BY COLIN RIGLEY

Keep out

Cal Poly club members ban gay couples from event

Had organizers of the Dairy Formal—members of the Cal Poly Los Lecheros Dairy Club—held their event this year, it would likely have been a night of drinking, dancing, games, and absolutely no gay couples.

"So bring a date!! (If you bring a date it must be someone of the opposite sex)," the Facebook page promoting the event read.

The event also would have been held on the same night as Cal Poly's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Pride Week Prom. Not that it matters anymore, because the event has been canceled and Cal Poly officials and faculty from the Dairy Science Department have stepped in to run damage control.

The solution: Cancel the event, remove any mention of it, and immediately distance the club from a few rogue members who started the controversy.

By 9 p.m. on May 6, angry comments began pouring onto the page.

"You guys are fucked up," one poster said.

"I love dairy farm parties!!!! Can I bring a lesbian?" wrote another.

By 12 p.m. on May 7 the page was shut down and the event was canceled.

"Too bad Cal Poly's Pride Prom is at the same time," one poster wrote before the cancelation. "Otherwise we'd come join you to help educate. Ignorance is bliss."

The event was set to draw as many as 150 people, with 33 confirmed guests before the page was shut down. One person listed as an "admin" on the page said the event was "just a private party."

"It's not affiliated with the university, the club, nothing," the individual, a club member, said in a somber tone, asking not to be attributed.

However, the Dairy Club used its official Facebook page in 2009 to link to the Dairy Formal that year, which was tagged as a "reunion." That Facebook page listed Dairy Club officers as "admins" for the event, as was also the case this year.

On May 11, Club President Theresa Machado sent an e-mail to Cal Poly faculty in which she distanced the club from the event and painted the organizers as rogue members who acted independently of the 160 plus members.

"Unfortunately, the actions of a few past and present dairy club members concerning the 'Dairy Formal' have been of an unprofessional manner that has reflected on Los Lecheros Dairy Club in a poor way," Machado wrote.

The Dairy Club's official Facebook page was previously open to public view. Following *New Times* coverage of the issue, the page was changed so that only approved members could view the information.

When *New Times* viewed the page on May 7, Dairy Club Secretary Jacqueline Van Beek was listed as the club's contact as well as the "creator" of the canceled Dairy Formal event page.

"The event has been canceled," Van Beek said in a brief phone interview before hanging up on a reporter. "We have no further comment." Micah Kuiper was also listed as an "admin."

Cal Poly Media Relations Manager Stacia Momburg said Van Beek told faculty that the event was not associated with the club.

"This was, as far as we know, a private party off campus," Momburg told *New Times*.

She added, "We're doing due diligence in terms of follow up with what the kids post and if it's related to Cal Poly or not. … We're kind of giving them the benefit [of] the doubt." However, if the event was determined to be associated with the club, "The club could lose its charter."

The Cal Poly Club Handbook prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Dairy Club Faculty Advisor Ed Jaster, a professor in the Dairy Science Department, and Department Head Bruce Golden instructed the students to remove the word "dairy" from the event title and "take corrective action," Momburg said.

"It is unfortunate that some of our students chose to use discriminatory language on their public event page," Jaster said in a written response, stressing that the annual event was not sanctioned by the club. "Please know that the [biased] language on the Facebook 'Dairy Formal' event page is not representative of Cal Poly, the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences or the Dairy Science department."

On the day the event was canceled, Associate Director of Student Life and Leadership Stephan Lamb contacted all the Dairy Club officers to arrange a meeting.

"Please know as officers of the club you may be held individually responsible to the university for the violation of campus policies and procedures, state law, and city ordinances regarding minors in possession [of alcohol]," he wrote. The page also advertised "the liquor will be flowing."

Such a meeting never took place and the matter has seemingly been dropped.

"I spoke with the president of the Los Lecheros club who indicated that the club was not connected with the event, that she had spoken with those responsible and the event has been canceled," Lamb said in an e-mail response. "This [said], it appeared there was not a reason to meet."

Said one of the event admins, "We have offended some people and we thought it was best to cancel it instead." Δ

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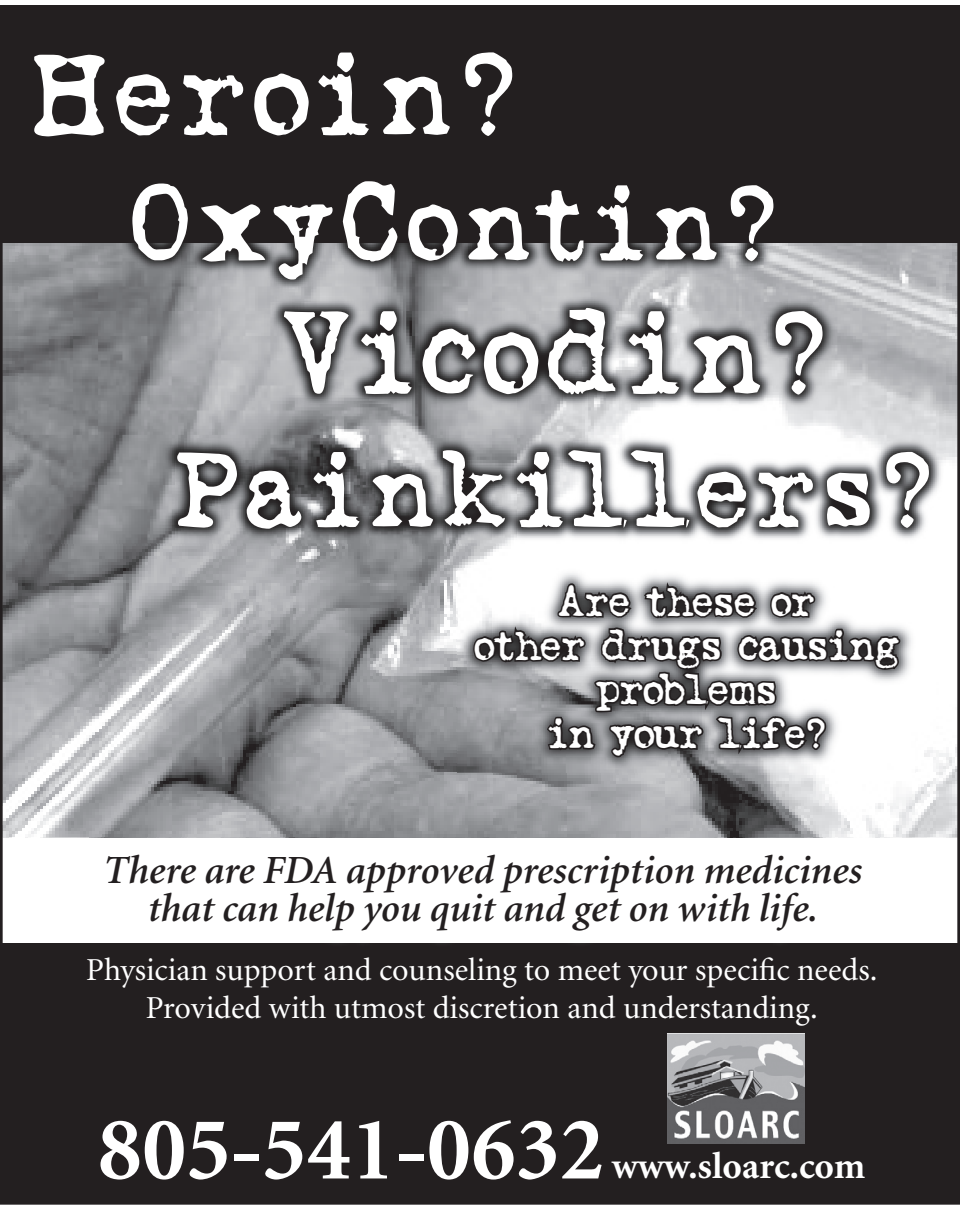

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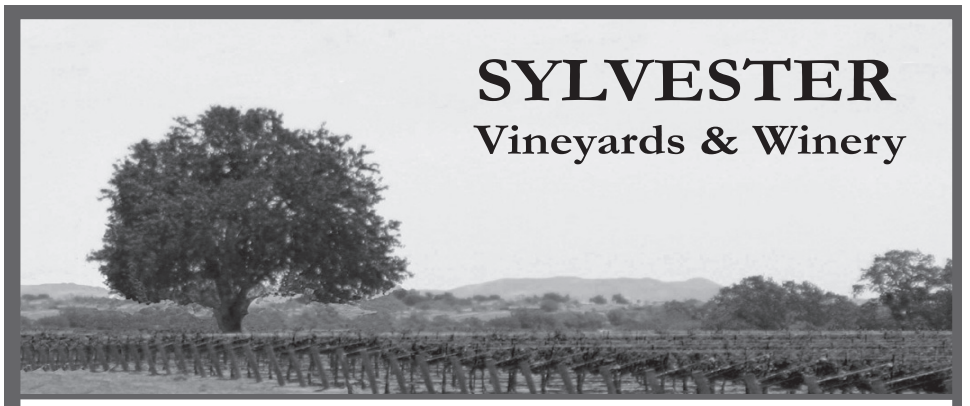

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