



# Meet Kim, the real Rain Man

By **KELSEY BLOOM**  
Staff writer

By the time Kim Peek was 3 years old, he could read the entire dictionary. At age 4 1/2, Peek, now a middle-aged man, had memorized a full encyclopedia series that he wasn't yet strong enough to pick up.

However, Peek's gifts also came with some disabilities. He had very poor motor skills, he had a head more than twice the size of other children, he had great trouble connecting and even socializing with other people.

These symptoms, along with the very small amount of information on neurological disorders available in 1951, left Peek being diagnosed as severely retarded as a young child. The doctor's prognosis, as explained by Peek's father Fran, was to put Peek in a mental institution for life and forget about him. But upon seeing Peek's fantastic ability growing before his eyes, he relented, demanding that Peek be raised at home like a normal child.

Peek, the subject of the 1988 film "Rain Man," starring Dustin Hoffman, appeared in the Jackson Theater Friday night, sponsored by Ohlone's Psychology Club.

Now that the science of neurology has grown so much with the help of technology and the study of Peek himself, he can be properly diagnosed with Savant Syndrome. It is not the same for everyone, but in Peek's case it means that although he does share a lot of the same problems with the mentally retarded, it also means that he was born without a corpus callosum and has an eidetic memory. He can recall over 95 percent of his life.

The corpus callosum is the network in the brain that connects the left and right hemispheres. One of the main jobs of the corpus callosum is to filter through our short-term memories and decide which ones are most important and relevant so they can be copied to long-term.

Because Peek was born without one, his brain retains everything with almost no discrimination, from his 10th birthday party to how many pages are in the last book he read.

Lacking a corpus callosum also allows him to be one of the world's fastest readers. The average person reads a page with both eyes, disseminating the information as they go. Because Peek's hemispheres are

separate, he is able to read the left page with his left eye and the right page with his right eye, then simply let his amazing memory take over. The local library is Peek's favorite place in the world, where he reads up to eight books a day.

Peek's vast differences made it extremely difficult for him to integrate into society growing up, every day was a struggle. Fran wanted his family and others sharing the same problems to have support, but he found that many families were too embarrassed to admit that a child had a similar disability, like mental retardation. Therefore, Peek and his father have dedicated their lives to helping break through the stigma of retardation and mental disorders. An organization of people with mental disabilities and their families was helped founded by Fran in the seventies and was a major player in a 1976 bill that required nationally that states provide special education.

Peek was there that day to see President Ford sign that bill into law and had some choice words for him.

"Mr. Ford, now that you're president you may think that you are the most important person in the country," said Peek, "but you're not, your wife Betty (Ford) has helped more people with cancer than you will ever help in your life." A teary-eyed Ford then hugged Peek before signing the bill into law.

Things like that are very simple to Peek. Just like the cardinal directions on a compass, his entire life is guided by a very simple principle. As Peek puts it, "treat others like you want to be treated and try to make the world a better place." It is that simple.

It is statements, and more importantly actions, like that that might make Kim Peek the most complicated simple-man on the planet, or is he the simplest complicated-man?

# Browning says no to pay raise

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they could be laid off. She said, "We love students and that's why we end up working for a college. Consequently we let ourselves be abused by getting caught up in situations where we work for no pay because we want the students to succeed."

Kirshner expects UFO to finish its vote in about two weeks, because part-time teachers must be given time to vote.

According to President Dr. Gari Browning, Ohlone Service Employees International Union (SEIU), a union of about 100 facility or maintenance workers headed by custodian James Dempsey, has tentatively agreed to a 4 percent pay cut. Dempsey was not available for comment.

Browning and all 45 managerial employees have agreed to take five furlough days, which is equivalent to slightly less than a 4 percent pay cut.

Browning has waived any increase in salary. Usually, if an Ohlone college president receives a good yearly evaluation, the Board votes to give an increase in salary. Such an increase was in the works for Browning after her passing evaluation in September.

At the Faculty Senate Meeting on Tuesday, Jessica Reynolds of the Lew Edwards Group reported a poll of Fremont, Union City, and Newark residents about Ohlone College. She determined that 61 percent of the respondents, who are potential voters, think that Ohlone should pass a bond for \$350 million for construction and facilities improvements. A 55 percent majority of votes is required to pass this type of bond. Building facilities for the sciences, medicine, mathematics and technology was particularly attractive to voters. The Board of Trustees plans to vote to place the bond measure on the ballot in July of 2010.

# Swine flu symptoms

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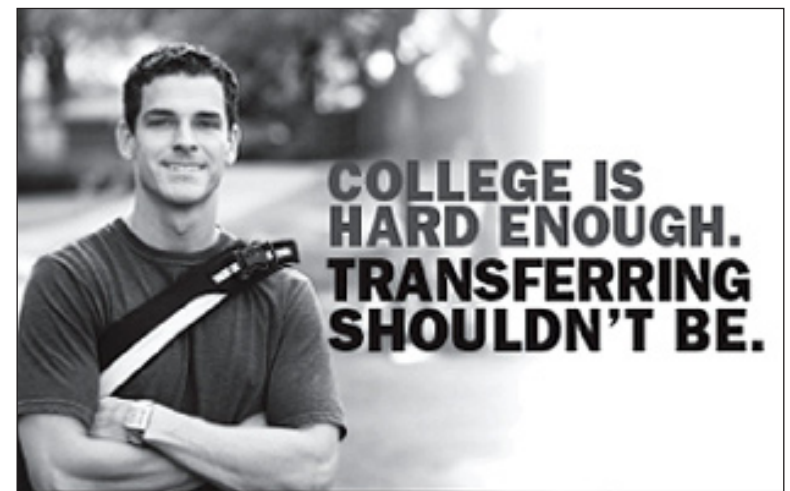
sonal flu but a lot of students are feeling H1N1 symptoms. California colleges are experiencing about a 30 percent increase of cases each week. Sally Bratton, director of the Student Health Center, has provided an accurate chart to show the difference between symptoms of a cold, seasonal flu, and H1N1.

This way teachers can determine if your student should be sent home or if they should continue attending class.

And students can decide whether they should stay home.

The chart will be available in the Ohlone Monitor website: <http://www.ohlonemonitoronline.com/>

For more detailed health information, consult any of the friendly staff at the Ohlone Health Center, located in Building 7, third floor, or your own health care provider.



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