

INTERNATIONAL WEEK: Four countries in four issues – TODAY: NIGERIA, page 5

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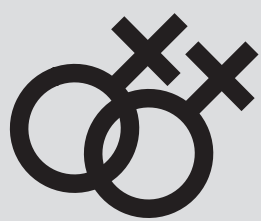
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2008

FEATURES PAGE 2

Students rally around ping pong mastery of retired SJSU professor

OPINION PAGE 7



Rights for all, not rights for some

ONLINE



A drink custom made for finals



W	TH	F	SA
66 51	66 48	69 46	71 48

University graduates wait for diplomas

MARCOS BLANCO
Staff Writer

Tony Tang has been waiting patiently since May for his diploma to arrive in the mail.

"It's very frustrating," said Tang, an SJSU graduate in business marketing. "I bought my frame already. It's empty."

Tang is one of several students who graduated this past spring who have yet to receive their diplomas from SJSU's undergraduate and graduate admissions office in the Student Services Center.

Tang said the office e-mailed him twice, notifying him that his diploma was going to arrive in a certain time.

"They haven't e-mailed me in the last month or so. No word or anything," he said. "I'm planning on calling more."

Benjamin Henderson, a political science grad-

uate and former Associated Students president, said he has been waiting for his diploma since he graduated six months ago. He said he understands the process the office has to go through to get diplomas out to other graduates.

"I know it's not an easy process," he said. "I know they are busy. For it to be this long, I'm trying to be understanding."

Delia Chavez, the acting manager for undergraduate and graduate admissions, said one of the reasons students are still waiting for their diplomas to arrive is a delay at the plant where the diplomas are printed.

"We don't print diplomas in house," she said. "We go to an outside vendor."

Chavez said she estimates that the backlog of

►► **DIPLOMAS**page4



Illustration by MATTHEW MOUNTFORD / Spartan Daily

A RISK WITH A 'WORLD' OF REWARDS



Michael Fromwiller, a junior computer science major, made a clone of the popular computer game "Bejeweled" that gamers could play inside of "World of Warcraft."

STEFAN ARMIJO / Contributing Photographer

MARCOS BLANCO
Staff Writer

Although junior computer science major Michael Fromwiller grew up playing video games when his mom bought him a Nintendo Entertainment System, he said he never thought it was going to be his future career.

"My mom got me into programming when I was 12," he said. "I was originally going to do network administration. I wasn't originally into game design."

Fromwiller, 26, who attended Monterey Peninsula College from 2000 to 2005 and the University of Hawaii for a year-and-a-half, has been

gaining recognition, some fame and a dash of controversy for making an add-on game based off the popular online puzzle game "Bejeweled."

His add-on, called "Besharded" to avoid trademark issues, was created for Blizzard Entertainment's extremely popular massively multiplayer on-

line role-playing game (MMORPG) "World of Warcraft," or "WoW" for short.

Fromwiller said the reasons for modifying "Bejeweled" were simple.

"There are times in 'WoW' when you're bored," he said. "The way a

►► **BEJEWELED**page3

SJSU prepares for budget cut, plans for fewer class sections

DANIELLE TORRALBA
Staff Writer

In October, \$31.3 million was cut from the entire CSU system and SJSU was affected by that budget cut by \$1.68 million.

Two weeks ago, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced that, as of Jan. 10, 2009, an additional \$66.3 million would be cut from the state budget.

Pat Lopes Harris, a media relations specialist for SJSU, said the university is prepared to deal with \$1.7 million affecting the school's departments, but with the recent announcement of the additional \$66.3 million cut, it is still uncertain exactly how much SJSU will be affected by it.

"SJSU had prepared for the possibility of these cuts and has asked the academic administration to plan for it," she said. "We don't know

exactly how much we will be cut yet, but I do know a lot of time is being spent where the cuts will be made. I haven't seen any promises that academics will be cut."

According to a news release from the CSU Chancellor's Office, the budget cuts will negatively impact instruction and student access. The CSU also anticipates it will result in increased class sizes, fewer course sections and additional temporary instructors, as well as resulting in fewer qualified students being admitting to the universities.

Abdel El-Shaieb, interim associate dean of the College of Business, said the college is trying as hard as possible not to cut classes, but there are no guarantees.

"We would like to be able to serve

►► **BUDGET**page4

Athletics department ranks among best in country for student-athlete health care

ANDREA FRAINER
Staff Writer

The National College Players Association, which examined how universities treat their injured student-athletes, awarded SJSU an A+ for the athletic department's medical policies.

"I would expect that," said Scott Shaw, director of sports medicine at SJSU. "I feel we do give quality care to our student-athletes at San Jose State. It doesn't surprise me that we did receive an A+."

The association asked all Division I schools to complete a questionnaire about the athletic program's medical policies. Based on the school's answers, the association assigned them a letter grade from A+ through F. Schools that did not fill out the survey automatically received an F.

Ramogi Huma, president of the National College Players Association,

said every school started with an A+.

"Depending on how they answer the questions for the survey, they may have deductions from that point," he said. "San Jose State had no deductions whatsoever."

The questionnaire asked if schools had year-round health coverage for its athletes, if the school ensures that 100 percent of medical expenses incurred from sports-related injuries are paid for and if there are any out-of-pocket medical expenses for athletes.

It also asked if athletes are allowed to seek a second medical opinion independent of the athletic program and how much time the school would pay for medical expenses incurred from a sports-related injury after the athlete's eligibility expired.

SJSU is one of 23 schools that re-

►► **HEALTH**page3

SERVING UP A PASSION

JOEY AKELEY
Staff Writer

Retired SJSU professor and ping pong master shares expertise and founded club

Growing up in Egypt, Azmy Ibrahim said he wanted to be a soccer player. He only played table tennis because his brother needed someone who could practice with him.

Now, decades later, Ibrahim's love for soccer is a distant memory as he has devoted his life to ping pong.

Ibrahim is a former ping pong coach and player and a retired SJSU sociology professor. He has trained professional players with the San Jose State University Table Tennis Club, which meets in the Student Union on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 10 p.m. Ibrahim said he originally had a club in San Francisco, but when the building was demolished, he had the idea of starting one at SJSU.

"I was the founder of this ping pong club," he said. "From these four tables, we have produced everything in the Bay Area."

Despite having just four tables, Ibrahim said the club has had some of the best players train and practice with the club. The one Ibrahim remembered most was Khoa Nguyen, an SJSU alumnus and 2006 United States of America Table Tennis Hall of Fame inductee.

"Khoa Nguyen is one of the best players in the country," he

said. "At one point, he was ranked No. 2 in the country. I trained him when he was very small in his garage. We would play, play and play. He became a student here later, and he learned a lot here at SJSU."

Ibrahim said his most memorable moment came as a player when his team won the Shield of the Republic, the award from a competition in Egypt.

"If your team won the event, you would receive the Shield of the Republic," he said. "It was an unbelievable night. We played until two o'clock in the morning. Now, we don't do that because there is a limit of time. On that night, we got it."

Ibrahim said he also remembered playing at halftime of Harlem Globetrotters games in Los Angeles.

"At that time, the half was 15 minutes," he said. "So at halftime, they would roll the table in, and at the time I was playing so good. Oh, and the crowd was into it. The game had a lot more rallies with hitting and chopping."

Currently, Ibrahim is an International Table Tennis Federation referee and rules committee member.

"Ping pong has taken me to al-

most every country in the world, believe it or not," he said. "As a referee, it took a lot of traveling. I traveled the whole world to give lectures and give exams, so that people can become umpires."

Ibrahim said he remembered the hype that ping pong used to produce.

"The game used to be extremely popular," he said. "When our schools faced each other, we used to have 3,000 people watch."

But the popularity of ping pong events in the U.S. has gone downhill in recent years, Ibrahim said.

"Most countries fund ping pong events," he said. "Here in the U.S., we don't get a penny."

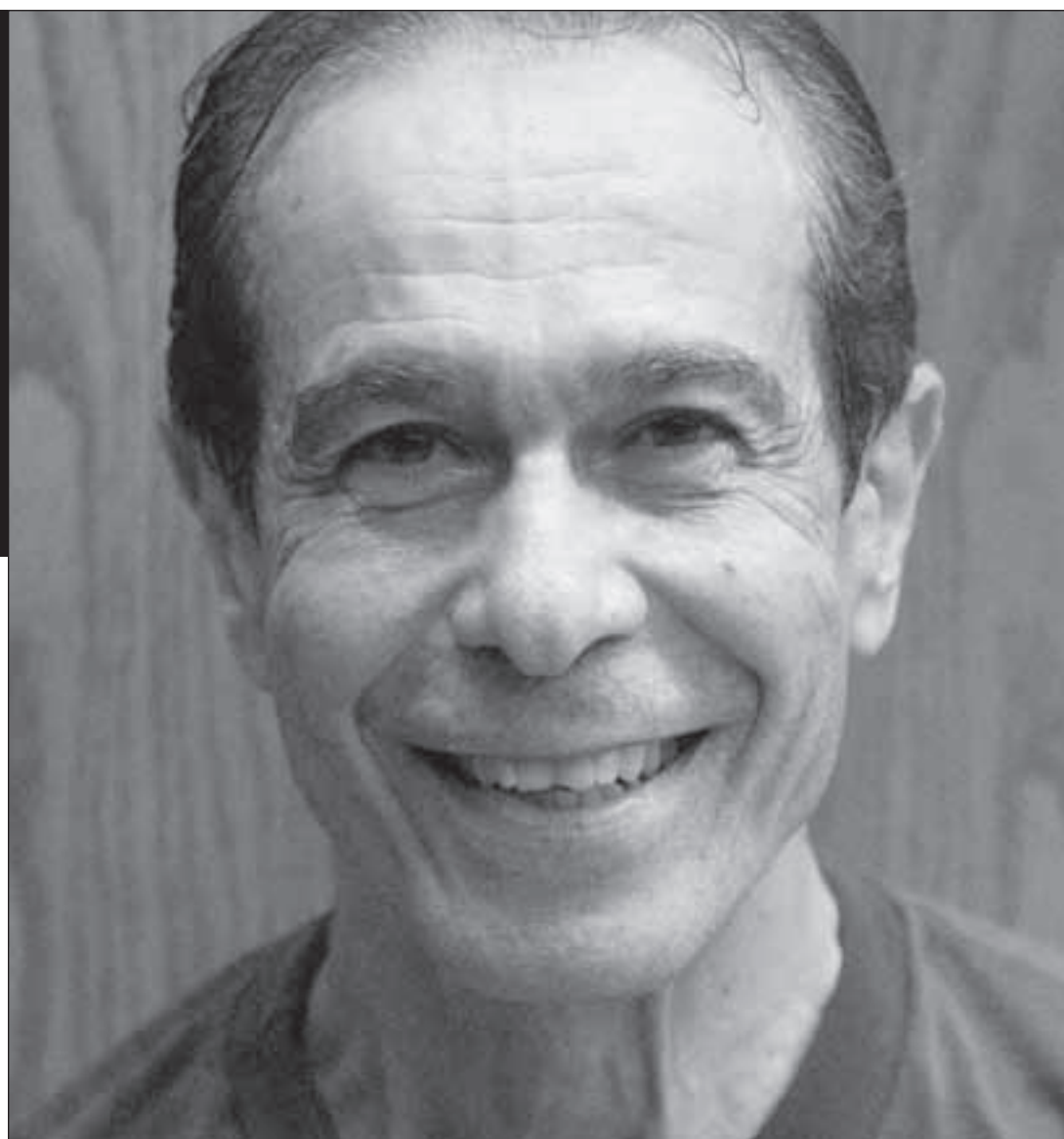
Ibrahim added that all the money is going to sports such as basketball, baseball and football because each one has the audience.

On the rules committee, Ibrahim has tried to make the game more popular. He said the audience of ping pong is more interested in matches with longer rallies.

"Where is the rally?" Ibrahim said. "If we don't have the rallies, we are losing viewers."

Ibrahim said one way to make rallies longer is to make the serve easier to return.

"The serve is supposed to be the beginning of the rally," Ibra-



Azmy Ibrahim, an accomplished ping pong player, donates his expertise to SJSU's ping pong club.

STEFAN ARMUJO / Contributing Photographer

him said. "Unfortunately, now the serve is the end of the rally."

Ibrahim said he has helped implement rules to make serves easier to return, which includes that the serve must be contacted behind the table, that it must be contacted in front of the body and that it must be tossed into the air at least six inches.

To this day, Ibrahim continues to teach his club members.

"When we aren't doing something right in table tennis, he will teach us," said club member Gor-

don Lee. "Before, I used to just play around, but now I take it more seriously, and it's because of Azmy."

Wilen Lim, an SJSU alumnus and club member, played doubles with Ibrahim and plays against him at the club.

"He is a nice guy and he is very pleasant to be with," Lim said. "We are friends, and we play each other, so we always learn from each other. Whenever you play an opponent, you always learn from them, teach them a few things."

Henry Chea, a sophomore

computer engineering major, said that anyone can play at the club.

"After he retired from teaching, he still kept the club going, so I really appreciate that," Chea said. "The competition is from beginners like me to people like Azmy, so he lets everyone play here."

Despite being a mentor, Ibrahim shows no empathy when playing his students.

"I have played him," said Neiman Chen, an undeclared sophomore. "He destroys me all the time. He shows me no mercy."

SPARTAGUIDE EVENTS CALENDAR

18 TODAY

International Week Food Festival — India

Enjoy Indian food with pickled cucumber and tomato with tarragon and lemon salad, basmati rice and naan bread, shrimp masala cooked Punjabi style in curry, palak paneer (spinach cooked with cheese), chicken tandoori, aloo ghoobi (potatoes with cauliflower) and saba bhindi (okra cooked with ginger, garlic and spices). \$7.95 for an all-you-can-eat lunch (or meal plan). Cultural entertainment included.

SJSU Dining Commons.
Contact Judy Rickard at Judy.Rickard@sjsu.edu

International Week Presentation — Campus Diversity Master Plan

Dr. Rona Halualani shares how the SJSU campus diversity plan was started and its progress to date with mini-team chairs presenting progress on their objectives and Inclusive Excellence Fellows discussing campus diversity and inclusive excellence. 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Instructional Resource Center, room 101.
Contact Judy Rickard at Judy.Rickard@sjsu.edu

Thru You Thru Food

Environmental Awareness Fair, what does your footprint look like?
11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Art Quad
Contact thruyouthrufood@yahoo.com.

International Week Salzburg Fellows Presentation

Hear about projects SJSU faculty and staff are completing following summer experiences in Salzburg, Austria.

12 to 1 p.m. in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, room 255/257.
Contact Judy Rickard at Judy.Rickard@sjsu.edu

International Week Listening Hour

Enjoy a vocal recital with songs of Gaetano Donizetti and Benjamin Britten.

12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the SJSU Music Concert Hall.
Contact Judy Rickard at Judy.Rickard@sjsu.edu

International Week Proclamation Presentation

Mayor Chuck Reed and San Jose city council members give San Jose State University a proclamation for International Week festivities, international students, cultures and curriculum.

1:30 to 2:00 p.m. in San Jose City Council Chambers, San Jose City Hall, 200 E. Santa Clara St.
Contact Judy Rickard at Judy.Rickard@sjsu.edu

International Week Lecture

Hear Dr. Yolanda T. Moses from UC Riverside speak on "Linking Diversity and International Knowledge and Practice: Our Millennial Challenge" as the second annual Dr. Peter C. Lee

Memorial Lecture speaker. 4 to 6 p.m. in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, room 225.
Contact Judy Rickard at Judy.Rickard@sjsu.edu

Pride of the Pacific Islands

Hula and Tahitian practice. 5:30 to 7 p.m. in the Student Union, Pacifica Room.
Contact Kristen Tom at (650) 270-4507.

International Youth Fellowship

Bible Study: "The Secret of Forgiveness of Sin and Being Born Again."
6 to 7:30 p.m. in the Student Union, Guadalupe Room.
Contact Ricardo at 509-9549.

International Week Coffee Night

Enjoy coffee and conversation with international students. 8 to 10 p.m. at the International House, 360 S. 11th St.
Contact Judy Rickard at Judy.Rickard@sjsu.edu

19 WEDNESDAY

Midweek Mix-up Campus Cookout

Meet your A.S. board of directors. 12 p.m. in the A.S. barbecue pit
Contact 924-6269 or events@as.sjsu.edu

Terrence McNally

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

2008 - 2009 Major Authors series

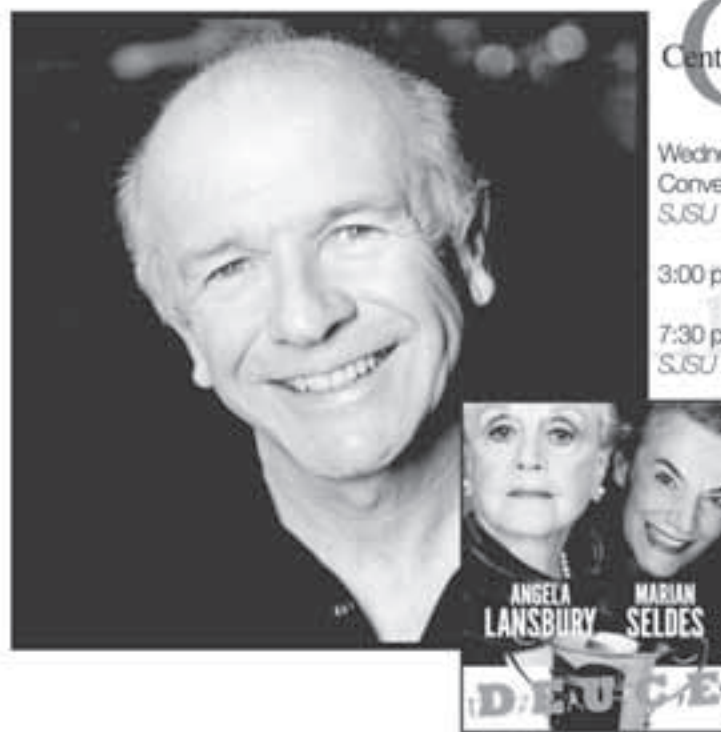
Center for Literary Arts

Wednesday 11/19, 1:30 pm
Conversation and Q&A
SJSU University Theatre

3:00 pm - Mt. Pleasant High School

7:30 pm - Lecture and Q&A
SJSU University Theatre

All events are free, wheelchair accessible, and open to the public.



Martha Heasley Cox Lecture

Award-winning playwright of Deuce, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Ragtime, Dead Man Walking

A generous endowment created by SJSU Professor Emeritus Martha Heasley Cox created an ongoing series that has brought these authors to San Jose: Wallace Stegner, Toni Morrison, William Styron, John Barth, Maxine Hong Kingston, Peter Matthiessen, George Plimpton, Paul Theroux, Jane Smiley, Michael Ondaatje, Dorothy Allison, Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller, Joyce Carol Oates, Tony Kushner, David Henry Hwang, Russell Banks, J.M. Coetzee, Tobias Wolff, Gore Vidal, Kiran Desai, Terrence McNally

The programs of the Center for Literary Arts are made possible in part by funding from the Patrons of the College of Humanities and the Arts at SJSU and by grants from the City of San Jose and Arts Council Silicon Valley. The CLA thanks the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, the Associated Students of SJSU, the Student Union, Inc. of SJSU, Martha Heasley Cox, Connie and Robert Lurie, Margaret and Jim Jimenez, Fairmont Hotel, Poetry Center San José and Citti's Florist for ongoing sponsorship and support of events.



BEJEWELED Video game company hired student after it stumbled upon his add-on to popular game

MMORPG is set up, there are going to be times when you're waiting and not doing anything."

Fromwiller said he decided to make "Bejeweled" an add-on for "World of Warcraft" because it was a "fun and addicting" game.

"I wanted to make something to interact with on the screen while waiting for people to respond," he said. "The tools were there so I could make it."

"Besharded" was released by Fromwiller into the virtual world of "WoW" on Nov. 8, 2006, and the word quickly spread across "WoW" servers about a "Bejeweled" clone in the game.

Two years later, PopCap Games, which owns the rights to "Bejeweled," heard about

Fromwiller's popular add-on and took action.

Fromwiller said Jason Kapalka, creative director and one of the founders of PopCap, sent him an e-mail regarding "Besharded."

Fromwiller said getting the e-mail from Kapalka was scary for him.

"I thought (PopCap) was going to sue me when I got the e-mail from Jason," he said. "That was the height of the legal situation."

Fromwiller said Kapalka thought making a "Bejeweled" add-on was a great idea, talked over the phone about it and eventually offered Fromwiller a contract to work together and make the add-on official.

"When I got the contract, I thought it was pretty cool," he said. "Since it was a contract job, I did it on the Internet from home."

Carl Kwoh, an associate producer at PopCap, informed Fromwiller about the copyright issues and told him that he needed to remove the artwork from the add-on since it was the same as the company's artwork.

"If he used (PopCap's) artwork, we would've pursued to protect their intellectual property," Kwoh said. "We wanted to do something official."

Tysen Henderson, a senior producer and artist at PopCap, said the company stumbled upon Fromwiller's add-on and decided

to hire him in recognition of his talent instead of sending cease-and-desist letters.

"It's about giving back to the (video gaming) community," Henderson said. "It's part of the mentality of some of the people here."

Henderson said Fromwiller has brought a new way of looking at things to PopCap.

"We just went back and forth on ideas," he said. "We had the same outlook on things and it was an interesting thing to do. It was outside of the norm for us."

Kwoh agreed.

"He was excellent and very receptive to feedback," he said. "It was everything I could hope for out of a project."

Fromwiller said he enjoyed working with Kwoh while making the "Bejeweled" add-on official.

"Carl made me want to get into game design," he said. "With the contract job and making all these mini-games, I'm already marketable and have experience for any game company. I'll have a better chance when I get my degree."

Fromwiller said he is already looking toward the future with more projects in the works.

"Right now, I have a game design I want to work on," he said. "It's a card game. I'm going to use it as a demo on 'WoW' and if it goes well, I'll make a physical version of it and pitch it to a publisher."

Fromwiller said he has made several other clones of classic games with "World of Warcraft" artwork such as "Minesweeper," "Bust-A-Shard" (a clone of "Bust-A-Move") and "Labyrinth."

Kwoh said he is looking forward to working with Fromwiller again in the near future.

"We are open to do anything and looking forward to doing more," he said.

Fromwiller said he liked the publicity he was getting in articles written about him. He highlighted a mention in the Wall Street Journal as a "great accomplishment."

"I thought nobody cared," he said. "It was five minutes of Internet fame."

CAMPUSIMAGES



STEFAN ARMJO / Contributing Photographer

An observer watches as Donna Pettit, wearing her hand-sewn hamster suit, demonstrates a sculpture she fabricated for her master's of fine arts show on Nov. 4 in the Art Building.

HEALTH

Medical coverage for athletes injured while playing is not mandatory, organization says

ceived an A- or better nationwide.

The grading system is part of the association's Medical Policy Disclosure Campaign to provide recruits and college athletes with an understanding of the medical policies of Division I schools.

"Division I football and basketball generates millions of dollars every year," Huma said. "Few athletes know that it's optional for a school to provide medical coverage for their sports-related injuries."

Huma said he started the organization when he was a football player at UCLA and was told that the NCAA wouldn't allow UCLA to pay for medical expenses.

"The more we dug into the issue of health coverage, we found out that medical expenses are not mandatory for schools to pay," Huma said. "I think the health issue should be one of the recruit's top priorities when choosing a school regardless how prominent the athletic program is. If you have a permanent injury ... you could

be stuck with a lot of debt."

Shaw said athletes who participate in SJSU's athletic program are covered if they get injured in a game, at practice or during conditioning.

"We are going to cover their in-

"The more we dug into the issue of health coverage, we found out that medical expenses are not mandatory for schools to pay."

RAMOGI HUMA
National College Players Association president

juries and nothing's going to come out of the student-athletes' or their parents' pockets," Shaw said.

Shaw said that despite the CSU budget cuts, there are no plans to cut the medical policy program.

"We do many things for cost containment," Shaw said. Shaw said the university has contracts with facilities and surgery centers to keep costs down and a team of physicians who voluntarily treat athletes.

"One of the nice things we have is a fantastic student health center on campus that many students aren't aware of," Shaw said.

Maricela Avila, a senior business finance major, said she thinks universities should cover their athletes' medical expenses.

"I think they should because (athletes) are an important part of the university and they represent us," she said.

Jay Lontoc, a senior computer engineering major, agreed.

"I think they should have 100-percent coverage since they play for school and they risk their own health playing sports," he said. "I think they should do the same for other students too because we have the gym for recreational activities and they should ... feel safe being here."

Vince Vaughn
Reese Witherspoon

His father, her mother, his mother and her father all in one day.

FOUR CHRISTMASSES

NEW LINE CINEMA PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH SPYGLASS ENTERTAINMENT
A BIRNBAUM/BARBER PRODUCTION
A WILD WEST PICTURE SHOW/TYPE A FILMS PRODUCTION "FOUR CHRISTMASSES"
PRODUCED BY DEREK EVANS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS PETER BILLINGSLEY TOBY EMMERICH
MICHAEL DISCO RICHARD BRENER MARK KAUFMAN GUY RIEDEL
PRODUCED BY ROGER BIRNBAUM GARY BARBER JONATHAN GLICKMAN
STORY BY MATT R. ALLEN & CALEB WILSON
SCREENPLAY BY MATT R. ALLEN & CALEB WILSON AND JON LUCAS & SCOTT MOORE
DIRECTED BY SETH GORDON

Invites you and a guest to join us at a special screening on Wednesday, November 19th at 7:30pm in Santa Clara!

For your chance to receive a pass (good for two), visit m.spartandaily.com on your mobile phone and click on the **FOUR CHRISTMASSES** banner. Then, bring your phone or THIS ad to the Spartan Daily Advertising staff in DBH 209 on Monday 11/17 or Tuesday 11/18 from 10:30am to 4:30pm to receive your pass.

No purchase necessary. Each pass admits two. Limit one pass per person/household. Passes will be available on a first come, first served basis, while supplies last.

IN THEATRES EVERYWHERE WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH!

More than teaching for English majors

ADAM MURPHY
Staff Writer

English students received a crash course in their prospective careers Wednesday afternoon in the Student Union, where three separate panels discussed possible career paths that a degree in English could afford.

The first panel to speak represented the nonprofit sector, a burgeoning field that has seen a massive increase in philanthropy.

"It's a lucrative field," said panelist Paul McNamara, a foundation giving officer and member of the SJSU Division of Advancement. "There is a lot of demand for it. Most grant writing is for research or a program that is going to benefit a particular community."

McNamara explained to the 25 or so attendees that a grant is a narrative and a budget.

"A grant is basically a persuasive argument," McNamara said.

Companies such as Google are founding their philanthropy groups earlier than ever, he said, which translates to more money in the pool for grant writers to write grants.

"The most essential thing to have is good writing skills in

English," said Olivia Sears, the president of the Center for Art in Translation.

All forms of literary work in languages other than English need bilingual writers, but good English writers are the key to translations, she said.

"As long as there is one person who can write beautifully in English, you can bring any language into English," Sears said.

The panel members all emphasized organization, budgeting proficiency and desire to succeed as good qualities to have in an expanding field. The ability to turn a phrase couldn't hurt either.

Diem Jones, the third panelist of the nonprofit panel, worked with George Clinton and the Parliament, and took a picture of George Clinton holding a 7UP bottle and wrote this photo caption:

"Presenting the un-disco kid for the un-cola who gave up his coke habit for a sip of 7UP."

That photo caption launched Jones' career, he said.

The ability to write and communicate clearly was echoed by the second panel, the corporate work panel, consisting of four speakers working in the private sector.

"Your important skills are communications, writing or verbal communication, what you learn in an English department," said Ciricia Proulx, global messaging manager of Intel.

The panel shared anecdotes of their job interviews after they graduated and the trepidation of finding a professional job with an English degree.

"The first job I took was at a wireless startup," Proulx said. "I was apologizing to the vice president when he asked me what my degree was, and I told him it was English literature with an apologetic look. He got pretty annoyed and said, 'Thank Christ, we have someone who can communicate now.'"

Robin Norvell, a panelist who works for Google, told the audience that English majors have an inherent advantage over their counterparts because their writing translates into a great cover letter, and a great cover letter is the key to getting hired.

The ability to communicate is an underrated and highly sought-after skill in the corporate world.

"I didn't think that Google would be hiring English majors," Norvell said, "but in reality

I think there is a lot of growth within the company because of the skills that I have."

After the panel shared their experiences, they opened up a Q-and-A from the audience.

"(This) gave me a direction that I could go in that I hadn't thought about before," said Pam Stair, a senior in communications studies. "It has opened a lot of possibilities."

The third panel consisted of English teachers.

"I was an English major," said Professor Nick Taylor, moderator of the event. "I am not a really good example because now I am an (English) teacher."

Ian Johnson, a teaching intern at Silver Creek High School, described teaching as "(being) the captain of your ship, and you have to lead your ship through the treacherous waters."

The teaching panel emphasized enthusiasm as tantamount to reading and writing for people who are going into teaching English.

Professor Jonathan Lovell spoke about becoming an English teacher.

"It is appallingly easy to become an English teacher," he said.

BUDGET Cuts threaten future of state businesses

as many students as possible," he said. "More students are asking for more classes and we don't want to disappoint them."

The Associated Students Child Development Center is another part of the SJSU that could be greatly affected by the budget cuts.

Teresa Stuefloten, the preschool program coordinator of the center, said \$27,000 that had already been budgeted for this year could be returned because of cuts.

"If it is taken away, we would have to think about where we would cut back," she said. "\$27,000 is about equivalent to a beginning teacher's academic yearly salary."

Monique Howard, a sophomore child development major who works at the center, said the cuts worry her because with money being taken away from the program, it could affect the amount of classes being offered in her department and prolong her graduation.

"It's very upsetting because it could affect me through my classes," she said. "It's sad because I have younger siblings and I'm afraid, with fees increasing and enrollment cuts, they might not be able to have the same opportunities."

According to a news release from the CSU, the governor's proposed midyear cuts to the CSU system will have a direct impact on the state's economy if the institutions are unable to provide graduates for California's businesses.

The proposed state budget funding cuts and the impact that it will have on SJSU are still unknown and will remain such until the May budget revision. An SJSU public affairs fact sheet said that a 10-percent budget reduction could mean up to a \$15.6 million cut to the university's current budget, and it would affect every aspect of the campus from availability of services to student rates of graduation.

Budget Timeline:

Jan. 10 - Facing a potential \$14 billion statewide budget shortfall for the coming year, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed a \$312.9 million budget reduction to the California State University.

May 14 - The governor's revision to his budget proposal restored \$97.6 million of the proposed cut to the university system, making the total proposed reduction \$215.3 million.

Sept. 23 - Almost three months after its due date, the California state budget was signed for the 2008-09 fiscal year, making the \$215.3 million budget reduction official.

Oct. 23 - In response to a request from the state's department of finance on state organizations, CSU Chancellor Charles Reed said in a memo to all employees that the university system would be cutting \$31.3 million from its budget for the coming year.

Nov. 6 - Facing a potential cash shortfall for the current fiscal year, Gov. Schwarzenegger called on the California Assembly to make moves to cut spending and increase revenue, including cutting the budget for the CSU by another \$66.3 million.

Source: CSU Public Affairs

DIPLOMAS Admissions office working at speedier delivery

students still waiting for their diplomas is about 150.

Chavez said another reason for diploma delays could also be attributed to students changing their major or minor or if the wrong information is printed on the diploma.

"It's hard to say because it depends on the situation," she said. "Students will also change their dates (to later in the future). They will then have to be re-ordered. Normally, it takes about four weeks for re-orders to go through."

Chavez said students should be applying for graduation a year in advance to receive them on time.

Henderson said he applied a year in advance but is still waiting for his diploma to arrive. He said he has received e-mails from the office telling him his diploma would be coming in soon.

Chavez said that if there's anything wrong with the information on the diploma, the process of verifying the students' requirements and getting them out has to be done again.

"We have to do a cleanup and go through files," she said. "We have to spot-check names and go through majors and minors. Once the cleanup is done, the analysts extract the data and use it for the re-orders."

Henderson said the office should send diplomas out two-and-a-half months after students graduate, if possible. Chavez said the office usually sends them out starting in mid-July for the spring graduating class.

"I know it takes time to check grades and verify student information," Henderson said. "My understanding is that they're trying to fix it."

Henderson said communication between students and the admissions office should be improved and that the work should be done early.

"I try to put myself in (the office's) position," he said. "I want to work with them to let students know and get the word out."

Tang said the office should take a more serious approach to

the diploma problem.

"It should be communicated to the people doing this that it needs to be done as fast as possible," he said. "All that tuition money, all that investment, is going into what we deserve, instead of just waiting around for it."

Chavez said more is being done to get diplomas out faster in the near future.

"We are ordering the diplomas two months in advance to the conclusion of the term," she said. "We're now verifying diploma information for the Fall 2008 class."

Chavez said students should also do their part to make sure they get their diplomas in on time.

"The students having worked for so long — of course it's very important," she said. "We want to highly recommend the graduates to verify their address so that their diploma is sent to the correct address."

Henderson stressed the importance of getting diplomas in a reasonable timeline.

"The diploma is a symbol of all the hard work you put in to get it," he said. "Students need diplomas for the jobs they want to get into. That is why it's so important."

Tang agreed. "I don't feel fully complete until I've gotten my diploma," he said. "I just want that final cherry on top."

Local father arrested on suspicion of three murders after being laid off

MOUNTAIN VIEW — Those who know Jing Hua Wu said the 47-year-old engineer was a smart, unassuming family man whose three young boys played among neighborhood children on a quiet street in this Silicon Valley city.

After Wu was arrested Saturday on suspicion of fatally shooting three of his co-workers after being laid off from a high-tech company in Santa Clara, neighbors said they were struggling to make sense of the tragedy.

Those who know Wu referred to him fondly as "Jerry" and his wife as "Jane," and described him as a happily married father of 6-year-old twin boys and another boy under 3.

"It's shocking and emotionally jarring," said Jim Pollart, 47, a neighbor who met Wu and his wife when the couple moved into the area some 11 years ago. "Who knows what happened to cause him to do such a horrible thing. It's unbelievable."

Wu will be booked into jail

on three counts of murder, police said.

"Wu is a nice, smart guy who is quiet by nature," Pollart said, adding that his children regularly played with Wu's kids. He also recalled how joyous Wu and his wife were when their parents made annual visits from China.

Wu was laid off from his job as a product test engineer at SiPort Inc. on Friday morning, and returned hours later to request a meeting with company officials, said Santa Clara Police Chief Stephen Lodge. Witnesses told police that Wu did not give any indication that he was upset when he arrived at the office park.

"It was during this meeting that Jing Wu took out a 9 mm handgun and shot and killed all three officials," Lodge said.

The shots killed 56-year-old Sid Agrawal, SiPort's chief executive officer; Brian Pugh, 47, vice president of operations; and Marilyn Lewis, 67, head of human resources.

He was not armed when he

was arrested, and officers were still looking for the gun used in the slayings, police said.

Now, Pollart said, his otherwise quiet neighborhood was shaken after police swarmed the area. Residents were not allowed into their homes for several hours Friday, upsetting children and forcing people to find other places to stay.

Standing outside Wu's home Saturday evening, Pollart saw a woman come out of the house and asked her how Wu's wife was doing. The woman replied, "Not so well."

A man holding a briefcase walked into Wu's house and was met by Wu's wife at the door. They did not respond to a reporter's subsequent knocks on the door.

"This is a truly tragic event. These people are innocent victims just trying to do their jobs," Sellers said. "To get him into custody within hours of the event was very, very important to our department."

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"When I lived in Nigeria, I lived in a house, not a village or a hut. I lived a basic, normal life like I do here."

AMAJU EKWEJUNOR-ETCHIE
Nigerian Student Association president

(From left to right) Nnamdi Nwaigwe, Nigerian Student Association (NSA) treasurer, Amaju Ekwejunor-Etchie, president, and Obinna Osuka, co-event coordinator/historian, stand in front of the Nigerian flag inside a meeting room at the Student Union on Monday night.

CARLOS A. MORENO /
Spartan Daily

Nigerian Student Association helps promote cultural awareness

TARA DUFFY
Senior Staff Writer

The Nigerian Student Association is an organization at SJSU that allows students to gather and celebrate their culture.

Amaju Ekwejunor-Etchie, a senior finance major, is the president of the association.

"Basically anybody who's open-minded and willing to come and learn about a different culture is welcome to join the association," he said.

The association holds several different social events throughout the year. One of its major events is Culture Day, which is held in the Student Union Ballroom. Culture Day usually takes

place in the spring. This time, the club is shooting for the last Saturday of February, Ekwejunor-Etchie said. At some NSA events, members bring food so that people have a chance to taste some different Nigerian dishes.

A few of the association's officers feel very passionate about their organization.

"It means diversity," said Obi Osuka, a senior health science administration major who is the historian and co-event coordinator for the group. "When I first transferred to SJSU, I was told about the association, and I wanted to join it."

"For the most part I feel like it helps me communicate better,"

Osuka said. "At first I was kind of shy, and it helped me come out of my shell a little."

Ekwejunor-Etchie said he takes being the president of the Nigerian Student Association very seriously and said that he enjoys the sense of family he gets from the club.

"You feel like you have people you can relate to," he said. "I will say that it's a better means of connecting with people."

Ekwejunor-Etchie also said he thinks joining the club is a good way to meet new people and can help students assimilate into college life.

"The association stands to bring Nigerians, African-American

and other ethnicities together in the SJSU community in an effort to achieve excellence in school and life, to learn from one another," said Nnamdi Nwaigwe, a junior management information systems major, who is the treasurer of the group. "We are there for each other through the good and the bad."

Nwaigwe spoke about what being a part of the association means to him.

"It means opportunities," he said. "I think it's important that a strong network correlation is being promoted."

Ekwejunor-Etchie knows about the culture firsthand. He is from Lagos, one of the biggest

cities in Nigeria, and moved to the U.S. when he was 9.

"A lot of people have misconceptions about Nigeria and the poverty there and that's true — it's a developing country — but not all of Nigeria is poverty stricken," he said.

"When I lived in Nigeria, I lived in a house, not a village or a hut. I lived a basic, normal life like I do here. There are nice parts of Nigeria."

Born in the the U.S., Nwaigwe said he has learned a lot about his Nigerian culture through the association's gatherings, and that the club has made him able to promote cultural awareness.

"It's a place where you not only

can be yourself, but take your own cultural experiences and share with others. You can be yourself and be accepted," he said.

Osuka said he hopes that the association will be able to include other cultures as well in the future.

"We don't want to have the message that we are only about Nigerians and other African-Americans," Osuka said. "I would like to invite more cultures to our club to make our organization that much better, to have them come be a part of our club."

The Nigerian Student Association meets every other Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Student Union's Ohlone Room.

The truths and misconceptions about Nigeria

KIMBERLY TSAO
Student Culture Editor

"None whatsoever," said Jeff Ordillo, a senior illustration major.

"No, not really," said Alex Stange, a freshman pre-nursing major.

The SJSU students were referring to whether they know anything about Nigeria.

All that pops into the mind of students such as Ordillo is "Africa."

Nigeria, a country rich in land mass and agriculture, is located in West Africa.

Uday Gajendar, a part-time instructor of user-interface design fundamentals, said that when he thinks of Nigeria, he thinks of "poverty" and "political instability."

He said his knowledge of the country comes from articles he has read in The Economist and The New Yorker. One thing he said he has heard is accusations against Nigeria.

"I forget if it was Nigeria," he said. "But I believe it was Nigeria."

For instance, the country was accused of shipping radioactive material to al-Qaida after Sept. 11.

On his FOX TV show, Bill O'Reilly said plutonium suspiciously went missing from Nigeria. A 2004 Salon magazine article refuted O'Reilly's broadcast by stating that the lost material was actually americium-241, a compound incapable of causing even a trash can fire.

However, Gajendar added that the country has a "very rich culture."

"I'm not into the culture — except the food," said Nicole Jarin, a freshman nursing major.

According to foodbycountry.com, Nigerian food includes spiced boiled yams. For Christ-

mas, the country offers specialized foods such as "jollof" rice, which is made of tomato paste, roasted goat and chopped liver.

Nigerians celebrate multiple festivals. In the Argungu Fishing festival, the Nigerians race to find the biggest catch in one hour.

One of the country's dances, the "Atilogwu," weaves gymnastics and stomping together. The dance translates to "Is this magic?" according to the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's Web site.

Matt Stoll, a senior marketing major, said some Nigerian pottery has European influences. He learned about this in his ARTH 193A class, Worlds Art/Culture.

Yet, he said that the class didn't really concentrate on Nigerian history.

"What we cover in history classes may not be everything we need to cover," said Sylvia Rodezno, a philosophy graduate student.

"The only thing covered is the beginning of African descent in the (U.S.)," she said.

Nonetheless, Eric Linden, a senior finance major, said he knows of warring clans, which

were responsible for slavery and refugees in Nigeria. He added that people in Nigeria have experienced their share of religious intolerance.

According to The Guardian, a U.K. newspaper, 20 Nigerian Muslims were killed as recently as 2006. The paper also reported that people were burnt and had their stomachs cut open.

In Nigeria, Muslims outnumber Christians by 10 percent, according to the CIA World Factbook.

Linden also brought up "poverty" in Nigeria.

"Poverty is very much relative," he said, relating it in Nigeria to what he observed on his travels to China, where he said the Asian country's idea of prosperity may be other nations' idea of poverty.

It's not all bad, though. Two students had positive perceptions of Nigeria, especially regarding sports.

Rodezno referred to the Olympics and the soccer World Cup.

"They're very strong and have a lot of talent," she said.

Stange said she knew some people from Nigeria since they

ran track and field together in high school. She said she thought that Nigerians are fast, but at the same time, she acknowledged that it's unfair to impose so-called facts on people based on their nationalities.

Jarin said she knew someone from Nigeria who was wealthy and would brag all the time.

Nevertheless, she doesn't see him as a reflection of the entire country's population.

Some well-known people who have roots in Nigeria may serve as better mirror images.

According to motherlandnigeria.com, they include Chinua Achebe, a writer and Booker Prize-winner, as well as singers Seal and Sade.

"I don't think Gandhi's from there," Stoll said.

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Cubans are more than just stereotypes and dictators



MARCOS BLANCO

For me, it's not easy being a Cuban-American in the U.S., especially here in California.

Cubans are very rare in The Golden State. Either that or just really spread out.

So if you want to meet a real Cuban quickly and try your luck at dominoes with them, either book a flight to Florida, or go visit the actual country itself, although just trying to get permission to go is an adventure in itself.

Secondly, apparently Cubans aren't easily distinguishable from all the other Hispanic groups. I can't begin to tell you how many people I've run into who have tried to guess what country my family hails from and they would, 100 percent of the time (I'm not kidding), guess wrong.

People will name off almost every Spanish-speaking country: Mexico, Argentina, Puerto Rico and Spain. They'll even guess Italy sometimes, for crying out loud.

In the end, the island country of Cuba never crosses their mind.

To my great surprise, some of the people I've run into don't even know where Cuba is located. It's really amusing when

some people think Cuba is in South America.

And don't get me started about the stereotypes when I finally tell them where my family comes from, such as being infamously known for our Cuban cigars, many Ricky Ricardo and "Scarface" references and, of course, our lovely former dictator, Fidel Castro.

Now, I know people in the U.S. are just joking and I take it in good stride. I can't help but be slightly annoyed sometimes, however, by the images they associate us Cubans with, especially since most of them are nega-

It sickens me to no end when Castro supporters in the U.S. call him a hero for standing up to American capitalism and having free education and health care for his people.

tive, with the possible exception of Desi Arnaz as Ricky Ricardo from the wildly popular "I Love Lucy" TV series.

When I think about these stereotypes, I ask myself, "Why isn't more being done to properly educate U.S. citizens about Cuban society, culture and history?"

The knowledge I have about Cuba mostly comes from the many stories my parents and grandparents (all of them are full-blooded Cubans) have told me about their homeland and the various movies and documentaries I've seen about Cuban society and politics during the Castro regime.

In the U.S. history classes I've taken in middle school, high school and college, the only times Cuba was ever mentioned were when my professors would talk about the Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

My mind is boggled at the lack of material, depth and insight that was presented to me and my fellow classmates regarding Cuba's historical background before and after Castro came into power in 1959.

While the documentaries and movies I've seen about Cuba have been somewhat informative about Cuban culture and society, when it comes to the subject of Castro himself, the filmmakers make Castro look soft and an enigma who seems to fascinate people.

How can people in the U.S. be so fascinated and intrigued with a dictator who imprisoned and executed thousands of innocent Cuban citizens, journalists and protesters for simply speaking out against the tyranny that was Castro's government for almost 50 years?

How can people be interested in a person who oppressed his own people by having police patrol every block and report anybody showing even a hint of government dissent?

How can people overlook the fact that he sentenced dissenters anywhere from 25 years to life in prison for speaking their minds?

If you think that's right, you are not a human being.

It sickens me to no end when Castro supporters in the U.S. call him a hero for standing up to American capitalism and having free education and health care for his people.

They have no idea about the kind of atrocities he committed and the heavy price Cuban citizens had to pay throughout his rule.

Seriously, why do you think so many Cubans and their families risk their lives trying to flee from Cuba on makeshift boats every year? That should give people an idea of how bad it is in Cuba because of Castro's government.

I encourage people to learn and be more informed about Cuba. There should be classes devoted to Cuba's history, society and culture.

My grandfather says I'm too Americanized, and he's right. I hope to one day visit Cuba and learn more about my roots.

I also hope people in the U.S. and in other parts of the world realize Cuban culture is much

more than big cigars and Tony Montana.

We are hardworking and laid-back at the same time, we love to dance, we love to eat and fill you up with lots of Cuban delicacies, and we love to joke around and make you smile. Cuba is more than just a communist country

wishing to be free. And a ruthless dictator does not define who we are by a long shot.

Viva Cuba Libre!

Marcos Blanco is a Spartan Daily staff writer.

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Gays deserve respect and a place in history



KIMBERLY TSAO
THE MOST YOU EVER KNEW

These are unhappy times. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger rejected a proposal to dedicate a day in honor of gay politician Harvey Milk. Three more states banned gay marriages, namely California, Arizona and Florida. Arkansas passed a measure that prevents homosexuals from adopting children.

That means more kids will stay in the system. Angelina Jolie can only take in so many. Give homosexuals a chance.

According to the American Psychological Association, studies have shown that homosexual parents are no different than heterosexuals, and in some cases, homosexuals are superior parents.

Besides, the definition of family is subjective. It doesn't have to be a dad, a mom and a kid. It usually never is — life makes sure of that.

Family can be a single parent, multiple parents, grandparents or no parents. It doesn't even have to be blood. The important thing is that the chil-

dren come first — not a religious or political agenda.

That means you, Schwarzenegger. According to a CBS News article, the governor vetoed the bill because Milk had more local importance in San Francisco rather than statewide. Reality check: Milk earned a spot on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and fought for gay rights. With the disenfranchised, a victory for one is a victory for all.

And may I just point out that "union" is synonymous with "marriage"? Not that anybody cares. But if you approve one, the thesaurus dictates that you have to approve the other.

Furthermore, we have countless holidays: Presidents Day, Veterans Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day ... I could go on and on. National Breast Cancer Awareness month, Vegetarian Aware-

ness month and Black History month? Check, check and check.

So why not make room for one more? Let's honor Milk. Or are we lactose intolerant?

If Rhode Island and New York can acknowledge same-sex unions performed in other states, I don't understand why they don't step up and approve the unions straight out. Big Apple, small balls.

And may I just point out that "union" is synonymous with "marriage"? Not that anybody cares. But if you approve one, the thesaurus dictates that you have to approve the other.

Joanna Grossman, a law professor, wrote, "Yet denying the term 'marriage' to same-sex couples seems blatantly discriminatory. Imagine, by contrast, if gay couples' adopted children were called not their 'children,' but their 'adoptees' — or if gay parents were called 'guardians' and denied the term 'parents!'"

Even the silver lining is gray. While California still allows same-sex unions, Arizona and Florida do not. Although minority voters turned out in large numbers, 70 percent of blacks voted in favor of Proposition 8, the gay marriage ban, according to a New York Times article.

Kyrsten Sinema, a Democratic state representative, said, "I think the country was like, 'Look you get Obama, call it a day and go home.' ... And frankly, I'll take it."

Well, with all due respect to Sinema, that doesn't cut it. Obama winning the presidency and shutting down Proposition 8 aren't mutually exclusive.

Change doesn't just mean a Democrat in the White House.

Change doesn't just mean an end to the war in Iraq.

Change means more, damn it.

Change certainly doesn't mean a ban on gay marriages — at least not the change I had in mind.

I refuse to believe that our generation will only see a triumph in the Civil Rights Movement and not the gay rights movement.

People have no control over the color of their skin any more than who they love.

Call us a selfish generation, but we want it all.

"The Most You Ever Knew" appears every Tuesday. Kimberly Tsao is a Spartan Daily student culture editor.

The all important ZIP code and its significance



CHRIS BAUSINGER
PLAYING THE ODDS

Those yuppie hipsters in Beverly Hills just revitalized the hit teen drama "90210" and I couldn't be less interested. Bringing back the historic ZIP code proves that people often don't think about the five-digit region they live in, unless it is famous.

Now they have the joy of experiencing everything that comes with owning a mailbox.

Tommy Tutone immortalized the unforgettable phone number in the song "Jenny." I apologize if you start belting out 867-5309 at your dinner table this evening. But unless your city is famous, most people across the country don't know where you are. You could argue that California, from Oakland to Sactown, the Bay Area and back down, became famous in Tupac Shakur's "California Love."

Unless you're constantly standing in lines at the post office, you may be unaware of your local ZIP code, let alone your neighboring town's, but that is not the case for folks in Larose, La. They have been traveling to their neighboring town's post offices to get their mail for four decades, according to an Associated Press article.

According to that same article, beginning Saturday, "the 7,000 or so who live in the town can start using 70373 and should soon receive letters and packages in their roadside mailboxes for the first time."

This bit of news really made me think about how I take the post office for granted. In the last two and a half years, I have lived in three different ZIP codes, but because of their design, I have received all the mail sent to me and rejoiced when I received my first articles of junk mail.

While there are certain things about the U.S. Postal Service that make people scream, like identity theft and countless amounts of coupon pages, these are things that the citizens of Larose have not had the experience of pulling out of their end-of-driveway boxes.

Now they have the joy of experiencing everything that comes with owning a mailbox. Like having it knocked over by a reversing truck or a disgruntled teenager with a baseball bat. As well as the occasional animal or insect that decides to make its home inside or the possible ridicule from neighbors that dislike your flamboyantly pink piglet mailbox housing.

The children of Larose will now get the chance to try and hide their report cards from their parents. Magazine subscriptions can be read on the day of delivery instead of on the day that you had enough time to go to the post office.

Members of the campus housing community may be sympathetic to Larose's plight because when I lived in Campus Village Building B, I often found myself saying, "But my mailbox is all the way in Joe West."

According to the AP article, "Residents petitioned for years to bring a rural route to the area, but the switch wasn't made until a recent survey showed widespread support, said Daisy Comeaux, spokeswoman for the U.S. Postal Service."

If only the survey would have been conducted 40 years beforehand ...

So, congratulations, citizens of Larose, you no longer have to go to the neighboring town to get your mail. Now you have entered into a world of global identity that includes possible anthrax letters and Victoria's Secret catalogs.

"Playing the Odds" appears every Tuesday. Chris Bausinger is a Spartan Daily copy editor.

Obama represents more than just change



DINA BASLAN
FROM THE CAUCASUS TO THE WORLD

As the high tide of thrilled American supporters crashed into applause, glancing through bulletproof glass walls, America's president-elect Barack Obama appeared in his element on Nov. 4.

Marking the dawn of the most recent chapter of American history, the first African-American president would sway the immigrant nation down the stream of its Founding Fathers' core principles.

"It's the answer spoken by ... Americans who sent out a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of individuals," Obama said, "or a collection of red states and blue states."

"We are, and will always be, the United States of America."

The same America that had struggled with issues of race, issues of religion, issues of color and issues of a divided class would be joined by a common, educated and committed leader.

Taking the tumultuous reins from George W. Bush would allow Obama to make history on the night of his acceptance speech.

It is not merely Obama's skin color, his social status or his political party

that creates his identity. It's the result of a leadership approach that hopes for change by touching on the common denominator of the diverse community that is joined with a single cause.

And while Obama addressed his nation with an unflinching voice of patriotism, the entire world awaited its share of the 17-minute speech by the new president of the most powerful country in the world.

Obama, who held a calm poise before the American people and the world, is known as an amateur concerning the vital foreign policy of the United States. It is what makes those who doubt him uneasy about the future.

But for many, Obama is the first step in raising America back to its feet. He highlights the difference that the United States has maintained as compared with the rest of the world. It is the reality of America, the fruitful land of dreams.

In fact, the New York Times has reported on the impact the American election has had on European countries such as France, which started reflecting on its own possible civil rights movement.

Despite the plethora of political analysts and notable characters commenting on this memorable day in history, one cannot help but turn back to the first chapter of the United States' history.

Who would've thought that 200

years after Thomas Jefferson stepped out of the White House on March 4, 1809, that the American people would turn out in record-breaking numbers to elect Barack Hussein Obama the 44th president of the United States of America?

And who would've imagined that such a young president, at the age of 47, could gather so much dignity and poise standing in front of the world, days after his grandmother had passed

away, with unshakable strength and peace of mind?

The American people will welcome president-elect Barack Obama as he crosses the bridge to the start of his presidency on Jan. 20, 2009. Upon his inauguration, they will welcome hope, change and unity.

"From the Caucasus to the World" appears every Tuesday. Dina Baslan is the Spartan Daily features editor.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I think there is a gay and secular fascism in this country that wants to impose its will on the rest of us, is prepared to use violence, to use harassment. I think it is prepared to use the government if it can get control of it. I think that it is a very dangerous threat to anybody who believes in traditional religion."

NEWT GINGRICH

Former Speaker of the House said on FOX's "Media Matters."

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'YOU DON'T WANT TO LET YOURSELF DOWN, OR YOUR COUNTRY'

In 2007, SJSU student Safi Mojaddidi was selected to be a member of the Afghanistan national basketball team. This year, fellow SJSU student Qais Haider has joined him in a quest to qualify for the 2012 Olympics.



SJSU civil engineering majors Safi Mojaddidi (left) and Qais Haider were selected to play for the Afghanistan national basketball team in 2007 and 2008 respectively.

Courtesy of Safi Mojaddidi

gets tougher as you get older. ... Hard work will always pay off."

The National Basketball Association of Afghanistan was re-established in 2006 after there was an interruption due to the country's troubles with the Taliban, Haider said.

The team doesn't have very big players, but other teams have a hard time with them because they are fast, he added.

The team is always traveling and playing different teams at different levels to gain experience, Mojaddidi said.

They have played teams from the International Basketball League, he said.

"We have played Hope International University, Edwards Air Force, La Verne University, Vanguard University," Mojaddidi said. "We still have many games left such as Chapman University, Azusa Pacific and some others."

He added that in the months ahead, the team hopes to play in other countries such as Mexico, Taiwan and Argentina.

Rafiq said the team is more known among the Afghan community in the U.S. than in Afghanistan, but the development of basketball has improved in Afghanistan.

Mojaddidi and Haider said they both feel very proud when they don the jerseys of their homeland.

"Every time we put on that jersey, I remember that I am one of the 15 representing my country," Mojaddidi said. "You don't want to let yourself down, or your country."

SELMA SKOKIC
Staff Writer

Juggling school, work, family and friends and representing their country in basketball are all in a day's work for two SJSU students.

Safi Mojaddidi, a junior civil engineering major, was chosen to play in the National Basketball Association of Afghanistan last year, and Qais Haider, also a junior civil engineering major, was chosen to join the team this year.

"(I) play basketball till I can't walk anymore," Haider said. "It's in my blood."

He said he is driven by people who do not have faith in his abilities.

"My freshman year in high school, I didn't make the basketball team," he said. "People doubted me, saying I did not know how to play basketball."

Haider said he has had to work for everything when it comes to basketball, whereas Mojaddidi was noticed for his abilities on the court. Team captain Yousof Etemadi said Mojaddidi and Haider have been great assets to the team, adding that Haider has given more effort than anyone else on the team.

"He is always the first in and last one out in the gym," Etemadi

said. "He is definitely the most improved player on the team."

Head coach Mamo Rafiq said all the players, including Mojaddidi and Haider, are better people than players.

Rafiq said Haider and Mojaddidi are the two youngest players on the team, at 21, and are very positive and high-spirited.

Both players said they hope to make the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

"There is nothing more we can do to make the Olympics that we aren't already doing," Mojaddidi said. "We get better week after week."

Rafiq, however, said that it would be a difficult task because the team is not fully sponsored and some of the other players have busy schedules.

"We don't have the money to fly them over all the time," Etemadi said.

Rafiq said the team received some help from small businesses and from Youth Basketball of Florida, which helped them purchase jerseys and equipment.

"Just making the team is not satisfactory," Haider said. "We want to take it to the level of making it to the Olympics."

Along with everything else, these two students travel to Anaheim every weekend for practice, where mini camps and training camps are held, Mojaddidi said.

"We have been at practices and games the last four weekends in a row and will be going ... all the way through November," Haider said.

Haider added that the coach is very understanding and distributes personal workout plans so the players can condition on their own time.

Mojaddidi said his inspiration to play came from his older

brother who got him to develop a love for basketball.

"My brother has influenced me from day one," he said. "I have always been pushed to my limits. It all started when I was

third grade and I was playing with older kids.

"He always told me you have to work hard and give it 110 percent because there will be better players and older kids and it only

University Scholar Series hosted by Provost Carmen Sigler presents

Nick Taylor



(Photo by: Steven Garfinkel)

Nick Taylor's debut novel, *The Disagreement*, was published by Simon & Schuster in 2008 and was chosen as a BookSense Notable by the American Booksellers Association. He has received fellowships from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and the William R. Kenan, Jr., Trust for Historic Preservation. A graduate of the MFA program at the University of Virginia, he is Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature at San Jose State University.

He will be speaking on his latest book *The Disagreement* at this event.

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BLOG

Check out the Spartan Daily sports blog this week for staff input on this Friday's SJSU football game against the Fresno State Bulldogs.

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