



Political Maverick

By EMILY BURKETT
Features editor

Christmas nightmare

Christmas is by far my favorite holiday. I love the candy canes and hot cocoa, the eggnog and mistletoe, twinkling lights and that arctic tingle in the air that quietly whispers of snow. I love cooking Christmas dinner and baking holiday cookies, dorky Christmas sweaters and hunting for the perfect tree, not in a lot, of course, but at a Christmas tree farm. Like the birthdays of my friends and family, I take Christmas to a new level.

However, I can't stand it when some pretentious putz in the corporate office decides to put the Christmas displays out early. I understand the marketing strategy; Christmas is a huge seller, the best time to throw new products into the market. Why not increase the anticipation further?

The answer: because there are two heavily commercialized, wonderfully enjoyable holidays in between that are strangled by the corporate world.

The first: Halloween. Eerie, spooky and with that atmosphere of slightly taboo, Halloween demands its own space. Every year, I drive down to Half Moon Bay's Art and Pumpkin Festival, go to the Ardenwood Corn Maze and, yes, I still go trick-or-treating. But when I walk into Target and am assaulted by plastic trees, dancing Santas and premature Christmas lights in October, my heart doesn't patter with the glee of Christmas. In fact, I'm left with a slightly queasy feeling in the pit of my stomach.

Not only am I deprived of my cackling witches, leering pumpkins and outrageous costumes, I lose Thanksgiving, as well.

Thanksgiving isn't a holiday producers are fond of. There's nothing to sell but a monstrous amount of food. Instead, they capitalize on the present-demanding Christmas season. Now, I'll be the first to admit that Thanksgiving doesn't produce the same feelings that Christmas and Halloween do. My only associations are a really bad stomachache and football. However, Thanksgiving still deserves its celebration and anticipation. Worse than anything else, though, is the damage this premature marketing does to the central holiday, my favorite celebration: Christmas.

My love for Christmas is spread too thin if I have to start celebrating it in October. The magic disappears. After three months, candy canes and Christmas lights lose their sparkle, hot cocoa doesn't elicit feelings of warmth and that tingle in the air, that quiet murmur of winter, becomes dull.

I want my Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas in their separate spheres so I may be free to celebrate each in their own right.

Dias de los Muertos

By INEZ BLACK
Staff writer

The Day of the Dead, known in Spanish as Dias de los Muertos, exhibit at the Louie Meager Art Gallery, designed by Curator Margaret Stainer, features a home altar, also known as an "ofrenda," with the Mexican Tree of Life, sugar skulls known as "calaveras," incense, special foods and other historical artifacts to celebrate Dias de los Muertos on Nov. 2.

The Day of the Dead is observed and celebrated in Catholic countries worldwide. In Mexico, Dias de los Muertos evolved from a pre-Hispanic, Aztec-Mexican tradition that celebrated children and death. Today, celebrators attend mass and then proceed to the cemetery to visit, bless and decorate the graves of family and friends.

The Spanish Conquest resulted in the fusion of All Souls Day, a Catholic holy day that honors the departed, on Nov. 2 and the 3,000-year-old pre-Spanish ritual tradition. Natives believed the dead came back and visited, whereas the Spaniards viewed death as the end of life. Stainer's exhibit emphasizes the secular Mexican aspects of the celebration.

Spanish priests changed the observance of The Day of the Dead from late July and early August to Nov. 2 in an unsuccessful effort to de-emphasize Indian traditions. Many of the symbols of Dias de los Muertos are used for Halloween with a different emphasis and integrated into harvest celebrations.

For Mexican families, "Dias de los Muertos" is a happy and loving remembrance of loved relatives who have passed on and are buried with many personal objects.

"The Mexican culture does not fear death the way the American culture does. It's not meant to be morbid in any way. They are confronting the death of their ancestors and themselves with a positive outlook, not fear and morbidity," said Stainer.

The exhibit includes "papel picatos," which are delicate, hand-cut, tissue banners. Traditional patterns include angels, birds, the chalice and crosses. Some countries don't use skeletons, but in Mexico City, the tissue banners display skeletons in various activities. Visitors will see a banner of a "calaveras" with a sombrero from a classic painting of Jose Guadalupe Posada.

Food is an important part of the celebration, placed on the memorial according to the wishes of the person and the social status of the deceased. It includes bread, fruits, vegetables and sweets. Specifically, candied fruit, pumpkins, tamales, maize dough cakes, enchiladas and chalupas may be offered. Beverages placed on the memorial include water, coffee, beer, tequila and "atole," a cornstarch, fruit-flavored, hot drink.

Bread is essential, as it was part of the earliest Spanish customs of begging for souls. At home, "pan de muerto," Day of the Dead bread, is placed on an altar and remains there until they visit the cemetery for the souls of the dead.

Mexican bakers make massive quantities of bread, typically three different types with varying ingredients and spices. "Pan de muerto" is adorned with strips of dough simulating bones and teardrops.

In addition, orange "zempasuchitl," a common Mexican flower, is considered a traditional flower of the dead and is placed on the "ofrenda" and the grave. The closest American flower is the marigold. Stainer stated that typically sage incense is burned, as it grows wild in Mexico. Mementos, photos, "calaveras" and other remembrances of the dead person are displayed.

"Calaveras" made of paper mache or edible sugar and cardboard coffins can be included.

Stainer said, "The sugar skulls are given to the children as treats, and often the child's name is written on the forehead of the skull. This shows that the culture is not afraid of death, but looking at death in a different way."

Friends and family sometimes wear special masks to achieve desired facial expressions. Obituaries, describing the character of the individual, their deeds and accomplishments in the community, are placed on the altar as placards.

The Dias de los Muertos art exhibit will be at the Louie Meager Art Gallery beginning Friday and ending Nov. 9.

Game club parties

By ANDREW CAVETTE
Staff writer

The Ohlone Game Developers Club [OGDC] will host a video game party on Wednesday, Oct. 31, from noon to 7 p.m. in Hyman Hall (HH-116).

In addition to the iMac games already available in Hyman Hall, the OGDC will provide all of today's well-known "next-gen" game consoles, including X-Box 360, Playstation 3 and Nintendo's Game Cube. OGDC will also have more advanced PC games like Counter-Strike and Halo. A number of tournaments are planned in addition to the regular game play.

Club President Scott Berkenkotter noted, "We can't have as many tournaments as we would like. Depending on what people seem to want to play, that's what we'll pick." Potential tournaments are planned for Halo 3, Gears of War, Counter-Strike, Starcraft and Super

Smash Bros Melee. The tournament portion of the party will begin at 3:30 p.m.

The OGDC was founded in March 2006 and currently has 25 members. Berkenkotter said, "Some people might have the impression that you have to have a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge about [game development] programs to join, but even novices and people interested in learning more [about video games] are welcome."

Everyone is welcome to the "Halo-ween Party" and the event is free. A \$1 entry fee for each tournament will be collected and then given to the winners as prize money. Costumes are welcome and candy will be provided.

For a list of the games already available in Hyman Hall, please visit www.ohlonegdc.com/games. For more information regarding Ohlone Game Developers Club, write to: ohlonegdc@gmail.com.

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Ohlone technician retires

By **BARRY KEARNS**
Staff writer

Described as a knowledgeable man of few words with a natural talent towards computer repair. Yu-Hay Kong, who has been an employee of Ohlone College since October 1976, will be retiring at the end of this year, ending a long and illustrious career. Starting at Ohlone in the Audio Visual (AV) department, Kong has since become a desktop support technician specializing in Apple computers.

Kong started in the AV department repairing amplifiers, speakers, slide projectors and 16mm projectors that are now a relic of classes from yesteryear. As the AV department began to shrink and a growing need for computer support became apparent, Kong was sent to a school that specialized in troubleshooting and repairing Apple computers. After dealing with PCs, Kong said that he learned and fell in love with Apple computers.

When asked about the changes that he has seen on the Ohlone campus over the years, Kong mentioned a greater amount of diversity amongst the students. He also said that he was in no way surprised

by the emerging role of computers in students' lives. He attributed this influx to the shrinking price of computers. As for changes to

traveling and mentioned that his wife would like a trip to Italy. When asked if he plans any returns to the campus, he said that he probably would stop in to help out his brother Yu-Pai from time to time.

Kong mentioned that Ohlone has good people working here and that it has been a fun environment in which to work. One of the things that he will not miss, however, is getting up at 5:30 a.m. to get to work by 7:30.

Kong was also a student of Ohlone College. He also recalled being able to work on some of the now-archaic punch card computers. He said that of all the classes that he attended while at Ohlone, computer science classes were his favorite.

For his daily responsibilities, Kong said that he starts the day by checking his e-mails and then processes help requests for desktop support before helping others with their tasks. Older computers giving out, hard drives failing and in some cases recovering lost data are among some of the biggest issues he faces. Among the challenges of desktop support, Kong said that there are constantly new things to learn.



Staff photo

Yu-Hay Kong retires Dec. 27 after impeccable service to Ohlone in desktop support for more than 31 years.

Fremont and the surrounding area, Kong said that he most noticed the rising prices in housing and growth of traffic.

After retirement, Kong said that the first thing he wants to do is clean his garage. He also plans to do some

computers giving out, hard drives failing and in some cases recovering lost data are among some of the biggest issues he faces. Among the challenges of desktop support, Kong said that there are constantly new things to learn.

Orchestra to play

By **ELISE LEON**
Staff writer

The Ohlone Wind Orchestra will play at the Smith Center Oct. 28 at 2 p.m.

The orchestra will be under the guidance of Tony Clements, who has been involved with music since the age of 7.

Clements is a recent conductor of the Ohlone Wind Orchestra and has been involved with the San Francisco Symphony, the Oakland Symphony, the San Diego Symphony, the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and the Sacramento Symphony.

Larry Osborne is the director for the program.

The orchestra consists of brass, percussion and 50 woodwind players. The orchestra will be playing pieces from Bach to Bernstein and Sousa to Strauss, as mentioned on the Ohlone website.

The concert will feature Mike Vax, a trumpet soloist. He is a well-known artist in the jazz community and has more than twenty records including *Creepin' with Clark*. Over the past 33 years, Mike Vax has done concerts and workshops in more than 1,500 high schools and colleges including universities all around world.

Vax will play *Bugler's Holiday* and *Dramatic Essay*. Leyroy Anderson was the composer of *Bugler's Holiday*.

Admission for the concert will be \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors, staff and students and \$8 for children under 12. Tickets may be purchased at the Smith Center box office.



Devil's Advocate

By **ANNA NEMCHUK**
Editor-in-chief

Too many choices

I've been sitting here, staring at this particular "very tough" Sudoku for quite a while now. I've penciled in all the possibilities, checked my definite answers and even peeked at the solution. The evidence is overwhelming; I'm at a crossroads. In every square, there's at least two possible numbers and it looks like, horror of horrors, I'll have to guess.

I hate guessing. In fact, I hate choices. Walking into Baskin-Robbins I turn into Buridan's ass, torn between Oreo vs. cherry vs. double fudge vs. the other 28 flavors until I storm out in a flurry of frustration.

Writing is like that. I know I want to write, but narrowing down the assorted debris in my head to a manageable topic is like picking your favorite child: they're all clamoring for attention so loudly you can't think, which eventually leads to your thorough disgust with all of them.

Picking a major is like that. There's just so much I want to do, to study, that I can't seem to decide on any one, or two, or five areas.

Choosing a hobby is definitely like that. I tried gymnastics because it's Daddy's sport, karate because I was 5 and liked kicking, reading because I could go wherever I wished, art because I was 7 and glitter was god, playing the clarinet because the flute was too sissy and the sax was too big, tap dance because I got a kick out of sounding like a drunk horse, cooking because I'm masochistic and watching movies since everyone else was doing it. I'm great on enthusiasm. Following through is another story.

Yet with all my complaining, if I ever see a chance to try an alternative, I'll move heaven and earth to do it - only to shrug and walk away after attaining the goal. It always looks so much prettier from afar.

The good part is this tends to get me into some interesting situations and some of the most valuable lessons I've learned came about due to my reckless disregard for thinking beyond the next step. For instance: on a declining slope, it is not wise to shut one's eyes if one happens, at that point, to be perched on a moving bicycle (4 years old) with pointy objects lining said slope (pine trees) or a pair of skis (16 years old) with mobile interferences (snowboarders) and firm guidelines (icy bushes) below.

The bad part is that I waste a lot of time, which everyone keeps telling me is the most valuable thing of all.

But you know, I have to sympathize with Buridan's ass. With as much tasty hay as there is in the world, sometimes all you want to do is starve to death, just looking at it all.

Poetry Night soon

By **ELISE LEON**
Staff writer

For the past three years, Poetry Night has taken place in the fall semester at Ohlone College. Kay Harrison, professor of Speech Communication, is in charge of the event.

Auditions were Oct. 23 and Oct. 24. However, if potential participants missed the auditions, they may be able to talk to Harrison at her office in Room 2322 and get a spot. Eight people have been selected to perform at this time, along with several members of the forensics team.

Writers and performers who have caught Harrison's eye in the past were former student Hassanean Al' Baker, who now attends San Jose State University and was a member of the forensics team in fall of last year, as well as Francine Dulin. Both participated in last year's event.

Brent Cullins and Tyler Wing are also students who have caught her attention; both students are speech majors.

Last year's Poetry Night had an average of 80-90 people who attended the event, with profits estimated to be about \$300. The profits were used to partially fund the forensics team's participation in the California Community College Association State Championships in Woodland Hills.

The event will take place Nov. 2 at 7 p.m. in the Music Room, Room 2133, and Harrison expects attendance similar to previous years.

"We're looking to bring poetry alive," said Harrison.

The admission fee will be \$5 at the door. The profits will again be used to fund the forensics team at upcoming tournaments, including state championships and national championships held in Chicago during the spring semester.

ASOC urges student activity

By **BARRY KEARNS**
Staff writer

The ASOC is hoping to get more students involved in the various, campus-wide committees.

Committees decide a variety of factors from campus security to the food available at the cafeteria. Every semester there are a number of committees that are created to address concerns on campus. Unfortunately, there is an absence of the general student population. While there are some committees that require a position in the ASOC, there are many more that don't require anything, other than being a student.

Currently, there are about seven campus-wide committees that any student can join and that could benefit from more student involvement. The first is the safety committee which meets once a month and discusses general issues impacting the safety of the Ohlone campus. The topics discussed range from issues like crime on campus to how construction impacts emergency evacuation plans.

The disciplinary committee decides the enforcement and sentencing of students who have broken laws or rules on campus. The student development committee meets to determine in which direction the education and available technology on Ohlone will head. The facilities committee decides where the efforts of restoration and maintenance are needed. The budget council manages the entire budget for Ohlone College. Different from the ASOC, which grants disbursement of funds on a case-by-case basis, the budget committee decides the budget for the entire school.

Another important committee that could use more student participation is the curriculum committee that ultimately decides what courses are offered through the college.

Also available for students are positions in the college council, which deals with a variety of issues regarding the school and the lives of the students who attend.

For those who are interested in participating in any of these committees, information about the chairs of the committees and other sign up information, including the days the committees meet, is available in the ASOC offices located on the first floor of building one.

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