

‘Monsters’ save the day

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Right: Mount Madonna School junior Haley Turner makes a new friend during an ice-breaker game at Conquest for Life, a non-profit for at-risk youth not far from Soweto, South Africa. Left: Brittany Lovato shares her camera, but more importantly her time and affection, with children at Cotlands, an orphanage in Johannesburg, South Africa for children who are infected or effected with HIV.

U.S. students travel to South Africa Young adults donate their time to help children in need

By Shmuel Thaler
Santa Cruz (Calif.) Sentinel

AROPENG, South Africa — Brittany Lovato has literally run out of lap space. The 17-year-old, who lives near Watsonville, Calif., sits in the middle of a play yard in Johannesburg, South Africa, giving the most important gift she can give — her time and affection.

The young recipients of Brittany's gifts are an exuberantly joyful swarm of children at Cotlands, an orphanage for children infected with or affected by HIV.

Although literally a half-a-world away from their homes in California, Lovato and her fellow Mount Madonna School juniors and seniors have arrived in this country of contradictions for a journey of learning and discovery.

It is the culmination of their Values in World Thought class led by teacher Ward Maillard.

As students leave the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, whose exhibits document the brutality of the South African history in the 20th century, they encounter a group of black youth

proudly singing the country's National Anthem.

The song, a metaphor for the new South Africa, which Archbishop Desmond Tutu calls "a rainbow nation", is sung three times — first in Zulu, next in Afrikaans and finally in English.

While severe economic disparities still exist between black and white, South Africa is a work in progress and these students are witnessing a moment in history as the nation evolves.

Rather than coming as tourists, they are here to talk with people that are part of working toward a brighter future.

Before leaving for the trip the Mount Madonna students collected enough donated clothing to fill 28 duffle bags to be given to nonprofits in South Africa. The group travels to Cotlands orphanage, where they will make the first delivery.

Cotlands Marketing Manager Lindy Nieuwenhuizen welcomes the group to the orphanage, which is bright and clean. She offers thanks for five bags stuffed full of donated baby clothes and gives a short tour of the facility.

Cotlands' Johannesburg orphanage, along with its other facilities are home to more than 4,000 children who are either HIV positive themselves or come from families that are unable to care

for them due to HIV/AIDS. The group enters a colorful play yard full of 30 exuberant 2- to 6-year-olds.

No sooner had the students entered the yard did the smiling youngsters descend on them to fill every lap and shoulder and the California teenagers matched the young children smile for smile.

"It was very happy and they were all really excited that we were visiting," Brittany says, "They were acted like they were part of our family and each of them needed to have a lap to sit on."

During the day Archbishop Tutu's son Trevor guides them through the famous black township of Soweto (Southwest Township), and by a squatters' camp housing thousands under shacks made of corrugated tin and other materials.

Another stop is Conquest For Life, a nonprofit that trains older at-risk teens and sends them out into the community where they connect with more than 14,000 elementary school students in Johannesburg each week offering hope through wanti-drug and other positive messages.

Seventeen-year-old Haley Turner of Aptos, Calif., and her schoolmates anxiously walk the three stories up a narrow creek

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Transfer plans replace certain Valencia pre-major programs

By Theresa Carli
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Valencia will not be offering certain historical pre-major programs to students seeking a two-year associate degree, due to a range of facts including an increasing emphasis on learning accountability from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Originally, associate of arts pre-majors were intended to put students on the right path towards one specific focus of study. An AA degree contains 60 credit hours, including 36 general education hours and 24

elective hours.

The pre-majors were intended to be a tool for students to use their elective hours effectively.

Somewhere along the way, however, pre-majors became more of a marketing tool.

Karen Borglum, Valencia's assistant vice president of curriculum and articulation, said it seemed like Valencia was "marketing different types of AA degrees.

It has always been an AA degree in general studies, never an AA degree in something specific. If we're saying something is a pre-major, then we are saying that a student

could go out and do something [professionally] with that major."

Valencia's provost, Jared Graber, indicated that certain pre-majors are misleading and could actually have a negative effect on students.

Pre-majors are degree programs that need outcomes and faculty oversight for the curriculum.

Graber explained, "Based on dialogues with the Commission on Colleges, Valencia was advised that any grouping of courses termed a major, pre-major, or area of concentration would require distinct learning

outcomes, periodic reporting, and formally assigned oversight."

The term "pre-major" will now be applied only to programs where a significant amount of required course work is directly related to that specific field of study. After nine hours of focused electives in one discipline of study, review could begin on whether it is an official pre-major.

Valencia will be keeping four official pre-majors due to the extensive course work in their fields of study. They are Studio/Fine Art,

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Deeper look into SGA elections

By Collin Dever
cdever@valenciavoice.com

Student government elections took place March 30 and March 31 on all Valencia campuses. On each campus four positions were up for election: president, vice president, executive secretary, and chief of staff.

Each position was open to any student who was enrolled in at least six credit hours and had a 2.5 GPA.

On the west campus, only two positions had candidates running for office, both unopposed. The presidency was pursued by Warren Levy, and Robert Stio ran for vice-president.

Stio, who ran on the strength of the Go Green Act he championed over the course of this year, which called for more recycling on campus, said he and Levy plan on focusing on campus awareness.

"I want to let students know what their rights are," said Stio.

The online election is not the only first

marked with this election. An amendment establishing term limits was passed this year, guaranteeing that the newly elected officials will serve no more than two terms. A term is defined as full academic year, or three semesters, summer, fall and spring.

Having run unopposed, Stio and Ansari were already looking past the election to the new regime getting down to business.

"Summer is where the majority of behind the scenes work gets done," said Ansari.

Information regarding the election was sent out to students, and students could cast their ballots through Atlas.

Unfortunately, the student participation was low due to a mixture of not being informed and a lack of empathy. Many students do not check their Atlas accounts regularly, and for those who do pertinent information can be lost in the massive amount of announcements flooding into each students' e-mail box.

Some students were shocked to hear about the lack of candidates, while others

were unsurprised and uncaring. Some students were also unaware that the elections were open to the entire student body.

The Student Government Association plays an important role in the shaping of Valencia. Student Government acts as the "voice of the students," said Stio. They are a liaison between the student body and the schools administration. Much like our own government they pass resolutions which are sent to staff members for implementation.

Though each bill is not guaranteed to result in actions taken by the school offer a strong, united voice in what changes need to be made here at Valencia.

According to current president Zia-Ur-Rehman Ansari, SGA has a budget of 25,000 dollars at their disposal for expenses and for the many activities and events they schedule.

Mr. Ansari was disappointed by the low turnout as were other members of the SGA.

To those involved in the elections, the low

turnout represent a student body uninterested in having a voice on campus.

A student government is a essential organization for a school to operate optimally. It also provides a way for students to gain a better understanding of how our own government operates.

Those students who were unaware of the elections suggested having teachers make an announcement regarding the elections, or sending mailers home to the students informing them of the elections.

Another suggestion, is to send messages from the student government through atlas labeled different then the regular atlas announcements.

Participation in any governing body is important for all citizens. When we give up our rights to participate in government we open ourselves to the exploitation by those in power.

—Additional reporting by Reese Wallace. To contact Reese, email him at: rwallace@valenciavoice.com.

Transfer plans replace some pre-majors

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Dance Performance, Sign Language Interpretation and Theatre/Drama/Dramatic Arts. Each of these programs contains over 20 elective credit hours that are part of common state prerequisites.

Dance, for example, has 24 hours of prerequisite courses that are generally accepted by state universities. Some historical pre-majors will now be supported through "transfer plans" that will focus on specific areas of study.

In the past, AA diplomas had the pre-major on it. The transcripts will still state the

area of study, but Borglum said that may change in the future.

Valencia's dean of students, Tyron Johnson, insisted that this change will "have no negative effect on the student" as far as transferring to four-year universities.

Dr. Gordon Chavis, the University of Central Florida's associate vice president of undergraduate admissions supported the dean's statement: "Admission to UCF is based on admission to the university and not to a specific degree program."

Dr. Chavis explained that during the admission process, the student's actual diploma is rarely even seen, and the transcript is the only thing that is relevant.

A review of the student's transcript allows the admissions department to see what courses the student has taken, which helps to determine if the student has prepared themselves for a specific type of degree at UCF.

Joy of giving carries on

Continued from Page 1

staircase in a listing brick building located near the railroad tracks not knowing what to expect.

As soon as they cross the threshold they are greeted with welcoming South African smiles from more than a dozen radiant youth from the Westbury Township.

The American and African teens break into small groups to share their dreams and give voice to their aspirations.

Haley says, "At first it was awkward, but as we

talked they became super friendly and were so interested in what we had had to say. The were all really passionate about their future and had goals linked to their passions."

Lamb chops are grilling on the barbeque in the dirt backyard behind the Conquest For Life building.

The Mount Madonna students join their South African counterparts for a meal. In one of the oldest bonding experiences known, people of different backgrounds sit down and break bread together.

After the experience Haley says, "The more found out about them the more we saw similarities."

—MCT Campus

Special Announcements

Valencia students win art contest, 'Adrenalina' gives out free tickets for 'Flowrider' indoor surfing

The following students who are enrolled in Dr. Mellano's chemistry classes have received passes to experience the "Flowrider" indoor surfing ride courtesy of Adrenalina sporting goods store for exhibiting an improved performance on test.

Congratulations to:
Andrew Strack - (CHM1046, M/W)
Aziz Tabiti - (CHM1046, T/H)
Yuelong Chen - (CHM1045, M/W)

The following students took home prizes for their efforts in the art contest which was held on the Valencia's east and west campuses March 31 in celebration of National Women's History Month.

Placements for West Campus:
First place - Claudine Vincent
Second place - Barbara Burry
Third place - Hrishikesh Bhattar

Placements for East Campus:
First place - Brooke Elliott
Second place - Jaclyn West
Third place - Alexandra Bush

The winners received bookstore gift cards with values of \$100, \$50, and \$25, respectively.


In order for artist's submissions to have been considered for the contest their art had to portray an American woman or women. Artists were able to submit poems, short stories, music, paintings, or any form of art.

The submissions were judged by subject content, originality, and complexity.

Deborah McCoy the employee relations & diversity specialist liaison of the Black Advisory Committee at Valencia said, "The level of talent portrayed was rather astounding."

This is the first year that this art contest has been held, but McCoy has hopes that this will be an annual event, stating that this event "is a tangible way by which we are inclusive in striving to celebrate the diversity of our Valencia family."

Congratulations to all of the winners, not only for your artistic talent, but for celebrating diversity!



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Michigan campus shaken by murder-suicide

By Lori Higgins, Robin Erb and Chastity Pratt Dawsey
Detroit Free Press

DEARBORN, Mich. — A 20-year-old woman and a 28-year-old man were killed during a murder-suicide at Henry Ford Community College Friday, police have confirmed.

The two were in a theater class together, but police were unable to substantiate any relationship between the two, Dearborn's deputy police chief, Gregg Brighton, said.

Dearborn police identified the two as 20-year-old Asia McGowan of Ecorse, Mich., and 28-year-old Anthony Powell of Detroit.

Earlier Friday, police responding to a 12:40 p.m. report of a campus assault were inside the fine arts building when a shotgun blast was heard. Police then entered Room F-111 and found the bodies.

Police believe the man shot the woman and then shot himself. Eight detectives, including four investigators from the Michigan State Police, were on the scene but police could release few details.

The 17,000-student college had light attendance Friday — a religious holiday — and it appeared that no class was using Room F-111 at the time of the shooting, officials said.

Marjorie Swan, vice president and controller for the college, said she was unsure whether Saturday classes would be held. Counseling services will be offered to staff and students, she said.

"Our hearts go out to the family and friends of the young woman who lost her life," Swan said. Responding officers escorted some students from the building while the college activated its emergency notification system to alert students and staff by cell phone and e-mails that the campus was being locked down.

The lockdown lasted about two hours



Henry Ford Community College's student Naeym Joumana, 19, of Dearborn walks by police officers after two students were killed in an apparent murder-suicide at the Henry Ford Community College's Fine Arts Center in Dearborn, Michigan on Friday, April 10.

during which time throngs of cars lined Evergreen Road waiting to pick up students. During the mayhem, nerves were frayed, but no panic ensued, staff and students said. Outside Henry Ford's Science Building just after 2 p.m., Henry Ford student Joumana Naeym, 19, of Dearborn, said she still was trying to understand what happened.

An education major, she had been in a teacher's office in the basement of the building when the teacher instructed Naeym not to leave. She remained for about two hours, she said, but didn't hear any gunshots or what she assumed was the chaos outside. "I'm just

nervous about it all," she said.

Matthew Head, 19, of Detroit was in a building across campus when a security guard told students to gather into the lunchroom. "It came to me as a big surprise," Head said. They were nervous upon hearing different stories about where the shooting was occurring.

In the technology building, Hassan Mourtada, 19, of Dearborn Heights, Mich., said he found out about the incident when a rushed in and said there was a shooting in the building next door. Mourtada ran to a window where he saw "the cops and their cars

and guns out."

"It's horrible. Why would it happen on a campus like this?" he said.

Diane Green, Henry Ford's associate dean of counseling, said the campus sent out a message by its early alert system — specifically by a call to her cell phone — asking people to stay in offices and classrooms.

"It's very calm. They're obviously taking control of the situation," Green said as police entered the campus. In fact, staff in her office, she said, continued to meet with students who had appointments.

— MCT Campus

Evidence surfaces in case of dragging death in Texas

By Howard Witt
Chicago Tribune

PARIS, Texas — Four months after a grand jury indicted two white men for the dragging murder of a black man in this racially-troubled northeast Texas town, key evidence against the pair appears to be evaporating amid growing optimism by one defense attorney that he can win an acquittal when the first case comes to trial in July.

Police had alleged Shannon Keith Finley and Charles Ryan Crostley, both 28, had used Finley's pickup truck to run over and drag to death 24-year-old Brandon McClelland on a rural road before dawn last Sept. 16. Local civil rights activists denounced the case as a racially-inspired hate crime.

But an initial police claim that investigators had found blood on the underside of the pickup has not been confirmed by more thorough forensic testing, which failed to verify the presence of any human material or DNA beneath the truck, special prosecutor Toby Shook confirmed to the Tribune.

"Initial scientific analysis of the truck didn't show anything," Shook said, noting there was evidence the suspects had washed the truck before it was impounded by investigators. "We are sending it back for further tests."

Moreover, a crucial prosecution witness — to whom police said Finley allegedly confessed details of the killing — has been challenged on his credibility, which could undermine any testimony he might give against Finley.

The witness, James Mitchell Laster, told police Finley had admitted to him he had intentionally run over McClelland and dragged his body beneath his truck for about 40 feet, according to a police affidavit.

But Laster has a lengthy criminal record and in January, 2008, he was charged with aggravated assault for allegedly beating Finley. The Lamar County district attorney later dismissed the charge.

"Laster almost killed Shannon," said Ben

Massar, Finley's defense attorney. "This guy is not a credible person. He is a violent person."

Finley and Crostley, who claimed to have been friends of McClelland's, have denied to police they were involved in his death. Instead, Finley told police and McClelland's family the pair had picked up McClelland for a late-night beer run and later, after an argument over Finley's ability to drive safely, McClelland had asked to be let out of the truck so he could walk home.

After McClelland's body was discovered, Finley fled to Wichita, Kans., where he was arrested.

Massar said he has an alternative theory of the crime he intends to present to the jury when Finley, the first defendant to be prosecuted, goes on trial in three months. The trial will be moved from Paris to nearby Hopkins County after Massar persuaded a Lamar County judge publicity about the case had tainted the local jury pool.

The two-lane road where McClelland's body was found is a common route for large trucks carrying gravel from a nearby pit, and Massar said the battered state of McClelland's partially-dismembered body was consistent with having been struck by a heavy gravel truck traveling at high speed.

"We have two witnesses that will be very good for us — two guys from Arkansas that came upon the body just moments after they were run off the road by a gravel truck," Massar said. "Look, this case is a tragic situation. The fact that somebody died is difficult to overcome. But we're very confident in this case."

McClelland's mother, Jacqueline, said she remains convinced Finley and Crostley killed her son and is distressed the case against them seems to be unraveling.

"I feel like everyone is trying to get these guys off," she said. "The stories are changing up so much. One minute they tell me they found blood on the truck, and then they say they didn't find anything. All I want is justice for my son's murder."

—MCT Campus



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Arrest in California girl's death

Sunday school teacher held for murder of Sandra Cantu

By Ruben Vives and Rong-Gong Lin II
Los Angeles Times

A Sunday school teacher was arrested on suspicion of kidnapping and killing her daughter's 8-year-old playmate, Sandra Cantu of Tracy, Calif., after admitting to police she owned the suitcase in which Sandra's body was found, authorities said Saturday.

Melissa Chantel Huckaby, 28, the granddaughter of a pastor, was taken into custody late Friday night, about five hours after she drove herself to a police station for questioning, said Tracy Police Sgt. Tony Sheneman.

"I couldn't begin to even theorize what her motive is," Sheneman said in a news conference that was streamed live online. "The outcome alone is beyond explanation." Sandra's mother, Maria Chavez, 41, was grief stricken and in shock, said Angie Chavez, Sandra's aunt. "How could another mother do this to another child?" Angie said Maria had asked her.

A break in the investigation into Sandra's death came after Huckaby gave an interview on Friday to the Tracy Press, telling the newspaper that she had owned a large, black rolling suitcase that was stolen on March 27, the same day Sandra disappeared. Huckaby's description of her suitcase resembled the one that contained Sandra's body, the newspaper reported.

On Monday, farmworkers discovered the suitcase at a dairy farm irrigation pond, about 2 1/2 miles north of the girl's home. Inside, investigators found the dead child dressed in the same clothes she was last seen wearing -- a pink "Hello Kitty" T-shirt, black leggings and "Hannah Montana" flip-flops.

Huckaby's interview with the local newspaper was inconsistent with what she had earlier told investigators, police said Saturday. After reading the published report, police asked Huckaby to come to the station for more questioning Friday night.

"She revealed enough information to us that we had probable cause to arrest her," Sheneman said Saturday. "She admitted yesterday and to the Tracy Press that the suitcase was hers."

Huckaby had told the Tracy Press that she had packed the suitcase with supplies to spruce up her classroom at the church. But she left it outside on her driveway at the Orchard Estates Mobile Home Park where she lives.

"There's been a lot of speculation on the news about what happened to my suitcase," Huckaby told the newspaper. "It's not my granddad's. It's mine, and someone took it."

Huckaby said she intended to call police and report her missing suitcase, then decided to make a report online but never got around to it, the newspaper reported. But when police started questioning neighbors in the mobile



Contra Costa Times / MCT Campus

Melissa Chantel Huckaby (above) was arrested for the murder of Sandra Cantu (right) who was reported missing March 27.

home park about Sandra's disappearance, she told police that her suitcase had gone missing, according to the newspaper.

Prior to the Friday interview with the Tracy Press, police were not sure whether the suitcase belonged to Huckaby, Sheneman said. As police questioned Huckaby Friday night, she was initially "calm, cool and collected," Sheneman said. Then, she "became very emotional, then was calm again, and then became resigned to what was happening."

Sheneman declined to disclose where or how the slaying took place. There are no other suspects. Huckaby was being held at San Joaquin County jail and is not eligible for bail, he said.

Investigators spoke to Sandra's family at 2:15 a.m. Saturday, spending 45 minutes with them.

"They were in disbelief," he said. Sandra was "very close friends with" Huckaby's 5-year-old daughter, Sheneman said. The girls lived just five houses away from each other and played frequently at Huckaby's home.

Angie Chavez, Sandra's aunt, said in a phone interview that she felt happy that a suspect had been caught, "but then shocked and in disbelief that it was a woman." She said the family wants to know why it happened.

Angie Chavez said Sandra's three older siblings -- two sisters, ages 20 and 11, and a brother, 15 -- were taking their sister's death hard. The usually talkative 11-year-old sister, she said, "has been quiet and crying a lot."

Angie Chavez described Sandra as a spunky, giggly, cute second-grader at Melville S. Jacobson Elementary School who loved doing cartwheels



Jose Carlos Fajardo, Contra Costa Times / MCT Campus

and enjoyed reading children's books aloud. Police said autopsy results and warrants related to the case are sealed.

According to public records, Huckaby lives with her grandfather, Clifford Lane Lawless, who is pastor of Clover Road Baptist Church. The church is just 500 yards from their home. Her marital status was unclear. "She spent an extraordinary amount of time" at the church, Sheneman said.

Police seized evidence from the church, Sheneman said, but he declined to identify it. He said authorities had "significant details" on Huckaby's criminal record but declined to release them.

According to public records, Huckaby was convicted of felony property theft in Los Angeles County in November 2006. Huckaby was born Melissa Chantel Lawless in 1981 in Orange County, according to public records.

Federal court records show that Melissa Chantel Lawless of Tracy filed for bankruptcy protection in 2003. She listed \$5,200 in assets, including \$3,000 in jewelry. Her debts totaled \$26,300, which included thousands of dollars in medical bills and credit card expenses, according to the records.

Mary Jones of Livermore, Calif., who described herself as a longtime friend of the Law-

less family, said she has known Huckaby since she was a girl. Jones expressed disbelief about news of Huckaby's arrest.

"That would shock me greatly if it were true," Jones said. "That's not the Melissa I know." "It doesn't fit in with her or the family at all," Jones said of the allegations. "The family is basically Baptist, totally church-going folks."

Jones said she received a card from Huckaby this past Christmas and last spoke to the woman several years ago. At the time, Huckaby was with her then-baby girl, Jones recalled.

"She was a doting mother," Jones said. "She was taking good care of the baby." Jones recalled how Huckaby sang in the choir as a child at her parents' church.

The arrest comes 15 days after Sandra was reported missing. Hundreds of volunteers and search-and-rescue crews joined the search after the girl who vanished on March 27 from the mobile home park, where she lived with her mother, grandparents and siblings.

Sandra was last seen on a surveillance camera that recorded the girl skipping down a street after a play date that Friday afternoon. Sandra's disappearance shook Tracy, a city of 78,000 in an agricultural area about 60 miles east of San Francisco.

—LATWP News Service

Portrait of suspect emerges

By Alexandra Zavis and My-Thuan Tran
Los Angeles Times

TRACY, Calif. — Fighting back tears, the family of a Sunday school teacher suspected of killing an 8-year-old California girl said they were at a loss Sunday to reconcile the accusations with the person they know as a devoted mother who loves children.

"The information that we have been given regarding the charges against Melissa Huckaby are completely out of character for her," the 28-year-old woman's uncle, Brett Lawless, of Lake-wood said outside the Orchard Estates Mobile Home Park in Tracy, where Sandra Cantu was last seen alive March 27.

But he said his family's pain could not compare with that of Sandra's relatives.

Later, at an emotional Easter service at the nearby Clover Road Baptist Church, Huckaby's grandfather, Pastor Clifford Lane Lawless, and others offered prayers for Sandra's family.

"Nothing can be more tragic than losing a child," Lawless said.

For Sandra's family, the condolences from Huckaby's family came as a "slap in the face," said the girl's aunt, Angie Chavez.

"You can't apologize for this because it is not going to bring Sandra back home," Chavez said by phone. "They get to see their daughter grow up. We don't."

Huckaby, who lived with her grandparents in the same mobile home park as Sandra's family, was arrested Friday, hours after she drove to a police station for questioning.

Police said she acknowledged that she owned the suitcase in which Sandra's body was found in an irrigation pond about 2 1/2 miles from her home.

Police have not said where and how Sandra died, or offered a motive for the killing.

Huckaby is being held without bail at San Joaquin County Jail. An arraignment hearing is scheduled Tuesday.

The picture of Huckaby that emerged from her family was that of a "sweet" woman, raised in the Baptist church, who did not drink or take drugs, and had no psychological problems.

Her father, Brian Lawless, who lives in Cypress, said Huckaby's life revolved around her 5-year-old daughter, Madison.

"She just always had an extreme patience with her, never raised her voice, never yelled, never struck her," he said Sunday.

"She was that same way with other children. She loved, loved children."

However, her father acknowledged that Huckaby had struggled with depression, especially after she divorced her husband and had to raise her daughter alone.

Court records show that when Huckaby filed for divorce from her husband, John Huckaby, in Orange County in January 2005, the couple had no children.

The identity of Madison's father was not immediately clear.

According to her family, Huckaby has been hospitalized several times with stomach problems and struggled to hold a job after graduating from Brea Olinda High School in 1999.

She worked for a time at a Food 4 Less supermarket in Tracy, but later returned to Southern California.

Federal court records show that Melissa Chantel Lawless of Tracy filed for bankruptcy

protection in 2003. Her debts totaled \$26,300, which included thousands of dollars in medical and credit card bills.

Public records also show that Huckaby was convicted of felony theft in Los Angeles County in November 2006.

Last summer, the family said she moved in with her grandparents and began teaching Sunday school to the children of their congregation.

According to both families, Huckaby's daughter became good friends with Sandra, and the two played together often. Madison left on a pre-arranged vacation with her mother shortly after her friend disappeared, relatives said.

About 20 worshipers attended Sunday's service at the small church, about 500 yards from the mobile home park.

Visitors stopped in front of the park to pay respects. Some left stuffed Easter bunnies and chocolates.

Others visited the Fry Memorial Chapel to reflect before an altar covered with stuffed toys, balloons and condolence messages.

A slide show of the bubbly second-grader was playing.

—LATWP News Service



U.S. Navy / MCT Campus

Maersk-Alabama Capt. Richard Phillips, right, stands alongside Cmdr. Frank Castellano, commanding officer of USS Bainbridge (DDG 96) after U.S. Naval Forces rescued Phillips off the coast of Somalia.

Captain's rescue ends high-seas standoff

By Shashank Bengali and Nancy A. Youssef
McClatchy Newspapers

MALINDI, Kenya — With Somali pirates pointing an automatic rifle at a hostage American ship captain, U.S. Navy sharpshooters opened fire Sunday, killing the pirates and ending an extraordinary five-day standoff that marked the first seizure of a U.S. vessel by pirates on the high seas in at least two centuries.

Three pirates were killed, the Pentagon said. The captain, 53-year-old Richard Phillips of Underhill, Vt., was rescued unharmed and taken aboard a U.S. warship. A fourth pirate who'd surrendered earlier also was being detained and could face trial in the United States.

Vice Adm. William Gortney, commander of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, in a briefing for reporters, said U.S. Navy SEAL snipers perched at the back of the USS Bainbridge — a guided-missile destroyer floating about 30 yards off the 28-foot lifeboat where Phillips was being held — opened fire on the pirates when one of them pointed an AK-47 rifle at Phillips's back.

The SEALs felt Phillips's life was in "imminent danger," Gortney said. The White House said President Barack Obama had given the Pentagon a standing order to use force if necessary to save Phillips's life.

The sharpshooters "took it that the pirate was ready to use that weapon" and opened fire within seconds, Gortney said in a telephone

briefing from Bahrain, headquarters of the Fifth Fleet.

President Obama was told that Phillips had been rescued 11 minutes after the shots were fired, according to Pentagon and White House chronologies of events.

According to Somalis with knowledge of the discussions, the pirates, who at one time had demanded \$2 million for Phillips's release, had grown desperate with their situation — adrift under a searing sun in waters infested with sharks, staring at two massive Navy ships armed with guided missiles, running low on fuel and having spent their ammunition.

A relative of one of the pirates, who said he spoke with the men by satellite phone at about 3 p.m. — four hours before the Navy opened fire — said they "were getting scared" and trying to persuade the Americans to let them go in return for the captain's release.

"They were trying to save their own lives," said the relative, Hassan Mohammed Farah, speaking by phone from Harardheere, a coastal town in central Somalia where pirates are known to operate. "The only thing they could bargain with was the captain, but the Americans would not accept."

The pirates had appealed by satellite phone to other pirate groups to sail captive ships and hostages to the scene of the standoff, to put some pressure on the U.S. forces. But Guled Farah, who belongs to another pirate group that had hijacked a German ship last week, said the presence of the U.S. vessels scared

them off.

"Their little boat was surrounded," Farah said by phone from Harardheere. "We couldn't go to help them, and for that we are sorry."

The rescue marked a dramatic conclusion to a saga that began Wednesday, when the pirates attempted to hijack an American-owned container ship, the Maersk Alabama, which was delivering food aid to Africa. It was another in a surge of pirate attacks this year off the coast of Somalia, Africa's most anarchic nation, with a coastline the length of California and no military force to police it.

The ship's unarmed, 20-man crew banded together to beat back the pirates, who escaped in one of the Alabama's lifeboats with Phillips, the captain. The Alabama arrived Saturday in the Kenyan port of Mombasa, its original destination, where crew members described Phillips as a hero.

One said that Phillips "jumped" on one of the pirates after the pirate was led into the ship's engine room.

On Sunday, crew members, who have not been permitted formal interviews with reporters, shouted to journalists from the ship the pirates had never taken control of the vessel. They said as soon as the pirates entered the ship's bridge, Captain Phillips passed control of the vessel to the ship's engine room and disabled the steering mechanism on the bridge.

But Phillips refused to take credit for the outcome of events.

"The real heroes are the Navy, the SEALs,

those who have brought me home," Phillips said by phone from the USS Boxer, according to a statement by John Reinhart, the CEO of Norfolk, Va.-based Maersk Line, the ship owner.

The U.S. Navy released a photograph of Phillips after his rescue. He appeared healthy despite having spent more than 100 hours adrift in 110-degree-plus temperatures with limited food and water.

Obama, who'd been receiving regular briefings on the standoff, according to the White House, telephoned Phillips after his release and praised his bravery.

"His safety has been our principal concern, and I know this is a welcome relief to his family and his crew," Obama said in a statement.

Even as the military celebrated Phillips's rescue, however, it remained unclear what the United States could do to better protect ships traveling in the waters off of Somalia, which hasn't had a functioning government in nearly two decades and lacks a coast guard or effective police force to rein in piracy.

A coalition of international navies has deployed warships to patrol the vast waters, but there have nevertheless been at least 18 hijack attempts on passing ships in the last three weeks, Gortney said.

At the time of the Alabama hijacking, 16 international navies were patrolling the region but the nearest ship — the USS Bainbridge — was 300 nautical miles away.

—MCT Campus

Navy finalizes sea dispute, shoots 3 pirates dead

By Stephanie McCrummen
The Washington Post

NAIROBI, Kenya — Somali pirates seized a U.S.-operated container ship Wednesday with 20 American crew on board, the latest in a spate of pirate attacks that have drawn an international flotilla of naval vessels to the waters off Somalia's coast.

A U.S. Navy spokeswoman, Cmdr. Jane Campbell, confirmed the attack on the 17,000-ton Maersk Alabama, which was carrying food aid. She said it was the first seizure in recent memory of a U.S.-operated ship.

Campbell also noted that the pirates, who have been operating a multimillion-dollar shake-down business mostly in the crowded shipping lanes in the Gulf of Aden, seem to be moving south to the less-controlled, open sea off Somalia's vast coast — a shoreline roughly the length of the East Coast of the United States.

The Maersk Alabama was seized 500 miles south of the Gulf of Aden transit routes where most of the 20 or so naval vessels are patrolling, Campbell said. The nearest navy ship was about 300 miles away.

"It's an incredibly vast area, and basically we're seeing pirates in more than a million-square-mile operating area," said Campbell, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, based in Bahrain.

"So while the presence of naval vessels has had an effect, we continue to say that naval presence alone will never be a total solution. It starts ashore."

The Maersk Alabama is owned and operated by Maersk Line Ltd. in the United States, part of the Copenhagen-headquartered A.P. Moller Maersk Group, according to a statement on the company's Web site. It is the sixth ship to be seized in the past week, said Andrew Mwangura, coordinator for the East African Seafarer's Assistance Program based in Mombassa, Kenya,

where the Maersk Alabama was headed.

Mwangura said the attack marks a rise in a piracy problem that cost companies \$150 million in ransom last year. The attacks had been stemmed in recent months by patrolling navy ships sent from the United States, Russia, China, Turkey and Pakistan, among other nations.

There are now 18 ships being held by Somali pirates, a wily bunch who deploy a high- and low-tech arsenal of satellite phones, rocket-propelled grenades and wooden ladders to take over the massive container ships.

Although there is no word yet on the fate of the Maersk Alabama crew, the pirates usually take sailors onto shore and begin negotiating hefty ransoms that fund lavish lifestyles centered in Somalia's pirate capital of Eyl, along the coast.

Campbell said that despite the deployment of heavily armed ships to combat piracy, at least three shipping companies have managed to fend

off pirates recently using relatively low-tech methods. One simply zigzagged, outmaneuvering the pirates, who typically attack in 15-foot skiffs. Another used flares and a water hose. The third one: old-fashioned barbed wire.

"These boats are usually armed to the teeth with RPGs and automatic weapons, but the method of boarding is literally tilting a ladder and climbing," she said.

"In this case, when they got to the top of the ladder, the barbed wire was there."

Maritime officials reported that the pirate attack on the Maersk Alabama began late at night and lasted about five hours.

Up to three pirate skiffs were said to be involved. The container ship's crew tried to take evasive action before the pirates eventually were able to board it. Piracy experts attribute the recent surge in successful hijackings largely to an improvement in the weather in recent weeks.

—LATWP News Service

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Our Voice

Killers thrive on gun free zones

A Virginia Tech student goes on, what can simply be called, a rampage, killing 32 people. A drifter walks off the street into a Colorado public school and kidnaps a half a dozen girls before sexually molesting and shooting one of them. Three Wisconsin teenagers are taken into custody for plotting a bomb attack on their school. A teacher is gunned down in Vermont as a man searches angrily from classroom to classroom for his ex-girlfriend. Another student in a rural school shoots his principal.

Those “Gun-Free Zone” signs in front of public schools just aren’t catching on. Or are they?

Does anybody else see the obvious connection between gun-free zones” and murder? Harris and Klebold at Columbine High School, John Lee Malvo in Baltimore, Charles McCoy in Columbus, Ohio?

And not only that, but do you see the obvious omission: how are these innocents being protected? Short answer: they’re not.

Gun control laws do not protect good people; they disarm good people. Bad people are encouraged, not intimidated, by gun control laws. Criminals, by definition, break the law; how is a new law going to prevent them from carrying a gun when they’re breaking a law to use it in a crime in the first place? A placard outside of a school or hospital is not going to prevent a criminal from carrying a gun onto the property. The placards make criminals more likely to use their gun. Criminals prefer a disarmed population. Criminals aren’t stupid. Gun-free zones are the safest places to kill people and that’s why most of the mass murders in our nation take place at these locations. The gun control policies of the public school system are almost as deadly as their Planned Parenthood-sponsored sex education classes.

Good people have nothing to

fear from good people keeping and bearing arms. Only bad people need to fear that. If there were only that much sense in a politician willing to defy the liberal insanity of gun-free zones and allow good people to carry the means of defense on their person.

Our nation’s gun-free zones are a microcosm of the politics of mass murder on a much grander scale: Mao tse Tung, Hitler, and Stalin, the three most infamous mass murderers in history, only succeeded in their diabolical tyranny because of successful gun control. Gun control is job security for criminals and tyrants, who lie about what keeps us safe and usurp common-sense rights to protect us. Guns in the hands of teachers, doctors, and bus drivers are not what is transforming our gun-free zones into killing zones. It’s guns

in the hands of criminals, giddy with the leftist policies that guarantee their victims will be disarmed and defenseless.

“But we can always dial 911, and the police will protect us!”

Tell that to the six girls in Colorado that were held at gunpoint while the police waited outside behind their cars. Tell that to the Columbine students, who hid under desks at the library and barricaded themselves in classrooms as Harris and Klebold went on their killing spree while officers hid behind their bullet-proof shields outside the school for hours. In their defense, the police were successful at keeping armed and furious parents from charging onto school property to kill the butchers and protect their kids. That would have violated school policy, and the parents may have been shot in the back had they tried it.

Carrying guns onto school property, even if it’s to protect your kids from mass murderers, is almost as bad as student-led prayer or posting the Ten Commandments. Hopefully the irony in that last statement isn’t lost on you.

VALENCIA VOICE

Opinion:

CORRECTIONS

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Dan Carino / MCT Campus

Your Voice

Urban schools, safest learning environments

By Adam Fishman
afishman@valenciavoicedotcom

Urban school officials and law enforcement have taken concrete steps to stamp out violence. Students have to pass through metal detectors when they enter the school and in cities like Boston, police and civic activists have beefed up community policing and violence prevention education programs in recent years, which has dramatically reduced the rate of juvenile crime.

The rural and suburban schools aren’t following the same platforms that have had some success in the urban communities.

In fact, suburban students are negatively impacted by the urban subculture that promotes violence and crime.

In contrast, suburban school officials don’t seem to be impacted at all by measures taken in urban schools to prevent violence.

Yet if schools become too vigilant about tightening security, they can lead more students to feel mistrusted and alienated, which can lead to more violence.

Although rural school shootings seem to be escalating, though the phenomenon is still rare. Psychologists simply lack enough cases to draw strong scientific conclusions.

Is it even at all possible to predict which children are potential murderers, and to intervene before they kill? Some psychologists say such an effort

may be the equivalent of casting a “fishing net” too widely.

Many experts believe that if you try, based on present knowledge, to invent a screening tool to identify who’s at risk for engaging in a homicidal act, you would probably pinpoint a lot of kids who engage in antisocial behavior but may not kill. You can argue that all the students involved in school shootings had access to a firearm. But does that mean any kid with access to a gun is a potential killer?

Regardless, behavioral scientists know enough about youth violence to begin making some efforts to prevent school murders. Plenty of violence-prevention programs have shown promise in the inner cities.

Such programs, many of them being used in elementary schools, teach children to praise others, avoid insults, resolve conflicts peacefully, manage their anger and speak about hurt feelings.

Many of them also provide parenting training programs for high-risk families.

Although it’s not yet clear whether these prevention strategies are applicable in suburban and rural regions, where demographic factors are significantly different, schools and community leaders have no reason not to try them.

We can’t afford to not act on preventing the suggested risk factors, even if the scientific information isn’t complete.

We can’t afford to not act on preventing the suggested risk factors, even if the scientific information isn’t complete.

Your Voice

Assailants display like trends

By Kenny Wagner
kwagner@valenciavoicedotcom

School violence is now a full-fledged epidemic, every week it seems we hear news of another school shooting and this type of violence is not just affecting our own country.

On April 13 a gunman at Locke High School in Los Angeles shot and killed a 16 year-old classmate. Just last month a German student shot and killed 18 students and similar acts of violence have been reported across the world. Although these types of violence are seemingly unrelated, there are clear indications that there might be a format that all gunmen follow an archetypal mass-murderer per-say.

Among the criteria that assumingly makes a killer a killer the one that sticks out in most minds is the fact that most school shootings and mass-murders are executed, no pun intended, by someone in treatment and on medication for a mental defect.

Cho Seung-Hui, the gunman behind the Virginia Tech shooting was on medication for psychological problems, as was Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold of columbine. Across the board it seems that all of these school shoot-

ings were carried out by individuals, all males, on prescription medication.

According to a 2008 article in USA Today drugs that are prescribed for mental issues are often times no more effective than a placebo. They have also found that it’s hard for Doctors to refer patients to a specialist that could work out some of their problems through proper channels.

It is clear that these depression and anxiety drugs do not work, or at least they don’t work when not paired with proper counseling. Schools should be aware of this, after all if students are not getting the help they need, they will eventually attempt to self medicate. Some may choose to drink themselves into oblivion, some might seek to take it out on family members, and who knows some might look to find professional help and better themselves.

But, there will always be a few that seek to end another person’s life to attempt to cure themselves. Also, shcools cannot be afraid of profiling, if someone is being treated for bipolar disorder and has a violent history, they need to be vigil of this person and make sure that they will not be a threat to the greater population.

There will always be a few that seek to end another person’s life to attempt to cure themselves.

Do you feel safe at West campus?

Tips for students to stay safe

By Lee Bierer
McClatchy Newspapers

Most students assume nothing can go wrong in their college bubble. Students often get caught up in a false sense of security. But, unfortunately, bad things do happen.

Here are some suggestions of ways for students to stay safe on a college campus:

Don't walk alone after dark. Use the campus escort service. If you must walk alone, stay alert, don't listen to your iPod and don't stop at an ATM. Be sure to walk on well-lit paths and know where the emergency phones are located. Know the number for campus security; plug it into your cell phone. Keep the cell phone handy so you can make a call, if necessary. Make sure someone knows where you are at all times. Text when you arrive safely at your destination.

According to the Parents' Guide to College Life and a survey done by Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America, more than 100,000 property crimes on college campuses are reported to police each year and thieves make off with an average of \$1,250 in stolen student property per theft.

Get a locking device for your laptop. Ask someone to watch your belongings when you head to the restroom or take a break at the library. About 25 percent of all college-age women are victims of rape or attempted rape. Feelings of invincibility by male students lead them to riskier behavior than their common sense would dictate. Approximately 1,700 students die from alcohol-related injuries each year.

Avoid drinking too much. Do not accept a drink from anyone other than a bartender. Date rape drugs are easily slipped into drinks. Never go home with a stranger. Bring enough money to pay for a taxi back to your dorm, if necessary.

Despite these statistics, college campuses are still generally very safe places. Still, the best bet is to be smart and be vigilant.

—MCT Campus



"I don't wander around this campus that much, I just stay in one building. So, I feel pretty safe."

— Mashanti Clarke



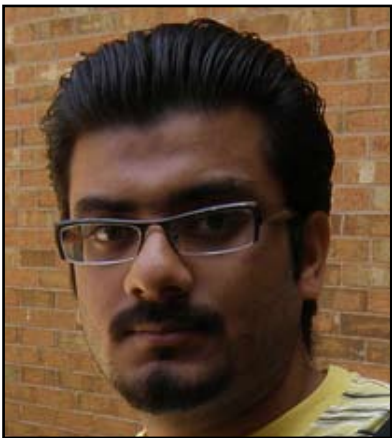
"I've never been robbed before so I feel pretty safe. But if it did happen to me I'd be the first to say, yeah let's do something about it."

—Tri Tran



"Not really but I don't have anything all that valuable. Jokes on somebody who tries to rob me. I had a friend who was robbed on campus and had his laptop stolen. That was scary, but I don't carry anything like that."

— Asodeh Pakniat



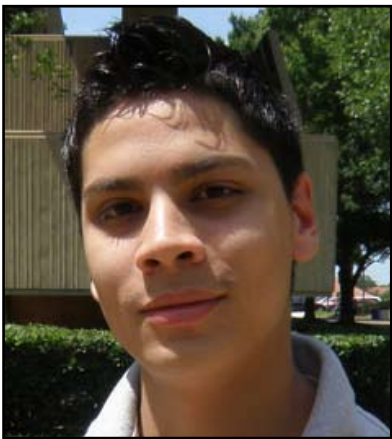
"I feel safe on campus, I've had no problems. Security does a decent job and my classes are in the morning so I feel safe, at night I don't know."

— Awais Ifdikhar



"I can say I feel safe on campus because I'm always in class, SSB or the library. I'm never out in the parking lot."

— Judy Vasquez



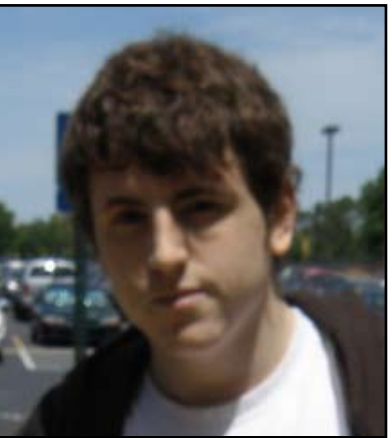
"I feel safe, it's not like 50 people have been robbed. When I drive home I have to go through Pine Hills but I've never been robbed and I've been going here for two years."

—Johan Rodriguez



"Not all the time, I had an incident where I was being followed in the parking lot at night. Then security came by and the person kind of ran away."

— Darlinette Goris



"I feel safe here despite the neighborhood. I don't think campus security really does their job all they do is drive their golf carts around the campus."

— Greg Felicitto

Kenny Wagner / Valencia Voice

Gun control helps to curb violence

The Philadelphia Inquirer

With the 10th anniversary of the Columbine High School massacre approaching, communities across the nation have relived the horror of what happens when evil, paranoia and madness mix with the ready availability of guns.

An appalling series of eight mass shootings has claimed at least 57 lives in recent weeks.

On Saturday, three Pittsburgh police officers were slain by a man wielding an AK-47. The day before, a suicidal gunman took the lives of 13 civilians in Binghamton, N.Y., before shooting himself. Domestic disputes led to other massacres in which children were cut down.

Experts believe the nation's economic woes are a factor underlying some of the latest violence. But easy access to fearsome armaments enables killers to wreak carnage when they snap.

With 280 million weapons available in the country, it's little wonder guns account for roughly 12,000 of the 17,000 people murdered each year.

As the nation did after the April 20, 1999, Columbine murders, it is time to confront the many causes of gun violence.

But the starting point has to be stricter gun control measures, including a national assault-weapon ban, wider reporting of lost and stolen guns, universal background checks, and limits on handgun purchases.

For local police to have any hope of fighting illegal gun sales, Congress also must re-

peal the Tiahrt Amendment that shields traffickers by limiting gun traces.

The question is whether the latest shootings will budge the needle on a public policy debate that has been stalemated for years.

Until now, the Obama administration has failed to take on the National Rifle Association over even the most reasonable gun control measure.

Granted, Team Obama has been busy on other fronts, but that's hardly a tenable stance now.

Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. in February took aim at what should be the top priority: reinstating a tough, federal assault-weapon ban.

Until the ban lapsed in 2004, it safeguarded police from 19 military-style weapons for a decade.

There's other unfinished business, too: turning down the volume on the increasingly reckless drumbeat from right-wing groups over a so-called "Second Amendment Revolution."

The fear ascribed to Pittsburgh's 23-year-old cop-killer suspect, that President Obama was about to ban guns, isn't all that surprising, given some gun-rights rhetoric.

As the CeaseFirePA gun control group asked this week, "At what point does superheated rhetoric about government coming to take your arms turn into a toxic brew that puts some misguided loner packing guns over the edge?" The debate should be about how to stop senseless shootings.

—MCT Campus

White House welcomes new dog for 1st family

By Manuel Roig-Franzia
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Who let the dog out? That's the Washington mystery du jour.

The identity of the first puppy, the one that the Washington press corps has been yelping about for months, the one President Obama has seemed to delight in dropping hints about, leaked out Saturday. This despite White House efforts to delay the news until the big debut planned for Tuesday afternoon.

The little guy is a six-month-old Portuguese water dog given to the Obama girls as a gift by that Portuguese water dog-lovin' senator himself, Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts. Malia and Sasha named it Bo; their cousins have a cat named Bo and first lady Michelle Obama's father was nicknamed Diddley, a source said. (Get it? Bo ... Diddley?)

Bo's a handsome little guy. Well suited for formal occasions at the White House, he's got tuxedo-black fur, with a white chest, white paws and a rakish white goatee.

Clearly, the identity of the dog was information too big to contain. A mysterious Web site called FirstDogCharlie.com published a puppy picture Saturday morning, complete with a Q and A with the dog, which it said was originally named Charlie. The celebrity gossip Web site TMZ.com linked to the picture. So much for the big White House unveiling.

The affair was another hard lesson for Obama's tight-knit team, which had considerable success at controlling information and leaking tidbits to different news outlets during the campaign. But once Obama took office, that proved more difficult. With more wide-ranging sources of information available, word leaked to the media of major nominations, as well as the tax problems that sank former South Dakota senator Tom Daschle's bid to become the White House health czar.

In mid-March, word on the street was that



Pete Souza, White House / LATWP

The Obama family gets to know their Portuguese water dog, which daughters Sasha and Malia named Bo.

the White House was going to plant a vegetable garden. A Washington Post food reporter was making calls, probing, pushing. But the White House was mum. Word filtered out that the exclusive had been promised to The New York Times. But the White House offered a mollifier: The puppy exclusive is yours.

The newspaper that cracked Watergate was happy to have the puppy story.

These kinds of arrangements get made all the time in Washington but seldom are discussed publicly. The puppy deal seemed to be holding up. Sure, reporters here and there nipped at the story. There were hints that the puppy was a gift. There were reports that the

Kennedys were involved, but the senator's press people professed no knowledge.

But then came Saturday morning. The FirstDogCharlie site included a photograph of a Portuguese water dog that looked exactly like the dog in a White House photo, right down to the multicolored lei, that The Washington Post was getting ready to publish on the front page of its Sunday paper. (FirstDogCharlie was registered anonymously on Friday on the Web site GoDaddy.com.)

Still, there's lots of stuff that didn't leak out, including a secret get-acquainted session with the family at the White House a few weeks ago. The visit, known around the White House as

"The Meeting," was a surprise for the girls. Bo wore a lei then, too.

Bo charmed the first family, a source who was there said. He sat when the girls sat, stood when the girls stood. He made no toileting errors and did not gnaw on the furniture. Bo has, after all, been receiving lessons in good behavior from the Kennedys' dog trainers. These lessons have been taking place at a secret, undisclosed location outside Washington.

Bo, though he was raised elsewhere, already has a keen sense of who's in charge inside the Beltway. When the president walked across the room during the visit, Bo followed obediently. "He's soooooo cute," the source said, referring, let us be clear, to the puppy. "It's very exciting. They had a great meeting."

Just in case Portie-mania ensues, how could it not, after all this buildup?, a staffer warns that Porties "are not for everyone. They're very energetic. They play, play, play. Then they sleep."

Some issues remain to be resolved. Where, for instance, will Bo sleep? The White House has plenty of rooms to choose from, but the great question of whether he'll get to bunk with one or both of the girls remains undecided.

During the campaign, word surfaced that Obama had promised a dog to his girls. Since then, he has been hounded constantly about the choice. Precious moments in most of his first major interviews as president-elect and then as president were dedicated to the puppy question.

The Labradoodle and the Portuguese water dog were always in the running because they are considered good pets for children who have allergies, as Malia does.

In a statement, the Kennedys said: "We couldn't be happier to see the joy that Bo is bringing to Malia and Sasha. We love our Portuguese Water Dogs and know that the girls, and their parents, will love theirs, too."

— LATWP News Service

Obama lifts Cuban travel restrictions

By Lesley Clark
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Monday made the first U.S. overture toward Cuba in decades, lifting all travel and gift restrictions for Cuban-Americans and sending charter tour companies scrambling for more and bigger jets to meet the expected demand.

The formal announcement, expected for months as part of a presidential campaign promise, came at the apparently first-ever bilingual White House briefing, with spokesman Robert Gibbs saying Obama was "taking some concrete steps today to bring about some much-needed change that will benefit the people of Cuba, to increase the freedom that they have."

The policy change, which includes pushing for more cell phone and satellite service for Cubans on the island, reversed former President George W. Bush's efforts to tighten restrictions against Cuba but stopped far short of efforts in Congress to lift all travel restrictions to the island.

White House officials said the changes are aimed at hastening change on the island, in part by helping Cubans become less dependent on the Cuban government.

"We think the positive benefits here will way outweigh any negative effects that they may have," said Dan Restrepo, a special assistant to the president who spoke in English and Spanish.

"That creating independence, creating space for the Cuban people to operate freely from the regime is the kind of space they need to start the process toward a more democratic Cuba."

The changes would allow unlimited family visits and remittances, let U.S. companies seek



Georgia Tasker, Miami Herald / MCT Campus

The national ballet building and the Capitolio, the home of the Cuban national government in Havana.

contracts for communication services in Cuba and expand the types of humanitarian aid that can be sent.

Last month, Congress resumed allowing Cuban-Americans to visit family members once a year. Under Bush that was pushed back to once every three years.

Obama campaigned on a promise to improve relations with Cuba, and the policy changes have support among Cuban-Americans who'd like to see family more often.

Supporters of a hard-line stance against the communist regime, though, criticized Obama for not seeking concessions from Havana. In a joint statement, Florida Republican Reps. Lincoln and Mario Diaz-Balart said Obama has made "a serious mistake by unilaterally increasing Cuban-American travel and remittance dollars for the Cuban dictatorship."

They said Obama should insist that Cuba release political prisoners; legalize political parties, labor unions and the press; and sched-

ule elections. But the White House said the changes are aimed at increasing communication, among Cubans on the island and here in the United States.

The telecommunication changes include allowing U.S. companies to seek to operate satellite radio and TV on the island, something Cuba would have to permit.

They also would allow Americans to pay for cell phone bills in Cuba, which can be expensive.

The White House also called on the regime to end its practice of keeping a portion of every remittance.

"The president's very clear that we're getting the United States out of the business of regulating the relationship between Cuban families," Restrepo said.

"The Cuban government should get out of the business of regulating the relationship between Cuban families."

— MCT Campus



Using past to foresee divorce

By Kyung M. Song
The Seattle Times

It may sound like a conservative's marriage manifesto: Pick a partner with a similar background, don't shack up without an engagement ring and stick with even a lifeless marriage for your kids' sake.

But following that creed could avert divorce, which, statistics show, can be perilous to your health. Researchers have persuasively linked certain demographic and socio-economic factors — many of which you can't control — with higher odds of marital breakup.

Your race, occupation, income, age at first wedding, the length of courtship and whether you have children from previous relationships all can preordain the success of your marriage even before the "I dos."

Did your parents divorce? Your own marriage is twice as likely to end that way than if you grew up in an intact family. Do you and your spouse practice different religions? Chances are your marriage won't endure as well as those of couples who worship together.

About 40 percent of American marriages end in a divorce. Marital disruptions strain child-parent bonds (particularly between fathers and children), plunge many women into financial hardship and can show human nature at its nastiest.

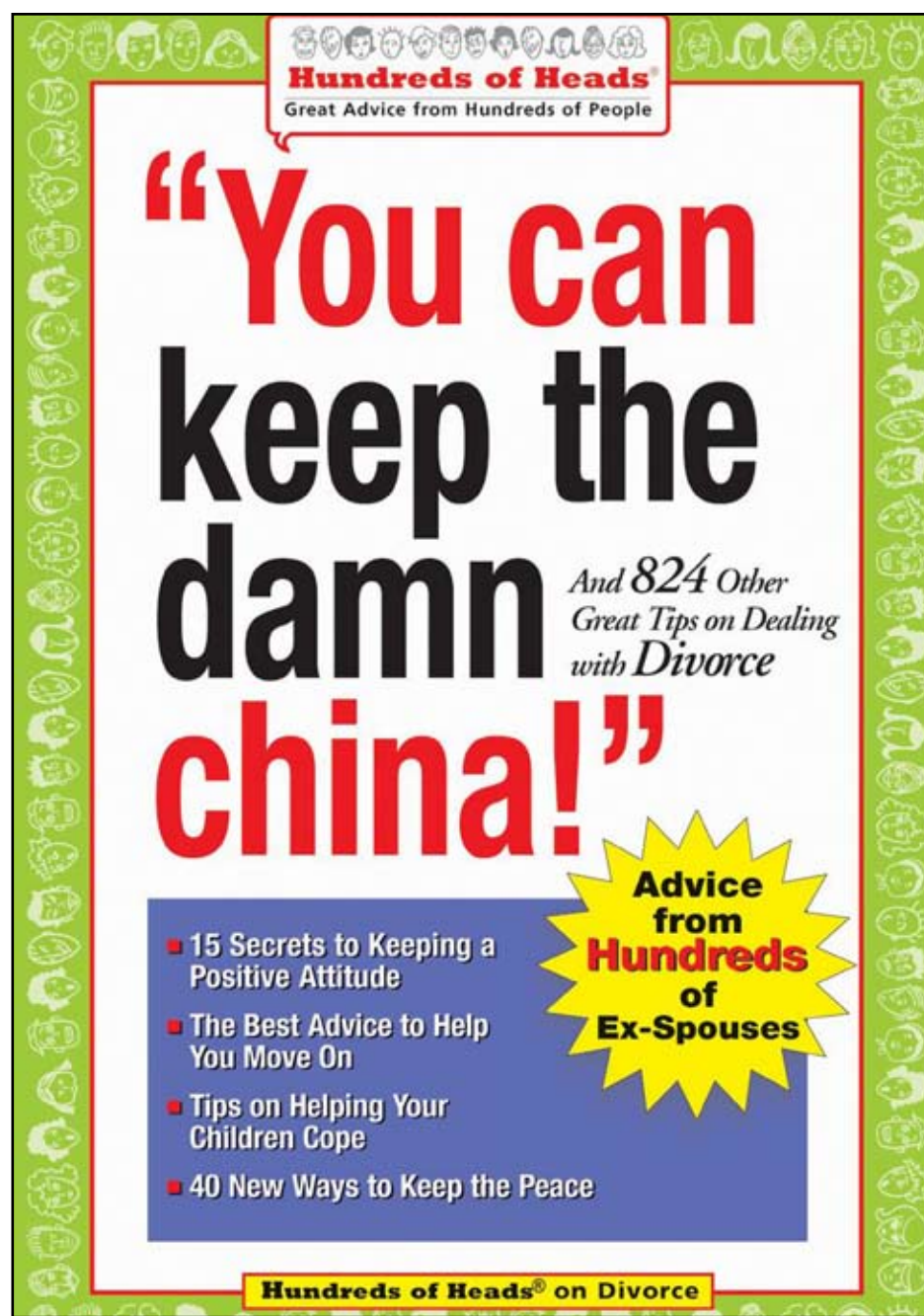
The health effects of divorce on children depend partly on the degree of civility between the parents. Though children generally are better off in two-parent households, marriages marked by open contempt, constant criticism and vicious arguments can exact a huge psychological toll on them.

Numerous studies show that such children can develop mental-health problems, ranging from lowered self-esteem to depression and anxiety to greater aggression. In such cases, the children's mental and emotional well-being actually improves after the couple parts ways.

Why not just give up? With the stakes so high, how could anyone handicapped by demographics and family history hazard marrying?

"If you want to be rational, you might want to interview your dating partner" for divorce risks, joked Nicholas Wolfinger, author of "Understanding the Divorce Cycle: The Children of Divorce in Their Own Marriages" (Cambridge University Press), published this year.

Wolfinger analyzed data on 33,000 Americans from two major national household surveys to calculate how divorces recur through generations. His conclusion: Having divorced parents



Divorces are now becoming more petty and frustrating than ever before. "You Can Keep the Damn China! And 824 Other Tips on Dealing With Divorce" details tips on how to survive the stress.

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greatly jeopardizes the odds of keeping one's marriage intact and heightens the likelihood of multiple divorces.

Wolfinger found that when both husband and wife come from families of divorce, they are nearly three times more likely to split up than couples whose parents stayed married.

If a parent was divorced at least twice, the odds that an offspring's marriage will survive are

only one in three. Another cause is that, statistically, children of divorce become sexually active earlier and marry younger than others, said Wolfinger, associate professor in the University of Utah's Department of Family and Consumer Studies.

Various researchers have found a strong correlation between age at time of marriage and elevated divorce risk. In fact, Scott Stanley, co-

director of the Center for Marital and Family Studies at the University of Denver, regards teen marriages as the most vulnerable of unions.

"My belief is young age at marriage would trump everything else" as a divorce predictor, Stanley said. "People getting married at 18 are at such high risk."

Stanley says people who marry young lack the maturity and coping skills to sustain long-term relationships. They also choose ill-suited mates. "If they had married at 22, they would have married a different person," Stanley said.

Contrary to what many people believe, "test driving" a relationship by living together before marriage also reduces the odds of success. The exact reasons are unclear.

It may be that couples make riskier picks with a live-in partner than they would with a potential spouse. Or couples who defer marriage and opt to live together first may do so because they have trouble with commitment.

Sliding into marriage becomes "a transition without a decision," Stanley said. "For a lot of young people, it's not a real deliberative thing. They're not really thinking, 'Are you the one?' 'Am I the one?'"

According to Teachman, Americans are less likely to divorce if they are Catholic, have high education levels, marry someone close to their own age and don't have children before wedding.

For instance, the chances of divorce for a woman who is five or more years older than her husband is 88 percent greater than for couples without the age gap. Teachman based his calculations on more than two decades' worth of data from the National Survey of Family Growth.

Couples in distressed marriages may feel compelled to remain together if they have children, said Paul Amato, professor of sociology and demography at Penn State University.

And in many cases, children benefit from that choice. Even if the spouses are miserable, Amato said, children tend to be better adjusted and achieve more in a two-parent home.

Sometimes parents use the children to justify divorce. "Parents think, 'If I'm happier, my children will be happier.' That's not necessarily true. Children want access to both parents," Amato said. Divorce involving children "is not a private issue any more. It's a public issue."

But Amato said that does not hold for couples whose relationship has turned toxic, marked by constant fighting, hostility and verbal or physical attacks. "A lot of kids would be better off if the parents split," Amato said.

—MCT Campus

Faking marriage goes mainstream

By Eric Edwards
The Orlando Sentinel

I wouldn't want to say it's easy being a woman.

If I did, I'd probably get strung up by my own small intestine before I even finished this column.

But when it comes to dating, women who have it good often suffer an embarrassment of Riches and Davids and Henrys and Chucks.

It seems some women get so much attention from admiring menfolk they have been forced to devise a way to weed out some of the less-suitable suitors.

While there are women who would love the extra attention, those who are subjected to that onslaught have found that more is not always better when it comes to finding Mr. Right.

So in order to keep some of the wolves of dating at bay, these princesses of popularity picked up on the fake engagement ring.

The New York Post recently reported that these faux rocks are the accessories of the season for fashionable ladies who just want to be left alone.

They drop \$10 on a gaudy stone, apply to left ring finger and watch as one-time pursuers fade into the background.

One woman told the Post that she no longer has any trouble walking past leering/howling construction workers. When the guys stop shoveling dirt and start shoveling lines, she just flashes her ring and the curtain falls.



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Engagement rings have now become a way to ignore men that is not attractive

Of course, this raises the question: Why don't these women wear wedding bands? But I guess if you're going for the fake-out, you might as well do it with the style that only a

diamond can bring.

While I admire any innovation that makes single life easier, I wonder if these young ladies realize that not only may they be chasing away Mr. Wrong, their two-carat fake may also be dissuading real catches from making passes.

Let's face it: It would be madness for any guy to hit on a woman who is wearing an enormous jewel.

As far as I can tell, most women who sport engagement rings are so proud of their new accessory you don't even have to see the ring to know they're spoken for.

Frankly, there are enough honestly engaged women in the world who are off-limits that it seems unfair for women to muddy the waters of dating just because they hate to tell a guy to buzz off.

Fortunately for men who have fallen victim to the fake engagement ring dupe and who spend their nights cold, lonely and without a tender woman's lap on which to lay their head, the "lap pillow" has been introduced in Tokyo.

Manufactured by Trane KK, the lap pillow resembles the look and feel of a woman's lap in a mini-skirt.

According to the company, which sells the dolls for under \$100, single men have taken an instant liking to the pillows, and they have



Ariane Kadoch, Los Angeles Times/Met Campus

Cathy Anderson still wears her diamond even though she is divorced.

already shipped about 3,000 of them.

With innovative ideas such as the fake engagement ring and the fake woman's lap, it looks as if society is making strides toward segregating the sexes so much that our grandkids will want to huddle around the fireside when we're old and listen to tales about the archaic ritual of "dating."

That is, if we are able to get up off our fake women's laps long enough to go out and find a woman who's not wearing a faux engagement ring and might be interested in joining us for a cup of coffee sometime.

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Starring Reese Witherspoon, Seth Rogen and Kiefer Sutherland, "Monsters vs. Aliens" took in a total of \$59.3 million and opened at the number one spot; \$5.2 million was earned in IMAX theaters alone, making it the third highest-grossing IMAX debut, behind "The Dark Knight" and "Watchmen."

'Monsters vs. Aliens' entertains whole family

By Frank Tobin
ftobin@valenciacoice.com

One would have to believe that—as far as animated features goes—Dreamworks must feel sort of like Avis Car Rental, No. 2 behind Pixar Studios. This feeling of inferiority was never more apparent with the release of "Monsters vs. Aliens," which is basically "Monsters, Inc." meets the "Incredibles," two vastly superior Pixar movies.

It's a colorful wonderama for the kids with a few over-their-head jokes tossed in to please parents. This picture exhibits a lot of intelligence, but strangely very little heart.

This is surprising especially for the studio which produced the hilarious and often emotional "Shrek" franchise. It also gets a bit

intense in some scenes and parents may find this a bit of a problem, as well. The story has Susan (Reese Witherspoon) preparing for her marriage to the cocky and selfish weatherman Derek Deil (Paul Rudd) when she is struck by a meteor from out of the blue.

Of course, as we all know, such an occurrence would not crush her, it just makes her grow to gigantic proportions - 49 and-a-half feet, to be exact. Right? Why are all the scientists shaking their heads?

When average California girl, Susan Murphy (voiced by Reese Witherspoon) is hit by a meteor and mysteriously grows 49-foot-11-inches at her wedding, the government arrives, stuns, captures and hauls her off to a gray jail cell.

Soon, though, she perks up when meeting

her fellow cell-mates, various monsters kept in captivity since the 1950s: Dr. Cockroach (a play on the 'Fly,' voiced by Hugh "House" Laurie); the Missing Link (a Creature from the Black Lagoon); B.O.B. (a one-eyed Blob-type thing, played by Seth Rogen) and a giant caterpillar (think Mothra).

They all become heroes, saving the world from total domination by other evil aliens. As previously mentioned, the animation here is terrific. The scenes in and around San Francisco are amazing; the views from space are awe-inspiring and the characters are well done and well-defined. The writing, for the most part, tries to imitate the old Warner Brothers cartoons with juvenile silliness the youngsters could relate to mixed in with the jokes only adults could contemplate.

The main problems are the lack of character development (we know little of any of the main leads and the various aliens and monsters that are just thrown at us); poor pacing (the movie speeds up slows down and speeds up again) and the absence of an emotional center (we just do not care about any of these characters like we did Shrek, Fiona, or Donkey).

The faults are not fatal, but draw the distinction between better, more polished animated CGI efforts. Still, in an atmosphere of really bad films currently playing, and fewer family movies showing, "Monsters vs. Aliens" is not a terrible picture to see.

At least the whole family can be entertained for a while and there's nothing wrong with that.

'Observe and Report' humorously tops the rest

By Colin Covert
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

There won't be a more polarizing comedy released in 2009 than "Observe and Report." This audacious, subversive action comedy turns two of our cuddliest performers, Seth Rogen and Anna Faris, into poster kids for atrocious misbehavior. Writer-director Jody Hill knows that disgusting and hilarious can be two sides of a very thin coin.

Rogen plays Ronnie, a blustery incompetent who is the head of security at Forest Ridge shopping mall. He's a genuinely scary clown, who has a vicious streak and the soul of a vigilante. When a serial flasher starts exposing himself, Ronnie becomes a one-man war on terror.

"Part of me thinks this disgusting pervert is the best thing that ever happened to me," he crows. Ronnie uses the security threat to unleash his inner badass. The heightened threat level provides him an excuse to go Dirty Harry on anyone who annoys him. And it gives him a chance to strut in front of Brandi (Faris), a makeup counter hottie who seems to have stumbled out of a "Girls Gone Wild" video.

If he catches the exhibitionist, Ronnie figures, he's a shoo-in to land his dream job as a policeman. But when real cop Det. Harrison (Ray Liotta) steps into the case, our cocky antihero faces a threat to his jurisdiction, and a rival for Brandi's attention (short as it is).

Rogen and Faris commit fully to their appalling roles. He proves that he can play characters more complicated than his usual lovable klutz, and she is a good sport about looking disturbingly vulgar and trashy. The moment when she upchucks after a "date" of tequila shots, he chivalrously proclaims, "I accept you," and seals the deal with a deep, lingering kiss, is unnerving and uproarious.

Hill skillfully toys with our instinct to identify with Ronnie, but keeps our emotions off balance. Ronnie is initially sympathetic. He's been dealt a bad hand in life.

His mom (Celia Weston) is a lush, and his dream of joining the force seems unattainable. But the terse, macho voiceovers that narrate his daily grind reveal the fury beneath his roly-poly exterior. "In these dark times, the world has no use for another scared man," he declares. He's like the pompous man-child heroes of Will Ferrell movies, but with psychological problems and a gun fetish.

When Det. Harrison drops Ronnie off in a bad part of town to give him a taste of real police work, the comic payoff is all the stronger because it's so unexpectedly brutal. Lily livers and weak stomachs, look out.

Those willing to step outside the comfort zone of run-of-the-mill studio comedy should check it out. "I live by a code of my own invention," Ronnie explains, and so does "Observe and Report."

—MCT Campus



Warner Brothers Pictures/MCT

Director Jody Hill, left, talks with actor Seth Rogen on the set of "Observe and Report."



Courtesy of ign.com

Ninja Blade character fights off demon-like villains, infected victims of an infestation of “Alpha Worms,” a flesh-eating parasite that is terrorizing the streets of Tokyo

‘Ninja Blade’ lacks originality

By Frank Tobin
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It’s been said that “imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” That might be a bit too simplistic of an analysis to sum up the whole of this experience.

Composer Igor Stravinsky once said, “Good composers borrow, great composers steal.” One can’t help but wonder if the team behind “Ninja Blade” took these words to heart while creating their new genre bouncing adventure.

You can find elements of popular and successful franchises from the likes of Capcom, Tecmo, Konami, Sony and even a little hint of Ubisoft. But it’s both a blessing and a curse, as while it’s still fun to play, it seems to have trouble finding a unique voice of its own.

In a lot of ways, the game is reminiscent

of “Ninja Gaiden.” It’s got the same big-city, tiny-ninja feel down to a tee. You play as Ken, because there’s already a ninja named Ryu.

Working as a member of an elite black-ops military group, you are sent into Tokyo to fight off an infestation of “Alpha Worms” that burrow through the human body, causing demon-like mutations in their victims. (“Resident Evil”/“Parasite Eve” much?)

During the operation, it becomes apparent that your sensei/father and your best friend have become infected when they flip out and totally kill everybody. Ken somehow survives and sets off to stop the infestation, get revenge, and show these monsters what real ultimate power looks like. Yadda, yadda, yadda... you’ve seen this before.

Fighting is all about finding the right tool for the job. You could go through most of the

game using only one sword, but you’re probably not going to have a good time - especially when it comes to some of the gigantic bosses you’ll face.

And you will fight a lot of giant monsters: giant, flying, three-headed hydras, humongous spiders, and chicks with snakes growing out of their torsos.

And while there is a lot of variety in the bosses you’ll face, sadly the same cannot be said for the lesser bad guys. While you will encounter some variations, most of the time you’re fighting off the same disfigured grunts over and over. Sometimes I think that there’s a factory somewhere just busting these guys out on an assembly line.

God of War-esque quick-time events are littered generously through every level. If you fight something bigger than a grunt, it’s almost

guaranteed that you’re going to have to play out a time-based button-pushing brawl.

And although the action is impressive from a cinematic angle, such as surfing on a missile or riding a motorcycle while dodging electric fireballs with more flair and style than Keanu Reeves in a trenchcoat, there’s just too much of it.

If you enjoyed “Ninja Gaiden,” “Assassin’s Creed,” “God of War,” “Devil May Cry,” “Dragon’s Lair,” “Resident Evil,” etc... then you will find something that you’ll like in “Ninja Blade,” because there’s a little bit of all of them in here.

Just make sure that you have some eye drops handy for after all the quick-time events, since your eyes are going to be dry from not blinking. And also make sure you check your brain at the door... this game can get mindless.

‘The Legend of Zelda’ goes back to basics

By Frank Tobin
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Way back in 1985, back when ‘A-Team’ was (and still is) the greatest TV show of all time, back when, as “Bowling for Soup” sang, when there was “Springsteen, Madonna, waiting for Nirvana,” a video game company by the name of Nintendo released a title called “The Legend of Zelda.”

And thus began a legacy resulting in a plethora of sequels, prequels, toys, food, soundtracks and even a cartoon show. This is where it all started.

This game was big for several reasons. Besides it starting off the Adventure/Action genre for home consoles (before only being popular in board-games and PCs), but it was one of, if not the first games to have a chip installed that allowed you to save your game. Before this time, you had to complete games in one single run.

Now you could play, quit, have a break and play again at the same point that you left off.

The story, if you can call it that, was mediocre at best. But, as many video games back then didn’t care for a plot or narrative, having a story, even one as skimpy as this, was at least an upside.

A long time ago, in a land far, far away, there is a kingdom called Hyrule. In this Kingdom, an evil pig-demon called Ganon has decided to rule the kingdom his way and has captured the princess, a young blond called Zelda, and taken over the kingdom, Reynolds-style, by infesting it with his evil minions.

Cue Link, a young man who is on his merry way walking through the kingdom when he spies, out of his little eye, an old woman getting beat upon by the aforementioned evil minions.

He totally flips out and saves her, and the woman reveals herself to be Impa, handmaiden to Princess Zelda. Impa tells Link to save the princess, and he, being a nice guy, agrees.

The kingdom in question has a treasure (as most kingdoms do) called the Triforce, which is a sacred triangle, consisting of three, smaller,

separate golden triangles, each of which has a specific power.

And it’s up to Link to get the eight pieces of the Triforce back and make sure things don’t get crazy-go-nuts, and to ensure that all returns to normal again.

Easier said than done. The game is played from above, in an isometric viewpoint. We see little Link skip about fields and dungeons on his happy killing spree.

And it’s great fun. You come equipped with a wooden sword from a creepy old recurring and badly translated (from Japanese to English) man and a secondary weapon that can be anything from a bomb to a boomerang to meat.

You have your little health meter, represented by the now-familiar row of hearts, and you have your purse that can be filled with rupees, the currency of Hyrule, up to a total of about 255, of which you can spend on extra weaponry, health, items, shields or anything else that takes your fancy.

The music contains nice little ditties that will have you humming for years. Also, you can

hear the original, unmixed versions of many songs that were repeated in later Zelda games.

The dungeon music is as atmospheric as the NES would allow and the enemies you face sound just like what they should, each having a specific sound bite to warn you of their presence.

The only annoying thing is the constant beeping when your health is low, but that’s about it.

But enough can’t be said for how annoying it really is—like a constant nails-on-a-chalkboard screeching in your ears, constantly (sic). The NES had two buttons, four if you count Start and Select as buttons, plus a D-pad.

The A button makes Link use his sword, and the B button uses your extra item. Nice, as it allows you to slash, throw a boomerang, or bomb, and run without too much difficulty.

Select pauses the game and Start brings up the Inventory page, showing you everything you need to know about the game but were afraid to ask. All in all, a fine game, and a great addition to any NES collection. Classic.

Spring shoes have attitude

By Kathryn Wexler
McClatchy Newspapers

This summer, daintily-clad toesies are morphing into so-called “caged feet.”

Leather straps are radiating over arches, thrust forward by towering, heavy heels and thick shanks.

Platforms made of punishing wood are back and in abundance.

Heels come shaped like inverted triangles or hefty cylinders.

It's part medieval armor, part 21st century Don't Tread On Me.

And with the gladiator style still in full force since last summer, even flats are managing to look aggressive.

Laird Borrelli-Persson, senior features editor at Style.com, says she saw a lot of “hard and studded shoes” on spring/summer runways and that they're probably here to stay.

“I wouldn't be surprised to see that continuing as a trend because maybe, psychologically, when times are tough they help you

feel like no one can beat (you) up,” Borrelli says.

But as anyone who's ever shopped knows, for every trend there's a counter-trend.

Floral printed canvas shoes are also in vogue, although many are less delicate than in years past.

In haute circles, the “shoe as sculpture” persists, with “a lot of molded heels and sort of inventive platforms,” Borrelli said, citing those at Giambattista Valli, Christian Louboutin, Lanvin and Louis Vuitton.

Tribal motives, too, are still hot. Snake-skins real and faux are showing up in high volume.

Leather fringes are making appearances here and there.

Overall, don't expect your feet to have an easier time of it anytime soon.

“I don't see comfortable shoes becoming fashionable,” Borrelli said.

“They seem to be getting higher and higher and higher.”

—MCT Campus



(Piperlime.com/MCT)

Pictured here is Chinese Laundry's "Bounty" in brown available at www.piperlime.com.



(Piperlime.com/MCT)

Pictured here is Guess Footwear "Convert 2," in brown multi fabric available at www.piperlime.com.



(Piperlime.com/MCT)

Pictured here is Vince Camuto "Dries," in gold available at www.piperlime.com.

Ruffles rock the runway



A modern twist on a classic trend gives fashionistas a new look for Spring

By Melissa Magsaysay
LA Times Washington Post

Phillip Lim played around with rows and rows of ruffles in his spring line, putting vertical layers down the front of a pink shift dress and even on the back vent of a trench coat.

He also edged some of the ruffles with zippers, giving them a more sculpted quality.

Off the runway, it's best to sample this trend as a soft detail, not a heavy focal point.

Stay away from shirts with ruffles on the collar, bib and sleeves -- they were meant for Mozart, not modern-day dressing.

And keep it to a few ruffles in the same color as the rest of the garment, unless you're putting together a tango costume.

There are other pitfalls. Ruffles can look too juvenile if done in a heavy lace

or cotton candy color, so keep colors neutral and layers soft.

And be careful about placement.

If you don't want to draw attention to your hips, stay away from tiered ruffle skirts, as they add volume.

Instead, let the ruffled fabric add a subtle romantic touch to a cap sleeve, the edge of a pocket, the top of a shoe or the front of a simple T-shirt.

J. Crew is making a tissue cotton tank top with diagonal layers of ruffles that is feminine and easy to dress up or down.

It's simple enough to flatter any age or shape, and the soft -ivory shade is versatile for day and night.

For a bright daytime look, pair it with a skirt in a deeper tone and play up the texture with a colorful bib-style necklace that sits above the neckline so it doesn't crowd the detail on the front of the shirt.

—LATWP News Service



Both outfits styled by Melissa Magsaysay, of the Los Angeles Times and shot at the Cooper Design Space, (Los Angeles). To the left is a J. Crew tiered ruffle top, \$44 at J.Crew South Coast Plaza; H&M skirt, \$39.90 at H&M Beverly Center; J. Crew necklace, \$150 at jcrew.com; CC

Skye stud bracelet, \$185; CC Skye white "cabochon" bangle, \$110, CC Skye ring, \$150, at www.ccskye.com; Jessica Elliot bracelets, \$50 each at www.skinnystyle.com; Theory shoes, \$335 at www.shopbop.com. To the right is dress that has ruffles sculpted with zippers.

Cabrera emerges from magical Masters

By Mark Herrmann
Newsday

AUGUSTA, Ga. — It is not often that the golfer wearing the green jacket at the end of the day is maybe the fifth- or sixth-biggest story of the Masters. But that in itself is a tribute to Angel Cabrera, who prevailed through a maelstrom. He might have seemed like a footnote Sunday, but the record always will show that he won in one of the Masters’ finest hours.

This Masters will be known for the remarkable matchup between the pairing of Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods. They began the final round in 10th place, seven shots back and made a two-pronged charge that was obvious everywhere on the course, especially the leader board.

It also will be remembered for the heart-break of Kenny Perry, 48, who was on a smooth track to become the oldest major champion in history before he bogeyed the last two holes and lost on the second hole of a three-way playoff.

There also was the fact that the Masters itself made a huge comeback after several years of criticism that it had lost its Sunday mojo.

Plus, there was the saga of Chad Campbell, who missed a short putt on the first playoff hole and lost his chance for a first major title.

Still, the title and the jacket went to a 39-year-old from Argentina who had been searching for his confidence since he won the 2007 U.S. Open.

Cabrera made pars on the two playoff holes and was the last one standing on a withering day. As he stood at the awards platform to accept his green jacket, he was not the least upset that fate hadn’t made him center stage.

“This is the Masters,” Cabrera said through an interpreter. “It’s a course (where) you can do a lot of birdies, you can do a lot of bogeys. A lot of magical things happen.”

Most of the magic Sunday induced roars from the massive gallery that followed Woods and Mickelson. They caught fire together and made the leaders shake.

“I was in awe of what they were doing,” Perry said.

Campbell said: “You could hear it out there. They had it going.”

Others were going south. Cabrera had dropped from 12 under to 9 under by the 10th hole. Then he birdied the two par 5s on the back nine and the par-3 16th.

He was back at 12 under, getting into the playoff when Perry bogeyed the final two holes of regulation, thus squandering his chance to win his first major.

Cabrera looked to be cooked on the first playoff hole, the par-4 18th, when he pushed his tee shot behind a tree. “I thought I had room about this big (placing his hands about 3 feet apart) and I said the ball is smaller than (that),” he said. His shot caromed off a tree into the fairway, he drilled a sand wedge within 5 feet and saved par.

With Campbell out after missing a short par putt on the 18th, Cabrera made a routine



Photos by Jason Getz, Atlanta Journal-Constitution / MCT Campus

Above: 2008 Masters Champion Trevor Immelman, left, put the green jacket on 2009 Masters Champion Angel Cabrera, right, at Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia on Sunday, April 12.
Below: Cabrera, right, hugs his caddie Ruben Yorrio after sinking the winning putt.

two-putt par on No. 10 to win after Perry missed the green and made bogey.

Perry missed his last four greens, though he nearly chipped in for birdie on the first playoff hole.

Consider it Argentina’s turn for a good break. At the 1968 Masters, countryman Roberto DeVicenzo signed for a 4 on No. 17 in the final round instead of the birdie 3 that he had made and cost himself a playoff with champion Bob Goalby.

“He had bad luck, he had bad moments. That doesn’t change,” Cabrera said. “But this win takes a major back to Argentina. It’s going to mean a lot.”

It would have meant the world to Franklin, Ky. (population 8,079), where Perry is the civic pride and joy. He nearly aced the 170-yard, par-3 16th, had a tap-in birdie and seemed on his way to the Butler Cabin victory ceremony.

“Great players make it happen, and your average players don’t,” he said, reflecting on not giving his par putt on 18 in regulation enough of a run, of not compensating for mud on his ball in the 10th fairway during the playoff, of not seizing his one opportunity.

“I just didn’t get the job done again and I’ll look back the rest of my life saying what could have been,” he said.

“But I’m not really going to go there because if it is the worst thing that happens in my life, my life’s pretty good.”

It’s just major-less, as it was when he surrendered a two-shot lead at the 1996 PGA and lost in a playoff.

Sunday night, he said, “I’ve got two to think about now.” All of golf has one day it never will forget.

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Young QBs look to fill big shoes

By Randy Covitz
McClatchy Newspapers

Matt Ryan and Joe Flacco spoiled everyone last season. As rookie quarterbacks in the NFL, all they did was step in, start all 16 games and lead their teams to the playoffs.

If they could do it, what's to say the top quarterback prospects in this year's NFL draft — Georgia's Matthew Stafford, Southern California's Mark Sanchez and Kansas State's Josh Freeman—can't do the same?

All three have strong arms, strong wills and produced big numbers in college.

The one difference between the elite quarterbacks in this class and last year is experience.

Ryan and Flacco were seniors. Fifth-year seniors, in fact. Stafford and Freeman are true juniors, Sanchez is a redshirt junior. And that could be a major factor in their immediate — and even ultimate—success or failure in the NFL.

"There's a big adjustment, especially at the quarterback position," said Washington coach Jim Zorn, a former NFL quarterback. "There's a lot to be responsible for. There's a lot to handle. There's a way you have to present yourself. As a young guy, it's hard to come into a bunch of 30-year-old guys, and say, 'I'm in charge now.' And they look at you like ..."

Of the 14 quarterbacks taken in the first round in the last five drafts, five have been juniors. Only Pittsburgh's Ben Roethlisberger, the 11th overall selection in 2004, has justified that pick with two Super Bowl wins.

The verdict is still out on Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers (2005). Tennessee's Vince Young (2006) and Oakland's JaMarcus Russell (2006) have fallen short of expectations, while San Francisco's Alex Smith, the first overall pick in 2005, appears to be a bust.

But there's little question that Eli Manning and Philip Rivers, who were traded for each other after Manning was taken first by San Diego and Rivers fourth by the New York Giants in the 2004 draft, were more prepared as seniors than had they come out a year earlier.

Rivers sat on the bench as a rookie with the Chargers while Manning was an understudy to Kurt Warner for half a season with the Giants. The year before, Carson Palmer, a Heisman Trophy winner, fifth-year senior at Southern California and the first overall pick in the 2003 draft, did not take a snap as a rookie with Cincinnati.



Bob Andres, Atlanta Journal-Constitution / MCT Campus

So imagine the odds of a junior making it quickly in the NFL.

"It's hard to lump all of them together," said New Orleans coach Sean Payton. "There have been some good juniors coming out at quarterback who have gone on to be successful. You have to treat them separately in each case."

"If it's a running back, sometimes it's a good thing (to be an underclassman) with the amount of carries they have, but at the quarterback position, it's how they play when their team is behind. Do they have the skill set you're looking for? That might vary per club, depending on what each team wants."

Stafford, projected by many to be taken as the first overall pick by Detroit, has an answer for those worried about the risk of taking an underclassman at quarterback.

"I played in 39 football games in college," said Stafford, a three-year starter. "That's a lot of football games, probably more than some

seniors have played in. ...

"Obviously I have a lot to learn. ... But I understand what it takes to prepare and get ready to play early. ... I played in the SEC, a tough conference. ... I've got a little bit of a taste of what it's like, I think."

So does Sanchez, despite starting just one year at USC, where his coach, Pete Carroll, thought Sanchez would have benefited from another year of college football.

"I started 16 games," Sanchez said, "played in practice every day with a pro-style offense against a pro-style defense with guys ... who are in the league and are going to be in the league."

"I've been in a big city, a large media market. We've played in the Rose Bowl, in nationally televised games, and I'm ready for this league."

Still, NFL Network draft analyst Mike Mayock is not so sure that taking junior quarterbacks high in the first round is worth the

risk.

"I keep trying to warn people that the Matt Ryan-Joe Flacco thing is an anomaly," Mayock said. "You haven't seen that maybe ever in the NFL — two rookie quarterbacks like that. They were both fifth-year players. There is a track record on tape, there is a track record off the field, work ethic. You can track it better, and more accurately. When you're talking about Matthew Stafford, he just turned 21, he has three years as a starter in the SEC, which is impressive."

"Stafford has elite arm strength. ... 'To me, arm strength rates fourth or fifth on how I rank quarterbacks. He has some issues with pocket awareness, feeling the rush, not dropping his eyes down and giving up on a play. Being able to slide laterally, find lanes and throw the football. That's part of being a young quarterback.'"

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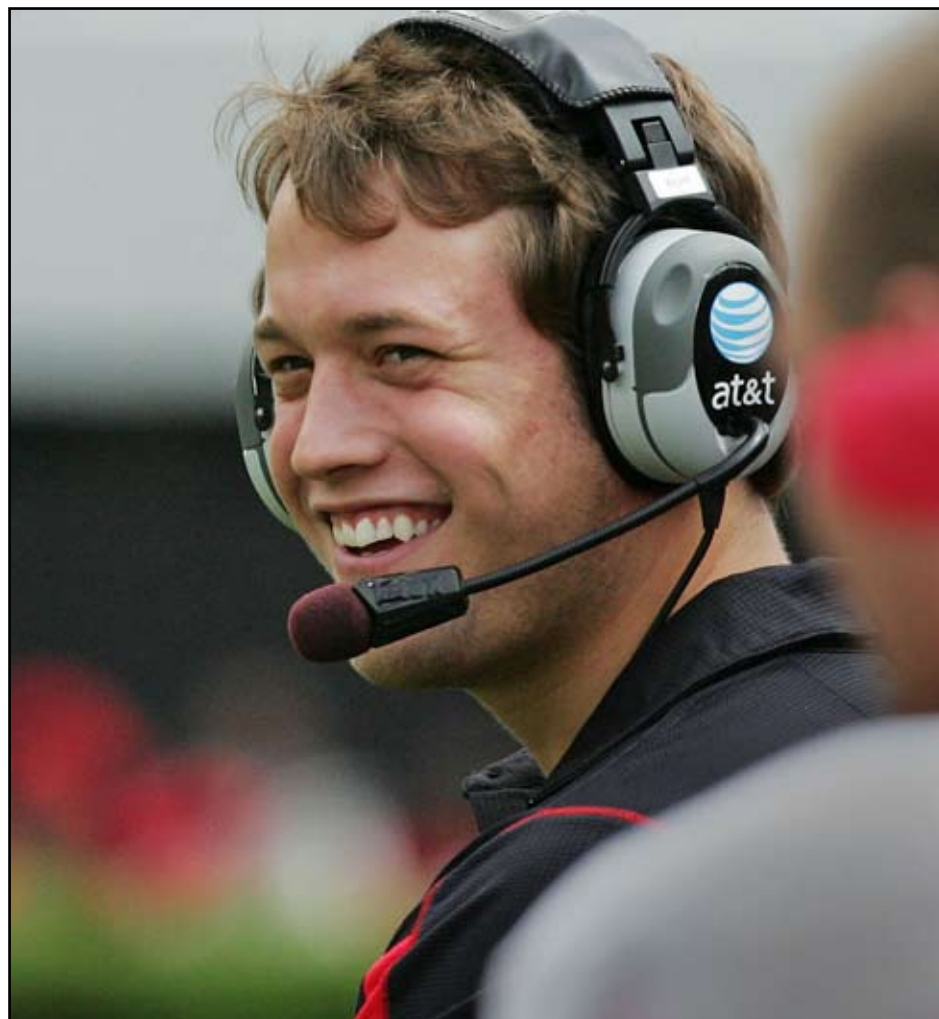
Photos by Bob Andres, Atlanta Journal-Constitution / MCT Campus

Top: Georgia quarterback Joe Cox hands off the ball during the second half of Georgia's annual G-Day spring intra-squad football game on Saturday, April, 11, at Sanford Stadium in Athens, Ga.

Bottom Left: Georgia head coach Mark Richt was jovial on the sidelines during the second

half of Georgia's annual G-Day spring intra-squad football game.

Bottom Right: Georgia quarterback Matt Stafford worked on the sidelines during the second half of Georgia's annual G-Day spring intra-squad football game on Saturday.



‘The Bird,’ Tigers star, dead at 54

By Bill Shaikin
Los Angeles Times

Mark “The Bird” Fidrych, whose off-beat antics electrified the city of Detroit and charmed baseball fans everywhere during one of the unlikely seasons of glory in major league history, died Monday, April 13. He was 54.

Fidrych was found under his 10-wheel dump truck on his Massachusetts farm, the victim of an apparent accident, according to Worcester County district attorney Joseph Early. Fidrych appeared to have been working on the truck, Early told The Associated Press.

In his first major-league start, May 15, 1976, Fidrych took a no-hitter into the seventh inning. He finished the game with a two-hitter and a 2-1 victory over the Cleveland Indians, and he finished the season with a 19-9 record and league-leading 2.34 ERA. He was the starting pitcher for the American League in the All-Star Game that July.

Yet Fidrych is better remembered for a lighter side unusual among baseball players. He gave pep talks to the ball, knelt to smooth out the dirt on the pitcher’s mound, sprinted to shake the hand of a fielder that had made a good play.

“The guys that have fun when they play, they’re rare,” said Los Angeles Dodgers coach Larry Bowa, who played against Fidrych in the ’76 All-Star Game. “We knew he wasn’t trying to show anyone up. That was just how he was.”

“He was the game’s Pied Piper, the most charismatic player I’ve ever seen in baseball,” Hall of Fame Tigers’ announcer Ernie Harwell told the Detroit Free Press in 2001.

Fidrych, a native of Worcester, Mass., who was born Aug. 14, 1954, is survived by his wife, Ann, and the couple’s daughter, Jessica.

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Jerry Lodriguss, Philadelphia Inquirer / MCT

Phillies Hall of Fame broadcaster Harry Kalas, pictured August 19, 2002, died Monday, April 13, a short time after passing out in the broadcast booth before a game in Washington against the Nationals.

Voice of Phillies dies at 73

Harry Kalas leaves city saddened

By Jim Salisbury
The Philadelphia Inquirer

WASHINGTON — Just before noon Monday, Harry Kalas got off the Phillies team bus and walked into the visiting clubhouse at Nationals Park. As always, Kalas said something nice to everyone he encountered, then stopped, pulled out a pen and wrote down the lineup which had been posted on the wall.

Lineup in hand, the Hall of Fame broadcaster rode the elevator to the press level and began

preparing for a 3 p.m. game between the Phillies and Washington Nationals.

He never got to call the game.

Kalas, in his 39th season as narrator of all things Phillies, collapsed in the broadcast booth around 12:20 p.m. EDT April 13 and died after being rushed to a nearby hospital. He was 73.

Phillies players and personnel were informed of the news by club president David Montgomery in a somber pre-game meeting.

“Sadly, I must confirm that we lost Harry,” Montgomery, fighting back tears in a hallway outside the visiting clubhouse, told a large group of reporters who had assembled after hearing that Kalas had been stricken.

“We lost our voice today,” Montgomery added. “Harry loved our game and made a tremendous contribution to our sport, and certainly to our organization.” Players were not available for comment before the game.

“They’re stunned,” Montgomery said.

“When you have a presence like Harry Kalas, anybody that played for us, it’s an immediate point of connection with our club because Harry is the Phillies.”

The Nationals organization, hosting its home opener, honored Kalas’ memory with a moment of silence before the first pitch.

“He was the heart and soul of the Phillies organization,” the stadium public address announcer told the crowd. As Kalas’ picture flashed on the video board above rightfield in the hushed stadium, a fan shouted: “We love you, Harry.”

Chris Wheeler, a longtime broadcaster partner of Kalas, wondered if the Phillies could have played if the game weren’t on the road.

“It would have been hard to play if this had been a home game,” Wheeler said.

The team did not say how the broadcast team will be affected by Kalas’ absence.

—MCT Campus

Angels’ rookie pitcher killed by drunk driver

By Mark Saxon
The Orange County Register

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The quiet began even before public-address announcer David Courtney asked for a moment of silence.

A sellout crowd at Angel Stadium Friday, April 10 barely rustled as it waited to see how the team would honor Nick Adenhardt, the 22-year-old pitcher killed by a drunk driver early Thursday, April 9.

Hours before the ceremony, Angels pitching coach Mike Butcher marked his own half-minute of silence in front of dozens of media members, cameras and microphones.

Butcher needed 28 seconds before he could recount the night Adenhardt died.

The coach was the first member of the organization to hear of the collision that took Adenhardt’s life. The pitcher’s father, Jim, had found Butcher’s number in his son’s cell phone while Nick Adenhardt underwent surgery.

The game against the Boston Red Sox was a hesitant first step back to the safety of the white chalk lines for the Angels. Manager Mike Scioscia called baseball a “haven” for a team full of players grappling with grief.

The hard part was holding a meeting to discuss the tendencies of Red Sox hitters when so many Angels were still reflecting on their teammate’s legacy.

“It’s going to take some time,” Scioscia said. “Everyone in that room has a heavy heart. There’s nobody in that room that

doesn’t.”

Both teams came onto the field for the ceremony, lining up on the baselines opposite their dugouts.

Angels starters took their positions, with John Lackey and Torii Hunter holding Adenhardt’s No. 34 jersey over the mound.

Before that, the Angels displayed a brief video tribute that showed Adenhardt pitching for his high school team in Maryland, for Team USA and then striking out Eric Chavez on Wednesday night.

By Friday’s first pitch, barely 36 hours had passed since the fatal wreck. Angels owner Arte Moreno said he felt like he had been “punched in the heart.”

Butcher spent nearly seven minutes answering questions about that night, but he seemed to find refuge in talking about Adenhardt’s pitching mechanics. It was only at those times that his voice didn’t crack.

He recalled the conversation he had after Adenhardt pitched six stellar innings in his fourth major league start just hours before he died.

“I walked up to him and asked him, ‘How’d it feel? Did you feel the ball coming off your fingertips like it’s supposed to?’” Butcher said. “He said, ‘Butch, I got it.’ That was a pretty special moment.”

Pitcher Dustin Moseley was the Angel who spoke most eloquently about Adenhardt on Friday.

Adenhardt and Moseley struggled in tan-



Irfan Kahn, LA Times / LATWP

Angels’ rookie pitcher, 22-year-old Nick Adenhardt, was killed in a car accident involving a drunk driver April 9. Adenhardt had pitched six scoreless innings in his season debut just hours earlier.

dem at Triple-A Salt Lake for most of 2008. It was that common experience of trying to revive their careers that drew them together.

Moseley heard of Adenhardt’s death when he woke up to a text message Thursday morning from his younger brother. Moseley said he “pretty much cried for quite a while.”

The two pitchers met three years ago when they were recovering from injuries at the Angels’ Tempe, Ariz. complex. Moseley first was struck by the quality of Adenhardt’s arm and mechanics. He later was impressed with Adenhardt’s personality.

“He was one of the coolest, most unique guys,” Moseley said. “He had style, he had all these different things. He could do just about

anybody’s mannerisms. He could do voices, all kinds of stuff. He was multi-talented, not just in baseball.

“To see someone lose their life at such a young age with so many talents, it takes you out of that bubble that you think you’re in to say, ‘Wow, tomorrow could be my last day. What kind of impact am I making?’”

Five hours before Jered Weaver took the mound for Friday’s start, dozens of people circled the makeshift memorial outside the gates at Angel Stadium. A pile of hundreds of bouquets, posters, candles and poems, many handwritten, cluttered the brick pitcher’s mound beneath the giant ball caps.

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