Obama Wins Urban Count As Race Ends
by Sam Kronish

Democrats Barack Obama and Joe Biden have won the U.S. presidential election — at least as far as Urban is concerned. A total of 110 Urban students, faculty and staff voted in an online poll conducted by The Urban Legend from Oct. 14 to Oct. 16. The response was almost instantaneous, with nearly 100 people responding within the first hour. More than 90 percent of the responses were received prior to the final debate on Oct. 15.

An overwhelming 96 percent of respondents chose Obama over Republican candidate John McCain, although only 8 percent will be eligible to vote on Nov. 4.

College Counselor Susan Lee, Admissions Director Bobby Ramos and Business Director Susan Munn met with Legend reporters to talk about how the economic crisis may affect Urban families’ ability to pay for Urban and for college.

Ramos, Urban families should expect little change in the size of this year’s financial aid, according to Urban staff.

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Wall Street Woes Hit Home for Students, Staff
by Lizzie Logan and Toby Smith

News of the Wall Street meltdown and the credit crisis has been in the headlines for weeks now. But it may take more time to figure out how the downturn in the U.S. economy will affect college scholarships and financial aid, according to Urban staff.

Elections 2008 Classes Spotlight Campaign
by Alan Hsiao

In addition to focusing on the • urinetown Takes Aim 
Urban’s fall drama production satirizes just about everything in American society — page 4

LETTERS TO THE PREZ 
Urbanites write to the next occupant of the Oval Office — page 8

ACTIVE LEARNING “You have to express what you believe,” says teacher Clarke Weatherspoon. He is one of three faculty teaching this year’s Elections 2008 class.

Workers unloaded and assembled a rock-climbing wall as music played from the concourse, and dozens upon dozens of portable toilets lined Music Concourse Drive. By 8:30 a.m., there were already hordes of families lining up for free tickets, sponsored by Pacific Gas & Electric Co. A growing sense of excitement and wonder filled the air. As San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom observed in a speech at the opening ceremony, visitors felt “a tremendous sense of spirit and pride to live in a place like San Francisco.” Museum officials estimated the opening day crowd at more than 30,000.

The Academy’s new digs are a world apart from its past. The new three-story building thoughtfully integrates ramps, underwater tunnels, and a huge glass rainforest dome into one cohesive design. The Academy’s mission is to celebrate science, but it seeks to show “how science and evolution are
Urbanitens
A quick look at what's happening in our community

HELPING THE BARD
Teacher Cathileen Sheehan served as dramaturge for Twelfth Night at Orinda's California Shakespeare Theater. The play ended its run on Oct. 4.

NEW POLICY
According to a new policy, Urban students will be allowed to use only their own calculators on all math quizzes and tests.

WORM BIN
Put your compostable products (except meat, dairy, and greasy paper) in the Green Team's worm bin to help create natural fertilizer.

ID CARDS M.I.A.
Plans for new Urban ID cards with bar codes have been dropped because the production company failed to meet its end of the contract, says Charlotte Worsley, assistant head for student life.

MELTDOWN: Economy crunches students
from page 1
the building and buy supplies, increases every year with inflation, he noted.
However, "the percentage of the increase is determined later on in the year," Ramos said, and not in response to a crisis on Wall Street or elsewhere in the economy. Similarly, Urban's financial aid budget was set last year, long before the current crisis began, said Munn.
For families currently receiving financial aid, applications for next year are not available until Dec. 10, so school officials have not yet seen any evidence of increased demand.
Urban's tuition increased 5% percent last year to $30,750, including books and fees. Currently, the number of students receiving financial aid is 22 percent, but Urban hopes to increase this number to at least 25 percent within five years.
As for prospective students, the outlook is mixed. The Wall Street crisis caught Urban just as it launched the fall admission season, with dozens of potential students and their parents visiting the school.
"There are more questions during this 08-09 process about tuition and tuition increases than I remember during 07-08, and (more) questions about financial aid," said Ramos. He added that he expects "more people will be looking at parochial and public schools than in previous years."
But it is Urban's seniors who may feel the real pain of the economy's slide. If a family has put a lot of savings into the stock market to pay for college, it is "a bad time to want to cash in those savings," Lee noted. Already, economic factors are causing seniors to look at a wider range of schools.
"More people are applying to (the University of California and CSU campuses) because they don't know what's going on," Lee said. Middle-income students will likely feel the worst pinch: Low-income students will still be able to get scholarships on the basis of need, Lee said, while higher-income families will likely be able to pull together enough money to pay a full college tuition.
Middle-income families, however, often depend on student loans from banks, colleges or the federal government. But credit "is where the crisis is," noted Munn. Seniors can access scholarship information on the web at www.fastweb.com, or by talking with their college counselor.
Sally Scopa, an Urban senior, is applying to UC schools in part because they are cheaper.
She is relatively confident that her family will be able to afford college costs, but realizes that times are uncertain: "Maybe I shouldn't be so comfortable."

ELECTIONS: Students watch race unfold
from page 1
minutiae of campaign news, Weatherspoon teaches students about "government function, the electoral process, campaign issues, and the role of the media," factors that remain constant throughout the election season.
Urban offered the first Elections class in 2000. Now-retired history teacher Peter Schulman began discussing idea of having an elections class that would teach students about political fundamentals while tracking the elections process.
Since then, Urban has offered numerous variations on his original class. Urban offered an elections class in 2003, when Gavin Newsom was elected mayor of San Francisco, and in 2004, when the Bush-Kerry race focused on national security concerns.
Even though it has been successfully taught at Urban for nearly a decade, other schools have yet to offer a similar class.
Eric Castro, chair of the social science department at Saint Ignatius College Preparatory in San Francisco, says that a government class "spends a significant amount of time covering elections issues," but there is no class that is dedicated to a current election.
Talia Berson, a sophomore at University High School, said that her school has no specific course on elections.
Karen Eshoo, assistant head of school at Lick-Wilmerding High School, added that Lick "(does) not have a specific course on elections or government, but our U.S. history classes are all doing a lot of work on the election right now."
By its very nature, a politics class is difficult to teach. As Votto says, elections and politics, particularly this year, "matter so much" that it is difficult for him to completely hide his political affiliations.
However, Matz says that though teachers are not apolitical, they have found a way to teach without bias.
What's more, students who came in with strong opinions are likely to completely change their views during the election season, according to Ramos, who himself"reaffirmed my passion (for) Obama."-
-Amelia Koster ('09)

I have learned a lot about candidates (the class) the class "reaffirmed my passion (for) Obama."

-College Counselor Susan Lee researches student loans to help college-bound seniors afford rising tuition cost.
JENNIFER ADDAMS, 40, AND SUSAN SHETTERLY, 45, enjoy their first minutes as a legally married couple on Oct. 2. There were 2,708 such marriages between June and September 2008 alone in the San Francisco County.

Same-sex couples hurry to marry

by Madeleine May

For Robin and Sylvia Brook, traveling to San Francisco to get married was just another step in their journey to becoming a legally recognized couple.

The couple had already gained domestic partnership in their native Florida and in Canada. But with this union, they were able to establish themselves as wife-and-wife in the United States.

Casually dressed in blue jeans and blouses, and grasping each other’s hands, the couple showed no signs of uncertainty about the commitment that they were about to make.

After Nov. 4th, other gay couples may not enjoy the same experience. Proposition 8 states that “only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.” If passed, it would overturn a California Supreme Court decision on May 15 that allowed gay and lesbian couples to marry.

Opponents of Prop 8 argue that it would take away civil rights. The “No on 8” campaign compares same-sex marriage to the freedoms of speech and religion.

Supporters of Prop 8 believe that, although “gays have a right to their private lives”, changing the “definition of marriage for everyone else” is unconstitutional. They warn that schools will be required to teach about gay marriage rights.

Many gay couples want stronger legal ties than those offered by domestic partnership. Algis Sodonis, Urban science teacher, says domestic partnership “feels like second class, separate but equal.”

Sodonis, who was married to his partner, Will Hocker, in October, credits Urban’s Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) with motivating him to take the next step.

Robin and Sylvia Brooks say marriage will open doors for them. “It makes adopting a lot easier,” says Robin.

Despite the heated battle, many same-sex couples are hopeful that Prop 8 will be defeated.

“It would be hard to take away rights from someone when you have already granted them,” says Jennifer Addams, who was at City Hall to marry her partner, Susan Shetterly. “We aren’t threatening anyone,” added Jennifer.

Said Sylvia Brook: “We want the same things.”

Students react to Palin daughter’s news

by Céline Bureau and Sarah Maccabe

Is Bristol Palin’s pregnancy a legitimate news story, or are reporters who cover it invading the privacy of a 17-year-old who should be left alone?

Urban students had mixed responses to news that the daughter of Sarah Palin, Alaskan candidate for vice president, is pregnant with her first child. While teen pregnancy has always been controversial, seeing it in the context of a presidential election made it much more personal.

“I think calling teen pregnancy an American reality is terrifying and sick,” said Ali Arnold (’09), one of several 17-year-old girls who were interviewed for their views on the Palin story. Arnold believes teenage pregnancy should not be accepted as the American norm. Like Arnold, many young women worry that the American public is mishandling adolescent pregnancy by sensationalizing and glorifying Bristol’s situation.

On Sept. 1, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin announced that her daughter Bristol was five months’ pregnant after blog-gers speculated that her fifth child, Trig, was in fact her daughter’s son. Fearing the potential dam- age that could have resulted from the online accusations, the campaign decided to clarify the situation. In the statement, Sarah Palin and her husband, Todd, asserted their unconditional love and support for Bristol.

Most of the Urban students interviewed expressed dissatisfaction at having Bristol Palin’s pregnancy play such a large part in the election. However, one student said that Bristol Palin’s pregnancy reveals a fundamental flaw in Sarah Palin’s support of abstinence-only sex education.

“I think that it plays in as evidence that abstinence-only sex policies aren’t effective,” said Amelia Koster (’09). Students questioned whether or not Palin can lead the country when she was not able to implement her policy views at home.

“Oh, obviously, (abstinence) didn’t work for her own daughter,” said Jessica Tom (’09).

Some students said that Palin’s abstinence policy already crossed the line between public and private, so reporting on her daugh- ter’s pregnancy is acceptable.

“Palin’s plan on interfering on the lives of Americans seems like a pretty big invasion of private life, so at this point, I say that her personal life as well as that of her family is fair game,” said Katie Bentivoglio (’09).

Others said that Palin’s private life should not be a major factor in choosing the next president. “I think voters need to weigh her private life, although it shouldn’t be a priority in voting,” said Ali Arnold.

The general consensus appears to be that, Bristol’s life must factor into our perception of Sarah Palin because it gives the American public insight on the candidate, her potential, and her ideals.

I think voters need to weigh her private life, although it shouldn’t be a priority in voting.

― Ali Arnold (’09)

Domestic partnership "feels like second class, separate but equal"

- Algis Sodonis, science teacher

NOT REALLY...

"(T)he competition was more favored towards (China)."

Samantha Lucas

GOOD SHOW

"(T)he Chinese put on a good Olympics -- quite extravagant ... the Chinese showed that they could be recognized."

Henry Klingenstien

ShoutOut!

Has your view of China changed since you watched the summer Olympics?

ABSOLUTELY!

"I definitely was impressed ... got the Olympic 'rush' whenever I watched it. And seeing the Olympics makes me want to go to China."

Louise McCune

STARRING ROLE

"Yes ... it gave me a different idea of what China's situation on the world stage is."

David Boddy

urbanelegenda@gmail.com
November 2008
3
Novel pits teens vs. terror

Orwell’s classic 1984 gets remake in book about SF teens who fight for free speech amid war on terror

by Sarah Maccabee

Fall flicks to consider: Quantum of Solace, The Spirit

Many of us were witnesses to the horrific events of 9/11, but other than going to airports, we don’t experience the day-to-day impacts of the war on terrorism directly. What if all that changed? For Marcus Yallow, the protagonist of the novel, Little Brother, this is exactly the case.

A tech-savvy 17-year old, he sneaks away from school one day to participate in an ARG, a kind of alternate-reality game played through the Internet. But as he roams San Francisco, the Bay Bridge is bombed, placing the city under immediate lockdown. Soon, the Department of Homeland Security takes over the streets, throwing people into trucks and breaching the privacy of each and every individual. Everyone, including Marcus, is a suspect.

Marcus himself is apprehended, interrogated, beaten and abused. He is a prisoner of the United States. He emerges from the situation with broken bones, and a broken spirit. However, his imprisonment sparks the beginning of a rebellious intent among the teens that bear Marcus’ name.

Marcus, a wunderkind as he called himself over the Internet, assembles a group of young supporters, all eager for change. Their mutinous battle cry is: “Don’t trust anyone over 25.” This cry reflects not only a teen uprising, but the realization that youth are the future. “Winston” also is a reference to George Orwell’s well-known novel, 1984, which is also a look at a future world where fear and terror are used as excuses to take away the civil rights of an entire society.

Walter Mitty was the war on terrorism. Little Brother follows Marcus’ Internet civil rights rebellion and the actions he takes to secure his freedom as a citizen. And the idea of tyring the relevance of political events to our space-age technology is clever as well as informative.

Not only does Marcus resist the government, he does it through an internet-generously devised online community. Working with his small band of tech-savvy friends, Marcus gathers thousands of young supporters citywide, who share his fervent desire to tear the unjust roundup, beatings and intrusive surveillance tactics that are being used in the name of the War on Terror.

After many twists and turns, the teens turn to a journalist for the Bay Guardian to help them uncover the illegal prison that has been constructed by the Department of Homeland Security on Alcatraz. Ironically, it is an old school principal, and not a high-tech blogger, who finds a way to outwit terror.

This book may appeal to the most ardent science fiction reader. However, it proves its authenticity with thoughtful and clear writing. The author Cory Doctorow, is an avid blogger, and what makes the story authentic is his knowledge and depiction of the world he writes about.

One unusual aspect of this book is that it is available as a free download. Readers can find it at Doctorow’s website, at http://www.craphound.com. In a preface, Doctorow says that he wants the book to be available for free so that more people can read it. He also dedicates the book in part to the Booksmith store on HaightStreet, where he often buys books.

I found this book informative and highly relevant to situations arising from the war on terrorism.

Having said that, I am not the most ardent science fiction reader. Little Brother lacked the sweep and detail of a classic novel. I agreed with the points made, but considered the use of language generic. In other words, it’s more of a commercial fiction rather than a distinguished novel.

Still, I appreciated the over-riding message of Little Brother: Beware of losing freedom in a fearful world, but if you’re going to secure freedom, you must be absolutely dedicated to achieving your goal.

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Fall flicks to consider: Quantum of Solace, The Spirit

by Sebastian Gutierrez

With movie tickets going for the price of an entire pizza, these days it pays to think ahead before you head over to the multiplex. Which movies are worth your cash? Here are my recommendations for fall flicks. All will be in Bay Area theaters this November and December.

Number One: Body of Lies. Oh, joy! A spy thriller set in a post-9/11 world. No, seriously, Oh, joy! I don’t think we’re getting enough of films that take a serious look at the war on terror and what it’s done to the national psyche. Body of Lies looks to be at the forefront of the Oscars with its awesome cast (including Leonardo DiCaprio and Russell Crowe), consistently reliable director ( Ridley Scott), and a story worthy of a Tom Clancy novel. Combine all these things, and you have a contender for one of the most exciting and thought-provoking movies to come out in a good while.

Two: Quantum of Solace. If you were of the camp that thought that Casino Royale was a sub-par James Bond film, get out, because there is no talking to you.

For the rest of you sensible folks, I give you solace: Quantum is the first true Bond sequel, picking up about an hour where Casino left off, in mourning for a lady love who drowned in a Venetian palazzo while he looked on, unable to save her.

Daniel Craig is sure to deliver another great performance, coupled with all the bone-breaking action that made Casino utterly addictive. The Bond necessities are there as well, including stunning locales, beautiful women, and a nefarious villain.

Shaken? Stirred? I hope so.

Three: Twilight. I confess, I never read the book. The movie looks interesting, I’ll admit. But, after seeing a trailer, or two, I’m not that excited.

On the minus side, the color palette looks too gray and depressing, the performances seem really wooden, and the fact that it’s another play on Beauty and the Beast doesn’t help.

Still, who knows? This could turn out to be the greatest fantasy movie since Lord of the Rings, but my money’s staying in my pocket until I actually see it.

Four: The Spirit. Remember Sin City? Remember the really cool art style and the visual effects that made you feel like you were in a graphic novel? Then, ladies and gentlemen, you’re likely to be moved by The Spirit.

Directed by Frank Miller, the brain behind Sin City, and adapted from a line of comics by Will Eisner, The Spirit looks to be, if nothing else, one entertaining, visually arresting film.

Hey, if it doesn’t work out, I’ll provide some nice comic book violence until Watchmen comes out.

Five: Valkyrie. Don’t get me wrong: This movie actually looks good, but that fact that it has been delayed so many times casts a dark shadow of doubt over this Tom Cruise vehicle.

Besides, this looks to be one of those historically accurate movies that takes the accuracy and throws it out the window. That and the eye patch. Ooooo, the eye patch. Be catch more of Sebastian’s reviews at http://detailscriticisms.blogspot.com/.
Can art disappear? Not if you can capture it

by Justine Palefsky

It's not your typical art gallery.

Since its closing in 1981, the abandoned Public Health Services Hospital has served as a haven for inspired trespassers and renegade artists. The crumbling Presidio landmark is filled floor-to-ceiling with awe-inspiring murals, vibrant graffiti, and untouched artifacts. If you want to see all seven stories of this urban museum, however, you'll have to get there fast: By this November, the hospital is set to be demolished and rebuilt into rental apartments.

But if you can't make it, don't worry. Thanks to Urban senior Erin Wallace, this is not a case of art today, gone tomorrow.

Last May, Wallace launched into an ambitious project to document the decrepit halls of the Public Health Services Hospital before they came down. A Presidio resident herself, Wallace grew up hearing ominous stories about the “haunted” hospital, but that never stopped it from intriguing her.

“It's a really pretty building,” Wallace explained. “I wanted it to be represented in a better way.”

After contacting the Presidio Trust, Wallace worked through a student initiative organization called Youth Funding Youth Ideas and drew up a proposal. After receiving a permit from the Presidio Trust, Wallace became one of a few people legally permitted to explore the remarkable hospital.

According to Wallace, the artistic talent hidden inside the hospital is mind-blowing. “A big misconception is that people just go in there to do gang tagging,” she said. But in fact, “a lot of people do amazing seven-foot-tall murals, or huge stencils that they put a lot of time into.”

In May and June, Wallace took thousands of photos and uncovered countless artifacts that had accrued with all the other deserted and forgotten things that inhabit the rubbish of a building frozen in time. Among those were the tags and identification of past hospital invalids, and a stack of love letters written to a hospital employee.

Wallace found everything from dead birds to makeshift beds to noose-hanging baby dolls along the peeling halls. Occasionally, it got creepy.

In the basement is blocked of all light,” Wallace said, and “you can't see anything except in the split-second of your camera flash. You can still go in the morgue . . . and slide out the body trays.”

Wallace found the beauty of the Public Health Services Hospital has attracted photographers for over a decade. Websites such as flickr.com are host to hundreds of PHSH photos, and many different photographers enter illegally to see the hospital for themselves.

Due to the demolition plans, however, that will change. “During construction, there will be additional security to protect the site, construction materials, and equipment, as well as for public safety and the prevention of injury,” warns Clay Harrell, spokesperson for the Presidio Trust. Trespassers now face a locked fence, padlocks, several internal alarms, and two security guards patrolling 24 hours a day, not to mention a $100 fine.

Wallace’s photos were shown in the Thoreau Center Gallery at the Presidio for more than a month, but were taken down this September to make room for new exhibits.

However, Wallace still retains hundreds of photos of PHSH. The Legend has created a digital photo gallery including several of Wallace’s photos. See them online at http://myhighschooljournalism.org/ca/sanfrancisco/urban/.

Berkeley Rep play spotlights race, culture, free speech

by Lizzie Logan

Students with strong opinions. Teachers with agendas. Classmates just trying to figure out how to get along despite their differences and, maybe, because of them. A fish tank in a hallway. And a high school newspaper trying to cover it all. Sound familiar?

Not anymore. The Jacket, publishes every day in particular. Can art disappear? Not if you can capture it...  

The Berkeley Rep invited high school journalists in the Bay Area to a special performance on Sept. 5. A question-and-answer session was revealing. Apparently there were a lot of last-minute script changes. This is understandable considering the complicated plot, but the dialogue was genuine. In fact, I heard snippets of lines that I swear I have heard in the hallway at Berkeley High. It was very real.

The beauty of the play is that, while based on the author’s high school experience, it is not autobiographical. The play does what we in real life cannot. It sees the story from every angle possible. Each character is given a background and a motivation, making it nearly impossible for the audience to choose a “side.” As Urban student Amti Khalsa ('10) put it during intermission, “I want good things to happen to everybody . . . everybody is right.”

The artistic choices were interesting, particularly the casting. Each actor played both a student and a teacher, and pulled it off brilliantly, though it felt like half the cast was missing during the final bow. A fence and a wall covered in graffiti served as the story’s backdrop; both became instrumental to the plot during the final act.

The plot began to border on repetition at one point, but Kevin Hoiles (Sammie), who plays a fed-up sports writer, saved me from boredom. The others, including Ben Freeman (Ari), an editor trying desperately to stop the boycott—Shonsh Aladini (Damien), a gang member working to figure out the system; and Amti’s High School alumnus Ita-Mar Moses. It is set at his alma mater during the mid-1990’s, but touches upon still-relevant themes.

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Planetarium Offers Galaxy Quest

Take a seat at the Academy's planetarium, and prepare to be taken on a digital ride. In an IMAX-like setting, you'll be surrounded by comfortable chairs that seat 290 people per showing, and the screen is tilted by 30 percent to enhance viewing quality. Then the lights dim, and the high-quality video begins. The opening program is called "Fragile Planet," and it will guide you through the impossible - floating through space. An Academy scientist will explain the images created from NASA's data, beginning with the Academy's own living roof. Then zooming out to examine planet Earth. Suddenly, you'll be flying all the way out of our own solar system and even out of the galaxy in a quest to find possible planets that can support life. After a 30-minute adventure, you'll leave with a new perspective, having learned that Earth is indeed the only planet known to support life, and what better place to realize all this than the world's largest all-digital planetarium?

---Allegra Gordon

Aquarium Fish, Divers Dazzle

The Academy of Science Aquarum is a combination of California aquatic animals and marine animals from other regions, with more than 100 tanks filled with an assortment of fish, amphibians, and underwater invertebrates, along with many other forms of aquatic life, the aquarium will inspire anyone stuck in a terrestrial rut.

The aquarium includes several exhibits. Once every hour, the "Water Planet" transforms into a 360-degree theatre that plays a five-minute movie about the importance of water. The California Coast Aquarium displays a giant octopus along with countless of other California creatures in 100,000 gallons of seawater. Another attraction is the hands-on tide pool exhibit, where patrons can hold hermit crabs and starfish. A Philippine coral reef includes more than 4,000 fish. Divers give presentations on each of the exhibits.

Alongside the high-tech additions is one of the few relics of the old Academy: The alligator exhibit, where patrons can hold hermit crabs and starfish. A Philippine coral reef includes more than 4,000 fish. Divers give presentations on each of the exhibits. Another attraction is the hands-on tide pool exhibit, where patrons can hold hermit crabs and starfish. A Philippine coral reef includes more than 4,000 fish. Divers give presentations on each of the exhibits.

---Alex Roncal
NEWS, WITH A TWIST

Journalists often run into obstacles when reporting stories. But we managed to slip past the long lines at the Academy in an unusual way — by wrangling snakes.

Thanks to the Academy, editors Alex Roncal and Justine Palefsky had press credentials, enabling them to enter and tour the Academy along with the professional press. But we weren’t so lucky. Without credentials, we were merely part of the general public. With lines snaking out to JFK Drive, we thought we’d never get in.

Then, opportunity knocked — or rather, hissed. While walking to the end of the line, Scott noticed a man holding an albino python. He was curious about the snake, so he got closer to take a look.

Suddenly, Scott recognized the man holding the python — it was Chris Giorni, the director of Tree Frog Treks, a science education program. In middle school, Scott went on daylong trips with Giorni.

“The exact ingredients did you have to do to get this job?” a curious woman asked. We just smiled. One hour later, at 9:30 a.m., the doors officially opened. We slithered in, eventually returning our snakes to Giorni and wrote our story.

—Allegra Gordon and Scott Lucas

Photos (clockwise from top): Alex Roncal, Scott Lucas, Justine Palefsky, Alex Roncal.

“Do you want to volunteer?” Giorni asked us. We jumped at the chance: Quickly, we put on neon orange Tree Frog Trek hats and Academy T-shirts, and draped ourselves with a couple of pythons.

“What exactly did you have to do to get this job?” a curious woman asked. We just smiled. One hour later, at 9:30 a.m., the doors officially opened. We slithered in, eventually returning our snakes to Giorni so that we could go and write our story.

Just like any other journalists, — Allegra Gordon and Scott Lucas

Up on the Roof

NAHAY BAy AREA Foliage stretches over 2.5 acres of rolling hills in one of the Academy’s most popular exhibits. The exhibit is the result of a $20 million dollar renovation engineered by a roller coaster designer. The lowering hum of the Mild, not only a remarkable engineering marvel that makes the building self-conditioning for the floors beneath. Visitors aren’t allowed to walk on the hillocks, but they can experience their beauty from an observation terrace. The six inches of buffer soil absorbs about 98 percent of the rainfall that hits it, which scientists estimate will prevent up to 3.6 million gallons of storm water run-off carrying pollutants into the ecosystem each year.

Depending on the weather, automated sky-homes open or close to vent the building, and are strategically placed to provide the coral reef and living rainforest with natural sunlight.

With 1.7 million plants, the Academy’s living roof is the largest concentration of native plants in San Francisco County. Already, it’s a resource for local wildlife, with birds, insects, rare butterflies, and even honeybees creating new homes in this slice of earth 36 feet above the ground.

At the opening day, there were nine different species of plants living on the roof, but the changing exhibit will expand, focusing on flowers that sustain native insects. Maintaining an ecosystem on a roof seems like a lot of upkeep, but the living roof is actually highly sustainable in itself — it behaves in the same way as natural Bay Area land, and requires no artificial irrigation or fertilization. In fact, the living roof is quite capable of outliving humans. Scientists at the Academy estimate it will last for about 400 years.

— Justine Palefsky

A Rainforest That Just Won’t Quit

Within the 90-foot glass dome of the California Academy are three majestic rainforests, sectioned off by a spiraling pathway. The exhibit is astonishing, with scenery that not only captivates but educates.

First comes Borneo, with thin, tan trees and lush leaves. Next is Madagascar, where monarch butterflies chase onlookers and a rich, potent smell of wildlife fills the air. Displays of geckoes, frogs, and chameleons of Madagascar line the pathway, guiding viewers to the final floor, Costa Rica. There, tiny birds fly around freely, like the butterflies in Madagascar. The chirping and buzzing of insects and animals overtakes all of the senses.

Automatic steamers control the climate of the three different rainforests. The heat and humidity increase with each step upward, capping at a steamy 85 degrees. The environment can take some getting used to, but the forests provide plenty of enticement. Tiny birds fly around freely, and the chirping and buzzing of insects and animals overtake the senses.

In reality, traveling to Borneo, Madagascar and Costa Rica would mean criss-crossing the globe at a cost of thousands of dollars, not to mention time. But at the Academy, you can visit all three places, in a single afternoon.

— Scott Lucas

A Walk on the Wild Side

On the Wild Side

TAKING A WALK

gallon coral reef

212,000

specimens in Academy collection

2,000

million dollar renovation

10,000

feet of exhibit space

484

NEWS, WITH A TWIST

Journalists often run into obstacles when reporting stories. But we managed to slip past the long lines at the Academy in an unusual way — by wrangling snakes.

Thanks to the Academy, editors Alex Roncal and Justine Palefsky had press credentials, enabling them to enter and tour the Academy along with the professional press. But we weren’t so lucky. Without credentials, we were merely part of the general public. With lines snaking out to JFK Drive, we thought we’d never get in.

Then, opportunity knocked — or rather, hissed. While walking to the end of the line, Scott noticed a man holding an albino python. He was curious about the snake, so he got closer to take a look.

Suddenly, Scott recognized the man holding the python — it was Chris Giorni, the director of Tree Frog Treks, a science education program. In middle school, Scott went on daylong trips with Giorni.

“The exact ingredients did you have to do to get this job?” a curious woman asked. We just smiled. One hour later, at 9:30 a.m., the doors officially opened. We slithered in, eventually returning our snakes to Giorni so that we could go and write our story.

Just like any other journalists, — Allegra Gordon and Scott Lucas

Photos (clockwise from top): Alex Roncal, Alex Roncal, Allegra Gordon, Justine Palefsky, Alex Roncal.

“Do you want to volunteer?” Giorni asked us. We jumped at the chance: Quickly, we put on neon orange Tree Frog Trek hats and Academy T-shirts, and draped ourselves with a couple of pythons.

“What exactly did you have to do to get this job?” a curious woman asked. We just smiled. One hour later, at 9:30 a.m., the doors officially opened. We slithered in, eventually returning our snakes to Giorni so that we could go and write our story.

Just like any other journalists, — Allegra Gordon and Scott Lucas

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OPINIONS

Letters to the Next President

We asked Urban students, faculty and staff to write letters to the next occupant of the Oval Office. Below are their responses.

Dear Mr. President,
I want to know how you are going to make economic progression if we spend so much money on the war in Iraq and other costly government programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. How are you going to ensure that Americans will still have a reasonable income without subtracting thousands of dollars through taxes? While gas prices and other necessities get more expensive, the American people seemed to be getting taxed more and more. How will you fix this problem?
-Nose Howland ('10)

Dear Mr. President,
I may have voted for you, and I may have voted for your opponent. Now that the election is over, however, it doesn't matter. What does matter is that we come together as Americans to recognize the enormous problems that we face, beginning with the racism that infected the last days of the campaign, to the greed that has destroyed Wall Street as well as the dreams of first-time homebuyers, to the national illness that is unemployability, to the environment that we have used for too long without understanding how we and our children. Can you bring us together to solve these problems? That's my hope, and whoever you are, you'll have your support as long as you work constructively towards consensus.
-Beatrice Matamadi

Dear Mr. President,
There's so much to do should you become President. I barely know where to begin. Certainly, you plan to create a greater energy independence can do a lot of good here and relieve some international pressures. We'd also do well to generate some good will in the world by closing Guantanamo and generate some good will in the press. We'd also do well to here and relieve some international pressures. Second, the American people need to be told and need to realize the truth about the economy and the dangers of free capitalistic markets; about the environment and the damage we will further create should we continue to live according to the “more is better mantra,” and lastly about the diverse ways of life and beliefs of not only the world around us, but in the very states and cities in which we live. A multi-colored, multi-faceted America is not an unpatriotic one.
-Pija Kudsiyap

Dear Mr. President,
You assume the presidency at a watershed time in human history, and I support you initiating the processes and policies that could transform the United States from the largest (per capita) consumer and producer in the world to the most committed and productive engineer of technologies and strategies for sustainable practices in energy, agriculture, medicine, and education.
-Josepho Howland

Dear Mr. President,
America needs to reestablish itself as a good world citizen. I want to see you engage productively with leaders of all NATO nations around problems in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, and affirm (America's) commitment to combat inhumane, repressive and/or dangerous regimes, by taking a more active role in stopping genocide in Darfur, finding ways to provide aid to the people of Myanmar, and taking an even more assertive stance with regard to the development of nuclear weapons in Korea and Iran.
-Suzanne Forrest

Dear Mr. President,
Please make this the beginning for all of us. Make this a new day when each of us, regardless of race, creed, class, or criminal history, can come together as one people and share the fruits of our labors as one. Make this the dawning of a new age of compassion and the right to do whatever you like, whenever you like, with whomsoever you like, in whatever location you like. Today can mark the final day of an age of fear, an age that lasted far too long. You can make today the first day of a new age of hope.
-Samatha Kostick ('11)

Dear Mr. President,
When you, as the leader of this country, mandate that the United States recognizes itself … that it faces the genocide, rape, torture, murder and essential destruction it birthed itself from…when you try to right those wrongs...
-When you ensure that my daughter’s grandfather and every one of the political prisoners in your own country is free … when President Bush can find their country on a map, their land in their hands, the names and pictures of their murdered children in the news ...
-When real people will not die of starvation, of curable diseases, of thirst … from Gaza to Haiti to Oakland … when you flex your power for justice – not just here, but everywhere around the globe… then and only then will I consider respecting you as a just leader; then and only then will I fight for you. Meanwhile, I’ve voted for Cynthia McKinney on the Green ticket. She won’t win, but your vote expresses my political beliefs and voices my dissatisfaction with the two-party system.
-Shakima Ross

“Get our troops out of Iraq before we do any more damage…”

“Be brave! Preserve citizens’ right to free speech…”

"There is no excuse for the state of our public schools…"

"A multicolored America is not unpatriotic…"

"There’s much to do if you become president…"

From education to healthcare to our standing as a world citizen, the letters express a common hope … for change.

Dear Mr. President,
Make sure gay marriage becomes legal and stays that way. Get our troops out of Iraq before we do any more damage. Let abortion be a choice made by the person who is carrying the baby, not everyone around her. Treat all people equally! The prejudices and customs from before the civil war haven’t yet worn off. All people are equal: men, women, adults, children, foreigners, emigrants and citizens, people from any national-ity. Spend more time trying to bring about peace, than commissioning, building and training weapons, aircrafts and troops. Act the way a beautiful, diverse country such as ours, should act. And if your name is McCain or Palin, get the hell out of the White House!
-Jona Robertson ('09)

Dear Mr. President,
Have you ever been to a baseball game? If so, you’ve heard the national anthem, which ends with the words, “land of the free and home of the brave.”

In recent years, President Bush has doubted the bravery of the American armed forces, referring to them as “the real people.” After we leave to face our freedoms, wire-tapping and color-coded terror now carry the day. Without dwelling on the past, I would like to ask you to take our anthem seriously. Be brave. Make the bold decisions. You are president now, so do the right thing. Scared of anti-gay backlash? Too bad. Be brave. Give homosexuals the freedom to marry; you are their president too. Scared of criticism? Too bad! Be brave! Preserve citizens’ right to free speech without questioning their patriotism. Contrary to popular belief, the president is supposed to make decision that help the people, not control them. While sometimes these two overlap, that isn’t an excuse to exercise undue powers. If I can be brave enough to exercise my freedoms, you should be brave enough to let me keep them.
-Elizabeth Legan ('10)
In Politics, Laughter Often Wins

by Adrienne von Schulthess

Political humor is an American hot dog. It occupies every part of the media: There are political television shows, such as The Daily Show; political cartoons in The New Yorker and other magazines, and even books such as Steven Colbert’s I Am America (And So Can You!). Political cartoons are nothing new; no matter how old you are, chances are that even your parents saw political cartoons. As early as 1765, Paul Revere published a famous cartoon of a sewage plant after George W. Bush. I believe that political humor has given us insight into just how crazy politics has become. The New Yorker cover demonstrated how ridiculous it was to insinuate that Obama was a terrorist. Thanks to Stephen Colbert, I laughed after the Republican National Convention, instead of being angry about the views expressed there. I suppose the test for me will be how I’ll react if someone names a sewage plant after Obama. When it comes to political humor, the real question is, can we take a joke? Like it or not, humor has a major influence on politics. The Daily Show is incredibly popular, reaching 1.5 million households, influencing younger voters and becoming a main source of news for a growing number of Americans.

For the first time, The Daily Show’s reporters were granted official access in August to the Democratic National Convention. A survey by The Washington Times found that Tina Fey helped to sway independent voters away from McCain with her parody of Sarah Palin. At the same time, comedy helps retain Americans’ interest in politics and gives politicians a chance to become real people. Lenoy Vetto, a history teacher at Urban, says that humor “helps to demystify candidates … (it) is good because it makes them more human.”

In a democracy, it’s essential for citizens to be able to criticize people in power. After all, freedom of speech is guaranteed in our Bill of Rights. Political comedians should not be limited in the content of their cartoons or jokes. Restricting humor would go against our principles and lead to a boring election. I don’t know what I would have done without the comic relief of Tina Fey and Stephen Colbert to lighten a long presidential campaign. Without the essential element of humor, I am sure that we would have the lowest voter turnout in history. And that would be no joke.

Game changers

see John, we are mavericks. just wait until joe biden sees us “we’re not mavericks” hmp

by Madeline May

November 2008

URBAN STUDENTS can’t vote on Prop. 4 but will be among those teens who are most affected by its outcome

Focus: Parent notice law a bad idea

This November, the issue of parental notification before abortions for minors makes its third appearance on the ballot. Proposition 4 would require hospitals and schools to notify the parents of teens seeking abortions. Also, a 48-hour waiting period would be required before a minor could receive an abortion.

The issue of teen abortion is different from most other initiatives because those who would be the most affected by the proposition are not old enough to vote. As a high school student, I believe that teens are entitled to more control over their decisions, not less.

The sad fact is that some parents do not have the best interests of their daughters at heart: If told about their daughter’s pregnancy, some parents might not support their daughter in the way she needs. They might punish her or isolate her from friends and other activities that would usually have a positive impact on her self-esteem. Removing a pregnant girl from her normal routine could diminish her mental capacity to make the right decisions for herself and her child. If a girl wants to have an abortion and her parents will not allow it, she may become desperate. “Teenagers who do not wish to tell their parents about their abortion may have a good reason and may end up attempting illegal procedures,” warns Chapin Broyer (’10). These girls who think that they cannot legally raise their child will continue to find ways to terminate their pregnancies, whether or not the procedure is safe. Since when has the mental and physical safety of teen mothers been a debatable notion?

Pregnant girls do not need regulations and requirements — they need support. California should enact a proposition that requires teens to receive support, including unbiased and reliable medical care. Instead of focusing on the stigma of teen pregnancy, schools should create more opportunities for teens to learn about safe sex, with objective education about contraception and the realities of childbirth. Prop. 4 does nothing to prevent girls from becoming young mothers or to help them if they do. Giving young mothers a chance to tame their own decisions would be far more logical than an absurd law requiring that someone tell them. The minute Obama takes office, we will have taken giant steps to repairing our damaged reputation and relationships abroad.

His critics speak of a lack of experience, but Obama was one of the few to foresee accurately what lay ahead in Iraq. In 2002, when it was considered unpatriotic to question the march to war, Obama wisely warned against “an occupation of undetermined length, with undetermined costs, and undetermined consequences.”

Moreover, Obama is committed to issues that we at Urban care greatly about, such as education, healthcare, the environment, and social and economic justice.

Obama’s personal story is unique and compelling. With tough economic times ahead, we need a president who understands the struggles of both the middle class and the less privileged. Obama has been a part of both groups, and it’s clear that he is pulling for the little guy.

As the generation that will pay for the debt, the pollution, and the other consequences of the past eight years, we believe that Obama’s approach is the only way to recapture the American dream before it disappears.

Given the issues we face, and the stark differences between the candidates, we endorse Barack Obama.
BY THE NUMBERS

7
Number of goals
Jonah Williams ('09) has scored
this season as of 10-18

18:53
Minutes and
seconds it took
Sean Judkins-
Boeri ('11) to run
the Stanford 5k

12
Seniors who are
playing a fall
Varsity sport

14
Number of Varsity
soccer players who
shaved their heads
for the first game

590,550
Number of inches
Sam Kronish has
run in three cross
country races this
fall

Urban Blues 01
Blues 1 0
UHS 0 1
Urban University Devils

Urban Ties Uni

Boys' soccer team is fierce in rivalry match

by Allegra Gordon and
Alex Roncal

The 17 boys’ soccer players
who walked out onto the field for
Urban’s Bay Counties League play
opener against University High
School on Sept. 24 had more on
their minds than just one game.

Last year, Urban’s boys’ var-
sity soccer team made it to the
North Coast Section tournament,
a first time for a team that has not
been among Urban’s strongest
squad.

This year, after losing eight
seniors, including four starters
from last season, and hiring a new
coach, Antony Reyes, players wor-
ried about the transition.

The question on their minds
was: Could new athletes bond,
become a team, and score vic-
tories?

Even before the match against
University, Urban’s soccer team
had two barbecues, giving athletes
a chance to get to know each other
as people and not just players.

Players also shaved their heads,
using it as a team bonding experi-
ence.

“Shaving the heads created uni-
ty, because (now) everybody is the
same,” said Jonah Williams ('09).
But the question remained: Could
this group work as a team?

In Uni, Urban faced a formi-
dable foe. The school typically
fields strong soccer teams, and it
has always been a powerhouse in
the league. Despite their efforts
to come together as a team, the
Urban players couldn’t help but
feel intimidated.

With Urban’s first move, how-
ever, the feeling changed.

The game began with an Urban
tie past the
midfield line. Within the first
10 minutes, Jor-
dan Calhoun ('10) crossed
the ball to Cap-
tain Scott Lu-
can ('99), who
scored.

Urban con-
trolled the ball for the rest of
the first half, with Lucas
stealing the ball and then
getting tackled from behind
by a Uni player, who received
a yellow card.

The game was physical
from the start.
University re-
cived two
yellow cards.

Reyes was not
coaching from
the bench this game because he had
received a red card in the previous
game against Marin Academy.

At halftime, we were pumped
up, because we had never tied
University (by then), or beaten
them,” said Co-captain David
Boddy ('99). “So there was a lot
of really positive energy.”

Heading into halftime, Urban
displayed momentum, excitement
and perseverance. However, the

team missed a few oppor-
tunities to run up the score,
with several off-sides calls
destroying the surge. Univer-
sity pounced on the oppor-
tunity, scoring within the first
20 minutes.

Goalie Tom Biba ('99) stepped
up his game and saved some

crucial shots during the sec-
ond half. But despite his ef-
torts, the game ended with a
tie.

The Blues were not defeated,
but after coming so close to
decisive victory, they were

understandably disappointed.

“We were not able to maintain
the focus and concentration nec-
essary to hold Uni to a shutout,”
Boddy said afterwards.

Over the next few weeks, the
Blues compiled a 1-6-3 record
in league play going into their first-
round playoff game against Drew
School on Oct. 27.

Urban defeated Drew by a score
of 2-0. The first goal was scored
on a corner kick, which was then
headed in by Andrew Leddy ('10)
midway through the second half.

Jonah Williams ('99), who crossed
the ball to Leddy for the first goal,

headed in the second goal unassisted from the corner box.

The Drew game proved even
more physical than the one against
Uni. Urban received four yellow
cards and Drew received two.

As of press time, Urban was set
to face Marin Academy in the sec-
ond round of the BCL playoffs.

In a statement, Boddy said that
this year has been a building year,
and that the team will likely be
stronger next year.

“The players on the varsity
quad have learned a lot this year,”
Boddy wrote. “The younger and
less experienced players especially
have grown into smarter, more
composed, and generally more

capable players on the field.”

Boddy added that the game
as much mental as physical.

Players “must not allow nega-
tive and excessive criticism
within the team to dampen spirits
during matches,” Boddy wrote.

And if that means shaving
heads again next year, he believes
that the team will make the sacri-
fice.

“For team unity, yes, that could
(happen),” Boddy predicted.

ANDREW LEDDY, Urban number 6, battles a University player in a closely fought 1-1 draw, played on Uni’s home turf

photo by Isabel Moore
Clean, green and mean ... polo?

Segways replace horses in a high-technology twist on a classic game

by Scott Lucas

A triumphant war call and a raised mailed fist let everyone know who the champ was. After scoring a beautiful goal, Ted Perry was surr- rounded by his teammates who gave him high fives and pats on his gold, spray-painted bike helmet. In any other polo game, Perry would not be playing, much less scoring goals. At age 65, suffering from diabetes and a wrist problem, it’s fair to say that Perry would be on the sidelines, sipping wine while watching others compete.

But thanks to his Segway, Perry is back in the game.

His wide grin said it all: “It just seemed like it would be fun.” Perry and other polo players gathered in Golden Gate Park on Sept. 14, 2008 for Polo in the Park, an annual celebration sponsored by Horses in California, Inc.

On a cold, foggy Sunday, instead of the usual middle school athletes running around kicking soccer balls, it was men and women riding horses and Segways. Players ranged in age from 15 to 69.

Ted Perry and the Sacramento Gold Rushers played a vicious match against the San Jose Polo Bears. The Gold Rushers maintained possession of the ball, with Perry’s goal giving his team a 1-0 lead after the first quarter.

But the Polo Bears struck back. The Gold Rushers were playing without a goalie, using the extra player as an attacker to help maintain possession. The Bears took advantage, and scored a goal within the first minute of the second quarter.

Now the pressure was on.

Down 2-1 late in the game, the Gold Rushers scored another goal in full attack, and scored again moments later. The final score was 3-2.

After the games, players of both teams persuaded their coaches that the two sports are completely different, with traditional polo emphasizing physical contact while Segway polo focuses on finesse.

“Alexander Anolik, 69, of San Francisco, said that classic polo is more aggressive and physical. His own match was a good example: Anolik and his fellow riders saddled up and raced their horses onto the field.

Violent swinging and chaotic cramping set the tone for the next 30 minutes. There were hardly any breaks between scrums. Horses constantly bunched up around the polo ball, and riders drove the horses into each other to push each other away.

By contrast, Segway polo seems to favor the youth who can balance standing up while hitting a ball with a mallet. Whacking a polo ball 25 yards down the field while moving 12.5 miles per hour takes tremendous hand-and-eye coordination.

Douglas Molina, a 15-year-old sophomore from Sacramento, who plays for the Gold Rushers, said he hopes Segway polo grows. But he added that he does not think high schools should adopt Segway polo as a sport because “high school students are not as mature as you would think” and Segways might not stand up to teenage abuse.

A brand-new Segway costs $15,000, though players said that used Segways can be found online for $5,000 or less.

Although Segways have re-defined polo, the sport is still extremely exclusive, and old ways die hard.

As Anolik put it “It’s not polo — it’s Segway polo.”

Above: Polo in the Park on Sept. 14 featured several polo games, but only one was played on Segways. Below right: Ted Perry of the Gold Rushers prepares for a match.

Athletics outlook: Varsity round-ups look forward

What’s the outlook for the Blues this year? We asked several captains and key players to fill us in on how their teams are doing and what the future may hold.

Cross Country

Urban’s cross country team has gone through some massive changes this year, fortunately for the better. We now have a new coach, Bill Cincio, who was the co-coach for University’s cross country team. We also have our longtime coach, Mary Schaezlein, who has been working with us for seven years now. Mary and Bill inspire the team through experience and leadership; they effectively motivate new and returning runners to reach goals that would seem impossible just a few years ago. Those far-reaching goals are now within the team’s grasp. Both boys and girls run exceptionally well. They are able to consistently challenge experienced runners in rival schools.

In the Bay Counties League meet on Oct. 21, Urban boys and girls placed second, slaying behind Marin Academy. In the girls’ race, Sally Sepu’a (’09) came third, Caitlin Nghiem first in fourth, and Emma McCune (’12) came second in seventh. In the boys’ race, Tommy Wong (‘09) came first, Sean Judkins-Borri (’11) came first in sixth, and Alex Wu (’12) came in ninth.

— Tommy Wong (’09)

Tennis

Girls Varsity tennis is having a strong season, despite the lack of fans who come to games. As of Oct. 25, the team is 7-4-0, having beaten Drew, Lick-Wilmerding, Convent of the Sacred Heart, and Bay School, and losing close games to University and Marin Academy. We are working on improving team spirit, so we recently purchased sweatshirts and went to lunch as a team before our match against Marin. Our skill level is improving significantly, and with playoffs underway, the entire team is working very hard during practices. We’re a great team to watch, so come and see our next match.

— Becca Atkinson (’10)

Volleyball

This season, the Urban volleyball team started off strong, losing only one game in the preseason. Granted, in some of our games, we didn’t feel challenged. But this resulted in some great practice. As we began the regular season, we struggled to beat the tough teams in the league, such as University and Marin Academy. However, we had two tournaments in which we placed second and third.

We have a large team this year with five seniors, seven juniors and a solo sophomore. We’re really excited to keep playing, and we hope to see you cheering us on throughout the rest of the season and playoffs.

— Jeanne McPhee (’09)
there are many things that students know about Meridith “Mari” Oram: She moved to San Francisco on Aug. 1, she lived in Guatemala for three years, and she is fluent in Spanish.

Graduating from Pennsylvania State University, Oram joined Urban as the new Spanish teacher in September, replacing Ana Maria Lasala. However, there is a secret side of her life that many students do not see in the classroom.

Oram confesses that she’s “addicted to salsa dancing.” She began dancing in college, when she was in a summer program in the Dominican Republic.

However, she did not start dancing salsa until a subsequent visit to Spain. Oram found the high-intensity style of Latin dancing to be an athletic thrill; salsa gives her a kick she doesn’t experience anywhere else.

“I go into a zone,” she explains. She even claims that in her former life, she was a pro salsa dancer. In salsa, the male usually requests his partner to join him in a song. Not surprisingly, as a language teacher, Oram finds the best dances are with native speakers.

“It is not the same energy with a bunch of (non-native speakers),” Oram says. Plus, she can speak Spanish, which makes for “the whole experience.”

Unfortunately, since starting work at Urban, Oram hasn’t taken to the floor. Instead, she finds herself scrambling to deal with Urban’s high-tech culture.

Will her salsa skills come in handy when her SMART Board stops working?


—Allegra Gordon and Alex Roncal