

STUDENT LIFE

Students mobilize for political awareness



By Lacy Buzard
copy editor



KRT CAMPUS

The new Behrend Political Science Society submitted its constitution to the Office of Student Affairs yesterday. The club is designed for any student with an interest in politics or debate.

President Zaina Esoof, PoliSci 04, says that the society will hopefully attract speakers such as alumni and political leaders that will discuss the political field. Members could also have discussions following the viewing of political movies.

Debates that are being planned by members of the society are not limited to discussions between the College Republicans and Young Democrats. Esoof and the other charter members would like to promote the interaction of students from all majors and all ideological backgrounds.

The debate and political aspects of the Political Science Society

should draw in non-majors according to Esoof.

The main objective for the society this semester is to grow. Right now, the society has five core members, but Esoof hopes to at least double that by the end of the semester. There will be posters up around campus with more information.

The Political Science Society does not have a faculty advisor yet. The students came up with the idea for the group by themselves and proceeded to legitimize their organization without the assistance of a staff member.

"I think one of the political science professors knows about," said Esoof.

Adult student Jane Speicher, SOSC 08, feels that a political society on campus would be beneficial to younger students by helping them become aware of issues such as social security and others, that they may not think affect them.

'Idol' finalist Vazquez drops out; Nikko back in

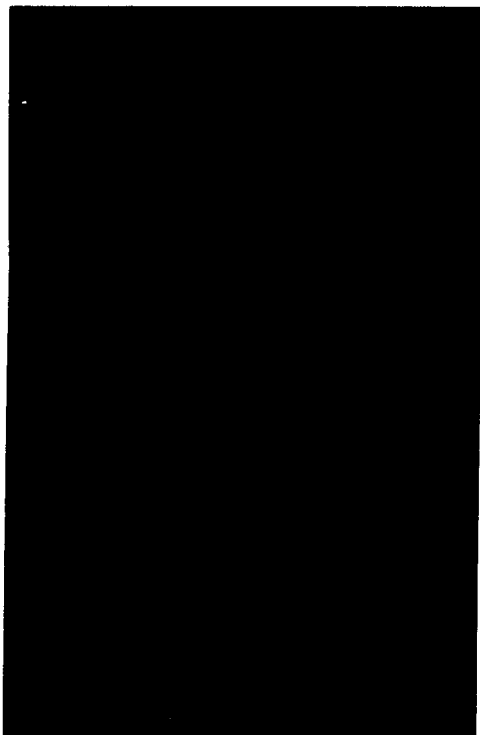
By Daniel Fienberg
Zap2it.com
(KRT)

LOS ANGELES - "American Idol" will begin its Final 12 on Tuesday with a different dozen than viewers saw unveiled Wednesday night. In a surprising move, Mario Vazquez has withdrawn from the popular FOX talent show and will be replaced by Nikko Smith.

Offering no explanation beyond the always vague "personal reasons," FOX announced Sunday (March 13) that Vazquez would no longer be competing on "Idol." A 27-year-old from New York City with smooth dancing moves and a pure voice, Vazquez had been one of the favorites since his "Idol" audition in Las Vegas.

A recent set of odds put out by an offshore betting group had Vazquez as a third betting choice, behind only Anwar Robinson and Bo Bice.

Smith, son of Cardinals and Padres great Ozzie Smith, will take the place in the Top 12 that many viewers had assumed would be his before his unexpected departure last week. Smith had been considered another of the competition's favorites after strong



FOX Mario Vazquez suddenly quit "American Idol" last week due to personal issues.

renditions of "Georgia on my Mind" and "Let's Get It On" in the previous two weeks,

but was not originally one of the six leading votegetters among the "Idol" men.

In an interview that aired Monday on "Extra," Vazquez remained cryptic.

"It was a very, very hard decision on my part. ... 'American Idol' was only positive and wonderful with me," Vazquez said. "Overall, my intuition told me there was things I really needed to take care of, personal areas in my life that I'm trying to keep private. ... To me that meant that I couldn't continue on with the competition.

"Everything is great! I'll be expecting some bad press and some good press, but that's what comes with being in the public."

But other theories are certainly swirling. In Roger Friedman's Fox News entertainment column, he speculates that Vazquez may have wanted to avoid the risks of being an "Idol" also-ran like Justin Guarini and Diana DeGarmo. Then again, Friedman mostly references unnamed sources, manages to repeatedly misspell Vazquez's name, doesn't know that Nikko Smith was added to the competition to keep a Final 12 and thinks that Frenchie Davis' departure last year opened the door for Fantasia Barrino to win, even though Davis was briefly a contestant two seasons ago.

Incredibly better than other 'toons

--By Phoebe Flowers
South Florida Sun-Sentinel
(KRT)

Sure, "The Incredibles" won the Oscar a few weeks ago for best animated feature. But consider the competition.

In the category, created for the 2002 awards, this stunning, all-ages-delighting tale of a family of superheroes forced to suppress their powers in an excessively litigious society was up against only two other films: "Shrek 2" and "Shrek Tale." The former was funny and clever, yet wholly superficial, and its first half-hour was relatively wretched. The latter was a more urban, less enchanting gloss on "Finding Nemo."

Despite its predecessor winning the very first animated feature award three years ago, and both installments making a gazillion dollars, "Shrek 2" wasn't any real competition to "The Incredibles." And perhaps because it managed to attract Martin Scorsese in a key supporting role - the man, it appears, just can't catch a break at the Academy Awards - "Shrek Tale" certainly wasn't a threat, either.

So while it's great that "The Incredibles" got an award, it really deserved to compete on a higher level. Because you know that gloomy, grimy boxing melodrama that won most of the big prizes, including best picture? "The Incredibles" surpasses it in both quality and durability.

If you haven't yet seen the best family film in years, DVD isn't the worst place to finally do so. Even on, say, a 27-inch flat screen, writer-director Brad Bird's unstoppable concoction doesn't lose its vividness and punch.

The last animated film with characters this well-drawn, fellow Disney/Pixar production "Nemo," never went quite this deep. Actresses who despair over the lack of worthwhile female parts in movies should have taken a closer look at the role of Helen Parr: mother, wife, elasticized superhero.

As voiced by flinty Holly Hunter, Helen completely upsets the perception that wife characters are there merely to provide foils to the husbands. Sure, Bob Parr (Craig T. Nelson) is the biggest thing in the movie, with his iceberg-sized jaw and hulking physique, but it's Helen whose strength holds both her family and the movie together.

In large part because the intelligent, thoughtful family dynamic overrides even the thrilling action in the movie, "The Incredibles" truly reaches out to more than just sugar-fueled youngsters and tolerant parents. What other cartoon would cast the role of Violet, the shy pre-teen Parr daughter, with Sarah Vowell, an essayist and regular National Public Radio commentator best known for her wry yet squeaky voice and obsession with Abraham Lincoln? The second disc of the DVD even provides a great 10-minute feature on Vowell and how she came to be in the movie.

The special features are thoroughly diverse. For everything the kids can enjoy, there's a more adult-themed featurette. In the former category, there's an all-new short showing what really went on at home with deceptively cute baby Jack-Jack and his baby-sitter when the rest of the family scurried off to save the world.

For grownups, there are two making-of documentaries and a spotlight on animator Bud Luckey, who created the winsome, Oscar-nominated short film "Boundin" (which preceded the feature in theaters and is also included here, with optional commentary).

Confidential to kids: If any joyless adults try to tell you jackstones aren't real, don't listen to them. They totally are.

New tech gadget guide puts plans in your hands

By Heather Newman
Knight Ridder Newspapers
(KRT)

There has been a flood of magazines on the market lately that emphasize tech gadgets you can buy (led by Conde Nast's successful Cargo). But another new entry focuses on gadgets you can build.

O'Reilly Media, publishers of the popular series of Hacks instructional trade paperbacks, is introducing Make, a quarterly magazine that walks you through complex home-electronics projects with photos and step-by-step instructions.

The premiere issue, for example, teaches you how to build a magnetic card reader, a video camera stabilizer (for \$14) and a kite rig so you can take aerial photographs.

The magazine itself is the size of O'Reilly's books and nearly as expensive: It carries a \$14.99 cover price, and a yearly subscription runs \$34.95. Like most newly launched magazines, it's fairly light on ads, so its 192 pages are pretty much uninterrupted.

If you think of the magazine as an even geekier version of Popular Mechanics how-to features, you'd be close. But even if you don't plan on building a backyard monorail (page 14), it's an interesting read.

For starters, all the instructions come with O'Reilly's standard high-quality text and illustrations. That means that even if you don't want to make the perfect solder joint (page 162), you'll get a really good education on how the process works. And for anyone who's stared at a favorite

household gadget and wondered how it works, those make for addictive articles.

If you're not a hands-on person, there are still plenty of geek-style computer and gadget hack stories: how to get more from your Gmail, speed up your typing, make Excel more useful and so on. I especially loved the stories profiling inventors of nifty or popular gadgets that described how they got their ideas or made their fortunes, and the ones that put a MacGyver-like spin on making doodads. (One story promo: "Imagine this: Your car battery is dead, and you're stuck in the woods. Your mission: Get home before you freeze to death.")

There are reviews of books, gadgets, gear and tools; reader-to-reader tips, which presumably will become more valuable when the magazine hits the stands; quick-hit how-tos on everything from home entertainment to imaging to cars, and even "life hacks," real-life tips for non-tech topics.

The premiere issue's "How-Toons" uses a cartoon-style format to illustrate building a motor, an idea that's done better in Family Handyman magazine's "Wordless Workshop," but it's good eye candy here.

The stories are illustrated either by photos of the step-by-step instructions (as in the card reader) or by rough pencil-style drawings (as in a feature on how to create a setup that would amplify a weak wireless Internet signal). Both work well, although the photos are more detailed and up to O'Reilly's typical how-to standards. There's a reason why their books are so

popular with the tech crowd, and this magazine speaks directly to that audience.

You don't have to be a hard-core nerd to enjoy Make, but it helps. I can say with confidence that I will build none of the gadgets in the premiere issue (well, maybe except that workaround for weak wireless signals), but it was an engrossing read from a "how it works" standpoint. If you've ever considered doing something like building your own PC, this is definitely the magazine for you.

For more information, check out <http://www.makezine.com>. The site has more and different articles on the same sorts of topics. You can also order the first issue on Amazon.com or by calling 866-289-8847.

The newest technology focused magazine, "Make," published by O'Reilly Media, has a \$14.99 cover price and can be bought through Amazon at www.amazon.com.

Top iTunes downloads

Apple Computer Inc.
(KRT)

Top 10 albums on iTunes Music Store for March 8, 2005.

"In Between Dreams," Jack Johnson

"The Massacre," 50 Cent

"Garden State," soundtrack

"Frances the Mute," The Mars Volta

"Hot Fuss," The Killers

"The Beekeeper," Tori Amos

"American Idiot," Green Day

"Rebirth" (iTunes version), Jennifer Lopez

"Amos Lee," Amos Lee

"Songs About Jane," Maroon 5