Council Taps Students for Referendum Support

Facing massive cash shortage, desperate councilmembers take to Library Walk as polling day approaches.

By Sarah de Crescenzo SENIOR STAFF WRITER

In an attempt to compensate for a potentially debilitating funding deficit, the A.S. Council will run a referendum next week asking UCSD undergraduates to increase their quarterly campus activity fee by \$19.82 beginning Spring Quarter of this year.

If approved, the referendum will channel the majority of the proposed activity fee increase into A.S. Programming and A.S. Student Organization Funding, along with other expenses and enterprises overseen by the council.

Councilmembers are spending this week and the next on Library Walk informing students about the referendum and asking for their support. Other campaigning activities have included contacting each student organization and visiting with college councils in a bid for endorsements.

"From the colleges, we have received official endorsements from Revelle College and Marshall College," A.S. Vice President of Finance and Resources Naasir Lakhani said. "This is not to say that other colleges are not supportive, but they just have not taken an official stance."

While the A.S. Council as a whole has no official stance on the referendum, many councilmembers are involved with the pro side of campaigning

"A.S. is not allowed to use funds related to their positions to campaign



either for or against the referendum," Assistant Vice President of Student Advocacy Frank Carroll said. "There is equal funding available to students both for and against the referendum to campaign, but the money set aside for the con side has not been, as of yet, utilized."

So far, \$1,800 has been spent in general election advertising, with another \$1,000 expected to go toward other logistics such as voting tables.

"We are picking up right where we left off last quarter and hitting the ground running," A.S. Vice President of External Affairs Lisa Chen said.

Councilmembers attribute the current funding deficit to a budget that has remained largely unchanged

See **REFERENDUM**, page 3



Top: Members of the A.S. Council's pro-referendum faction are campaigning on Libarary Walk all this week and the next in an effort to raise awareness of the upcoming student fee referendum. **Bottom:** The council's neutral campaign held a public forum Wednesday to discuss the referendum.

Moores, SDSU Win \$15M for Novel Cancer Study

Project to examine disease rates among races, encourage more students to take interest in cancer research.

By Kelly Pleskot

The Moores Cancer Center at UCSD and San Diego State University began collaboration last month on a project aimed at examining disparities among cancer occurrences in various races. The project is being funded by a \$15 million grant from the National Cancer Institute, one of three such grants awarded nationwide last year.

According to NCI reports, there are significant differences in the rates at which certain types of cancers affect individuals of different races, as well as the mortality rate among these individuals. For instance, the institute has reported that while Caucasian

women have a higher chance of developing breast cancer, black women are more likely to die from the disease.

Dr. John Carethers, a co-principal investigator on the project and chief of the gastroenterology division at the UCSD Medical Center and the Moores Cancer Center, is comparing the occurrence of colon cancer among blacks and Caucasians. Through the study of colorectal tumors, he hopes to determine why blacks are at greater risk for the disease. Other researchers will examine the effects of chemical derivatives with possible anticancer agents as well as nanotechnology-based vaccines for colon cancer.

Carethers said that these personalized studies could help provide new approaches to treating cancer over the next several decades.

"We will be able to take your genetic material and be able to optimize the best treatment based on your genetic background," he said.

Carethers added that the development of this new medicine will be similar to the development of therapies for diabetes or AIDS, during which researchers found effective treatments for diseases that were previously considered unmanageable.

Under the conditions of the NCI grant, the project also stresses community outreach to better serve all San Diegans. Dr. Elizabeth Klonoff, psychology professor and co-principal investigator for the project at SDSU, said the project aims to facilitate a better understanding of cancer research among medically underserved minorities. The grant will also assist in producing medical-consent forms in multiple languages to serve a wider spectrum of patients.

The partnership study is projected to last five years, while individual projects for studying specific cancers will last two to three years. After this period, new projects related to the study may be developed if the initial projects yield significant results.

Carethers said that one of the project's most daunting challenges lies in training researchers. Students selected to participate in the project have the opportunity to receive a certificate in cancer research through SDSU as part of a training program offered by the grant.

"There is definitely a shortage of people doing cancer-disparities research," Carethers said. "That's a challenge, especially in a five-year time period."

Koloff added that the project will greatly increase the number of faculty and students participating in new cancer research efforts at both universities.

The SDSU-UCSD Cancer Center Partnership is the only partnership in California funded by the NCI. According to Koloff, each university will receive roughly \$7.5 million. The M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York received funding last year for similar research.

Readers can contact Kelly Pleskot at kpleskot@ucsd.edu.

NEW IRVINE LAW SCHOOL BOASTS FREE TUITION

By Yelena Akopian

A new law school opening at UC Irvine will offer three years of free tuition to the incoming class of winter 2009. Tuition for students accepted in subsequent years will be at a standard rate.

The UC Irvine School of Law, California's first public law school to open in over 40 years, expects to enroll about 60 students in the founding class. Funding for the initiative will require roughly \$6 million and come entirely from private donations.

According to Director of Communication and Public Affairs Rex Bossert, the university is about one-third along in the path to acquiring the necessary funds.

"We're substantially far along in that process," Bossert said. "I'm fairly confident we're reaching that amount."

The university has received an additional \$24 million in private donations for student scholarships and endowed faculty positions.

The university hopes that incentives such as the promise of free tuition, a curriculum focused on public interest, a prestigious faculty and a 3-to-1 student-faculty ratio will attract top law students from across the nation.

Founder Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, who credits the civilrights lawyers of the 1950s and '60s as his legal inspiration, says his intention is to have the school recognized as one of the top 20 law schools in the country from the first time it is ranked, an effort he says will begin the day the school opens its doors.

"Our goal is to be the best in the country at training lawyers to practice at the highest levels of the legal profession," Chemerinsky said in a statement.

Since the Standards and Rules of Procedure for the Approval of Law Schools by the American Bar Association stipulates that a law school cannot be considered for accreditation until its second year of operation, the school must wait until its second year to apply for accreditation.

However, according to Bossert, provisional accreditation during the school's second year of operation will allow the students to take the bar exam in any state. Full accreditation is allowed after the school has been operating under ABA standards for two years. Achieving full accreditation is a three- to five-year process.

"Provisional accreditation

See **IRVINE**, page 9

HIATUS The Year's Films in Review

From trash-collecting robots and nocturnal animal costumes, the best films of 2008 pull rank and take a number.



SPORTS Up for the Challenge

Men's volleyball: Despite their spot in the tough MPSF league, the Tritons have high hopes for the season.



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ONLINE

Poll: Should university officials seek to increase nurse staffing levels at UC medical centers?

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WEATHER





POORLY DRAWN LINES







ANIMAL STYLE



CURRENTS

UC Board of Regents May Limit Freshman Enrollment

The University of California Board of Regents has scheduled a joint meeting via teleconference on Jan. 14 to discuss a proposal to limit freshman enrollment this fall with the expectation that the state budget will be insufficient for the number of students UC had hoped to enroll.

UC President Mark G. Yudof will release an enrollment plan later this week but details have not been finalized, UC spokesman Brad Hayward said in a statement.

"It's an unfortunate impact of the state budget situation," Hayward said.

During their November meeting, the regents threatened unspecified limits on future freshman enrollment. Yudof suggested that one solution might be to deny more students entrance into their first-choice UC campuses and instead offer admittance to underenrolled campuses such as

UC Merced.

An estimated 127,000 students applied for admission to at least one of the nine UC undergraduate campuses for the fall 2009 term, up from 121,005 last year.

UC officials report that the 5 percent increase has set a record for the highest number of applications in the University of California's history, adding that it will likely amount to a record number of rejection letters sent to high-school seniors and transfer students.

UC Board of Regents Chairman Richard Blum said in a statement that the governor's plan to cut UC funding was forcing the university to take drastic action, calling the state an "unreliable partner."

UC officials have said that students who have been turned away from the university could spend their first two years at community colleges, many of which are already struggling with booming enrollment

"One day it was going to happen," Blum said. "We're supposed to be getting \$10,000 for each

additional student, and we're not getting it. If we can't pick up these kids, hopefully the community colleges can. At the end of the day, you still get a UC diploma."

UCSD Students Named Gates Millennium Scholars

A record number of 63 UCSD students have been accepted into the Gates Millennium Scholars program this year.

Sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the program was established in 1999 to help eliminate financial barriers for students from ethnically underrepresented groups.

Students who demonstrate high academic and leadership potential, as well as a commitment to community service, are nominated by principals, teachers, counselors, tribal higher-education representatives and other professional educators.

"Gates Millennium Scholars represent some of the most outstanding and gifted students attending college today," Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Penny Rue said in a statement. "UC San Diego is honored to have such a large number of these uncommon scholars among us. Noted for their creativity and drive as well as their intelligence, Gates Scholars are sure to make a positive impact in the UC San Diego community."

Eligibility for the GMS program is limited to blacks, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and Latinos who are in the process of completing undergraduate studies in all discipline areas or graduate work in mathematics, science, engineering, education or library science.

Rue said the investment made by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will insure that these students have the support they need to thrive in college.

"The commitment to diversity in higher education of the Gates Foundation matches the commitment to diversity within UC San Diego," she said.

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Council Hears Deejay's Woes, Continues Referendum Discussion

ouncilmembers were in and out of the fourth floor forum in just over an hour at last night's A.S. meeting, which was primarily devoted to brief discussion of various campus events and the A.S. activity fee referendum campaign.

During public input, Adam Timmerberg, president of the Deejay and Vinylphiles Club, explained the situation surrounding the "Let's Bounce" event that the organization is hosting on campus Jan. 10 from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.

"The event is amazing and is really a \$30,000 party that we got for \$9,000," Timmerberg said. "We were within budget but we no

longer are within budget. We are actually over \$2,500 over budget because the police really want to shut down the event."

Timmerberg explained that DVC is asking the council for an emergency funding request of \$2,500 to cover the cost of the increased security that the UCSD Police Department suddenly finds necessary for the event. Nevertheless, he informed council that the event would take place regardless of whether or not the organization receives the additional funds from Associated Students, adding that DVC is perfectly aware of the financial strain that will follow.

In an effort to make herself more accessible to students, President Donna Bean told the council that she would be lunching with Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Penny Rue every other Friday in Price Center.

Since the A.S. activity fee referendum was pushed through council at the end of last quarter, councilmembers have been working furiously on the campaign for the special election that will take place next week.

"Should this wonderful referendum pass, then we can book our artist for Sun God," Associate Vice President of Programming Garrett Berg said.

Associate Vice President of Student Advocacy and Special Elections Campaign Manager Frank Carroll took the opportunity to provide a show-and-tell session of all campaign booty that is currently being used to get the attention of students, aka eligible voters.

The bookmarks, flyers, and table toppers passed Carroll around the council tables were met with approval, but the buttons pro-

duced by the A.S. Graphic Studio generated a significantly greater amount of enthusiasm. There are 10 different button designs, most of which are graced with the popular bears of the Bear Garden posters holding up signs advertising the election.

Connie Shieh

cshieh@ucsd.edu

After leaving his seat to show the council samples of the bear picket signs, Carroll returned to the table only to find some of his buttons missing, despite having passed around bags of buttons for councilmembers to swipe.

"I stand up for two minutes and four of my buttons got jacked!" he said in dismay.

Vice President of Finance and Resources Nassir Lakhani provided an update on the status of Che Cafe, which will remain closed until it acquires the liability insurance required to continue its operation and events.

Announcements regarding activity fee referendum info sessions at various colleges and upcoming tailgating events rounded out the rest of the

Gupta: Future of Sun God Rests on Referendum



ERIK JEPSEN/GUARDIAN

Councilmembers warn that if the referendum fails to pass, A.S. will be unable to provide any significant funding to student organizations on campus.

▶ REFERENDUM, from page 1

since 1985 and a constantly increasing undergraduate population, which Associate Vice President of Student Organizations Utsav Gupta said has led directly to the creation of more student organizations, many of which request funding from the council.

The amount of funding requested by student organizations rose by 40 percent between the 2006-07 academic year and the 2007-08 academic year, a rise that Gupta attributes to the council's switch last year from paper funding requests to an online system.

The council typically funds about 40 percent of a student organization's event, enough to cover venue and sound-system costs.

"Without funding at 40 percent, this means that we are no longer funding the essentials to student organizations for their events," Gupta said. "Because of this, funding at a level lower than 40 percent is the same as zero-funding the event. Failure of these events will put a very noticeable damper on student life as a whole at

Gupta added that if the referendum were to fail before the student body, the most noticeable effect of the continuing deficit would be the quality of this year's Sun God Festival.

"If this referendum does not pass, there will not be a Sun God Festival this year — at least not one that continues a 27-year-old annual tradition," Gupta said.

The alternatives include hosting a vastly scaled-down event or canceling the festival altogether and preserving funds to stage the festival every few years rather than continuing to host an annual event.

Because not all students participate in campus organizations or A.S. Programming events, Chen said the referendum would also put money toward programs that have a larger scope than the UCSD campus.

Even if you were to never step into an A.S.-sponsored event or are not part of any student organization on campus, the referendum goes to

supporting the environment with a sustainability resource center, and going to increasing our presence in Sacramento and the regents that directly deal with policies affecting every student," Chen said.

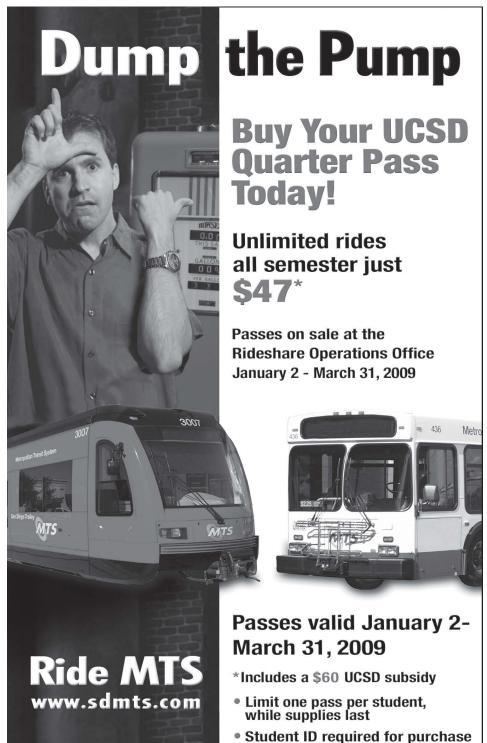
Gupta said the initiative for a sustainability resource center would be another main beneficiary if the referendum passes.

"Sustainability is a movement that I feel is going to define our generation," Gupta said. "The creation of a student-controlled, student-initiated sustainability center will consolidate sustainability efforts around UCSD and provide an essential resource for

He added that other A.S. programs, such as Safe Ride, are in danger of being cut altogether if the referendum does not pass.

In that case, councilmembers say that students can expect to see it again on the ballot during Spring Quarter.

Readers can contact Sarah de Crescenzo at sdecresc@ucsd.edu.





Curriculum to Include Modern Update on Traditional Legal Studies

We expect our school

is going to involve

more collaboration

between students and

faculty."

- Catherine Fisk, founding faculty

member, UC Irvine School of Law

▶ IRVINE, from page 1

means essentially the same as accreditation — they could take the bar exam in any state," Bossert said. "We'll do everything we can to get there. Our ABA consultant is telling us that we're in excellent shape

to get provisional accreditation at the earliest possible time. I can't imagine the UC [system] having an unaccredited law school."

Founding faculty member Catherine Fisk stressed the importance of innovation and collaboration in building a school from the ground up.

"Our students will find our curriculum distinctly different," Fisk said. "We expect our school is going to involve more collaboration between students and faculty, since we'll be creating all the institutions from scratch."

Fisk added that the school's curriculum will include variations on

conventional methods of teaching

"We are very excited about the prospects for creating a top-20 law school here at UC Irvine," Fisk said. "We are going to have an innovative curriculum that covers all the essen-

> tial knowledge and skills, but that does so in a way more suited to modern legal practice than at most law schools, especially in their first year."

Although standard tuition has not yet been determined, officials expect it to be similar

to the tuition rates at the other UC laws schools at Davis, Los Angeles, Hastings and Berkeley.

According to the Internet Legal Research Group, tuition for all four UC law schools falls roughly between \$35,000 and \$38,000 annually.

Readers can contact Yelena Akopian at yakopyan@ucsd.edu.

Work for THE GUARDIAN

THE STUDENT VOICE SINCE 1967

Come to the informational meeting on Friday, Jan. 9 at 5 p.m. on the second floor patio of the old Student Center (up the stairs next to Hi Thai).

Free pizza will be provided!

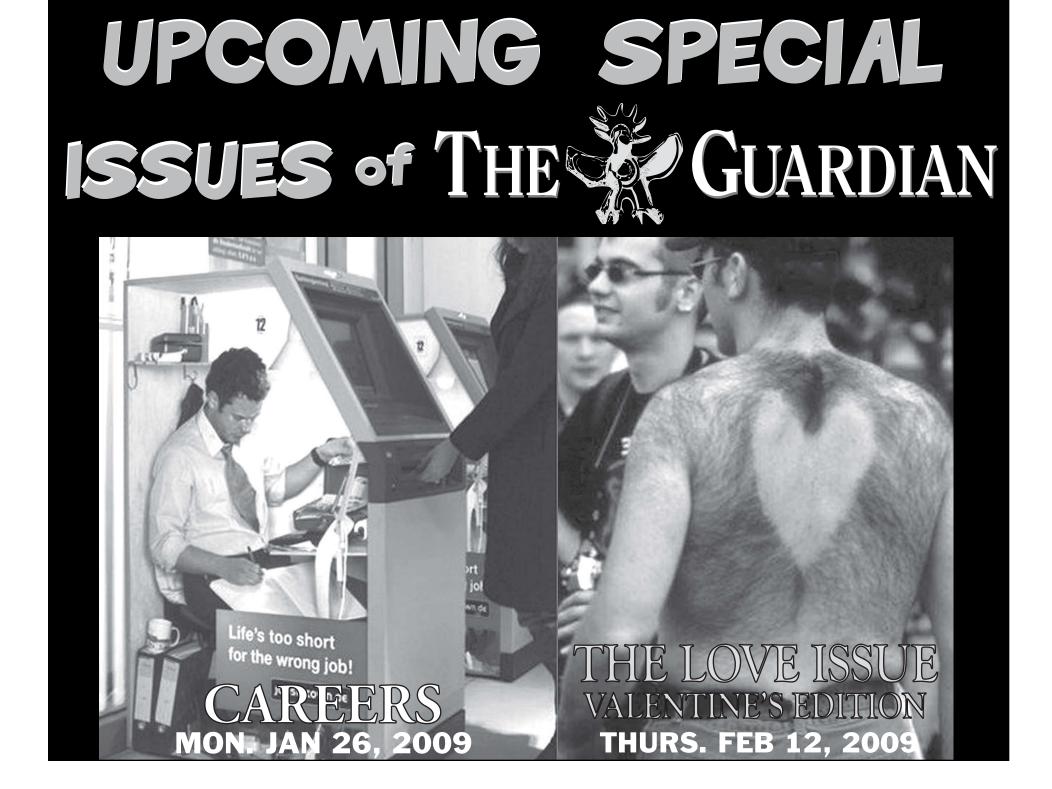
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Props to UC Irvine's new law school for offering three years of free tuition to its entire first class, which is slatted to begin instruction in fall 2009.

Flops to the UCSD Police Department for creating new security requirements for the Deejay and Vinylphiles Club's "Let's Bounce" event.



EDITORIAL

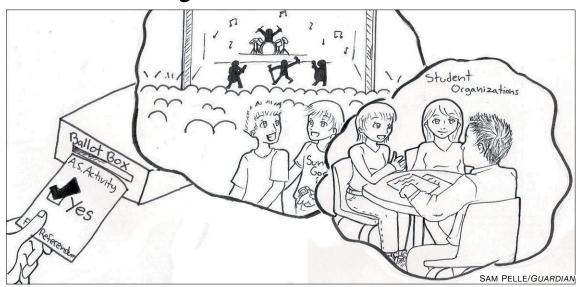
Faults Aside, Fee Referendum Must Pass

hen the A.S. Council set about drafting its emergency referendum last quarter, the question that first came to mind was how our student government could possibly have managed to land itself in such an unfortunate monetary conundrum. The revelation that the previously well-endowed A.S. coffers contained virtually zero funding for Sun God and a rapidly dwindling supply of cash for student organizations came as a harsh reality check not only to the council, but to the many arms of our campus community that depend on A.S. funding to sustain their day-to-day activities. From Surf Club to Safe Ride, from the Koala to College Republicans, the pervasive effects of the council's total fiduciary failure would be felt by all.

Now, as is so often the case when a government neglects to sustain itself financially, the burden of solving this monetary crisis has fallen squarely on the shoulders of the body politic. Thus it is time now for students to decide whether our quarterly activity fee should be raised an additional \$19.82.

While the initial (and very much justified) reaction of any student raised to believe in this university's message of affordability might be the outright rejection of such a proposal, the council's dismal situation calls for the student body to support this referendum so as to preserve the countless services and amenities our student government provides. Regardless of how this crisis came about and despite how opposed we might be to the notion of higher fees, students must now come together to resolve this issue before we are forced to suffer the effects of a broke and broken council.

It is much easier to swallow this referendum when considering what would happen were it to fail. Student organizations would quickly falter,



unable to host the events that depend so heavily on A.S. funding. The Sun God Festival that we have come to cherish would, as councilmembers have so vehemently insisted, become a thing of the past, its replacement coming in the form of smaller, potentially less frequent festivals. Council-sponsored services such as Safe Ride, the godsend of any stranded drunk, would be significantly tapered off.

Yes, our council has truly found itself in a tight spot. Yet we cannot fault councilmembers for a lack of effort in attempting to solve this problem. They have, after all, put together a highly transparent, well-organized referendum, one devoted primarily to ensuring the future of some of our most important student interests. The council's well-versed devotion to these interests is perhaps best illustrated by its intention to channel part of its requested bailout funds into the creation of a bigger, better student lobbying corps to represent UCSD before our state's lawmakers in Sacramento.

Additionally, the inclusion of a consumer price index clause provides students with the peace of mind that no similar referendum will be necessary in the foreseeable future, while guaranteeing that the council will possess enough funding to operate at full capacity. Be assured, the referendum's language and breakdown give students the power to demand this money will generally be well spent.

There are exceptions, of course. The council will allocate \$2.34 per quarter of its requested funding increase to the upcoming campus Sustainability Resource Center. And while green initiatives should no doubt be a top priority for UCSD students, this venture appears pointless at best and wastefully ironic at worst. Organizers, who secured one-time start-up funding from administrators without any plan to sustain their sustainability center (remind us again why we should trust you with our activity-fee money?), have opted to ignore the campus' numerous already-established green resources in

favor of reinventing the wheel one more time. Though it seems only customary at this point for each of the council's pet orgs to have its own center.

Ultimately, however, this fee increase does far more good than harm. Vote yes, and rest easy knowing the student body shouldn't have to make this tough decision again.



Hadley Mendoza Simone Wilson

Reza Farazmand

Alyssa Bereznak

OPINION EDITOR

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Regents' Logic Flawed in Eligibility Requirements

Dear Editor,

I worked very hard to get into UCSD, and that does not just include doing well in high school, it also includes making sure I fulfilled all of the requirements in order be eligible for admission. So you can imagine my surprise when the UC Board of Regents decided to take up a proposal to eliminate the SAT II as an admissions requirement.

I am not the biggest fan of standardized testing, but my problem lies in the UC Board of Regents' reasoning. To quote the minutes from the July 16 meeting: "Failure to take the required SAT subject tests or complete the 'a-g' curriculum properly — which may mean only minor variances — are major reasons for ineligibility, including academically strong students." This means that the UC Board of Regents figures, "many students are not taking the SAT II who would be eligible if we eliminated it, so let's eliminate the requirement because some students are not taking it!"

Former U.S. Congressman and UC Berkeley graduate Doug Ose discussed this logic in a recent op-ed.

"This staggeringly simplistic rationale raises legitimate questions about the wisdom of the regents' willingness to consider admitting to the UC system students who cannot understand the most fundamental step of entering college which is to apply for it," Ose said. "The answer is for UC to better communicate its admissions requirements, not eliminate them." If students cannot figure out the steps to getting into college, why would I want that person as my classmate? They are only going to burden an already overcrowded system. Many students who meet the requirements are already turned away, so why extend an invitation to those who do not meet even the most basic of criteria?

All of this does not even account for how much this new proposal will cost the UC system. The San Francisco Chronicle recently reported a loss of \$1 billion to the UC endowment and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is discussing millions of dollars in further budget cuts after the endowment has already been butchered once. This proposal will make thousands of more students eligible for admission and each one will require more attention because we will be losing a benchmark for admissions. This is going to create an even greater burden on our already stretched admissions system.

Basically, this proposal is seeking to eliminate admission requirements because applicants do not know about them. The consequences of applying this logic are disastrous. If we applied this backward logic to other things, we would end up with lawyers who think they deserve to get into law school because they did not know about the LSAT. For more information go to www.saveucstandards.com and tell the UC Board of Regents it is out of touch. We do not need to dumb down the admissions process for the finest network of institutions in the country.

– **Jack Buchanan** John Muir College senior

Special Chimes at Geisel to Start New Year

Dear Editor,

The chimes atop Geisel Library will ring out special premieres during January 2009. Keep in mind that the actual library entrance is the worst place to stand — you really need to walk onto Library Walk to get the full effect. These premieres were commissioned by the UCSD Arts Library and are associated with the Ringing in the New Year exhibit at the UCSD Arts Library this month. Located on the lower level of the west wing of Geisel, the exhibit calls attention to the chimes atop Geisel Library.

UCSD's carillon first rang out on Sept. 20, 1989. The instrument was a gift from educational patron Joe Rubinger, who saw our young campus' need for the warmth and function of a carillon. Joe named it the Irene Rubinger Institute for Continued Learning Memorial Carillon, after his late wife Irene. The carillon chimes automatically on the hour from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends. If you have any song requests, please direct them to spaulson@ucsd.edu.

— Scott Paulson University Carillonneur

Referendum Asks to Raise Student Activity Fee

Dear Editor,

Students will return from vacation to find themselves with a decision to make. Starting the second week of Winter Quarter, students will be able to vote on a referendum increasing the activity fee by \$19.82 per student each quarter. After the hike, the cost for the campus activity fee will total \$47.82.

The student activity fee increase will support UCSD financial aid needs for undergraduate students, the Sustainability Resource Center and A.S. Programming. The majority will go toward programming, student organizations, services and operations of the Associated Students with a total of 59.2 percent. UCSD financial aid needs will utilize 29 percent of the raise, while the remaining 11.8 percent will go to the creation, maintenance and operation of

Students can vote online at tritonlink.ucsd.edu and specific locations on campus beginning Jan. 12, 2009. For the referendum to pass, 20 percent of the undergraduate student majority must vote and if passed, the campus activity fee referendum will become effective starting Spring Quarter 2009. For more information regarding the A.S. campus activity fee referendum, visit as.ucsd.edu.

— Nicole Elias A.S. Publicity Assistant

▶ 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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DNA and Nice Hair Trump Political Experience

B ehold: The United States Senate. An elected body full of men and women who have spent their entire lives dedicated to public service. A shining monument to the ideal of democracy that the Western world holds so dear. One might think that each Senate member works tirelessly to win elections by his or her constituents and battles it out with the best political savvy he or she could muster. No



doubt our Founding Fathers implemented strict rules and regulations in order to ensure that those who receive the honor of serving their country in a legislative manner would properly represent the will of the people.

Unfortunately, if you have followed recent political news, you probably know there is more than one route to Capitol Hill — and these days politicians are getting craftier than ever.

Let us start our examination with everybody's new favorite Illinois governor, Rod Blagojevich. With the election of Barack Obama as president and the subsequent vacancy of his seat in the Senate, the job of appointing a new junior senator has fallen to the crafty hands of Mr. Blagojevich. Like any proud capitalist, the governor seized this opportunity as a chance to extract as much material wealth out of the process as possible. In essence, Blagojevich secretly perpetrated a silent auction of sorts to help choose a representative for nearly 13 million Illinoians. Unfortunately, when wiretaps and a federal investigation are involved, a silent auction turns into a very public auction. Needless to say, this alleged "pay-to-play" scheme has not been well accepted by the public and Blagojevich's impeachment has been put into motion. But rather than cower in fear and shame, our man Blagojevich has remained defiant, recently appointing longtime democrat and Illinois politician Roland Burris to the position.

Like most Americans, when I first heard of the Blagojevich scandal I was appalled. His actions represent all that is evil in a democracy. I was gearing up to drive to Illinois and march on Springfield — until I saw him on television and fell instantly in love. Mr. Blagojevich sports a haircut that is simply second to none. The way his ultra-poofy hairdo refuses to blow in the wind defies all laws of gravity and is so impeccable that it must not be overlooked by the American public. Only a political god could possess such a mane. I believe Mr. Blagojevich should be acquitted of all charges, appoint whomever he pleases and obtain as much money as possible in the process. Not since Bill Clinton has somebody so obviously guilty looked so damn confident on television. So what if the man he appointed to the Senate was never elected by the people and constantly talks in the third person? Any friend of the Blagomeister is a friend of mine.

Now let us turn to the political stronghold of New York and the vacant Senate seat of Madame Secretary Hillary Clinton. Apparently, the nickname

See **DISUNION**, page 5

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

By Niven Wilson



Politicians Take Shortcuts to Victory

▶ **DISUNION,** from page 4

"Empire State" is not just a motto but a way of life as Caroline Kennedy has emerged as a leading candidate to fill the position. Yes, that's right. Caroline Kennedy is the daughter of former President John F. Kennedy and thus a member of the most fabled political family in American history.

While the possible selection of Ms. Kennedy has elicited several complaints, I simply see no credibility in any of them. There is no doubt that as a Kennedy, young Caroline is endowed with the same political DNA that has pulsed through the veins of her legendary forbearers, making all accusations

of inexperience and lack of qualification meaningless. I for one am looking forward to the first day of Caroline's Senate career and the security it will provide to all those who call the land of Camelot home. I am nearly convinced that if there ever comes a time in our nation that a relative of the 35th president does not hold a place in government, the entire mechanism may malfunction. And with crazy Teddy seemingly on his way out, Caroline's moment has come. All we need now is for Chelsea Clinton to be appointed to a Cabinet position and for Jeb Bush to be victorious in the presidential election of 2016. Some may call it aristoc-

If anything, the Blagojevichs and Caroline Kennedys of the world have taught young Americans an important lesson. If you can't achieve your goal of a Senate seat through an old-fashioned election, don't fret. Instead, marry into a well-known family or better yet, just find somebody who is willing to sell you a place at the table of the most exalted legislative body in the world. After all, as the old adage states: If you ain't cheatin', you ain't tryin'. At least

the American people can rest assured

that if some of our politicians are not

particularly trying, there are certainly

racy; I prefer to call it natural selection.

OPINION

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CONTACT THE EDITOR Sonia Minden

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With the pressure of an exponentially breeding indie mob from below each one outsmarting the last, layering more fuzz, trumpeting more influences and further perfecting the little-girl voice until we couldn't rightly tell the good from the bad guys — the mainstream had to pull out the big guns this year. Even the most devout hipster to innovative dissonance couldn't avoid the bigger-than-ever T.I. synths, burbling stream of Lil Wayne masterpieces and a surprising feminine lean toward worshipping the independent woman. With such expansive exposure of both the underdogs and millionaires, 2008 left no excuse to wax wallflower. As follow, my favorite tracks of the year, for better or worse:

WHITE WINTER HYMNAL" FLEET FOXES

FLEET FOXES · SUB POP

Good Christmas songs let us, like gospel and children's lullabies, stay bundled in the comfort of warm, repeated harmonies while scoring a bay view of Winter's coldest textures — icicles and bells and frosted lights and furry little animals covered in snow. From a quilted rocker next to the hearth, Fleet Foxes fashion a sad and pristine sort of holiday cheer, watching a pack of nondescript creatures "With scarves of red tied 'round their throats/ To keep their little heads/ from fallin' in the snow," digging up a long-lost childhood scare-tale for the most beautiful and festive of rural folk among 2008's many throwbacks.

"LIGHTS &

IN GHOST COLOURS MODULAR/INTERSCOPE

Carried into the competition for most danceable — while still dark and arty — housey, oft-Euro disco by DFA's Tim Goldsworthy, Cut Copy were freed just enough from the chunkifying latter concern to create a glittering

album's worth of Windexed dance-floor sheen that could score any pre-party with nary a "next." Track three is the album's first breathtaker.

"FIND A WAY (GRAEME & SWITCH MIX)" **DIPLO FEAT. SANTOGOLD**

TOP RANKING: A DIPLO DUB · MAD DECENT

Santogold's self-titled debut drew quick and blow-offish comparisons to reigning world-hop princess M.I.A., but there was a de-bittered, belted clarity to the newcomer's glittery vomit that gave her album the leg-up. Once this got too jarring, sometimes-M.I.A. collaborator Diplo reggaed and jangled things up a little — just right to wash down the "Paper Plane" bullets.

"HEARTLESS" KANYE WEST

808S & HEARTBREAK · ROC-A-FELLA/ISLAND DEF JAM

Just because the AutoTuner was nauseatingly overused by 2008's Top 40, doesn't mean it didn't lend a scale of genius to a couple tracks — the handy studio pal put the perv in Lil Wayne's "Lollipop," the cheese in Akon's "Right Now (Na Na Na)" and, most earnestly, the pain in Kanye West's "Heartless." Its similarly smoothed, rotoscopic music video may have hottened the babes and sleeked his facial hair, but the Tuner helped to raw him down to his inner loser, dusting aside West's godforsaken urge to rap and showcasing his fame-making musicality.

"MY LIFE" THE GAME FEAT. LIL WAYNE

LAX · GEFFEN/INTERSCOPE

It's hard to find a rapper with anything on Lil Wayne - even Jay-Z was eclipsed on his Tha Carter III spot — but the Game packed "My Life" with a dense heartiness that can't be found on any Carter III track, recapturing Wayne's own lines — "We are not the same, I am a Martian" — with a knuckle-punch to threaten the good king for the thrown.



DEUCES WILD · ONE RECORDS

Vast Aire has seen hard times since El-P bowed out of their Cannibal Ox dream team, taking the rapper's mojo right along with him. But dude's back in 2008, having heaved himself off the sofa to recruit a brand new jewelry box of dark underground beaters; Falside slings Aire's ode to a lifetime of honeys (in the Ghostface tradition) to the top ranks of space-rap, newly lifted from El-P's weight.

arts/entertainment

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2009

BY EDWIN GONZALEZ ASSOCIATE HIATUS EDITOR 2008 brought suburban desperation, familial drug

abuse and felled gay activism back to the water cooler

Synecdoche, New York

It's the first time "and Directed" was printed in front of his name — ordinarily it's just "Written" — and tagged to the end of "Synecdoche, New York." Yet these titles fit together

With audacious gall, Kaufman's blend of magical realism and stagecraft yields a film with "by Charlie Kaufman" like floorboards. that hurls itself into the bigger questions that most directors are too jaded to attempt. Exploring new narrative structures, visual styles and evidently industry vocations, it's a visionary epic that launches with the largest ambitions and settles with the most honest.

Following the saga of a theater director transforming his life into a self-canonizing achievement (or so he hopes) on stage, "Synecdoche" soon wheels itself beyond the realism of its first 30 minutes and never quite returns. Though many critics decry its difficulty and thorny exterior, the film supremely models originality. While many other cultural achievements are continuously compacted into easy-to-understand, bite-size pieces by Sparknotes, Wikipedia and even an Arts and Entertainment section, it's refreshing to encounter a film too ambitious to

Rachel Gelling Married The last time someone made the leap from princess to drug addict, Carrie Fisher lost her career. But when handled with care (and not actual narcotics), drugs can be a safe bet for anyone angling for an Oscar. As Kym, Anne Hathaway sports a choppy. lost her career. But when handled with care (and not actual narcotics), drugs can be a safe bet for anyone angling for an Oscar. As Kym, Anne Hathaway sports a choppy, choosed bob and over-applied eveliner. She plays the bride-to-be's vounger sister on a safe bet for anyone angling for an Oscar. As Kym, Anne Hathaway sports a choppy, cropped bob and over-applied eyeliner. She plays the bride-to-be's younger sister on the while extorting emotional severance pay.

the while extorting emotional severance pay.

Getting off to a strong start before it even spreads along the screen, Jenny Lumet's bute. Though your family is probably less eccentric than theirs, the relationships belated Robert Altman, and jagged tracking (summoning him-Compounded by Jonathan Demmes austere technique born belated Robert Altman, and jagged tracking (summoning himself "Dogma" '95" style) to put you in between the belated Robert Altman, and jagged tracking (sumn self "Dogma" 95" style) to put you in between the feuding family, "Rachel" is a chaotic affair — paradoxically lacerating, affectionate and transcendent

If anyone has deftly mastered the delicate art of making warm-hearted children's films that adult sensibilities can cuddle (and ponder), it's Pixar. And as the most popular number one of 2008 top 10 lists, "WALL-E" has certainly shown that big profits and critical acclaim can come in small, robotic packages if done right.

On an abandoned Earth that looks like a decrepit L.A. in some 10-odd years, the film follows the self-titled, boxy, trash-collecting droid as he sifts through the oceans of waste excreted by our unsustainable habits. Yet careful not to wag a moralizing finger, Pixar's allegory uses our inevitable future to nest a witty love story between its acronymic starcrossed lovers, while keeping its speculative criticism to a minimum.

Although not having to hire voice actors was a pleasant relief for casting, "WALL-E's" reliance on animation is its most impressive feat. With visual gags and camera work used to convey most of its humor, the film glows with animation — energy, creativity, movement and above all, a genuine love for something we all grew up with.

After being released last year to the effete patter of film-festival applause, Gus Van Sant's return to high school hallways was given a limited release during the Ides of March in the United States, and thereafter quickly translated to DVD. Though most limited to the first of the limit of know him for films like "Good Will Hunting" or the hugely successful "Milk" — neither of which he wrote — Van Sant has made his career and reputation on smaller films ("My Own Private Idaho," "Elephant") with far less narrative and a lush feel for time's slow passing.

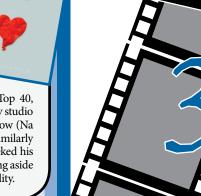
In "Paranoid," the slate and verdigris palette of Portland's darkly-clouded skies and

oxidized roofs frequently tint Christopher Doyle's cinematography, especially in a city rife with a youth culture equally as glum and dispossessed. With a quiet, soft-spoken Gabe Nevins as the film's lead, it waxes rhapsodic as skateboards shave the concave floor of parks like petrified kites capriciously ducking left and right. The kids do the same, hoping to miss the punches of adulthood that fall too early.

See FILMS, page 8







"TOUCHED SOMETHING'S HOLLOW" OF MONTREAL

SKELETAL LAMPING · POLYVINYL

The twisted scale/tempo zig-zag of Skeletal Lamping — Of Montreal's sexy, schizophrenic followup to the more depressing disco of 2007's *Hissing Fauna* — was interrupted by one of the drop-dead prettiest little riffs in this year's sea of ballads. The voice of Kevin Barnes, gayest nonpansy in the biz, can find it difficult to avoid leaping kitschy and over the top. But for one minute and twenty-six seconds, he pauses to think: 'I don't know how long I can hold on/ If it's gonna be like this forever.



Nothing like waiting behind 10 hair-sprayed bitches — who no way in hell have to pee as bad as you — to kill the buzz from the dance floor. Pharrell kept a lower profile this year, but this jazzy tribute to "all the girls standing in the line for the bathroom" and all those who wish they weren't (since remixed for the charts, laden with a mushy beat and benefitting only from Lupe Fiasco's verse) was the cutest squirt of funk this side of the urinals.

SEEING SOUNDS · INTERSCOPE

"WHATEVER YOU LIKE"

T.I. PAPER TRAIL GRAND HUSTLE/ **ATLANTIC**

Officially replacing "to the left, to the left" as top-40 lyric to apply to all daily situations, T.I.'s "you can have whatever you like" can be utilized vir-

tually everywhere - grocery store, dive bar, anywhere you feel like pointing at things — and, with a beat rivaled in depth only by last year's "What You Know," it's easy to forget the rest of the album is even better.



LLAMADO DE EMERGENCIA" DADDY YANKEE

TALENTO DE BARRIO · MACHETE/EL CARTEL

Yeah, so the movie was predictably shit, as with most other rapperturned-actor debuts before it. But what emerged from under "Talento de Barrio" was far worth the flop — a fat piñata (excuse my politics) of thrilling reggaeton for the kiddies, the best from Yankee since "Gasolina."



SPIRIT · SONY BMG

From the moment the church organ rolled in, "Bleeding Love" surprisingly co-penned by teenybopper Jesse McCartney, though that does account for the stabbing, first-love angst — had the world on its knees. "My heart's crippled by the vein that I keep on closing," ends its chorus, wet with that physical hurt of falling too hard in love. Sucker.



"LIVING WITHOUT" BOSS HOGG OUTLAWZ

SERVE & COLLECT II · KOCH RECORDS

Though Weezy all but overshadowed the thriving Dirty South scene this year — thrown national by UGK and the Clipse in 2007 the nether states still hosted a hot stew of home runs on ground level, led by Slim Thug's cash-driven crew of Outlawz, embracing an addiction to the high life on the impossibly hot "Living Without," over a beat that almost brings the stutter into fashion.

'NIGHT OF THE LOTUS EATERS" NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS

DIG, LAZARUS, DIG!!! · MUTE/ANTI-

Though he's recently reached the ripe age of 51, Nick Cave is the only thing we'll have left when all the dirty old folk'n'rollers are gone — Springsteen and Waits are pushing 60, and lord knows Dylan's on his last leg, if still kickin. Cave approaches the best of each, and all that between; here, the trusty Bad Seeds help him sink a tooth into America as he knows it — on terms of gullies and tumbleweeds, never forgetting the yellowed heat of his homeland down under. "Don't you love my baby?" he asks an unrelenting growl of bass, more than likely just outside your window.



There may have been a horizonless fleet of newcomers trying their hand at grungy creep-spherics this year, but no lucky young'un could ever churn those gears with the same diligence as Beth Gibbons and her two main men. After a panicked build of synthetic fuzz, mechanic chirps and nailon-chalkboard strings over drums fit to drive an old-world sacrifice, the noise is dimmed to a slow, fretty froth and Gibbons finally gives up what we've been waiting for: that full-bodied, sliding whine that rings far into the upper wings of the opera house but still never gets too pretty. There's far catchier hooks all over Third, and "Silence" ends itself abruptly by cliffing off mid-churn, but — as they say, if I remember correctly — one cannot feel happiness without first having braved the storm.

MICROCASTLE KRANKY **RECORDS**

Deerhunter managed what so many of their peers in the "AGORAPHOBIA" Deerhunter managed what so many of their peers in the Radiohead wakewater drowned in bore-masking dreaminess on a new-age double disc for the ages. The voice begging for shelter throughout "Agoraphobia" is not quite used to the microphone — it's flat, persistent, lingering a little long in earnesty.

That's because guitarist Lockett Pundt goes there, and even through the rest of the set is gurgling in shapely yet slender standouts, we never forget that plea.

B-SIDES

"STILL THROWED"

"STORK AND OWL" TV ON THE RADIO

"BLIND" HERCULES & LOVE AFFAIR USHER

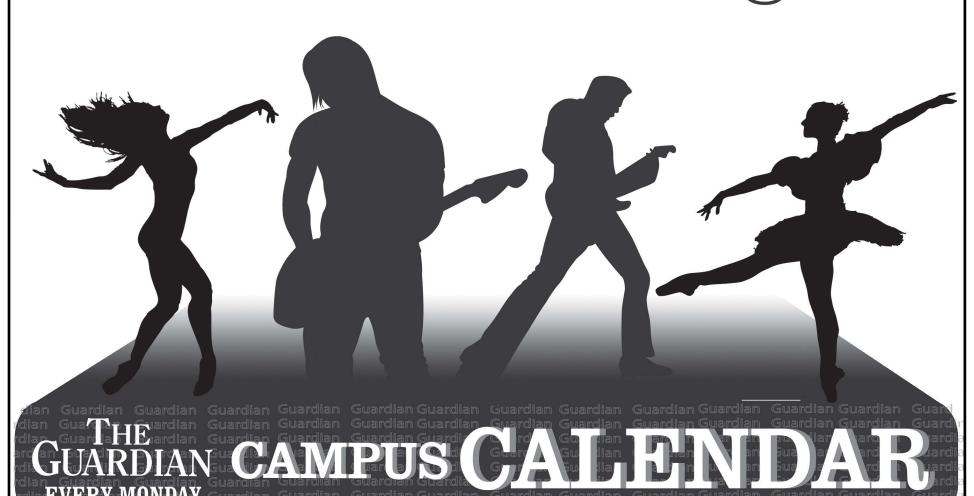
"LOVE IN THIS CLUB"

"HOW DID WE FORGET? EL PERRO DEL MAR

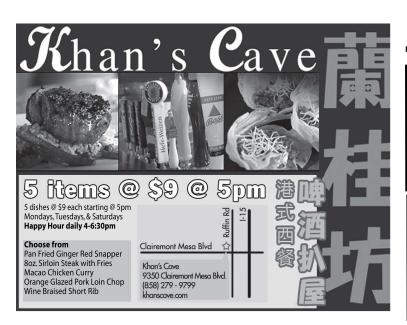
"DISTURBIA" RIHANNA

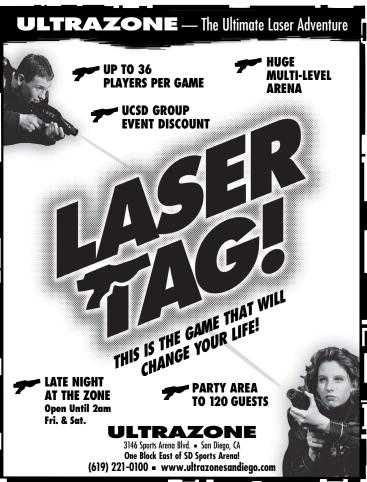
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▶ FILMS, from page 6

The Wrestler

film, "The Fountain" in a relatively unpretentious change of heart (and style) for the studied director. A gruff, visceral film that is undemanding and straightforward, the brutal melee of overly-tanned brawlers and failed body builders depicts the glamour of professional wrestling by focusing on a pared-down character study of Rodney "The Ram" Robinson

Rather than alchemizing brutality into poetry as Martin Scorsese had, Aronofsky doubles back on his screenwriter and with a protagonist less introspective than La Motta (at least by the end of his life), the Ram doesn't find spiritual redemption as easily. Relying on Robert Seigel's minimalist script instead, Rourke's acting is given the most weight on the screen, with which he can hopefully pull himself up by his own bootstraps in the next decade.

This isn't Van Sant's first hagiography of a public patron saint, or his only magnetic success during the award season. Splicing lessons learned from both in a political pill capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, "Milk" radiantly amplifies the aura of capped with equal parts arts and entertainment are capped with equal parts are capped with equal pa

capped with equal parts arts and entertainment, Milk radiantly amplifies the arta of gay activist Harvey Milk's passionately democratic vision.

As a San Francisco populist who began his campaign in the unwelcoming grass roots of a once-conservative Castro Street, Harvey (jovially played by Sean Penn) channels his glowing personality straight through the screen. Along with a list of upand-coming young actors, "Milk" follows the taxing campaign trail through the failures and disappointments that never seem to impede Harvey — even as he narrates the and-coming young actors, Milk Tollows the taxing campaign trail through the failures and disappointments that never seem to impede Harvey — even as he narrates the film from his tape recorder for prophetic fear of an assassination. Trailing a troupe of local journalists and brazen supporters behind him, Milk's loudspeaker candor is an emblematic emboss of the American politician — who, despite being felled by the family-values crusader Dan White, remains a martyred ghost



Keeping on with his success in marionetting the dark-winged avenger for a new audience of cynics and comic-book junkies, Christopher Nolan's studio godsends have collected more than enough money from an eager box office congregation.

Knowing their audience, nocturnal spectacles capitalizing in exploding vehicles, festering corruption and all-too-common criminals are given fodder in any Batman film. But slipping new blood into the formula, two charismatic men enter Bruce Wayne's life who manage to also steal the show for the remaining film. And yet, as intriguing and "thought-provoking" as their quips and nihilistic pontifications are (investigating their theories through pseudo-philosophical terrorism), Joker and Dent are ultimately flat characters stuffed up with 80 percent personality and 20 percent curious conceit. As its title hints, "The Dark Knight" harkens back to the noir textures that first sculpted

Batman into the menacing antihero of the film. And with a little help from combustible special effects, both leave audiences spellbound with

anticipation for the next

Wendy and Lucy

The pith of director Kelly Reichardt's stripped approach to filming "Wendy and Lucy" is undoubtedly her keen ability to sublimate an asphyxiating melancholy from only her frail heroine and the Pacific Northwest. Following a homeless Michelle Williams as she struggles to find her dog, Lucy, before moving on to Alaska, "Wendy and Lucy" abandons the luxury

of a polished presentation for simpler tools.

Though the film slipped unheard of during the holiday season, it's a stony cut outfitted modestly in plainclothes realism that refuses to direct anyone's feelings anywhere. Stitching scenes together with a mix of long shots, a photographic fixation and few cuts, "Wendy and Lucy" effectively consecrates itself entirely on William's acting (similar, though more radically to "The Wrestler"). That said, Reichardt's tale of a dejected loner in the wild heart of a spiritually unaccommodating world is a pretty cold character sketch that still manages to seep in and paralyze emotions like quicksilver.

Revolutionary Road

To say that the 1950s didn't have its crop of revolutionaries is a tad underrating — it had them, they just settled too early and too easily to shake off suburbia's crippling sedative after

As two yuppie New York bohemians who did just that, Frank and April Wheeler's saga investigates the lobotomy of romantic and liberal ideals that bourgeois conformism entreats. Working from Richard Yates' lauded novel, it isn't hard for "Revolutionary Road" to choreograph emotions according to narrative strings. However, the film manages to do it while boasting a skillful ply of cinematography and steady control of compositions.

Though the review for "Revolutionary Road" is scheduled for next week, its limited release in the States earlier in the year puts it in competition with other 2008 runners. And while directions with the states earlier in the year puts it in competition with other 2008 runners. tor Sam Mendes has certainly learned to trust his actors a little more and manipulate his scenes a little less, he's going up against fellow directors not afraid to alienate larger audiences.

Slumdog Millionaire

On a sunnier note that takes its cue from Bollywood's hyper-happy glow, one of the year's most underrated films follows a diamond-in-the-rough urchin blessed with a "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" shot at love, fame and for-

Filming abroad for lack of a better inspirational landscape, director Danny Boyle mines the fibrous, over-populated and lower-income barrios of Mumbai with febrile kinetic energy. Whether the camera is hustling through a city thrumming with life or snooping the dark underbelly of India's streets, it packs nearly every composition with abundant buzz.

But beyond the bustling street scenes, "Slumdog's" shiny puppy-love story where its continuously with a kitech cruy. Though it's eastern Romeo and

ushers its sentimentalism with a kitsch crux. Though it's eastern Romeo-and-Juliet appeal adds forced prostitution into the mix, it centers the film's uplifting thrust (a first for Boyle) and lends it the perfect touch of heroic climate.



















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PERSONALS

Entertainment news: The TV show CSI: Crime Scene Investigation is changing it's name to "Grissom, The Thing That Wouldn't Leave." (1/8)

To the Veggie Wednesday group in the Old Student Center: great food, but I have all the Beatles cds already.

Sports Blog Watch: The Steeler fans are a smug bunch, maybe because they've won 5 Super Bowls in 34 years. We'll see Sunday. (1/8)

Poor Sportsmanship Award: A New York doctor is demanding that his estranged wife pay him \$1.5 million to compensate him for the kidney he gave her while they were still on good terms. (1/8)

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MONDAY JAN. 5 Crossword Solution

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GUARDIAN SUDOKU

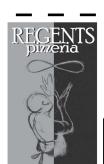
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Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.

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NFL's Top Defenses Set Up Tight Battles for Divisional Round of Playoffs

▶ **JOE**, from page 12

N.W.A. fans) tandem. The difference should then come down to defense, and while Brian Dawkins leads a strong Philadelphia effort, emerging superstar Justin Tuck has made up for Michael Strahan's retirement and should help the Giants continue their playoff winning streak.

Joe goes with: Giants 24, Eagles 20.

Panthers vs. Cardinals

When the Panthers pulled off a miraculous last-second win in week one, they had given themselves either the start of a season-long reclamation project, or simply an early adrenaline rush that would turn into their season's only highlight. Quarterback Jake Delhomme, returning from injury, and wide receiver Steve Smith, returning from a one-game suspension after punching teammate Ken Lucas in the face, helped Carolina achieve the former. With DeAngelo Williams and Jonathan Stewart teaming up in the backfield to produce the hottest duo in Carolina since John Edwards' affair, the Panthers stormed all the way to the NFC's second seed and a first-round bye. While their team makeup looks solid, especially with Julius Peppers again proving dominant on the defensive line, their season is marked with less-thanspectacular victories. While its season included a 34-0 romp against the Kansas City Chiefs and a 24-9 win against the Atlanta Falcons, Carolina allowed 22 points to the Detroit Lions, scored only three in a loss to the Bucs and was killed, 45-28, in a rematch against Atlanta.

The good news for the Panthers is that they are facing the Arizona Cardinals who, prior to their win last week against the Falcons, limped

into the playoffs with losses in four of their final six games. Arizona benefited from playing in a division in which it got dual wins over the Seahawks, Rams and Niners. Kurt Warner has looked amazing at times, but also mistake-prone and is always just one hit away from fumbling the entire game. The defense was surprisingly stout and disciplined against the Falcons, but on the road might return to its over-aggressive ways that allowed opponents to score 20 points or more in 11 games and resulted in a 56-35 loss at the Jets and a 47-7 devastation at the Patriots.

Warner and the Arizona offense might be able to stay close in a battle of former NFL Europe quarterbacks. However, the Panthers present a more complete team. Having already defeated the Cardinals during their regular season matchup in London, Carolina has shown the ability to overcome a big passing day from Warner and still pick up the victory. With the added benefit of home-field advantage, the Panthers should be able to end the Cardinals season before people in Arizona start expecting something out of their football team.

Joe goes with: Panthers 38, Cardinals 28.

Titans vs. Ravens

As the last undefeated team in the NFL, the Titans were the beneficiaries of much-deserved regular season recognition following early season turmoil after the meltdown of former Rookie of the Year and Madden Cover quarterback Vince Young. With a punishing defense, an explosive rookie running back in Chris Johnson and a veteran quarterback who knows how to run an offense without committing gamekilling mistakes, the Titans seemed to have a Super Bowl-worthy reci-

pe. In fact, it's the same recipe that the Baltimore Ravens employed when they won Super Bowl XXXV in 2000. While Jamal Lewis might have resembled LenDale White in size more so than Johnson, both teams relied on a defense-first philosophy that worked in the regular season and for Baltimore proved punishing in the playoffs.

These Baltimore Ravens have been compared favorably to their 2000 counterparts. While not as dominating defensively as the Super Bowl-winning squad, the team still has a dominant secondary led by a

No matter how hard Chargers fans might try to convince themselves otherwise, Darren Sproles is not LaDainian Tomlinson.

Pro Bowl safety (this time Ed Reed instead of Rod Woodson), a strong line with a huge body in the middle (the way-more-fun-to-say Haloti Ngata instead of Sam Adams), and Ray Lewis serving as the heart, soul and mouthpiece, even if he's not replicating his Defensive Player of the Year and Super Bowl MVP season from 2000. Furthermore, using the running back trio of Willis McGahee, Ray Rice and Le'Ron McClain has allowed the Ravens' offense added flexibility on the other side of the ball, even if offense still remains Baltimore's weakest link.

The biggest difficulty for the Titans is that other teams are now more prepared than they were at the start of the season for the Tennessee style. Playing that style against a team equally intent on controlling the clock can also be difficult. While it's risky to trust a rookie quarterback as the Ravens have done this year with Joe Flacco, minimizing his attempts will also minimize his opportunities to make mistakes. Tennessee also must realize that its defensive line with postinjury Albert Haynesworth and Kyle Vanden Bosch is not as controlling as the pre-injury version. The year might no longer be 2000. It's Flacco and not Dilfer on the other sideline. Instead of proclaiming herself "Bootylicious," Beyoncé is now punching midgets in the face. Mel Gibson cares less about "What Women Want" and more about stealing dreidels and commenting upon the sugar content of female officers' "breasticles." The year may have changed, but the Ravens still know how to punish Kerry Collins.

Joe goes with: Ravens 16, Titans

Steelers vs. Chargers

For the Pittsburgh Steelers, having a first-round bye and being the favorite to advance to the AFC Championship game should come as no surprise. After being upset in last season's playoffs by the Jacksonville Jaguars, the Steelers have been strong both offensively and defensively. Despite injuries to running back Willie Parker, quarterback Ben Roethlisberger and lacking depth after the seasonending injury to rookie Rashard Mendenhall, Pittsburgh continued to roll throughout the season with all four of their losses coming against playoff teams and only one, a 31-14 defeat at Tennessee, appearing lopsided. James Harrison is the first defensive player in a long time to receive legitimate MVP-hype after leading the league's best defensive unit, and even Mewelde Moore was able to find success behind the Steelers' offensive line.

For the San Diego Chargers, things were not supposed to go this way. After beginning the season as a popular Super Bowl pick, the Chargers sputtered to a 4-8 record and seemed destined for an early first-round pick and the merciful end of the Norv Turner Era. However, after rolling off five straight wins, including two straight elimination game victories in the regular season finale over the Denver Broncos and in the playoffs against the Colts, San Diego is just two wins away from what could be its first Super Bowl appearance since 1994. Phillip Rivers trumped Dan Fouts for the best season by a quarterback in team history and simultaneously proved his Pro Bowl worth, saving Turner's job.

The Chargers no doubt have momentum on their side and the team is finally playing up to its talent level and somewhat meeting expectations. Unfortunately, no matter how great he has looked recently and how hard Chargers fans might try to convince themselves otherwise, Darren Sproles is not LaDainian Tomlinson. Even if the Steelers have to play with Byron Leftwich instead of Ben Roethlisberger, the Chargers are at a greater disadvantage playing with Sproles instead of LT. San Diego's greatest shot is if its team keeps playing with the same what-dowe-have-to-lose mentality against what might be an overly confident Pittsburgh squad. The only upside is that if the Chargers lose, maybe they can still get rid of Norv Turner.

Joe goes with: Steelers 28, Chargers 27.



UC SAN DIEGO SWIMMING & DIVING
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SENIOR
YS. GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY
SUNDAY, JAN. 11 - 11:00AM
C ANYONVIEW POOL

CONTACT THE EDITOR Janani Sridharan sports@ucsdguardian.org





HOT CORNER Brett Stuckey Men's Basketball

After missing last season and the first eight games of this season due to injury, the senior scored 10 points in 10 minutes in UCSD's 68-64 win over CSULA on Jan. 2.

Record Season Has Tritons Thinking Playoffs



SAHN LUONG/GUARDIAN FILE

Redshirt sophomore Will Ehrman missed the 2008 season with an injury, but his return this year is one of the reasons UCSD is expected to continue its climb up the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation.

ASSOCIATE SPORTS EDITOR

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL — Head coach Kevin Ring has orchestrated great things with the men's volleyball team, a program that has experienced tremendous growth during his time at the helm. Entering his third year, Ring hopes to improve on a season in which the Tritons won a school-record 10 matches, beat powerhouse UCLA for the first time and knocked off defending national champion UC Irvine in both meetings. There's still plenty of room for improvement, however, as the Tritons only finished 10-19 a

Ring's players are quick to note the impact he has had on the team.

'The turnaround of this program has started with recruiting," senior libero and All-MPSF performer Eric Leserman said. "Coach Ring has done a great job bringing in the players needed to compete year in and year out. The influx of quality players has been responsible for us closing the gap in our confer-

Despite last year's breakout season, the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation coaches picked UCSD to finish 11th in the conference, three spots short of a playoff berth. The MPSF is full of teams that are in the national championship conversation, a position the Tritons are still trying to attain. Pepperdine, last year's national runner-up, and UCLA tied for the poll's top spot, with Long Beach State, Cal State Northridge and UC Irvine rounding out the top five. Pepperdine, UCLA and UC Irvine have all won national championships in the past four years.

"Our goal this year is to make the playoffs for the first time ever," Leserman said. "With the group we have coming back, we are optimistic that it's a feasible goal."

Hasty preseason predictions

aside, the Tritons have the foundation intact to continue their rise as an emerging volleyball program. Last year's record-breaking squad lost one senior and will return another All-MPSF performer in Jason Spangler. Spangler, a junior outside hitter, led the team with 489 kills, tying for the third-highest total in school history. Meanwhile, senior defensive specialist Leserman has set the UCSD single-season record for digs in consecutive years, with 267 as a sophomore and 282 last season. Leserman also currently owns the career dig mark with 667. Leserman points to Ring's simple defensive philosophy for his suc-

'Coach preaches that the defense should never let the ball hit the ground," he said. "I've spent my time doing the best I can to uphold that, and it has resulted in tremendous success on the defensive end."

The Tritons also welcome back Will Ehrman and Adrian Guthals, two veteran starters who were severely missed last year because of injuries. Ehrman was second on the team with 328 kills as a freshman in 2007, and will have the opportunity to reclaim his position as an offensive stalwart alongside Spangler. Guthals has proven to be a quality blocker up front. During his injuryshort freshman campaign, he led the Tritons with a .316 hitting percentage and 1.24 blocks per game.

The Tritons will host all of the conference's powerhouses starting with UC Irvine on Feb. 25 and UCLA the next day. Pepperdine stops by for an appearance at RIMAC Arena on March 7. These matches mark opportunities UCSD must take advantage of if it hopes to continue its ascent. Ring and the Tritons open their season at RIMAC against Hope International on Jan. 9 at 7 p.m.

Readers can contact Neil Joshi at nejoshi@ucsd.edu.

PLAYOFFS: BELIEVE IN THE DIVISIONAL **ROUND**

The 2008 NFL season was one for believers. Who would have believed that Kerry Collins would be more relevant than Tom Brady? Who would have believed that a 4-8 team left for dead would become a 9-8 team advancing to the second round of the playoffs? Who would have believed that Brett Favre would actually get his due criticism for playing like



crap? Who would have believed that the star wide receiver of the defending Super Bowl champions would take a gun to a nightclub in the waistband of his sweatpants and subsequently shoot himself in the leg? As the 2009 NFL playoffs move forward, eight teams remain, trying to make believers out of a growing group of football fans.

Giants vs. Eagles

The NFC East has been arguably the best division in football throughout the year, even when considering late-season struggles for both the Dallas Cowboys and Washington Redskins. With that in mind, it's no surprise that two NFC East squads meet in the second round of the playoffs. The Eagles have considerable experience in advancing to (and more often than not, losing in) the NFC Championship game. The Giants, meanwhile, are the defending Super Bowl Champions. However, while the Giants flew under the radar last season, even as they made their way to the Super Bowl, they are more appropriately regarded this

As the only remaining NFC team that made the playoffs last season, the Giants have the most recent experience in this type of

Unfortunately, the Giants are also the only team missing one of its best players. For all the distractions that Plaxico Burress might have caused, the wide receiver was nonetheless the source of muchneeded swagger for a team with a quarterback in Eli Manning who is about as intimidating as Mike from the Life cereal box.

The Eagles have been on one of the biggest rolls in the NFL, particularly since the benching and subsequent re-emergence of quarterback Donovan McNabb. With running back Brian Westbrook healthy and a group of receivers —including rookie Desean Jackson — that is the best since the ill-fated days of Terrell Owens, the Eagles have enough offensive weapons to compete with any team in the league. After losing to the Giants in week 10, the Eagles come into this game with the confidence of having defeated New York on the road during their week 14 rematch.

Westbrook remains the single most explosive player on either team. However, the Giants counter with not a single back, but three in the Earth, Wind and Fire (or Cube, Dre and oft-forgotten M.C. Ren for

ON DECK

Women's Basketball

at Cal State San Bernardino and Cal Poly Pomona Jan. 9-10

The Tritons are on a roll, having won 10 of their last 11 games. They will be tested, however, in a critical two-game roadtrip against the teams tied with them atop the CCAA standings. First up is Cal State San Bernardino, a team UCSD went 3-0 against last season. The following night, the Tritons will face the Broncos, who are currently riding a six-game winning streak.

Men's Basketball

at Cal State San Bernardino and Cal Poly Pomona Jan. 9-10

The men's basketball team takes to the court this weekend hoping to stay in first place in the CCAA, despite suffering its first loss in conference play to Cal State Dominguez last weekend. Cal State San Bernardino was picked to finish first in the CCAA and will definitely pose a challenge for the Tritons, who were picked to finish seventh. Both teams currently boast 3-1 CCAA records.

Swimmers Eager for Rematch With LMU

The Triton women look to avenge last season's tough loss to Loyola Marymount University this weekend.

By Tyler Nelson

SWIMMING & DIVING - It has been one year since the Triton women last faced off against Loyola Marymount University in a dual meet, and the Tritons have not forgotten their bitter defeat at the hands of the Lions. Although this season's team features several new players, the leftover feelings from the close defeat have not diminished.

'Not to take anything away from LMU, but it was a hard loss to swallow," head coach Scott McGihon said. "We really hope to pull out a win this

Last year, the Tritons and the Lions both won seven individual events, with the Triton women taking two relays. Unfortunately for UCSD, it was not enough to overcome Loyola Marymount, who bested the Triton women 131-128.

"That was a horrible loss," senior captain Aubrey Panis said. "We did not put our best performance in the pool that day."

In last year's competition, Panis was a member of the first-place 400yard medley relay and she looks to recapture that race when the two



ERIK JEPSEN/GUARDIAN FILE The UCSD swim team has been on fire, but will host its first swim meet in two months against rival Loyola Marymount. Last year's meet was a close affair, with the Lions edging the Tritons 131-128.

With only one senior from last year's team, and a flood of new talent, the Tritons are ready to sweep the Lions.

teams meet again on Jan. 10.

"We've been training really hard and have a lot of talent on the team this year," Panis said. "We beat them by almost 100 points at Nike Cup earlier this season, so we're going to be racing hard this time to win."

The Tritons maintained an intensive workout regimen over winter break that included workouts of 14,000 yards in the pool in preparation for their meet against Loyola Marymount.

"We've been training really hard these past six weeks and haven't had competition since the Nike Cup [in November]," McGihon said. "We're really excited for our first meet of the year and our first conference home meet of the season."

The swim meet on Jan. 10 begins

at 11 a.m. at Canyon View Pool and pits the UCSD women, equipped with a lot of young talent and speed, against the Lions, who have not been nearly as competitive with the Tritons this season in collective meets such as the Nike Cup. The Tritons have a chance to start off four straight weekends of competition with a victory. This time, the Tritons will be seeking revenge in their own pool — an advantage they did not have last time the teams met.

'We didn't have a great meet last year," McGihon said. "But, we have a strong team this year and hopefully can pull out a win."

Also this weekend, the men's swim team will be hosting Grand Canyon University on Jan. 11 at 11 a.m. and there will be a knockout round for UCSD Spirit Night during the intermissions of the meet.

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

See JOE, page 11