



Stone cold
thinker

By NOAH
LEVIN
Opinion editor

Hard times, lend a hand

Since before the government officially declared our economy in recession, I noticed them standing there every day. Disheveled, tired and sad; hungry, homeless and jobless. These are the people holding signs that beg commuters and passer-bys to part with anything they can.

In the past, I ignored them.

I am regularly approached in the grocery store parking lot, and I always told myself, "I just don't have any extra cash;" that it wasn't my fault and therefore, not my problem, that these people were reduced to begging on the off-ramp in Fremont. After months and months of seeing an ever-increasing number of people asking for help, I've decided to stand up, and try to help. By help, I do not just mean giving out whatever cash I have on hand when I am approached or when I see someone holding a sign. I am talking about taking an active role in the situation by taking a hungry person to actually get some food at the grocery store, or giving them \$10 as opposed to \$1.

Skeptics might say this leaves some people open to being taken advantage of, and to this I say, "Give them the benefit of the doubt." With the current economy, there are many people who are forced to beg for food or money; it is not only difficult, but also shameful, to have to beg for help. Some in our society even frown upon giving to those begging, the suspicion being that the money will be used for drugs or alcohol.

I had made a whole plethora of excuses to no one but myself in the past when I hurried by a homeless man asking for spare change, or a woman trying to get some food for her family. I was raised in a culture that is cynical and jaded, and the realities of such a culture make our generation wary of scams and scam artists. But it is important to keep in mind that not everyone is out to fleece you, and many people are in genuine, dire need of charity.

If you do not feel comfortable with giving money from your pocket, donate to a food bank. Give blood to the Red Cross. Donate old clothes to youth charities, or volunteer your time at a soup kitchen. The smallest and largest contributions are all significant, and there are countless avenues for people who are well-off or even just getting by to help others during these hard times. Our money and personal belongings should not be so precious to us that we cannot do without them while whole families go without food and shelter in this country.

Good economy or bad, the surest way to keep our nation strong is through solidarity, and the surest way to secure that is by helping one another.

Ohlone students and teachers share



The Big Apple

Monitor Sports Editor Jeff Weisinger was back home in New York City over spring break to visit family and friends. What photo says 'New York City' more than a subway train pulling into the Penn Station Subway stop? Jeff said he was on his way to South Street Seaport in Lower Manhattan. What do New Yorkers say when you ask, 'What time is it?' they say, 'Time for you to buy your own watch – tourist!' Jeff is back on the Left Coast now, but is headed back east soon.

Ohlone student Christy Marovich, below at left, went to southern Denmark over Spring Break to be with her boyfriend, Allan, right. She described Denmark as a land of bicycles, windmills and manual-shift cars. She visited an indoor rainforest called 'Randers Regnskov' where she got to feed a live manatee and had a snake draped around her neck. She said she met a lot of interesting, friendly people and the visit was worth the 15-hour plane flight.



Springtime in Denmark

Show honors dance innovator, Duncan

By SEAN NERO
Staff writer

Starring in her own self-written one-woman show Kres Mersky will perform at the Smith Center Friday, April 3.

Mersky portrays the life and times of dance trendsetter Isadora Duncan. Dean of Fine Arts Business and Communication Walt Birkedahl

said, "Duncan is the founder of the Modern Dance genre and is a flamboyant character and famous dance innovator." Mersky, an actress and writer from Los Angeles, will perform in what is called a "one-woman show." Mersky specializes in one-woman shows and has appeared on television shows such as "Murder she Wrote" and "Charlie's Angels."

"[Mersky] wrote the entire play on her own," said Birkedahl.

Birkedahl also noted "the show will feature different sets as well as numerous costume changes."

The press release said "Mersky provides a fully dimensional portrait of this great early 20th century woman, whose provocative views on art, women's rights, education, marriage and love continues to

inspire till this day."

The release also stated "Kres Mersky brings Isadora to life brilliantly, as she entices, fascinates and stirs the audience to support her school."

Tickets for the show can be purchased at the Box Office. Adult tickets are \$20, Senior/Student tickets will cost \$15 and Youth tickets are \$10.

Oppenheim recalls past adventures

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Oppenheim emerged from the war in 1968 physically unharmed but psychologically changed, determined to make sense of the horrors of the past two years. He began "wandering," as he described it, hopping trains and hitchhiking across the country, and then to Europe.

It was in Europe that Oppenheim began to turn his life around. The catalyst for the transformation was simple—he met a woman, a U.C. Davis student studying abroad, and fell in love—but the results were profound. "For the first time I was around someone who was well-read, well-educated and well-spoken," said Oppenheim, "and I began to understand what it must be like to know more than what I knew."

She and Oppenheim soon parted ways, but Oppenheim's newfound desire for knowledge lingered. He returned to Ventura Community College and devoted himself to studying "24/7," going on to enroll in the Monterey Institute of

International Studies, where he specialized in Spanish. He enjoyed his time there, but the institute served another purpose as well. "I wanted to find out if I could handle the pressure [of higher academics]," said Oppenheim.

The answer came when Oppenheim was accepted into U.C. Berkeley, where he was immediately drawn to sociology. "Sociology was natural because of the places I had lived, the places I had seen, and what I felt I knew the most about, which was the people in the world around me."

He majored in sociology, with a minor in computer studies. The strange-sounding combination of disciplines, he explained, was really not that unusual—at that time, a knowledge of programming was necessary in order to carry out the number-crunching needed for sociological research. In the 1970s, before the dawn of the personal computer or even the floppy disk, the only computers were mainframes, refrigerator-sized units that had to

be programmed with paper punch cards. The machines were so few and in such high demand that Oppenheim was only allowed to use them from 2 to 5 in the morning.

Oppenheim went on to get his Master's and Doctorate in sociology at Berkeley. As soon as he was out of school, he knew he wanted to teach. "I wanted to be a student all my life. The next best option was to be a teacher."

He taught throughout his graduate studies, first at Ventura Community College, then at Sonoma State.

He came to work for Ohlone in 1976 as a part-time sociology instructor. As the main campus was not yet completed, his first classes were taught at Mission High School. After a year and a half of adjunct work, Oppenheim became a full-time instructor, teaching both sociology and computer studies because the sociology department did not include enough courses to employ a full-time teacher. It was not until 10 years later that the department had grown large enough

for Oppenheim to teach sociology exclusively.

Ohlone was a very different place when he first began teaching, Oppenheim remembered. He would often take his 20-student classes outdoors on sunny days—an impossibility with his 150-student classes today.

Though he has taught three core classes consistently throughout his career at Ohlone—Intro to Sociology (SOC-101), Sociological Problems (102) and Marriage and Family (105)—Oppenheim has also taught a handful of other varied classes over the years. One such class was a course on the "World of Work;" another was a one-time semester-long research project in which he and 300 students interviewed 5,000 Tri-Cities families for a buying habits survey for the Chamber of Commerce.

Alongside teaching, Oppenheim has also served as union negotiator for the United Faculty of Ohlone (UFO) for the last 26 years. The opportunity came up almost by

are spring break experiences

There's always a math angle

Furnace Creek

ELEVATION -190 FEET



Math Professor Geoff Hirsch, above, points out a "practical application of negative numbers" from his trip to Death Valley over spring break, where he took more than 400 photos. His drive through Furnace Creek, elevation minus 190 feet, was part of a trip that included a visit to Ojai, where his mother celebrated her 92nd birthday.

Monitor Opinion Editor Noah Levin, below at right, brings his shootin' irons to town in Felton, an old logging town in the Santa Cruz mountains. From there, he traveled down the coast, stopping at a beach near Bonny Doon.



Howdy, sheriff



Weighing Anchor

By **ERIC DORMAN**
Editor-in-chief

Mind the machine

Last week, a troubling report made its way briefly into the headlines: almost 1,300 computers of organizations worldwide—including NATO, governments and embassies—were hacked by a computer spy network based in China.

If you didn't hear about it, you're not alone. The story of the hack, like the reports of other cyber infiltrations before it, is easy to ignore. After all, stories of extensive and vicious cyber threats, such as the current Conficker worm scare are to us, for all intents and purposes, just that—stories. We know a couple computers get hacked from time to time, we understand that information does get stolen, but by and large we feel secure in the intricate web of technology that supports our lives. If you stop and think, though, virtually every part of our lives is dependent on some sort of technology—and that technology is not impregnable.

For a reminder of that vulnerability, and its very real consequences, go back no farther than December of last year, when a hacker infiltrated the computer network of electronic payment processing services provider RBS WorldPay, gaining access to the account information of 1.5 million customers and possibly the social security numbers of over a million. If 1.5 million sounds like a big number, try going back a year earlier, when TJX Companies reported that 45.6 million customer credit card numbers had been stolen, the largest data breach ever. If these large-scale security breaches fail to inspire fear, take a look at another statistic: 10 million Americans will be victims of identity theft this year.

Even if you look at those millions and argue that the odds are against a security breach affecting you personally, you can't argue with the size of the stakes. Like it or not, we've entrusted almost every part of our lives to the Machine. We work on computers, talk on cell phones and access our money through credit cards. And in one way or another, much of who we are and what we've accomplished is written in ones and zeros on far-off servers: our social security number, our bank account information and the information we present on social networking sites, not to mention everything we hold dear as students—grades, transcripts, applications and diplomas. That information is too vital to leave up to ignorance and chance.

Technology is a valuable and powerful tool in today's world, and one that influences practically every aspect of our daily lives. Its usefulness, however, does not bring with it infallibility, and as users profoundly dependent upon it, we can hardly afford complacency.

Winter sounds during spring concert

By **ANNA BIARITZ ROLDAN**
Staff writer

The Ohlone Community Band led by Conductor Tony Clements held its Winter Concert Wednesday, March 25 at the Jackson Theater. During the show, the Community Band played a variety of music with oldies from 1911 to more modern music

from 1992.

The concert kicked off with a piece called "American Overture For Band" by Joseph Willcox Jenkins followed by the emotional "And the Heart Replies" by Anne McGinty which, according to Clements, was written by the "marvelous composer" Anne McGinty.

The band also played the wind

piece "Canzona," a piece that Clements called an "old hag," but he added "great music is great music, no matter how old it is."

The Ohlone Community Band had a great performance even though many tickets weren't sold. The band closed with a four-movement, "Second Suite in F for Military Band" that was written by

Gustav Holst.

It was the moving and soothing piece it was meant to be, as it closed the show, leaving the audience with a lasting image.

The Ohlone Community Band will hold an open house this April 8 and on May 9 at Lake Elizabeth starting 10 a.m. kicking it off with the tuba ensemble.

After 33 years, 'Dr. O' is moving on

chance: after taking issue with a clause in his contract at a faculty meeting, a colleague told him that if he had a problem with it, he should do something to fix it. Oppenheim took the advice to heart and ran for the position of negotiator soon after. He has been re-elected to the position continuously since.

Historically, union negotiators usually burn out quickly, due to the demands of the job, but Oppenheim said that after dealing with drill sergeants daily, even the toughest negotiations pale in comparison. "My life experiences make that kind of encounter very easy."

Oppenheim named his work on health benefits for retirees and salaried workers as his most meaningful achievements as negotiator, but also mentioned a less tangible, but no less important, victory: Ohlone's faculty have maintained a positive enough relationship with the administration that they have never felt obligated to go on strike during his time as negotiator.

Political Science Professor Alan

Kirshner, whose 38 years of teaching make him one of the longest-serving faculty members on campus, said that Oppenheim's work as negotiator has been instrumental to the well-being of the college. "He's the ideal person [to act as negotiator]," said Kirshner, who played a role in persuading Oppenheim to take the position. "He is definitely going to be missed by us."

Oppenheim will serve through the end of the year as negotiator. While no decisions have been made concerning his replacement, History Professor Heather McCarty has indicated that she is interested in the position, said Kirshner.

Kirshner and McMahan both mentioned Oppenheim's charm and disarming presence as memorable characteristics of his personality. "Bennett [is] the most articulate person on campus," said McMahan. "He could talk you into anything."

Always the storyteller, Kirshner reached into the past for a story to illustrate Oppenheim's dynamic

personality. Some time in the early years of the college, he explained, a contest briefly gained popularity at Ohlone. Styled after the bachelor TV shows at the time, it was made up of several faculty members standing behind a curtain, each vying to be the audience's choice by answering questions. Every time, Kirshner recalled, the audience seemed to narrow the field down to him and Oppenheim. And each time, Kirshner remembered, chuckling, they picked the latter.

"He has a certain charisma, whether it's in the classroom or behind a curtain," said Kirshner.

Despite Oppenheim's extensive work at Ohlone, he has also found time for other professions. A holder of a brokerage license, he owns Oppenheim Group Real Estate, which he established in 1982. The firm has developed many properties around the Tri-City area, recently selling a four-plex on Fremont Boulevard.

Oppenheim's departure from Ohlone is not by any means complete—he will continue to teach