



Ideas Exchanged at Student Faculty Conference

By ALEX SIEGEL

Last Tuesday students and faculty met to discuss key academic issues at the biennial Student Faculty Conference. In addition to the committees for specific academic divisions, four other committees make suggestions affecting everyone at Caltech. These four, the Honor Code, Quality of Life, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Core Curriculum Committees, presented their findings to anyone at Caltech who attended their sessions in Ramo Auditorium.

Almost all members of the Caltech community take the Honor Code very seriously. It allows students to take exams on their own schedule, collaborate on certain problem sets and take advantage of other privileges that could only exist under such a system. The Honor Code committee discusses issues related to the maintenance of the Honor Code itself. This past year the committee has discussed plans to create an Honor System Representative, a faculty member in each option who would better inform the faculty about the Honor Code. He or she would make professors more aware of the Board of Control and how it handles honor code violations. This could reduce the problem of professors' personally dealing with students who violate the Honor Code.

The committee also proposed an elected Conduct Review Committee (CRC) representative from each house. Currently the CRC handles non-academic Honor Code violations, however its only elected official is the CRC Chair. Under the new system, each house would elect a CRC representative, much as they do the Board of Control (BoC) representatives from each house and the two reps at large. The committee also assured students that the previous BoC Chair and Secretary will send details of Honor Code-related decisions and statistics about violations to the California Tech for publication.

The Honor Code Committee also outlines the House Stewardship Committee in order to improve communication between students and the housing office. It will help to define murals as separate from graffiti, a decision that each house would make individually and for which some houses already have guidelines. It will also be available to mediate conflicts over damage to the houses.

Caltech students are famous for studying hard, overloading with classes, and being bitter. The Quality of Life Committee seeks to improve upon this lifestyle. For instance, the Quality of Life committee is still discussing whether to lower the maximum number of units upperclassmen may take before needing an overload petition from 54 to 51 or even 48, but any such changes will not happen until after next year. The Academic

Policies Committee (APC) also intends to make it easier for undergraduates to get credit for doing research.

Furthermore, the Quality of Life Committee is discussing the need to set lower time limits on exams, especially during midterms. Currently, professors often give exams of six hours or longer, making it difficult for students to fit all their exams into a reasonable time period. The committee also encouraged professors to inform students how long they should work on exams when the professors set time limits at 12 or even 24, not realizing that some students will actually spend the full time on the exam. The new policy will dissuade Professors from assigning infinite time finals or midterms simultaneous with problem sets.

In order to appoint an administrator who could better handle the undergraduates' issues, the Quality of Life committee advised the creation of a Dean of Undergraduate Studies along with numerous minor changes to the administration. In order to increase student awareness of

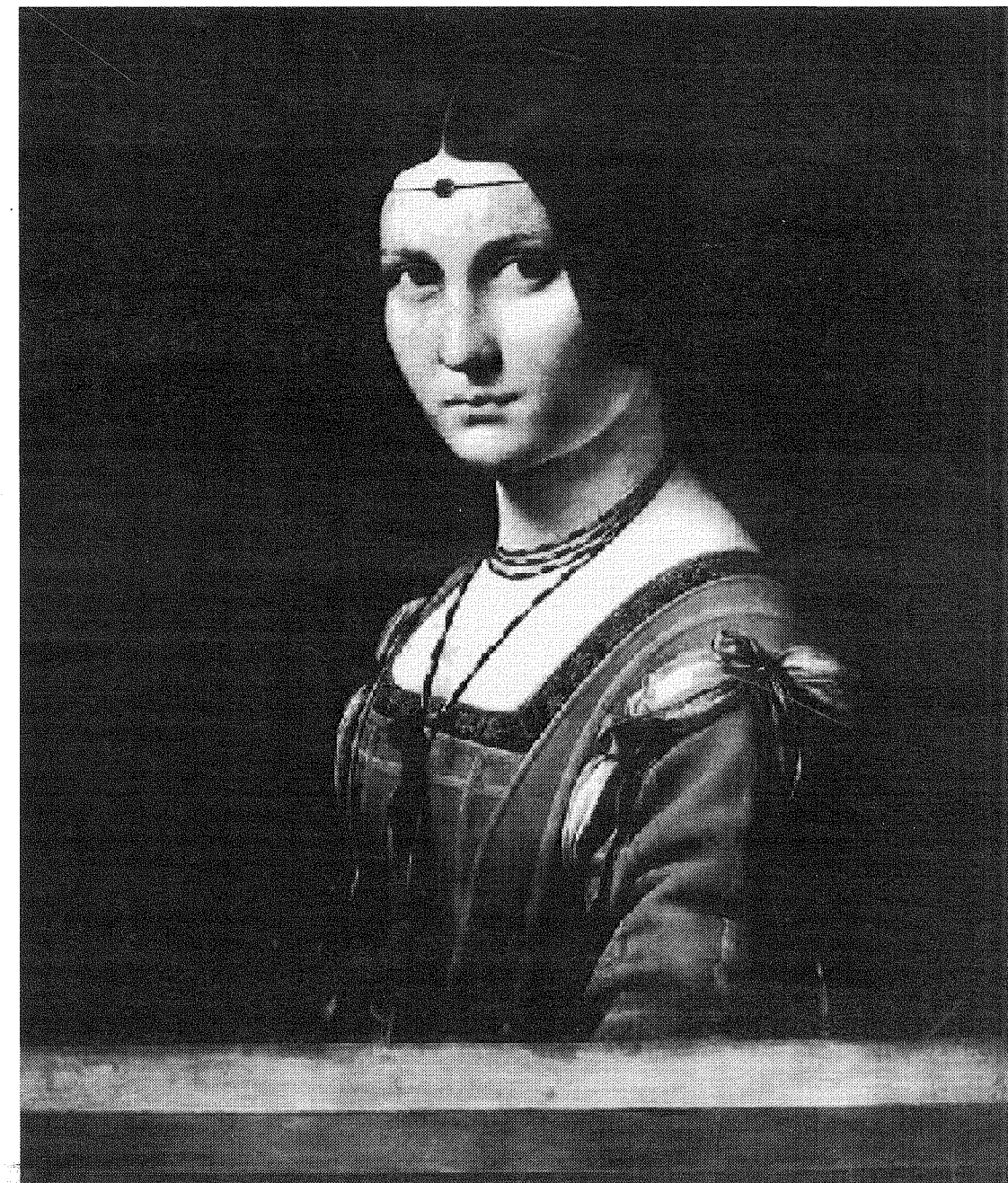
Continued on Page 4, Column 1

Bush Administration Critic Kurt Gottfried to Discuss Science, Politics at Caltech

By DEBORAH WILLIAMS-HEDGES

Cornell University professor of physics and noted science advisor Kurt Gottfried will present the third keynote address in the 2004-2005 season of the Social Activism Speaker Series at the California Institute of Technology. Gottfried is the cofounder of the Union of Concerned Scientists, a nonprofit organization that promotes scientific integrity in government policy. He will speak on the relationship between science and politics from both a historical and a current perspective. This event will take place on Tuesday, April 19, at 8 p.m., in the Beckman Institute Auditorium at Caltech. It is free and open to the public.

Gottfried has served on the Council on Foreign Relations and as a senior staff member of the European Center for Nuclear Research. He recently co-authored a report entitled Restoring Scientific Integrity in Policy Making, focused on documenting the alleged misuse of scientific research by the Bush Administration. Thousands of scientists signed statements in support of its call to action. Gottfried has written two physics textbooks and was the senior author of *The Fallacy of Star*



Courtesy of: www.abc-people.com/data/leonardov/007pic.htm

Fo' reals yo? John Brewer will discuss the dispute over the authenticity of this alleged Leonardo da Vinci painting as part of the Watson Lecture Series.

Art Battles Science in a Da Vinci Detective Story

By MARK WHEELER

In 1920, says the California Institute of Technology's John Brewer, the art dealer Joseph Duveen dismissed an alleged Leonardo da Vinci painting, "La Belle Ferronniere," as a copy or a fake. His opinion initiated a decade-long lawsuit and courtroom drama dubbed "the battle of the experts," in which the art connoisseur's eye and the tools of modern science were locked in conflict.

On Wednesday, April 13, at 8 p.m., Brewer, the Eli and Edye Broad Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences and professor of history and literature, will present his talk, "Art and Science: A Da Vinci Detective Story," in which he will discuss the changing relationship between technology and the human eye in the task of identifying and attributing great works of art. His talk is part of the ongoing Ernest C. Watson Lecture Series.

Brewer's chief areas of research interest are eighteenth-century British history and literature, the history of early-modern Europe, the history and theory of consumption, twentieth-century historiography, and contemporary issues in cultural policy. In the last few

years he has been working on a series of essays on art markets and values, including essays on forgery, reproductions, cultural patrimony, patronage, and the responsibilities of the curator. Brewer is the author of, among other works, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, and *A Sentimental Murder: Love and Madness in the Eighteenth Century*.

Caltech has offered the Watson Lecture Series since 1922, when it was conceived by the late Caltech physicist Earnest Watson as a way to explain science to the local community. Seating for this free public event in Beckman Auditorium on the Caltech campus is on a first-come, first-served basis, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Public Events at 1 (888) 2CALTECH, (626) 395-4652, or events@caltech.edu, or visit www.events.caltech.edu.

Individuals with a disability can call (626) 395-4688 (voice) or (626) 395-3700 (TDD).

All lectures will be available online at Caltech's Streaming Theater, <http://today.caltech.edu/theater>.

For more information, visit <http://sass.caltech.edu> or contact Greg Fletcher, Caltech Y, (626) 395-6163.

Bitter Caltech Lesbian



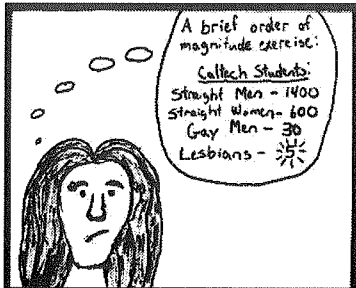
Because Dilbert Will Not Tell You How to Make Ma1 Bearable by Meng-Meng Fu

Last Tuesday, the biennial Student Faculty Conference, composed of committees of both students and faculty at Caltech, met to discuss a number of key issues. Aside from the Academic Divisions which have their own committees, there were four other committees that make suggestions affecting the entirety of Caltech. These committees, including the Honor Code Committee, the Quality of Life Committee, the Humanities and Social Sciences Committee, and the Core Curriculum Committee, presented their findings to anyone related to Caltech who was willing and able to attend their sessions in Ramo Auditorium.

Almost all members of the Caltech community take the Honor Code very seriously. It allows students to take exams on their own schedule, collaborate on certain problem sets and take advantage of a number of other privileges that could only exist under such a system. The Honor Code committee discusses issues related to the maintenance of the Honor Code itself. This past year the committee has discussed plans to create an Honor System Representative, which would be a faculty member in each option who would better inform the faculty about the Honor Code. This could raise awareness of the Board of Control and how it handles honor code violations amongst professors. This could reduce the problem of professors personally dealing with students when violations of the Honor Code occur.

The committee also proposed an elected Conduct Review Committee (CRC) representative from each house. Currently the CRC handles Honor Code violations that are not academic related, however its only elected official is the CRC Chair. Under the new system, each house would elect a CRC representative, much like the Board of Control (BoC), which has a member from each house as well as two reps at large. The committee also assured students that statistics detailing Honor Code violations and related decisions will soon be published by the previous BoC Chair and Secretary, in the Tech.

The Honor Code committee also outlines the House Stewardship committee which has been formed to improve communication between students and the housing office. They would help to define murals as separate from graffiti, a decision which would be made individually by each house though some houses already have



such provisions. They would also be available to help communication flow when damage occurs to the houses.

Caltech students are known for studying hard, overloading with classes, and generally being bitter. Whether this is true or not, the Quality of Life committee seeks to improve the lifestyles of undergraduates. One change that the Quality of Life committee is still discussing is the issue of the maximum units students can take before needing an overload petition. No official decisions have yet been made, in fact, a number of students expressed concern in regard to lowering the overload units from 54 for upperclassmen to a possible 51 or 48. At this time, it appears unlikely that any changes will be implemented for next year. The Academic Policies Committee (APC) also intends to make it easier for undergraduates to get credit for doing research.

The Quality of Life committee is also discussing the need to set lower time limits on exams, especially during midterms. Currently, professors often give six or more hour exams which make it difficult for students to fit all their exams into a reasonable amount of time. The committee also encouraged that professors inform students as to how long they are expected to work on exams when the professors set time limits at 12 or even 24 hours when they expect much less work, not realizing that some students will actually spend the full time on the exam. Infinite time exams will be strongly discouraged. Professors will also be told not to assign problem sets if they simultaneously give midterms.

In order to create an administrator that could better handle the undergraduates' issues, the Quality of Life committee advised the creation of a Dean of Undergraduate Studies along with a number of minor changes to the administration. There are plans to give students access to unofficial transcripts online. In order to increase student awareness of the "web of support" at Caltech, such as the Counseling Center or Health Ads, the committee plans to publish statistics as to how often students use these organizations, as well as providing a handbook for incoming freshmen that would provide valuable contact information. For instance, 18% of undergraduates and 20% of graduate students use the counseling center.

Addressing a number of faculty members who have complained about lower class attendance, the Quality of Life committee has toyed with ideas



that would encourage students to attend classes. One idea was to give short problems to students at the start of class. Another was to take attendance. Some even insisted that lecture notes be removed from the internet. While these ideas were not well received by the undergraduates in the auditorium, the committee also discussed more popular plans such as recommending a short course to teach professors how to teach. Perhaps a better idea, which some students have since suggested, is to let the students decide for themselves whether they need to go to a certain class or not. The idea being that if a class is taught well it will probably be attended.

There are also plans to create a better ombudsperson system in all courses. There would be a student ombudsperson in each class that could improve communication between professors and the students in their class. Students could also improve relations with faculty by inviting professors to dinners in the houses more frequently. There are also talks of planning social events for both students and faculty in each specific option as well as a plan to build a Student Center which could be finished as soon as five years from now.

Although Caltech is a science and engineering oriented school, many people feel that is important for students to be exposed to the Humanities and Social Sciences in order to get a good education. The Humanities and Social Sciences committee exists to discuss issues that affect the Humanities and Social Sciences at Caltech. In a recent survey on the ASCIT website, students were asked if they would have taken minors had they been offered from their freshmen year at Caltech. While only 161 students took the survey, 46 students said they almost certainly would have pursued an HSS minor, while 71 others said they were somewhat likely to have pursued a minor. The HSS committee, however, feels that HSS minors would take students away from the HSS majors which were created with the sole purpose in mind of being second majors. An HSS major is purposefully lighter than most of the other majors and creating minors seems to be unnecessary. Some students argued that HSS majors, as light as they are, still cannot fit their schedule. The HSS committee is also worried that minors would encourage students to limit their breadth of humanities classes so that all of them would give credit towards their minor instead of allowing students to experience different humanities. Finally, they are worried about "trophy hunting," or students



Mints

Summer Work Study:

Information and applications for 2005 Summer Work Study are available in the Financial Aid Office. If you are interested in SummerWork Study, please submit the required application as soon as possible, but no later than June 1, 2005. Your entire financial aid application must be complete by June 1, 2005 in order to be considered for Summer Work Study. If awarded, the work study funding will begin July 1, 2005.

One Act Theater:

An Evening of One Act Theater will be performed Monday, April 18th at 7:00 pm. The amphitheater outside Sherman Fairchild Library will be outfitted with lights and speakers, acting as a distinctive stage. Seating will be on the grass, so bring a blanket, chair, or be prepared to sit on the grass. The plays are completely produced by the students, and this year we will perform Fight Dreams; Left to Right; The Dumbwaiter; Oh My God, Not Another Play; and I am Herbert. Tickets are free, since the production was made possible by a generous grant from the Moore-Hufstetler Fund, the MOSH, and ASCIT. However, OAT is asking for donations so that they can produce more one act events.

looking to take minors just because it looks good on their resume even though they have no interest in the subject. The committee made it clear that if minors were to be created, it will probably not be this year. Though students and faculty on the committee could not come to a consensus on the issue of HSS minors, students in attendance strongly supported the idea and discussion on the topic lasted for nearly an hour.

Caltech students are faced with nearly two years of Core requirements in Math and Science classes that, at times, can be painful. Luckily, since all students are required to take them, they are the first classes to receive attention when a problem exists. In fact, they get their own SFC Core Curriculum committee to propose changes to core classes.

Freshmen are introduced to Caltech via Math 1a, a rigorous Calculus-based proof class. Though many students have complained about the class through the online surveys, the Core Curriculum committee feels that the point of the class is to give freshmen a wake up call that Caltech isn't an easy school. Making Math 1a easier would defeat one of the primary purposes of the class, to encourage cooperation on problem sets. Some suggestions for improving it include changing the subject to an equally difficult logic class, or giving students a printed guide detailing how to do a proof.

Students entering Caltech are assumed to have a strong background in Physics. Those who do not have such a strong background are told to enter Physics 1a Section 1, taught by Jerry Pine. The special section has its own work separate from that of Physics 1a itself. There have been numerous complaints about Physics 1a Section 1 and the Core Curriculum committee is addressing them by recommending changes to the class. The plan is to offer a separate course (like Math 8 is for Math 1a) that could allow students without a sufficient background in physics the ability to catch up.

While the curriculum of Chemistry 1a at Caltech, taught by Professor Nathan Lewis, is well organized and planned out, Chemistry 1b was fairly disorganized during this past year. The course was changed from seven weeks of "physical" chemistry and three weeks of "organic" chemistry to an equal five weeks of each. Because of this, too much curriculum needed

See Green Dragon and meet the director:

Green Dragon, showing at Caltech this week, is Timothy Bui's beautiful portrayal of South Vietnamese refugees waiting for assimilation into their new homeland, America. In 1975, refugee camps across America housed the hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese fleeing the collapse of their homeland's government. Concentrating on those at Camp Pendleton and the friendships that formed among the refugees themselves and between the refugees and the American camp officers, Bui weaves a tender tale of renewed hope and noble love in the midst of despair. A montage of elegant vignettes, Green Dragon brings enlightening attention to an often overlooked aspect of the Vietnam War.

Come this Thursday, April 21, at 7:30 pm to Baxter Lecture Hall to meet Timothy Bui himself after a screening of Green Dragon and embark on a heartwarming look at one of the world's most infamous and bloodiest wars.

Scholarship Opportunity:

The California State Society is currently accepting applications for the Bono-Capps Congressional Internship Program for the Fall 2005 term. This internship opportunity is especially appropriate for students who are interested in working in a California congressional office. The California State Society provides a stipend of up to \$2000 to the Bono-Capps interns to help defray their expenses. Students can learn more about the scholarship and get an application by going to www.cssdc.org/internship.html

The deadline for applying for the fall term is 8 July 2005.

to be covered in the first five weeks. The problem sets and exams were filled with errors due to the recent changes to the class. The committee suggests that Chemistry 1b needs a better website and an overhaul of the curriculum. Another problem is that the Organic half of Chemistry 1b lacks a textbook. There are currently plans to get permission to use some chapters of organic chemistry textbooks specifically for the Chemistry 1b class.

Math 2a is now Differential Equations while Math 2b is now Probability and Statistics. These two classes have switched positions in order for Differential Equations to be taught before Physics 2b, Quantum Mechanics. The Physics 2a class, currently split between Thermodynamics and Waves, is also under review. There are hopes that either the textbook can be changed or else that students be allowed the choice between Thermodynamics and Waves much as they have a choice between Practical and Analytical physics. Many problems would arise from such a choice and they are still being examined.

The Student Faculty Conference has made some good suggestions that can improve Caltech in the near future. It remains to be seen as to how many changes are actually put into affect, how quickly, and how effective they become. The Student Faculty Conference will meet again in 2007 to follow up on the suggestions that they made this year and to propose new ones.

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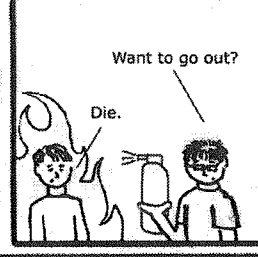
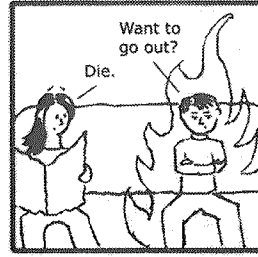
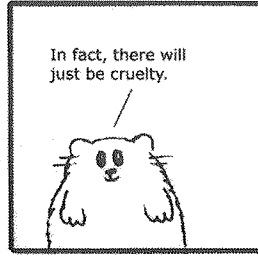
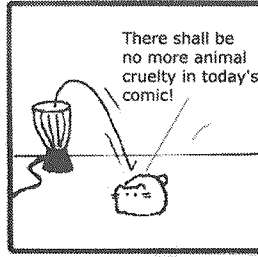
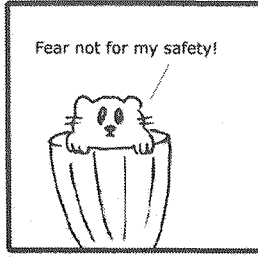
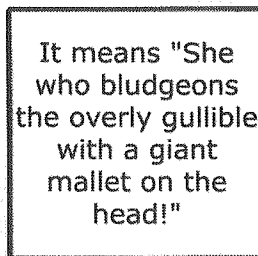
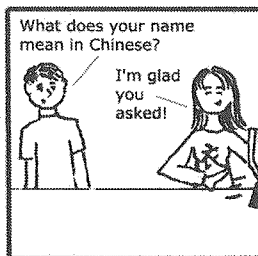
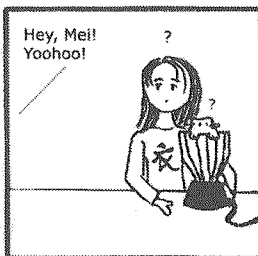
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The advertising deadline is five p.m. Friday; all advertising should be submitted electronically or as camera-ready art, but the Tech can also do simple typesetting and arrangement. All advertising inquiries should be directed to the business manager at business@tech.caltech.edu. For subscription information, please send mail to "Subscriptions."

Irrational Exuberance

Zhiyun Guan (art)
Robert Barish (text)



McGriddles Happy Hour

By JEFF PHILLIPS

The only way to end a proper night at Tech, the kind of night that keeps you up well into that second dusk the outside world considers daybreak, is to walk over to McDonald's on the corner of Holliston and Colorado sometime after five for the holy grail of morning food: that insomniac's treat, that partier's final nightcap, that munchy to end all munchies, that sweet reward for the frosh on core finishing his sets right before morning collection, the McGriddle.

In the long histories of bacon, eggs, cheese, sausage and pancakes, each of which stretches back to the dawn of recorded history, never has a combination of these appealed to the late nighter and the early riser quite like the McGriddle. 82% daily cholesterol value and 143% savory goodness can be yours in this nine-bite miracle of culinary science. When you realize that the syrup comes from flavor pockets within the McPancake wrap, you will find yourself one step closer to enlightenment.

Ask me what could top a warm McGriddle in the morning. Ask it right to the paper. Ask loud enough that the people around you start looking askance. If you are not around anyone else, fold this paper up and move out of your room. Unfold it again in a public place, within earshot of someone who gets noticeably uncomfortable around those who speak to their periodicals, and cry, "What could fucking top a warm McGriddle in the morning?"

If that nosy Neville responds, tell him to mind his own business, because you are trying to read. The only thing better than a warm McGriddle is a warm McGriddle with french fries. The trouble is that McDonald's officially starts serving fries when it stops serving breakfast. Until 10:30 AM the deep fryer brims not with generously salted fries but with relatively flavorless hash-brown-nugget-things so generic and so below the standard of real hash browns that they don't even warrant a

McPrefix.

The secret to getting a McGriddle and fries at the same time, I discovered last week, is timing. It is no secret that McDonald's makes food in advance. Arrive just after breakfast has ended, long enough after that they've started serving fries, but before the McGriddles in the supply chain are all claimed, and you might just walk away with breakfast and lunch in the same bag. Timing is everything: just like at Moe's Tavern, McDonald's McGriddle Happy Hour lasts for about a half hour.

Now that all five of you who read this whole article will be competing for those few remaining McGriddles, things will be dicey, but if you call ahead, 449-9597, McDonald's can save a McGriddle or two for you. Come in a large group with any regularity and the management might take notice and reward your demand with an official overlap, so tell your friends. You can start with that guy you freaked out by yelling at your paper.

Does Prefrosh Weekend Work?

By JONATHAN MALMAUD

The prefrosh for whom Caltech competes annually are some of the smartest students in the country and the world. After being #1 in the USA Today rankings several years ago, Caltech has seen a drop in number of applicants at the same time as Harvard's and MIT's have soared. While Caltech graduate school is certainly at the very top tier in the world, many now question the value of the undergrad school. I do not have hard statistics but it seems more people outside of Caltech now assume that MIT is the more prestigious place to go. Perhaps this is because virtually no one besides some affirmative action students are accepted to MIT but rejected from Caltech. Perhaps it is because MIT rejected 60% of the current CIT students who applied.

Granted, Caltech does prank better. But this situation of low respect, especially from prospective students, must stop. We all know that Caltech is at least as hard and probably a lot harder than any other school in the country. It has the highest concentration of world-class scientists to undergrads. It should attract the best and brightest.

Perhaps one reason is prefrosh weekend. I interviewed a pair of prefrosh who both told me they saw virtually nothing of any house except the one in which they stayed. Thus their entire view of Caltech social life hinged on a random assignment. Imagine if the current by-choice Avery students had to choose between Caltech and MIT and saw nothing but Ricketts during their pre-frosh weekend or vice-versa. Guess which college they would choose. We know that almost all science-oriented personality types will fit in somewhere here. The prefrosh do not. I would not have come here if I had stayed in one of the more eccentric houses during prefrosh weekend.

It would help tremendously to have more campus-wide social events during prefrosh weekend where the prefrosh could meet and mingle with the undergrads. Then they would find other Techers of their personality types. Both the prefrosh I talked to said the only undergrads they talked to extensively were their hosts, my roommate and me. The only events where they could have met Techers from other houses were the campus barbeque and some of the open-house events like Rickett's dry bar. Even at these, most of the prefrosh seemed too anxious to mingle extensively.

The eccentric acts put on by the houses do further harm. When rolls started flying at Lloyd dinner I saw one of my prefrosh cringe and knew at that instant that MIT just scored a huge point with him. I explained that it was a rare event and that many houses always eat dinner peacefully,

but I he silently doubted me. Before dinner he told me he was leaning towards Caltech but afterwards took the defensive, "I have to think about it."

A lot of prefrosh come to Caltech expecting to meet socially immature nerds, see something like ballistic rolls, and never understand that Tech has a range of nerdiness and social antics like any other tech school. We need not do what MIT does during their prefrosh weekend; according to my high school friends, they pretended to be homogeneously athletic, well-rounded, and normal. Tech is different. Tech is eccentric. Tech is nerdy and proud of it. But not everyone is a nerd, and we are not socially immature except when we want to be.

The other major problem was that prefrosh weekend just was too boring for some people. I overheard more than one prefrosh mention that MIT's prefrosh weekend was more entertaining. My prefrosh complained about the time lag between organized activities. Friday evening featured only basketball and mic-night, causing prefrosh to spend time chilling in the computer labs and host rooms rather than meeting new people.

Still, prefrosh weekend definitely does a lot of things right. It lets the more social prefrosh talk to a lot of different students and helps dispel a lot of myths about Caltech, especially that of the infamous ratio, which my prefroshies thought was still in the 4:1 range. It is a huge factor in getting prefrosh who click with one the houses where they eat to come here. Both of my test subjects said that they are more likely to come to Caltech after having seen prefrosh weekend. Kudos to the houses for spending the time to make their own prefrosh events.

The next step in improving prefrosh weekend is to look at the numbers. I want to see whether people who come to prefrosh weekend decide to enroll here more than those who do not. I also want to see whether certain houses are having more positive or negative effects on prefrosh than others. The ultimate victory for Caltech, though, is to enroll the best students at the expense of the rest of the tech schools for a score of MIT-1, Caltech-7.

Monday at Last

by Adam Craig
(proud supporter of magnifying glasses)

After two late issues, the Tech is finally on time, thanks to the help of our lovely new layout editor A.R. Sheive, lovely cartoonists Z. Guan and J. Reynolds, lovely student writers M. Fu, J. Phillips, A. Siegel, and J. Malmaud, our lovely press release writers M. Wheeler and D. Williams-Hedges, and a slew of lovely, attention-seeking professors and administrators. Please send Tech-related death threats to tech@uges.



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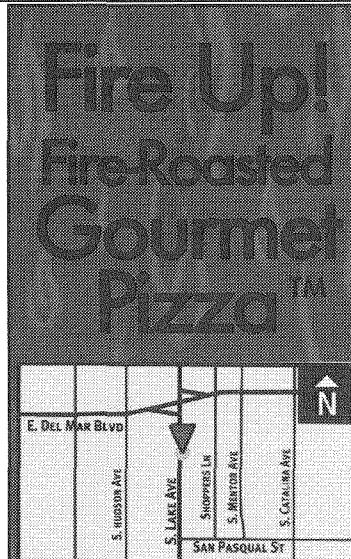
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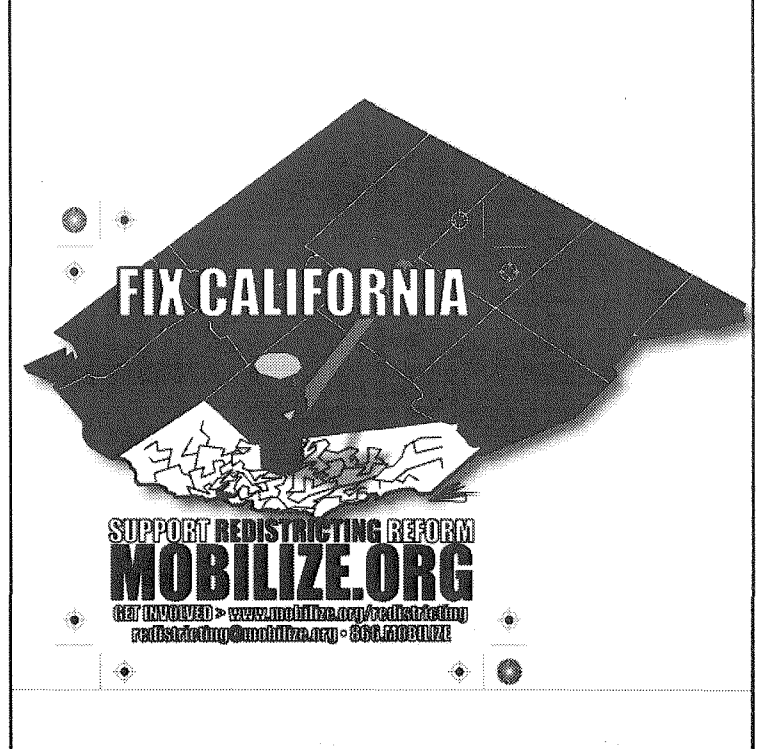
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Students, Faculty Confer

Continued from Page 1, Column 1

the “web of support” at Caltech, including the Counseling Center and Health Aids, the committee plans to publish statistics on how often students use these organizations and to provide a handbook of valuable contact information for incoming freshmen. Students will have access to unofficial transcripts online.

Addressing a number of faculty members who have complained about lower class attendance, the Quality of Life Committee has toyed with ideas that would encourage students to attend classes. One idea was to give short problems to students at the start of class. Another was to take attendance. Some even insisted that lecture notes be removed from the internet. Although undergraduates in the auditorium roundly denounced these suggestions, recommending a short course to teach professors how to teach proved more popular. Perhaps a better idea, which some students have since suggested, is to let the students decide for themselves whether they need to go to a certain class or not, relying on competent teaching to draw students to lecture.

They decided that yet another way to improve classes was to improve the ombuds system for all courses. A student ombudsperson in each class could improve communication between professors and the students in their classes. Students could also improve relations with faculty by inviting professors to dinners in the houses more frequently. The committee also considered plans for social events for both students and faculty in specific options as well as a Student Center, which could open as soon as five years from now.

Although Caltech is a science and engineering school, many people feel that a good education must include humanities and social sciences. The Humanities and Social Sciences Committee exists to ensure that a Caltech education exposes students to plenty of art, literature, language, and social studies. In a recent ASCIT web survey of 161 students, 46 students said they almost certainly would have pursued an HSS minor had they had the chance their freshman year, while 71 others said they were somewhat likely to have pursued a minor. The HSS committee, however, feels that HSS minors would take students away from the HSS majors, which are available only as second majors and, as such, are already purposefully lighter than most of the other majors. Some students argued that HSS majors, as light as they are, still cannot fit their schedules. The HSS committee also worries that minors would encourage students to limit their breadth of humanities classes to those that would give credit towards their minors instead of experiencing different humanities. Finally, they worry about “trophy hunting” students who would take minors just because it looks good but who would have no interest in the subject. The committee made it clear that minors will probably not be available this year.

Caltech students face nearly two years of Core requirements

in sometimes grueling Math and Science classes. Luckily, since all students must take them, the Core Curriculum Committee promptly assesses any problems and proposes changes to make the core classes bearable.

Freshmen get their first taste of Caltech via Math1a, a rigorous, Calculus-based proof class. Though many students have complained about the class through the online surveys, the Core Curriculum committee feels that the point of the class is to show freshmen how challenging Caltech courses can be. Some suggestions include changing it to an equally difficult logic class and giving students a guide detailing how to write a proof.

Students entering Caltech typically have a strong background in Physics. Those who do not have such a strong background enter Physics 1a Section 1, Jerry Pine’s section. The special section has its own work separate from that of Physics 1a itself. In response to complaints about section 1, the CCC has proposed a separate course in the spirit of Math 8 that could allow students to catch up to the level of physics they need for Ph1a.

While the committee lauded Professor Nathan Lewis’ organization of the curriculum of Chemistry 1a, it took steps to ameliorate the roiling chaos of this past year’s Chemistry 1b. Instead of seven weeks of “physical” chemistry and three weeks of “organic” chemistry, the course covered five weeks of each. Because of this, the lectures crammed too much information into the first five weeks, and recent changes to the class resulted in many errors in homework sets and exams. The committee suggests that Chemistry 1b needs a better website and an overhaul of the curriculum. Another problem is that the Organic half of Chemistry 1b lacks a textbook. The committee plans to get permission to use some chapters of organic chemistry textbooks specifically for the Chemistry 1b class.

Math 2a is now Differential Equations while Math 2b is now Probability and Statistics. These two classes have switched positions so that students can learn Differential Equations before taking Physics 2b, Quantum Mechanics. The committee will also review Physics 2a, currently covering both Thermodynamics and Waves. Hopefully, either the course will have a new textbook that better fits the curriculum or else students will get to choose between Thermodynamics and Waves much as they choose between Practical and Analytical physics. Many problems would arise from such a choice, and the committee is still examining them.

The Student Faculty Conference has made some good suggestions that can improve Caltech in the near future, but how many of these changes happen, how quickly, and how effective they become are all open questions. The Student Faculty Conference will meet again in 2007 to follow up on the suggestions that they made this year and to propose new ones.

Blacker Interhouse Party Inspires Student to Write Article for the Tech

By MAYRA H. SHEIKH

Blacker House’s M.C. Escher themed interhouse on Saturday April 9th was probably the most successful Blacker party in four years (since Egyptian Interhouse, 2001). Officially the party began at 9pm and by 10pm the dance floor was packed! DJ Petey Pie played a lively mix of dance music that kept people going past 2 a.m. when the party was officially supposed to shut down. However, the bar was closed at 2 a.m., as promised by security. Hundreds attended and admired the clever ways in which the moles made M.C Escher’s bizarre, impossible paintings into a fantastic party. For those who missed the party, or didn’t manage to catch all the details, you will feel like you were there.

Scaffolding with steps leading up to the tree house in Blacker’s courtyard greeted guests, from the left, as they entered the party through the Ricketts House. The tree house was originally constructed for Post-Apocalyptic Interhouse, 2002; it was stripped and parts were repaired for use this year. Staircases mimicking the painting “Relativity,” complete with sideways stairs and an M.C. Escher manikin dressed in “Blacker Wear,” lead up to the tree house from Blacker Breezeway. Unfortunately, Safety did not allow for use of the amazing staircases, brainchild of Drew Helstley, due to too small a tread width. The stairs were narrow and banned in favor of keeping potentially inebriated or high-heeled attendees alive.

As always, Blacker’s courtyard was flooded and the dance floor was above water. The dance floor was painted with a tessellating pattern of green, black, and white lizards, appropriately so since the dance floor was in the shape of a giant lizard, which had a paper mache head and feet. The dance floor was lit from below, by replacing a few lizards with plexi-glass and pacing light bulbs underneath. Freshman Keegan McAllister is to thank for much of the clever lighting at the party. Above the dance floor was a sliver origami decoration with blue lighting from the inside.

Speaking of origami, the Blacker dining hall ceiling has hundreds of cranes and other impossible looking origami decorations. Also hanging from the ceiling was a human sized metal mobius strip with ants crawling over it. Blacker alumnus, Nate Austen, class of 2002, welded the metal decoration and made the ants from huge nuts and appropriately shaped pieces of metal. The dining hall was also the residence of the bar, where three bartenders served drinks and socialized with the guests. A table with non-alcoholic drinks was close by. Across from the bar was table setup for milkshakes, generously provided for by Blacker’s RAs, John and Amanda Bender.

A fabricated room with paper walls and ceiling is what could be seen of Blacker lounge from the dining hall entrance. A table setup with snack food, including mobius strip, checkered, and other themed and non-themed items, much of it baked by Blacker members, was in the corner

of the room. Proceeding further through the lounge, guests were amazed to find that they were in another paper room, but this room was lying on its side. The table was suspended from the wall, the couch was sideways, the light switch was on the ceiling, and the mattresses were on the floor. The sideways room provided much amusement and definitely amazed the non-sober students. The exit from the lounge was across from a tunnel, metallic and lighted on the inside.

Overall the party was magnificent and was an enjoyable night for most who attended.

ASCIT Minutes April 14, 2005

By PARVATHY MENON

Present: Warner Leedy, Peter Foley, Dima Kerna-tootired-tospellname-skiy, Meng Meng Fu, Michelle Wyatt, Todd Gingrich, Parvathy Menon
Introduction:

1. Call to Order, 5:11 PM
2. Warner announces his recommendations for the ASCIT ExComm – himself, Corinna Zy-

gourakic, Damien, Will Coulter, Lisa Seeman, David DiCato, Nick Hutz (as chair of committee). We talk about whether representation from all 7 houses (or lack of) is an issue and after thorough discussion, we vote.

Vote: 6-0-0 (approved)

3. Staff Awards to be decided and done tonight by the BoD.

4. Warner and Dima tell us that Midnight Donuts will be happening on Thursday night because of PreFrosh weekend – the BoD prepares to carry ridiculously heavy tables from Fleming at 11:20pm.

5. Warner reminds us that the Club Fair is occurring on Saturday afternoon from 3:30 to 5pm for all the Prefrosh to be exposed to the campus clubs. ASCIT will have a table as well... and to keep it fresh and hot, Warner promises mixing and Digga-digga-DJ-joy as well.

6. As the wind brushes her hair aside, Michelle Wyatt reminds us that the Honor Code handbook revisions are under way and that BOC by-laws need to be submitted by May 16th to be included in print.

7. Overcome with the intensity of the ASCIT meeting, Peter Foley fully staples his index finger. Brief trauma ensues.

8. Parvathy reminds the hot BoD and Caltech citizens that the Club Budget Meeting is to be held this coming Sunday (end of Prefrosh weekend) at Brennen Conference Room from 6pm until 11pm.

9. Todd confesses that he has more money than he knows what to do with... thus, he plans to start a Prank Club.

10. Peter reveals that the ASCIT/house dues next academic year is going to be very different than what currently occurs – fees will be paid as part of tuition. Details to come.

Meeting adjourned 5:55 PM.

You too should be vegetarian, Parvathy Menon



This is a hasty rendition of an ad made by a young Stephen King when he worked for the UMaine newspaper. Stephen King is a scary man, he has a shotgun, and probably hasn’t bathed for days. You should probably listen to him.

We are currently accepting anything that’s fit to print. Articles should be in plain text or Word docs with single spaces between sentences. Images should be jpegs.

Email questions or submissions to
tech@tech.caltech.edu

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