address, phone number, signature and major. Letters become property of the Spartan Daily and may be edited for clarity, grammar, libel and length. Only letters of 300 words or less will be considered for publication.

Published opinions and advertisements do not necessarily reflect the views of the Spartan Daily, the School of Journalism and Mass Communications or SJSU.

The Spartan Daily is a public forum.

## the DAILY

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"This is a place where, if you left your purse in your car, nobody is going to go bust out your window or anything. Now we're going to be a little more on the alert."

### DELORES THOMPSON

Resident of Frankfort, Ill., nearby Tinley Park, where five women were shot to death in a Lane Bryant clothing store Saturday.



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