# The California Tech

tech@caltech.edu

Volume CVIII, Number 27 | Pasadena, California | MAY 7, 2007


## Chameau talks on teaching

BY MARISSA CEVALLOS

President Jean-Lou Chameau suggested faculty peer pressure as a driving force encourage "not-so-great" teachers to improve their lecturing skills, at a Q&A session on effective teaching last Tuesday.

Chameau challenged the assumption that strong research universities like Caltech are necessarily weak in teaching. He argued that while research is an important supplement to classroom teaching, teachers can bring students back to lecture halls by taking advice from faculty and student evaluations, along with inviting colleagues to attend and criticize lectures.

"You get the same feeling from great teaching as when you're reading a great novel," said Chameau. "You cannot wait to get back to it. This is the experience a great educator can give you."

But the audience wanted to know whether "bad" teachers actually receive an administrative slap on the wrist for failing to improve. The answer, according to a few professors near the front row, is that questionable teaching is policed within the department, not Institute-wide.

Physics chair Tom Tombrello said his department is particularly active in evaluating teaching performance. In fact, Tombrello himself was once heavily criticized by his students and his superiors that he was doing a poor job lecturing in a particular class.

"I was getting constant feedback," said Tombrello while he was trying to figure out how his students wanted him to teach.

By the end of that year, Tombrello won a teaching award.

Chameau pointed to similar anecdotes to demonstrate that even the worst lecturers are capable of turning around their teaching style with a little help from their colleagues.

But a few audience members were unconvinced that Caltech makes teaching a priority. Chameau had to admit to one questioner that teaching is given a "limited" priority when hiring new faculty, but the ability to present research to small groups of people is "a major part" in the hiring process. However, the hiring of TA's varies by department. For example, according to a few faculty members in the audience, chemistry tends to stick first year TA's with teaching positions, while chemical engineering has a stricter hiring policy.

Undergrads took the spotlight for a few minutes when an audience member asked specifically

Please see TEACHING, page 3

# ASCIT proposes new Honor Chair

### Position would relieve duties of ASCIT Vice President, currently also the BoC Chair

BY RAM KANDASAMY

ASCIT is looking to relieve the responsibilities of the Vice President by creating a new position called the Honor Chair that would increase communication between the Board of Control (BoC) and the Conduct Review Committee (CRC).

But before they can change the bylaws, they have to get the approval from 2/3 of voting students next Monday.

The proposed changes to the bylaws have already passed unanimously through the first round of voting amongst ASCIT officers. The major change in the proposal is to relieve the burden on the position of ASCIT VP, which is currently responsible for campus-wide Honor Corde policy regarding undergrads. Current ASCIT VP Mike Grinolds said, "Currently, the job of VP involves 20 to 25 hours a week of work. It is hard to find the time to handle the responsibilities well, so this change to the bylaws will distribute duties among more people."

The changes would then have the VP be the Honor Chair, who would "represent the honor code to students, faculty, and administration", and have a separate BoC chair to handle BoC cases.

*For the ASCIT BoD explanation of the proposed changes, see Opinion, page 2*

Photo by Jonathan Tsai

**Chris Gonzales, Jean Sun, and Mike Grinolds discuss the proposed bylaw changes.**

This change has far-reaching consequences. ASCIT President Chris Gonzales said, "This change will help in education about the Honor Code. It will also allow for more student input into cases and more published statistics on the BoC that will help demystify the process." Grinolds added, "There is also a seeming lack of parity between the BoC and the CRC (Conduct Review Committee). With this new restructuring, the Honor Chair would have access to both BoC and CRC cases, uniting the two committees that handle academic violations and non-academic violations, respectively." Both agreed that the change would hopefully result in greater transparency regarding the BoC process and the CRC process.

With respect to Honor Code education, Grinolds said," The new position of Honor Chair

Please see HONOR CHAIR, page 3

# Faculty members elected to NAS

BY SARA MCBRIDE

Four Caltech faculty members were named last week to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the private organization of scientists and engineers dedicated to the furtherance of science and its use for the general welfare.

The new NAS members are David Anderson (Biology), William L. Johnson (Engineering and Applied Science), Charles R. Plott (Economics & Political Science), and Mark B. Wise (High Energy Physics).

Caltech holds one of the highest percentages of NAS members from permanent faculty. At 18%, Caltech beat MIT (only 13%), Scripps Research Institute (5%), UCLA (1%), and most other major research institutions. To become a member of the NAS, one is nominated by one or more of his/her colleagues who are already members of the NAS. David Anderson sums up the nomination and election process: "Apparently it is quite complicated, requiring several successive rounds of voting, and can take several years."

The NAS consists of only 2000 scientists, and each member is meant to serve as a role model for defining excellence in science for the next generation of scientists.

The NAS operates in cooperation with two other sister organizations, the National Academy of Engineering and the Institute of Medicine, which provide extensive policy advice to our national and state governments. The issues addressed range from stem cell research to the dangers of arsenic in drinking water and of future climate change.

Caltech, with now 76 members and 3 trustees in the National Academy of Science, is highly influential over public policy. Mark Wise, who discovered heavy quark-mass expansion and heavy quark symmetry in quantum chromodynamics, wants to encourage the government's "continued support for the parts of science that don't have any obvious practical applications but are still important for understanding what the laws of nature are and what they imply."

Charles Plott is the only economist elected the NAS this year. His research areas are the behavioral foundations of economics and political science, with special regard to laboratory experimental methods. Plott says "Because economics has such broad applications, the scientific results find themselves in applications immediately. So we have the thrill of seeing ideas emerge from the most basic of questions and become transformed into field level applications."

William Johnson's research includes studies of metallic materials including liquid alloys, bulk metallic glasses, nanostructure metals and metal-matrix composites. He also works on applications of metallic glasses for structural materials in sporting goods, aircraft, military hardware, and other objects for which custom-designed characteristics are an advantage. In a future of oil shortages and increased travel, both in and out of our planet's atmosphere, liquid alloys may be seen in much more than golf clubs and tennis rackets.

David Anderson's work led to the identification of stem cells in the embryonic nervous system. Not only does he study the neuronal circuits involved in fear, but he has some fears of his own which he's eager to make known to our government.

"The biomedical research enterprise is one of the most precious and valuable resources that this country possesses. It has led, among other things, to the discovery of cancer genes, the identification of the AIDS virus, the development of new drugs to treat heart disease, and to the sequence of the human genome. Over the last few years the NIH budget has been progressively cut, for the first time in decades, primarily due to the cost of the Iraq war. These funding cutbacks put the continued vitality and productivity of this research enterprise at great risk – not just now, but po-

Please see ACADEMY, page 5

Ultimate Frisbee hits regionals

Page 4

## In This Issue



Conference traveler recommends Tuscany

Page 6

# Why Caltech needs to restructure its student government

## *Proposed bylaw changes split BoC Chair from ASCIT VP, create "Honor Chair". Why?*

**BY JEAN SUN, MIKE GRINOLDS, AND CHRIS GONZALES**

ASCIT bylaw changes. You're probably heard rumors about how they're a pain in the ass. So why are we going to the trouble of stirring up a campus-wide vote to get these changes (which spans 4 or 5 articles, no less) to pass?

All the revisions in this round of voting reflect a single change in the structure of the BoD: what was once the joint BoC Chair/ASCIT Vice President position will be split into two positions held by two different people. I won't go into the practical advantages of this (e.g., it frees up more time, creates more oversight, etc.) because they're self-explanatory. Rather, I'll briefly explain the philosophical necessity of the change, and why it impacts the student body as a whole.

First, the BoC Chair and ASCIT Vice President positions entail completely different responsibilities. The former deals strictly with Honor Code violations—a non-trivial commitment that can amount to 30 hours or more of casework a week. The latter, on the other hand, deals with the Honor System as a whole. This means that, more often than not, the Vice President must handle issues outside of the BoC's jurisdiction involving people who are not undergrads. The VP must also think about how well the different parts of the Honor System (the BoC, CRC, Routing Committee, education, administration, etc.) are working together. Having the BoC Chair also act as the VP thus constitutes a blatant conflict of interest.

*"The Honor Chair position...makes someone directly responsible for improving the Honor System."*

More importantly, however, one student simply cannot fulfill these two completely different sets of duties without being forced to sacrifice some part of one for the other. For something as central to Caltech as the Honor Code, this should not be acceptable.

Secondly, the BoC Chair is only familiar with the academic aspect of the Honor Code. However, a large part of what makes Caltech's Honor Code unique is that it applies to much more than just cheating in the classroom. The current system thus results in under-representation of all non-academic issues. It also leads to confusion about where the line between the Honor Code and institute policy should be drawn. The Honor Chair, who will participate in reviewing both BoC (academic) and CRC (nonacademic) cases, can finally bring these two sides of the Honor Code together.

Finally, and most importantly, the Honor Chair position will increase student input in making decisions that impact the whole campus. It also makes someone directly responsible for improving the Honor System. As witnessed in previous Student Faculty Conferences, for instance, good recommendations often surface (lengthen Spring Break, improve the advising system, do something with the TQFRs), but unless someone spearheads the effort to implement these changes, they'll simply never happen. Ultimately, then, these bylaw changes will set up the means by which students can genuinely improve how the Honor Code is implemented, taught, and enforced at Caltech.

# Learn lesson from MIT scandal

**BY BENJAMIN GOLUB**

When Marilee Jones, the Dean of Admissions at MIT, resigned recently amid revelations that she had lied about her scientific degrees on her job application 28 years ago, some were quick with venomous comments linking her personal failure with larger questions about her institution and the admissions process she led. One poster on the web discussion forum CollegeConfidential wrote, "[W]e now know why MIT relied so much upon subjective criteria [as] opposed to objective criteria in admissions, … why MIT so warmly welcomes women, and has a 30% female admissions rate compared to a 10% male admissions rate. Marilee Jones set it up so that the ideal applicant is… herself -- a female with average objective credentials."

Certainly, Jones guided a change in the admissions process, reducing the emphasis on high achievement in difficult science courses and exams and moving to a more holistic evaluation. It has become a big boost to be a member of an underrepresented minority group. Women are now admitted at substantially higher rates than men to balance the incoming classes' gender ratios. Quirky non-science activities are sometimes valued as highly as science competitions. To some of those who prefer Caltech's more "meritocratic", numbers-driven system, the evolution of MIT admissions seems outrageous and wrongheaded, and they are glad to see Jones punished. What better irony than having the flakiness of the process reflected in its leader? In Jones' fraud, they feel a vindication.

This view is wrong for several reasons. First, few of us are without sin, and rejoicing at another's failure seems unseemly to me. Second, many very legitimately credentialed people advocated and implemented the same policies that Jones did, and so it makes little sense to link her own background to these policies so tightly. Finally, to paraphrase a line from When Harry Met Sally, perhaps we should have what MIT is having. After all, the school slaughters Caltech by a margin of about 3-to-1 in competing for students admitted to both places, and thousands of people are applying to MIT who don't even consider Caltech. It is hard to escape the conclusion that, professionally, Jones was not a failure but a resounding success in increasing the attraction of her school for the best students in the country – and at beating Caltech at the admissions game.

*To some of those who prefer Caltech's more "meritocratic", numbers-driven system, the evolution of MIT admissions seems outrageous and wrongheaded, and they are glad to see Jones punished.*

That is what my head tells me, but my heart is elsewhere. There is something deeply unsettling about the gates of such a prestigious scientific institute being guarded by a person who probably could not tell a differential equation apart from a chemical one. After all, MIT justified many of its counterintuitive admissions results based on subjective evaluations. When she admitted students – often women and minorities – with low scores or grades, Jones defended the decisions by emphasizing the ineffable portents of promise that she saw in the students. But, for my money, a nonscientist cannot distinguish scientific passion from a goat's behind, just as a musical novice cannot competently judge a Juilliard applicant's audition for nuance and spirit. MIT's process certainly suffered because of her leadership, though I find no joy in this.

For me, the main lesson of the Jones case is that people making subjective decisions about potential scientists should have scientific credentials that would be very hard to falsify – that is, they should be practicing, publishing scientists. Caltech is the major university that comes closest to this ideal. But we must couple our virtues with rhetorical force if we are not to be swept aside by competitors with less careful and serious practices. In addition to winning on ideals, we should also win in the only way that really matters – in the market. Ultimately, it is Caltech's duty to lead the scientific community to an undergraduate admissions philosophy that has both a heart and a head.

# The Caltech Myth #2

## *What makes a real scientific education, and does Tech have it -- or have we lost our flexibility?*

**BY CRAIG MONTUORI**

The second part of Joe Rhodes's "Caltech Myth" series, which ran on 16 May 1968, asks the question, "Why should any undergraduate come to Caltech?" mentioning that both the 'troll' and the 'well-rounded individual' have better options elsewhere. While this, being rather demeaning to students at Tech and Tech as an institute, provoked the majority of responses, I feel his real question is a reasonable one: What is a scientific education? Is it merely scientific courses, like Tech seems to assume, or is it more?

Tech takes the standard scientific curriculum, compresses it, and adds more courses that many other colleges only briefly touch on in even their graduate curriculum. Additionally, the Institute encourages undergrads to conduct research as part of research teams that other colleges could only dream of having work there. But Joe felt that due to the heavy workload from our intense curriculum, people didn't have enough time to explore their own interests. As he says, "updating our curriculum should not be simply a matter of shifting the courses back one year and encouraging seniors to take more graduate courses." These days, that still applies, if not even more so.

Note also that this was shortly before the SURF program was set up (Thanks, Perpalls). However, right around this time Joe started the ASCIT Research Project (ARP) on the LA smog phenomenon, which many Techers participated in, and it received a $68k grant from the National Air Pollution Control Administration (26 September 1968). Since then, people have been encouraged to fill up their entire year with schoolwork and research. Joe argued that the constant drudge of work inevitably ground away at the passion that Tech looks for in their students.

I've heard a lot that since the average Tech lecturer isn't all that helpful, what Tech teaches (through trial by fire) is how to think, how to develop a path from point A to point B, only knowing first principles. Joe says that to encourage that, students should be allowed to have greater control over their curriculum, and while it's true that over past decades, the required units to get a degree have slowly but surely shrunk, everyone in a major still goes through essentially the same path to get a degree. The only exception is the humanities and social sciences requirement, which can be mixed and matched to one's heart's content. Is there any reason more aspects of the curriculum can't be like that?

Core is certainly necessary, as are certain requirements for every major. But in the physics major, there is a listing for 54 units of "physics classes," which seems to indicate allowing for concentration in an interest or dabbling to find one. Compare this to the E&AS (Aero) major, which has a long list of required classes, all of which need to be taken. Why not allow for time for students to "actively engage in intellectual dialogue with other students as well as professors" to complement the rigorous workload?

I tend to agree with Joe in saying that a scientific education is more than the sets we complete and the classes we take. The Houses do a great job in promoting social growth in frosh, and the Houses provide social events for fun times every so often. On the other hand, I feel that people ignore the outside world, and many want to lock themselves away in the proverbial ivory towers. It seems most just want to get their work done and get their degree, without feeling much of a need to improve the school during their time here. I wouldn't exactly call it apathy, because when people who are complaining about something figure out who to talk to about a problem, they often do.

I'll close this week's installment by calling for the Curriculum Committee to give students greater freedom in choosing what they learn here, and to attempt to institutionalize the teaching of analytic thinking that students tend to learn here. For example, I've spoken with alumni who say that Tech has gotten easier since they were here in the 60s or 70s. They say that homework sets were impossible to complete or included unsolved problems from current research, but that it was okay, because professors would review the sets and teach the thought process behind approaching the problems. We don't have anything like that today, and until we figure out how to approach the unsolved problem, usually on our own, we really don't make very good scientists.

The California Tech

Caltech 40-58, Pasadena, CA 91125
advertising e-mail: *business@caltech.edu*
editorial e-mail: *tech@caltech.edu*

VOLUME CVIII, NUMBER 27

Marissa Cevallos
*Editor-in-Chief*

Kimberley Ho
*Business Manager*

Chandra Barnett
*Circulation*

Matt Glassman
*Photography Editor*

Valerie Syverson
Sonia Tikoo
Yang Yang
*Layout Editors*

Evans Boney
Marissa Cevallos
Andrea Dubin
Mark Eichenlaub
Hamilton Falk
Leighland Feinman
Matt Glassman
Anna Hiszpanski
Robert Karl
Cindy Ko
Natalya Kostandova
Radhika Marathe
Harold Martin
Sara McBride
Craig Montuori
Vibha Laljani
Harrison Stein
Valerie Syverson
Sonia Tikoo
Jonathan Tsai
*Staff*

Dr. Gary Libman
*Advisor*

*The Tech* is published weekly except during vacation and examination periods by the Associated Students of the California Institute of Technology, Inc. The opinions expressed herein are strictly those of the authors and advertisers.

Letters and submissions are welcome; e-mail submissions to *tech@caltech.edu* as *plain-text* attachments, including the author's name, by Friday of the week before publication. *The Tech* does accept anonymous contributions. The editors reserve the right to edit and abridge all submissions for any reason. All written work remains property of its author.

The advertising deadline is 5 PM 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@caltech.edu*. For subscription information, please send mail to "Subscriptions."

*ASCIT Minutes: May 2, 2007*

# Security reportedly charges

Present: Chris Gonzales, Mike Grinolds, Andrea Dubin, Ekta Bhojwani, Patrick Herring, Daryl Coleman, Zack Higbee
Absent: Mike Woods, Angela Zah, Caleb Ng
Guests: Anthony Chong, Craig Montuori, RJ Krom, Karen Wang

*Funding Requests
-Anthony Chong requests money for the Ruddock frosh party. They didn't anticipate that they would have to pay for security. He requests $200. We don't fund other frosh parties or Christmas parties and don't have the money to fund all the houses for a second party. It was suggested that they could ask for money from Tom Mannion. Mike Woods asked why they are charging for security now and haven't in the past, but nobody had an answer. Anthony also asks to borrow the ASCIT speakers. He will contact Ekta about them.
-RJ requests money for men's ultimate frisbeee. They played in sectionals and placed to go to regionals ($250 entry fee). They are already $400 in debt and paying out of their own pockets. They would like $650 or $700 to reimburse tournament fees. They sill create a typed up budget outlining how much was spent.

*Bylaw changes
-Vote to change the bylaws. Approved (6/0/0). The changes will go into the Tech and a vote will be taken of all undergraduates. We need 2/3 of voting members to approve the changes in order to pass.

*ARC
-Caleb is looking for anyone who would be interested in being interim ARC chair first term next year. If you are interested, please contact arc@donut.caltech.edu

Andrea Dubin
ASCIT Secretary

*The Tech publishes ASCIT BoD minutes every week as a service to the student body, as specified in the ASCIT constitution. The minutes are contributed by the ASCIT secretary (Andrea Dubin).*

# Honor Code survey proves productive

HONOR CHAIR, FROM PAGE 1

would be better able to focus on educating the students on the Honor Code." A specific concern was that graduate students and some faculty were not familiar with some of the conventions of the Honor Code. Grinolds mentioned situations in which TAs might suspect cheating and accuse a student, when it would be correct to report this to the BoC.

The restructuring would also allow the Honor Chair to appoint someone to interact directly with faculty representatives on each option. Grinolds said, "Having faculty representatives for each case would provide more insight into the case because we would be better able to understand the situation from the perspective of the accused."

For example, if a student was taking a graduate level math course and was BoCed, a faculty representative would help the BoC officers understand the context of the situation.

The changes were stimulated by an Honor Code survey done last year. Jean Sun, who distributed this survey in spring of 2006, said, "Someone brought up the idea to relieve the burden on the Vice President and reorganize the BoC, and I was surprised that no one had brought it up before! It make a lot of sense." The survey had an 82% overall response rate, and a majority of the students who took the survey also wanted these changes to happen. From there, the idea had to pass through the Dean's, the BoC, and the ASCIT BoD, which it did successfully. Finally, it was brought up to the student body as a part of the Honor Code presentation at the SFC (Student-Faculty Conference) last month.

A concern about this proposal, however, was that if the task of Honor Chair and BoC Chair were separated, that one of the two positions may not have first-hand experience with working on BoC cases. Sun said, "We thought about how to avoid that, and we decided to tie both into the review process. When we give regular responsibilities to both, it also allows for more student input."

This proposal still needs to go through another round of voting, which will be in the coming weeks. Gonzales ended by saying, "The part about the changes that will probably matter the most to people is that the Honor Chair position allows for additional student over-

# Students on good teaching

TEACHING, FROM PAGE 1

what is wrong with Caltech teaching. Jean Sun, senior in biology, answered that unorganized teachers are a hindrance to learning.

"Some of the professors are more 'together'," said Sun. "But some give you midterms back after Drop Day."

IHC Chair Mike Woods said that "a significant portion of Caltech undergrads exist from problem set to problem set," and that Caltech could take steps to reduce unit loads and add more creative research to the curriculum.

Chameau agreed that Caltech should emphasize one on one research, its strong point. "We should make sure smallness means something."

The lecture is fifth in a series organized by CPET, the Caltech Project for Effective Teaching. Said organizer Mary Dunlop, a graduate student in Control and Dynamical Systems, "These lectures are to facilitate discussion. There are no immediate plans to put this information into the woodwork, but it's important that people talk about it."

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Kevin Sites, Tuesday, May 8, 7:30, Ramo Auditorium

As one of the world's most respected war correspondents, Kevin Sites has spent the past five years covering global war and disaster for several national networks. Sites helped pioneer solo journalism, working completely alone, traveling, and reporting without a crew. As a solo journalist ("SoJo"), Sites carries a backpack of portable digital technology to shoot, write, edit, and transmit multimedia reports.

His past assignments have brought him to nearly every region of the world, including the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe.

As Yahoo!'s first news correspondent, Sites will spend the next year covering every major global conflict for Kevin Sites in the Hot Zone on Yahoo! News. These areas of conflict are typically left uncovered or under-reported by mainstream news organizations. The goal of this project is to bring these important stories to Yahoo!'s global audience of nearly 400 million users.

## "China Blue", Friday, May 11, 8 PM, SFL Amphitheatre

Presented by Ten Thousand Villages and the Caltech Y

(7:30 pm - music and snacks; 8:00 pm - movie begins)

They live crowded together in cement factory dormitories where water has to be carried upstairs in buckets. Their meals and rent are deducted from their wages, which amount to less than a dollar a day. Most of the jeans they make in the factory are purchased by retailers in the U.S. and other countries. CHINA BLUE takes viewers inside a blue jeans factory in southern China, where teenage workers struggle to survive harsh working conditions. Providing perspectives from both the top and bottom levels of the factory's hierarchy, the film looks at complex issues of globalization from the human level.

Photo by Mark McDuff

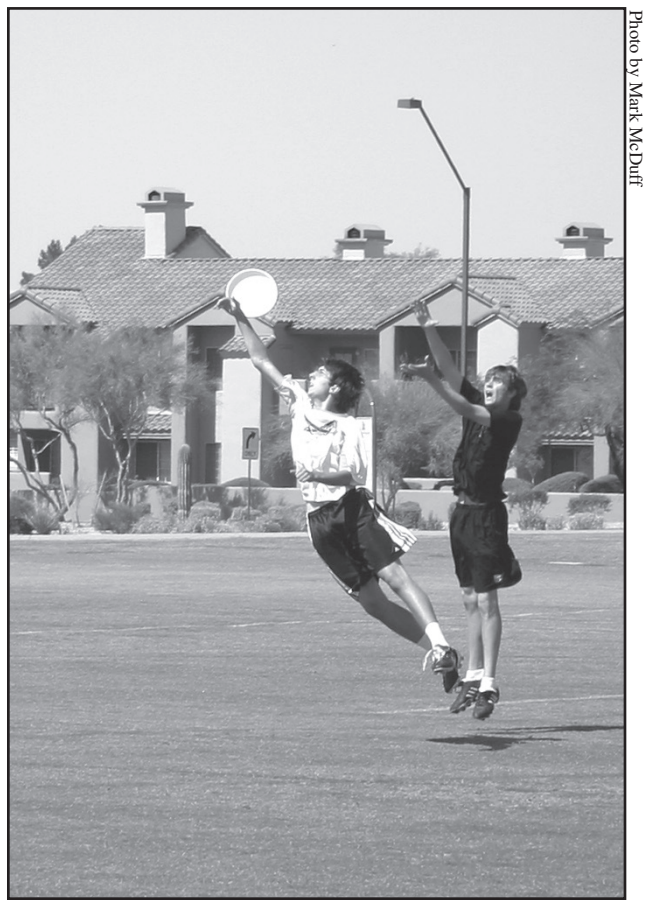


Photo by Mark McDuff

**Left: Sarah Payne skies her USC opponent to intercept the disc.**
**Above: Daniel Barroll D's a UCLA pass to the endzone.**

# ULTIMATE Frisbee

## Regionals in Arizona

**Women**
L, Colorado, 15-0
L, Arizona, 14-6
W, New Mexico, 10-4
W, CSULB, 13-0
W, Colorado State, 8-6
L, Cal Poly, 13-2

FINISHED: 10 of 16

**Men**
L, UCLA, 15-1
L, Claremont, 15-0
L, San Diego State, 13-10
L, Air Force, 14-9
L, Long Beach, 13-7

FINISHED: 15 of 16

Photo by Mark McDuff

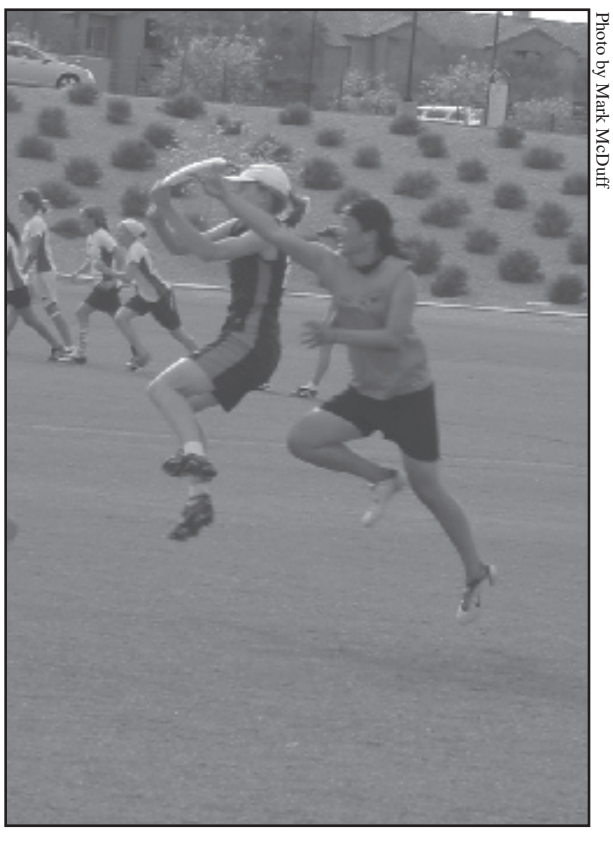


Photo by Mark McDuff

**Left: Noah Tanabe, freshman, looks for a pass against Claremont on Saturday.**
**Above: Veronica Anderson, sophomore, reaches a pass before her USC defender.**

# Caltech faculty has 18% NAS membership

ACADEMY, FROM PAGE 1

tentially in the future as well."

Anderson was 30 years old when he received his first NIH grant in 1986. Now the average age is 44. In 1999, 21% of all grant applications to the NIH were funded; now the number is 8% and still dropping. With the enormous reduction in funding, especially for new investigators,

Anderson says, "These funding cuts threaten not only our ongoing research enterprise, but also may discourage our most talented young scientists from choosing a research career. In this way, the current situation may have a ripple effect that lasts long after the Iraq war is over. So, my advice to the government is to save our research enterprise now, before it is too late."

The threats to the welfare of the citizens of the United States and the world range from banking deregulation and fuel shortages to avian flu and a lost generation of scientists. The NAS was established by Abraham Lincoln in 1863 to act as an official adviser to the federal government. With 76 of Caltech's 408 permanent faculty as members, Caltech influence with the government may be easier than previously thought.

## Write for *The Tech*!

Have something to say? You know you do.
Meetings 1 PM, Broad Cafe, Monday and Friday.
Or contact us at *tech@caltech.edu*

# Athletic recruitment makes its debut with Caltech track team

*16 freshmen likely to join Track & Field next year*

*Influx of new athletes expected to alleviate "manpower shortage"*

*Coach Levesque kept in contact with prefrosh athletes before and after admission; team met with them at prefrosh weekend*

**BY NATALYA KOSTANDOVA**

Sports recruitment? In Caltech? No, this isn't a joke. This year, Caltech has officially entered a new level of sports recruitment. The upcoming year, at least sixteen of the incoming freshmen are expected to become a part of the Track and Field team, drastically increasing not only the number of the athletes but also the level of the competition that Caltech can present in SCIACs.

While the amount and type of recruitment that Track and Field head coach Julie Levesque could do was limited by the NCAA Division III standards, communication with the athletes has certainly been the key in the recruitment process. Levesque contacted many of the prefrosh before they were admitted and discussed their prospects at Caltech from both athletic and academic standards. She kept in touch after some of them were admitted and met with the potential students during their campus visits.

Many of the prefrosh who chose Caltech as their alma mater already have better times and marks than most, if not all, of the current athletes of the team in their respective events. In fact, some of the prefrosh can already beat enduring Caltech records and compete on a very high level in the SCIACS.

The impact that the incoming student athletes will potentially have on the Track and Field team is not, however, expected to come solely from the performance of the prefrosh. Currently, the size of the team is very small compared to its SCIAC competitors, which puts much pressure on the existing members. Because of manpower shortage, many of Tech athletes compete in up to seven different events in a single meet, while the majority of other teams have athletes specializing in one to two events. On many occasions, it was difficult for Caltech to find enough people to fill some relay events, and even more often the spots on such teams were filled with runners who would not ordinarily run them. For instance, during the season Mark Eichenlaub, team co-captain, ran both a 400 meter relay and a distance 25 times longer than that, a 10k, two events that require entirely different types of training and racing. With more people on the team, it is possible that not only will Caltech have a representation in more of events, but that its athletes will have a better chance to compete in and focus on events that they actually train for.

While it may happen that, upon becoming immersed into the world of Caltech academics, some of the prefrosh will choose to lower the level of priority that Track and Field has in their lives, next year promises to be one of much change for the team.

*Many of the prefrosh who chose Caltech as their alma mater already have better times and marks than most, if not all, of the current athletes of the team in their respective events.*

"While unfortunately we'll be losing some of our seniors (including captains Mark and Scott), we have a lot of talent coming in next year to help fill the void. The Caltech team is sufficiently small that even a few good athletes will make a huge difference," said co-captain Elette Boyle.

Indeed, even if only half the expected prefrosh actually run as fast as they do now, it is safe to say that SCIACs will see some intense competition from Caltech.

Photo by Sara McBride

**The medieval streets of San Gimignano preserve thirteen towers the way they looked when Dante visited, as well as being famous for wine. A perk of scientific travel: 35 minutes' drive from Florence.**

# Monastery science: how to make the most of scientific conferences

**BY SARA MCBRIDE**

I speak not of Abbey ales and Monk chocolates, but of the growing trend to conduct scientific conferences at rural monasteries in the Tuscan hills of Italy. The monasteries, abbeys and convents across Italy have opened their doors and their kitchens to travelers and conference organizers from around the world. The scenery is inspiring, the isolation divine, the cost minor, but the snoring roommate is a major glitch for such a serene environment.

The world renowned scientist who artfully arranges his speaking schedule according to the highest number of frequent flyer miles he can accumulate in one week would highly object to a flight into Rome, then a train to Siena or Florence and a bus to a hidden Tuscan valley. But to a scientist who appreciates a little thinking time outside of the "Hurry-up and wait" hustle & bustle of airport travel, a monastery conference is ideal. The only major downfall is the accommodations are a bit rustic, and a roommate is always guaranteed, even if you're the Grand Poobah of the NIH. But the bonuses are as plentiful as the spring olive harvest.

The first bonus is that Tuscany, and nearly all of Italy is gorgeous. The beauty of Tuscany falls into three subsets; monasteries with lots of wine, and fabulous medieval hill towns with amazing food. The second bonus is that no one expects you to actually speak Italian. Your habit-clad concierge may not speak English, but with patience and a smile, communication can occur. The third bonus is that unlike major hotels, the monks have modernized and now provide several washers and dryers for their visitors.

My recommendations for getting the most out of your monastery conferences are: 1. Fly in and out of Rome, which, Oh Darn, forces you to see Rome! 2. Travel light, with a single small roller bag or a carry-on backpack. Big luggage is a major hindrance for Italian travel. 3. Plan to stay an extra 3-4 days in Tuscany after the conference. Florence is worthy of five days alone. Siena and San Gimignano can make a nice four days. And if you've never seen Venice, get thee to a canal!

Tuscany has a convenient bus system and Italy has an efficient, inexpensive train system. So turn your four-day conference into a 10-day Italian vacation, and see if you can convince a colleague to join you. But even if alone, there is no better place to read a scientific paper then while enjoying an abbey ale lakeside, mulling a Chianti with a stunning hillside view, or sipping a cappuccino in an Italian piazza. Start submitting those abstracts and get ready to follow in Da Vinci's inspired footsteps.

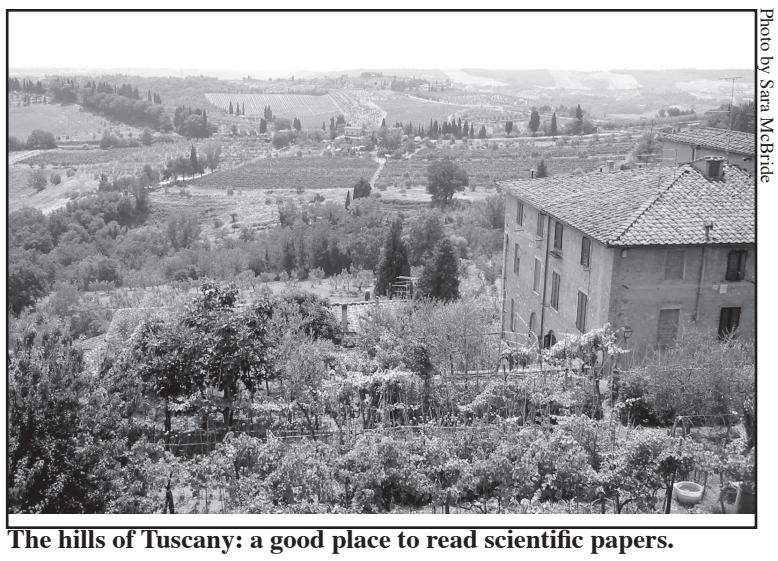


Photo by Sara McBride

**The hills of Tuscany: a good place to read scientific papers.**

# Slick idea leads to olive harvest

BY SARA MCBRIDE

Walking through campus with Ricky Jones leaves the impression of a stroll down a Hollywood red carpet. Everyone from professors to President Chameau stop to say "Hi" to this undergraduate biology major.

How did this tall Ruddock junior become the toast of presidents and provosts of one of the country's most revered research institutions?

He brought forth a new tradition that will carry his name as a legacy for future Caltech generations. Like the Greeks and Romans, he brought olive oil to our small western campus.

From this point forward, Caltech will celebrate an annual Olive festival every fall. In the fall when the olives of Olive Walk are ripe for picking, all Caltech staff, students and professors are invited to help with the harvest.

"I think it's a great tradition to bring people together who normally would never speak to each other." said Ricky, who then paused and added, "Hopefully no one will hurt themselves."

To keep things safe and productive, Caltech has sought professional advice from Craig Makela, the President of the Santa Barbara Olive Co.. Makela encourages hand picking of the olives for this fall's festival harvest, which is predicted to include 70 tons of olives. Makela's olive company will handle the pressing and bottling of the Caltech Oil.

"We'll be holding a competition for the label design," said Ricky. "I hope we get a few entries that are not so offensive we can't put them on an olive oil bottle. It would be nice if the label had something to do with Caltech; like if it had a beaver or two."

The harvest is anticipated to yield 3000 12.7-ounce bottles of the golden elixir, which are to be sold for $10 each. The $30,000 raised will go back into school funding, probably for scholarships and care of the olive trees.

The harvest festival this fall will include an array of activities and exhibitions. There will be a breakfast and a lunch served by student waiters. Plenty of olive pickers will be needed, and all those who participate will receive a free T-shirt. The original olive pressing techniques improvised by Ricky and his house mates will be shown, complete with home-made cheese cloth, trash-bag, and cinderblock presses.


Photo courtesy of Ruddock House

**Ricky Jones on a reconnaissance mission to Caltech's future partner in olive oil.**

Ricky's Minnesota roots may have been part of his inspiration for his olive oil exploits. He believes that "it's good to prepare your own food, direct from the dirt". Because of this healthy philosophy Ricky thinks that olive oil pressing will always be in his life. "Wherever I live, I plan to have a field of olive trees and fruits and vegetables I can pick fresh."

At the Athenaeum's 100th anniversary, in 2031, pictures of this Caltech junior may grace the screen of the Athenaeum's historical video. By then, Caltech's olive oil will have become a permanent fixture and a highly prized ingredient by the Athenaeum chefs.

When Ricky set out to bang a few trees for a study break, he may not have intended to create a new Caltech tradition. Now that his golden legacy has been laid, he says, "I'm glad it was Olive Oil. It's quirky enough to fit Caltech. It seems like a perfect tradition for us."

Photo courtesy of Ruddock House

**The olives are boiled to separate the oil from the fibrous material.**





| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8 | | 5 | | 4 | | |
| | 4 | | 1 | | | | | 3 |
| | 1 | | | | 2 | | | |
| | | 7 | 2 | | | 9 | 6 | |
| | | | 5 | | 4 | | | |
| | 5 | 9 | | | 7 | 8 | | |
| | | | 9 | | | | 4 | |
| 6 | | | | | 5 | | 7 | |
| | | 2 | | 1 | | 3 | | |

FAUX-MOVIE REVIEW

# Spiderman 3 rocks my world

## *From a man who knows what rocks are all about.*

BY HAMILTONY FALK

Grade: A+

Spiderman 3 may be the best movie ever made, or better. I just thought I'd put that out there right at the beginning, so you don't waste too much time reading and immediately go get in line to view it at least 4 times.

*(Spoiler warning: I may have accidentally included some actual plot points is this article.)*

It had everything you could want in a movie: action, adventure, love, stuff that isn't love, comedy, flying surfboards and even flashbacks that edited facts from the previous movies to further the current movie's plot! Did you know that Spider-Man actually has some of the deadliest venom of any type of half spider half mammal, but his teeth are too short to pierce human skin? The point is, the third installment of Spider-Man was super great.

Now, I know that there are many critics out there who didn't like the movie because it was "stupid" or "not a French film from the 50's" or even because "it sucked." While all of these criticisms may be superficially true, the deeper truth is that the movie was made to entertain, and while it failed in doing that, it was still friggin' awesome.

A large number of the critics complained that many portions of the movie were implausible and poorly explained. I should point out that this is a movie about a "spider man" that "does the things a spider can" such as spin webs and predict the future, and should probably be considered to be fiction, since spider-men were not discovered until well after the original screen play for the movie was written.

Critics complained that the "sand man" villain was awkward and that his creation was poorly explained. I counter that he was very similar to the mummy from an earlier movie of that name, and that the three spinning physics do-dads were clearly an advanced ancient Egypt simulator.

They also pointed out that it was odd that all of the villains would happen to have personal beef with Spider-Man, and that even the space goo (the aggression amplifying symbiote as the brilliant physicist was able to discover by looking at it very closely) for some reason chased down Spider-Man. To this I respond that Spider-Man is dreamy, so it makes sense that evil super-villains would want to do him harm. Because they are jealous.

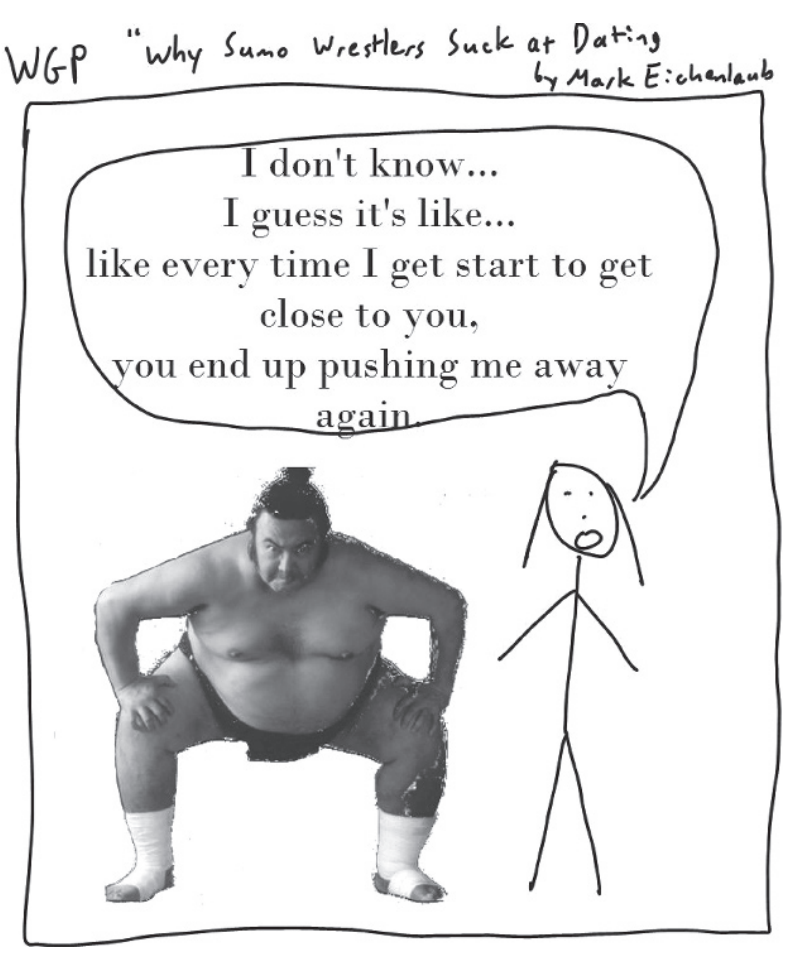
*Spider-Man is dreamy, so it makes sense that evil super-villains would want to do him harm. Because they are jealous.*

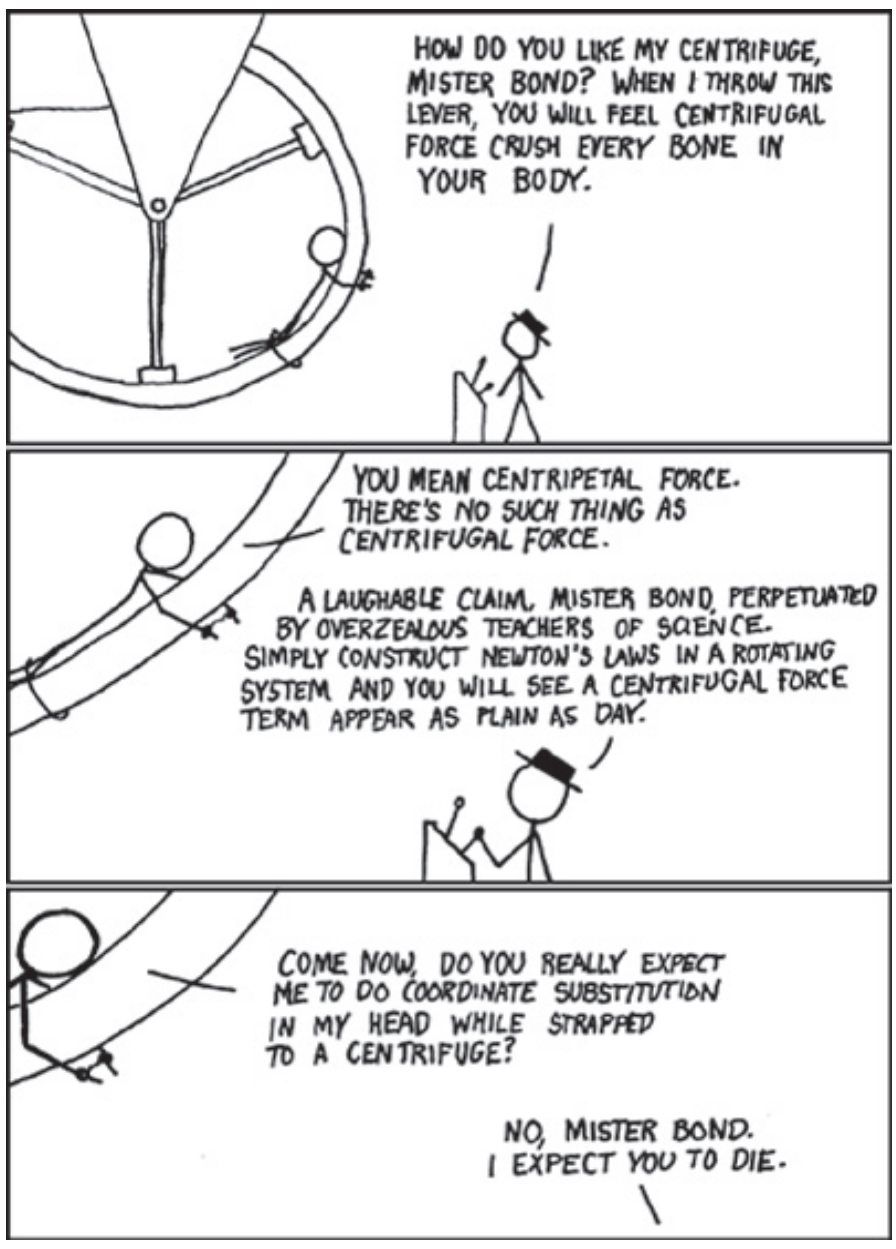
Another criticism that seems to have come up a lot is that the evil symbiote turned Peter Parker (who is also sometimes Spider-man) into a strange combination of an angry wife-beating redneck, an emo kid, and Jim Carrey's character from the movie The Mask. I found this delightful, as I have always associated emo with evil, and what better way to brood emo-tastically than to sit on top of a church in the rain wearing all black?

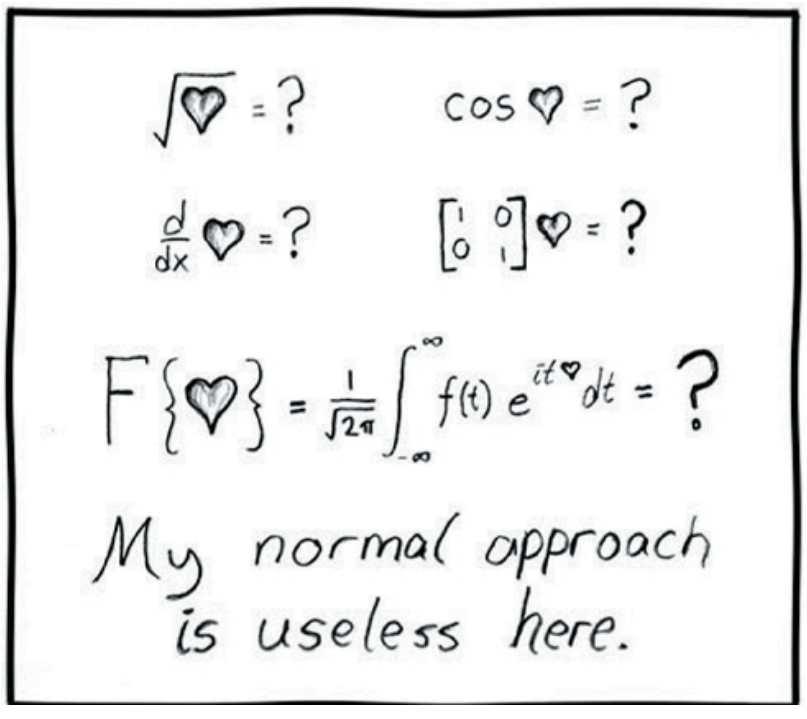
In addition, dancing in a law of physics defying way has long been known to woo women in movies, and the key source of this ability is weird substances that you attack to your body in a way that makes them skin tight and difficult to remove.

A lot of the people who were down on the movie wondered this like, why didn't the butler of the vengeful friend of Spider-Man tell said friend the truth about how his father died, so he wouldn't get his butt kicked by emo-Spider-Man? Why did a grenade that merely scared the face of one person completely vaporize another? Why did two simple chest puncture wounds kill a person who needed only a few days in the hospital after dropping several stories and hitting his head on a pipe, a dumpster and the ground and could take a grenade to the face with only cosmetic damage? Why did the Sand-Man completely change his mind at the end of the movie and decide to blow away into the wind rather than fight Spider-Man? Why didn't Peter Parker get with the hot blond chick? And finally, why is the dude from That 70's Show playing a villain?

To all of these questions I respond that the answers are clear if you pay to watch the movie in theaters several more times as well as buying Spider-Man merchandise and eventually the Spider-Man 3 DVD with special commentary.




The California Tech
Caltech 40-58
Pasadena, CA 91125