

the mosaic

san jose urban journalism workshop www.mosaicworkshop.org friday, june 30, 2006

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'Trunking' teens take a ride in danger zone

By Anila Khan
Mosaic Staff Writer
It was a wild ride Josh Hernandez will never forget. He jumped into his friend's car trunk and went for a quick spin. "The driver made a sharp left," the 18-year-old Evergreen Valley High

School graduate said, "and my body hit the wall."
"Trunking," or riding in the trunk of a moving car, was once an underground activity borne out of necessity—too many kids and not enough room for passengers. But now it's become a growing phenomenon partly driven by

a recent law that bans teen motorists from transporting minors in their cars. Trunking has caught the attention of law enforcement agencies and legislators after two 15-year-old boys from Glendora were killed last year in an accident while riding in trunk of a car driven by an unlicensed 17-year-old

driver. An Assembly bill to outlaw trunking and increase punishment is pending in Sacramento.
Many of the teens interviewed by Mosaic said they understood trunking is against the law, and its inherent dan-

See TRUNKING, Page 4

THE RISE AND FALL OF RON GONZALES



San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales is supported by his friends and family who stand behind him at the press conference held at the City Hall on June 23.

IOANA GABRIELA ANGHIEL - MOSAIC STAFF

MORE COVERAGE ON THE MAYOR

By Jordan Kolb, Nereya Otieno, Marissa Del Toro and Robert Tian
Mosaic Staff Writers

Mayor Ron Gonzales' week in pictures
PAGE 10

Editorial: We want him to quit right now!
PAGE 13

It's a long way down from the mayor's office on the 18th floor of San Jose City Hall to the first-floor booking center at the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department.

The arrests of Mayor Ron Gonzales, 55, and his top aide on charges of bribery and conspiracy represent the lowest point in a political career that now looks ruined. From a once promising

path that started in Sunnyvale and later led him to the podium at the Democratic National Convention, Gonzales now finds himself fighting for his reputation and freedom.

The indictment says the mayor was involved in a secret deal to give waste hauler Norcal an extra \$11.25 million for changing their subcontractor's union. The mayor denies any wrongdoing. Nevertheless, the unprecedented charges have put Gonzales and his team under the microscope and facing critics

who say he failed to follow his father's example. "My father, my mother, our family and I have lived in this valley for over 50 years," the mayor said five days after his indictment. "I think we've established a strong reputation for the name Gonzales and we're going to continue to have that strong name. What's at stake here is my reputation, my family's reputation, and the reputation of my staff."

Gonzales grew up in
See GONZALES, Page 10



ANILA KHAN - MOSAIC STAFF
Deputy District Attorney Julius Finkelstein speaks at a press conference regarding the mayor's indictment.

Students explore charter schools

By Vina Nguyen
Mosaic Staff Writer

Richard Garcia can still remember his freshman year—the gang fights, impersonal staff and disorganization—at his public high school in East San Jose. "There was a lot of chaos," says Garcia, now 18.

On the advice of friends, Garcia transferred in his sophomore year to Latino College Preparatory Academy, a charter school. Friends attending Latino Academy told him about the structure and learning environment offered there.

Garcia is just one of the growing number of students leaving public high schools in the East Side Union High School District for smaller charter high schools. From 2002 to 2005, enrollment in East Side charter high schools grew from 74 to 832. During the same time, the number of charter high schools increased from two to five, according to the California Department of Education.

Many of the students enrolling in charter high schools, especially in the East Side, come from low-income minority families. Charter schools such as Latino Academy and Leadership Public School-San Jose have a majority population of Latino students.

Some think the increased interest in charter

See CHARTER, Page 4



MARIA MARROQUIN - MOSAIC STAFF
Maria Marroquin, right, a former day laborer, serves as the day workers center director, where she helps other day laborers find work and also serves as a mentor to them.

CENTER REACHES OUT TO DAY LABORERS

By Marissa Del Toro
Mosaic Staff Writer

Tucking her dark hair behind a pair of plastic sunglasses, Ana, 36, of Veracruz, Mexico, sits at a card table in the back of Mountain View's Day Worker Center, waiting patiently for a job that might never come.

It's after 10 a.m. and about 30 workers are scattered around the dim church

hall, a small television blaring the reaired U.S.-Ghana World Cup game in a crowded corner. Folding chairs and flimsy tables litter the room. Shelves containing weathered board games and books cover the walls. Near the back door are a few potted plants and a bulletin board of family photographs. A vol-

See DAYLABORER, Page 6

Poets slam violence in hip-hop culture

By Vidur Malik
Mosaic Staff Writer

The promotion of negativity has become all too common in the world of hip-hop and rap culture, to the point where the music is associated with violence, drugs and misogyny.

Artists like 50 Cent and Young Jeezy are at the forefront of the violent commercial formula that sells millions of records. This modern day rap image has produced a glorification of gang life among the youth who religiously listen to these rappers.

Fortunately, there are programs working to reverse this trend, using the elements of hip-hop, female empowerment and slam poetry to make a difference.

Unity Care, a San Jose-based youth development center that helps foster children prepare for their emancipation from the foster care system, is doing its part to stop the negativity. Programs like Hip Hop 360 allow children to learn and express themselves hip-hop culture.

The program helps middle-school age students build positive relationships. Hip-Hop 360 exposes students to different elements of hip-hop culture, such as rapping, dancing, art and deejaying. Each element is connected to an educational and life

See HIP-HOP, Page 17

IOANA ANGHEL, SUNNYVALE

Ioana Anghel, a Romanian-born immigrant applying for U.S. citizenship, is based for the University of California-Santa Cruz this fall. Despite public perception in the United States that many Romanian girls become gymnasts, Ioana doesn't participate in gymnastic sports. "I lived in Romania for 13 years," Ioana said. "My dad didn't think we had enough opportunities there, so we moved here."

Growing up, Ioana had always been interested in taking photos, and in high school she finally got her chance. In her sophomore year, she worked on her school yearbook, and by the time her junior year rolled around she was appointed the yearbook's photo editor.

"It was to be in control of other people," Ioana said, "and in yearbook I got a chance to do that."

In college, Ioana hopes to major in human psychology. "I think we'll also be seeing more of our photojournalists."

—Amanda Rivers

JERRY CAO, SAN JOSE

Jerry Cao, editor in chief of the Piedmont Hills High School newspaper, the Legend, also sings in the school's chamber choir. Jerry also has done makeup for models in several local fashion shows. She speaks Swahili, and she plans to work in Africa as a social worker.

But her childhood dream was to become a mortician to satisfy her morbid curiosity with post-mortem procedure and "put makeup on dead people."

"What has been her passing Mosaic experience?" When a funeral car headed at me and my friends and the horn was a wolf whistle. What a LOSER!"

—Marissa Del Toro

JERRY CAO, FREMONT

Jerry Cao, an incoming senior at Fremont's Mission San Jose High School, joined Mosaic because he loves reporting the news. He will be the news editor for his school's newspaper, the Smoke Signal. Jerry's favorite part of journalism is being able to talk to different people and hearing their perspectives.

Jerry is a photographer at Mosaic. He says a picture is worth a thousand words.

I believe that photographs are a very powerful means of communication," he said. "A really good photograph does not just tell you a story, it also haunts our conscience."

In his spare time, he enjoys listening to Metallica, watching movies and playing video games.

—Robert Tian

VICKY CHEN, CUPERTINO

Fantasy reads Vicky Chen, 17, has been writing a novel, "Starlit Shadow," for five years.

She usually goes behind the shed when analyzing "good" and "bad" characters in novels — and she prefers the bad ones.

"Bad characters" are less confused than good characters, because they are not bound by moral standards," Vicky said.

She started studying journalism at Cupertino High School during her junior year. She will be a senior this fall.

—Vicky plans to attend Stanford University and hopes to major in English or pre-law.

MARISA DEL TORO, SAN JOSE

Incumbent senior Marissa Del Toro is the features editor of Presentation High School's newspaper, the Voice. A self-proclaimed "chocolate nerd," she placed 12th in the state's high school speech tournament in the honor's intersession category.

Although she identifies with her culture, Marissa also speaks "the Spanish of an illiterate 4-year-old." Words can be her friends. At Leo, she hopes to marry a musician, but for now they're too hard to find in MySpace.

Marissa plans to major in mass communications and work in Southern California. Her ambition is to someday take an uprising while wearing caution yellow headbands, then run the pants off of those hippies.

—Tanya Bel Cao

CARLA ESTRADA, SAN JOSE

Carla Estrada's energetic character immediately draws people in. As a recent graduate of Cupertino College Preparatory Academy, a small charter high school, Carla was able to not only strengthen her English, but also speak her interview in journalism. Carla is interested in journalism because she feels people



FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT: Susanna Fremont, Joe Rodriguez, Ania Khan, Maria Gomez, Isabella Gabriela Anghel, Guadalupe Gonzalez, Nereya Otieno, Maira Navarrs, Jerry Bel Cao, second row from left: Marc Cabrera, Carla Estrada, Jordan Kolk, Monique Mediana, Vicky Chen, Diem Ly Vo, Marissa Del Toro, Jessica Chavez, Donna Ahavado, third row from left: Janet Kim, Eric Jin, Vidiar Malik and Denis Theriault.

Memories to last a lifetime

By Vicky Chen

The day was hot and the breezes warm on a Sunday afternoon in mid-June when 12 high school students from around the Bay Area straggled and snuggled into the Washburn Hall dormitory to report for the Mosaic Journalism program hosted by the Mercury News — our 25th member arrived two days later.

Excitement and nervousness hung thick in the air between us, but the awkwardness lasted no more than a few minutes. Some of us knew we wanted to be journalists and others came to test the waters, but despite our varied backgrounds and hobbies, we all had one thing in common: a love of writing and photography. This friendly atmosphere and growing camaraderie carried us through the next two weeks.

During the next 12 days, our instructors gave us a crash course in real journalism while imparting what we had learned from the Bay Area studio, and we had only one main objective: to interview and photographing going members-to-city council members, anime fans to doctors, we set out to learn what journalism was all about. For the time being, at least, we were real journalists out on a mission to tell a story. While some struggled with the sudden freedom, wanting an editor to tell them when to write about, others derived under our editors' urgings to write about what we loved. It was once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Why waste it on topics for which we had no passion?

For me at least, it wasn't until the

third day, when we sat before a panel of professional journalists, that the importance of this opportunity struck me. They were there for us to question, and to offer us their experiences and their advice. What better instructor could we have than the genuine articles? They taught us by sending us out for hands-on work, asking us questions and making our brains until we fell into our beds at night. The groaning on deadline days was not enough to dampen our spirits. Before we knew it, the time was up and we were on our way home, but the times we shared will never be forgotten.

While some of us may become journalists and others will move on to other careers, two things are certain: Our Mosaic experience were priceless — and the deadlines will march on.

LORENZO RAZO, SAN JOSE

Lorenzo Razo attends Belarmine College Preparatory in San Jose. But this 16-year-old is not just a student in the prep-school stereotype.

He's proud of being one of the few Mexican-Americans at Belarmine, and he has an extreme passion for the sport of baseball. He's been playing since he "could pick up a ball."

Razo is a tri-lingual and R&B, and he's considering owning a "Troy's Records like business."

"I'm very into everything," Razo embodies, it's that of a teenager. "One of my hobbies is being an adult. I'm definitely gay crazy."

—Eduardo

AMANDA RIVAS, SAN JOSE

Amelia Gomez, 17, comes from Scandinavia and Mexican origins. She has an open mind and broad cultural knowledge.

Gomez is a senior at Leigh High School in San Jose, where she will edit the school newspaper, editorial and InDepth sections.

Although she identifies with her culture, Marissa also speaks "the Spanish of an illiterate 4-year-old." Words can be her friends. At Leo, she hopes to marry a musician, but for now they're too hard to find in MySpace.

to his school's newspaper. He will be the news editor for his school's newspaper, the Smoke Signal. Jerry's favorite part of journalism is being able to talk to different people and hearing their perspectives.

Jerry is a photographer at Mosaic. He says a picture is worth a thousand words.

ANILIA KHAN, SAN JOSE

"Go-getter" fits my Mosaic roommate, Ania Khan, so well that the dictionary should have her picture next to the definition.

Ania is one of the youngest Mosaic staff members, yet she plans to start her own magazine and online newspaper in the fall. She volunteers every Sunday at a hospital and has an internship at her local newspaper, the Overpost Times.

Ania, who is working as a photojournalist, says the Mosaic program has helped her to start working on a novel. She also enjoys watching whether her friends are working together with his best friend. He also will be the editor in chief of his school newspaper next year.

When he isn't playing tennis, Jordan enjoys traveling, listening to music and performing magic tricks. He entertains at birthday parties, performing tricks and working little kids.

He also enjoys running, going to the gym and watching Robin Williams movies. He is involved in Habitat for Humanity and is the president of his school's Habitat affiliate.

JORDAN KOLK, CUPERTINO

Jordan Kolk, 17, attends Monta Vista High School in Cupertino. He was born Jan. 15, and is proud to share a birthday with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Jordan, who plays varsity tennis, feels happy that he can play doubles along with his best friend. He also will be the editor in chief of his school newspaper next year.

He was born in the San Jose area, but has also lived in Los Angeles. He is currently deciding whether to major in journalism or psychology.

When he isn't playing tennis, Jordan enjoys traveling, listening to music and performing magic tricks. He entertains at birthday parties, performing tricks and working little kids.

He also enjoys running, going to the gym and watching Robin Williams movies. He is involved in Habitat for Humanity and is the president of his school's Habitat affiliate.

Jordan is a determined teen who cares for others and is sure to have a bright future.

VIDUAR MALIK, FREMONT

Vidiar Malik has been on the defensive line of San Jose High School's football team since his freshman year, and he brings his love of sports

to his school's newspaper. He will be the news editor for his school's newspaper, the Smoke Signal. Jerry's favorite part of journalism is being able to talk to different people and hearing their perspectives.

MONIQUE MEDIANA, GILROY

Monique Mediana, 18, spends her days around the Bay Area and June reporting the halls of Gilroy High School, always with a notebook.

Front-page editor of her high school newspaper, Monique is open to most kinds of journalism, although she says her news is her favorite. She is a photographer for Mosaic, but she reports and edits for her high school paper.

ROBERT TIAN, PALO ALTO

Robert Tian will be the sports editor of Palo Alto High School's newspaper the Campanian, which boasts the largest circulation of any high school newspaper in the Bay Area.

He enjoys playing badminton and watching all types of sports. He has a sister and she is his hero and role model. Robert is also a very focused student and has a sharp mind. He is also a good, funny person who always tries to cheer people up. He is close with his friends, and they refer to themselves as the "Tribe."

DIEM LY VO, SAN JOSE

The 2006 volunteer of Willow Glen High School in San Jose is a varsity tennis player, editor in chief of the Bean Pages and a future student at the University of California, Berkeley.

Diem Ly Vo is amazing. She is 16, and she is a member of the Willow Glen High School tennis team. She is also a member of the Willow Glen High School tennis team. She is also a member of the Willow Glen High School tennis team.

VINA NGUYEN, SAN JOSE

Vina Nguyen is a determined fanatic who was inspired to become a journalist after press responded to an article she wrote.

"I got my message across, and it was empowered me to pursue journalism," Vina said.

Vina played the clarinet for seven years and was a member of the first minton team for four years. She said

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PETA gathers at KFC in San Jose to protest treatment of chickens



Waiting to safely cross the street, Kelsey Gidd sits in a wheelchair dressed in a chicken suit to protest the mistreatment of chickens raised for KFC restaurants on North Bascom Avenue in San Jose on June 22, 2006.

Vina will attend the University of California-Arkham in the fall, where she plans on having the best learning experience ever.

—Carla Estrada

NEREYA OTIENO, CUPERTINO

Nereya Otieno, Adhami's Oromo — Beyn for short — is one quirky teen journalist. Born Sept. 8, 1988, at Stanford Field, she will be a senior at Cupertino High School next year. Her father was born in Kenya. But none of that fully describes what makes her "Bea."

"I've typed literally with her, you'll hear her use a flurry of different accents. Just for fun. And she makes endless use of the phrase, 'I'm a fan.'" She talks about hands most people have never heard of. She says her friends warn people to watch out, because "she'll cut you with her words."

Beyn is her school's volleyball team captain. She's also in her school's leadership class and is a member of the Associated Student Body.

she chose the activity because "it's a win-win excuse for playing a sport." In reality, she was on the varsity team, which helped her to create a strong bond with friends and fellow teammates.

—Carla Estrada

LORENZO RAZO, SAN JOSE

Lorenzo Razo attends Belarmine College Preparatory in San Jose. But this 16-year-old is not just a student in the prep-school stereotype.

He's proud of being one of the few Mexican-Americans at Belarmine, and he has an extreme passion for the sport of baseball. He's been playing since he "could pick up a ball."

Razo is a tri-lingual and R&B, and he's considering owning a "Troy's Records like business."

"I'm very into everything," Razo embodies, it's that of a teenager. "One of my hobbies is being an adult. I'm definitely gay crazy."

At the protest, "Their throats are slit and they are burned to death — often while still conscious and able to feel pain."

PETA protesters also gave away handouts with pictures of deformed chickens alongside the details on how the animals are killed.

Gidd explained that her chicken suit was covered with dirt to illustrate how KFC chickens grow in unsanitary conditions. She sat in a wheelchair to represent the way most chickens are paralyzed before they are processed. Her beak was cut off so she would resemble the chickens that have their beaks removed before they are killed.

As Gidd was pushed across the four points of the busy intersection at North Bascom Road and Nagle Avenue, a small crowd of protesters, ranging from senior citizens to children, rallied her.

The crowd grew as passing cars honked in support, while the abused chicken crossed the road.

Lindsay Rajt protested along the side-

walk with a small television hanging from a strap around her neck. The television showed the practices that chicken enclosures while they are processed for eventual consumption.

"The chickens are sometimes boiled alive," said Rajt, a campaign coordinator for International Grassroots Campaign, a subgroup under PETA umbrella.

On the other side of the road, KFC manager Francisco Higuera tried to figure out why the chicken protesters were so cross.

"It makes no sense to me," he said. "I guess he's had some thoughts on the protest. Higuera said the protest might have had an unintended effect.

"More people are coming in than before because they think that's an event going on," he said.

"KFC employee Rosaura Uscant watched the protest, but said she didn't understand the cause.

"They are supposed to kill the animal," Uscant said. "The chicken is killed so you can buy it and eat it." The chickens "end up dying anyways."

"Chickens suffer broken legs and wings from being broiled and fed a steady diet of drugs to make them top-heavy and from having their legs forced into shackles at slaughterhouses."

—FROM THE FILMS HANDED OUT AT THE PROTEST

A protester with Animals for the Ethical Treatment of People protests in front of a San Jose KFC restaurant.

Fighting to be a mother, not a statistic

TEEN PARENTS GRAPPLE WITH BALANCING SCHOOL, WORK, FAMILY LIFE

By Carla Estrada

Her plans were to study cosmetology or become a medical assistant — once she finished high school.

Instead, when Karla Herrera learned she was expecting a baby at the age of 15, she put those plans on hold to attend her daughter, Alana.

"It was a sacrifice I needed to make," Karla said in Spanish, the words coming straight from the heart.

Karla, now 17, was scheduled to graduate from high school this summer. But as a sophomore at Latino College Preparatory Academy in San Jose, Karla did not have someone to watch Alana while she attended school. That left her no choice but to drop out and focus on caring for her new child.

According to Planned Parenthood, teen mothers are more likely to end up having children at a young age. Other studies show that teenage mothers are less likely to graduate than those who do not conceive at a young age.

But what happens to these young mothers once they get beyond the age that they were supposed to graduate high school? And what about those who stay in school?

Information gathered by the Web site adolescentsfor-outh.com, a database for youth advocacy information and statistics, shows that prospects for teen parents who drop out of high school are not promising.

"Teen mothers have about a 60 percent chance of graduating from high school, compared with 90 percent of those who postpone childbearing."

Among dropout, teen women who have children are much less likely to return to school.

Despite the discouraging numbers, some young San Jose mothers say they are determined to prevent their children from becoming just another statistic.

"The leaders of tomorrow are being born right now," Karla said, confident in her ability to raise her child to be successful. She lives with the father of her child in his mother's East San Jose home.

"Some women, like Karla, get kicked out of their homes once they are pregnant, or they are not accepted within their own families. The problem is that when they are forced to leave while carrying an unborn child."

In many cases, the women end up living with their

Mothers. Parents grapple with balancing school, work, family life.

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By Carla Estrada

Her plans were to study cosmetology or become a medical assistant — once she finished high school.

Instead, when Karla Herrera learned she was expecting a baby at the age of 15, she put those plans on hold to attend her daughter, Alana.

"It was a sacrifice I needed to make," Karla said in Spanish, the words coming straight from the heart.

Karla, now 17, was scheduled to graduate from high school this summer. But as a sophomore at Latino College Preparatory Academy in San Jose, Karla did not have someone to watch Alana while she attended school. That left her no choice but to drop out and focus on caring for her new child.

According to Planned Parenthood, teen mothers are more likely to end up having children at a young age. Other studies show that teenage mothers are less likely to graduate than those who do not conceive at a young age.

But what happens to these young mothers once they get beyond the age that they were supposed to graduate high school? And what about those who stay in school?

Information gathered by the Web site adolescentsfor-outh.com, a database for youth advocacy information and statistics, shows that prospects for teen parents who drop out of high school are not promising.

"Teen mothers have about a 60 percent chance of graduating from high school, compared with 90 percent of those who postpone childbearing."

Among dropout, teen women who have children are much less likely to return to school.

Despite the discouraging numbers, some young San Jose mothers say they are determined to prevent their children from becoming just another statistic.

"The leaders of tomorrow are being born right now," Karla said, confident in her ability to raise her child to be successful. She lives with the father of her child in his mother's East San Jose home.

"Some women, like Karla, get kicked out of their homes once they are pregnant, or they are not accepted within their own families. The problem is that when they are forced to leave while carrying an unborn child."

In many cases, the women end up living with their

Mothers. Parents grapple with balancing school, work, family life.

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In Death: Immigration

A PERSONAL BATTLE

DAYLABORER | Center reaches out to workers

Continued from Page 1

unteer wraps up the day's English lesson in the stuff heat.

"Around this time it gets obvious that there's probably no work for the day," said Rosa, a 49-year-old single mother, over a disgruntled roar from the soccer fans huddled around the television across the room.

With President Bush sending the National Guard to reinforce the southern border and Congress debating immigration reform, the American public is given the message that immigrant workers are enemies to be kept out. Quite contrary, the lives and stories of these day workers revealed the lowest ranks of pioneers, each struggling to create his or her own American Dream.

Many men and women at the center, who have asked that their last names not be used, are regulars. Some arrive long before the 7 a.m. opening to catch a job cleaning homes or doing yard work. Without English skills and, in many cases, without proper documentation, day workers have few job options apart from physical labor. Even the best positions require the applicant to speak basic English and give proof of legal status, making the job hunt a daily struggle.

Rosa echoes Cesar Chavez in her native Spanish: "Con papeles, no se puede" — with legal papers, one can make it. However, several jobseekers say an undocumented worker who speaks English fares better in the job market than a documented worker who doesn't.

This makes the Day Worker Center at Mountain View's Calvary Church invaluable to the immigrant community. The center offers workers a friendly indoor alternative to gathering outside Home Depot. It serves about 90 people daily and doubles as a place for locals to find hard workers for temporary hire. Employers can walk in and register with the center's office and receive a helping hand for the day. Each worker is guaranteed a minimum of \$10 an hour.

Contrary to popular belief, the workers at the center aren't all Latino. "We get all kinds of people from all kinds of places," said the center's director, Maria Marroquin, 47, nodding toward a Vietnamese man behind the soccer match with the predominantly Hispanic crowd. "Everyone has a story."

There are women like Ana who hasn't seen her sons in three years, and men like Lorenzo, 37, who split rent with six other people to make ends meet.

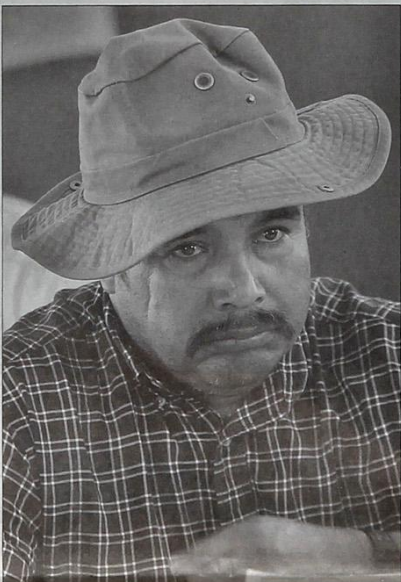
Javier, 17, of Oaxaca, Mexico, has been going to the center for four months, waiting with the sun to spend his days awaiting a job in the stuffy church room or hauling bricks if he's lucky. Few American teenagers would take hard work as appreciatively as Javier does, joking and smiling with friends at the center. Work is scarce, with some people getting as few as eight hours in a week, although the pay and regularity of work is exponentially better here than on the other side. Whether from the Ukraine, Vietnam or Latin America, each immigrant comes with the hope of creating a better life.

These aren't people looking for charity and handouts. In fact, many are too proud to take advantage of programs such as the day laborer center and opt to go it alone. This can be a problem, as unregistered employers are not required to go through a screening process like employers who go through the center. Workers go into a job blindly with little assurance of payment and safety of the location.

"Sometimes they say they'll pay \$100 for a job and they give instead \$30," says John, 41, an ex-convict programmer from Vietnam, between sips of noodle soup. "You can't trust them."

Despite all the daily hardships, many workers still find it within themselves to reach out to others in their community. A woman at a nearby apartment building, recommended by Marroquin to the mothers at the center, babysits children after school while their parents are away.

The center is a hub of information. Often



Diem Ly Vo
in my opinion

Immigration controversy hits home

With the renewal of the immigration debate in early May, I observed many of my peers at Willow Glen High School walk out of classrooms in protest of the immigration bill in Washington that threatens to punish many of their undocumented friends, relatives and even them. While I objected to rash and unorganized protesting, I affirmed their passion for the issue. It had never occurred to me that in the same schools and neighborhoods walked teens who may share my ambitions, but not the same legal challenges.

A new perspective had come to light. It initially seemed too subjective for my often rational way of thinking — which would be in any other case prompt this kind of response. If you are illegal, you have no legal rights. But a re-examination of their cause provoked me to recollect memories of my own experiences with immigration and helped me shape a better perspective.

For the first seven years of my childhood, I lived in a province on the outskirts of Hue, Vietnam. I was rarely perplexed with the problems that were permanent factors in the daily lives of my family. I never realized that for every day I played, my parents labored in sweat and tears. Summer days were when my dad spent countless hours in the weeding, crop fields and my mom, in her fragile health, worked at the crack house to sell household items in the village market. School days never inspired individualism, but trespassed impossible goals centered on the good of the community. The regime and undemocratic traditions that fosters are responsible for the misguided progress of my country. The harsh lives of my hardworking parents and the ungrateful feelings of my friends. My country has not strived for democracy since the tragic Vietnam War. My parents never spoke out their complaints and my peers never showed signs of individualism.

All that I did not realize, until my family legally immigrated to the United States with the help of my father's role as an officer in the South Vietnam coalition during the Vietnam War. It was a few of fate, I now value more than ever.

It was not easy. My siblings and I struggled to learn English to help ease the culture shock while my parents continued to overwork to pave paths for our futures. We lived in a one-bedroom apartment in downtown San Jose where airplanes flew so close that they seemed almost at arm's reach. I remember always wanting to jump high enough to grasp their wings, feeling hardships and returning to the familiar Vietnam.

Yet daysdreams like these were a few of fate. I now value more than ever. It was not easy. My siblings and I struggled to learn English to help ease the culture shock while my parents continued to overwork to pave paths for our futures. We lived in a one-bedroom apartment in downtown San Jose where airplanes flew so close that they seemed almost at arm's reach. I remember always wanting to jump high enough to grasp their wings, feeling hardships and returning to the familiar Vietnam.

Functioning as a middle ground between employers and day workers, the center is a magnet for the area's laborers in providing comfort, community and camaraderie. And to a lot of people, a good computer is all anyone needs to keep going.

Day Worker Center are people seeking basic survival through community. And if the day's job hunt turns out fruitless, the workers can find consolation in the authentic Mexican meal offered daily at noon. This complimentary meal can make all the difference in a workless week. As Ana puts it, "Though you may not find work everyday, you always have to eat."

Functioning as a middle ground between employers and day workers, the center is a magnet for the area's laborers in providing comfort, community and camaraderie. And to a lot of people, a good computer is all anyone needs to keep going.



During the early morning hours, a man looking for work at the day labor center sits in quiet contemplation.

"We get all kinds of people from all kinds of places. Everyone has a story."

—JOHN, 41
VIETNAMESE IMMIGRANT AND LOCAL RESIDENT



John, 41, watches a World Cup match on television with fellow workers. A legal resident who emigrated from Vietnam, he has lived in the United States for 17 years and worked as a software engineer before being laid off two years ago. Finding a steady job has been difficult, so he tries to find work whenever he can.

police and relatives will ask laborers whether they've seen missing people or runaways on the local job circuit. After a nearby residential fire in early June, the Mountain View chapter of the Red Cross went to the labor center to find families displaced by the fire and ask where others could be found. Marroquin recalls the hurricane relief fundraiser the center ran.

"It was incredible to see the people down on their own luck still pulling money out of their own pockets," he said.

Countering the cultural stereotypes classifying immigrant laborers as a drain on social funding, the workers at the Mountain View

mon anyway, the financial effect on the school district was minor. Puma explained that cutting class affected the students academically because they were "missing out on preparing for state tests."

Despite the downsides, many agree the rallies have been effective in demonstrating deep involvement in the immigration debate.

"It shows how many people actually know what's happening now and are against it," Barber said. "We're very proud of our students and how they behaved." Puma said, "They led rallies downtown, led rallies of their own. I think it gained them respect."

Even though the bulk of the protests have ended, students like 17-year-old Braulio Gonzalez, who attends Menlo-Atherton High School, are on the lookout for more opportunities. "It's a thing that you hear in the news and you keep your eyes peeled."

Because most rallies happened in the after-

Rallies are fine, educators say, just not during class

By Jim Igo

Mosaic Staff Writer

On May 1, more than 100,000 people from all over the Bay Area came to San Jose and peacefully rallied for immigrant rights. The march happened on a Monday — a school day.

Among the mix of children, parents, immigrants and non-immigrants were many high school students who ditched school to make the event. Several other protests in March and April also fell on school days. High schools in the San Jose Unified School District saw a general decline in attendance whenever there was a rally.

While school officials don't mind students supporting their communities, they don't want them to cut school for it.

O'Hany McLean, spokesperson for California Superintendent of Schools Jack O'Connell, said O'Connell "encourages educators to help students learn and express their views on the ral-

In Depth: The War

Conflict in the Middle East comes home to Bay Area



While he was in Iraq, rifleman Eduardo Rivera of the Army National Guard survived a car explosion and fire after a suicide bomber's car collided with the Humvee he was traveling in. This helmet helped save his life.

AT PEACE WITH WAR

Wars share many parallels — just not student protests

By Noreya Ochoa
Mosaic Staff Writer

Picture a time when the nation was engaged in a war on communism, the president had a rapidly dropping approval rate, the United States had a draft and students everywhere were protesting a war they were being forced to fight.

Now picture the situation today: The nation engaged in a war on terror, a president with a rapidly dropping approval rate, yet no threat of a draft and less student protesting.

Student involvement in protests today seems less prominent than that of the Vietnam-era, despite the fact that both wars were shared parallels.

According to South Bay activists who participated in anti-war protests during the '70s, the social differences made the biggest impact on protest involvement.

The draft was a big component of the protests for Vietnam," said Jay Lawson, a history teacher at Cupertino High School. "You have to understand that we were scared. The voting age was 21, but we were being sent to war at 18. We had a type of mold to fit into and we had no avenue to speak out. We were frustrated, and that is where the heart for protests in the '70s came from."

Lawson did not consider himself a radical during the Vietnam protests, but rather an occasional protest attendee. Still, his viewpoint is similar when compared to those like Charlotte Casey, who was heavily involved in the resistance to the war during the '70s.

Casey, now an event organizer for South Bay Mobilization, an organization devoted to resistance of the war in Iraq,

See ANTIPAR, Page 8



Rivera, 20, could be deployed to the U.S.-Mexico border to help the Border Patrol keep undocumented immigrants out. "I am Mexican but my loyalty lies with the United States."

By Isana Gabriela Anghel
Mosaic Staff Writer

One would expect 20-year-old Iraqi war veteran Eduardo Rivera to be faced by his nine-month combat experience in Iraq. But as he speaks about his perspective on life after fighting on the front lines, he sounds optimistic.

"The fact that I'm still alive is very positive," said Rivera said. "I like to serve, it's my duty and I take pride in it."

Rivera has been back in his hometown of San Jose for six months and could be deployed to the U.S. Mexican border as part of President Bush's plan to secure U.S. borders. Rivera joined the Army National Guard when he was 18 and was sent into combat two months after he completed boot camp. During his tour north of Baghdad, he witnessed scenes few young men have.

On one occasion, the his Humvee he was traveling in hit an improvised explosive device and veered into a ditch. The impact shattered one of his fellow soldiers' legs and broke another's collarbone. Because Rivera sustained suffered only minor injuries, he was able to provide medical aid to his comrades. The smoke and darkness made it nearly impossible to dodge incoming fire from an enemy he could not see. The concussion he suffered as a result of the blast still gives him headaches.

On another occasion, Rivera's Humvee collided with a suicide bomber's car. The Humvee was blown apart and it burned to the ground. Sharpnel penetrated Rivera's arm, leaving deep scars. He received a Purple Heart for

See VETERAN, Page 8

When inflicting a rifleman, Rivera's Humvee exploded after a suicide bomber crashed into his vehicle, a piece of metal pierced the right side of his left eye.

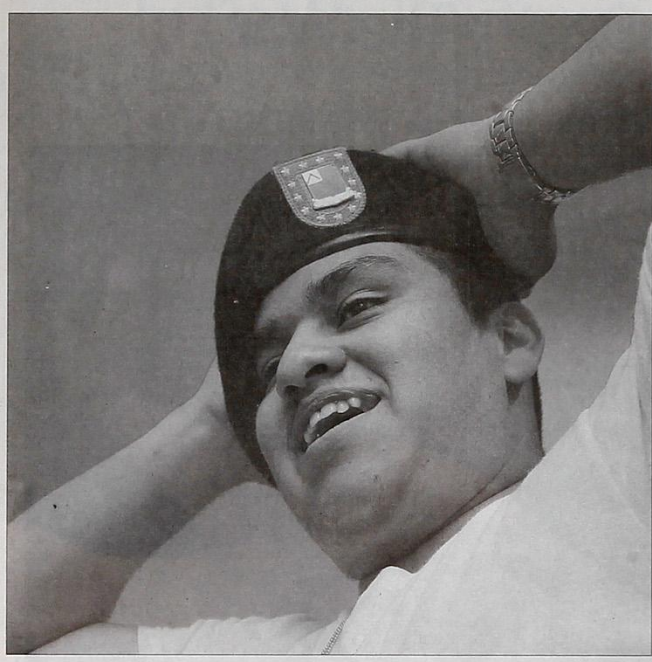
Common slang often hurtful: Teens take issue with 'That's so gay'

High School who will attend De Anza Community College's Middle College program in the fall. "I hear it at high school daily. And at the mall, too. Anywhere there is youth around."

The phrase has become synonymous with terms like "stupid," "lame" and "annoying," and even worse, it's hurtful to people like

See SLANG, Page 8

According to Shannon Turk, the director



Eduardo Rivera, an infantryman in the Army National Guard, was injured in Iraq and now could be redeployed to the U.S.-Mexico border.

VETERAN Tales from the front

Continued from Page 7

IN MAY, BUSH CALLED FOR 6,000 TROOPS TO BE STATIONED ALONG THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER TO HELP REDUCE ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSING. RIVERA IS WAITING TO BE DEPLOYED.

"I have never answered that," he said. "I am not going to long about it because I value human life. No matter who they are, a life is a life."

In May, Bush called for 6,000 troops soldiers to be stationed along the U.S.-Mexico border to help the U.S. Border Patrol reduce illegal crossings. Rivera is waiting to be deployed. It may occur within the next three months or he may not have to at all. The irony is that he is a Mexican immigrant.

"I've heard celebrities, heard it from movies, from TV. The media said about the word 'gay,'" Popalir's television show says that "South Park" and "Chappelle's Show" frequently use such terms and often feature episodes and skits that make fun of the disabled and gay characters.

There appears to be a certain type of person who uses such offensive jargon. Uneducated people say it, too," Jessica said. "They are ignorant and do not care from people in a certain age range."

"I would say that people are more susceptible to this thinking until they are 20 to 21. Before that, especially 19 to 21, they think they should be more in tune with the culture," she said. "They realize that these words are culturally loaded," Vanniarajan said.

"These phrases seem to mostly address 'white' and 'hispanic' as they continue to use it after those ages, it's about masculinity."

Jessica is hopeful she won't be hurt by slang for the rest of her life. "I think it's an adolescent thing. You hardly hear it among 20- to 30-year-olds, so I just hope people grow out of it," she said. But that doesn't mean she isn't hurt by comments now.

"One day, I told to watch his mouth, but I usually just say 'f--- off,'" she said. "I don't mean to sound like I hate people's name, but it does really hurt me. I don't want to sound like I'm a racist."

Not everyone is willing to speak up. "I've seen young people tend to let it slide up a bracket and say that it doesn't bother them."

In support groups, it comes out that these terms are harmful... some suffer in silence because they are afraid of what others will say. "I don't want to be exposed," she said.

She offered an alternative way to cope with the language. "Many cases, students will see a teacher or administrator, and by California law, he or she is expected to help reduce the harmful language," she said. "If the school officials only do so much, Jessica said.

"People say they are sorry, and they will say I'm sorry and faster again later, even that same day," she said.

Education and persistence may be the best weapons in eliminating such offensive language.

"How far can we change people's thinking once it has become a habit? Can we change people's thinking, period?" Vanniarajan asked.

"You cannot force people into believing something. It has to come from within," she said. "They have to see it hurting someone in order to change their habits."

Among those adolescents who report feeling unhappy and stressed, 70 percent said they don't get enough sleep at night and 28 percent said they feel too

ANTIWAR | Youths less engaged in protest because impact less felt

Continued from Page 7

By contrast, Vietnam protests were rich with music, poetry, art and fashion. Youth flocked to hear and see these new and creative ways of making a stand.

John Burk of Food not Bombs, a San Jose group that opposes the occupation Iraq said, "Through past events, we've found a lot of political activity comes through the hip-hop culture." The concern he said, is whether a hip-hop movement enough to engage the younger generation.

Technological advances made the Internet networking site has done more than helped the Iraq war generation.

"The Internet today make the difference," said Keshia Evans, an East Palo Alto activist. "It has been keen down a certain amount of integrity. There is no need for struggle."

As much as the use of technology may detract from social media, it also provides an outlet for speaking out against the war. Tom Fullen of South Bay Mobilization said, "The government will crack down harder and faster if no one does anything. They will bring out the National Guard and the military and will not have tolerance for the action being taken. It would be better to speak out."

Cordoso brought the idea that many young people seem to forget. "The draft could happen again. And when it did, all of us will be here." "How could we have let this happen?" she said.

Still, some people have not given up hope on the young activists who protest the war in Iraq.

"The young site MoveOn.org works on a lot of the Internet networking site MoveOn.org of the Iraq war."

Through the Web site MoveOn.org administrators can organize in-person meetings for those members to discuss matters pertaining to their mission. Using this method, people sharing the

HISTORIC PARALLELS

Timeline of significant social and political events before and during the wars in Vietnam and Iraq

VIETNAM
 February 1965 - War officially begins
 1966 - Pacifist movie "The Sand Pebble" is released; 400,000 American forces stationed in Vietnam
 March 1966 - My Lai Massacre sparks dissent in the United States
 January 1969 - President Richard Nixon is inaugurated
 May 1970 - Four protesters killed by U.S. National Guard during anti-war rally at Kent State University
 June 1970 - Neil Young releases "Ohio," a protest song, as a single
 June 1971 - 325,000 American troops stationed in Vietnam
 1973 - U.S. pulls out of war; 50,000 dead; 300,000 casualties and \$15 billion spent

IRAQ
 Sept. 11, 2001 - Terrorists attack World Trade Center and the Pentagon
 March 2003 - 114,000 soldiers war in Iraq
 March 2004 - Bush declares war on Iraq
 March 2004 - Bin Laden's name is mentioned in Iraq
 June 2004 - Anti-war movie "Fahrenheit 9/11" questions the Bush administration's reasons for invading Iraq
 December 2004 - 1,500 paratroopers arrive in Iraq and get stuck on Iraq
 January 2005 - Iraq holds first nationwide election, with surprisingly large voter turnout
 November 2005 - Haditha killings of 24 Iraqi non-combatants
 May/June 2006 - U.S. Young returns the Bush administration's war on terrorism, stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. Senate debates proper procedure for military withdrawal

SLANG Some reject hurtful words

Continued from Page 7

online encyclopedia Wikipedia's entry on sexual slurs, whether they slurs come to exist in society is "determined by a society's or subculture's set of values, especially its biases against genders or sexual orientations."

In simpler terms: The usage of the phrase may be making a form of homophobia. Gay isn't the only word that may be used inappropriately and hurtfully but it is constant use in daily culture. Another common phrase "That's retarded," and the psychology behind that phrase goes even further.

"We've started using all these more politically correct terms: disabled, handicapped, special ed. The term 'retarded' is less of a mainstream word and left for teens to use as more negative slang," said Swathi Vanniarajan, a professor of linguistics at San Jose State University.

Letover terminology isn't the only reason behind these secondary uses. The world's history of intolerance has snowballed to allow some terms to become more acceptable.

"There have been other times in history that dominant groups have used ethnic slurs against other groups and have been allowed to just by saying they 'don't really mean anything.' But they all come from a place of oppression and it speaks for a greater problem in society," Turk said.

Peer pressure and the media also play a role.

"I've heard celebrities, heard it from movies, from TV. The media said about the word 'gay,'" Popalir's television show says that "South Park" and "Chappelle's Show" frequently use such terms and often feature episodes and skits that make fun of the disabled and gay characters.

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Science NEWS COVERAGE FROM THE MOSAIC URBAN JOURNALISM WORKSHOP

GLOBAL WARMING

YOUTHS TAKE FIGHT TO STREETS

BY AREA GROUPS WORK TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GASES

By Eric Jin Mosaic Staff Writer

Vida Chen, 18, stands at Santa Clara and San Pedro Streets in San Jose, asking pedestrians, "Do you have a minute for the environment?"

Chen, a San Jose resident, works for Environment California, an organization that collects money from the public to influence state legislation on environmental issues.

At Smith College in Massachusetts, Chen was looking for a way to change the world as well as find a summer job. She stumbled upon Environment California, soon she was working to fight global warming.

"It was me got involved with this issue," she said.

Many student organizations and youth activist groups are trying to show the world that global warming is serious and that it's having detrimental effects on the earth. College students such as Chen, who wears a blue Environment California T-shirt, inform the public and try to persuade people to help campaign for a greener world.

Chen stood in 90-degree heat for five hours June 23 at Brooks Branch and Christina Galvan, both 18. The three students cover the San Jose area as part of the Menlo Park branch of Environment California. They work five hours a day, six days a week, at different locations, talking to passers-by about the environment.

"There are people who walk by who are willing to donate," Brad said. "And that's exactly what we want. Many people sign up for membership and donate to the cause. Their contributions are used to fund political campaigns."

Global warming could become "the largest environmental issue of this century," said Michael Hanemann, professor of environmental economics at the University of California-Berkeley. "It's a very large problem. It's going to increase in magnitude as the decades advance."

The phenomenon is caused by a buildup of greenhouse gases which mainly include carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Released by the burning of fossil fuels, these gases build up in the atmosphere and blanket the Earth, trapping in heat from the sun.

Over the past few decades there has been an exponential increase in carbon dioxide, mostly generated by human activity, Hanemann said. As a result, the Earth's temperature has been rising. "In the century, the Northern Hemisphere's average global surface temperature rose one degree. Although it doesn't seem like much, small temperature increases may have enormous ramifications. It's a profound change in our climate that is unprecedented in human history," Hanemann said.

Former Vice President Al Gore contends in his documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" that glaciers and ice floes have been melting at alarming rates.

He says that if left uncontrolled, Greenland would be iceless by 2050. That melt water would



Vida Chen, an Environment California campaigner, draws San Jose pedestrians' attention to the non-profit environmental organization.

raise the sea level by about 20 feet, drowning low-lying areas such as Manhattan or coastal India and affecting more than 100 million people globally.

Environment California is dedicated to preventing this. It has supported several bills that have passed through the Legislature. In January, a measure was passed that allocated \$3.2 billion for installing solar panels on new buildings in California.

This summer, the organization is working on Assembly Bill 22, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, said 20-year-old David Wyman, citizen outreach director of Environment California's Menlo Park branch. The bill's goal is to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emissions in California by 25 percent by 2020 and 75 percent by 2050. Wyman hopes for it to be passed by Aug. 11.

Other programs, such as the California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG) have similar goals.

"We want to have all campuses be carbon neutral, or to have a 90 percent reduction within the next 30 years," said CALPIRG's Student

Board Chair Tamaso Boggs, 19. Like Environment California, CALPIRG also runs on donations. But the money comes from UC students, not the general public. To keep a CALPIRG branch running, about 20 percent of a campus student body must pledge at least \$5 annually.

"The only way we manage to stay on campus and keep our funding is that we go door-to-door," Boggs said. "We have to take a week out of our activities each quarter and talk to students."

One of the largest problems student activists face is the lack of money to do their work. "The community's general indifference toward global warming 'It affects everyone,'" Galvan said, "and the sad part is that a lot of people are apathetic."

Nonetheless, students and organizations are working to impart the seriousness of the matter on the public. "It's the most important issue of our generation," said Dan Ko, a UC-Davis student. "The human ramifications in the last 20 years would be huge."

She is the coordinator for her school's CALPIRG Campus Climate Challenge, a national program focused on making college campuses more energy efficient.

Ultimately, she just wants to make a difference in the world. "I can be a little dent in the universe of politics," she said.

"In my opinion, sleep deprivation is truly one of the most pressing health issues today. I myself consistently went to sleep after 1 or 2 in the morning throughout my junior year of high school, simply because I needed the time to study or finish my homework."

Sleep deprivation may also result in irritability, shrunken speech, memory loss, and trouble concentrating. These symptoms are similar to those of a person who is drunk or high on drugs. These impairments of judgment can have serious and, in some cases, fatal consequences. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Center, Sleep is supposed to be when the body recharges. It is also when the body develops, and this is especially important to teenagers because their bodies develop rapidly.

Teens waking up to a growing problem: sleep deprivation

While the world is waking up to the dangers of global warming, a growing number of teenagers are waking up to a growing problem: sleep deprivation.

"I would never do well on the tests anyway, since I was tired because I didn't get enough sleep the night or morning before," Oza said. "I simply didn't learn anything after my brain shut down at 1 in the morning. I would continue to study until 2 or 3, but wouldn't really learn anything."

"In my opinion, sleep deprivation is truly one of the most pressing health issues today. I myself consistently went to sleep after 1 or 2 in the morning throughout my junior year of high school, simply because I needed the time to study or finish my homework."

Sleep deprivation may also result in irritability, shrunken speech, memory loss, and trouble concentrating. These symptoms are similar to those of a person who is drunk or high on drugs. These impairments of judgment can have serious and, in some cases, fatal consequences. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Center, Sleep is supposed to be when the body recharges. It is also when the body develops, and this is especially important to teenagers because their bodies develop rapidly.

Insufficient sleep also has been shown to cause problems in school because students find it more difficult to learn.

"Sending students to school without enough sleep is sending them to school without breakfast," Dr. Don Mindel, the associate director of the Sleep Center at the Hospital of the Philadelphia, told the Associated Press.

"Sleep serves not only a restorative function, allowing cells, bodies and brains, but it is also a key element in learning. When we've learned during the day,"

Teachers, too, are noticing the effects of sleep deprivation on their students.

"A lot of the students seem tired during class," said Tyler Hanborough, a teacher at Bellarmine College Preparatory in San Jose. "It can affect their work. It can affect their grades. It can be made up on weekends."

Maintain a consistent sleeping pattern. Be more efficient with time and cut down on procrastination. Wasted time can be better spent on studies for increasingly stressed teachers.

"Looking back on it, sleeping late or simply getting enough sleep is a terrible idea," Oza said.

To tell 'Truth,' Gore movie ineffective

DOCUMENTARY ATTRACTS AUDIENCE WHO ARE ALREADY CONVINCED

By Jordan Kolb and Nereya Oleson Mosaic Staff Writers

An inconvenient truth may prove to be an ineffective one. The movie "An Inconvenient Truth," documents former Vice President Al Gore's simplistic approach to the complicated science of global warming. Using only a slide show and his own personal accounts, Gore explains the potentially detrimental effects of the United States' energy-consuming lifestyles.

The movie aims to educate and warn the public about daily energy-use habits, but the movie may not be as eye-opening as it was intended. For viewers leaving the theater at a late-late screening in Campbell, the movie seemed to mislead what they already knew and predicted.

"We're very ecology-minded now and we do an awful lot environmentally. We use solar panels, purchase hybrids and recycle," said one moviegoer leaving the Campbell screening. "We do all these things because we believe in the environment."

Similarly, others in the theater reported that they already use fuel-efficient cars, buy energy-saving light bulbs, take public transit and recycle.

At least one viewer said he had made a drastic lifestyle change before the film's release.

Alphouse Grueszfeld of San Jose said he contributed to the movie's message of conservation by moving downtown "for easy access" to his destination. As a result, he said he no longer has to commute far for social activities.

Those in attendance who say they already are taking part in the fight against global warming were still glad to have seen the "truth."

"The film was informative, interesting, thought-provoking and depressing," said Rachel Sacak, San Jose. "It's something everyone should see."

Sacak added that "everyone" should include San Jose city officials.

"The city needs to improve public transportation - it's poor, efficiency and emissions," Sacak said.

City officials responded that although there has been progress, more could be done to improve the city's energy efficiency.

"We're not 100 percent," conceded Anna Intanek, who helps oversee the city's fleet of vehicles. "But in this generation, constant improvement never stops."

Jim Cogan, chief of staff for Councilwoman Linda Lorette, explained some of the city's accomplishments in pursuit of a more environmentally safe city. Lorette has earned a reputation as an environmental advocate on the council.

"San Jose is the first municipal city to join Sustainable Silicon Valley, an organization committed to lowering carbon dioxide distribution," Cogan said. "We also have what we call the Green Building Policy, which deals with alternative ways to develop and make buildings more ecologically efficient. We use single-stream recycling and have one of the highest diversion rates in the country."

Single-stream recycling refers to a method of picking up curbside recycling that requires fewer garbage trucks and less sorting by residents. The diversion rate refers to the percentage of solid waste that is recycled rather than sent to landfills.

Regarding transportation, San Jose's airport is integrating alternative fuel vehicles, using compressed natural gas and decreasing the use of petroleum-based gasoline.

More motorcycle parking spaces will be available in city parking garages, encouraging motorists to use the more fuel-efficient alternative. A recent grant from the Bay Area Air Quality District will help modernize the city's diesel trucks and cut down on emissions.

When asked how he thinks San Jose as a city is progressing environmentally, Cogan said, "Well, we're doing it, but we can always do more."

Although San Jose has worked to become greener, significant progress - in San Jose across the planet - may not be seen until those with the information can give it to the public.

And "An Inconvenient Truth," with its built-in environmental conscious audience, could merely be preaching to the choir - a choir that may not be heard and ignored. The public ignores the global warming problem.

MAYOR'S DILEMMA TAKES TOLL

Continued from Page 1

Sunnyvale, a town that evolved from acres of fruit orchards into a hotbed of high-tech industry. He admired the work of his father, Bob, a devout Roman Catholic who served communion wafers to farm workers in the fields. It was Bob Gonzales who first got the mayor interested in politics by bringing him to school board meetings.

Sal Alvarez, a friend of Gonzales' since before his college days at the University of California-Santa Cruz, said, "Ron was very attached to his father. His life with Bob was entrenched in the service arena. The two were inseparable."

It's a mystery to people who knew the father and son, but the mayor somehow developed a far different political philosophy. Bob Gonzales was a blue-collar, grassroots social activist. Ron Gonzales became a white-collar, fiscally conservative Silicon Valleyite. The son did not have his father's charisma or the same rapport with the Latino community.

Ron Gonzales became the first in his family to receive a college diploma. He attended the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, then returned home and ran for mayor of Sunnyvale in 1972 and barely lost. In 1978, he ran unopposed and served as mayor of Sunnyvale until 1987. Under his leadership, Sunnyvale won national recognition for efficiency and fiscal soundness.

In 1988, he won election to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, and became instantly outnumbered by its socially liberal members. Gonzales was the only supervisor to vote against the rebuilding of Valley Medical Center, upsetting many in the Latino community and other supporters of public medicine. He proposed privatizing the hospital but it went nowhere.

After serving two terms as supervisor, he cast his eyes on the mayor's seat in San Jose. Gonzales moved there and became an executive at Hewlett-Packard. HP proved to be a valuable networking forum, providing him with contacts he would rely on later.

After living in San Jose for four years, he ran for mayor in 1998 and won, using his ethnicity and his business savvy to win the corporate world's political support. Could the governor's mansion be next?

As the first Latino mayor of San Jose in modern times, he became an icon for that community, whether he wanted the role or not.

But soon after, he dropped a quote that would haunt him. Asked about his status as a Latino leader he said, "I'm not a Hispanic mayor. I'm just a mayor who happens to be Hispanic."

It was "like a slap in the face," said Jose Montes de Oca, a community health and housing director who has known Gonzales for approximately 19 years. "It was like he was turning his back on the Hispanic community. We were all extremely disappointed."

Gonzales reached the pinnacle of his career on Aug. 14, 2000, when he delivered a keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention in San Diego. He represented the party's vision of the new Democrat, fiscally prudent, socially aware, appealing to white and minority voters. He was a rising Latino star.

And then the star began to fall. County Assessor Larry Stone probably knows Gonzales as well as anyone in politics. He served with Gonzales on the Sunnyvale council and has known him for 31 years.

"It is tragic to see what happened to him," Stone said. "He was so well-positioned for statewide office."

One month after the convention, rumors spread that Gonzales was having an affair

with a woman about half his age, a staff member at City Hall. Gonzales denied the accusation but later admitted he did have an affair with then 28-year-old Guiselle Nunez. She resigned three weeks later. Gonzales said he would put the affair behind him and make amends with his popular wife, Abina. He didn't. Gonzales later admitted that the affair went on "a few months" after he had promised to end it. After 22 years of marriage, his wife filed for divorce in August 2001. Gonzales and Nunez eventually married three years later.

"The affair caused him to turn inward because he was being so attacked," said Terry Christensen, a political-science professor at San Jose State University. "Although he never has been the most outgoing, warm politician."

Despite the scandal, Gonzales still had Jude Barry. Barry had known Gonzales since his early days as Sunnyvale mayor and was Gonzales' chief of staff. Barry enjoyed a close relationship unlike any other of Gonzales' other staffers. Together, they pushed through a ballot measure that promised to bring a Bay Area Rapid Transit extension to San Jose. They delivered low-income housing and after-school homework centers.

Barry, however, left Gonzales in December 2000. The two haven't spoken in more than five years.

"All they want is honesty," Barry said of San Jose's residents.

Stone said he witnessed a transformation in the mayor's abilities after Barry's departure.

"His turnaround was when he lost Jude Barry," Stone said. "Barry was perfect for Ron in office as far as staff goes. You need solid, trustworthy political people advising you. Losing Jude has been very detrimental to him. He is no longer getting the right advice."

Richard Robinson, a political consultant who has watched Gonzales, uses a popular line for describing Gonzales' decline. "When he lost his father, he lost his soul. When he lost his wife, he lost his heart. When he lost Jude Barry, he lost his mind."

At the start of his first term, Gonzales' approval rating was 70 percent. Today it's at 28 percent. Still, Gonzales has his defenders.

Dustin DeRollo, Gonzales' former deputy chief of staff, credits Gonzales for investing \$100 million in neighborhood housing and tens of millions more in other new projects.

"People will try to sum up his career with 'the Norcal scandal,' but they need to look at what he's accomplished since 1999," DeRollo said. "He's a good man."

However, losing his father, Barry and his wife was just the start. Scandals erupted over a contract that favored Cisco technology for the new City Hall, bloating the cost of a project Gonzales had taken over. Gonzales was accused of not telling the council all they should know and working deals behind closed doors.

That was all before his biggest headache. With the Norcal indictment, a mayor who promised good government for the city and hope for its Latino citizens now clings to his wife's arms at news conferences.

His budget director, Joe Guerra, faces a five-year prison sentence and \$54,000 fine.

According to Barry and others, Guerra was the gatekeeper in Gonzales' office.

Robinson put it bluntly: "Ron trusts Joe. Mainly because Joe gives him a lot of leeway, responsibility and power without questioning it."

After the Norcal indictment, Gonzales lost the support of his fellow council members. All but two have demanded his resignation.

Ron Gonzales, the defiant mayor, says he won't step down. Some would say he already has.



FAMILY COMFORT: Guiselle Gonzales, the mayor's wife, center, and his brother, Robert Gonzales, Jr., left, stand with Gonzales after he addressed the accusations on June 22. Deputy District Attorney Julius Finkelstein and other prosecutors depart the conference room.

MORGUE MANSOUR - MOSIAC STAFF



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DEFENSE: Allen Ruby, Mayor Ron Gonzales' attorney, answers a question at a news conference on June 26, at City Hall.

YOUTHS ON MAYOR GONZALES

"He should resign. He stole money from us."

MARY CRUZ CASTRO 11
DOWNTOWN VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER

"If there's enough evidence that he did the crimes, he should resign. If he knows he did it, and he's still stupid enough to fight it, he deserves to get caught."

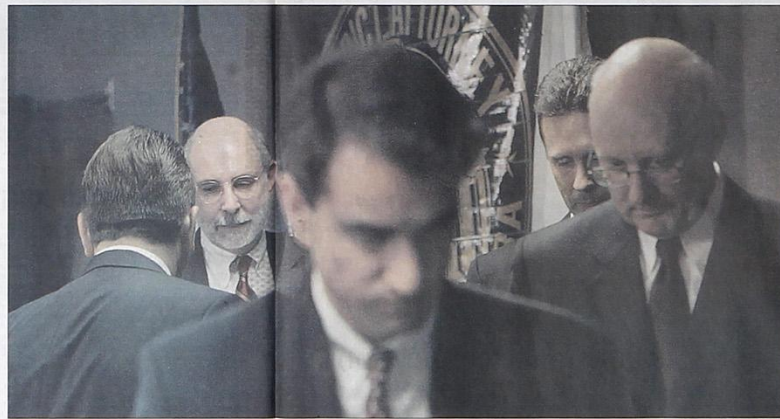
— SAN JOSE RESIDENT

After the Norcal indictment, Gonzales lost the support of his fellow council members. All but two have demanded his resignation.

Ron Gonzales, the defiant mayor, says he won't step down. Some would say he already has.

"I feel sorry for him because it seems like no one likes him."

— TERRY STONE 11
OSWEGEE HIGH SCHOOL, SAN JOSE



PROSECUTOR: After speaking of the accusations made against Mayor Ron Gonzales on June 22, Deputy District Attorney Julius Finkelstein and other prosecutors depart the conference room.

DIANA GABRIELLA ANGELO - MOSIAC STAFF



DIANA GABRIELLA ANGELO - MOSIAC STAFF

LOOKING IN: A silent observer sits outside at the press conference held by Mayor Ron Gonzales and his attorney Allen Ruby.

Vidur Malik
in my opinion

Pro athletes set records in risky behavior

Even casual sports fans know that professional athletes aren't exactly law-abiding citizens. Sure, most pro athletes dedicate their lives to attain abilities most of us can only dream about. But when it comes to using the muscles in their heads, some athletes are pretty much beginners.

Recent reports of athletes getting into serious motorcycle crashes have made headlines. A few weeks ago, Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback and Super Bowl champion Ben Roethlisberger crashed his bike into a car, suffering a broken jaw, broken and chipped teeth, a mild concussion and other facial injuries.

Roethlisberger was warned repeatedly by his head coach Bill Cowher to wear a helmet while riding, but Big Ben just wouldn't listen. The injury was neither life-threatening nor career-threatening, but Roethlisberger has said that if the rides again, he will wear a helmet.

To add insult to injury, Roethlisberger was fined almost \$400 for not wearing a helmet and not having a motorcycle license. If a near-death experience won't teach Big Ben, nothing will. Former Chicago Bulls guard Jason Williams went through a horrific motorcycle accident in 2003, crashing into a light pole and fracturing his pelvis while suffering nerve damage to his leg.

Before the crash, Williams was on his way to a promising career with the Bulls.

The former No. 2 overall pick has not played in an NBA game since.

"You've got to feel bad for Williams, who is working on a comeback. At the same time, you must blame him for driving without a helmet and license. How can you declare yourself fit to drive such a dangerous vehicle without having the proper qualifications or protection?"

Cleveland Browns' tight end Kellen Winslow also was on his way to a successful NFL career, until he almost threw it all away — surprise, surprise — by crashing his bike.

The No. 6 pick of the 2004 draft, Winslow cut short his rookie season with a broken leg. In the off-season, he crashed his bike while doing tricks in a parking lot. The incident was caught on tape, giving everyone a chance to see how bone-headed some pro athletes can be.

What thrill could you possibly get from riding a bike that you can't get from catching a touchdown pass in front of 70,000 people, or soaring up to the rim to dunk a ball while the crowd goes crazy?

Unfortunately, it's not just the way athletes drive that gets them in danger, but also what's in the system when they're driving. You give me a week of the year, and I'll give you an athlete who did something stupid because of alcohol.

Either they drive when they drink, they sleep their wives when they drink, or they give it to underage girls who shouldn't be drinking it.

Even athletes who we think are squeaky clean, like Duke University guard J.J. Redick, are not immune to the powers of booze.

Redick was arrested for drunk driving a few months after leading his squad to the NCAA tournament.

Cincinnati Bengals' wide receiver Chris Henry was charged with providing three underage girls — ages 16, 16, and 18 — alcohol and also was charged with possessing and drunken driving.

Talk about killing two birds with one stone. The sad part is it seems athletes are screwing up, but that they are not learning from their fellow athletes, or even their own mistakes.

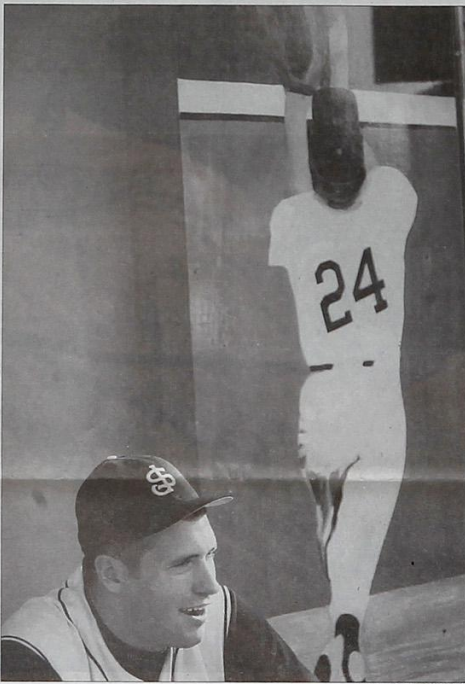
I want to sit Chris Henry or Virginia Tech quarterback Marcus Vick down and ask them both how they can get handcuffed so many times in so short a time span.

If athletes keep going the way they are, I don't think we're too far away from hearing about an athlete who loses his life because he drank a little too much.

S.J. BALLPLAYER SWINGS FOR FENCES

Minor league lifestyle challenging, but 'part of the experience'

By Lorenzo Razo
Mosaic Staff Writer



Brooks McNeven, a 25-year-old minor league pitcher for the San Jose Giants, often drives up Highway 101 to watch the San Francisco Giants play at glamorous AT&T Park.

But it's a much longer journey to move from the minor leagues to the major leagues, one that can take years, and one where talent provides the only shortcut. It is a trek that only a select few complete.

The path is filled with tedious bus rides, poverty-level wages, loneliness and doubt. And the competition is tough.

"It's a struggle," McNeven said. "You're competing with so many players. You know it's a cut-throat business, when you're competing against your own teammates."

There are about 120 ballplayers in the Giants' minor league system, all competing for that one spot," he said.

Each year 7,280 minor league players nationwide compete for the chance to live out their dream and become one of the 750 ballplayers who play at the major league level.

Julian Harris, an ex-minor leaguer, gave baseball his all but fell short in the end. Harris, now a local San Jose pitching coach, got as far as the advanced Class A league, just a notch above the regular Class A minor leagues, the lowest level of organized professional baseball.

Playing in the major leagues was all Harris wanted to do. He was a star pitcher, first baseman, and outfielder at Oak Grove High School. As a tall lefty relief pitcher, he relied on his 92-95 mph fastball, changeup, and slider. Harris was 19 when he was drafted by the Anaheim Angels organization. The American League club farmed him out to the instructional rookie leagues to perfect his pitching mechanics.

It was Harris' first time living away from home. He not only had to learn the craft of baseball and focus on his career, but he also had to learn how to live with teammates from all walks of life.

After a year and a half in the instructional leagues, the Angels elevated Harris to Class A team in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. During his first season, he struggled with control problems, going 1-3 with a 4.8 ERA, but he still showed promise and was promoted to Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.

There, however, his career hit a wall and he was confronted with the

Justin Hedrich awaits a eager crowd of fans asking for pregame autographs.



Justin Hedrich awaits a eager crowd of fans asking for pregame autographs.



Above, before the game begins, Darren Sackx autographs a mitt for an excited fan at the stadium's entrance. Right, San Jose Giants starting pitcher Darren Sackx, 33, reacts to a fan's request for an autograph on his sleeping pillow.

"It's a struggle, ... You know it's a cutthroat business when you're competing with your own teammates."

— BROOKS McNEVEN, 25, MINOR LEAGUE PLAYER

World Cup scores as fans make connections

By Diem Ty Vo
Mosaic Staff Writer

The Bay Area's large and diverse population of immigrants, drawn from countries all over the world, is fueling enthusiasm for World Cup soccer games — and it's also enriching the region's mainstream culture.

Bay Area residents, like many Americans, have spent the past decade only beginning to embrace

an event, or rather a culture, that to others is so much more than just soccer. Regarded by many nations as the biggest sporting event in the world, the quadrennial World Cup, held in Germany this year, is igniting fervor all over the globe. With Bay Area fans hailing from Mexico to Australia's "Down Under," interest in the World Cup is growing so intense it could one day match the passion gripping fans in the immigrants' homelands.

In recent weeks, World Cup fans

have been flocking to Bay Area restaurants, bars and cafes to watch the games. Behind San Jose's newly reopened Latino sports bar — Futbol, Antojitos, Mas — Martin Garfias and his wife, Candy, waited anxiously to see whether Mexico would beat Portugal.

They woke up at 6 a.m. to join their fellow fans in watching what they called the "best sport in the world" at a small but cozy place

restaurant was filled with early risers in green jerseys and meekers with the Mexican flag draped over their backs. By halftime, Martin and Candy's friends and we take them to the bar. They were shocked and disappointed," he said. "I ain't trying to be a career minor leaguer."

He gave up his professional baseball aspirations, but he remains close to the game. He works as a pitching instructor for kids in the Bay Area, passing on his knowledge to young players with the same dream that he once harbored.

McNeven, on the other hand, is still following his dream. Born and raised in Canada, he played baseball at the University of British Columbia.

But his pursuit of a spot on a major league team became a source of tension in their relationship.

"I didn't know if I wanted to be with someone who's gone six months out of the year," Gina Harris said. "But he told him he had one last chance to show — or else give it up."

He pitched on with a minor league team in Mesa, Ariz., that had no affiliation with any major league team. However, players showing promise could have their contracts purchased by a big league club.

But in Mesa, his life became a pressure cooker. His career tanked because he realized that his family was more important.

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THE UNVEILING OF A QUEEN FOR A YEAR



READY FOR HER CLOSEUP: Ashly Fagundes, 15, Festa Queen for San Jose's Five Wounds Portuguese National Church, examines the detailed beadwork adorning her traditional cape.



PICTURE DAY: Above, Orienda Mendes, left, and Crystal Mendes, sidemaids to the queen Ashly Fagundes; at right, cross a bridge at Evergreen Valley College to meet with the rest of the Festa group and have their photographs taken. Ashly's father is the president of Five Wounds — and the president's daughter traditionally takes on the role of Festa Queen.



ASCENDING: Fifteen-year-old queen Ashly Fagundes, center, and 6-year-old "little queen," Leiana Gonzalo, are escorted by sidemaids Crystal Mendes, from left, Rina Leganpi and Sydney Minesses at Evergreen Valley College. Five Wounds is the center of San Jose's Portuguese community.

By Lorence Razo
Mosaic Staff Writer

Ashly Fagundes, a 15-year-old sophomore at Yerba Buena High School, is this year's Portuguese Festa Queen, an honor that makes her parents very proud. But at times, she would rather be an average teenager: one who enjoys spending free time chatting on the computer, hanging out with friends, and listening to her favorite rock bands, like the Killers, Papa Roach, and Linkin Park.

Ashly said she reluctantly accepted the role of Festa Queen because it meant so much to her father. She also pointed out that "my dad's the president of San Jose's Five Wounds Portuguese National Church, the center of San Jose's Portuguese life and the sponsor of the annual three-day festival that honors the community's heritage."

Ashly's parents, Joe and Irene Fagundes, both emigrated from the Portuguese island of Terceira in 1983. Both are passionate about their Portuguese culture and dis-

HIP HOP | Poets and musicians slam violence in hip-hop culture

Continued from Page 1

skill.

"When a kid wants to rap, he's not only going to learn to rap, he's also going to learn about metaphors, similes and other techniques that are required to be a good writer," said Gilbert Chaidze, outreach program supervisor at Unity Care.

"A lot of kids drop out of school because they feel that it isn't relevant to them or their neighborhood, so what we try to do is help them tap into their passions and connect that to school to make it relevant for them," Chaidze said.

Hip-Hop 360 organizers agree that the program offers an alternative tone to the negative drone of modern rap.

"Before, artists like N.W.A and Ice Cube represented the reality of the gangster life," said Demone Carter, project coordinator for Hip Hop 360. "Sensually, that reality got blown out of proportion into what it is today. Now it seems like you need a hard luck story to be successful. You need to tell people you got shot or stabbed to sell records."

When comparing old-school and new-school hip-hop, there are similarities and differences. Today, there appears to be more "gangsta" rap.

The popularity of "gangsta" rap has led casual rap fans to believe that all rap promotes the gang image.

This wasn't the case in the late '80s and early '90s, Chaidze said.

"Nowadays, the 'rap' is synonymous with 'gangsta,'" said Chaidze. "Basically, rappers exposed the gang life, but it wasn't like that life was the only way. Now, it's like the gang life is the only choice."

On the flip side, old-school artists like Ice Cube and Tribe Called Quest weren't considered "gangsta." Likewise, there are a few rappers today who stay away from the violent music broadcasted over the airwaves.

"Guys like Common, Kanye West, Talib Kweli and Mos Def aren't part of the gangsta vibe," said Carter, who himself works to promote positivity by rapping and making music. "It's good to see them so successful, because when I was young, I felt like it was impossible to spread that positive vibe and sell records."

The objectification and disrespect of women is another unhealthy trend in the mainstream hip-hop world. There are women who will not stand for the labeling of women as booty-shaking instruments.

Vanessa Nisperos is one of those women.

Nisperos runs 5th Element, a San Jose based collective that supports women in hip-hop.

"5th Element promotes female rappers, b-girls, DJs, and graffiti artists," said Nisperos.

She said there is a disparity between hip-hop being played for the mainstream and the hip-hop most people don't hear.

"There is a fine line between commercial hip-hop, which is a business, and produces party music, and real hip-hop, which is a celebration of life and something that brings people together," Nisperos said.

The goal of 5th Element is to empower women and give them their rightful seat in the hip-hop community. "Everyone deserves a place in hip-hop, and women should feel safe in their place," Nisperos said in her interview.

pointed by their daughter's ambivalence toward portraying Queen Isabella, who was made a saint by the Roman Catholic Church because of her devotion to Portugal's poor and hungry during the early 14th century.

"Kids nowadays, I don't understand them," Irene Fagundes said. "They just don't want to do it."

Every year, Portuguese communities across the nation select their own queens for their own versions of the feast. Five Wounds Church has been participating in this tradition for more than 82 years.

The daughter of the president is usually the recipient of honor. If the president does not have a daughter, a girl is chosen among the daughters of the church.

Ashly's yearlong duties and responsibilities as queen include attending fundraisers such as car washes and selling raffle tickets and homemade "dignatins" for her church. She was crowned during a ceremonial Mass.

But her most important duty is



At an Alum Rock Youth Center open mic session, audience members were encouraged to participate and show off their talent.



Demone Carter raps at an open mic session held at the Alum Rock Youth Center. Carter is project coordinator of the Hip Hop 360, an organization that aims to promote confidence and self-expression in children through hip hop.

views of women come from male artists, some female artists are responsible as well. Rappers like Lil' Kim and Trina have made careers for themselves by producing provocative videos and proudly referring to themselves with derogatory terms.

"Some female rappers have found a way to make money selling their bodies, just like in any other entertainment form," Nisperos said. "Because of rappers like Lil' Kim, guys will always have an excuse. When we criticize them for disrespecting women, they can say, 'Well, Lil' Kim does it too.'"

Nisperos doesn't think anyone in the mainstream empowers women, but she does respect rappers like Mos Def and Koolha.

"They're really empowering women, but they also don't demonize them like (trancey south-

ern rappers) the Ying Yang Twins."

Youth Speaks

Future hip-hop artists who want their music to be meaningful and genuine must speak now. Programs such as Youth Speaks help them do that and also bring about a comforting picture of the future of hip-hop.

A program that promotes literacy and the spoken word, Youth Speaks is full of young men and women who have an opinion about hip-hop and aren't afraid to express it.

They do this with hard-hitting "slam" poetry, a form of poetry that involves competition and high-powered performance similar to rapping.

"Hip-hop is going downhill and it's promoting the 'bling-bling' culture," said Yostine Reyes, 17, an award-winning poet from Youth

Speaks. "It's basically phone sex with a beat."

Influenced by conscious artists like Dead Prez, Common, Mos Def, Kweli and Earthquake 90, Reyes writes about a broad range of subjects in his work.

"I write about a lot of social, political, and family issues," said Reyes.

Panama Dominguez, 18, another Youth Speaks poet, also has strong opinions on the state of hip-hop today.

"Hip-hop is supposed to be positive," Dominguez said.

Inspired by Oakland rap duo Zion I and Latin artist El Rookie, Dominguez writes about his roots and Latino culture. He puts positive messages in his "musical poetry."

Dominguez says that if the right people are put in charge, mainstream hip-hop can become positive and real.

"The people who run hip-hop need to change. The people who run MTV and BET need to go," he said. "If you give me control of KMET, we would see a change in a few months."

Dominguez also questions the motives of many artists today.

"Hip-hop is a job now, you do it to get money. Even if you want to do it from the heart, you will eventually do it for money."

Based on the violence and negativity displayed by mainstream hip-hop, one might conclude that the culture is dying slowly.

Organizations like Unity Care, 5th Element, and Youth Speaks are working hard to resurrect it.

Portuguese church in S.J. nominates this year's teen queen



Festa queen Ashly Fagundes, and her sidemaids Diana Laal share a laugh about the slips they are going to be wearing under their dresses.

joining other girls who have been selected as the queens for their various communities in parades. These parades are held every Sunday, and usually last about an hour and a half.

Five Wounds Church held its parade last week. Afterward, Mass was celebrated and thanks was given to the original Queen Isabella.

During the parade, Ashly wears an elaborate white dress and holds a scepter as maidens and escorts accompany her.

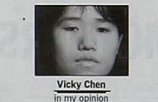
"It's hot," Ashly said of the gown. "You have to wear a lot and the parades are long."

While the festa would be held without a queen, neither would it be complete without sapos, a hearty Portuguese dish.

Sapos are served with soggy French bread and cut up with cabbage and meat," said Joe Meneses, a father of one of the maidens.

The church typically gives the queen's family about \$5,000 to buy the necessary decorations, period dresses and shoes, and to cover the slaughter and butchering of 10 cows — beef for the sapos.

The hard work was worth it,



Life's sweetest dreams start with a belief

A friend in my orchestra class once asked me, "How do you know that you have courage? Why try something if you know you can't do it?"

She's only 14 but already she's one of those people who feel they're the worst at everything. Even when I tell her she's improving at her music, she simply can't believe it. We spend hours arguing about whether it's really possible to make our dreams come true.

I refused to believe anything is impossible and raise my sister as an example.

My twin Alisha Chen, 11, is legally blind and an amazing artist.

While we both love art, she puts a lot more effort into it. Her art teacher at Cupertino High School allows her work, and she's begun entering competitions, winning one honorable mention and passing the first round of the InSights Art Exhibition, an art competition for visually impaired students hosted by LightHouse for the Blind.

Every piece of art has its own feeling, an emotion she's trying to show by drawing it. When she places a stroke on paper, she may not see it but she knows where it is and what's supposed to come next — the whole and the heart. It's about taking the image in her head and translating it onto canvas, so it doesn't matter if she can see it or not. After the rough outline, she'll refine the details under an electronic magnifier, and no one will ever know that the artist is disabled.

Still, my friend remains skeptical. She plays the violin but is so afraid of visually impaired students that she never volunteers for more prominent roles in our orchestra concert. She wants to be a great musician yet she can't come to terms with the fact that she has to start somewhere.

It's embarrassing how she idolizes my violin skills as First Chair. But she's never dared to ask me straight out how I do it — people are always afraid of offending me by bringing up such matters.

You see, like my twin, I am also a legally blind student.

Learning pieces takes me two to three times longer than it does other people. All my music has to be enlarged to two or three lines a page. Before we could afford one of those making old copy machines, my parents had to draw every note by hand on huge sheets of construction paper. I have been frustrated and tired.

Notes sometimes mix themselves up in my vision and I can't play anything resembling music until I have everything memorized, but I never give up.

Music is the universal language, and I love being able to express my emotions through my violin. I work hard and worry harder, but all it pays off when I step onto that stage.

As a violinist, I have attended three competitions alongside people with healthy vision and walked away in the top three every time, as well as with an award for best Chinese piece — a folk song called "Yu Zhou Chang Wan," or "Singing the Night Among Fishing Boats." If I had never tried to play violin because of my visual impairment, I would never have known how well I could play.

Everyone has their weaknesses, whether it's my eyes or my friend's lack of confidence. It is different for everyone and we each have to find our own ways of dealing with it.

Besides, exceeding expectations is half the fun.

When people look at me and my twin, they see people with serious problems. We're legally blind so they don't expect us to excel at anything. We delight in showing them how wrong they are.

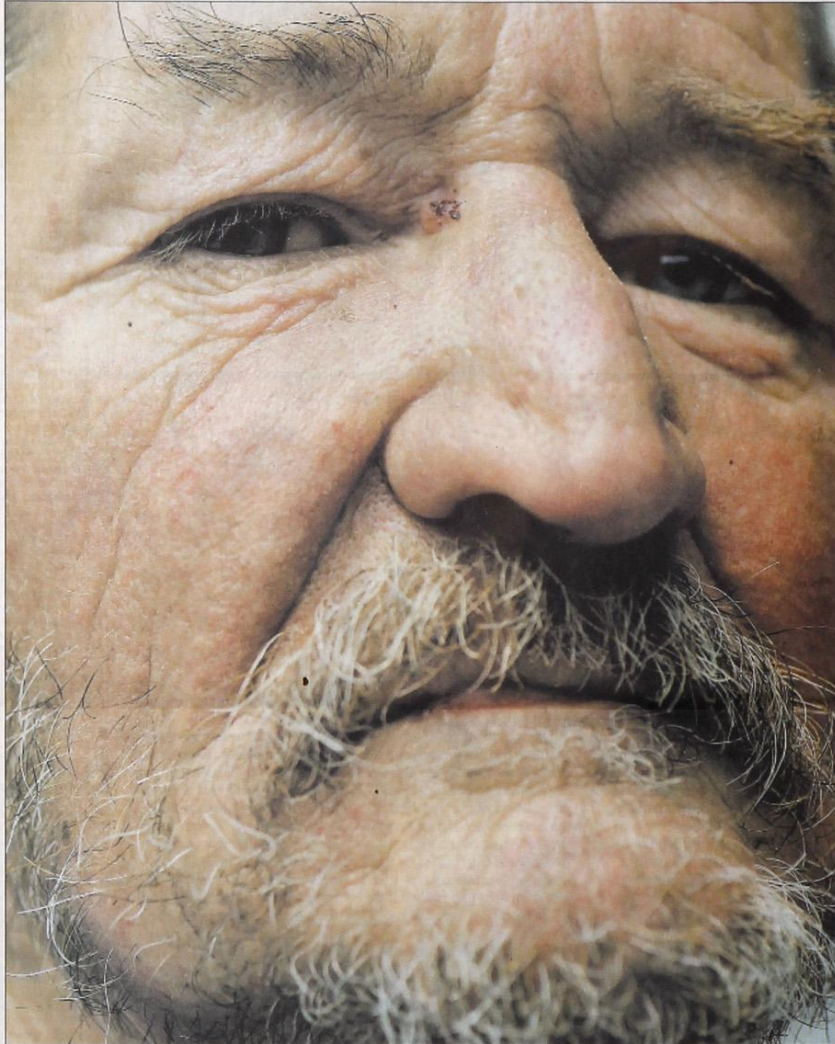
Being better than average is satisfying enough. Being disabled and knowing that they didn't think we could do it makes the victory that much sweeter.

rene Fagundes said, "We would like to keep tradition, like the old days," she said. "So the old culture was die."

The hard work was worth it,

DOWNTOWN REFLECTIONS

Images from the heart of San Jose



LIFE ON THE STREET: A former aircraft mechanic in the Air Force, Gary Richard Tate, 56, has been homeless since he got evicted four months ago. JERRY CAO - MOSAIC STAFF



ALL WET: A San Jose youth finds relief from the summer heat at the fountain at the Plaza de Cesar Chavez. IOANA GABRIELA ANCHEL - MOSAIC STAFF



MIRROR IMAGE: The facades of several buildings are reflected in the windows of an office complex at the corner of Santa Clara and South First streets in downtown San Jose. MONIQUE MEDAKIAN - MOSAIC STAFF



STEPPING PRETTY: Pedestrians walk over purple confetti-like blooms from the Jacaranda trees on Paseo de San Antonio in downtown San Jose.

ANILA KHAN - MOSAIC STAFF