

# OPINION

"Every move you make, every step you take, I'll be watching you." – Sting

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## EDITORIAL

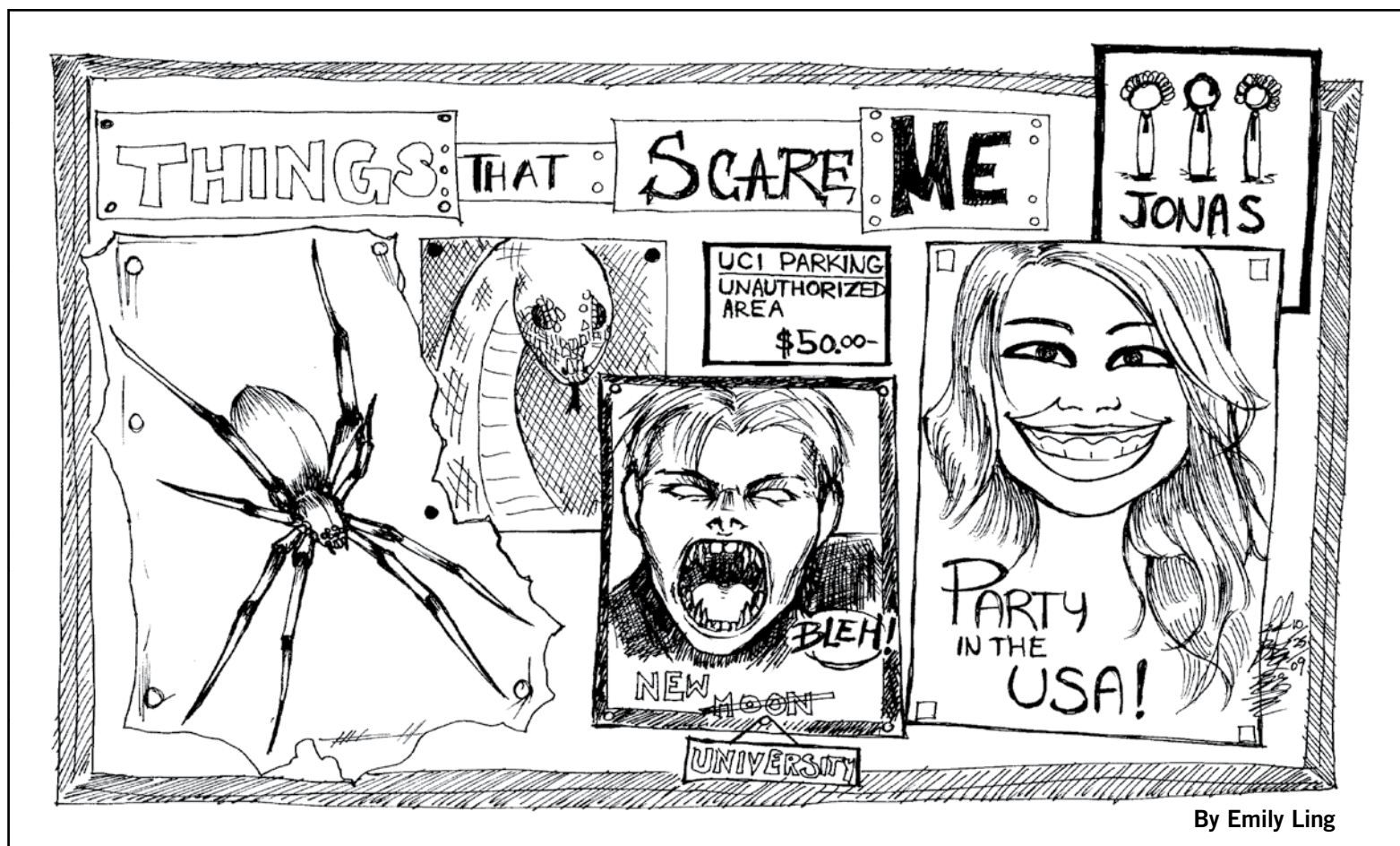
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# Halloween: The Least of Your Worries



If you are anything like the average college student, you probably have not been scared of Halloween for a while. Sometimes you miss the holiday of your childhood. There was free candy and scary movies that left you genuinely afraid to go to bed for weeks. You ran away screaming from your neighbor's porch on October 31st because they had one of those motion-sensor moving vampires/zombies/witches/ (insert Halloween cliché here)s.

So, for all you Anteaters who miss being a kid, we at the New U are here to let you know that it's okay. You can still be scared on Halloween. Hell, now you can be scared 365 days of the year because there are scarier things than those squash candle-holders, cotton spider webs and black-lights.

There are the actual spiders of UC Irvine. You know, the inordinately large and furry ones with the invisible web that somehow pop out of nowhere and scare the shit out of you if you are not paying attention. These spiders are no contenders for the creepiness of the new Peter the Anteater statue in the Student Center. In the dark, Peter resembles

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## Balloon Boy or Barf Boy?

**HOAX:** Charles Hicks discusses the tweetastic story that had the entire nation hoodwinked.

By Charles Hicks

When the dust finally settled on Thursday, Oct. 15th, we discovered something rather ironic. The infamous "balloon boy," who captured the attention of the entire national news media, was never actually in the balloon to begin with.

Instead, while 6-year-old Falcon Heene sat semi-comfortably in the attic of his family's home, America was in the balloon. Yes, we were the ones that were actually floating

through the Colorado sky.

If you don't know what I'm talking about, consider yourself one of the lucky ones and move on to another article. But, the fact is, you probably do know what I'm talking about.

In short: a large balloon, shaped like a flying saucer, was being recorded and broadcast by every major news network in America. For a while, we thought young Heene was inside, and we were worried about him. Then, we discovered that he was safe at home, and during a horde of interviews all over the news the next day, we found out that the whole thing was a publicity stunt pulled by his parents for attention, further solidified by a nervous child barfing on national television.

Apparently it had been too long since Richard and Mayumi Heene – loving parents and former stars of ABC's "Wife Swap" – had been in the national spotlight.

Yes, in the middle of the national health care debate and the reevaluation of our strategy in Afghanistan, our news coverage was devoted almost exclusively to the boy that was not in the balloon. It was literally the only thing that was on the news, and on the Internet when the tweets hit the fan.

What was it about these Colorado hillbillies and their hoax (which they insist was real) that captured our collective attention? Indeed, what does the balloon boy say about America?

See **BALLOON**, page 14

## Yudof: More Marching, Less Legislature

**ACTION:** UCSA challenges Yudof's line of action and calls for new tactics in the march on Sacramento.

By Victor Sanchez

There is an old adage that says: "If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got." The Regents and the state legislature have been following this model for years: reacting to budget cuts by raising fees has only brought more budget cuts. These fee increases have only been met with

more state budget cuts and cannot be a solution for the problem of accelerated state divestment from higher education. Higher education is in a crisis, if we keep trying old solutions, we'll stay stuck in this crisis with the same old problems.

In the last 20 years, while the state has cut funding in half for the UC, in the last 10 years the UC Regents have doubled student fees. Currently, we are facing a 30% fee increase which would put fee levels at over \$10,000. This will price out low- and middle-income students from the UC system from affording

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# Goldman Sachs' Profits Defy Reality

**WALL STREET:** Brock Cutler discusses the bonuses and the false earnings of America's biggest payout.

By Brock Cutler

Now is the time. Seize the day. Take the bull by the horns. Step up and get control of your life. There is no reason left to hesitate, your choice of action is clear: get a job with Goldman Sachs. Do whatever it takes. Graduating this year with a degree in chemistry? English? It's not too late to switch. Drop all your classes and get into anything and everything at the business school. Suck up to your professors. Manipulate your peers. Network. Just make sure you get to Goldman. It doesn't matter who you alienate or what bridges you burn along the way, it will all be worth it the very first time that bonus check comes bouncing your way.

Goldman Sachs, one of the banks that destroyed the economy only to receive billions of dollars to keep their executives afloat, reported third quarter earnings of \$3.19 billion just

last week. That's \$3.19 billion for one quarter of the year. It was the richest payout in the 140-year history of the company. And if the recent years are any indication, Goldman will pay around 1 percent of that in taxes. Of course, Goldman Sachs does so much charitable work that the tax rate makes sense. Right?

But isn't this just a sign of the economic recovery we have all been waiting for? It is a sign of recovery, sure, just not one that involves actual people. The national unemployment rate is still climbing near 10 percent (which excludes those people who gave up looking for jobs); foreclosures proceed apace, with people getting kicked out of their homes; and consumer spending is down (because no one has any money). Banks that have continued to focus on consumer lending and investment have not managed to do quite as well as those like Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan Chase (\$3.6 billion in third quarter profits) that, well, move money around. With expanded debt-to-equity ratios, credit default swaps and Synthetic Collateral Debt Obligations, they make money without doing anything messy like producing goods and services. If the big

banks and financial players can't be bothered with an economy that actually creates things, why should you?

In the last three quarters of the year, Goldman Sachs has put aside nearly \$17 billion for compensation, projected to reach about \$23 billion this year. That means, according to the calculators at the New York Times, that each employee at Goldman Sachs could be paid somewhere around \$700 thousand this year. That is each and every person who pushes paper around for this one company. You don't even have to perform well, just get in the door and you are virtually guaranteed the big bucks. If last year is any indication, even if you destroy the world economy and almost destroy the company itself, you can still be part of \$4.82 billion in bonuses. A bonus for failure! Why are you even thinking about evolutionary biology?

Not good enough for you? Concerned that regulation might shut the party down? Not to worry, Goldman Sachs has taken the necessary steps to take over your government, ensuring that the funnel of tax money is stationed squarely over the engorged neck of Sachs' shares, should they fall again. For

instance, a number of top aides for Timothy Geithner, the U.S. Treasury Secretary, were on the payroll of Goldman Sachs and other Wall Street banks and hedge funds last year. None of these men, who have considerable influence and power in the economic arm of our government, have been vetted by Congress. Geithner's Chief of Staff, Mark Patterson, was the chief lobbyist for Goldman Sachs before joining the Treasury Department. The man Obama picked to be chairman of the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission (a commission set up to protect consumers from financial fraud) is Gary Gensler, an 18-year veteran of Goldman Sachs. And now, the Securities and Exchange Commission has hired a 29-year-old straight from Goldman Sachs to head the enforcement unit. Geithner himself has multiple conversations every week with the top executives at Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase and Morgan Stanley, talking over ways to "stimulate" the economy. The types of regulation required to reel in unsafe practices will never be implemented as long as firms like Goldman Sachs continue to staff government agencies meant to regu-

late them. It reads like a coup, with Sachs in the role of Generalissimo.

But wait, you say, "isn't Obama going to get into the fray? Hasn't he spoken out about this culture of greed and corruption that rules the financial sector as well as our government?" Yes, he has. Just a few weeks ago, in a speech he gave to an audience from the financial sector, he promised that the government and banks would be de-coupled, and that the tax payers would not be there to help out the next time these financial gamblers lose their shirts through illegal and risky behavior. He drew a line in the sand. It was a stirring speech, uplifting to those of us on the outside. And in the audience were, let's count -no bank heads. None. They didn't care. They have no respect for the president because they already own the government. Obama can spit all the rhetoric he wants; we have already lost the battle, and soon, the war. So I say you better get to the party before the cops show up. Rush the oligarchy and try for that job at Goldman Sachs.

Brock Cutler is a history graduate student. He can be reached at [bcutler@uci.edu](mailto:bcutler@uci.edu).

# LGBT Rights Come Out Into the Open

**EQUALITY:** Jon Wong recounts the cross-generational progress shown in LGBT marches in Washington DC.

By Jon Wong

Over the last two weeks, I have experienced two events that have shown the distinct changes the LGBT community has undergone over the past several decades - especially on the issue of "coming out."

The first event was the National Equality March. Tens of thousands of pro-LGBT equality demonstrators marched past the White House and toward the Capitol building to demand action from President Obama and the members of Congress in

support of LGBT equality. The second event was a much smaller and quieter affair, a group tour of the history of Dupont Circle, which is a neighborhood that continues to be the center of gay nightlife in DC.

The march was striking. It was full of vibrant young people of all sexual orientations, including many wonderful straight allies of all religious beliefs and races. This diverse group marched down Pennsylvania Avenue chanting, among other things, "Obama, Obama! Let mamma marry mamma!" or "Gay, straight, black, white, marriage is a civil right!" This stood in direct contrast to the second event, the history tour, which was led mostly by older gay men and filled with stories about survival, growth and sex. This contrast reminded me of the immense progress of the past 40 or so years and the profound

changes in the coming out process.

Before the Stonewall Riots and the emergence of the AIDS crisis, coming out for many gay people, especially gay-identifying men, was more an issue of community, survival and breaking away from the past. At the time, oppressive laws were still in the books and LGBT individuals from that earlier generation who wanted to be open and honest could only go to bars or clubs that often weren't operating legally. In the case of sex, many of those LGBT individuals, especially gay men, could only find pleasure cruising in public spaces or unsanitary bathhouses and clubs.

Times have changed, however, and with the enactment of laws and court cases protecting LGBT individuals in the last 40 years, we've seen a change in the coming out pro-

cess. Instead of moving to the city, coming out and finding a safe community to be in, it seems that many LGBT individuals now come out just to state who they are. It has also led many more LGBT individuals to come out at a younger age.

Just recently, I read a New York Times magazine article on how more students are coming out in middle school. The article profiled young teenagers in both urban and rural areas, and from both wealthy and working class families. The article also pointed out that with rising acceptance of LGBT individuals, many of these LGBT teens are coming out with the support of friends or families. Sometimes instead of going to specific places to find a community, find people to date or hook up with or even meet openly LGBT individuals, many of these teens are

growing up within existing networks of friends and family.

While it's important to keep up the fight to advance LGBT equality, it's also important to look back through our history to see the progress that has been made. The past few decades have shown immense improvement in terms of rights, acceptance and, of course, the coming out process. As we move forward with the passage of stronger hate crimes legislation and change the marriage debate with the defeat of Maine's Question 1, let's also remember and celebrate the LGBT community's progress on this 40th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.

Jon Wong is a former UC Irvine student. He graduated from UC Irvine in 2009 and can be reached at [jonwong87@gmail.com](mailto:jonwong87@gmail.com).

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a serial rapist (or Spencer Pratt from the Hills). With his shady sunglasses and a smile that is clearly hiding something, the human-sized anteater just sits on that bench with his laptop, his arm outstretched in a come-hither look.

But, we can take some comfort in the fact that Peter is tightly cemented to that bench. He will never stalk you, which is more than we can say for the Green Peace volunteers on Ring Road. "Hey you in the boots, do you like whales!?!?" they cry out while you are innocently trying to get from class to class. Beware, if you do not stop or make up an excuse, they will follow you to that class and annoy you the entire way there. The longer it looks like it has been since they have last showered, the longer they will stalk you.

Then there are those abstract fears that UCI provides. Getting a

massive ticket from UCI Parking or the huge tuition increase next year are enough to make any student hit the ground running. Even Mark Yudof slightly resembles the horror-movie staple, Igor. But the main reason that we at the New U feel that we know scary is because we know news. Unless you've been living under a rock for the past two weeks, you are probably familiar with balloon boy, the little kid whose parents made him hide in the attic in a box while they released their homemade hot air balloon and declared him missing to gain media attention. The sheer fact that people like this exist is terrifying enough.

Almost as terrifying is having a Hennessy-intoxicated Kanye West try to take your award and give it to Beyoncé. It's at least as scary as Miley Cyrus' pole dancing skills. Or what about Lady Gaga? She sends shivers down more people's spines than Morticia ever could.

We don't have room to write about everything that scares us in the world. The economic recession alone merits all of the fears listed in this article combined. So, for all of you going to Santa Barbara or LA or even the five or six of you who actually stay in Irvine next weekend, we just want to help you regain the fright that this holiday used to inspire. Believe it or not, Halloween was not invented to have girls dress up as different slutty variations of normally cute and cuddly animals like bunnies, or to have boys come up with comical costumes to make said bunnies laugh enough to hop into bed with them. It's okay girls; you can always just blame it on being scared.

Please send comments to [newuopinion@gmail.com](mailto:newuopinion@gmail.com). Submissions should be no longer than 500 words and must include your name, year and major.



# Meat is Not Green, Vegetarianism Is

**FOOD:** Adrian Wong discusses the habitat destruction, pollution and death involved in meat consumption.

By Adrian Wong

It doesn't take an environmentalist to see that the planet we live in is in trouble. Petty efforts to "save the whales," pick up trash or spread the word are being made each day. What most people don't know is that the meat industry and livestock business are not only rapidly wasting valuable resources such as food, land, energy, water and rainforests, but are also contaminating water, polluting the air and accelerating global warming.

Yes, I said it. Meat is causing global warming. When you order that hamburger, you are probably

unaware of all the things that happened before that cow in the pasture became a patty on your plate. So, I will graciously explain.

A huge amount of energy is needed to produce that burger. A 2006 United Nations report found that meat industries produce more greenhouse gases than all the SUVs, cars, trucks, planes and ships in the world combined.

Raising animals for food is extremely inefficient. One of the reasons for this is basic biology. The livestock we eat has to be fed. More than 70 percent of the grain, cereals, corn and soy produced in the United States is used to feed farm animals. It takes 16 pounds of grain to produce one pound of meat, and five pounds of wild-caught fish, which are used to make fish food, to produce one pound of fish flesh. Twenty percent of the world's population could be fed with the amount of food given to cattle. It is highly

ironic that 800 million people are suffering from hunger and malnutrition while such a large portion of crop yield is fed to livestock in order to obtain meat.

America alone processes (grows and kills) almost 10 billion animals a year, according to a study in January 2008. These animals don't just eat food that could feed humans; they also produce 13 billion tons of waste a year. That is 130 times the excrement produced by the entire U.S. population. A pig farm with 5000 animals produces as much fecal matter as that of a city with 50,000 people.

A contamination study by John Chastain, a Minnesota agricultural engineer, reports that "The data indicates that the pollution strength of raw manure is 160 times greater than raw municipal sewage." Run-off contaminates soil and water, which kills fish and other wildlife.

The environmental impact of meat

doesn't stop there. Over 260 million acres of U.S. forest have been cleared to create cropland to grow grain to feed farmed animals. On a global scale, entire ecosystems – from tropical rainforests to pine forests – are being destroyed, which has led to the extinction of plants and animal species, soil erosion and the gradual desertification of once fertile land.

Harold A. Mooney, professor of biological sciences at Stanford, stated, "We are seeing tremendous environmental problems with these operations from land degradation and air and water pollution to loss of biodiversity."

Furthermore, our precious water supply is being depleted to feed billions of animals, and to clean the filth from factory farms and slaughterhouses. It requires 5,000 gallons of water to produce one pound of meat, while growing one pound of wheat only requires 25 gallons. While millions of people across the globe are

deprived of water, a great portion of the world's water supply is being used for animal agriculture.

I'm not saying everyone needs to immediately become a vegetarian. But it's not just an animal cruelty issue. It involves morals and ethics centered on the unknown truth most ignorant consumers don't know.

Although I've been a vegetarian my entire life, I know that it isn't easy for meat lovers to just stop eating meat. However, the next time you order a hamburger, chicken nuggets or bacon, think for a moment about what you are supporting: global warming, wasted resources, habitat destruction and pollution are just the beginning.

Adrian Wong is a first-year business administration major. He can be reached at a.wong.chief@gmail.com.

# Spoiled Bloggers Need to Report Swag

**MEDIA:** Neil Thakor challenges a new FTC regulation that attempts to stop conflicts of interests on blogs.

By Neil Thakor

Laws protecting consumers are generally good. In fact, it is hard to remember a law that was intended to protect consumers yet failed. However, there are always exceptions, and in this case, the Federal Trade Commission's new regulations on bloggers proved to be the exception. On Oct. 5, the FTC passed new rules forcing bloggers to disclose any material connections to companies for products they review. At first glance, it sounds like a good regulation, and it could be with a little more refining. Right now, however,

it is evident that something is very wrong.

The new regulations are a good idea; more consumers turn to online reviews and testimonials for advice on buying a company's product. It is good to regulate bloggers who mislead consumers with inflated reviews. However, the FTC needs to understand that a line must be drawn. Unfortunately, the FTC has crossed that line so egregiously that it is infringing upon the First Amendment right of free speech. Here are some of the more remarkable and frankly unsettling, regulations of the FTC's restrictions on bloggers.

First, there are the tabs on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter. Celebrities or other prominent figures cannot be friends with a product page if that company has given any sort of gift without disclosing the relationship. Here is an example: let's say the New University

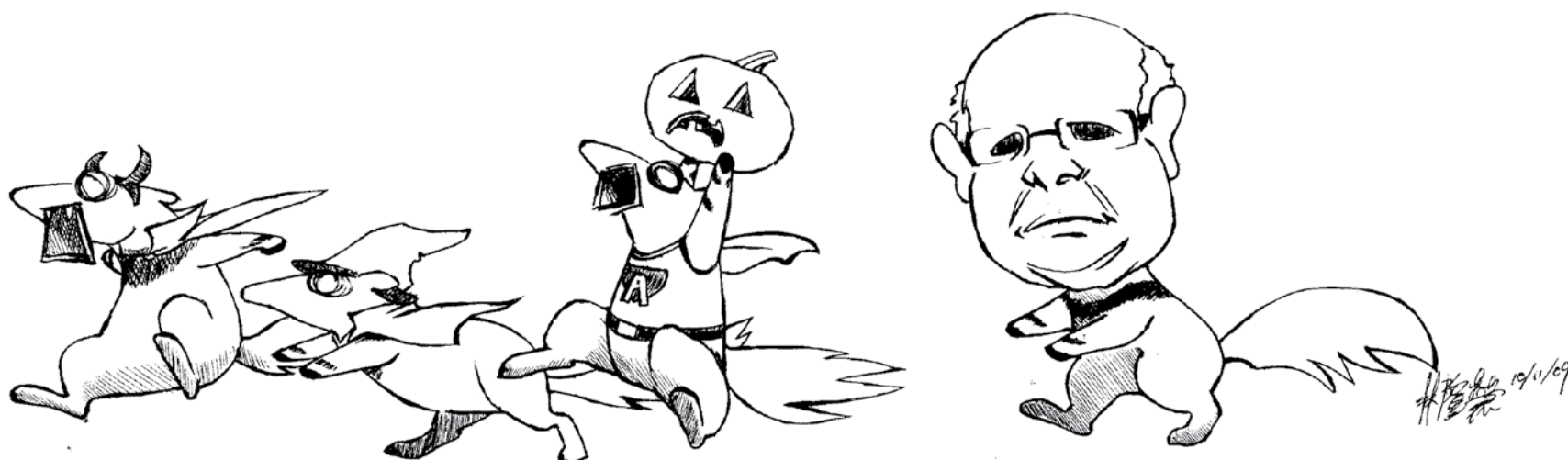
loves my writing so much that they give me a free New University wardrobe and I, consequently or inconsequently, add New University on Facebook. Well then I could be fined up to 11 thousand dollars. Yes, 11 grand for a Facebook friendship. Either I am one influential person, or the regulations are whack. This sort of regulation applies to Twitter as well. Under the same scenario as above, if I then go on Twitter and post, "The New U just gave me a new wardrobe. It is so comfy and stylish! Thanks!" Another possible 11 thousand dollars. Of course, this sort of thing will never apply to me, but it will apply to celebrities or big time individual bloggers. Peter Feld of BrandChannel is already predicting a scandal in upcoming years of some celebrity or blogging site accidentally stepping on regulations by "endorsing" a product and being hit with a fine.

Secondly, there is no threshold of what constitutes a gift. Any little thing can be a gift – a free t-shirt, a dinner – essentially anything that is free. The language of the regulation leaves room for some interpretation. Granted, I do not think the FTC will persecute some random blogger who receives a free t-shirt from a college newspaper and brags about it.

That being said, this kind of loose language is practically asking for some sort of controversy in upcoming years. What is wrong with adding a general threshold of what constitutes a gift or a bribe? Here is an example: Any item given with a net worth of \$250 or more constitutes as a material connection. It is as easy as that. That way, small individual bloggers are protected and, more importantly, larger sites are given a better standard of what is right or wrong and can be held accountable more appropriately.

Don't get me wrong; there are some good things about these new regulations. And, in the FTC's defense, the new regulations will likely act as a guideline of ethics that won't be prosecuted; however, if that is the case, they should not have made the regulations in the first place. The concept was truly a good one. The execution, however, was more than flawed. Not only do the new regulations beckon some sort of scandal or controversy with celebrities (or New University writers) but the regulations don't even effectively regulate larger sites from skewing reviews. It should be interesting to see what is sure to be a scandal prone future.

Neil Thakor is a second-year political science major. He can be reached at nthakore@uci.edu.



By Emily Ling

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Let me suggest to you one possible conclusion: The balloon boy actually is America.

When you dissect the whole thing independently, it really does seem ridiculous that this “news story” captivated all of us. But when you place it in the larger context of American pop culture, it makes complete sense.

Why do we care about the balloon boy? We care because he represents what all of us in the Twitter generation crave: attention. We carefully maintain our Facebook profiles and send witty tweets from our cell phones, and why? It's simple – we want attention. And when someone like us, who is desperately trying to win the captivation of others, actually gets that attention, we simply can't look away.

Even if we wanted to look away, we didn't really have that option; the balloon boy was everywhere. As we checked our daily round of Web sites, it was all over every last one of them. When you look at the results, it makes sense that the media ate this up. Between an hour of the balloon boy and an hour of Sean Hannity discussing Obama's socialist agenda for the 100th time, which is the average American more likely to watch? The media is selling a product. If a story boosts ratings, it's all you're going to see on television.

I suppose we can thank Heene for giving us a day of rest from the usual round of “Jon and Kate Plus 8” divorce drama. But that's the

whole point: it was going to be one or the other. Our celebrity-obsessed, voyeuristic culture has turned what is supposed to be “the news” into nothing more than TMZ on every major network.

This is why nothing ever gets done in our government – we don't have time to care about health care reform or foreign policy. We're too busy worrying for the balloon boy's life and reading tweets from our favorite celebrities. We all have too many reality shows on our DVR lists to catch up on. How are we supposed to find time to band together and put pressure on our elected officials to actually get things accomplished?

There is so much that we should be worrying about. Things like Heene's bizarre family and Jon Gosselin's collection of rhinestone-covered Ed Hardy shirts simply shouldn't be important to us. And yet they're everywhere and we're all watching. Either because we actually care or because we're glad we don't care, we are all watching closely nevertheless.

Now if you'll please excuse me, I need to log onto Facebook and add “Reading about the balloon boy LOL” to my list of interests. After that, I'll be posting a blog about Kate Gosselin's hair and making a YouTube video about how Miley Cyrus deleting her Twitter account has personally affected me.

Charles Hicks is a third-year religious studies major. He can be reached at [cbhicks@uci.edu](mailto:cbhicks@uci.edu).

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and even applying to the UC.

Additionally, because the state has broken its promise to fund enrollment growth of 2.5% for the UC, the UC is overenrolled by 14,000 students. The Regents are planning to cut enrollment by 4,600 for the 2010-2011 year. UC Berkeley has announced its intention to admit 600 fewer California students to make space for out of state students as a way to address their budget shortfall since out of state students pay more. The state and the UC have abandoned the Master Plan and its commitment to provide a space for the top 1/8 of California's graduating seniors.

To address the nearly \$1 billion state divestment from higher education, the UC reduced faculty and staff salaries by implementing a furlough program. However, in the last decade, we have seen the number of administrators in the UC and their collective salaries double. We are seeing a serious lack of vision and priorities from UC officials and the state legislature.

These budget cuts are disproportionately placed on the backs of students. Fee hikes and enrollment cuts limit affordability and access, and faculty and staff furloughs negatively impact the quality of education that we receive at the UC. We are seeing over-crowded classrooms, short library hours and cuts to student services. Because the UC has failed to provide the necessary classes that students need to graduate, private institutions are offering discounted classes for those students. We are paying more and getting less, and the UC's excellence is severely threatened.

With the unprecedented increase in fees, financial aid as guaranteed by the Blue & Gold Plan and the short-term stimulus package credit

is not enough to maintain the affordability of the UC. Fees cannot be raised enough to get us out of this budget deficit, and therefore it cannot be the solution to this crisis. It is foolish to believe that continuing to raise fees, cut enrollment, cut services and reduce faculty and staff salaries is going to get us out of this crisis. We cannot keep doing the same thing expecting different results. We need bold leadership with the resolve to take on these budget cuts while maintaining the values of access, affordability and quality that has made the University of California the most prestigious public system in the world.

Students are seeking bold and innovative solutions to the budget crisis. We have started by launching a campaign to lock in Cal Grant funding to protect students from budget cuts and fee increases, and we're on the lookout for more. We will be holding the March for Higher Education, a month of action dedicated to increasing pressure on the Legislature to adopt real solutions to our crisis. We'll kick off the month with our annual Lobby Day on March 1 and end on March 31, with — you guessed it — a march on Sacramento.

President Yudof, the assembled army of UC advocates is already here. You can join us by taking the mid-year fee increase off the table, ending pay cuts and signing on to student solutions. We already have plans laid out to march in Sacramento, not before we first march to the Regents meeting in November. Are you game, President Yudof?

Victor Sanchez is the president of the UC Student Association. He can be reached by phone at 323-422-8583 and by email at [president@ucsa.org](mailto:president@ucsa.org).