



THE BEST AND BEST OF 2009



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CA BUDGET CRISIS | BUDGET CUTS HIT BLACK'S BEACH



Lifeguards Sent Home for Winter

Beach services reduced as state parks catch economic fallout.

By Ayelet Bitton, Associate News Editor

Torrey Pines State Beach, also known as Black's Beach, will be reducing the months that lifeguards patrol its shores from June to Labor Day after a proposal made by San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders was approved by the San Diego City Council on Dec. 14 in order to accommodate city budget reductions.

Previously, the city of San Diego assigned lifeguards to protect beachgoers from late March through October. Black's was chosen for cuts as it is has smaller attendance than other beaches in the area.

"It's not as heavily populated in terms of beachgoers as other beaches," San Diego fire department spokesperson Maurice Luque said. "So we had to put our resources where the highest danger was in terms of number of people that are at the beach."

Sanders designed the proposal to save money for the city and fire department. "It's all part of the budget cuts that all city departments are facing right now," Luque said. "There's only so much to go around. We have to prioritize where it's put and where we put our personnel."

With no lifeguards assigned to the beach itself from September to May, response time to any call can take around 20 minutes. The closest beach to Black's with lifeguards on patrol will remain La Jolla Shores Beach. "We're advising people to be careful [and] don't put themselves at risk," Luque said. "If something happens, there may be a delayed time of response to get somebody over there to help."

Lifeguards originally scheduled to patrol Black's will be reassigned to other local beaches. Black's suffered from other cuts last year as well. Service reductions such as the removal of waste bins and the closing of restroom facilities were implemented last fall.

Many UCSD students still visit Black's in the winter, when no lifeguards patrol originally. "It doesn't make a difference to me," Eleanor Roosevelt College sophomore Phillip Wybenga said. "I'll still go to Black's Beach. I don't think the reduction of lifeguards on duty will really deter a lot of people from going there. There's always a little risk of getting injured in really any activity, [and] there was never really a great presence of lifeguards there... Black's Beach is just too much fun."

Additional reporting by Kashi Khorasani.

Readers can contact Ayelet Bitton at arbitton@ucsd.edu.



PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY WONG/GUARDIAN

ON GUARD! TOUCHE.

The Triton fencers swept Bladerunner like deuling ain't a thang.

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BUT... WE DON'T WANNA GROW UP

Give the students their cookies, and they'll pay you back eventually. Promise.

PAGE 4

DIGITAL ARTS CONSOLIDATED IN GEISEL RENOVATIONS

After 10 years of planning, the new hi-tech media center opens for student and faculty use.

By Megha Ram, Contributing Writer

Geisel Library unveiled the \$1.8 million makeover of its Arts Library on Dec. 15, complete with digital technology infrastructure and high-definition media workstations located on the first floor.

The renovations began in Winter Quarter 2007 and concluded Fall Quarter 2009.

According to UCSD Communications Director Dolores Davies, the project was initiated a decade ago, when UCSD Libraries determined that Geisel Library's three separate parts — Art and Architecture, Music and Film and Video — were too disjointed to meet the changing needs



JOHN HANACEK/GUARDIAN

After two years of work, Geisel's Arts Library is finally complete. The new facility is a combination of the old Art and Architecture, Music, and Film and Video Libraries. By combining the three and adding new facilities, the space is now more conducive to use and study for students.

of students and faculty. An advisory group composed of faculty and students was formed to guide a renovation and consolidation of the libraries.

The new Arts Library consolidates the three previous areas into one efficient workspace. According to Leslie Abrams, head librarian of the Arts Library, combining the three

customer-service stations allows for an additional 16 hours of service per week, and allows the library to house its collections on compact shelves — creating more study areas.

"The consolidation opened up space tremendously," Abrams said. "Most of it is underground, but you don't feel like you are, because we

have brought in so much light."

The initial proposal projected a cost of \$8 million, but the project was ultimately completed with less than \$1.8 million. The renovations were funded by a grant from the Mellon Foundation, which had committed to

See LIBRARY, page 2

CA BUDGET CRISIS

Governor: Put Prison Funds into Universities

By Hayley Bisceglia-Martin, News Editor

Gov. Schwarzenegger made an ambitious proposal Wednesday morning, in his last annual State of the State address: He promised to amend the California constitution so that no less than 10 percent of the state's budget could be spent on higher education.

Schwarzenegger's bill — a far cry from his suggestion last year to completely eliminate funding for Cal Grants — would remove funding from

See LEGISLATURE, page 3

SPOKEN

"Mommy took a bus trip and now she got her bust out/ Everybody ride her, just like a bus route."

JAY-Z "EMPIRE STATE OF MIND" PAGE 8

FORECAST

Table with weather forecasts for Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

NIGHT WATCH

Table with moon phases for Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

SURF REPORT

Table with surf reports for Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

GAS PER GALLON

Table with gas prices for ARCO and HIGH.

INSIDE

Table of contents for the magazine.

SUNNY-SIDE UP By Philip Rhie



House Cracks Down on Student Loans

By Sarah Smith
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Students could face new loan regulations after the House of Representatives voted Dec. 11 to increase borrowing restrictions, an effort to curb rising student debt rates.

If passed by the Senate, the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act would create the Consumer Financial Protection Agency, a watchdog organization meant to protect students from predatory private loans by enforcing heightened verification laws.

Private loans offer a greater degree of flexibility than federal loans, but also have interest rates that can reach up to 18 percent and high repayment fees.

In the 2007-08 academic year, students took out \$17 billion in private loans — an increase of 592 percent from 10 years earlier.

Under the new verification laws, all private lending organizations would be required to verify the enrollment status of potential student borrowers and determine whether they are still eligible for federal loans. Students would be required to attend a financial-aid counseling session prior to taking out a private loan and learn all the other options available to them.

"The act is designed to benefit any consumer and any student and protect them from deceptive tactics," said Angela Peoples, legislative director of the United States Student Association.

Peoples said the provision ensures that students are fully aware of federal loan options, considering as many as 64 percent of students who are eligible for federal loans take out private ones instead.

"Since [students] don't have to come to the office, sometimes [they'll] take out a loan before they realize that they are eligible for federal loans," Peoples said. "We are trying to create educated and well-protected consumers."

"We support having the school certify the student's eligibility for a private loan," Klein said in a statement. "This would ensure that the student has an opportunity to utilize other financial aid available before taking the private loan, as well as not overstating the amount the student may need to borrow."

The bill also requires that loans not exceed the cost of attendance. Peoples said that this requirement is meant to curb rising student debt.

In the 2008-2009 school year, 700 students at UCSD took out \$7 million in private loans. According to Klein, these numbers are relatively small because 65 percent of undergraduates received a total of \$236 million in financial aid last year.

According to Peoples, the bill's passage is a top priority for the Obama Administration and Senator Christopher Dodd (D-Connecticut).

Readers can contact Sarah Smith at sj001@ucsd.edu.

10-Year Project Funded By Private Donation

► **LIBRARY**, from page 1
the project before the budget crisis.

"The money was saved at a much better time fiscally," Abrams said. "We are very lucky, because if we tried to get this money now, it wouldn't be possible in this fiscal climate. It really is a gift to the students."

The renovated Arts Library features improvements such as digital-media production studios, high-definition media-viewing stations and a film preservation studio. Students can now view films on high definition monitors and listen to audio from 8 a.m. to midnight every Sunday through Thursday. Three new group viewing spaces will be available by this spring.

Readers can contact Megha Ram at mram@ucsd.edu.

Governor: Higher Education Will Be Priority in 2014 State Budget

► **LEGISLATURE**, from page 1
California's prison system and put it toward the state's universities.

Currently, California spends 11 percent of its General Fund on public prisons, and 7.5 percent on higher education (of that, 5.9 percent is devoted to the University of California and the California State University systems). Ten years ago, the state was spending

10 percent of the General Fund on education and 3 percent on prisons.

"Spending 45 percent more on prisons than universities is no way to proceed into the future," Schwarzenegger said in his address. "What does [this statistic] say about our state? What does it say about any state that focuses more on prison uniforms than on caps and gowns? It simply is not healthy."

The proposed amendment would cap taxpayer spending on prisons at 7 percent of the total budget, and create a 10-percent minimum for spending on higher education.

According to Daniel Simmons, Vice Chair of the UC Office of the President Academic Senate, this amendment would provide a much-needed source of economic stability and help ease the

financial burden placed on students by rising tuition.

"University really has three sources of revenue — research funding, the state and fees — and of course the only one the university has any real control over is student fees," Simmons said. "What the state doesn't provide

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• Shogun (Level 2)

Atrium Food Court
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• Burger King • Santorini Greek Island Grill
• Tapioca Express • Zanzibar Café at The Loft (coming soon)

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- Bamboo Room
- Dolores Huerta Meeting Room
- Thich Nhat Hanh Meeting Room
- Philip Vera Cruz Meeting Room
- The Guardian
- The Factory: (T-shirt Print Shop)
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Student Center
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Gupta Hopes To Achieve Fiscal Independence From University

The first A.S. Council meeting of 2010 was largely uneventful, as councilmembers discussed senate projects and student initiatives.

Alumnus **Chris Westling** explained a proposal to expand the San Diego Old Town Trolley to include a stop at University City, connecting UCSD to SDSU and Petco Park.

Student director of the Student Sustainability Collective **Elizabeth Elman** presented an update on the California High-Speed Rail, which was approved by voters in November 2008.

Elman and Westling said the rail would make UC campuses more accessible for students and urged councilmembers to support these initiatives.

President **Utsav Gupta** presented his plan to create a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization he hopes would separate A.S. from the university and give the council more fiscal flexibility.

Gupta said he wants to model his plan on the one used by UC Berkeley's student government and collect voluntary student fees of \$5 to \$10 per quarter to improve student life for commuters. He proposed constructing off-campus housing and a Greek row, as well as obtaining legal representation.

Muir senators **Ryan O'Rear** and **Lynne Swerhone** announced that their council project, a KSDT radio show, will air next Tuesday at 1 a.m.

Campuswide Senator **Tobias Haglund** informed the council that plans for the A.S. Store are near completion and begged the council to help him write a business plan.

AVP Enterprise Operations **Rishi**

Ghosh announced that the Grove Café will be reopening Jan. 19.

"A blast of promotion next week will be the most critical part of its success, or not a success, however it goes," Ghosh said.

Councilmembers debated for about 10 minutes over whether to close the meeting to the public before discussing the creation of a co-managerial position for the Grove Café.

As the only individual present at the meeting who was not a member of the A.S. council, I took the hint, but waited for an official vote before waiting outside for 30 minutes.

Upon my return, councilmembers voted to approve the position. As the council moved on to new business, they discussed trivial matters, bringing up the question of whether various proposals even belonged in new business, which is reserved for pressing and timely issues.

Haglund pushed for an approval to rewrite the standing rules to have meetings end at his proposed deadline of 11 p.m. A number of councilmembers stated their disapproval of this irrelevant topic.

"I don't want this to wait — if it fails then it fails," Haglund said. The motion did fail, but the council voted to discuss the issue next week.

VP Finance and Resources **Peter Benesch** wanted to put into writing that "no event that charges admission for undergraduate students will receive funding from A.S., with exceptions from the Student Organization Funding Advisory Board and the finance committee."

The proposal passed by a roll-call vote 12-10.

Simmons: Short-Term Funding Struggles Remain

AMENDMENT, from page 2 for the education of our students, the students are going to have to provide. So as the state gives us a stable source of funding, it will take the pressure off of student fees."

Though the amendment may come before voters as early as the November 2010 ballot, it will not go into effect until 2014, giving the state enough time to privatize the prison system and begin redirecting taxpayer money.

The UC system received a cut in funding last year, when the state chose to finance the university \$2.6 billion instead of the \$2.9 billion it provided in the 2008-09 academic year. UCOP made up for the difference by passing a 32-percent student fee increase at the UC Board of Regents meeting in November.

According to Simmons, though the university would welcome the additional funding, it will still be facing budgetary shortfalls and relying financially on student in the coming years.

"The bad news is that the proposal really doesn't kick in until 2014," Simmons said. "So even if it were to be adopted by the people of California, we still have some years of difficulty in front of us."

Schwarzenegger said he hopes that providing more funding for higher education will aid California's long-term economic recovery.

"Choosing universities over prisons is a historic and transforming realignment of California's priorities," Schwarzenegger said. "If you have two states, and one spends more educating and one spends more incarcerating, in which state's economy would you invest?"

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New Business

KELSEY WONG
klw009@ucsd.edu



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01/21 & 01/23	WHIP IT	02/23	CIRQUE DU FREAK
01/26	COUPLES RETREAT		THE VAMPIRE ASSISTANT
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ARE YOU IN FAVOR OF A SIMPLE-MAJORITY VOTING SYSTEM IN STATE CONGRESS? VOTE ONLINE.

✓ Yes
 ✓ No
 ✓ I don't know

OPINION

CONTACT THE EDITOR: opinion@ucsdguardian.org



Props to Thomas College in Maine for guaranteeing that every student who doesn't find work in his or her field within six months of graduation can return to school tuition-free, or have a year of loans paid off.

Flops to California Union University — a bogus college offering no classes or faculty members — for charging illegal immigrants up to \$10,000 for student visa documents.



For a Bloomie Touchdown, Craft Your Game Plan

Following a Christmas season filled with more food, family time and rainbow-print toe socks (thanks, Mom) than I'll need in a lifetime, I spent the last couple days of break seeking out mindless entertainment on my laptop.

Sure enough, a twinkling gem sparkled on the AOL homepage: "How to Shop on Black Friday," brought to us by *eHow.com*. A little preparation and a pre-shopping game plan, apparently, will take you a long way in the pursuit of a fabulous find.

The Surf Report

KELSEY MARRUJO
 kmarrujo@ucsd.edu



I've always thought Black Friday merely referred to the annual post-Thanksgiving sales frenzy. But according to the trusty ol' Internet, the term can be used to describe any store's blowout sale that hurls push-up bras and digital cameras our way as a strategy to clear its racks — a phenomenon that often takes place in the same proportions between Christmas and New Year's. It's an exciting time (especially when you spot the same God-like Coach purse you'd seen glowing on its pedestal while Christmas shopping for Aunt Jenny weeks earlier, now being sold for a whopping 75 percent off, just waiting to be snatched up by my greedy little paws).

When it comes to shopping, I've realized that the mall perfectly embodies my high-school cafeteria at lunch hour — complete with the "cool" (devastatingly boring) table at which I don't belong (Abercrombie & Fitch), the cozy corner in the quad that's hard to tear myself from when it's time for class (Forever 21) and the comfy "reject" bench that looks like a pretty good time, but is too embarrassing to hang around much (Old Navy).

As a general rule, our budgets dictate the type of stores we frequent. So, regardless of what meets our fancy, we average Joes must always remind ourselves that our place is in Payless and consignment row — not Bloomingdale's. I, for one, can never find a top in Charlotte Russe that will blend into my black-and-blue wardrobe, but a Guess mannequin is usually rocking exactly what I've been searching for. Accordingly, I always spend a few moments in front of aforementioned window display, feeling covetous yet penniless.

But sales unify mall rats of all shapes and sizes — rich or struggling, expert or rookie. Shopping is a sport. Its rules remain the same whether your equipment consists of Daddy's American Express card or a humble sack of quarters. All you need to know are the cardinal rules of the game — which brings us back to our little Internet how-to.

First, take advantage of the technology available to you. If you have an iPhone check the "Pic2Shop" app for the lowest prices in your area, or click your way to www.shopzilla.com to compare prices online. Rummaging around for coupons or

EDITORIAL

We May Be Well-Fed, But Now's No Time for a Diet

THE UCSD GUARDIAN

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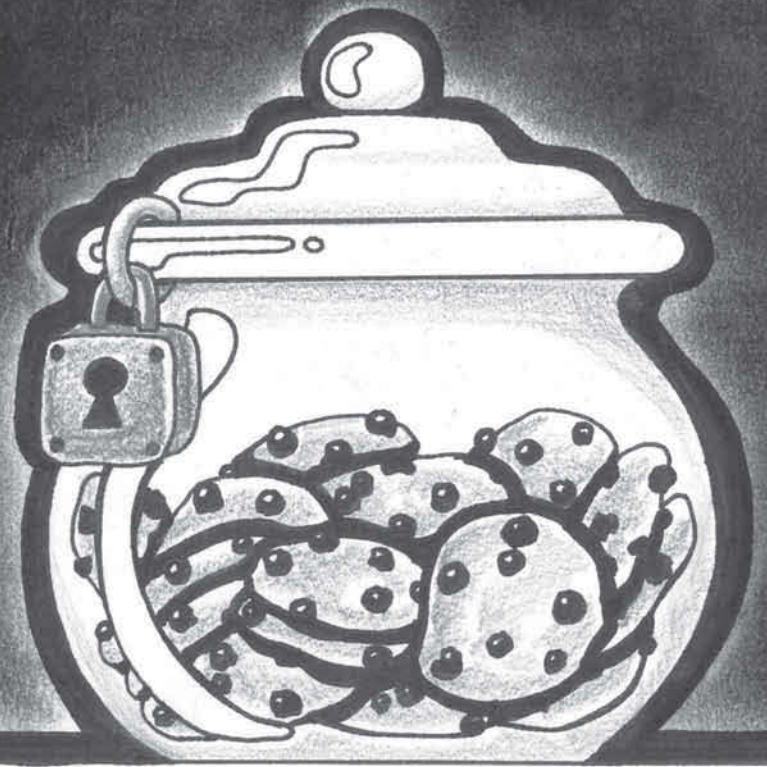
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REBEKAH HWANG/GUARDIAN



The Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2009, which passed in the House on Dec. 11, tightens loan regulations to ensure that students are only spending money on the necessities (you know, things like a 32-percent-more-expensive, substantially less competitive education). Though the bill is a noble attempt at locking down the loan market to avoid future classes, it creates a dangerously restrictive system for a demographic that's barely weaned itself off mom and dad's bank account.

The bill would create the Consumer Financial Protection Agency — a watchdog organization to regulate home mortgages, credit cards, interest rates and student loans. The agency has the power to cap the amount of money students can borrow and — most importantly — where we can borrow it from. The bill would empower us by providing beneficial information about financial options and the ability to take out federal loans, but then degrade us by placing a cap on private loans and taking the power to make these important financial decisions out of our hands.

There's more than enough bad news and ugly numbers to explain why this bill was proposed. Private loans — which can have interest rates up to 18 percent — were taken out by 23 percent of college students by 2006. On average, 62 percent of public university graduates face an average debt of \$20,200 by the time they set out on the job hunt. The outlook for paying it back doesn't look too hopeful either: the U.S. Department of Education reported an increase in the student loan default rate from 5.2 percent to 6.2 percent from 2007 to 2008.

Under this bill, all institutions which offer private loans are regulated by the CFPB. Officials must verify the enrollment status of any potential student borrowers to determine whether a student is eligible to take out federal loans. If a potential borrower is still eligible for a federal loan, private institutions are obligated to advise that choice instead. Though it might not be good for business, fat cats like private loan company Sallie Mae are obligated to inform potential students borrowers of all other options available.

If the 64 percent of students who take out private loans while still eligible for federal money can avoid doing so, all the better, but the CFPB also has a stiffer agenda: to make sure these lenders are only giving loans to students who will use the money strictly for edu-

cational purposes.

It's no secret that we use loan money for more than just textbooks and tuition. Even more tempting than borrowing money for college is using it to pad our cushy lifestyle just a little bit longer. And that's exactly what this bill tries to fight.

In a perfect world, loan money would be used for education, not a tricked MacBook Pro. Students would only take out private loans when they need to and not cripple their finances by borrowing more money than the cost of attendance.

But it's important for politicians to remember that we're more than machines whose whole existence is dedicated to mastering quantum mechanics over a 24-pack of ramen. College is a game of responsibility, and playing may require exceeding the basics, student debt be damned. So maybe we want to fund a trip around world before we graduate. Or, less thrilling, newfound financial hardship may arise.

And maybe we need the money because a MacBook Pro is the only way to follow our dream of becoming a hotshot filmmaker. Who's to say that luxuries aren't part of our education too? If we come up short, should we just give up?

Placing a cap on our income because we're college students is a step back from California's leading example. It forgets to take into account the varying circumstances in which we might need money, to invest in our career and it cripples our ability to manage our finances, debt and future.

Student loans are among the most ironclad of financial agreements, unable to be discharged even in the case of bankruptcy or death. We may not have the best track record while we're in school, but the fact that we're in a four-year university and the loans are impossible to discharge ensure that they will eventually be paid back. For every student who needs more money for a ritzy spring break trip, there's another one who needs it for that essential laptop the parents won't shell out for. H.R. 4173 tries to protect everyone, but instead marginalizes those who truly need the help.

We may be an expensive bunch, but expecting us to run the world without some financial autonomy will postpone our eventual success even further. We're young, naive and we learn best through trial and error — God forbid we learn those lessons in the real world when a lot more is at stake.

ANIMAL INSTINCTS By Kim Cyprian



Stay in the Game; Don't Drop the Ball at Old Navy

► **REPORT**, from page 4 asking the already swamped makeup lady at Nordstrom where to find cheapest women's shoes will only waste precious time, allowing for varsity shoppers to swoop on your desirables. Google-image a floor plan of your corporate wasteland of choice beforehand. I'm serious — it helps.

The next step is easy: Come equipped with a list of desirables (and consult it frequently) to make sure you're not distracted by every sequined sandal that flies your way. Bring a pen and cross off the items you've already purchased. Another plus: this creates an illusion of strict business, so you can speed past the piranhas pushing bedazzled cell

phone covers onto unsuspecting shoppers in a fast-talking flurry.

The last step is especially important for those who never mustered up enough pride to switch tables in high school. Sometimes the eerie, perfume-fog environments of a fancy store can divert one's attention away from his or her shopping mission, but don't get drunk on name brands. Clothes are clothes. Just because you drop \$85 on a

rhinestone-encrusted Ed Hardy tee, it won't necessarily win you a spot at the cool-kid table (and if it does, consider relocating).

Next time you hit the mall, don't be intimidated into your usual hunting grounds. Finding real treasures become more of a reality when you do the research and create a game plan. A step out of your comfort zone might even win you those Rock and Republic jeans you've had your eye on. So get cracking on your research and

dig up your most serious sneakers — the sales are calling.

Just because you drop \$85 on a rhinestone-encrusted Ed Hardy tee, it won't necessarily win you a spot at the cool-kid table (and if it does, consider relocating).

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Studying Abroad Doesn't Have to Break Your Bank

Dear Editor,

In Spring Quarter 2007, I was one of the many economics students at UCSD learning about the fascinating social and economic changes taking place in China. After so many of my courses had a special focus on China, I decided that the best way to understand what was happening was by studying in China and seeing things firsthand. The idea of learning the language and trying to adapt to a completely different culture made the idea of the trip even more appealing. I found the business and economics program at Fudan University in Shanghai and applied immediately.

In the beginning of the application process, I was concerned about the costs involved with studying abroad. But after doing some research and visiting the Education Abroad Program office, I realized that the cost is not necessarily higher than staying in UCSD. Even if certain exchange programs are more expensive, there are scholarships that are only available for students who study abroad. I applied to five of these scholarships, and I received the Gilman International Scholarship. The Gilman scholarship provides awards for U.S. undergraduate students who are receiving federal Pell Grant funding to participate in worldwide study abroad programs. There are other study abroad scholarships available, and people from the Education Abroad Program office can help you find the right ones for your particular exchange program. So if one is really determined to go abroad and willing to spend some time applying for scholarships, money should not be an obstacle. The experience is definitely worth it. Students will learn a lot about the country they visit, but most

importantly, they will learn a lot about themselves.

Living in Shanghai challenged me from day one, as I had to immerse myself in a completely different world literally overnight. The very first day I arrived at my new university's dorm, I had to use the little Mandarin I had learned to find my new apartment, figure out how the heater worked, introduce myself to my Korean roommate (he spoke no English) and urgently buy toilet paper.

My visits around the city and trips around the country were just as useful as my courses when it came to learning about China's success story and current challenges. I visited Buddhist temples located next to brand new shopping malls, took trains across beautiful landscapes and polluted rivers and walked by Beijing's brand new luxury hotels as well as its overcrowded run-down buildings. Contrasts are everywhere in China, and studying there was the best way for me to experience its implications for the country itself and the rest of the world.

After the end of my year abroad, I returned to UCSD with a much clearer understanding of China's current challenges, a better idea of my capacity to be outside my comfort zone and enough Mandarin to keep in touch with the Chinese friends I left in Shanghai.

— **Santiago Halty**
2008 Warren College Alumnus

► The Guardian welcomes letters from its readers. All letters must be no longer than 500 words, typed, double-spaced and signed with a name and applicable title. Letters must also contain a phone number. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Letters may be dropped off at the Guardian office on the second floor of the Student Center or e-mailed. Send all letters to:

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TONIGHT

Peek at work from a local artist before bathing in the barrage of Crash Encore, Republic of Letters and DJ Edgartronic at the Casbah's Visual Underground night. \$10 at the door, 21 and up.

HiATUS

CONTACT THE EDITOR: hiatus@ucsdguardian.org



boss ditties

THE BEST SONGS IN HIATUS THIS WEEK

- Why? "Gemini"
- Converge "Concubine"
- The Strokes "Last Nite"
- Madvillain "Operation Lifesaver"
- No Age "Eraser"

YEAR IN REVIEW

DECADE IN REVIEW

THE 10 MOST LIFE-CHANGING ALBUMS OF THE 2000S

Suburban Steez

CHRIS KOKIOUSIS
ckokious@ucsd.edu



The '00s are behind us, but do we feel better for it? While musical subgenres ebbed and flowed in the limelight, there were few dominant arcs to the headphone waves these past 10 years. Diverging blogs catered to the most particular chill-fi and psychedelic crack-hop tastes, providing an almost limitless source for our iPod identities. It was all so overwhelming; I never thought my hard drive would hit 80 gigs of music (let alone 30), and — to be honest — it has left me engorged and a little nauseous.

But sometimes it just takes a little perspective, a revisiting of the records that continued to inspire me as I left my teen years behind for the bearded college life. Here, in no particular order, are 10 LPs — some obvious, some obscure — that facilitated that journey.

Why?
Elephant Eyelash
ANTICON



First game-changer on the list is Yoni Wolf's morbid indie-hop opus. It treats wordplay like cupcake sprinkles, garnishing the band's warm rock instrumentals in abstract blog-poetry confessionals. Nothing else in rap or indie comes off like this — *Elephant* is one of those hopelessly genuine albums that you'll either love or despise, because Wolf's nasal croon and jet-black lyrics polarize folks like lasting music should. Thirty seconds of the vivid, cruising "Gemini" will convince you either way.

Black Dice
Creature Comforts
DFA RECORDS



This vibrant head-trip of an album made me believe in noise. I remember thinking, "This is where music is going" — pure sounds, collaged. I'd bet that in 20 years or less, mainstream pop will steal this groundwork and shape these far-out

See **STEEZ**, page 8

BREAKING IT DOWN IN TWO THOUSAND NINE

THE 11 BEST DANCE SONGS OF THE YEAR

Straighter Than Narrow

SIMONE WILSON
siwilson@ucsd.edu



A few meager indie scraps from Grizzly Bear, Karen O and that Knife chick weren't nearly enough to keep us warm in the economic ice age of 2009. Luckily, a few select artists knew just what we needed: to dance. R&B gained some weight, techno rosied its cheeks with dubstep, top-40 hip-hop adopted a latin flair, Ghostface got cuddly and Beyonce somehow got hotter the longer she role-played Sasha Fierce. Shivering in the shadow of all those big beats, experimental rock was trumped by old-school sex bangers this year — at which point the noblest of the pale skinnies did man up and jump in the fire.

1 "SWEET DREAMS" BEYONCE

Please don't kill me, Kanye, but "Single Ladies" don't got shit on "Sweet Dreams." Beyonce's sleepy, swirly underdog single technically made its debut on last year's *I Am...* *Sasha Fierce*, but it wasn't until the bluescreen blowout of its music video that "Dreams" could really flex its muscles.

See **NARROW**, page 8



RONNIE STEINITZ/GUARDIAN

THE 5 BEST (AND WORST) FILMS OF THE YEAR

BY JENNA BROGAN • ASSOCIATE HIATUS EDITOR



1 "UP"

Remember the first time you saw "Toy Story" and your eyes welled up when Woody and Buzz finally became friends? Anyone who has seen "Up" knows Pixar hasn't let up with the warm fuzzies since. When an old man's wife dies, he's determined to fulfill their dream of moving to South America. In an effort to dodge retirement home confinement, he attaches balloons to his house and makes a fabulous exit. Unbeknownst to him, Russell — a lost boy scout — is along for the ride and the unlikely pair are in for quite the adventure filled with talking dogs, a giant mama bird named Kevin, and a washed up hero interfeere. Now, I know what you're thinking — it's a Disney movie. But before you deny yourself childlike wonder, consider this, it takes one talented team of animators to make grumpy geezers like us laugh and cry, ooh and aww. Wes Anderson gets points for challenging Pixar's monopoly with innovative art direction in "Fantastic Mr. Fox," for now, the crown stays with Disney for its imaginative concepts and ability to bring elderly folk back in style.

2 "THE HANGOVER"

Move over Apatow, there's another funnyman in town. That's right, Todd Phillips, the mastermind behind "Old School," is back with a vengeance and it's spelled V-E-G-A-S. When a bachelor party in Sin City ends with a missing groom, a lost tooth and a trashed hotel room, it's up to the three groomsmen to puzzle together the previous night of which they have no recollection. Though it sounds like another regrettable I-hope-they-serve-beer-in-hell bro romp, you'll be pleasantly surprised to find out what happens when the host of Funny or Die's "Between Two Ferns," Sack from "Wedding Crashers" and Andy Bernard are put in the same hotel room. All I can say is: it involves Mike Tyson' tiger. Expect drunken stupors, random chickens to appear out of nowhere, and the same Mary J humor that made "Adventureland" so pee-your-pants funny. And if that's not enough to tickle your fancy, try this on for size: an unidentified baby and a nimble Chinese gangster get thrown in the mix.

See **BROGAN**, page 9

FILMREVIEWS

Same Old Cera — Just Add Moustache

By Rebecca Erbe
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Michael Cera is a quirky kid who's desperately in need of some love.

If you've been anywhere near a movie theater in the last three years, you're well aware of it. Whether he's seeking to impress a lifelong crush in "Superbad," pining after some girl he knocked up in "Juno" or combing NYC for a drunk chick in "Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist," Cera always comes through with a cutesy confession.

Needless to say, his role in "Youth in Revolt" — based on the book series by C.D. Payne — is one of the same. Nick Twisp, a well-mannered, teenaged Sinatra aficionado living with trailer trash, longs to cash his V-card an awkward pause with a girlfriend of his very own. But when it becomes obvious that his occasional eye contact with the opposite sex isn't doing the trick, his alter ego — the devilish and debonair Francois Dillinger — takes the reigns. Before we know it, Nick is on his way to winning over his hot new neighbor Sheeni Saunders (Portia Doubleday).

But before we're even introduced to the cast, which boasts

Youth in Revolt

STARRING MICHAEL CERA, PORTIA DOUBLEDAY & JEAN SMART
DIRECTED BY MIGUEL ARTETA
RATED R
01:30

★★

See **REVOLT**, page 9

Sexless Rom-Con Takes Muddy Nosedive

By Faith Swickard
STAFF WRITER

There's nothing like a lovers-to-enemies love story to get some on-screen chemistry bubbling. Unfortunately, in Anand Tucker's latest chick flick-out-of-your-memory, any sort of sexy tension gives way to annoying bickering.

Amy Adams stars as the rigid and controlling Anna, who is looking for happiness in a wedding ring — a letdown to any feminists hoping to see the next Adams flick. But when her boyfriend (Adam Scott) of four years fails to propose, she takes matters into her own hands. Planning to propose to her man on Leap Day, Anna journeys to Dublin to surprise her love with a proposal — apparently, it's an ancient Irish tradition.

You guessed it: The plan goes awry. When inclement weather halts the expedition, our fearless heroine seeks refuge in a Welsh B&B run by the smoking hot Declan (Matthew Goode). He



Leap Year

STARRING AMY ADAMS, MATTHEW GOODE & ADAM SCOTT
DIRECTED BY ANAND TICKER
RATED PG
01:37

★★

conveniently offers to drive her to Ireland. And so begins a slough of bickering, insults, sexism and irritating dialogue. Along the way, cows are harassed, his car is totaled,

her clothes are ruined and their true selves are exposed: He's afraid of commitment, better because his fiance ran off with his best

See **LEAP**, page 9

druthers

HIATUS PICKS THE WEEK'S BEST BETS

LOS LOBOS

BELLY UP TAVERN
JAN. 9. / \$35

Like most troupes bumbling through the Belly Up — Solana Beach's antique-district fun-in-the-sun venue — Los Lobos are super fogey. But like all fogeys that find themselves on that musty stage, the Lobos boys know their shit: their Spanish guitars, their rhythm in foot taps, their soul-feeding yelps in harmony. Try to erase the memory of your parents doing their best ethnic jig in the living room, and let yourself wax starstruck. (SF)

CRAZY HEART

HILLCREST CINEMA
JAN. 8. / \$10

This Friday, catch Jeff Bridges ("The Big Lebowski") as the deeply tortured country music singer Bad Blake in director Scott Cooper's first feature film. After a few failed marriages, years on the road, and far too many tequila sunrises, Blake is time-worn and bitter, with no patience for a young journalist (Maggie Gyllenhaal) determined to uncover the man behind the music. With strong supporting actors, Robert Duvall and Colin Farrell, and a kickin' soundtrack, the film promises to inject life into what would appear to be a blasé storyline. (JB)

exit strategy

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

THE JUMP OFF

ROUND TABLE PIZZA
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BENEFIT SHOW

CHE CAFE
JAN. 8, 6:30 P.M.
\$5

JERK DANCE 2K10

PORTER'S PUB
JAN. 8, 8 P.M.
FREE

DA BEARS

CHE CAFE
JAN. 9, 8 P.M.
\$6

NOSAI THING

THE LOFT
JAN. 9, 9 P.M.
\$8

JEWEL MARIE

CAFE ROMA
JAN. 11, 8 P.M.
FREE

LYMBYC SYSTYM

CHE CAFE
JAN. 11, 8 P.M.
FREE

YOU AT THE LOFT

THE LOFT
JAN. 11, 8 P.M.
FREE

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SOUPS

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SALADS

Zanzibar House Salad, Chopped Summer Salad, Mango Chicken Salad, Moroccan Chicken Salad

COLD SANDWICHES

Mediterranean Vegetable, Albacore Tuna Salad, Turkey, Zanzibar BLT

HOT SANDWICHES

Chicken Pesto, Tuna Melt, Oven-Roasted Turkey

PANINIS

Three Cheese, Vegetarian, Turkey and Bacon Melt, Pastrami Rubeen

BIG BITES

Smoked Chicken and Black Bean Quesadilla*, ZBar Mac and Cheese*, Jerk Turkey Burger*, Blackened Fish Sandwich*

DINNER MENU

BITES

Seared Edamame, Basket of House-Made Chips, Bowl of Warm Olives

BITES TO SHARE

Mediterranean Plate, Bombay Turkey Sliders, Flatbreads, Market Cheese Boards

*Also featured on the Dinner Menu

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THE GUARDIAN

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PAGE 5

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'Twas a Year To Trust in the Magic of Rhythm & Blues

► **NARROW**, from page 6
After a hard-rock, light-as-a-feather intro (badass dove included) sets the theme, Beyonce enters her fitful shut-eye universe, that beautiful place where hair extensions are lost to the wind and stanky leg is the only way to get around. Like "Single Ladies" or the masturbatory "Videophone" (on which Beyonce rocks the tribal diapers and Lady Gaga makes a tranny-rific fool of herself), "Dreams" becomes synonymous with its video, until we find ourselves possessed with Her Hotness' every body roll, even once we've backed away from the YouTube.

Now, if only shards of five-way mirror would fly past our hurricane manes, swept into a mind-controlled tidal wave as we undergo insta-3CPO costume change. But alas — there can be only one Sasha.

2 "EL RITMO NO PERDONA" DADDY YANKEE

Of all the major players in reggaeton — Wisin y Yandel, Don Omar, Tito El Bambino — Daddy Yankee is generally the suckiest (even once you've forgiven the combed-flat gelly bangs and "Daddy Yankee punto com!" fillers). Yet somehow, he always seems to pull the 'ton track of the year out his "Crossroads" bucket hat.

In this case, we can pretty clearly blame the beat. "El Ritmo No Perdona" runs at a pace barely within the confines of danceability, but is all the more irresistible for that challenge — a gang of black Caribbean dudes pummel coked-out urban merengue so hard that the nearby video honeys begin to jerk around like puppets on strings. And just when we can't keep up any longer, the beat drops into a slower, deeper grind (albeit ravaged by Yankee's scream-o flow), whirlpooling our hips down the throat of a brass horn, always on its own accord.

The biggest loser in reggaeton is surprisingly the one to overcome the

genre's most grimacing simplicities, while at the same time — unlike the more experimental/respectable Calle 13 — never forgetting its main *propósito*: set our asses all a-shake.

3 "PON DE FLOOR" MAJOR LAZER

Want to know what happens when a bunch of Jamaicans do too much E? Check the "Blue's Clues"-gone-freakay video for "Pon de Floor," a collaboration between sometime M.I.A. producers Diplo and Switch — one big happy-colored orgy with friend explosions and silly zipper noises. No tutu removal required.

Major Lazer's more palatable single "Keep It Going Louder" does boast a cute-as-fuck cameo from Nina Sky and makes for a more mindless, less giggly grind, but after a quick memorization of "Pon de Floor"'s starts and stops, you'll feel like the most sexy awkward robot on the dance floor. Save Sasha, of course.

4 "SO GOOD" ELECTRIK RED

Never thought I'd say it, but these bitches are the best thing since TLC. On their video for "So Good" — off *How To Be a Lady: Volume 1* — Kyndra, Lesley, Naomi and Sarah are like four rays of juicy-ass sunshine, strutting between ropes and magical chairs and roped magical chairs. The Lil Wayne remix will certainly swing them the spotlight they deserve, but Weezy sort of just geeks all over their healthy, hearty R&B for the soul, and something of its purity is lost. I'd prefer they stick to laying across each others' laps and fingerpainting each other's ensembles, thank you.

5 "EMPIRE STATE OF MIND" JAY-Z FEAT. ALICIA KEYS

Ah, the joys of repping. Alicia Keys and Jay-Z made even the most devout West-Coasters wish for just a minute they were braving the streets

of a Woody Allen movie (the old kind) for a few twinkly lit moments this holiday season. Then we learned we could just insert the name of our own small town into the operatic "New York" bit — then gesture to the nearest inspiring lights and girls that got ridden "like a bus route" in high school and now have the burp stains to prove it — and we could be just as proud as them shmancy cold-weather folk. Best way to both start a party and end a night. I got a feelin'! Oh wait. Wrong one.

6 "SPOTLIGHT" GUCCI MANE

Gucci Mane's brutish growl is nothing we haven't heard before (in fact, Young Jeezy and Mike Jones already dragged that bullshit onto my blacklist many moons ago), but his eerie ability to gather the hottest hooksters in the game 'round his lame-ish campfire — all at once, all night long — is the work of a god. (And a damn charming agent.) Mane's first year on the scene, he released two gluttonous full-lengths splitting its sides with melodious meats; not surprisingly, highlights see their guest star draw out his or her set as long as possible. Big Boi's smart-perv come-ons ride the skittish "Shine Blockers" limo far into the sunset; Lil Wayne is the life of the leaners on the "Wasted" party bus; but you can't beat Usher's smooth talk on "Spotlight" — and just when I thought we'd forgotten how to make love in this club.

7 "GUEST HOUSE" GHOSTFACE KILLAH

8 "LUST FOR LIFE" GIRLS

9 "LISZTOMANIA" PHOENIX

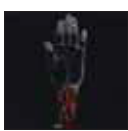
10 "MY GIRLS" ANIMAL COLLECTIVE

11 "DIME SI TE VAS CON EL" NIGGA FLEX

New Millenium Made for Weirder Raps and Sloppier Punk


► **PATH**, from page 6
ideas into hits. Abrasive and gorgeous, Black Dice's animal record shaped an African safari from samples and processed guitar. They might sound like birds and elephants, but it's really three dudes twiddling knobs.

Converge
You Fail Me
EPITAPH



Before these rippers, I thought hardcore was a bunch of basketball-shorted bros screaming like Cookie Monster, but *Jane Doe's* "Concubine" convinced me to finally give tatted scenesters a chance. And then *You Fail Me*, their next record, was pure death-scuZZ love. From the brutal chug of the title track to Jacob Bannon's banshee wail on "Eagles Become Vultures," these four disregard genre tropes in favor of the creative — the heavy-as-fuck.

Deerhoof
Apple O'
KILL ROCK STARS



While it's super hard for me to pick a favorite Deerhoof record, I chose *Apple O'* because it's the album that introduced me to Satomi Matsuzaki and her merry friends, and arguably the purest expression of their ragged-pop style. Satomi's shrill coos over vintage tube guitars and spastic, mashed drums make for hyper-cute ditties with a twisted undertow. These post-modern Rolling Stones should be way more popular than they are.


Respira
A Still Silhouette
EXOTIC FEVER



Speaking of popularity, when I started high school, I was convinced these Sonic Youth


disciples from my very own suburb (Thousand Oaks) would ride out of our sleepy town with this record and never return. While it didn't go at all as I imagined — the band played a final show a few years back and dissolved into the real world — their full-length inspired my love for musical honesty and community. This LP contains some of the raddest guitar riffs and tones ever put to tape.

Flying Lotus
Los Angeles
WARP RECORDS



Future sex techno-soul on a yacht sailing through mercury — that's what FlyLo's about. His Warp debut is timeless like a classic jazz record, jammed with outerspace breakbeats that never wear out their welcome. My 2010 prediction: His new record, *Cosmogramma* (dropping on 4/20) is going to be the most hyphy album of the year.

The Strokes
Is This It
RCA



I'm a sucker for their first two LPs, and even though *First Impressions of Earth* is a cavernous blemish on their otherwise spotless track record, I still believe they can recover their cool with *Album Four*. I remember that school morning in fall 2001, when I first heard "Last Nite" on a friend's burned CD, like it was yesterday — that evening I saw the boys' music video on MTV and resolved to boycott nu-metal for good.

Desaparecidos
Read Music/Speak Spanish
SADDLE CREEK



For a while, I couldn't stomach succumbing to Conor Oberst's emo-folk — no matter how


much it spoke to me. I had standards, goddammit. Then I heard his fuzzed-out ode to consumerism and couldn't hold out any longer. While some of Bright Eyes' lyrics address broad issues of love and politics to a populist fault, *Desaparecidos* is super specific about its parking lots and suffocating shopping bags. This punk doesn't hide under distortion — it hones it like a dart, then shoots Coca-Cola and Disneyland in the face.

Madvillain
Madvillainy
STONES THROW



Madlib and MF Doom's superstar collab will go down in infamy for crackly vintage beats and bizarre-rhymes that hit a high '90s rap could never touch. Refined but ever-weird, Doom spits lines like "Her big butt and smile was like camo/ Hit up the men's room, we need more ammo." Or how about "All bets off! The Villain got the dice rigged/ And they say he accosted the man with the sliced wig." Delivered like a soulful sleptalker, if I do say so myself.

No Age
Nouns
NOISE POP



These two LA locals don't play complicated music, but great taste and ideas never lack on their concept-punk with delicate drones. Idea No. 1: It's okay to be sloppy if you put thought and feeling into it. Idea No. 2: Punk and ambient noise are allowed to mix; anything's game. Idea No. 3: Layer and sample the guitar licks until you get a My Bloody Valentine wall of sound, then channel that into a pop-punk gem. Their brainstorm seshes produced 12 perfectly sequenced tunes, a 30-minute wave of positive vibes and introspection.

FILMREVIEWS

Disfunctional Cast Half-Saves Another Virginal Voyage► **REVOLT**, from page 7

the not-so-indie Jean Smart, Ray Liotta and Fred Willard, we're flooded with an animated title sequence and kitschy soundtrack. Deja vu, anyone?

What follows is nothing short of predictable — every Cera film goes from unrequited love to rite of passage in two hours — but the actor's ability to underplay his underdog role with clumsy comedic timing and baby cheeks make it somewhat excusable.

The bigger problem, however, is that we're voyeuristically watching the same character mumble to himself and put his hands in his pockets for the thousandth time — and the

formula no longer feels fresh.

In fact, far more engaging than the coming-of-age story of a precocious recluse with no familial support are the well-developed characters that surround him. Sheeni, the object of Nick's affection, is the ideal mix of beauty, intelligence and immaturity — a cultured trailer park oxymoron with posters of Jean-Paul Belmondo tacked to her wall. Her rebellious tendencies captivate far more than Cera's tired Urban Outfitters pose, as she struggles to overcome her own parents' expectations (or lack thereof).

Justin Long gets his fair share of

witty one-liners as Sheeni's deadbeat older brother, who drugs their parents to make them more manageable during the holidays. And Steve Buscemi, Fred Willard and Zach Galifianakis deliver a few good knee-slappers, making "Youth" a charming if unintelligent date movie.

Sure, Cera once again plays the staple of our generation — the awkward virgin who, thanks to the Internet, is isolated, brainwashed and reaching out for a connection — but Twisp's journey to the holiest of holes is surprisingly enjoyable if you remember to leave your brain at home.

Marrytale Ends Shallower Ever After► **LEAP**, from page 7

friend, and she can't let her Type-A tendencies loose and enjoy life.

While we've seen and mildly enjoyed it all before (in "The Proposal" and "27 Dresses"), as the plot unfolds, it becomes obvious that a certain sexiness is missing between the two lovebirds.

The romance feels forced even when it's not supposed to. Sure, "Leap Year" has those staple chick flick moments when Anna and Declan are required to kiss, share a bed and even pretend they're married, but all feeble attempts to be heartwarming only reveal the shallowness of both the

characters and plot.

Never fear though; the film ends as all rom-coms do — happily ever after. Yes, much to the cynical conning's dismay, the story is strung together with a shiny red bow, as Anna realizes that the love she was so desperately searching for was in a homely little breakfast joint in Dingle.

Though Ireland's fairytale landscape keeps the film afloat for a time, the rolling hills simply aren't enough to distract the audience from the lame message: True love can be found in three days — even if you're constantly verbally abusing your lover.

We Love to Hate 'Em, But Mariah, Tarantino and Big Blue Aliens Delivered in 2009► **BROGAN**, from page 6**3 "INGLORIOUS BASTERDS"**

If it's at all possible to silence any Tarantino prejudices you might have, this year's Nazi blockbuster is definitely worth the effort. Sure, one too many of Hitler's minions get scalped on screen, but if you know anything about the director, it's no surprise. If you can stomach the bloodbath, the five-chapter story detailing a young Jewish refugee who seeks revenge for her family's murder is pretty thrilling. Characters include the Colonel who killed them, the German war hero turned movie star Frederick Zoller, and a fictitious rag-tag team of Jewish-American guerilla soldiers known as the "Basterds." A word of the wise: you're seeking realism, watch "The Hurt Locker." Brad Pitt's role as Lieutenant Aldo Raine of the Basterds is far less annoying than his bumbling "Burn After Reading" performance, watching a bomb squad tiptoe through one Iraqi death trap after another is terrifyingly sobering.

4 "UP IN THE AIR"

It was quite a year for George — what, with his role as the bushy-tailed instigator in Anderson's "Fantastic Mr. Fox" and stint as a psychic soldier who killed hoofed creatures with his mind in "The Men Who Stare at Goats" — but of course, he had to go out with a bang. In Jason Reitman's latest, our knight in shining pinstripes stars as Ryan Bingham, a downsizing specialist who loves nothing more than travelling through airports 322 days of the year on business. But when his mid-air lifestyle is threatened by a recent college grad

who develops swifter layoff methods, he is forced to reassess his means of existence. The plot might not scream Academy Award, but the acting certainly does. With flawless performances from Anna "Say goodbye to Twilight" Kendrick, the gorgeous Vera Farmiga and Clooney, this stylistic glance into the life of a man who has everything and nothing will have you eating out of the palm of Reitman's hand.

5 "PRECIOUS"

While it's typically a safe bet to steer clear of any film starring Mariah Carey, "Precious" is the exception to the rule. It may be the most depressing two hours of your life, but it may also be the most uplifting. 16-year-old Claireece Jones (Gabourey Sidibe) has problems, but not your typical suburban "I want an iPhone woes": She's an obese teenager living on welfare in Harlem. Her mother beats her and her father has impregnated her twice. Her first child has Down Syndrome, she was suspended from school and she can't read or write. Still complaining that you've run out of weed to smoke? Didn't think so. It's not often you seek out films where bad things happen to already unfortunate people. But here are three reasons why you should: Director Lee Daniels has an eye for capturing raw emotion and real human drama, everyone loves a good underdog story and with Oprah as an executive producer, how could you say no?

1 "NEW MOON"

Let's be real for a second. Whether you were dragged to AMC by your girlfriend, walked into the wrong theater by accident or proudly sport a

Team Jacob T-shirt, you have to agree — "New Moon" was a sad excuse for a film. Sorry guys, but watching Kristen Stewart bite her lip while Robert Pattinson runs his fingers through his greasy mop of hair, isn't quality cinema. Pull the "innocent teenage love story" card all you want, but at the end of the day, the latest "Twilight" installment is about as innocent as the giant posters of naked men that greet you in Abercrombie & Fitch. If you can get past the fact that the rock solid abs you're ogling belong to a 17-year-old who starred in "Cheaper by the Dozen 2" a mere four years ago, you'll realize that most of the film is filled with awkward silences and some rain. Like its paranormal-book-turned-film rival "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," the audience is left with one resonating question: Is that it?

2 "HANNAH MONTANA"/"THE JONAS BROTHERS"

Remember back in 1998 when that cute freckled-nose red head tricked her parents into getting remarried in "The Parent Trap"? Life was much simpler then. Fast-forward a couple Maxim spreads, some "heat exhaustion" hospitalizations, and a romance with DJ Samantha Ronson, and you've got the archetypal Disney Frankenstein — Lindsay Lohan. Following in her stumbling footsteps are this year's pre-teen idols turned Perez Hilton regulars, Miley Cyrus and the Jonas Brothers. While both acts entered the scene with signature symbols of virtue, it didn't take long to trade in their purity rings for a chance at the cover of "Rolling Stone" or a pair of sexy hot pants. If you feel like reminiscing about the idols pre-corruption, rent one of these flops, otherwise stick to Us Weekly for up-to-date juice on these singers-turned-actors you love to hate.

3 "TRANSFORMERS"

When you think Michael Bay, you think explosions. And that's exactly what you'll get in this year's "Transformers" installment that grossed an obscene \$402 million. That's all you'll get. Well, that's not entirely true. You'll also get to see Megan Fox lick her juicy lips via webcam. Honestly, how on earth does she keep them so moist all the time? Anyway, this time around our unlikely hero Sam (Shia LaBeouf) is headed off to the university without his trusty Camaro Bumblebee, in the hopes of having a real college experience. That of course, doesn't last long. Before he can say keg stand, he's face to face with Optimus Prime and the fate of the world is thrown in his hands — again. Insert a confusing 15-minute explanation about Decepticons, aliens and Egyptian glyphs, then let the madness commence. On a serious note, if watching giant pieces of scrap metal duke it out does it for you, check out "G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra," another 2009 film that burned up a couple other B-list actors this year.

4 "ALL ABOUT STEVE"

Anyone who's seen "Speed" knows why Sandra Bullock is still considered a Hollywood starlet, despite the fact that her last decent role was as a supporting actress in "Crash." But "All About Steve" will certainly make you question her title. When an eccentric crossword constructor falls head over red boots for her blind date (Bradley Cooper), she stalks him around the country to prove they're meant to be. If the plot alone isn't enough to make you run the opposite direction, Bullock's hair certainly will. I don't know what happened to her stylist, but whoever decided it was a good idea to ditch the long flowing locks we admired in "Miss Congeniality" for the cropped hay bale she sports in this film, should be thrown to the pigs. And no offense, but watching the 46-year-old actress waltz around in a mini skirt only makes her look old — like Dame Judi Dench old.

5 "LOVE HAPPENS"

While diehard "Friends" fans will continue to keep their fingers crossed for the resur-

rection of Jennifer Aniston's career, this year's token chick flop proves that Forrest Gump had it right all along — shit, not love, happens. In this "Sleepless in Seattle"-wannabe, Aaron Eckart trades in his Two-Face persona for the role of a weepy self-help author who can't take his own advice and face the reality of his wife's death. During one of his seminars he meets a woman who will give him a run for his money, and well, something happens. Too bad it's something unoriginal and boring. In place of depth, we get product placement, unintelligent advice about the grieving process, and some uncomfortable parallels between Jen's unsuccessful love life and her character's. While the film does, for the most part, lack in the detestable rom-com humor that made "He's Just Not That Into You" so unbearable, with so much emotional baggage weighing down on the audience, the occasional breather would have been nice.

BEST & WORST FILM OF THE YEAR "AVATAR"

It's been twelve years since "Titanic" blew Hollywood out of the water, and it looks like James Cameron has still got it. Sure, "Avatar" isn't nearly as quotable, has a less attractive cast and doesn't end with an epic iceberg battle, but it's by far the most visually stimulating films that has come out of the last decade. Using every last cent of his rumored \$300 million budget in developing the most technologically advanced special effects in the industry, Cameron delivers a spell-binding cinematic experience that raises the bar for science fiction. But enough ass-kissing. Strip its aesthetics and the film is little more than a three-hour live action "Fern Gully." And while most people are too awestruck to care, the one-dimensional characters, weak script and obvious political undertones make for an underwhelming story that — in any other instance — would've been tossed into the \$5 bin at Best Buy.

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Sudoku Solutions

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

Crossword Solution

A	D	A	M	P	A	C	K	A	S	C	A	P			
B	A	L	I	A	S	H	E	I	C	A	R	E			
I	N	T	L	S	K	I	N	R	A	N	D	R			
T	O	O	K	A	S	E	C	O	N	D	L	O	O	K	
S	L	E	D	C	H	A	S	E	R	O	R	D	E	R	S
O	R	C	H	I	D	A	V	I	D	A	V	I	D		
R	E	H	A	B	A	I	W	A	B	L	E	U			
C	O	O	K	I	N	G	T	H	E	B	O	O	K	S	
A	S	W	E	O	U	Z	O	L	A	R	G	E			
S	T	A	Y	C	A	R	E	S	S						
A	H	C	H	O	O	B	O	N	D						
B	Y	H	O	O	K	O	R	B	C	R	O	O	K		
Y	E	A	R	N	P	O	G	O	K	I	E				
S	N	I	D	E	T	N	U	T	O	R	L	Y			
S	A	N	E	R	S	I	N	E	M	A	S	S			

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

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk

Level: **1** 2 3 4

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

Level: **1** 2 **3** 4

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

Level: **1** 2 **3** 4

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

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Just Don't Look to the SEC for Any Southern Hospitality

► **FACT**, from page 12

best teams. It's not up for discussion. News services have fleshed out the game's every angle: Colt McCoy's chance at becoming only the second player in college football history to win four games (mind you, he red-shirted in 2005 when Texas beat USC in the Rose Bowl); Mark Ingram's somewhat controversial Heisman Trophy award; how the Texas offensive line will stop Alabama's own 365-pound Godzilla Terrance Cody when it couldn't keep Ndamukong Suh, listed as 60 pounds lighter than Cody, away from McCoy.

Possibly the most interesting storyline, though, is the SEC's complete dominance. The SEC claims four of the past five national championships and half of the national championships crowned during the BCS-era of college football. In fact, no SEC team has ever lost a BCS National Championship — they've got a perfect 5-0 record.

So what the hell are they feeding their kids in the South? I want some. According to its official Web site, Alabama's roster has only five players from non-SEC participating states. That's some good homegrown cookin'.

I could go on forever about the nitty-gritty, but tonight's game will come down to three key match-ups:

1) **Texas' Passing Game vs.**

Alabama's Defense: With their quarterback as their biggest rushing threat, an inept running game has forced Texas to rely solely on its passing game. If Cody is able to bulldoze through the Longhorn offensive line like Suh did, McCoy will be pressured into another subpar Nebraska-esque showing. Linebacker Rolando McClain will likely be in charge of keeping McCoy from scrambling. As one of the most sure tacklers in the nation, it's cake for McClain if he really is as healthy as reports suggest. But even if the Longhorn O-line can keep Saban's clever blitz packages and Cody out of the backfield, McCoy will still have to compete with one of the best secondaries in the nation. No matter how you look at it, the Texas offense will have a difficult time putting up its 40 points per game ... which leads to number two.

2) **Greg McElroy of late vs. Greg McElroy of midseason:** Which one we get is anyone's guess. The Alabama quarterback's season has been adequate, and a stereotypical stingy SEC defense has bailed him out on more than one occasion. Should McCoy and the 'Horns rack up points, McElroy and the Tide offense can keep pace if McElroy plays like he has recently. Many doubted he could capably fill in for former quarterback John Parker Wilson. Of late,

McElroy has proved that he was worth the wait. But doubt creeps in when I recall a three-game mid-season stretch during where McElroy couldn't find his rhythm, completing 43 of 85 passes with no touchdowns and two interceptions. If McElroy comes out trying to prove something, he could find himself back in his mid-year slump.

3) **Alabama Red Zone Defense vs. Texas Red Zone Offense:** Texas rates third in the nation in red zone offense, scoring on 53 of 56 drives inside the 20-yard line. With a reliable kicker in Hunter Lawrence and McCoy at the helm, Texas has found a way to score. Problem is, it has to get there first. Alabama ranks third in total defense, averaging a measly 241.69 yards per game. And even if the Longhorns's offense manages to sneak its way deep into Tide territory, it may encounter even stouter defense. Alabama has the second best red zone defense, allowing only eight touchdowns in 23 drives. Something has to give in the Battle of the Red Zone. The winner will likely take home the title.

The end of the holiday season couldn't offer a better gift: a true national championship with a high-powered offense, a shutdown defense and future pros all over the field. May the game give us everything we hoped for.

Swim Team Starts Year on High, Plans for LMU Faceoff

► **SWIVE**, from page 12

petition they will face at the National Championships. Last year at the competition, UCSD and Truman State finished third and fourth respectively.

"It's been a couple months before we've had a meet," McGihon said. "We were definitely eager to swim again. It's rare that we get to swim against an established Division-II program, so we wanted to take the opportunity to do well."

Sophomore swimmer Alexandra Henley said she was pleasantly sur-

prised at how well the team performed, especially coming off a two-month break from competition.

"The meet was good for everyone to see where we were at," Henley said. "It was also a good way to start the month, because this Saturday we're up against Loyola Marymount University — a big rival — and we can go into it with heads high and beat them as well."

LMU and UCSD have always competed fiercely against each other, but McGihon said the team is keeping this

meet in perspective, putting their sights to the greater season goal.

"We're focusing more on the national champions than anything else," McGihon said. "But this is a really big rivalry, so we're going to give it our best effort."

On the same day, immediately following the meet against LMU, the women's team will be racing against Kansas University.

Readers can contact Tyler Nelson at tnelson@ucsd.edu.

SWIMMING & DIVING UCSD VS. TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY (JAN. 2)

NAME	EVENT	PLACE	TIME
WOMEN			
Anju Shimura	100 Back	1st	59.66
Anju Shimura	200 Back	1st	2:05.67
Mercedes O'Brien	100 Breast	1st	1:07.40
Carianne Cunningham	200 Breast	1st	2:23.75
Karla Holman	100 Butterfly	1st	59.94
Carianne Cunningham	200 Butterfly	2nd	2:10.18
Katherine Tse	50 Free	1st	24.56
Katherine Tse	100 Free	1st	53.06
Alexandra Henley	200 Free	1st	1:53.79
Beth Dong	500 Free	1st	5:11.21
Beth Dong	1000 Free	1st	10:25.51
Alexandra Henley	200 I.M.	1st	2:06.78
Anju Shimura Jessica Ferguson Shea Kopp Katherine Tse	200 Free Relay	1st	1:38.11
Anju Shimura Mercedes O'Brien Jessica Ferguson Katherine Tse	200 Medley Relay	1st	1:48.34
MEN			
Julius Espiritu	100 Back	1st	53.68
Julius Espiritu	200 Back	1st	1:57.98
Pablo Carrillo	100 Breast	1st	57.59
Jon Masehi-Lano	200 Breast	1st	2:09.44
Dan Perdew	100 Butterfly	1st	51.80
Shaun Stringer	200 Butterfly	1st	1:55.12
Dan Perdew	50 Free	1st	21.20
Todd Langland	100 Free	1st	47.26
Michael Lorch	200 Free	1st	1:47.66
Jereme Barnett-Woods	500 Free	1st	4:46.81
Jereme Barnett-Woods	1000 Free	1st	9:49.77
Adam Rice	200 I.M.	1st	1:58.56
Sam Stromberg Todd Langland Blake Langland Dan Perdew	200 Free Relay	1st	1:25.57
Julius Espiritu Pablo Carrillo Dan Perdew Todd Langland	200 Medley Relay	1st	1:33.35

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SPORTS

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LINGO LEXICON

Épée: *ey-pey, ep-ey, n.* — A rapier with a three-sided blade and a guard over the tip. In the sport of fencing, points are scored by touching any part of the opponent's body with the tip of the weapon.



HOTCORNER

PILAR ALICEA | FENCING

The senior team captain took gold in the women's foil at the Bladerunner tournament, from Jan. 2 to Jan. 3. This marks the second consecutive year that Alicea has won the tournament, which hosts over 200 competitors.



ERIK JEPSEN/GUARDIAN FILE

On Jan. 2, the UCSD Swimming and Diving teams defeated Division-II counterparts Truman State University. The Triton men earned a clean sweep in all 14 events — scoring a 228-30 victory over the opposition — while the women won 184.5-77.5 and took 13 of their 14 events.

TRITONS TAME BULLDOGS

UCSD swimming and diving kicked off 2010 with a sweeping victory over Truman State.

By Tyler Nelson
STAFF WRITER

SWIMMING & DIVING — After coming out highly competitive in 2009 with pre-season fixtures, conference play and several multi-school tournaments, the Triton men and women got an equally fresh start in 2010 with a whopping victory over Division-II powerhouse Truman State University.

"[Truman] has been a strong winning program for five to six years now, so it was great to get that opportunity to compete against them," head coach Scott McGihon said.

The men's team scored a decisive 228-30 victory against the Bulldogs, winning all 14 events. The Triton women took 13 of 14 events, and won by a margin of 184.5-77.5.

"We were really happy about how we swam against them," McGihon said. "And it may have looked like the score was a little lopsided, but they're going to be ready to swim fast at the national championships, so it's not like we're going to let up by any means."

The meet, which the Tritons hosted over winter break, was decided very early on in the match-up. Freshman Katherine Tse (50 free, 100 back, 200 back), freshman Beth Dong (1,000 free, 500 free) and sophomore Alex Henley (200 IM, 200 free) all won two individual events on the women's side. In the men's division, senior Jereme Barnett-Woods (1,000 free, 500



ERIK JEPSEN/GUARDIAN FILE

The Triton swimmers will look to build on their performance against Truman State University when they take on rival Loyola Marymount University on Saturday, Jan. 9.

free), freshman Julius Espiritu (100 back, 200 back) and senior Daniel Perdew (50 free, 100 fly) each won multiple events.

After the recess, UCSD swimmers followed up their dominant individual displays with a collab-

orative relay effort that smashed the competition.

The emphatic win against Truman State gave the Tritons an idea of the kind of high-level com-

See **SWIVE**, page 11

The Last and Greatest Gift of the Holiday Season

Winter break is my favorite time of year. And it isn't because of family, the chilly weather or the fact that I can stare at the wall every day without having to think anything scholastic. No, what I love most about the holiday season is that it allows me to get away from my family, stay indoors and stare at something other than a wall: college football.

Matter of Fact

MATT CROSKY
mccroskey@ucsd.edu



I laugh when 94 percent of America picks Houston to beat Air Force, but the Falcons dominate with their option attack. I cry when my hometown team Fresno State loses in double overtime after a ridiculous goal-line play call that should be getting Pat Hill fired — not what will likely result in a multi-million dollar extension. I nearly fall to the floor from a heart attack when Bowling Green, Idaho and the Roady's Humanitarian Bowl makes for more fireworks than a Disneyland Fourth of July display.

This rollercoaster of emotion will come to a halt tonight when Alabama meets Texas for the BCS National Championship. Hate the Bowl Championship Series system or love it, they got it right this year. Despite Boise State's second perfect season in three years, the team wouldn't survive a full season in the Southeastern Conference or the Big 12 like 'Bama and Texas did. The Rolling Tide and the Longhorns are the nation's two

See **FACT**, page 11

ON DECK

Women's Basketball

vs. Chico State
January 9

The ninth-ranked UCSD women's basketball team will put its perfect 10-0 record on the line tonight at RIMAC Arena to host Chico State University. The game is slated to tip off at 5:30 p.m., and marks the first of four straight home games for the record-breaking Triton women. The team has been undefeated at home during the 2009-10 season, and can next be seen in action on Jan. 9 hosting Cal State Stanislaus.

Men's Volleyball

Santa Barbara Invitational
January 7-8

The UCSD men's volleyball team gets back in action tonight at the 46th annual Santa Barbara Invitational tournament. The two-day tournament, which takes place from Jan. 7 to Jan. 8, is hosted on the UC Santa Barbara campus and features several of the nation's top volleyball programs. The No. 13 Tritons will be tested early on, facing the No. 8 UCLA Bruins at 11 a.m. sharp.

UCSD Fencing on Point at Bladerunner

The Triton fencers turned in impressive results at the 14th annual home tournament.

By Matt Croskey
ASSOCIATE SPORTS EDITOR

FENCING — While their fellow Tritons were coveting the last few days of the holiday break, the UCSD fencers started off 2010 with a dominating performance at the 14th annual Bladerunner tournament held Jan. 2 and Jan. 3 at UCSD.

Open for all fencers part of the United States Fencing Association, the competition brought in top individuals from some of the most elite clubs in California. Senior team captain Pilar Alicea took gold in the women's foil for the second consecutive year at the event. Freshman Alex Lavin, competing in the epee event for only the second time in his short career, placed eighth, earning him a reputable C rating.

The tournament — hosted by UCSD as a fundraiser to help the team pay for travel and registration fees — featured over 200 competitors with fencers as young as 16 and as old as 63. Bladerunners hosted some of the best fencers in the state in addition to an individual from the Ukrainian national team.

Since strong competition was the perfect opportunity for the Tritons to reignite their competitive spirit, they weren't able to hold any practices over the holidays. Without any practice time, Alicea didn't expect such a strong performance.

"I was a little concerned about the timing of the tournament," Alicea said. "That being said, I was impressed with the team's overall performance."

Alicea continues a stellar fall campaign, which included a victory at the Collegiate Open and an undefeated run in competitions against UCLA, USC, UC Santa Barbara and Arizona State.

Other Triton women turned in top performances as well. Freshman Victoria Mo placed third in the women's epee and senior Alicia Trigeiro took eighth in women's saber. Freshman Rose Forcier claimed bronze in the women's foil with senior Razan Faraj placing eighth.

For the men, freshman Chris Bonner took fifth in the men's saber. UCSD took three of the top eight spots in men's foil with sophomore Michael Fong, junior Benjamin Dorn and freshman Nalin Desai finishing fifth, sixth and eighth respectively. Sophomore Patrick Burton finished seventh in men's epee, with Levin one spot behind.

Usually competing in the foil competition, Levin recently decided he would try his hand at epee. In only his second outing, Levin's eighth place



DANIEL CADDELL/GUARDIAN FILE

Senior captain Pilar Alicea won gold for the second straight year at the Bladerunner tournament.

finish earned him a C rating, something that usually takes years to do, according to Alicea.

Now in its 14th year, the Bladerunner tournament has seen the number of competitors steadily increase, and is bringing in better competition and more money. With each year, the intensity of the back-to-school tournament has risen, providing an excellent platform for the Tritons to hone their individual skills in preparation for the North American Cup D Jan. 15 through Jan. 18 in San Jose.

The Tritons will send only a handful of fencers to the event that features

individuals from all over the nation and world. UCSD will be represented in all events at the tournament.

Team competition will resume Jan. 30 and Jan. 31 at the Northwestern Duals that will feature tough Division-I competition.

"Working with the team this year has been incredible, and I look forward to seeing what more we can achieve during the rest of our season," Alicea said.

Additional reporting by Yvonne Chow.

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