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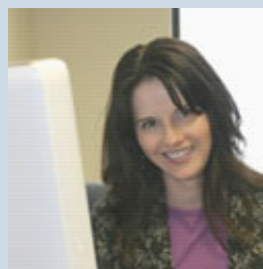
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Staff

KellyGirl



KellyGirl is the online handle of Kelly Phillips, a writer and editor in USD's Office of Publications and Marketing Communications. Before joining USD in September 2004, Kelly was a news junkie covering San Diego's City Hall for a wire service, and she also wrote about health care for online publications. A San Diego native who attended that "other" university across town and earned a degree in journalism, she's been

A Walk in the Park

A Walk in the Park is a running commentary on life in Alcalá Park
by *KellyGirl*

.....November 30, 2004.....

November 2004
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Center of Attention

I took some time this afternoon to learn about the cool things they're doing at the Women's Center. This place is kind of struggling, and it even had to close down for a time several years back. Now the advisory committee and the women who run the center — part-time directors Jenna Benites and Monique Alaniz, both students, and a new graduate assistant every year — are working on a new identity for the center. They're also hoping for a permanent staff member and could use a higher profile.



Monique Alaniz and Jenna Benites

For now, they continue putting on programs and helping out women in need. Sometimes women come by asking personal questions that may or may not pertain to themselves. Like the girl who came by asking what someone could do if she became pregnant. The Women's Center staff members aren't counselors, but they help by listening and helping students find resources. There are also pamphlets on HIV, sexual harassment, bulimia and other topics no one wants to have to talk about.

On a happier note, the center is handing out the Women of Impact awards coming up on Friday, when a student, a staffer and a faculty member will be recognized. Sorry, I can't offer an inside line on the winners!

Oh, and get ready for this: On Dec. 13, the Women's Center is hosting "Pamper Me Day" in the UC Forum A-B. Free massages for everyone! Facials, manicures and other stuff. They do it at the end of every semester. Benites says it's her favorite program. "It rewards everyone who's worked so hard all semester long." We can all use a little pampering.

posted by kellygirl

.....November 24, 2004.....

What's Cooking?

It's almost Thanksgiving, so I decided to head over to Main Dining and see what



a journalist ever since her college days ended way back in the early '90s. She's currently enjoying her explorations around USD, as well as being engaged, planning her wedding, spending time with her fiancée and, oh yeah, planning her wedding.

[Contact Kelly](#)

they were up to. Turns out Thanksgiving's pretty much over for them, at least professionally. They did a big Thanksgiving dinner for 1,200 last week, and yesterday they cooked up a turkey dinner for the children of USD's Manchester Child Development Center and their parents.



Main Dining does all the cooking for the tykes at the Manchester Center. Today they're having spaghetti, which I got to see being cooked up in huge quantities. The 20 pounds of noodles were boiling in a 30-gallon kettle, and the meat sauce was simmering nearby. Most of the time, the children eat similar meals as anyone eating at Main Dining or the Faculty Staff Dining Room — just nothing too spicy for the little ones. Otherwise, checking out the children's menu, it doesn't look like they're too picky. It's not like the cooks are doing up PB&J for them every day.

But sandwiches are a specialty here, overseen by Bob Tran, head of the pantry. His section made 700-plus sack lunches on a recent day. They also take care of all the salads. Main Dining as a whole is busy creating just about all the pastries sold anywhere on campus, making the dough for pizzas at the Torero Grill and generally cooking breakfast, lunch and dinner most every day. All that with only three to five cooks, plus other assorted staff. Amazing.

The school year is actually the slow time at Main Dining, when they do up about 1,200 meals a day. The real crunch time is summer, when conferences and sports camps keep the cooks on their feet turning out more than 2,000 — and as many as 4,000 — meals a day. Doug Taylor, production manager for Main Dining, says they're trying new things to entice more students to eat at the dining hall. "We're trying to constantly change our image from 'the Caf,'" Doug says.

posted by kellygirl

November 19, 2004

Letter Day

As you might imagine, there's never a dull moment in the Mail Center. "We're always busy. There's constantly stuff to do," says mail clerk Tom Schreiber. Under the direction of Operations Manager Danny Marines and Systems Manager Cheance Adair, they do the shipping and receiving for just about the whole university. So it's business mail, students' personal mail, interdepartmental fliers and such, and deliveries of all sorts.



I liked seeing the magazines lying in bins just waiting to be delivered to students. Mail clerk John Bennett tells me entertainment titles like People and Us are popular, as are the news magazines. Maxim and FHM come through, as do what Bennett calls "girly magazines" like Cosmo. There's even "occasional" appearance of that other girly magazine, Playboy (under wraps, of course). One horse enthusiast gets an equestrian magazine.

A typical Monday may see 30 bins and 10 trays of mail for delivery around campus. Fridays are a little lighter, but there's still plenty going on. The law school, perhaps not surprisingly, gets lots of heavy boxes, as does the library. The business school also gets a heavy volume of mail.

But it's the students' mail that really fascinates me. I never got mail at school.

Can you tell if a student gets cookies from home? Well, sometimes. But what's more interesting is that someone once received mail-order steaks that were clearly not aging well, the clerks tell me. Schreiber has seen people receive unboxed baseball bats, a coconut — you can mail pretty much anything that will take a stamp. But keep this in mind: "Surfboards don't do well." But whatever you've got — a flier announcing a yoga class, the latest issue of Cosmo or an important document — you can be sure the able staff of the Mail Center will handle it.

posted by kellygirl

.....November 16, 2004.....

My Interpretation

I've been to a few events in the last couple days where I met the mayor of Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Mayor Abdul Razzaq Arsalai was in town, and on campus, for a ceremony in which he signed a Sister City agreement with San Diego (gee, I hope these sisters don't fight over each other's clothes).



The Mayors and Me

I asked him for any comparisons between San Diego and his city, and he said it's not possible. He said the same about the University of Jalalabad and USD. But he said he felt great support from the leaders, faculty and staff here at Alcalá Park. I noticed that during the ceremony on Saturday night, Arsalai's interpreter couldn't just keep talking to him the whole time, so he was selective about what he conveyed. Arsalai gave San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy a lovely rug, and Murphy gave him a key to the city. Murphy quipped that the key (large and mounted on a plaque) would open the mayor's office, "whoever the mayor is for the next four years." The Jalalabad mayor seemed pretty well engaged for someone who was experiencing most of the ceremony secondhand. He seemed really peaceful when Afghanistan children were singing his country's national anthem.

When I had a chance to briefly interview Arsalai yesterday for an upcoming USD Magazine piece, I made sure I talked directly to him, even though I knew he couldn't understand much of what I said. It must be hard to be this smart, powerful man, and then come here and have to rely on interpreters. Then again, I guess that's the least of his problems these days.

posted by kellygirl

.....November 12, 2004.....

Got Blood?

I decided to give up some of my blood today, since the San Diego Blood Bank's BloodMobile was here for an employee health fair. I've always been too worried to donate — I figured I'd pass out.



I see the San Diego Blood Bank is critically low on blood. They get some 120,000 donations a year that go to transfusions in about 40,000 patients. But they always tend to get low around holidays, during the summer and at other times. Donated blood has a short shelf-life, so there's always a need.

So today I decided to eat a big lunch, then board the bus (set up as a

donation center on wheels) outside the UC and do my civic duty. I had to fill out this form certifying I don't have SARS, don't have mad cow disease, am not sick in any way, haven't spent extensive time in Europe — never been, in fact; how sad is that? — and don't hang out with nefarious characters. Only after dozens of questions did they deem my blood possibly worthy of inclusion in the supply.

So I made it past the first hurdle and into the actual BloodMobile, where I was entered into the system, then went through a screen door in the back of the bus into the tiniest "room" that could possibly fit two people to be further screened. The nurse pricked my finger to check my iron levels, and then took my temperature and blood pressure. She assured me all was fine ... except I didn't qualify to donate because I was kind of low on iron — not anemic, just a couple tenths too low to give blood. She sent me away with a printed sheet of iron-rich foods — red meat, fast food burritos and pizza among them — and a throbbing finger.

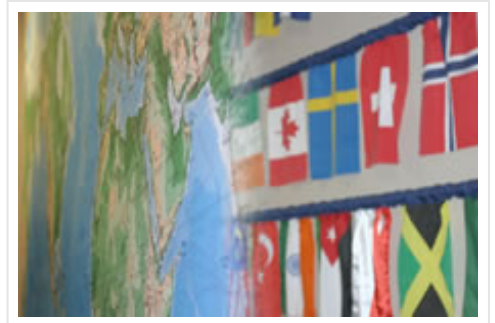
So I didn't get to help out my fellow San Diegans today. They did give me a T-shirt, though.

posted by kellygirl

November 9, 2004

Finding Your Place in the World

I dropped by the International Programs office today. They're the folks in charge of making the 130 or so international students feel welcome and begin assimilating into the college community. They seem to succeed by drawing the international students together for social gatherings and helping them get through daily life at USD. While the dozens of small flags on the wall can be a reminder of their homeland, a huge, wall-sized map of the world tends to draw students in to find their own place in the world.



"When they're not feeling connected, they'll come to this map. It does show how far they've come," says Lupita Jewell, who's actually the executive assistant for Student Learning and Inclusion. With the International Programs director on leave and a graduate student out sick, Lupita appears to be the de facto go-to person right now.

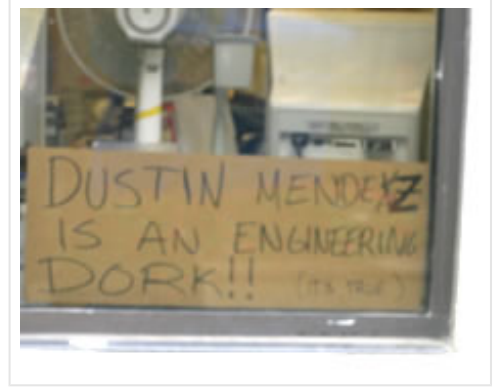
Several dozen international students have been attending the weekly coffee gatherings every Thursday from noon to 2 p.m. at the center, located on the bottom level of the UC. Lupita just wishes more "domestic students" would check out the get-togethers. The International Program's student board also organizes monthly dinners and two big events a year.

The center also helps foreign students who need help renting a car or otherwise navigating USD or San Diego life. Lupita says one Nigerian student was having trouble buying food — the local Vons wasn't offering her much in the way of food she recognized. So Lupita put her in touch with a Nigerian friend who took her to an ethnic market in the College Area where she could find food that was more familiar to her palate. It's all about being resourceful.

While it must be quite a culture shock to come to USD from another country, it seems the international students are lucky to have the International Programs office — and Lupita, even though she doesn't officially belong to the office.

Who You Calling a Dork?

Friday. Friday. Friday. It's a cold, dreary Friday, but at least it's Friday. (Actually, I see that the weather people say it's 62 degrees, which I've been told isn't all *that* cold. I've been documented with goose bumps at 74 degrees, though, so the 60s can be pretty shivery from where I sit.) And as for dreary, well, it is gray, but USD itself still looks green and pretty. And it's not raining. Yet.



I guess if this passes for a dreary winter's day in San Diego, I'll take it.

In other news, I spotted this sign in the window of the courtyard near the coffee cart in Loma Hall Center. (At least I think that's the building. Hey, cut me some slack, I'm still new here!)

Poor Dustin. If a dork falls in the forest and there's no one there to make fun of him, is he still dorky?

posted by kellygirl

Hershey's Kisses at the Polls?

Ahhh ... Election Day. It's one of my favorite holidays. I know, I know, it's not exactly a holiday, but it's a big day. I was semi-giddy as I stood in line first thing this morning with my neighbors; the giddiness faded as I re-read the ballot propositions I hadn't finished deciding on. This afternoon, I watched students in the University Center thoughtfully filling out their ballots — mostly provisional ones, as it turns out; more on that later. I hope they're enjoying this, for some it's probably their first voting experience. I talked with Milton Merritt, the inspector at USD's polling place. He gets paid \$100 to do this one-day job every two years, and he takes it seriously. He wants to make sure everyone understands the security measures they're taking — such as putting the provisional ballots in their own ballot box, not into the scanner used for the regular ballots.



This fill-in-the-bubble voting brings new challenges, like properly feeding your ballot into the scanner while making sure it's properly covered in the big cardboard sleeve so no one divines that you're voting for Bush. Adding to the confusion is the fact that you have no idea what the plan is until the scanner suddenly sucks up the ballot and leaves you holding the cardboard — oh, now I see what I was shooting for. Milton also told me the results of the scanner's tally would be posted on the door of the UC tonight. I wasn't sure about this Scantron-style voting. But if it prints out a tally of your precinct so soon, that's pretty cool.

Anyway, Milton says there were about three times as many students filling out provisional ballots as regular ones. Some were registered in Pacific Beach

or other local areas; others back home. But they'd come here to vote, and, as Milton says, "We let everybody vote. We don't turn anyone away." As of 3 p. m., nearly 110 people had fed their ballots into the scanner. A few hundred more provisional ballots were biding their time in a big box. The Registrar's Office will have to look at these, sort out who's really registered and make sure they haven't voted somewhere else already. These students are honest, though. Milton knows that.

As I was leaving, Milton was dumping a big bag of candy on the tables for the voters. Boy, everything's more fun when you're a student.