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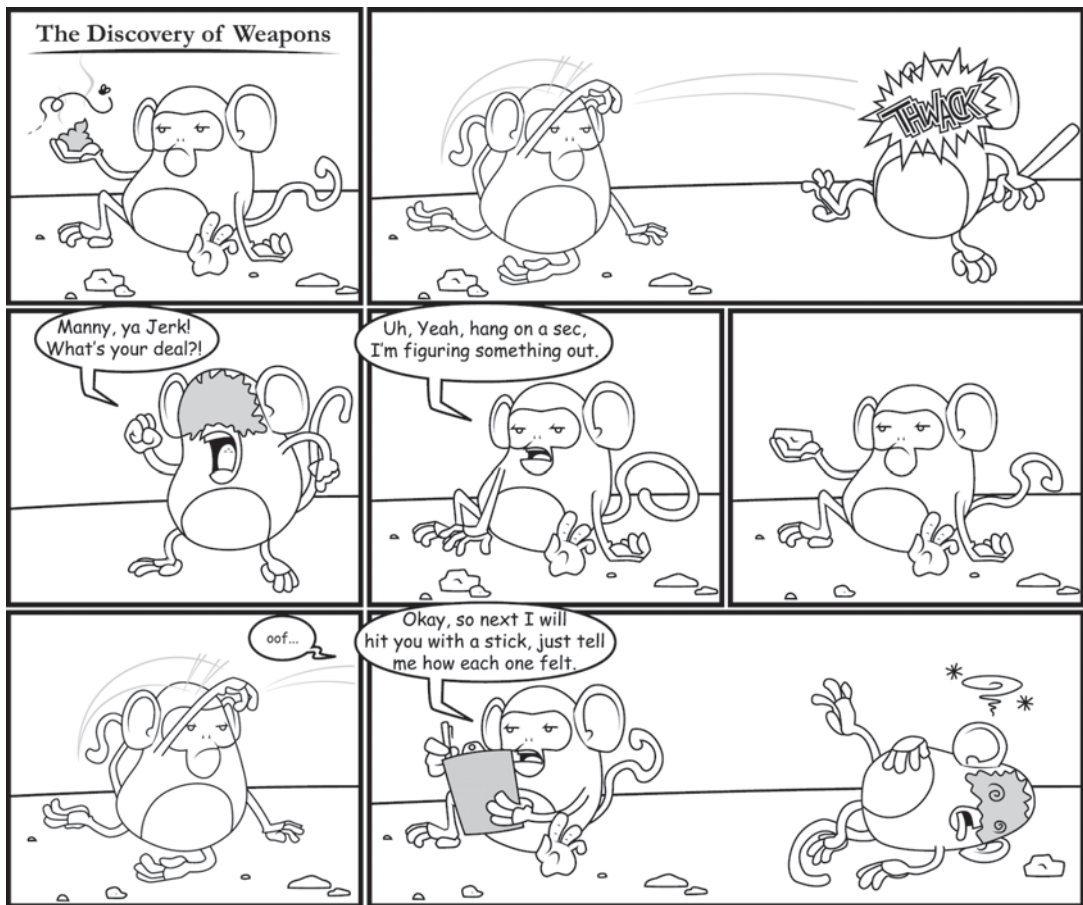


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The *MONITOR* is funded by the district, by the Associated Students of Ohlone College, and through advertising revenue.

The *MONITOR* is a member of the Associated Collegiate Press, Journalism Association of Community Colleges, Community College Journalism Association, California Newspaper Publishers Association, College Media Advisers and Society of Newspaper Design.



OPINION

We aren't getting any smarter, but chimps are

By SANDEEP ABRAHAM
Staff writer

"Chimpanzees have started using weapons." It sounds like a headline you would usually see glaring at you from a tabloid as you wait in line at Safeway, but it's true.

Chimpanzees have been observed using sharpened sticks to find and kill bush babies, which are small nocturnal creatures that look like a cross between a monkey and a squirrel. When I first heard about this, I was in shock, but not because they were using weapons,

as shocking as that is. I was shocked at something far more elementary. Since when do chimpanzees sharpen sticks and with what? That's what I found really impressive.

Apparently, these proficient primates fashion their weapons by taking a stick, ripping away its branches and leaves, and using their teeth to sharpen one end.

They then go look for a dead tree, the holes of which often contain sleeping bush babies. That's when the fun starts because they then slowly inch toward one of these

holes, raise their sharpened sticks over their heads and start brutally repeatedly stabbing the hole, hoping to hit the jackpot.

This does seem pretty desperate, considering the amount of effort it takes and the slim odds of finding a bush baby.

Back in the good old days, chimpanzees used to simply push sticks into termite mounds and let their food come to them. So why the sudden change? I guess the pay-off is bigger and probably tastier too.

Human beings have always been amazed at how much a

chimpanzee's behavior resembled our own. We laughed when they wore tuxedos and giggled at the funny, clown-like expressions their faces made.

Because we share 98 percent of our DNA with them, we often look at their behavior to better understand how our ancestors might have behaved. Even those who don't believe in evolution can't help but smile back when they see a chimpanzee smiling at them.

Is it any surprise that they would imitate something as undeniably human as murder? Well, it isn't

exactly murder, but given the fact that they are killing other primates, it isn't hard to imagine them killing each other. Chimpanzees are very aggressive creatures, after all.

Although I don't think we have to worry about trying to survive on the planet of the apes any time soon, one fact has become abundantly clear. They're catching up. It may be another few millennia (or less), but sharing our cities, weapons and businesses with chimpanzees is a distinct possibility.

Or maybe I'm just paranoid. You decide.

British drug law proposal is rational, fair-minded

By ANNA NEMCHUK
Editor-in-chief

"The idea of a drugs-free world, or even of a drugs-free Britain, is almost certainly a chimera. The main aim of public policy should be to reduce the amount of harms that drugs cause," stated the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce) report that came out March 8.

The 336-page report goes on to realistically describe the uses of illegal drugs today as not necessarily harmful, call for a much-needed

overhaul of the British legislation as related to all intoxicating substances, citing that alcohol and cigarettes cause more harm than many currently demonized narcotics and propose that drug use is a social issue, not always a problem, and should therefore be treated as such, with information on proper use widely disseminated and pointless and expensive crackdowns replaced by a drug policy that "should be better integrated into broader policy, not ghettoized in some ways as it is now."

In other words, England, wake up and smell the smoke.

And here I've been denigrating

England for their cat quarantine laws and lack of freedom of press. Perhaps I'll move there after all.

On the other hand, lobbyists in the U.S. have been fighting for years to legalize drugs in general and marijuana in particular, like the MPP (Marijuana Policy Project) that emphasize medical use.

Why has drug use become such a scapegoat recently? Humans have been smoking, eating, drinking, inhaling and injecting various substances to alter consciousness for thousands of years - some religions and cultures are based on psychotropic stimulants - and all of a sudden it's the biggest sin since

that bloody apple.

Or has it been recently? Come to think of it, drug use has been vilified for quite some time, and current legislation did not spring out of nowhere, full-grown.

So why? Yes, some drugs are actively harmful to the body and seem to cause the user to behave in ways harmful to themselves and others but I would argue that it is difficult if not impossible to pinpoint the drug as the cause of the problem. People tend to seek escape from their problems in anything that alters their mood and, whether it's alcohol, television, sports, school or drugs, the issues spring mainly from

the user, not the medium.

But drugs are so much more dangerous than all those other things, comes the rallying cry. How much worse is it to hand an already disturbed person an effective, albeit temporary, way out of this reality and expect them to treat the substance with the respect it deserves instead of abusing it, their own body and everything unlucky enough to be in the way?

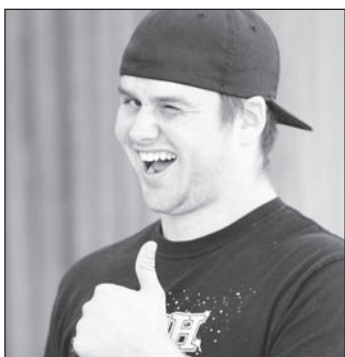
Cars kill more people than illegal substances do and all you need for a license is a few lessons, about \$60 and a trip to the DMV.

The drug debate has been blown
Continued on Page 3

CAMPUS COMMENT >>

How many stairs are there on campus?

Answer: approximately 1,300



JOSH DAUGHERTY
Drama

"Enough to make you want to skip classes once in awhile"



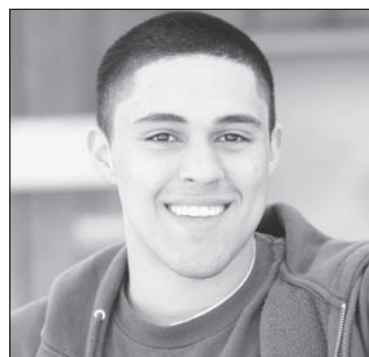
CHRIS EMPEY
Biomedical Science

"200."



JUN FANG
Business

"501."



RICHARD GAVARRETE
Psychology

"300 thousand."



ROBERT MANINGAT
Nursing

"100."