

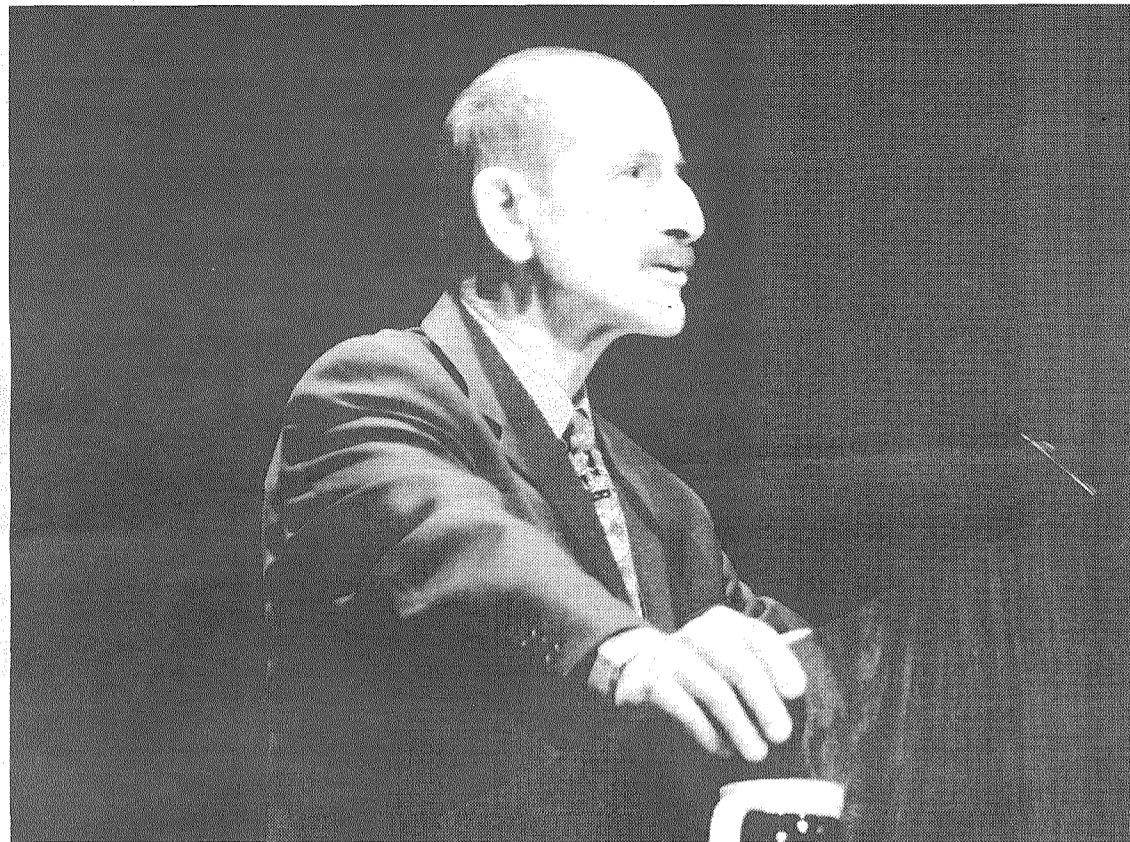


# The California Tech

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MARCH 8, 2004



D. Kortz/The California Tech

Despite being fictional, Professor Robert Rosenstone believes that movies based on historical events offer additional perspectives on the times they portray.

## Rosenstone Contends Historical Films Help With Understanding

By CHRISTINE CHANG

With the multitude of historical films, such as *Cold Mountain* and *The Last Samurai*, entering the box office, the role of films in the depiction and interpretation of history has come under the scrutiny of historians. Though most historians criticize the inaccuracies of such films in portraying events, Professor Robert A. Rosenstone asserts that films may perform a valuable service in understanding and analyzing history, as he presented in a Watson Lecture at Beckman Auditorium on March 3.

"I am interested in whether

there can be a film representation of history. What are film's rules of engagement with the past?" Rosenstone said.

Many historians do not consider film to be a valid form through which to study history, preferring the tradition written medium. However, Rosenstone argues that historical truth in itself is based on an empirical foundation which is molded to fit a written discourse.

Also, he stresses the differences between film and writing and the manners in which both transmit information. Through the use of images, film could convey certain details which are obscured on paper.

Furthermore, film, as a major way through which the public learns about history, could bring to the public awareness the greater complexities of controversial conflicts, as well as affecting the popular interpretation of historical events. Rosenstone cites *Frida* as a film which allows the public to realize the greater complexities of the fight for feminism than what is usually thought.

"It's a different kind of discourse, a different kind of realm. How can we expect film to be the same as writing?" he said. He clarifies, though, that he still advocates reading in conjunction with film.

Critics of historical film often condemn the fiction utilized in film to develop the historical

*Continued on Page 8, Column 4*

## Housing Committee To Vote on Prefrosh

By KEVIN BARTZ

Negotiators on both sides are braced for a tense exchange today as the Interhouse Committee prepares for a vote expected to fail on the Avery Council's bid to open the house to admitted candidates over Prefrosh Weekend.

A Wednesday letter from Admissions Officer Michael Herrera to the student-run Prefrosh Committee indicated that admissions had already decided to include five prospective students, but representative Nicholas Hutzler '07 said Friday that the matter had been redelegate to the IHC, where it now stands.

After a meeting last Wednesday less productive than hoped, the Avery camp targeted today for a vote.

Even if it fails, they may claim moral victory. While the IHC by all accounts remains staunchly opposed, the Avery Council is said to be winning considerable support among a third major cog in discussions, the majority faculty Student Housing Committee.

Although it's not certain to happen today, the vote is a precursor to consideration of the larger question of freshmen in Avery. The house's council, led by former Chancellor Yuan Sun '03, has pushed strongly this year to include Avery on freshmen's list of Rotation options.

"We are trying to build an inclusive community that would not only accommodate those who get kicked off of their respective houses," explained Sun, "but also make the experience of those who think of Avery as their only home more pleasant, supportive and fun." In short, he and many on the council see freshmen as the answer.

The measure they've brought to the table would treat Avery as something less than an "eighth house" but more than an off-campus dorm. It aims to offer the

same support structure seen in on-campus houses, but with a more studious tone for freshmen unhappy with an on-campus atmosphere seen as rowdy. Uniquely, the planned Avery culture would also emphasize interaction with graduate students and faculty.

"If we let freshmen in, the people who won't benefit from the house system won't be there," said council member Ryan Witt '05. "There is a support structure in place here; there are always people working all night on problem sets and most TAs are here. Also, students would benefit a lot from interaction with the faculty. It would be good for the frosh."

Still, the council's foes have major doubts. A concern shared by all is that an Avery with freshmen would gravitate to the fraternal trappings of the seven houses, removing it as an option for those dissatisfied with the house system.

"This will just turn Avery into house number eight--with the same politics, the same stupid cliques," said Ruddock icon Michael Priolo '05, who placed second in this year's IHC chair balloting. "You won't have a large dorm-like place for people for whom the house system doesn't work." Priolo, along with six others, campaigned on a status quo message of keeping freshmen to the seven houses.

SHC head and economics professor Kim Border, however, held that freshmen--not the house--will be the first to adapt. "There's a lot of evidence that freshmen are adaptable," he said. "If Avery wants to be a quiet house, there's a selection process there."

Nevertheless, Priolo's fears weigh on the minds of also some in Avery, particularly graduate students who'd rather not see their lone respite turn into a Fleming or a Page. "Some graduate students

*Continued on Page 2, Column 1*

## Real Women Author Tells of Latin Heroes

By DIANA LIN

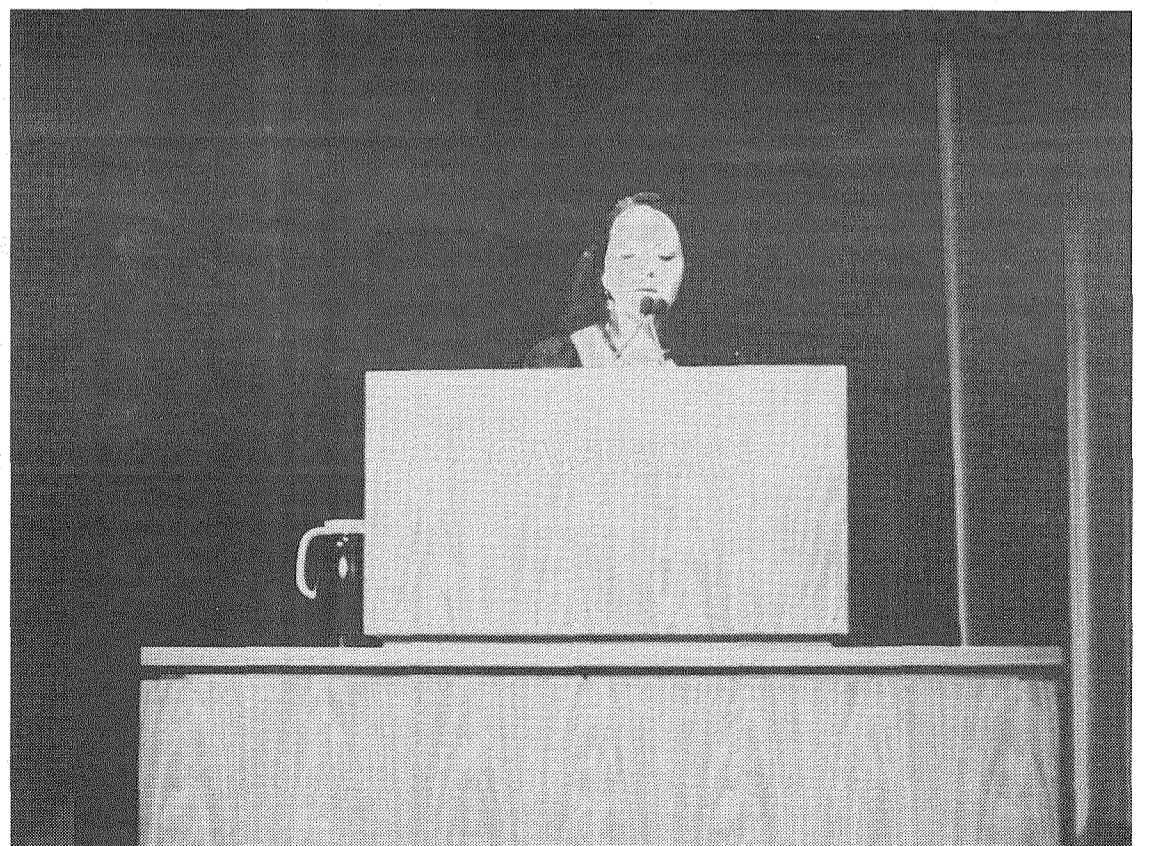
Last Tuesday evening, the spotlight in Beckman Auditorium was on Josefina Lopez, author of the movie, *Real Women Have Curves*. Brought to Caltech by the Women's Center, Josefina candidly shared with the Caltech community her life as a Latino feminist writer. In her black lace dress with a maroon flower in her hair, she embodied the strong heroes of society she writes about, beautiful strong women comfortable and proud of their identity.

She writes to spread her view of the truth and change the misrepresentation of Latinas and women. Latinos are often depicted as sad victims of society, trapped by educational, social and economic barriers. But through her writing and now this movie, Josefina wants people to respect these women and their qualities.

Born in San Luis Polosi, Mexico in 1969, she grew up in Boyle Heights. She sees the community with its ethnic mix and tolerance

as an ideal place for her to grow up. Her father was deported back to Mexico four times before he received a Green Card. And she spent her childhood working with her family at her sister's sewing factory, making evening gowns for \$13 that would later be sold in department stores for hundreds of dollars. But Josefina recalls those years of hard work with fondness. It was during this time that she developed the qualities of hard-work, family and dignity from the women around her. She recalls all the gossip that would go around all day, which is where she learned her story-telling skills. She humbly admits she was not the best story-teller by far among those gossiping circles, but as a writer, it is her job to get these stories out and portray these powerful women full of dignity to the rest of the world. These were "third world feminist" who are helping women obtain equal rights and status, simply by pursuing a life

*Continued on Page 7, Column 3*



L. Tran/The California Tech

Josefina Lopez, author of *Real Women Have Curves*, recounts the childhood influences that led to her successful career as a writer.

# Committee Divided Over Choice To Let Prefrosh Visitors in Avery

Continued from Page 1, Column 5

are afraid of immature behavior," said interim Avery Chancellor Orion Crisafulli, a graduate student, who mentioned isolated cases of summer freshmen stealing graduate students' publicly stored food.

But Avery advocate and graduate student Geoffrey Hom said that Border's argument has assuaged most of his colleagues. "The freshmen who choose to come here would already value academics and quietness," he argued. He said that only a few of the house's graduate students remain unsure about the plan.

Meanwhile, other adversaries saw the opposite problem: that freshmen in the traditionally quieter Avery would be deprived of the houses' more social environment. "Freshmen should be able to get a taste of the houses before they move into Avery," maintained Ricketts resident Nicholas Halpern-Manners '06. "Otherwise, there's a good chance they would pick into Avery without giving the houses a chance." Added Robert Morell '06, "Living in the houses helps them to come of their shells."

Avery rights advocate Neil Tiwari '05, though, disputed the notion that freshmen need the houses.

"While most would scoff at the idea of forcing people to try Christianity before exploring Islam or Buddhism or forcing people to use Macs before switching to PCs, surprisingly few hold the same view for the house system in terms of Avery," he said. "In the real world, there is a freedom called choice but the house system keeps it away from students."

In response, newly minted ASCIT President Galen Loram '05 maintained that choice isn't always a good thing. "If you look around, Costco gets the biggest marks because they limit choice," he offered. "In this case, more choice could hurt. The people who would want to live in Avery are the ones who need the houses most."

But Border deemed the possibility of studious freshmen clustering in Avery "not a disease that needs to be cured."

"I don't think more choice would hurt people," he held. "We know that people end up liking where they live, regardless of how they got there. It's not because the seven houses are more likable."

On some level, the largely theoretical argument is prone to go back and forth. Many on both sides have cited the example of Rice University, where students are organized into seven "colleges" not unlike the seven houses, flush with personalities, patriotism and an annual inter-house sporting event. As at Caltech, freshmen are required to spend a year in one of the colleges.

Kathleen Milazzo, president of Rice's Brown College, said it's a policy that rarely comes under any scrutiny.

"I think most Rice students really enjoy living on campus in the colleges their freshmen year," she explained. "The fact that the demand for housing far exceeds the capacity shows that students, regardless of their year, find meaningful benefits, both concrete and abstract, to living on campus at Rice." Her conclusion: she has no qualms keeping the freshmen in the colleges.

Another case study is Yijia Chen '07, the sole freshman in Avery this year, whom administrators granted an exception. Chen lent cautious support to the measure, stressing that she wasn't cut out for house traditions she considers invasive.

"Sure, I end up having to lug all my books and homework to the library," she conceded. "But, I don't get floated, I don't get showered or made to wear weird clothing and there's not a lot of noise. I'm the kind of person who just doesn't like to get wet."

Indeed, semi-hazing traditions such as showering freshmen, putting them through a "hassle week" or asking them to lug furniture out to Millikan Pond are little-questioned rites of passage in the seven-house community.

In fact, Student Housing Committee alternate Libin Zhang '05 said that he'd only consider supporting Avery after it develops house stereotypes and hazing traditions. "Avery needs to get a stereotype and definitely more hazing and then they can have freshmen—but only after I graduate," he maintained.

Facing entrenched traditionalists like Zhang, Chen is cautiously eager to "make sure there are enough places for people who don't like the house system"—but only if Avery attains the much-cited "critical mass" of freshmen necessary for a community to develop. "Either let a whole group in or let no one in," she said.

Even so, Avery resident associate Bill Jones held that the house is already cultivating its own traditions. "The argument is always that Avery doesn't have the same traditions. That is not fair," held Jones. "We have a group of people—not as nationalistic, but we're still close."

Avery's lack of nationalism worries some on the Board of Directors, however. Loram is uneasy about parents so anxious to see their sons and daughters succeed academically that they compel them to join the quietest house: by a long margin, Avery.

"What I don't like about the idea is that parents who have no other concept of the houses than 'That's rowdy, that's quiet' may force their kids into Avery," he said. Former President Tom

Fletcher '04 agreed, holding that "more choice would be a good thing if there wasn't this fear I have that people would be forced into Avery."

Another sticking point echoed by Avery's opponents is that the house lacks a real "support structure" for freshmen. "What is key, for a community that provides the best experience possible for the freshmen, is the genuine interest and involvement of upperclassmen," read a March 3 IHC statement.

In response, Avery has enlisted over 10 solid commitments for upper-class counselors and council member and campus pundit Alex Shim '05 believed that members are prepared to devote a genuine interest. "When people say, 'It's a house,' they mean it's a strong, close-knit community," he explained. "The things that make a strong, close-knit community aren't only things that make a house."

But many weren't quite convinced. "Living in a house is a very good experience to have," said Fletcher, who argued that many see the value of the houses only after living there for a year. Priolo concurred, adding that "we are trying to preserve something by living in the houses."

It's a sentiment echoed by the IHC, which last week released results from a survey that found that just 10 freshmen would have liked the Avery option—compared to 11 who originally preferred Avery but have grown to favor their on-campus houses.

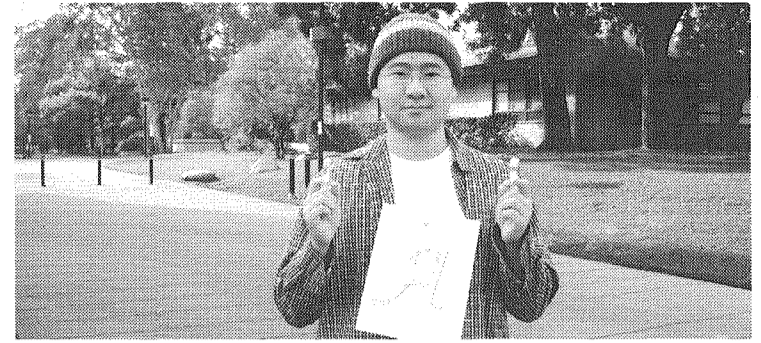
In light of the results, the IHC "strongly opposes the idea of allowing freshmen into Avery," according to their March 3 release. Although each rejected calls for specific comment, the eight-member crew of house presidents published a joint statement Saturday that expressed both continued opposition and resolve towards reaching a workable solution.

"While the IHC does not support the idea," it read, "we feel it is imperative that people keep an open mind at this point and be sure to consider all of the issues involved when deciding their standpoints about the proposal." No IHC member would discuss specifics, but the group pointed to a presentation slated for the first week of April as the public unveiling of its collective opinion.

Caution is nothing new for the sometimes secretive IHC, which in the past has kept from the public minutes of meetings that addressed the Avery matter. While some saw its silence as a sign that the group may be ready to compromise, no IHC source would verify the speculation.

Although they applauded the IHC's apparent willingness to discuss the matter, proponents expressed frustration at overcoming perceived "chicken-and-egg" arguments. Avery's community may be fragile, said Border, but "right now the living community is fragile because it doesn't have any freshmen. I see this as a chicken-and-egg argument."

Likewise, some opponents complain that Avery would not participate fully in inter-house athletics, but an IHC fiat by former Page President Aaron Davies '02 once denied an Avery request to participate. "The IHC and I have decided that we would prefer not to include Avery House as a separate institution in inter-house athletics," said Davies at the time, in a communique to Avery.



L. Tran/The California Tech

**Former Avery Chancellor Yuan Sun has spearheaded the effort to allow freshman into Avery.**

The net result is some frustration among the measure's supporters.

"Most peculiar about the IHC is their twisted combination of altruistic desire to do what is best for students, naivete and arrogance," explained Tiwari. "Despite their claims, the IHC does not represent all of the student body. They are the advocate of the majority who may enjoy the house system, but they are the bane of the sizable minority who do not like the house system."

However unpopular this view may be among those on-campus, Tiwari has pinned down some key pivots of support. A recent survey pegged over 60% of Avery in favor of freshmen and under 25% against—and among those who preferred Avery to the seven houses, only five thought freshmen should be forced into the seven houses. Additionally, Tiwari led this year's IHC race in first-place tallies, although he fell behind in second-place balloting.

Undoubtedly joining him will be some in the SHC. Committee sources suggest that Border and Geology Professor Geoffrey Blake are open to the idea and that IHC appointee Manny Garcia '05 is likely against it, while graduate student Karen Smith, though she declined comment, is said to harbor questions. Athletics Director Tim Downes, while he admitted that he's waiting to "become better informed," said that in general he thinks "choice is a very good thing."

Math Professor David Wales went no further than to say he's undecided, while Geology Professor Paul Asimow said that he's not yet convinced of Avery's argument. "At this point, I am keeping an open mind," he said. "Not everybody has been heard yet, nor all the angles considered. There are strong arguments on both sides. So the short answer is, no, I am not yet convinced."

As for Chemistry Professor John Bercaw, he's officially undecided, but impressed by the "passion" of those involved. "I am listening to both sides with interest," he said. "What impresses me most at this stage is the passion and conviction that the Avery Council and IHC representatives have for their positions." Master of Student Houses Cathy Jurca, who holds a non-voting ex officio role, declined comment.

Add it all up and many see potentially substantial Avery sympathy among the SHC—potentially a roadblock to any IHC effort to present a unified front against the plan.

The most optimistic supporters hope to see freshmen integrated into Avery by next fall, but Loram had doubts on practicality. "Given the IHC has a monopoly on Rotation, I think that's very unlikely," he said. He added that the measure's best chance for reconsideration will be the long-anticipated renovation of the student houses, expected to displace as many as half of on-campus undergraduates at a time.

Controversy hasn't always engulfed the modest 120-member dwelling first known as "Centennial House." No, the decision was

easy at the time of Avery's widely anticipated opening, said then-MOSH Wales; he would simply wait for the house to evolve before deciding on the freshmen question.

"At that time, there were many uncertainties about Avery and even the opening in September was not certain," he recalled. "We did not have a consistent view about how it would evolve, but thought it best to open and see what developed."

Now it's eight years later and the issue has again come to the fore as Avery hosts record numbers of transfers and first-year graduate students, two demographics known for their attachment to community. By the middle of the year, news of social events cluttered the Avery e-mail list and the once-dormant council sparked to life. "A lot of people came to Avery just to work," said Shim. "But this year, people gradually opened up."

Perhaps most indicatively, key proponent Witt is himself a transfer and fellow supporter Crisafulli a first-year graduate student. "Originally, I thought I would focus on my research here, but Avery brought me into the community," said Crisafulli. "My experience here made me think about my core values and affected me deeply."

Avery resident associate Molly Jones agreed. "One of the reasons Avery is interested is because we have a stronger community than we've had in the past," she said.

Strong, yes, but strong enough?

Nostalgia in his eyes, soon-to-graduate Arvind Murugan '04 said there's still no replacement for the freshman-year house experience. "Yes, the houses are not for everyone," he said, "but I don't think you can know as soon as you come in."

The IHC has called support of the Caltech community at large "absolutely essential." And in the battle for hearts and minds, it's Caltech's Joe Six-pack, the rank and file, students like Murugan, that the Avery Council have yet to win over.

## The California Tech

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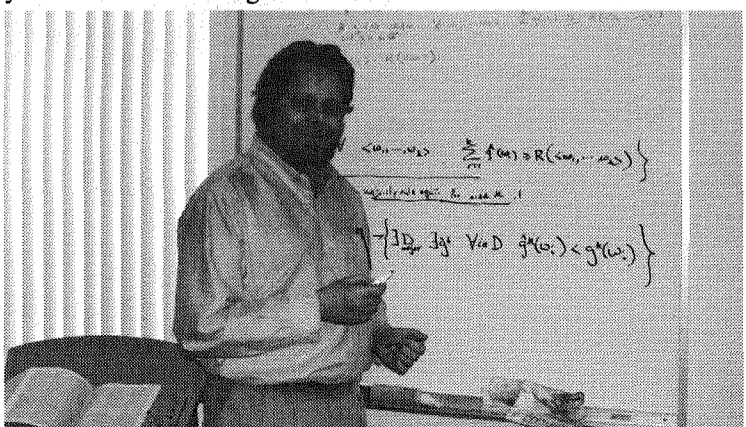
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L. Tran/The California Tech

**Professor Kim Border, head of the Student Housing Committee, advocates offering more choice for incoming freshman.**

## Students Show Tech Staff Appreciation with Awards

By CORINNA ZYGOURAKIS

The green-haired youngster, dressed in black, approaches the smiling woman with grey hair pulled back in a bun. He hands her a gift basket filled with delicious goodies and thanks her for her wonderful service to the Caltech community. The kind lady is shocked. She hugs the ASCIT President and exclaims, "I love working for you. You are all gorgeous people. I love all of you!"

This past Monday, the ASCIT Board of Directors recognized six members of the Caltech staff for their outstanding contributions to student life. Individuals were nominated for their eagerness to go above and beyond the call of duty to help Caltech students. Service award recipients were Suzette Cummings (former assistant in the Dean's Office, current assistant to Vice President Margo Marshak), Alice Edel (staff, Tech Express), Marie Lara (staff, Undergraduate Housing Office), Gilberto Rodriguez (staff, North House Kitchen), John van Deusen (staff, Mechanical Engineering Shop), and Clara, the smiling, grey-haired cashier in Chandler Dining Hall.

Students were effusive about Suzette Cummings's willingness to help students in every way possible, whether in the Dean's Office or in her new role as assistant to Margo Marshak. Upon receiving the award, Suzette Cummings said, "I feel so honored to be selected for one of the staff recognition awards. I really enjoy working with and helping out the students; it is one of the best parts of my job."

Students were also very appreciative of Alice Edel's hard work in the Tech Express. "Alice is not only knowledgeable and help-

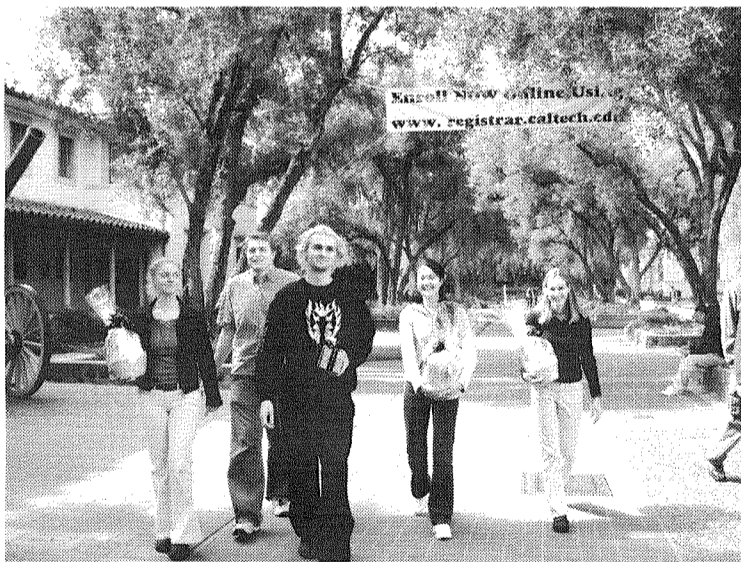
ful," said one student, "but she is also kind on a daily basis. It is rare to find her without a smile. Alice cares about each of us as people."

One student described nominee Marie Lara (of the Undergraduate housing Office) as "very friendly, approachable, and always willing to answer questions. Marie does her job very well and always welcomes me with a smile." Marie was touched to receive the award and noted that "it meant so much to her that students had taken notice of her efforts."

North Kitchen worker Gilberto Rodriguez was chosen because "he is always friendly to the student waiters and all the students. He drops whatever he's doing if we ask for help. He even takes interest in our music and dinner-time activities!"

In nominating John van Deusen, head of the Mechanical Engineering Machine Shop and role model for future mechanical engineers, one student said: "John displays an amazing amount of patience and really teaches students practical skills. He fosters students' creativity by encouraging them to try projects even when he is unsure of their outcome. During the last weeks of the ME72 class, he completely rearranged his schedule to allow students to work late hours in the shop. John is the cat's pajamas."

Students' love for Chandler's check-out lady, Clara, is equally strong. "Clara is so cheerful and friendly that she makes me happy to eat at Chandler," wrote one student. Another undergraduate commented, "Clara is really sweet, and it always brightens my day to see her. Her genuine love for all of us always shines through."



L. Tran/The California Tech  
The ASCIT BoD walks down the Olive Walk, loaded down with gift baskets for the six recipients of this year's ASCIT Staff Appreciation Awards. (top) Clara, Chandler's check-out lady is pleasantly surprised to receive a basket. (bottom)

## ASCIT Minutes: Club Funding, CUE

March 2, 2004

Present: Ann Bendfeldt, Ryan Farmer, Jenny Fisher, Shaun Lee, Kelly Lin, Galen Loram, Kim Pependorf, Corinna Zygourakis

Absent: Claire Walton

Guests: Parag Bhayani, Bing Huo

### Introduction:

1. Call to Order, 12:10 PM

New/Open Positions:

2. Jenny Fisher needs Academic Research Committee representatives from each house. If you are interested, please contact your house's previous ARC rep. Sign-ups for rep-at-large will be posted after all the house representatives have been selected.

3. Meeting for clubs to request funding from this year's BoD will occur on Friday, April 5. Any club interested in applying for ASCIT funding must submit a budget proposal form by Tuesday, March 30. If you have any questions, email [fdal@donut.caltech.edu](mailto:fdal@donut.caltech.edu).

4. Congratulations to the new IHC Secretary Joanna Cohen, IHC Ath Man Jeff Kauffman, and IHC Food Representative Kasia Gora

### Other Business:

5. Galen Loram reports that the presentation of the ASCIT staff awards on Monday, March 1, was successful. The recipients were effusive and very appreciative (see article by Corinna Zygourakis for more details).

6. Jenny Fisher, Galen, and Corinna report that members of the CUE (the Council for Undergraduate Education, headed by Dr. David Goodstein) were against students' suggestion to allow students to register online for two courses offered at the same time.

7. Jenny adds that in the 2003 Student Faculty Conference Workload and Student Morale Survey, 68% of the 275 respondents reported that they had had to register for overlapping classes.

8. Jenny informs us that teaching quality evaluation forms and block scheduling will soon go online. The Curriculum Committee plans to carefully examine the schedule to ensure that classes are not offered during lunchtime or from 4 to 6 PM. Also, in the next step of the online development of REGIS, academic audits will be made accessible online to stu-

dents and their advisors. Students will be encouraged to meet with their advisers once a term to discuss their academic progress and coursework.

9. In response to Galen's suggestion, Dr. David Goodstein will bring up the issue of allowing one term of pass-fail for transfer students to the Upperclass Admissions Committee.

10. In response to Corinna's suggestion, the CUE has discussed instituting a policy that professors cannot assign both a problem set and a midterm during the midterm examination period.

11. At the next CUE meeting, Jenny will bring up several third-term scheduling issues, including the scheduling of menu classes simultaneously, (making them difficult for upperclassmen to work into their schedules), the overlap of many social science and BEM courses, and the offering of Chem 3a in only one-day sessions.

12. Kim Pependorf reports that the Wednesday meeting of the Student Housing Committee (consisting of 7 faculty, 1 graduate student, and 1 undergraduate student) will include discussion on the issue of freshmen in Avery.

13. Kim notes that the IHC has not yet seen a strong indication that there is widespread Avery residential support for allowing freshmen to live in Avery. The IHC is preparing a report about the freshman issue and is surveying all Caltech freshmen with several questions, including whether they would have chosen to live in Avery (if they had the choice during rotation) and whether their opinion has changed over the past year.

14. Ann Bendfeldt and Galen Loram concluded their presentations to the heads of all Caltech divisions about the honor code. Faculty had many useful suggestions, including updating the faculty honor handbook and improving the collaboration policy sheets.

15. Ann remarks that some graduate students are concerned about the "culture of extensions"-i.e., whether students are using or abusing extensions on problem sets and other assignments.

16. Ryan Farmer suggests the consideration of a bylaw to handle budget surplus from one BoD to

the next.

17. The Coffeehouse managers have asked for web access in order to post openings/closures of the Coffeehouse on the donut website. The BoD agrees that this is a good idea and will talk to the devteam about setting it up.

18. The Graduate Student Council has agreed to fund the purchase of a lockbox for 24-hour DVD returns. Yay!

19. The BoD will meet with the provost and the faculty chairs of each department in April. If you have issues you would like ASCIT to consider/bring up in this meeting, please email [bod@donut.caltech.edu](mailto:bod@donut.caltech.edu).

20. The Hong Kong Student Association and Ecphonema have not picked up their checks. These clubs must email [corinnaz@caltech.edu](mailto:corinnaz@caltech.edu) to request their funding.

### Money Requests:

21. Parag Bhayani reports that the Caltech Quiz Bowl Team has qualified for a national competition at Washington University in St. Louis and requests \$500 to subsidize team travel costs. The previous BoD had allotted this money to the Quiz Bowl Team in the event that they qualified for nationals, but the present BoD must check if they can access the old accounts.

22. Bing Huo, Daniel Wu, Melinda Owens, and Niel Xu ask to take Dr. Feng-Ying Ming out to lunch at the Ath. Vote: 6-0-0 (approved).

Meeting adjourned 1:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Corinna Zygourakis

## Letter: Thank You, Lyle, VM Flawed

Dear Editors,

I'm an employee of Caltech, and I read *The California Tech* fairly regularly. After picking myself up off the floor over the fact that this piece even made it into the publication, I resolved to express my gratitude to Lyle Chamberlain for his article, "Let Me In! A Nice Guy's View on The Vagina Monologues." THANK YOU Lyle for offering a little balance to a grossly myopic view of the state of women in general, and particularly the relationships between men and women. I couldn't have said it better. There are so many GOOD, completely healthy monogamous male/female relationships left out of this picture. So much negative generalization. And generalization is not bad if it is accurate. For instance, take the statement, "Seatbelts save lives." In general it is true. But we've all heard of the instances where they TOOK lives. So that's a true generalization. But to present a picture of women's sexuality that completely omits the millions of happy monogamous relationships out there, will help women move forward at a glacial rate, if at all. I think the wrong thing has been singled out to be overcome. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. Half, (or over half) of marriages end in divorce. That does NOT mean there is something wrong with the institution of marriage. There is something wrong with PEOPLE! I could go on and on, but I will just close and say thanks again Lyle, and California Tech, if you are wise, you will continue to offer balancing opinions on subjects and plenty of them!

Sincerely,  
Nathan Braden  
Electrical Department

## Feynman Prize for Excellence in Teaching Awarded to Rossman

### Teaching Style, Effort, Make Him Stand Out

By STACEY SCOVILLE

At the second term faculty meeting on February 23, 2004, Provost Stolper was pleased to present this year's Richard P. Feynman Prize for Excellence in Teaching to George Rossman, Professor of Mineralogy. The original call for nominations, criteria and terms of the prize are attached. The committee's recommendation of Prof. Rossman reads in part as follows:

"George Rossman has been teaching with enthusiasm and with superb results since he joined the Caltech faculty in 1971. His courses include Ge10 and, at present, Ge114 (Introductory Mineralogy). George's style of teaching exploits the beautiful and beguiling qualities of minerals and their relationships to geological processes. He employs a series of mind-stretching demonstrations, often including liquid nitrogen and irradiated crystals. He tells stories about minerals. He asks probing questions about their color, and then leads students to think in general about the proper approach to scientific questions. Although students have been appreciating George's

courses for more than 30 years, these are not static. They evolve each year, in the best tradition of didactic innovation.

"George also originated the concept, and helped to fund the reality, of field trips to localities not easily accessible to students. Recently, undergrad and graduate students have gone to Alaska, Greece, Turkey, South Africa, and Brazil.

"George has served as he Academic Officer for GPS for several years. This places him at the intersection of several educational streams, all the way from freshman to postdoc; and he serves them all well. "Best professor at Caltech," or "Best mentor at Caltech," is a frequent distinction applied to George."



courtesy of  
[www.gps.caltech.edu](http://www.gps.caltech.edu)

# The Oscar Recap: One Ring to Rule Them All

By HARRISON STEIN

After last year's exciting ceremony had some of the most surprising results ever, this year's Academy Awards were quite a disappointment, as all of the favorites won during a lackluster four hours. While *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King* romped as expected, sweeping all 11 of its nominations, a host of other movies split the major awards. On the other hand, no other film won more than two awards and critical darlings *Cold Mountain*, *Lost in Translation* and *Mystic River* left with just one, one and two victories, respectively. Here's a recap of what happened, as well as what should have happened.

## Best Supporting Actor

Who Won: Tim Robbins  
Who Should've Won: Ken Watanabe

Tim Robbins gave the performance of his career in the flawed *Mystic River*, but halfway across the globe, an unknown international virtuoso stunned American audiences with the juiciest supporting role of the year. Filmed in New Zealand, *The Last Samurai* was a gripping epic unfairly overshadowed by the *Lord of the Rings* juggernaut, and the performance by Japanese sensation Ken Watanabe was the film's highlight. Even though every minute of the film revolved around producer/megastar Tom Cruise, Watanabe still managed to steal every scene, despite speaking very little English. He provided the one shining light in a year of weak supporting roles.

## Best Supporting Actress

Who Won: Renee Zellweger  
Who Should've Won: ?

A good critic professes ignorance when appropriate, and in this case, I have to admit that of the five movies that starred the candidates for Best Supporting Actress, I was only fortunate enough to view one. Since Marcia Gay Harden's performance as Tim Robbins' middling wife in *Mystic River* was dry and uninspired, I cannot analyze the results of this award. Without having seen *Cold Mountain*, I am happy that Renee Zellweger won because she absolutely deserved the Best Actress Oscar last year for her dazzling effort in the effervescent musical extravaganza, *Chicago*.

## Best Actor

Who Won: Sean Penn  
Who Should've Won: Bill Murray

[Sean] Penn has never won an Oscar, but so far, he has given the two finest male performances of the year, and it will be a shame if he doesn't win the Best Actor award for one of his roles.

--Harrison Stein from his review of *21 Grams* from December 8, 2003

Hey, we all make mistakes! Despite the fact that Sean Penn delivered two of the year's 'three' finest male performances, this Oscar should have belonged to the enigmatic Bill Murray. Penn is often considered the world's greatest living actor and his acting in both *Mystic River* and *21 Grams* did little to quench those opinions. Nonetheless, a full-time comedian has never made as dramatic a transformation into a successful serious actor as Bill Murray did in his breakout role. *Lost in Translation* was the year's best film and Murray was the film's most important cog. His shocking role reversal gives hope to every life-long comedian with dreams of becoming a respected actor.

## Best Actress

Who Won: Charlize Theron  
Who Should've Won: Naomi Watts

Having skipped *Monster* I can't really criticize the Academy's decision. Nonetheless, after seeing Naomi Watts' fabulous performance in the vastly underrated *21 Grams* I find it hard to believe that Charlize Theron was any more impressive. Watts, who played a tortured young woman who fell for the man with her late husband's heart, broke from her stereotypical role of jovial vixen with a physically and emotionally draining performance. In the end, she out-acted Oscar winners Sean Penn and Benicio Del Toro by turning in one of the best female performances in recent memory.

## Best Director

Who Won: Peter Jackson  
Who Should've Won: Peter Jackson

In an average year, the director of my favorite movie should also win the Best Director Oscar. This was not your average year. *Lost in Translation* writer/director Sofia Coppola showed that she is her father's (*The Godfather* writer/director Francis Ford Coppola) daughter by making a fantastic picture and winning a much deserved Best Original Screenplay award. At the tender age of 32, she has already established herself as the best female writer/director in Hollywood. Nonetheless, this Oscar has been earmarked for Peter Jackson for at least three years. *Return of the King* is an unparalleled triumph of epic proportions and it owes its success to Jackson's hard work and tremendous vision. The Academy might have made a number of mistakes in its major categories this year, but at least they got this award right.

## Best Picture

Who Won: *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*  
Who Should've Won: *Lost in Translation*

In 2003, no film captured the hearts of the public quite like *Return of the King*, an enormous fan favorite that was also a critical sensation. Normally, I don't complain when my third favorite film of the year wins Best Picture at the Oscars, but *Lost in Translation* deserved the award. *ROTK* was the a prototypical epic designed to win Oscars, but on the other hand, it had average acting, unnerving moments of inactivity, and a never-ending plot. *Lost in Translation* was the closest thing I saw to a perfect movie in 2003, as Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson's (somehow, she wasn't nominated for either category) spectacular performances were the year's two best. Coppola complemented their valiant efforts with a realistic but engrossing story that tugged at my every heartstring. In a year when one ring ruled them all, the real Best Picture got lost in the hype.



Renee Zellweger, shown here in *Chicago*, won the Best Supporting Actress Award.

# Tech Girls...and How to Get One

By HAMILTONY FALK

So here I was, an excited frosh, ready to fly across the country to beautiful southern California, a life of no parents, no more high school BS and a generally fun time at college. Sure there'd be some work (ok, tons of it, but it is technically school) but there'd be that wherever I went.

Then I got here, went to astrocamp, and learned things like "Caltech does not like drugs. Seriously, guys," and "We're all nerds here, so quit pretending to be cool" but most importantly "you will see about 15 girls here, and 12 of them already had boyfriends, or will before you ever talk to them." Not an encouraging fact. Luckily I then found out that two more of the 15 were devoutly Christian, and not interested in dating. At least not me. Or you. So things weren't so great, but hey, there's still that last girl. Then I thought, hey wait a minute, do I really want to date the girl that about 800 other guys here aren't interested in? Turns out there is no such girl, and in reality there are only 14 girls here (the last one decided on MIT at the last minute).

Well, this seemed a problem, so I figured I'd give all the guys out there some advice on how to get a girl, here at Tech.

Method one: Stalk one! It's fun, easy, and if you're persistent enough it might work. Or get you a restraining order! The pluses

of this method are that you get many of the perks of having a real girlfriend. These include spending time and money on someone else, seeing one person more than anyone else, and stress. There is a down side to stalking though. These are generally known as her friends, her father, her body-building older brother, and the police. But remember, as long as you don't actually enter her room, it's not a crime!

Method two: Become really good friends with a girl with a boyfriend, and hope she breaks up with him in favor of you. You can also try the girl who won't date, and hope she decides Jesus was just kidding. This method works well for those of you who were somewhat popular in high school, and aren't afraid of girls. This has many positive attributes too, such as having a female friend, having your friends make fun of you, and getting to practice your lying by saying "no, we're just friends, I'm not even interested romantically" constantly. And there's only one drawback. It never works. Ever. In the history of mankind. She'll either never break up with him, break up and date someone else, break up with him and say she can't date you, you're too good friends, or decide she's gay (or hardcore Christian[1]).

Method three: Give up and become very very bitter. This is one of my favorites, and may end up happening anyway. You simply decide that girls are all (insert insulting word here) and you don't want to date them anyway. This means you get to pretend that it's you who isn't interested, not them[2] and claim to be better off alone. There are very few problems with this philosophy, because you know as well as I do that the minute you have the slightest chance with a girl you'll drop the bitterness thing like it's a rock you don't want to be holding anymore[3].

Method four: Go to UC Riverside, UCLA, USC, Oxy, PCC, or any other local college that has girls. These people seem to think that we're smart so we must be interesting or funny or cultured or something dumb like that. Or at least rich someday. So if you have a car, and can hide your nerdiness and the fact that physicists make almost nothing, head on over to some other school and find yourself a girl.

Method five: Lie and tell everyone you have a girlfriend back home. If you can't get a girl you might as well make your friend think you're cool. And what the heck, you're from Virginia or something, who'll ever find out you're lying? Plus, you can easily get dumped by this person, since they don't exist. Just don't say you dumped her, because no one will believe you dumped a real live girl after being at Tech for any length of time. Except for not actually including a girl, this plan is perfect for the average Caltech student.

Method six: Transfer. Enough Said.

Method seven: Build yourself a girl robot. This is great for those Mech E's out there. Sure this girl won't have any personality, but what teenage guy is looking for that?

Method eight: Wait. Remember, eventually you'll either be able to pick off some frosh or graduate, and then the only problem with your love life will be that you're a loser. However, eventually the girls figure out that losers are better than jerks, and the only guy who is neither[4] isn't available.

So there you are, plenty of ways to deal with the fact that there aren't any girls here. And before you single girls come yell at me about how you're not super-Christian or gay and you don't have a boyfriend, go out on the Olive Walk and shout "I'd sure like to have a boyfriend now." Or mutter it under your breath. You'll have a guy or two in seconds. Or better yet, talk to me and I'll set you up with someone nice.

\*Disclaimer: This article does not represent the opinions of Caltech, the *California Tech*, the editors of said newspaper, or even me. It's just a bunch of lies.

[1] Before all you people get angry with me, realize that I'm not equating being gay with being Christian. I'm just saying that neither of those types of girls wants to date you.

[2] Of course they're still not interested, but you don't have to admit it anymore.

[3] I'd like to see you come up with a better metaphor than that.

[4] The Pope.

## Crazy Blood

BY HAMILTONY FALK AND JACK LOE

An Uplifting Comic for the Average Teacher

<p><b>OTHER SCHOOLS IN FEBRUARY</b></p> <p>This weather sucks...</p>	<p>...but at least I'm having fun!</p>	<p><b>TECH</b></p> <p>I've slept 4 hours in the last week, all in class. I hate it here...</p>	<p>...but the weather is great!</p>
<p>is the quiz going to be hard?</p>	<p>Nope, I thought it was easy</p>	<p>Is that only because you're a phys TA?</p>	<p>Yes! Ha Ha Ha Ha! Also, you'll have to know my secret code, which I made up last night while drunk, because I've decided all the quizzes will be written in that!</p>

# A Liberal's Stance on Social Matters

By PARAG BHAYANI

With regards to social issues, liberals have been regarded with rabid contempt by most right-wing ideologues. They are quick to blame us without fully understanding our positions and gratuitously apply blanket stereotypes. I want to explain my views, and those of most other liberals, on some of the most contentious issues facing society today: abortion and the right to life, capital punishment, and gun control.

The religious right loves to brand pro-choice advocates as merciless baby killers. However, conservatives fail to consider rational arguments. While I cannot speak for other liberals, I personally am opposed to abortion. That is, if I were a pregnant woman, I would never choose to get one, with exceptions in the case of a rape or where giving birth will endanger my life. I do not feel that killing the growing fetus is morally correct.

This does not mean, though, that I (or George W. Bush or the Reverend Jerry Falwell) should be able to dictate what a woman does. For the nine month gestation period, the mother has control over her body and the fetus and must be allowed to decide what is best. If she feels that getting an abortion is appropriate, then it is to be decided by her and her doctor only; the government or religious activists across the nation can have no say in this matter. So-called moral advocates must not be allowed to formulate public policy; otherwise, things like miscegenation (interracial marriage) would probably still be illegal. What the debate boils down to, in my opinion, is essentially a question of personal liber-

ties. I would appreciate a woman choosing to not abort, but only she can make this decision.

A similar debate was sparked last year when the case of Terry Schiavo made national headlines. Schiavo is a Florida woman who is currently brain damaged following a heart attack in 1990. After many years of no improvement in her abilities to function normally, her husband Michael obtained permission to remove Terry's feeding tube, effectively starving her to death. According to Michael, doctors have declared Terry to be in a "persistent vegetative state," and before her accident Terry said that she did not want to be kept alive in a vegetative state. Complicating the issue was the fact that Michael stood to receive a substantial life insurance premium if Terry were to pass away (although he said that he would give the money to charity). Terry's parents moved to block the court decision, claiming that she did not want to be euthanized and that she was not vegetative. Their actions led to a nationwide movement culminating in the Florida legislature convening in a special session to pass a law specifically overruling the husband's choice. Unfortunately, before the accident, Terry did not sign a living will that would dictate what would happen to her in such a situation.

Frankly, I opposed the actions of the legislature because it was my understanding that Terry was indeed brain-dead. Evidence provided by the parents that she could respond to external stimuli was thin, and it was not appropriate to keep her alive if she was suffering. The conservative crowd must keep in mind though, that while I supported the actions of the hus-

band, it was only because I felt that Terry Schiavo was vegetative and would not want to be kept alive in such a state. If it turns out that the converse is true, then I would side with the parents. Again, this all comes down to a matter of personal choice. Public outcry should not be allowed to influence the lives of private citi-

*"Getting an abortion only directly affects the mother, not me; a person carrying a gun, though, has the ability to directly harm me."*

zens.

Conservatives argue that while liberals are against life for the fetuses or suffering women, we are hypocritical in opposing death for those who kill. The first problem with capital punishment, though, is that our criminal justice system is flawed. Dozens of people have been exonerated of crimes since DNA testing has become prevalent--dozens of innocent people who had been sentenced to death, that is. As there is so much uncertainty, it does not seem appropriate to continue this policy until serious reforms have been enacted. Additionally, one must consider that people sentenced to death are murderers who have killed others. They most likely did not grant their victims any mercy. How-

ever, death penalty opponents do not want to stoop to this level. We are willing to show more respect for the convict than he did for his victim. We are saying that the death penalty makes everyone in society murderers, and we are noble enough to rise above this level of savagery. Besides, prison life is no picnic with the sodomy and riots. It is probably a better punishment than allowing the convict to escape his hellish life by dying.

You may be saying now, "Ah ha! Liberals support personal liberty and choice for abortion and euthanasia, but they contradict themselves by opposing gun rights." The difference here, though, is that people use guns against others. If a neighbor gets a gun, I had better not make this person mad! And even if he does not intend to harm anyone, a simple accident can cause the slaying of

an innocent person. What this boils down to is that getting an abortion only directly affects the mother, not me; a person carrying a gun, though, has the ability to directly harm me. Also, using a gun will significantly increase the risk of an innocent bystander getting killed; no such event will occur if a would-be killer uses a knife or a bat. Gun advocates make the tired argument: "Guns don't kill people. People kill people." A better statement to make, though, is: "Guns don't kill people. People with guns kill people." Advocates also point to the Second Amendment of the Constitution, which states, "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms,

shall not be infringed." Of course, the NRA disregards the first half of this statement. But a debate on constitutionality of guns will fill books, and I do not have that kind of room here.

While I cannot speak for all liberals, I can say quite honestly that I do not oppose guns themselves. Although I consider hunting to be barbaric, humanity started as hunters and gatherers, and if one wants to use a gun for hunting or target shooting then I have no problem. However, if, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, the United States is the place where you are most likely to get gunned down outside of a war zone, then something must be done. As long as children are stumbling upon loaded guns in their homes and playing with them, I will support mandatory trigger locks and safety features no matter what the cost to gun owners and manufacturers.

Opponents of the assault weapons ban say that the ban does not lead to a significant reduction in crime (even though these opponents say that guns should only be used for hunting or marksmanship (assault weapons are obviously not used for either, but for killing). As long as even one person is killed by an assault weapon, I will push for a ban on these firearms. As long as dangerous ex-convicts are obtaining weapons from gun shows, I will vigorously promote background checks on gun show buyers, closing the gun show loophole. These reforms of gun policy will not abrogate the rights of law-abiding gun owners to hunt, shoot for sport, or defend themselves. But, considering that America has far-and-away the highest per capita gun death rate out of any Westernized nation, the right to carry a firearm is far less important than the right to life of an innocent person.



Attention: Current Freshmen, Sophomores & Juniors: **2004-2005 Upper Class Merit Awards.** Each year, the Faculty Committee on Scholarships and Financial Aid grants a number of Upper Class Merit Awards to the most academically-talented of the Institute's Sophomores, Juniors, and, occasionally, Freshmen. Upper Class Merit Awards are based on outstanding scholastic achievement as demonstrated by exceptional performance in formal classes, in independent research, and extracurricular activities since beginning academic studies at Caltech. They are not based on financial need. Last year, 56 students were awarded Upper Class Merit Awards in amounts ranging from \$17,925 to \$31,461. The number and caliber of the applicants determine the level of

awards in any year. Applications and recommendation forms are available online at: [www.finaid.caltech.edu/UpperClassMeritAwardMarch2004.html](http://www.finaid.caltech.edu/UpperClassMeritAwardMarch2004.html) or in the Financial Aid Office at 414 South Holliston Avenue, Room 110. Electronic submissions will not be accepted. **THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING COMPLETED PAPER APPLICATIONS TO THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE IS 5:00 PM, April 9, 2004.** No exceptions will be made to this deadline.

The first ever **Caltech Dance show** is less than two weeks away! The Dance Show is a chance for dancers of all types to perform on stage. For the last three years, members of the Dance Troupe have been auditioning and performing at USC, but this show will be the first one organized, directed and performed by members of the Caltech community.

The response to the call for choreographers and dancers has been amazing. An incredible diversity of

styles will be presented, from Salsa and Mambo to Bellydance and Hula. Almost every segment of the Caltech community is represented among the over 50-person cast.

The Dance Show will take place on Friday, March 12 and Saturday, March 13 at 8pm in Ramo Auditorium. Preferred seating tickets are available for a donation of \$2. They will be distributed Wed, Thurs, and Fri (3/10-3/12) from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the Red Door Cafe. Ticketholders will be seated 15 minutes before the house is opened to nonticketholders, who may also choose to donate toward next year's show.

The Caltech Dance Show is generously sponsored by the Caltech Dance Troupe, the Moore-Hufstetler Fund, the Graduate Student Council, and Campus Life and Graduate Housing offices. For more information, contact [troupe@caltech.edu](mailto:troupe@caltech.edu).

**GSC Teaching and Mentoring**

**Awards.** Each year the GSC recognizes professors for their excellence in teaching. GSC also recognizes members of the Caltech community for their outstanding mentorship, and shows appreciation to teaching assistants who put in extra effort to guide students through a class.

We need the help of the entire Caltech community to identify the bests of every academic year. Please fill out a nomination form available at the red door cafe or online at: <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~gscacad/awardinfo.html>

In particular, the mentoring award nominees need not be faculty members or TAs. The nomination deadline for this term is on Friday, March 19th. Please do not hesitate to contact Amir Sadjadpour ([amirs@its.caltech.edu](mailto:amirs@its.caltech.edu)) or Sherry Suyu ([suyu@its.caltech.edu](mailto:suyu@its.caltech.edu)) for any questions or concerns.

**Caltech Shooting Club presents:** Free firearms training at Front Sight in Las Vegas. An alumnus has donated

passes good for four days of gun training, good for anyone who didn't go last year. Courses are available in rifle, pistol, or shotgun, and normally cost \$1200. Cost to you will probably be less than \$100. Possible dates are March 12-15, April 23-26, May 7-10. Contact [coxj@its.caltech.edu](mailto:coxj@its.caltech.edu) for more information.

Interested in Applied Math in a broad sense? What is research in graduate school? And where does it lead outside of academia? **Join the new student chapter of SIAM! (Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics).** We organize events to bring together undergraduate and graduate students, from all departments, to come and hear cool talks and vital career advice. Here's a sample of our activities:

- The "Meetings on Mathematics in Industry" are big, quarterly events, where we get top mathematicians to

*Continued on Page 6, Column 4*



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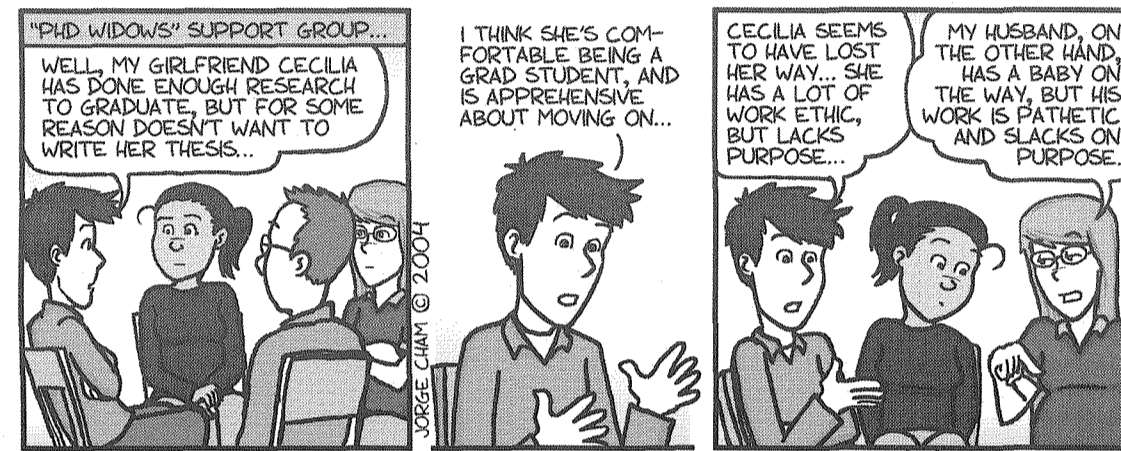
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March 18, 2004; Time: 12-1pm; Location: Women's Center located in room 265 of the Center for Student Services.

Building on "The Joy of Stress," comedian and therapist Loretta LaRoche uses her irreverent, unconventional, wacky and just plain funny style in this video, to show us how to "lighten our ways." Find humor in everyday situations and rediscover the joys of simple pleasures to help conquer the stress of life. RSVP required! To sign-up please call ext. 3221 or email: [wcenter@studaff.caltech.edu](mailto:wcenter@studaff.caltech.edu)

3) Reel Women - Dying to Be Thin  
April 8, 12:00-1:00pm. 2nd flr common area, Center for Student Services. An epidemic of eating disorders is spreading through America's youth, a contagion fanned by the media's obsession with wafer-thin celebrities. For millions of young Americans, the conflict between real and fashionable images of the body can be a matter of life or death. This video takes viewers behind the scenes at laboratories and hospitals where specialists are experimenting with new approaches to eating disorders. Lunch and drinks provided!

4) Women's Intermediate Self-Defense  
Sunday, April 18, 1-5pm. This class is for those women who have participated in the introductory workshop and would like the opportunity to deliver full force, debilitating blows to a padded assailant in a variety of simulated scenarios. Registration required! Class size is limited. All classes are taught at the Women's Center, Center for Student Services, Bldg. #86. Please contact the Women's Center for more information or to register, 395-3221 or [wcenter@studaff.caltech.edu](mailto:wcenter@studaff.caltech.edu).

The Beckman Political Internship will be available again this summer. The internship, supported by friends of Arnold O. Beckman, will pay a stipend of \$5,000. It allows a selected intern to spend the summer working in the office of a politician or a government agency and to see from the inside the process of government. The applicant is expected to make arrangements with the appropriate political persons or organizations. The internship is open to any Caltech undergraduate who intends to be a student next year. If interested, submit a proposal describing where and how you would use the stipend along with one faculty recommendation, to the Deans' Office, 210-87, or email [machang@caltech.edu](mailto:machang@caltech.edu), by MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2004.

One Act Theater (OAT) has received funding from MHF to produce evenings of one act plays this term. We need directors, actors, technical staff, and anyone who is interested in helping. If you are interested, particularly in directing (the play of your choosing), please email [oat@its.caltech.edu](mailto:oat@its.caltech.edu) and check the website <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~oat/>.

Submit to the Totem! The Totem is now accepting submissions for the 2004 edition of the literary magazine. Anyone in the Caltech community can submit their poetry, short stories, artwork and/or photography to the Totem. Please send your work by email ([totem@its.caltech.edu](mailto:totem@its.caltech.edu)), or by campus mail (MSC 292).

Women's Center Events  
1) Reel Women - Fly Girls  
March 11, 12:00-1:00pm. 2nd flr common area, Center for Student Services. During WWII, more than a thousand women signed up to fly with the U.S. military. The Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) test-piloted aircraft, ferried planes and logged 60 million miles in the air. But the opportunity to play a critical role in the war effort was abruptly canceled by politics and resentment, and it would be 30 years before women would again break the sex barrier in the skies. Lunch and drinks provided!

2) Health & Wellness Series: Humor Your Stress

# DARPA Date Approaches

By MARK WHEELER

PASADENA, Calif. -- It's do-or-die time for Bob. Next week marks the final test for the Chevrolet truck with the human nickname, the California Institute of Technology's entry in the DARPA Grand Challenge autonomous ground vehicle race scheduled for March 13.

DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, is offering a \$1 million prize to a team whose vehicle can complete an off-road course of more than 200 miles that will start somewhere near Barstow, CA and end somewhere near Las Vegas (the exact course won't be revealed until race day).

The challenge, of course, is that the 25 vehicles invited to race by DARPA (culled from an original 106 entries) will race without a driver and must be fully autonomous—not a remote-controlled vehicle driven by a student wielding a laptop at a distance, but a completely autonomous car that will drive and navigate itself. The vehicles will have to contend with such pitfalls as dirt roads and ditches, open water, rocks and boulders, underpasses, cattle guards, sandpits and their fellow competitors.

Before that race, though, Bob and the other vehicles must meet a challenge that is almost as great—a Qualification, Inspection and Demonstration (QID) test to take place at the California Speedway in Fontana. On Monday, March 8 from 2:30 to 3 p.m. and again on Wednesday, March 10, from 9:30 to 10 a.m., Bob will have to successfully navigate a mile-and-a-half-long course that will contain all the dire elements mentioned above. "We think of it as the precursor to the actual race," says Dave van Gogh, the project manager for Team Caltech.

For a year now, van Gogh has shepherd-ed between 18 and 23 Caltech undergraduates who receive academic credit for their work. Although they are receiving advice from scientists at Caltech, the Jet Propul-

sion Lab and Northrop Grumman, it is ultimately the students' responsibility for the computing hardware, software coding and designing and building Bob's mechanical infrastructure.

All of the hardware has been installed and in tests, the truck has been able to navigate from one point to another by itself. What hasn't been accomplished yet is the autonomous avoidance of obstacles, which is—obviously—critical for Bob's success. Currently, several of the students are feverishly writing additional code and rooting out programming errors in preparation for the Monday QID.

DARPA is sponsoring the challenge to encourage innovation in driverless technology, which the Department of Defense believes will be critical to future military endeavors. The idea for the race itself was suggested by former Caltech provost Steve Koonin, now on leave from the Institute. At the time he chaired the JASONS, an elite core of academic scientists that provides the federal government with advice on national security issues. DARPA had approached the group for advice on how best to advance research into autonomous vehicles.

The immediate goal of Team Caltech is to pass Monday's QID. The other primary goal, says van Gogh, has already been met—providing the students with a unique educational opportunity. "All of the students are really motivated and excited about this," he says. "That was our goal from the beginning—to create a unique learning experience for them."

The QID is free and open to the public. The California Speedway is located at 9300 Cherry Avenue in Fontana. More information on attending the QID and race can be found at <http://www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge/spectators.htm>.



Courtesy of team.caltech.edu

"Bob," the DARPA vehicle, shows off during a recent test run. The preliminary test is today at the California Speedway in Fontana.

## Sundance Winner Outlines Lessons Learned in Dignity

Continued from Page 1, Column 2

they believe in. *Real Women Have Curves* is based on her life.

The movie, which won the Dramatic Audience Award at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival, is about a first-generation Mexican-American named Ana who becomes a woman. Despite a scholarship to Columbia University, family expectations forces Ana to work in the family sewing factory. Working in the sweatshop teaches Ana a whole new world inhabited by her Latino family, very different from the privileged society her friends at school inhabit. She learns to respect and understand these hard-working Latina women who work all day sewing clothes and soon view these women as they truly are: complex women full of dignity, humor and love.

She always knew she would be a writer. In youth, she had written to cope with her ADD disorder, which she had never seen

a psychiatrist to diagnose. She started off writing stories based on her life. The movie *Real Women Have Curves* started off as play she wrote when she was 19. It was success after it was first produced in San Francisco, but it has taken eleven years for her to get it produced in L.A. because producers did not want to portray Latinos in sweatshops. But to Josefina, this is the truth and there is nothing shameful about it. These women have pride in their work and there is not shame in working all day in sweatshops.

She has gotten used to these setbacks. She has a vision of equality and acceptance, which she strives to drive our society towards through her writing. Society just needs to have the time to catch up and be ready to accept not just Latinos and women, but all groups as equal human beings full of beauty and dignity.

## Researchers Find Difference Among Primates in Cortex

By ROBERT TINDOL

PASADENA, Calif.—Everybody from the Tarzan fan to the evolutionary biologist knows that our human brain is more like a chimpanzee's than a dog's. But is our brain also more like a tiny lemur's than a lion's?

In one previously unsuspected way, the answer is yes, according to neuroscientists at the California Institute of Technology. In the current issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), graduate student Eliot Bush and his professor, John Allman, report their discovery of a basic difference between the brains of all primates, from lemurs to humans and all the flesh-eating carnivores, such as lions and tigers and bears.

The difference lies in the way the percentage of frontal cortex mass increases as the species gets larger. The frontal cortex is the portion of brain just behind the forehead that has long been associated with reasoning and other "executive" functions. In carnivores, the frontal cortex becomes proportionately larger as the entire cortex of the individual species increases in size—in other words, a lion that has a cortex twice the size of another carnivore's also has a frontal cortex twice the size.

By contrast, primates like humans and apes tend to have a frontal cortex that gets disproportionately larger as the overall cortex increases in size. This phenomenon is known as "hyperscaling," according to Bush, the lead author of the journal article.

What this says about the human relationship to the tiny lemurs of Madagascar is that the two species likely share a developmental or structural quirk, along with all the other primates, that is absent in all the carnivores, Bush explains. "The fact that humans have a large frontal cortex doesn't necessarily mean that they are special; relatively large frontal lobes have developed independently in aye-ayes among the lemurs and spider monkeys among the New World monkeys."

Bush and Allman reached their conclu-

sions by taking the substantial histological data from the comparative brain collection at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The collection, accumulated over many years by neuroscientist Wally Welker, comprises painstaking data taken from well over 100 species.

Bush and Allman's innovation was taking the University of Wisconsin data and running it through special software that allowed for volume estimations of the various structures of the brain in each species. Their results compared 43 mammals (including 25 primates and 15 carnivores), which allowed them to make very accurate estimations of the hyperscaling (or the lack thereof) in the frontal cortex.

The results show that in primates the ratio of frontal cortex to the rest of the cortex is about three times higher in a large primate than in a small one. Carnivores don't have this kind of systematic variation.

The hyperscaling mechanism is genetic and was presumably present when the primates first evolved. "Furthermore, it is probably peculiar to primates," says Allman, who is Hixon Professor of Neurobiology at Caltech.

The next step will be to look at the developmental differences between the two orders of mammals by looking at gene expression differences. Much of this data is already available through the intense efforts in recent years to acquire the complete genomes of various species. The human genome, for example, is already complete and the chimp genome is nearly so.

"We're interested in looking for genes involved in frontal cortex development. Changes in these may help explain how primates came to be different from other mammals," Bush says.

At present, the researchers have no idea what the difference is at the molecular level, but with further study they should be able to make this determination, Allman says. "It's doable."

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## Relay Team Breaks World Record In First Annual Marathon Relay

## Films Both Entertain, Teach About History

Continued from Page 1, Column 3



Courtesy of N. Pierce

Members of the Caltech Marathon Relay Team, which consisted of a mix 38 of undergraduate and graduate students, postdocs, staff, and faculty, cheer as Tamara Becher '04 carries in the baton during the final leg of the race. The team completed the marathon in 1:58:08, beating the LA marathon winner and breaking the world record for a marathon. The relay team ran at an average pace of 67.2 seconds per 400 meter lap for 105.5 laps.

## Opportunity Discovers Evidence That Water Once Inhabited Mars

By GUY WEBSTER

This image, taken by Opportunity's microscopic imager, shows a portion of the rock outcrop at Meridiani Planum, Mars, dubbed "Guadalupe."

View Opportunity images from this press release Scientists have concluded the part of Mars that NASA's Opportunity rover is exploring was soaking wet in the past.

Evidence the rover found in a rock outcrop led scientists to the conclusion. Clues from the rocks' composition, such as the presence of sulfates and the rocks' physical appearance, such as niches where crystals grew, helped make the case for a watery history.

"Liquid water once flowed through these rocks. It changed their texture and it changed their chemistry," said Dr. Steve Squyres of Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., principal investigator for the science instruments on Opportunity and its twin, Spirit. "We've been able to read the tell-tale clues the water left behind, giving us confidence in that conclusion."

Dr. James Garvin, lead scientist for Mars and lunar exploration at NASA Headquarters, Washington, said, "NASA launched the Mars Exploration Rover mission specifically to check whether at least one part of Mars ever had a persistently wet environment that could possibly have been hospitable to life. Today we have strong evidence for an exciting answer: Yes."

Opportunity has more work ahead. It will try to determine whether, besides being exposed to water after they formed, the rocks may have originally been laid down by minerals precipitating out of solution at the bottom of a salty lake or sea.

The first views Opportunity sent of its landing site in Mars' Meridiani Planum region five weeks ago delighted researchers

at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif., because of the good fortune to have the spacecraft arrive next to an exposed slice of bedrock on the inner slope of a small crater.

The robotic field geologist has spent most of the past three weeks surveying the whole outcrop and then turning back for close-up inspection of selected portions. The rover found a very high concentration of sulfur in the outcrop with its alpha particle X-ray spectrometer, which identifies chemical elements in a sample.

"The chemical form of this sulfur appears to be in magnesium, iron or other sulfate salts," said Dr. Benton Clark of Lockheed Martin Space Systems, Denver. "Elements that can form chloride or even bromide salts have also been detected."

At the same location, the rover's Mössbauer spectrometer, which identifies iron-bearing minerals, detected a hydrated iron sulfate mineral called jarosite. Germany provided both the alpha particle X-ray spectrometer and the Mössbauer spectrometer. Opportunity's miniature thermal emission spectrometer has also provided evidence for sulfates.

On Earth, rocks with as much salt as this Mars rock either have formed in water or, after formation, have been highly altered by long exposures to water. Jarosite may point to the rock's wet history having been in an acidic lake or an acidic hot springs environment.

The water evidence from the rocks' physical appearance comes in at least three categories, said Dr. John Grotzinger, sedimentary geologist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge: indentations called "vugs," spherules and crossbedding.

Pictures from the rover's panoramic camera and microscopic imager reveal the target rock, dubbed "El Capitan," is thor-

oughly pocked with indentations about a centimeter (0.4 inch) long and one-fourth or less that wide, with apparently random orientations. This distinctive texture is familiar to geologists as the sites where crystals of salt minerals form within rocks that sit in briny water. When the crystals later disappear, either by erosion or by dissolving in less-salty water, the voids left behind are called vugs and in this case they conform to the geometry of possible former evaporite minerals.

Round particles the size of BBs are embedded in the outcrop. From shape alone, these spherules might be formed from volcanic eruptions, from lofting of molten droplets by a meteor impact, or from accumulation of minerals coming out of solution inside a porous, water-soaked rock. Opportunity's observations that the spherules are not concentrated at particular layers in the outcrop weigh against a volcanic or impact origin, but do not completely rule out those origins.

Layers in the rock that lie at an angle to the main layers, a pattern called crossbedding, can result from the action of wind or water. Preliminary views by Opportunity hint the crossbedding bears hallmarks of water action, such as the small scale of the crossbedding and possible concave patterns

plotline, such as in the invention of characters. Rosenstone said he viewed this as a strength, however and did not believe it greatly affected the overall usefulness of the film as a historical medium.

"The larger discourse of history helps judge the inventions of film," said Rosenstone. Therefore, though the films may not depict reality with complete accuracy, the general interpretation of history may still be valid. Films also, while not depicting literal truth, were valuable in their interpretations through metaphorical and symbolic truths.

As time passes, the change in the interpretation of history also leads to a change in the filming of history, says Rosenstone. For example, *The Birth of a Nation*, the first great epic film of America, utilizes a racist interpretation of slavery and the Civil War which was appropriate at the time. More modern Civil War movies such as *Glory* diverge from this racism, however, to utilize a less racist perspective.

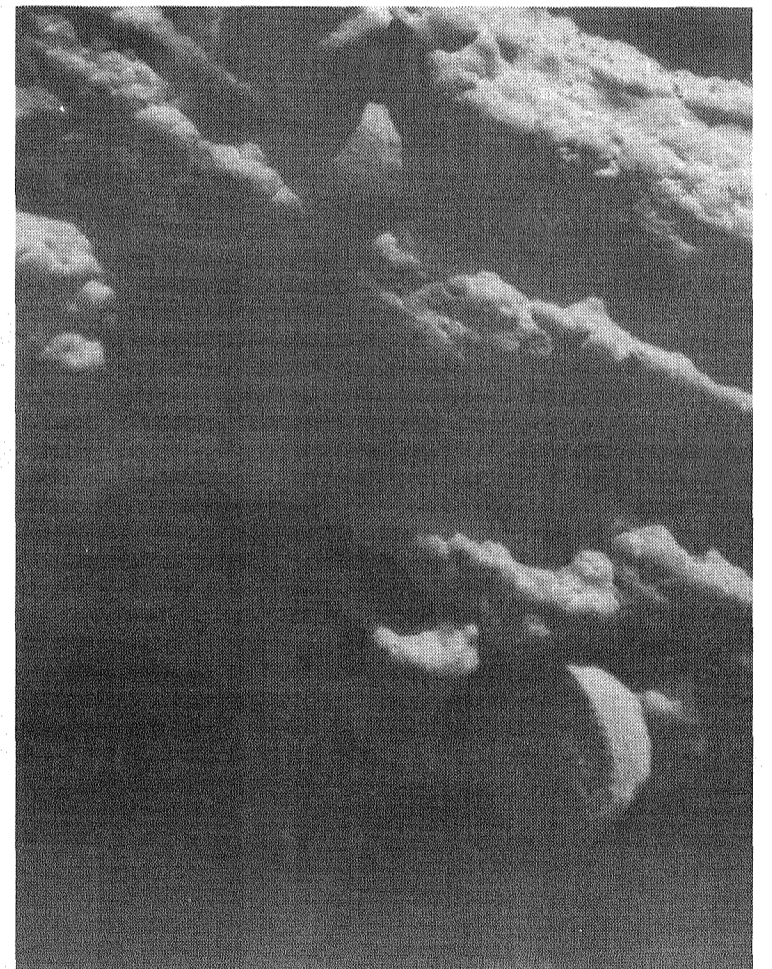
"The paradox of historical films is that they only tell truths about the past by making inventions of the past," said Rosenstone.

Rosenstone agrees that not all historical films were made as a serious discourse on history, stating that the discourse of history distinguishes films made to interpret history from films simply made to entertain.

"There is no formula for rendering judgment on historical films. It has to be done on a case to case basis," he said.

Rosenstone also states that he shares the same opinions about historical novels. While some simply concentrate on the romantic aspect of history, others deal with the political, economic and social conflicts of a time period, such as the works of Sir Walter Scott.

Rosenstone has authored half a dozen historical and biographical works such as *Mirror in the Shrine: American Encounters in Meiji Japan* and *King of Odessa*. Furthermore, he has served as the consultant or writer on Academy-Award winning films such as *Reds* and *Tango of Slaves*. He founded Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice in 1996, as well as serving as associate editor for *Film-Historia* starting from 1995.



Courtesy of marsrovers.jpl.nasa.gov

This image shows a microscopic geological feature called "Robert E" that indicates that there was once water on Mars.

formed by sinuous crestlines of underwater ridges.

The images obtained to date are not adequate for a definitive answer. So scientists plan to maneuver Opportunity closer to the features for a better look. "We have tantalizing clues and we're

planning to evaluate this possibility in the near future," Grotzinger said.

JPL, a division of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, manages the Mars Exploration Rover project for NASA's Office of Space Science, Washington.

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