

# access

san josé state university | spring 2006

## International Americans

...and American  
Internationals



*also inside:*

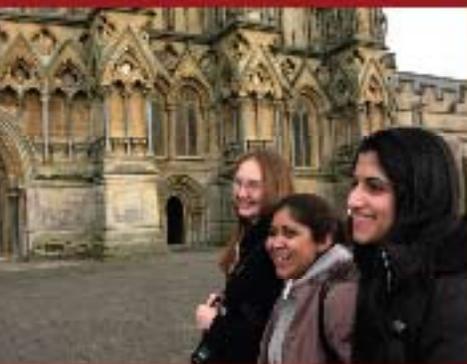
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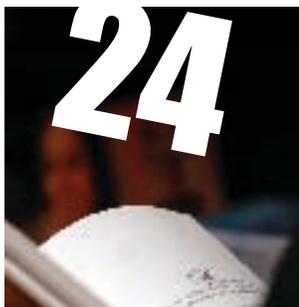
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Bill Murray's Groundhog Day has nothing on yours. You wake up slumped over your computer and realize that when your head hit the keyboard, your nose hit "delete" and the paper you worked on all night hit the trash. To cap it all, you didn't let the cat out and ... well, enough said.

A quick sniff of your armpits tells you that no one will notice if you don't change your shirt, and anyway, if you spray enough stuff on your hair, nasty smells will be masked and you'll wow 'em with your hip hairstyle.

Your trusty old jeep is your savior. You make it downtown in time for class, get a clear run to the garage, spot a parking place ... what jerk parked a Vespa in a space big enough for a truck?

You sneak into class and the prof is talking about 60,000 male witches being executed in the 18th century. What's this got to do with biology? Oops, it's history today. You look around. Half the class is asleep, the other half is trying to stay awake. How long until mid-terms? You wish you didn't have to work tonight. It's the same old faces, the same old routine. Is this it? No. Access offers ideas for better living.

In our feature globetrotting pages, we introduce you to adventurous Californians who have set forth from the rut to exotic places around the world. You can also meet intrepid travelers who have exchanged Arabian nights, Indian delights and Kenyan camps for sunny San José State. This Access is not just a passport to possibility, it has loads of ways to stimulate your imagination.

Stressed with work and study? Read Sachia Bhatia's piece about breathing life into your existence. Don't just listen to any old radio station, get into KJSJ's frantic fun, frolics, fans and lessons. Jean Blomo helps you get hooked on a legal addiction that sets you apart in the job market. Love Silicon Valley Technology? Learn how IT's gains are the environment's pains. Pondering an annoying question? Felicia has the answer. We show you how to wow your date without breaking the bank and hit breakneck speeds with our souped-up car. Laugh with our student waitress, groan about your roommates and snitch on your professor. It doesn't stop there: Join us online at [www.sjsuaccess.com](http://www.sjsuaccess.com), and play a part in Access.

Let Access inspire you to grab life by the throat and suck up every sizzling bit of it.

Enjoy!

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Editor in Chief



photo Ben Liu

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Access magazine is published by the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, San José State University, One Washington Square, San José, CA 95192 [www.sjsuaccess.com](http://www.sjsuaccess.com)

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Access magazine.

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# Fly STI: Riding along with a gearhead

His last words of advice were to hold on. Then the light turned green. The g-forces threw me back in the seat and the tires squealed as we came off the line. It took seconds to hit third gear. At this point we were doing over 70 miles per hour. The Integra Type R was well behind and we were just seconds into the race. When we hit fifth gear, the black STI was screaming down Capitol going over 100 miles per hour. The Integra was long gone. Mitch, laughing by now, turned the car around and headed back.

"Man, I wish that Type R would have put up at least some kind of fight," he said. "I didn't think it was gonna be that easy."

When this black 2005 Subaru STI isn't out looking for a race you can find it parked in the garage at San José State University. The owner is SJSU business management student Mitch Balli. Don't be fooled by the looks of his car. Mitch kept the body in its stock form because he loves the look and said you'd be amazed at how many people think, "No body kit equals no car." He is one of a few students here at SJSU who, despite his part-time car maintenance job, loves his car so much that he spends most of his free time and money on it. Simply put, he's a gearhead.

When he first bought the car, Mitch wanted to make major engine upgrades while keeping stock looks. First, he bought a Blitz air intake and a HKS blow off valve

because, "You gotta hear it chirp when you shift through the gears," he said. After a few months with the modifications he felt something was missing: power.

Mitch began to search for parts that would turn his car into a dream machine and soon found them online. He installed a new Borla exhaust system to give his car some grunt. Now he was ready to install a new, bigger bolt-on turbocharger. His STI was making around 500 horsepower, a lot more than the stock 300. He needed to upgrade the fuel system and reprogram the car's computer. Knowing that the stock clutch was incapable of handling 500 horses, he upgraded with a short shifter and a new clutch kit from Clutchmasters. The improved suspension with front and rear sway bars and fully adjustable coilovers has given complete control over ride height and stiffness.

"Next time I'll have to charge you for a ride," Mitch said. And as we pulled into his driveway I chuckled and agreed: "As long as there is going to be a next time." And as the garage door closed, I could only stare in awe as the fly STI was lost behind the door. -Joel Bridgeman



photo April Maramag



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# Ponderable imponderables

## Bart to the rescue

Both San José State University students and those who work downtown share the same frustrating problem...lack of parking. Downtown San José's parking nightmare not only contributes to the tardiness of students and workers, it scares off potential shopaholics and curious pedestrians. Fortunately, The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) has called BART to the rescue.



photo April Maramag

The VTA plans to stretch tracks from Fremont to Santa Clara, which would include a stop in downtown. According to the VTA, the extension would not only alleviate traffic congestion between Alameda County and the Silicon Valley, but would improve access to employment and education as well. Crowded parking garages would join first crushes and kindergarten in the memory archives of SJSU students, who would have BART as a faster alternative to get to school.

The project would also help downtown transform into a shopping hotspot. Laura Stuchinsky, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group's Transportation Director, envisions a vibrant community with better housing and frequent visitors from all over the Bay Area. Downtown wouldn't be just for bar hoppers anymore. Pedestrians could explore clothing stores, kitschy shops and maybe even find a silver man doing the robot.

It's exciting to think that downtown San José has the potential to rival the diverse entertainment that San Francisco and Oakland provide. The city's transformation into an urban oasis won't happen overnight, but a better social scene and fewer transportation problems may be in San José's future. -Iris Tablas Mejia

"But why, mom?" "Just because, honey." If you're still pondering, then ponder no more. I've been to the experts and found out the answers to some of life's imponderables. Go tell your mom.

**Why does 7-Eleven have locks on their doors when they are open for 24 hours a day, seven days a week?**

A 7-Eleven employee reliably informed me the locks are used for emergencies. "If there was a fight or something happening outside that was threatening the store, we would lock the door," she says. "They're also used when we go to use the restroom."

*And here I thought they were just decoration.*

**Why don't fish have eyelids?**

The Ic23.com Web site gives the obvious answer: "In land vertebrates, eyelids help moisten the eyes and protect them from bright sunlight. A fish's eyes are kept moist by the flow of water over them. They do not need to be shielded from sunlight because sunlight is seldom extremely bright underwater."

*Do mermaids have eyelids then?*

**How do bus drivers get into the bus when the handle is on the inside?**

A bus driver accused me of trying to find out how to break into a bus when I asked him. However suspicious of me he was, he still replied with an answer that I never expected: There is no key. "You see my driver's window right here? It has to stay open for me to get inside." He has to stick his arm through the window and press the button that opens the door. *But what if the window is closed?* "I can't get back in. That's why the window is always open." *But what if you accidentally close the door and the window?* "I call a mechanic."

*Now you know how to break into a bus—gives a whole new meaning to "take the bus."*

**Why does peanut butter stick to the roof of the mouth?**

Everything2.com answers this simply. "The high level of protein in peanut butter draws the moisture away from your mouth as you eat it," it says, "just like a sponge soaks up water."

*Did you know that arachibutyrophobia is the fear of peanut butter getting stuck to the roof of your mouth? -Felicia Aguinaldo*

# FIVE

## ways to bait your mate

*Rising tuition costs, inflated gas prices and the outrageous cost of living in the Bay Area contribute to the “starving college student” legend. Pricey dates will leave the typical San José State University student with the fond memory of a nice outing and the pain of an empty wallet, but if you’re creative, resourceful and outright frugal, you can turn out a great date for a few bucks.*

# 1

**Campus events.** SJSU's SPX Center offers Latin dance classes for a few bucks every Thursday. According to Rosamaria Cervantes, a junior at SJSU, “This is a great date because you get to dance, for cheap, and it’s not in a rowdy, drunken night club environment.” Most nightclubs average between \$10 to \$20 dollars cover charge. Cost: \$3.

# 2

**Mother nature.** Taking advantage of Silicon Valley’s warm, moderate weather exemplifies ingenuity. Picnics are still generally regarded as romantic and charming. Web sites like Google can help you find parks and the like. With a set plan for the afternoon you can impress and capture your date’s liking. Cost: Easy on the pocket.

# 3

**Anyone for coffee?** Coffee dates are some of the best strategic dates because they offer the flexibility of either an intimate conversation, or the option of cutting the date short. I know I’ve burnt my tongue by gulping the coffee quickly to jet out of an ill-match. Cost: No more than \$5 per person and possibly a few days of a burnt tongue.

# 4

**Let your fingers do the walking.** An assertive dater will search the web for ideas, using sites like Citysearch.com. Citysearch provides information on free events in your area. The site also offers a listing of scrumptious dinner spots, bars with live music and information on nightlife. Search through the restaurant’s menu and price range, find a bar with a low cover charge and fun music, et voilà — a great date.

# 5

**Freebie reading and listening.** The Spartan Daily, San José State’s newspaper, also reveals possible avenues of adventure that are suitable for the student bank account. Articles, advertising and blurbs tip off alert date planners. Radio stations have continuous giveaways, including expensive concert tickets. Therefore, with a little luck and much diligence, you could be the next winner of sold-out concert tickets that will flatter your date for free. Cost for searching, calling and reading: none.  
-Lesger Talavera



# High-tech trash

Byproducts of the products you buy

**illustration** Paula Chang **story** Erin Hull

**T**he ad bursts onto the screen with vibrant color, accompanied by "Feel Good Inc." by Gorillaz, the soundtrack to a rollerskating dance party. Black slender shadows skate across the television screen, some breakdancing to the rhythm, background changing color every few seconds. The shadows are young men and women, their only distinguishable features pairs of white headphones connected to small white rectangles. The screen flashes the words "iPod and iTunes," and the commercial ends with the brief image of a white apple.

Viewers over 40 might have no idea that this was an advertisement or what in the world it was advertising. Apple's new advertising campaign unabashedly sets its sights on American youth, and this tactic seems to be working. According to the marketing firm Look-Look, Apple sits comfortably as one of the most popular brands for today's youth. Every month or two, Apple reveals a new or upgraded stylish product for electronics consumers to drool over, and while they are lauded by their fans, there are some who are not pleased. A growing number of scientists, politicians, and private citizens are alarmed at the toxic byproducts of the computer industry. "iPod = iWaste" read the banner held by protesters at the January 2005 MacWorld Expo. In 2005, environmental advocacy groups

Silicon Vally Toxics Coalition (SVTC) and Texas Campaign for the Environment proclaimed Apple an official "corporate target." John Doucette, Campus Coordinator for SVTC's Clean Computer Campaign, explains that although Apple has made some progress in product design, they are far from producing non-toxic products. "[Apple] dedicates so much money and energy into developing products," says Mr. Doucette, "but they don't gear their designs toward toxics reduction."

In Silicon Valley, the computer industry is both a blessing and a curse. This technological womb of the United States brims with more material and intellectual wealth than most cities can claim. It is here where the computer industry delivers mind-bending innovations, changing the lives of people worldwide with just the click of a mouse. Unfortunately, it is also here in the heart of Silicon Valley where the toxic byproducts of the computer industry, termed "e-waste," are released into the environment. All of the benefits of computer innovation are threatened by the gravity of this industry's environmental effects.

By nature, the technology industry is competitive and rapidly changing. The turnaround on computers in particular is incredible. Unlike certain items like televisions which will last for

up to 20 years, personal computers are considered outdated almost immediately after purchase. Consumers busily trying to keep up with the latest technology inadvertently contribute to the more than 3,000 tons of electronics disposed of daily in the United States.

With recognition of the danger of e-waste comes the question of responsibility. Who should be held accountable for toxins accumulating in our soil and water supply? Legislatively, there have been two basic approaches: the first is consumer-centered, and the second is producer-centered.

Early in 2005, the State of California enacted the consumer-centered "Electronic Waste Recycling Act," focusing on electronics components such as Cathode Ray Tubes (CRTs), LCD displays, and gas plasma screens. CRTs contain leaded glass, while LCD and plasma displays are made up of mercury, cadmium, and brominated flame retardant. This "advance recovery fee" law puts the onus on the consumer by charging a tax at the retail level that is then passed on to recycling agencies by the Integrated Waste Management Board.

The United States is making progress in e-recycling, but we fall behind some other nations that are instead focusing on electronics producers. In 2006, the European Union plans to

## LEAD

Lead is toxic to humans, animals and plants and with significant accumulation has the potential to adversely affect the nervous system.

## BROMINATED FLAME RETARDANT

Brominated flame retardant readily accumulates in biomass and animals and can cause brain damage and disrupt endocrine and immune systems.

## CADMIUM

Cadmium is a recognized human carcinogen and if accumulated in the body can affect the kidneys and bone structure.

ban the sale of all products containing the aforementioned toxins. This type of ban places the responsibility with the producer rather than the consumer, and many environmental groups would like to see this type of legislation enacted in the United States.

Some electronics companies are exploring more sustainable product design. Panasonic, of the Matsushita Electric Industrial Company, is considered a leader in electronic product

each offer recycling services. Dell will recycle your old Dell computer free of charge, but only if you purchase a new one. Hewlett-Packard collects all brands of computers for a fee of \$13 - \$35. Apple offers recycling through an outside contractor, and only provides free recycling for Apples in its hometown of Cupertino. Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition claims that Apple opposes producer responsibility and actively lobbies against e-waste legislation,

other materials that were invented in conjunction with certain properties, such as melting point, of lead solders.

Apple, Dell and Hewlett Packard

are not protected from the toxins. It is costly for American recyclers to disassemble computers, and even if they did so there would be little or no market in the United States for the recyclable components. Bruce Olszewski, director of SJSU's Center for the Development of Recycling, emphasizes this as another factor in government responsibility. The increase in consumer recycling necessitates a market for these recycled goods, and Olszewski wants the government to "close the loop" by in turn purchasing these recycled products.

High-tech workers here in the United States have been affected by computer components as well. In 2003, a high profile case was brought against IBM by more than 250 employees across the nation, including people here in San José, alleging exposure to toxins. An unusual number of workers creating IBM microchips and

## Many recycling centers that had been limited to bottles and cans are now expanding their operations to accept electronics.

design. They have created an "SD Video Camera" with no lead, mercury, or brominated flame retardant, and with a recyclable aluminum casing. Panasonic retail stores will even collect the camera's used lithium ion battery. Lead/tin solder, a bonding agent that is used in manufacturing, is the primary challenge to ridding lead from electronics, says Guna Selvaduray, Professor of Chemical and Materials Engineering at SJSU. According to Selvaduray, Japanese companies lead the world in the development of lead-free solders, but in the United States there has been little research in this area and no hints at legislation banning lead solder like that in progress in the European Union. Selvaduray explains that "we are now victims of our history" and are "shackled" to lead solder, because the challenge of creating electronics with little or no lead also involves many

falling behind the environmental commitments professed by its competitors Dell and Hewlett Packard.

Many California recycling centers that had previously been limited to bottles and cans are now expanding their operations to accept electronics. When computers and other items are dropped off at California recycling centers, they are sometimes disassembled and the components are resold individually. SVTC admits, however, that it is difficult to ensure that these recyclers disassemble the items on-site since there is no official auditing done. To be certain, one should ask the recycler if they have a shredder on-site and for a "certificate of destruction." Unfortunately, an estimated 80% of recycled e-waste in the US is shipped to China, India and Pakistan where the products are disassembled by impoverished people in poor working conditions who

hard drives developed rare forms of cancer, and they believe that IBM was negligent in their safety precautions.

Young people today have the power to bring this issue to the forefront. As Doucette of the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition puts it, "The important thing is to start incorporating the world views that [youth] have with that of the high-tech industry." On the SJSU campus, the Environmental Studies Department houses the Center for the Development of Recycling (CDR), which acts as a community resource for recycling information. Students run the center, which doubles as the Santa Clara County recycling hotline. Olszewski of CDR reminds students, "The law of conservation of matter is real simple. Nothing ever goes away." This makes recycling and product design research all the more important.



## Groove is in the heart

A fusion of labor and love keeps KSJS in the mix

**photos** Niño-Eduardo C. Palaña **story** Rachel Hill

**I**t's Saturday morning, 9:45. KSJS disc jockey Notorious rushes through the large gray door of the station's tiny on-air studio. With a simple nod, he barely acknowledges the current on-air operator. He vigorously thumbs through dozens of CDs in the station's sliding shelves, scanning the titles in an attempt to find just the right set to start off his program. With his music selection in place, he is now

at ease and begins to manipulate his sound levels. Pulling his headphones over his ears, Notorious leans toward the microphone and presses his mouth to it. With a low tone he begins to address the audience effortlessly. Like most KSJS volunteers, Nathan Guevara, a.k.a. Notorious, views his work as a labor of love rather than just another course taken for credit at San José State University.

**above** Steve Lai, Sean Jacobs and Alfred Urbina (from left) of Arigma go unplugged in the tiny KSJS studio. They perform live on DJ D-Dre's show, "Melodramatic."

**below** Brittany Romby sifts through CDs at weekly station meetings, looking for just the right tunes.



The university's radio station, 90.5 FM KSJS, is a fulfilling alternative to the typical college organization. However, most students are unaware of the wealth of opportunity that the station offers. KSJS is almost entirely operated

perspectives and interests hits the airwaves, representing the university's diverse student population.

This diversity is reflected in the music the station airs. KSJS strives to support independent music, and

avoids songs typically played on commercial radio. KSJS General Manager Nick Martinez said KSJS is the only place on campus where students from varying musical interests and backgrounds can come together and socialize.

"You tell me anywhere else on campus, or even in America, where metal-heads are sitting next to hip-hop

Radio, Television and Film Department Chair Mike Adams described KSJS as the only "voice" that reaches beyond the university walls.

"Because of this responsibility," Adams said, "we offer ongoing opportunities for students in all majors to communicate their interests and those of SJSU to new audiences."

Through their affiliation, station volunteers are offered passage into the local music scene, gaining intimate backstage access into clubs and concerts as well as interviews with bands.

One of the station's greatest attributes is the close-knit atmosphere it fosters, countering the commuter nature of the university. As if it's not enough that KSJS is a mecca for radio experience, it also provides members a campus hangout with constant action, entertainment and friends.

For some, their tenure at KSJS has completely altered their college experience. Radio, Television and Film major Andrea Garcia can attest to that. Garcia

## Want to join KSJS?

- Enroll in RTVF 192.
- Attend Tuesday meetings at 6 p.m. in the Hal Todd Theater, Hugh Gillis Hall.
- Work an allotted number of hours for the station and earn up to three units.
- The station offers jobs in promotions, production, public affairs and the five music format departments.
- To become a DJ you must enroll in RTVF 94 for on-air operator training.

Formats played are subversive rock, jazz, electronic, rock en Español and urban. The station accepts and broadcasts public service announcements from non-profit organizations.

Visit [www.ksjs.org](http://www.ksjs.org) for details.

by students, who learn how to manage and promote the station as well as produce on-air content. The station is open to all majors, so a variety of

heads and electronic ravers are sitting next to people who want to be in the news and all getting along and enjoying themselves," Martinez said.



**left** Andrea Garcia keeps up with a wide variety of local musicians on her show “Melodramatic.”



**left** KSJS veteran Kevin Foley is the host of a jazz program called “Unconscious Desires.”

has been with the station since her freshman year at SJSU and is currently working as the office manager and on-air personality, DJ D-Dre. The petite DJ is recognized for her show, “Melodramatic,” which includes an interview with a musician almost every week. Her show typically features well-known local hardcore, punk and emo groups.

DJ D-Dre said her need to constantly keep in touch with bands has

didn’t know anybody. When I joined the radio station is when I started making friends.”

Shannon Miles, a.k.a. The Maestro, said his love of the people keeps him at the station, even though he has already earned his degree from the university. The electronic/house DJ refers to KSJS as his sanctuary, saying he loves media and music, but his listeners and friends at the radio station are the most significant aspect for him.

### **“When I joined the radio station is when I started making friends,” says DJ Andrea Garcia.**

earned her several new friendships with people inside and outside the radio station. Garcia has interviewed popular groups like, From First to Last, Matchbook Romance, Fall Out Boy and Finch.

“I think this is one of the best things that happened to me,” Garcia said. “San José State is really hard because it’s a commuter school, so in my first semester I was so miserable because I

Miles recounts a listener who called into his show, “The Housing Project,” who told him the song he just played saved his life. The DJ was astounded by the effect his program had on his listeners. Fellow Bay Area DJs, including Brother Reese, have praised the optimistic attitude in the music he plays. Miles said it’s uplifting for him to receive positive audience feedback from listeners and peers.

“I want people to know that music is the cure,” Miles said.

Although everyone has his or her own reason for joining KSJS, Martinez said it is not necessarily what the station itself embodies, but the lack of commonality and unity within the university that draws students to the station for more peer interaction.

“When you have a school like us who’s still searching for its identity, then people see KSJS as an opportuni-

ty to get something a little more than commuting to school every day and getting an education,” said Martinez.

KSJS may not be the most recognized organization on campus, but its reputation and member base is growing. Martinez said while other departments and students may not know exactly what happens at KSJS, the station is in no way underappreciated by the university.

# Addiction to leadership

Students are hooked and find themselves coming back for more

photos Tomomi Tsuda story Jean Blomo

**I**t all began innocently. He started as a resident advisor in the brick dormitories and getting involved in the hall government. Soon it turned serious. Alberto Gutierrez, now a senior double majoring in communications and sociology, began taking on positions in the Associated Students while remaining active in the service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega. Gutierrez attended numerous leadership and professional development conferences and workshops, but still it wasn't enough. He was addicted.



**above** Alberto Gutierrez, Associated Students President, leads a Board of Directors meeting.

positions on campus: Associated Students President. "You need to separate yourself from the title," Gutierrez says. "The title just allows me to get stuff done for the students. I have a voice and a vote at the table where decisions are made on campus."

"Yes, it's very true," Gutierrez says, laughing as his smile grows and his eyes squint behind his black-framed glasses. "You do get addicted to leadership. You feel so good about yourself."

Gutierrez now holds one of the most powerful

Unfortunately, not everyone has that sense of respect for power.

"The hardest lesson I had to learn was that certain people are using you because you have the ability to get what they want," Gutierrez says, now somber. "It's not necessarily the lesson I wanted to learn."

Gutierrez went through a stressful, trying time during the election. Support from friends allowed him to maintain his integrity and not take the easy route of giving up, complaining or bringing others down.

With any leadership position, sacrifices must be made for the bigger picture and the goal at the end, Gutierrez says, and that is what keeps him going. "I invested so much time in my residents and I had an impact on their lives," he says about being a resident advisor.

Jason Fithian, a senior majoring in photojournalism, says his interest in leadership began in high school while participating in student government and yearbook.

"As a leader, you kind of thrive," Fithian says. "You get an energy from leading others." As chair of Q-TIP (Queers Thoughtfully Interrupting Prejudice), a club promoting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender acceptance, Fithian says he is able to help others with difficult issues associated with sexuality. "I am able to create an accepting environment for them," Fithian says. "It's been an amazing experience."

Leadership experience not only allows students to have a voice, but it allows them to get a good job. Cheryl Allmen-Vinnedge, the director of San José State University's Career Center, says employers look for leadership skills and experience above all else. "To be successful in internships and to be more marketable upon graduation, it is really important



As the Leadership Development Coordinator, Nam Nguyen helps student organizations like fraternities and sororities at San José State University.

to have a series of experiences that help you fine-tune your leadership capabilities," she says.

"I applied to be a package handler at a FedEx office," says Melody Ocampo, a senior majoring in recreation and leisure studies. During the interview, the interviewer noted on her resume that she had been a board member for the Girl Scouts of Tierra del Oro Council, had won a leadership award during high school and was the president of the Women's Rugby Club at SJSU.

By the end of the interview, Ocampo found herself being hired as an administrative clerk, a position higher up and better paid than the job she had originally applied for. "I was surprised and very happy," Ocampo says. Being a leader "has opened more and more doors for me."

Allmen-Vinnedge says employers are looking for leadership experience in communication and teamwork. As the business world becomes more globally oriented, employers will want to hire people capable of leading across cultures and borders. She adds that SJSU students are already at an advantage because of the campus' diverse population. "Our students have perfected their leadership skills in a cross cultural environment." She says that students have a "great head start" working with people of different gender, age, racial and religious backgrounds.

"We have about 35 members in our club and a lot of different cultures," says Anadelia Rodriguez, the president of Delta Sigma Pi, a coed fraternity for business, economics and hospitality management majors and a senior majoring in human resources and international business.

"Everyone expresses themselves differently," she says. She tailors her program to include all types of communica-

tion preferences. "Some people would rather e-mail me or talk to me one on one."

Rodriguez says her biggest challenge as a leader is motivating all members to get involved and being flexible enough to understand each member's personality. Before holding the position of president of Delta Sigma Pi, Rodriguez said she held two positions on the fraternity's executive committee and learned a lot about how to lead. "You have to make decisions on the spot while keeping in mind that you're making decisions for 35 other people. You can't be selfish."

"We don't believe there are 'born leaders' or 'natural leaders,'" says Nam Nguyen, Leadership Development Coordinator with the Student Life and Leadership Office. The office is responsible for freshman orientation, overseeing more than 200 student organizations and 35 Greek fraternities and sororities and advising the Associated Students. Nguyen says one must instead constantly develop leadership skills to become a good leader.

Encouraging commuter students to sacrifice time and energy to participate in the many leadership opportunities is "somewhat of a challenge," she says, but adds that once a student gets involved in one activity, they frequently want to take on more roles in different organizations on campus. However, Nguyen says, it's also easy for those students to take on too much. "I have to remind them that they are students first," Nguyen says.

"I have no life," Rodriguez says under her breath, looking over her shoulder to see if anyone heard. She constantly sacrifices time with her family in order to fulfill her duties as president of Delta Sigma Pi. **Continued on page 27**

# Around the world in many ways

*San José State University is a microcosm of the world, with numerous students from diverse social and geographic backgrounds who have traveled across the globe or across states to enrich their educational experiences. While some rush in, others venture out to sample a smorgasbord of study and work opportunities. SJSU students are exposed to the joys of an all-embracing campus and can taste life without boundaries. In these pages, meet some students from here and there, walk their paths, and if their stories strike a chord, know that you can do it, too.*



## Dream voyages

Different countries, varied interests, contrasting personalities, one common factor — education

**photos & story** Megan Kung

**S**tepping off the longest, stuffiest, most leg-numbing flights of their lives are the roughly 1,300 international students of San José State University, who come with a mixture of determination, excitement and maybe an inkling of that universal longing for one's parents. They can't circle the planet every weekend for the home-cooked meals and comforts that some California students take for granted. Despite, or perhaps because of this, international students know why they're at SJSU, and they seize the opportunities that it offers.

When Shyamala Bhimavarapu was born, her mother was disappointed

— yet another girl, the third. Her daughter could never grow up to earn the same authority or money that a man in India could.

Twenty-six years later, Bhimavarapu is about to graduate with a master's degree in electrical engineering from SJSU. "Now she is as good as a boy," says her roommate, Hetal Patel, as she and Bhimavarapu look at the black and white family photo on her desk.

Silicon Valley is home to the world's leading hi-tech companies, providing many enviable job opportunities for international students. When Bhimavarapu graduates, she hopes to work for at least a year in San José, joining



Michael Mayer holds the flag of his native Austria on the roof of the International House where he lives.

the Indian and Chinese workforce that constitutes the largest group of skilled immigrants in Silicon Valley, according to a 2002 study by the Public Policy Institute of America on immigrant professionals in Silicon Valley.

Going to SJSU provides opportunities in other fields as well.

“Education is my mother and father,” says the proverb on the “Lost Boys of Sudan” Web site. Deng Ajak Jongkuc is one of the “Lost Boys,” a group of about 20,000 boys who fled from their homes in Sudan 18 years ago to escape a civil war. He lived in Ethiopia for four years, went back to Sudan for six months, and then lived in refugee camps in Kenya from 1992 until 2001.

Upon graduating from a refugee camp school, he came to SJSU to study health science. He wants to go back to Sudan to educate people about preventing diseases. Jongkuc works towards this goal by studying in the Martin

Luther King Jr. Library every day when he isn’t in class. His appetite for learning reaches far beyond the classroom. He reads newspapers and magazines to keep up with politics and current events. At home, he watches television, but not because he is enthralled with American programming. He watches to learn about American culture, he says.

On the other side of the educational process is finance professor Maretno Agus Harjoto, or “Augus.” He loves to teach.

“Sometimes when I get bogged down with administration, students are the only ones that cheer me up,” he says. He enjoys American classrooms, where “you have feedback in both directions.”

In classrooms in his native Indonesia the student-teacher hierarchy is stricter, with only the teacher doing the talking, says Harjoto.

In addition to educational opportunities, many international students have taken advantage of the campus’ recre-

ational and fitness facilities to enhance their experiences.

“I want to be jack of all trades, master of none,” says Bhimavarapu. In addition to spending her nights in the Engineering building lab, Bhimavarapu exercises four to five times a week at the gym, takes fitness, Latin and salsa dancing classes, recently started training for a half marathon, and cooks Indian food with her roommates and friends at least once a week. “Back in India, I couldn’t have thought of doing all these things,” she says.

Esther Wessel, a psychology major from Germany, also regularly exercises in the Event Center to stay healthy. She lives off food from the Dining Commons, which offers large portions at every meal, and ice cream for breakfast. “Everything has to be big here,” she says. “Just have it normal!”

Other international students enjoy San José’s proximity to tourist destina-

**right** Esther Wessel adorns her room with photos of the new friends she has made in San José, some of whom helped her put up the construction-paper mosaic of the sun.

**right**  
Deng Ajak Jongkuc studies in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library every day to work toward his goal of going back to Africa.

**below**  
Shyamala Bhimavarapu serves *rasgulla*, an Indian dessert, to her friend during one of the gatherings Bhimavarapu and her roommates have about once a week with other friends.



tions. Michael Mayer, a physics, geography and education major, is proud that he and the California governor share the same home country. This pride does not stem from the governor's leadership abilities, however. Instead, Mayer thinks of Schwarzenegger's Hollywood fame.

Next to the American flag hanging in his room at the International House is not the Austrian flag, but a Universal Studios Hollywood towel. "Hey, it was only \$10," he says with a smile.

Mayer is making the most of his short five-month stay. During his free time, he feels he should experience and explore as much as possible. He has already traveled around the Bay Area and

Los Angeles and is planning to check out Las Vegas, New Mexico, Arizona and New York. Because of the costs, he has cut Hawaii out of his itinerary. Besides, playing Xbox games with other students in the International House basement is much cheaper.

Jongkuc has already traveled extensively. He has been to New York to advocate for the rights of African refugees and immigrants, and to Michigan and Arizona to participate in reunions of the "Lost Boys" of Sudan.

In Kenya, he had to study during the day because there was no electricity, and ten students had to share one textbook. While SJSU is a far cry from the refugee camps, Jongkuc does not lead an easy



**below** Business professor Maretno Augus Harjoto discusses a finance problem with one of his students during office hours.



life here either. As a full-time student, he struggles to pay the bills. In Africa, people think life in California is easy.

“When you come here it’s completely different,” he says. Since being in the refugee camp, he has told himself, “No matter what, I will be successful.”

because the employer couldn’t pronounce his name. Here in San José, though, he says he has not had to deal with racism.

According to Wessel, this is the first time she has ever experienced so many different cultures. In addition to the

the International House often takes an hour because she ends up having five conversations with five different people, she says.

On a walk through the hall, she bumped into her Japanese roommate and her friends and enjoyed a Japa-

### “You learn something new every day,” says Esther Wessel.

Professor Harjoto found it easier to adapt because he had already lived in Arizona and Kentucky for about 11 years. In Kentucky, where the population was predominantly white, he was called Mr. Miyagi from “The Karate Kid” movies.

He created his nickname “Augus” in Arizona when he was refused a job

pictures of her family on her bedroom wall are more recent pictures of her new friends from the International House and a construction paper mosaic of the sun, a butterfly and a heart that she and her international friends put together.

It’s difficult for her to get any studies done, as going up a flight of stairs at

nese snack, strawberry Pocky, for the first time.

“You learn something new every day,” she said while finishing off the pink stick-shaped snack, probably unaware that her statement sums up the goals of others who have traveled across the globe to be here.

# Into Africa

illustration Ian Wing



Out of the city and into the bush.  
Two students reflect on how Africa changed their lives.

## Tanzania

story Rosalyn France

**I** heard the howl of a hyena, then the roaring of lions. Sleeping in a two-person tent, I woke up. This is not a dream. Here I am, out in the wilderness in Tanzania, suffering from insomnia and wondering if the lions

are hungry. How did a San José State University student, balancing studies and a full-time job, end up in a small tent in eastern Africa?

It was June 2005 and I had joined a group of students who had heard Professor Jeffrey Fadiman's enthusiastic accounts of Africa. I joined him on a two-week camping safari to learn about Tanzania's people, wildlife and countryside.

We did not worry too much about animals during the daytime. The sightings of elephants, zebras, lions, wilde-

beest, rhinos, hippos and giraffes were some of the highlights of our itinerary.

As soon as we arrived in a new place and set up camp, we were off hiking or driving around to see the area and its inhabitants. Seeing the animals outside in their natural environment rather than in a zoo was incredible! Sometimes our group hurried to take pictures and at other times sat and watched the wildlife respond to our presence. The cheetah ran away, but some zebras came close enough to our car that it seemed like we could reach out and touch them.

Our itinerary also included stops to meet Tanzania's people to see how they live and work to support their families. We met people working in the tourism industry in some of the bigger cities, and they lived in houses similar to what we see here. Others farmed and lived in huts built by women with mud and cattle dung. In every tourist area we visited, children and teenagers approached us selling handmade jewelry or clothing items to make money for their families.

We visited a primary school where the children were polite and most of the older children knew enough English to speak with us. We tried asking the students about their school experiences, but they only wanted to ask about us.

We were all asked to bring with us school supplies and a soccer ball. Although the children were very excited to meet us, we were immediately forgotten when we showed them the ball. Several of the children quickly ran off to play with it.

A few days later on a rock mesa high above the Serengeti, our daily after-dinner conversation turned to our experiences at that school. We had comfortably full stomachs as we talked of the students who seemed to have so little. Dinner was usually pasta or chicken with dessert, along with beer and wine. The school we visited was built for about 300 students, but had at least twice that number. Classrooms had dirt floors, no paper, pens or books and very few teachers for such big class sizes. The teachers were happy with the classroom materials we brought, but the students were ecstatic to have foreign visitors and a new soccer ball.

The overall feeling we had talking that night was one of privilege. Why do we have so much when other people in the world struggle for so little? I thought back to my childhood, when my parents were working long hours to provide for my sister and I. Why was I born into a family that could give me everything I needed when these children had been born to such poor conditions, so poor a simple soccer ball could provide so much happiness? It is hard to describe the feelings, but we continued to think of the Tanzanian school children

and set up a Web site that provides school supplies and uniforms to a group of orphans. We also hope to help them help themselves by growing some food for meals and to sell. This will aid only a handful of children in a continent where so many need help, but our efforts may make a small difference.

*To get involved, learn more about our group's goals, see pictures from our trip or take the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of a few more Tanzanians, please visit <http://www.tanzanianorphans.org/> and see what we're doing.*

## Zimbabwe

story Ashley Johnson

**J** abulani Primary School is a faded green canvas tent. The canvas droops in the middle and when it gets hot the children unhook the flaps on the sides to let air in. The school rests in a field of sand beneath the sun and a cloudless blue sky. As the day wears on, goats trickle by and chickens peck at the sand.

This is where I taught for the month of July.

San José State University students can go to Zimbabwe, not to study, but to work. Zimbabwe is not like the United States or Europe. It's a third world country and its customs, culture and the way people interact cannot be truly understood in a classroom or from a textbook. Zimbabwe is about real people with real problems but every day is a new day and to survive is to get through to the next.

More than 50 children squeeze into the school each day. The lower grades have their classes outside because there is no room inside. There are white plastic deck chairs in the seventh grade work space. The other grades sit on wood benches that hug the ground. The children do not have desks to work on. Instead they prop their bare feet on the edge of their chairs and use their legs as a table.

Most of the children don't have shoes and their clothes hang loosely from their emaciated frames. They don't complain about not having food because every day they come without. They arrive every day before 8 a.m. and are ready to learn. The children don't complain about having to walk more than five miles each day because their thirst for knowledge is more important.

Walter, who was invariably the first one to raise his hand, sat in front next to his best friend, Petros. Petros always wore the same red jersey with a white number 10 embla-

zoned on the front and whenever he smiled he laughed too. Lytton smiled and looked at the ground when I called on him. He only spoke in whispers. Shepherd was the loudest in the class. Nick had a silent strength about him. He was quiet but always tried to answer questions, always listened and always hunched over when he did his work. One boy whose name I never learned always came to school with the same tattered and faded teal shirt hanging off his left shoulder. He sat in front with a pen in his hand.

Each student had only one pen. When I went to Zimbabwe I took one small suitcase for my clothes and one big suitcase filled with paper, pens, crayons, markers, two balls, and a jump rope. The children never had normal school supplies. They don't have money for such luxuries. They make balls out of plastic bags by melting the plastic over a fire. They twist and turn the bag until the plastic melts and they form it into a semblance of a ball.

If students don't want to teach, they can work with elephants. The Elephant Camp is where Gavin and Shaylene Best keep 15 elephants they found abandoned or injured. Izibulo is a seven-month-old baby, no more than 3 feet tall. Izibulo means "first born" in NDebele.

Students stay in chalets or in Mehru tents. Wild animals come every night to drink from the water hole. Kudu, impala, wild elephants and water buck come throughout the day. Toward the end of my journey I was lucky enough to see lions. They had made a kill close to camp and were feeding and drinking. Their calls could be heard from miles away. At about 2 a.m. I heard them roaring. I got up with my binoculars to see them. When I looked out of my chalet into the darkened bush lit by the full moon, I saw three of them lying about 100 feet away, roaring in the dirt surrounded by grass. One lion would start and then the second one would chime in followed by the third one, like a chorus. It was beautiful.

Zimbabwe is rarely visited. Nevertheless, there are some people who will endure four different vaccinations so that they can enjoy falling asleep beneath a mosquito net and waking up to the screeching of birds. A humble camp, 20 miles from the nearest town, with limited water, no Internet or television, and surrounded by nothing but elephants, lions, the occasional cheetah and sometimes irate buffalo thrills some people. The people who go are the ones who want to make a difference and once there, they don't want to return.

I am back in the United States and all I hear is the soft chirping of crickets, fire engines, police cars, house alarms, car alarms. I miss the sound of the lions roaring at night, the sound of a hyena or just the silence of the bush.

This is an opportunity that anyone can take advantage of. Its impact cannot be described in words. It has to be experienced and the experience changes lives, changes futures, changes people.



# Salaam America

Keeping Persian traditions alive in a new world

**photo** Niño-Eduardo C. Palaña  
**story** Mandie Mohzenzadegan

**I** am in the line at Safeway amidst a sea of weary and tired-looking faces. An elderly woman is hunched over counting her exact change. A mid-30s pregnant woman sighs heavily, tapping her foot and flipping the pages of *Cosmo*.

Suddenly the monotony is broken as I hear two women behind me saying, "Vay, maan nemeedoonam koodoom marke khameerdandoon begeeram! Crest behtareh ya Colgate?" ("Man, I just don't know which brand of toothpaste to buy. Is Crest better than Colgate?"). Smiling, I turn around and politely say "Salaam" (hello).

It is not unusual for me to spot Persians throughout the day. You will find us everywhere! The wave of Iranian im-



Mandie Mohzadzegan manages to maintain her sense of humor while melding Persian and American traditions.

migrants coming to America, seeking freedom and a new opportunity at life, means I have many peers who have grown up in American society yet continue to keep their culture alive. We all have different experiences and stories to share on struggling to maintain our heritage while adapting to an American lifestyle — a task that is as difficult as it is humorous and amusing.

Having lived in California for the past 10 years, I have dealt with some huge changes in my lifestyle, which were not easy to become accustomed to. I will never forget the big Christmas party my uncle threw when we first came to San José. I was very young, and was not aware that my teenage cousin's American friend did not appreciate the Persian custom of two kisses on the cheek as a welcoming gesture. As I reached over to kiss him hello, he jumped back, yelling, "Whoa there little girl, I'm too old for you!" and to my utter humiliation, ran and informed everyone that I had the "hots" for him.

Americans, seem to have misconceptions about Persian lifestyle as well. I remember my parents inviting my first grade teacher to our home. She "oohed" and "ahhed" at our Persian rugs and handcrafts. After dinner, as we all gathered around the TV to watch the evening news, she looked at

my parents and asked "So ... does Iran also have television?" That killed me.

I have also learned that my American friends do not consider tea and bread as an "evening snack." They do not find the same zeal in staying up until 5 a.m. eating watermelon seeds and gossiping, which I have tried to coerce them into at slumber parties.

My American upbringing with Persian parents has caused me to have moments of embarrassment, such as trips to Costco with my dad. Having him yell across the store in his thick Persian accent, "*Mandana! Vat ees de price of dose cookies?!*" still makes me turn red with humiliation.

I have also finally accepted that for Persian parents, having your child turn 18 or even 21 is not linked with giving her much more freedom than she had before. She must comply with her parents' wishes and rules until she's married, no matter what age.

Recently I discussed the differences in our culture with a friend, Leigh High School Senior Sam Mazaheri, and we laughed over some childhood memories. Sam, who was born in San José, is also a Persian with an American upbringing.

"It took me a long time to figure out why the white kids would stare at me when I took off my shoes at their front door," he said.

We also both agreed that most Americans are grossed out by the Persian tradition of putting ketchup on spaghetti and pizza, among many other eating habits.

Only a few months ago I took three of my American friends to try Persian cuisine, and was disappointed to learn that they found one of my favorite beverages, a carbonated yogurt drink called *doogh* that is very popular among Persians, to be absolutely disgusting. One of them commented, "Mandie, this tastes like my grandma!"

Even with seven uncles, aunts and more than a dozen cousins by our side to help us out, communication was not easy for us at first. In fact, my parents still have difficulty understanding simple American expressions. I remember my mom looking confused as someone informed her that it was raining "cats and dogs" outside. Likewise, my dad does not understand common slang that I picked up in my early teens, and often asks me if I "need a jacket" when I tell him something is "cool."

With the Persian population continuing to grow, especially in the Bay Area, you may now recognize us next time you see someone at the cafeteria in the Student Union squirting ketchup on pizza or drinking *doogh*. Go up and say, "Salaam." They'll probably get a kick out of it.



# Breathe in, breathe out

Art of Living workshops teach the lighter way to enlightenment.

**photos** Niño-Eduardo C. Palaña **story** Sachin Bhatia

**O**n any given day in the life of a typical Spartan, it's rush hour. Lunch is crammed between two classes and dinner is shoved amid important assignments, as gizmos and laptops make the possibility of sleep a mere dream. Mornings see most students waking up, jumping into their clothes and flying out the door. But Aparna Atmaram gets up at 6 nearly every morning, just to breathe. She inhales and exhales all night, of course, and during the day she'll instinctively take in about 20,000 breaths of air. Yet the 25-year-old computer engineering graduate from San José State University believes the secret to good health is literally right under her nose. Conscious breathing clears her foggy head, fends off lethargy and is her favorite elixir to modern-day stresses.

The six-day Art of Living workshop offered by the Art of Living Foundation (United Nations accredited), is centered on a powerful breathing technique called *Sudarshan Kriya* — a means of detoxifying the body and bringing clarity to the mind by aligning one's own rhythm with that of nature. For many people, pursuing the American dream becomes a ride on a turbo-charged locomotive, flashing past so quickly they miss the scenery. Many discover the secret to taking it all in is in the breath.

Art of Living's breathing technique is a dynamic blend of ancient wisdom — like the knowledge of breath, meditation, yoga and the profound knowledge of consciousness that is becoming increasingly popular. The technique is a tool for maintaining overall well-being and enhancing quality of life.

This participant is reading one of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's published works, "God Loves Fun," which is full of ancient wisdom and knowledge.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, global humanitarian and founder of Art of Living Foundation, believes that the breath is the connection between the mind and the body. Based on the principle that all emotions are linked with a different breathing pattern, the workshop revolves around the process of altering that pattern to change one's state of mind. "You can't just say, 'I am not going to be angry' when you're really angry," explains Mark Ball, a 34-year-old international Art of Living teacher. "But you can breathe it out of your system," he suggests. "Whether you're in seated meditation or taking a test, if you shift your attention to your breath, you immediately shift out of anxiety," says Annelis Smith, an Art of Living yoga instructor in the Bay Area.

Tens of thousands of students from universities all over the world and numerous people of diverse backgrounds are reaping the benefits of this program, which demands no subscription to any particular religious or spiritual beliefs. Worldwide, the number is in the millions. "Art of Living is for anyone who breathes," Ball says. "The program also incorporates several processes that enable one to have a clear internal dialogue, which reflects in one's external communication. After practicing the techniques over a period of time, many members say their lives have changed dramatically — for the better," Ball adds.

Slow breaths and meditation help Gaura Kapuria flush out stress and calm her mind. The 21-year-old hospitality management major from SJSU, decided to try the course after

Adithya Pamudurthy, a 23-year-old engineering graduate of SJSU who took the 22-hour Art of Living course, feels less stressed over routine chores that would have unnerved him before. "I give 100 percent of myself to whatever I do and am joyful in the moment," says Adithya. Before Art of Living, he describes himself as "feeling pressed for time, always anticipating what was coming next — it was like living on a treadmill." Not anymore. "I attached happiness with some goal, some event, some achievement or some person. Until I realized, 'If I cannot be happy right now, I can never be happy,'" he quips.

For Narendar Shankar, Art of Living is like coming back home. This hip and happening 28-year-old Director of NVIDIA Corporation loves to share this knowledge with others. "It was the best gift I gave myself," he says. "It allowed me to take on challenges head on, instead of being fearful. Now I feel more in tune with everything." In addition to making one feel more alert, yet relaxed, the course also allows one to rise above self-concerns. "It definitely made me more sensitive to others' problems and I'm able to have better conversations with people," he adds. Today he is an active Art of Living volunteer and teacher.

Others like Johanna Chu, a 24-year-old realtor and graduate student at UC Santa Cruz, thought it wasn't meant for her. "How could any one course change the way I think and feel," she questioned. With ample hesitation about not "fitting in," Johanna finally took the plunge. She was surprised by how easy it was to share personal space with total strangers for six days at a stretch, despite cultural

**"Cultural barriers don't exist when we're sitting quietly, arms open, palms facing the ceiling," says realtor Johanna Chu.**

experiencing personal trauma. "For three years I was going through ups and downs, so I became determined six months ago that I was going to try this," she says. After attending a couple of sessions, the breathing helped her block distractions. "It's so liberating. I feel as light as a feather and there is an inner space in me — just a blank space that nothing can touch," says Gaura. "I was amazed with my creativity when I wrote poetry on the sixth day of the course. I never imagined the transformation would be this impressive."

differences. "They're very welcoming," she says, smiling. "We're all there for the same purpose. Cultural barriers don't exist when we're sitting with arms open, palms facing the ceiling, eyes closed."

Jeremy Occhipinti, a 29-year-old international Art of Living teacher, throws some light on the subject, "There is a great universal aspect to the program. It carries a similar message to that of Christianity — we are meant to help each other and do service." Jeremy teaches students in colleges



Inhale,  
exhale,  
stretch,  
breathe,  
repeat.

Ramaprasad Jayaraman and Linda Fish, students of the Art of Living, learn techniques for coping with stress (joined in the top photo by Rob Fish).



and universities, including faculty and staff members. He also extends the course to teenagers in high schools in the form of Youth Empowerment Seminars. For children ages 8 to 11, there is a separate course entitled ART Excel — All Around Training and Excellence.

The cost for students and senior citizens is \$200 and \$375 for adults. “Money should not stop people from enrolling,” says Jeremy. “For the needy, payments can be

“It’s not that you experience happiness all the time,” says teacher Mark Ball. “There are moments when you’re tense.”

discounted or spread over months. The funds go into the nonprofit foundation, not to the teachers. We teachers share the Art of Living gospel because of what it’s done for us. And in that sense,” says Jeremy, “the course is priceless.” The Prison Smart program for juvenile prisoners and the Breath Water Sound workshop designed specifically for at risk youth are taught free of cost.

Battered by round-the-clock schedules and alarming deadlines, “students immensely benefit from the Art of Living,” according to Ball. “The western society can make you extremely stressed because of work and responsibilities. This program helps one to be much more content and joyful about their duties and activities. We’re always looking at our next fix in the present rat-race civilization, so this is something to keep us grounded,” he says. “It’s not that you experience happiness all the time. There are moments when you’re tense. But the level of awareness is much higher. It’s easier to let go of stuff,” he explains. No wonder Generation-X is rapidly seeking a balanced lifestyle, hungry for sanity and strength.

And as a soothing voice said “Take a deep breath in” at Stanford University’s Escondido Village room, I saw it coming full circle. Nineteen bodies rose with air. “Become aware of all the noises in the environment,” said the voice softly. Apart from soft footsteps of the passersby, the group sat in silence. After a few peaceful minutes, the space filled itself with bliss and ecstatic faces lit up in deep gratitude. “If we remove the veil of stress and ignorance, we will discover the pure love we’re made up of,” says Ball. And that connection is worth making.

For more information, or to find an Art of Living center near you, visit [www.artofliving.org](http://www.artofliving.org)

## Addiction to leadership

### Continued from page 15

"I knew that it would be tough. I knew that it would take up my time and be stressful. In the time that I could relax or study, I end up doing fraternity work." She says: "A lot of Delta Sigma Pi is building relationships. It's not strictly business. We work hard and play hard."

Fithian splits his time between chairing Q-TIP, being a resident advisor and being on the Associated Students Board of Directors. "You have to devote some time to yourself," Fithian says. "If you don't, you burn out." He says he still has managed to find the time to begin to revive a national progressive gay and bisexual male fraternity, Delta Lambda Phi, which broke up in the mid 1990s.

"You can't think of a leader as by themselves," Associated Students president Gutierrez says. "Leadership is about people working together. It's a teamwork process."

Ocampo says she constantly asks for the opinions of her

teammates in order to do what's best for the team. "I am only one person," Ocampo says. "I won't have every idea. I won't always have the best idea. There are so many things I don't know and that's when bringing in all the heads into the mix can create the best team that you can."

"These leadership experiences have prompted me to go to grad school and pursue a career in higher education so that I can do what I'm doing now but on a more professional level," Fithian says.

"Leadership is a choice," Ocampo says. "There are those who choose to take on the responsibility of being there for others, being a role model and being a guide."

This is one addiction that needs no counseling. In fact, the addicted can inspire a pandemic to change people, groups, business and the world for the better.

*For more information on leadership training, go to SJSU's Student Life and Leadership website at <http://sa.sjsu.edu/sll/index.jsp>.*



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# 15

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buttahflie2117@hotmail.com**

## Local Restaurant Infuriates Competition by Giving Away Hundreds of FREE Beverages to SJSU Students

San José, CA. We have seen many types of restaurant promotions to grab your attention. However, Ralph Peterson, who owns The Pita Pit, simply takes the cake. Peterson's latest promotion is targeting all San José State University students. His goal is to give every SJSU student one free beverage. What's more amazing is he has not put any restrictions on which students can get one, only that they be an SJSU student.

According to Peterson, it's very simple; if he can get a guest to try The Pita Pit he believes they will be a raving customer coming back again and again. They are open until midnight and deliver, which fits students' hectic schedules.

San José is known as one of the healthiest cities in America and The Pita Pit, whose tag line is "Fresh Thinking Healthy Eating," feels they have the answer for residents on the go wanting great tasting healthy food. Whether you like vegetarian and falafel or are more of a Philly cheesesteak and grilled chicken breast eater, they have the answer. The Pita Pit brags an amazing 14 different fresh topping choices and 13 kinds of sauces. Customers are able to mix and match combinations of toppings and sauces to create their own unique pita.

Customers can claim their free beverage by showing their SJSU Student ID with the purchase of any regular priced pita during the Spring '06 Semester. Peterson invites students to stop by The Pita Pit at 151 South 2nd Street, just north of the Camera 12 theater and Starbucks. It's only two blocks from SJSU. Or you can order from the restaurant's easy to use website at [www.getpitaa.com](http://www.getpitaa.com).

# My love-hate relationship

photo Brett Karleen story Kiersten Gustafson

The bar is packed with full tables, intoxicating smells emanate from the rostisserie and there's an amplified hum of conversation and laughter. Just through the walkway connecting the bar and main restaurant, a copper backed "cook's counter" resides, where the more daring restaurant goers have dinner and watch the chefs quickly and rhythmically make their creations. It's Saturday night and I'm running my you-know-what off.

Working in such an environment can be bittersweet. One day you love it, and the next, you're griping to your boyfriend, "What the hell am I doing?"

On the nights that you can't give the profession enough praise, you feel like there's no job better! Positive qualities abound on a "good night." The money can be great, considering you can take home \$200-250, all in a five-to-six-hour shift, and you make wonderful connections with total strangers who've only come in to have dinner or a drink.

It's wonderfully social, where a friendly and jovial mood seems to blanket the place.

Later in the evening when your last table is finished and your books are done, good friends, good food and a good drink await you. After nights like these you walk away beaming with appreciation of your wonderful job saying, "Damn this is great!"

Ohhhh...but don't get too used to this euphoric feeling. Within a 24-hour change in the cosmos, the very same place that you were thinking of retiring from turns on you. It becomes an evil, dastardly place that you want to torch in the name of dignity and goodwill. On nights like these, the crustiest, bitterest, "cream of the crop" seem to have planned ahead of time to converge at your restaurant.

Not only has your entire section been filled with astringent people, but they have all arrived at the exact same time, so you find yourself running at mach-speed in the attempt to satisfy 80 needy tables at once. To top it off, you've lost your knack for multi-tasking, so you run around like a chicken with her head cut off in attempt to catch up with the needs of your customers.

People tug on your shirtsleeve as you pass by with full hands, to ask for a ninth extra helping of horseradish, and they order you around as if they were the king and queen of California and you were their personal slave. On torturous nights like these, the short shifts feel like an eternity, and when you finally do leave, your wallet is barely fuller than it was when you began your shift.

You drive home with what little energy you have left and flop on the couch like a limp rag doll. Your mind continues to rewind and play back the dreadful night. One of your memories is vivid and comes back to haunt you: "Hey I'm dry over here!" booms a gravelly voice over a half-full Gray Goose and tonic. His gold chain slightly jumps from its position, then snugly resides upon his thick carpet of a chest. (Yes, this sounds like a stereotype, but he truly exists.)

With both hands weighted by brimming plates of food, you calmly tell him you'll be right there. "I don't have all day, Miss," he



snidely says and chuckles with his companions. After dropping off the dinners to one of your civil tables, you approach the brute, trying to contain yourself. But after overhearing a couple more unpleasant comments about your waiting abilities, you throw the customer service mantra, "The customer is always right," right out the window. "You're dry huh?" you growl, as you gesture to his far from empty glass. "Maybe I should bring three or four for you, just to be on the safe side!"

After your emotion-driven comment takes flight, you realize the continuance of a comfortable interaction between you and the table is unfathomable. Needless to say, the manager gets involved and recruits another waiter for the thug. Fortunately, your manager understands your side, but a queasiness takes up residence in your stomach for the rest of the night.

Over the years I have come to realize that waiting on tables is a relationship with humanity. It's a relationship like any other, one that deals with the ebb and flow of moods, circumstances and chemistry.

And just like many relationships, some days you love the person, and some days you want to get as far away from them as possible.



## Roommates from hell

illustration Jennifer Corker story Janet Marcelo

**A**t first things are going really well and you're hitting it off. Then things take a turn for the worse and the next thing you know the simple sight, smell or sound of them causes bile to rise in your throat. No, it's not your siblings or your ex. It's the roommates from hell and here are the simple signs that it's going to be one long semester.

1 They pretend everything is fine and dandy, then the next thing you know you're woken up at an ungodly hour as your roommate skips out on you and the rent. But then again, that means you don't have to deal with them for the entire semester.

2 They have nightly and daily drinking sessions and you get to encounter hoards of strangers coming in and out every morning, noon and night.

3 They let unfinished large portions of food fall into the drain forgetting that your sink doesn't have a garbage disposal—doh!

4 They would rather see the pillar of trash reach the ceiling than take it out themselves. That or wait until you do it for them, Jeeves.

5 They don't understand why you're not fond of the ant colony that has taken up permanent residence among their leftover cheeseburger, fries and lollipops beneath the sofa cushions.

6 They leave clothes, food, books, papers and everything else everywhere right before room inspection, casting the blame on you.

7 They shower once a month, smell like moldy cheese and gym socks and you can swear the green fuzz growing on their towel is not a part of its pattern.

8 They turn the thermostat up to unbearable degrees, end up breaking it, and worst of all, they leave you to pay for it.

9 They constantly break things, not just their things, but your computer, phone, microwave and anything else they can get their grubby hands on.

10 They have sex with their significant other when you're in the room, or worse, on your bed when you're not there.

## Ratting and rating

story Julia Cooper

**I** don't want a drill sergeant. I want a teacher. That's why I go to RateMyProfessors.com before I choose classes each semester. When I have a choice between professors I exercise my right. I want someone who is helpful, and, dare I say it, easy, over someone who might fail me for forgetting a comma.

First of all, I like 99 percent of the professors I have taken at San José State University. But I avoid one percent like I avoid self-inflicted pain. The teachers who assign ridiculous amounts of work that don't teach you anything or present subjects in a way only Einstein could understand are not on my top 10. I'm no masochist. I don't want a teacher who fails most of the class.

It was an SJSU student who inspired the creation of RateMyProfessors.com. Alumnus John Swapceinski started the site in 1999 after taking an ogre of a teacher who was nasty to students and graded unfairly. When filing a formal complaint didn't get him anywhere, Swapceinski decided to create a forum where students could warn each other about similar professors.

The site is so great! Student opinions tell me if a teacher is "the worst ever." If 50 people say their dog could spread knowledge more efficiently, then, schedule allowing, I might choose another teacher or postpone taking a class until a different professor is offered. Don't get me wrong, I don't avoid challenges or difficult material, just teachers who are unclear, unhelpful and unreasonable about assignments and grading.

Also, the student tips that detail how to succeed in a particular teacher's class are extremely useful. Suggestions that give test advice or say how to get on a teacher's good side are like study guides for taking professors.

But while the ratings are generally helpful, not everything on the site is. Students can also judge a teacher's hotness, something I do not care about. For one thing, some students out there have really bad taste. Secondly, if you are choosing your teachers solely because they might look like Angelina or Brad, then I'm sorry, you need to get out of college and go back to being a couch potato.

It is easy to disregard the hotness ratings, but one thing you cannot ignore is that the ratings are only *opinions* and shouldn't be treated as The Ten Commandments of Picking Professors. While I have found the ratings to be spot on most of the time, there are a couple of reasons to treat the site with healthy skepticism. One, some students are liars and they think it's fun to post false teacher ratings to deceive others. Second, some students are just lazy. They don't go to class, show up only for tests and then bitterly give a teacher a horrible rating when they get an F. If you follow their advice you could body swerve a teacher who might change your life.

That is why I encourage more students to post ratings. The more ratings there are, the more reliable the site will be. It's much easier to trust 100 ratings that say a teacher is a drill-sergeant-in-disguise than just one.

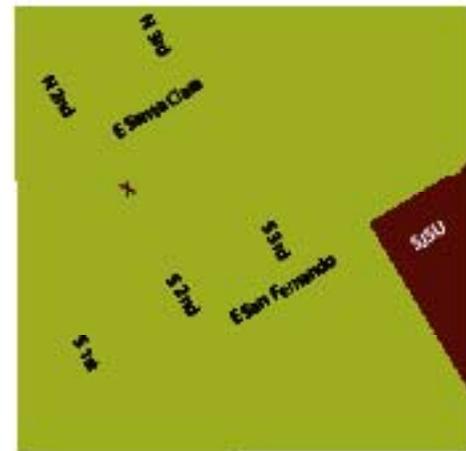
Since we don't get to see the professor evaluations we fill out at the end of a semester, Web sites like this are one of the few resources students have to identify the cream of the crop from the crap of the heap.



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