

Incoming frosh: more women

Women make up 37% of the class of 2011

BY HAROLD MARTIN

The infamous “ratio” will improve next year as at least 80 women enroll in the Class of 2011, 37% of the total class. For the first time in Caltech’s history, the yield is equal on both male and female admits.

There are 215 students currently enrolled out of a pool of 576 admits, a yield of 37%.

Furthermore, yield on women who attended prefrosh weekend (PFW) was higher than on men who attended.

“I’m very pleased with prefrosh weekend,” said Rick Bischoff, Director of Admissions. “There’s an astonishing amount of student work that goes into it... I’m incredibly appreciative of all the

work students do.”

This year saw the return of the three day PFW, which, according to Bischoff, was an important factor in this year’s higher PFW enrollment versus last year’s. Of the 219 PFW attendees, 135 have enrolled, a yield of 62%.

The administration considers this low enrollment, since the target class size is 240, and admissions will be offered to some of the approximately 170 people currently on the waiting list.

Despite the proclaimed success of the latest round of admissions, President Chameau has formed an Admissions Task Force charged with reevaluating the current admissions process. The task force is comprised of staff, faculty, and students, with Michael Woods and Maria Gutowski representing

the undergraduates.

The task force is concerned with determining how Caltech can best enroll minorities and women, and whether admissions should take into account a holistic view of the class, but Bischoff said that, “No one is suggesting a radical departure from the way admissions is currently done.”

No unqualified students would be admitted, said Bischoff, adding that after quantitative standards were met, the admissions committee had to make admissions decisions based on other, more subjective factors.

Bischoff encouraged students concerned with future admissions policies to contact him directly or the undergraduates on the admissions task force.



Image by Harold Martin

The percentage of women in the entering freshman class is the highest in at least the past eight years.

Ricketts pays for damage

House pays \$5000 for damaged doors from last Saturday

BY LEIGHLAND FEINMAN

Ricketts House will be paying out of its house funds to repair the broken doors that members damaged last Saturday.

In addition, the House voted to abstain from alcohol for four weeks to “sit down and rethink things,” according to Ricketts House President Chris Moody.

Members of Ricketts damaged ten doorframes by kicking them during its annual Polish Constitution Day Eve, which ends in a “boisterous” House Tour of the North and South Houses.

Moody said some members of his house, “...took rowdiness, and took it to the extreme...it was excessive.”

Moody said there was approximately \$5,000 in damage done to doors and other items throughout all of the houses, a number that was confirmed by Senior Director of Housing Tim Chang.

Chang reported that 9-10 doors and doorframes were damaged, and the only Houses that were not damaged were Lloyd, Ricketts, and Avery. Chang said that this event normally has some small amount of damage associated with it, but “...never to this extent before.”

Ricketts House, however, seems more concerned about making reparations towards the other Houses than about lessening punishment.

Ricketts held an apology House Tour on Thursday, May 10, when members visited all of the damaged Houses with donuts, apolo-



Photo by Robert Kati

Ripped drywall exposes wires after Ricketts damaged several doorframes last Saturday night.

gizing for any damage or stress they might have caused. This event coincided with Ricketts’s weekly Thursday Night Drinking (TND) event after they agreed as a House to abstain from alcohol for the evening to reflect on what

had happened last Saturday.

Chang said that while the Housing Department was “disappointed” with the damage, he felt

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Seniors give a clock

Proposed Feynman statue too expensive

BY VICTOR LI

While last year’s senior class donated several fruit trees as their lasting gift to Caltech, this year’s senior class has much higher ambitions – but also much less time. Now, halfway through third term, the seniors have finally settled on an Olive Walk clock.

The clock is planned to be about the size of the house signs and to hang over the mailboxes. But it may be moved over concern of future North House renovations.

The project, headed by senior co-presidents Cindy Ko and Isaac Garcia-Munoz, was a year long journey going through many different ideas and setbacks.

The project started early in the summer. After a poll and some debate, the initial work focused on a beaver statue. It would cost a little over \$10,000 including construction and installation on Caltech grounds.

To fund the project, the seniors could have applied for the Moore and Hufstедler Fund (MHF), which offers \$180,000 every year to enhance student life at Caltech. But there were mixed feelings about this project, and the MHF

didn’t think the statue would benefit student life.

So when seniors heard about two alumni who were planning on building a Feynman statue, they quickly latched onto that idea instead.

The Feynman statue was to be “Ronald McDonald” style with Feynman sitting on a bench and his arm over the shoulder of anyone who sat next to him. But the statue would cost around \$100,000, and the seniors had a hard time

getting in touch with the alumni organizing the project. MHF support would be necessary for this project. But that would mean that they would have to follow the timeline mandated by the MHF when in fact the alumni who organized the idea weren’t even sure that they would go ahead with the project. So this idea was scrapped, and the seniors were polled to give their own ideas. The Olive Walk clock swept the polls with about 38% of the votes.

“The process for choosing a senior gift has been a longer one than we expected, but I’m really happy that the senior class has chosen a gift that they like,” said senior co-president Cindy Ko.

“This will create an opportunity for a sweet Back to the Future stack!”

Cindy Ko

Senior co-president

Ghosts of Ditch Day past

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Go to bed early, frosh -- DITCH DAY’S TOMORROW!

From the Editors

If you don't like it, make it better

The Tech could use some negative feedback

Every so often I get a pat on the back for being the editor of a paper "on the upswing." Just about everyone who confronts me about the paper has a smile and a positive word.

But I'm often more interested in the harsh words than the encouraging ones. I'd like to know what's still wrong about the Tech.

The other evening, I walked into a Blacker Lounge filled with people chatting. About ten of them had copies of the Tech open, and several were yelling about how bad the writing is, how not funny the Humor page is, and who the hell is Hamiltony Falk anyway?

One person was about to start into a loud rant, saw me, paused, and then ranted anyway.

The episode was amusing, but most importantly informative. The next day, I probed the lounge for specifics. Which articles were bad? What would be funnier on Page 8? How could the editing be improved?

I found out a lot that I would have never known had I continued

on my blissfully ignorant way. There's actually a vocal group that cares about the quality of the Tech. But how was I supposed to know without eavesdropping in on a lounge conversation?

Maybe there are more of you out there. If there are, I'd like to hear from you. We hold meetings at the Broad Cafe from 12-1 on Mondays and Fridays, and you can always reach tech@caltech.edu for a gripe or two. There's no way the Tech can improve without knowing what to fix. If students care as much as I think a few of you might, then it's your job to tell us what you'd like to read about.

And if you're a hot-shot writer, maybe you should consider joining the staff. The same thing goes for photographers and lay-out editors.

Talented students avoiding extra-curriculars is a recurring phenomenon at Tech. Qualified students refuse to join extra-curricular activities because they're not up to their standards. I've heard musicians say they won't

join the jazz band because their high school band was better.

It seems like just about every extra-curricular activity lacks the critical mass to sustain itself, even with the amazing talent that Caltech attracts. Granted, I understand everyone is in over their heads in schoolwork, but if every talented writer realized how many other talented writers there were, and if they all decided to join the Tech at the same time, imagine how great the newspaper would be!

I'm not saying everyone should drop their physics problem sets and sign their name in blood to the California Tech, but if students want a change, they have to be proactive. At least send an email to tech@caltech.edu with your least favorite article of the issue. Maybe you'll have a favorite, but honestly, I don't want to hear about those. Give me your worst, and we'll try to give you our best.

Marissa Cevallos
Editor-in-Chief

Caltech: institute or university?

The Caltech Project for Effective Teaching (CPET) seeks an answer to a question which has gone unaddressed for too long: does teaching quality matter? Classes have low attendance; some students would rather learn from each other than from professors; TAs are frequently described as not understanding their material.

Undergrads frequently bemoan being considered as untrained annoyances that take time away from valuable, research-producing graduate student and postdoc efforts. Whether this impression is real or perceived, the fact remains that for undergraduate education to continue here successfully, that impression needs to change.

The question remains; is this an academic research institute with a vestigial college attached, or is Caltech a place where the best minds come to advance science?

CPET's attitude is that teaching quality is important. We agree.

The so-called "good old days" of Caltech are underlined in many students' minds by the presence of dynamic, undergraduate-involved professors like Richard Feynman. Recent college classes

have been among the most competitive and well qualified in history. In that case, why is Caltech not experiencing a renaissance of these good old days with our new, higher quality students?

We argue that the Institute is missing professors for core courses who get as involved in student's lives as Richard Feynman was. There are definitely professors who develop close relationships with students; Professors Tom Tombrello, John Allman, Kip Thorne, Warren C. Brown (to name only a few), and many others are known around campus for their teaching quality, social relationships with students, and general willingness to be friendly and helpful. If this kind of attitude were present among all the faculty, perhaps this concern would be alleviated.

There's a lot more to teaching quality than just being nice, but as Chameau mentioned in his CPET lecture, if we focus on improving presentation, the content is already there.

Leighland Feinman
Craig Montuori
Staff Writers

Honor Chair: improving the ASCIT BOD

Major organizational changes revive older Vice President duties

BY CRAIG MONTUORI

Today, undergrads are voting to change ASCIT in a way that's done no more than once every decade. I'd like to spend some time exploring the different aspects of the proposed changes and what they mean to campus life. In the interest of full disclosure, I was the one who submitted the idea in the Honor Code survey last May, and I continue to fully support the proposed amendments.

Jean Sun and Mike Grinolds took the basic ideas behind the Honor Chair idea and included many important changes to the BoC, including implementing their "side-by-side" BoC boards to better deal with large case-loads (which are more due to increased education and awareness of Honor Code requirements than a structural increase in cheating at Tech). With their detailed knowledge of the BoC and contact with the Deans, they ran with the idea after I dropped it over the summer, having no idea how to implement it.

I had two major goals in mind with creating the Honor Chair: unifying the BoC and the CRC to fix what I see as major problems with the CRC and, more importantly to me, freeing the ASCIT VP to be an actual position.

Regarding the first goal, I feel last week's articles covered it nicely, so I will focus on the ASCIT side of the proposal.

Last May, here's how I summarized the position in an email to Todd Gingrich, "His or her duties would be to defend and explain the Honor Code to administrators and faculty members, who though are not currently bound by the Code, interact with us in ways that require intimate knowledge about how we live under the Code. Also, he or she would represent student interests from the perspective of the Honor Code on the BoD."

As I've quoted and read Ted

Jou's Undergraduate Self-Governance paper over the past year, I came to believe that as student-perceived coverage of the Honor Code expanded, the additional duties of the ASCIT VP were slowly pushed out.

The 1957 little t stresses the dual nature of the ASCIT VP, saying, "[the ASCIT VP] also runs the combined charity drive ... With the [Directors At Large] the Vice-President reviews Honor Key applications." The 1974 little t adds, "... the dual nature of assisting the President and being chairman of the BoC."

Today, the VP position is merely an additional title given to the BoC Chair. Jean expressed interest in being an ASCIT VP when she ran for the position, but I now believe that it is impossible for anyone to do more than be BoC Chair; that is, if he or she doesn't want to flame.

That said, I believe that having someone address the additional duties once dealt with by the ASCIT VP will be for the benefit of the school once someone has the time to fulfill them. Additionally, I hope to see greater interaction between the President and the VP; instead of throwing the success or failure of each BoD entirely on the President, a more cohesive and effective BoD can be built between the teamwork of the people in the two top positions.

I hope that having two people at the top of ASCIT dedicated entirely to the BoD will result in better services to the student body. Additionally, this lets the BoC and CRC Chairs focus entirely on their Boards, while continuing to give the Honor Code representa-

tion on the BoD.

For me, this is a test of a larger idea that I have about the organization of the BoD. I wonder what would happen if the BoC Chair, CRC Chair, ARC Chair, Social Director, and IHC Chair were not on the BoD, instead meeting with the President and VP biweekly to discuss their different groups. As it is, I feel that many BoD meetings for these people are simply them reporting on their group's status.

Since the BoD has no Excomm to provide ideas from their "long and short range students and planning for the Board of Directors," as the 1974 little t says, annually, the BoD just deals with problems as they come up with no thought for campus-wide projects. People do have somewhat of a point when they say that all ASCIT does is provide donuts, though naturally, this is not the extent of ASCIT's activities.

If anyone's interested, Excomm was set up in 1958 to provide direction to the BoD. They chatted with people and put together proposals to tailor ASCIT's actions to better serve the students. These days, the President sets the direc-

There is no unity of purpose in the BoD. Ask Chris Watson about his year as Freshman Director at Large if you're interested in hearing more about that.

tion based on his or her thoughts, as well as responding to problems as they arise. Perhaps it would be better to let Excomm plan, while the BoD executes.

Structurally, I do not believe the other positions (President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer, and Directors at Large) can be effectively cohesive with the BoD be-

ing the way it is today. There is no unity of purpose in the BoD. Ask Chris Watson about his year as Freshman Director at Large if you're interested in hearing more about the frustration of not having any defined goals, aside from busywork. People get assigned problems to solve, but the group has no common goal to provide impetus to work together, like the IHC, the ASCIT Social Excomm or other groups do.

For example, the Social Excomm assigns duties to be completed to individuals, who can draw on the entire group for support when necessary. Contrast this to last year's attempts at revisiting the ASCIT DVD Library, where Chris Watson was asked to restore it, without knowing the people that set it up, who has graduated already, or knowing where any of the component parts were located. Chris was not given enough support from people like me, though the BoD is not set up to be conducive to such sharing of responsibility. We spent nearly a year hearing weekly reports of, 'the DVD library is still not ready yet,' without trying something different.

I am very interested to see how the Honor Chair fits in with the rest of the BoD and how the new position's responsibilities affect the BoD as a whole over the next few years. I hope that the VP position will now have the time to work with the rest of the BoD on projects and issues. If the Honor Chair is effective, both individually and in improving the BoD, maybe more changes should be made to the BoD organization over the next few years. Hopefully, we'll see a more active BoD in the future that creates more, better student life activities, as well as responding to students' thoughts and concerns.

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ASCIT Minutes: May 9, 2007**Comic book collection expanding**

Present: Chris Gonzales, Mike Grinolds, Andrea Dubin, Angela Zah, Ekta Bhojwani, Patrick Herring, Daryl Coleman, Zack Higbee

Absent: Caleb Ng, Mike Woods
Guests: Vibha Laljani, Michael Ferrara, Jayson Messenger, Natalie Becera

***Funding**

-Jayson Messenger from the Caltech comic book club requested \$100 to buy comic books from an alum who is graduating and selling her comic books. The comic book collection used to be in the old coffeehouse along with the DVD library. Currently SPECTRE found the collection and has it, but will give it back to them. It will be stored in the ASCIT library. They plan on purchasing about 70 comic books. Approved (6/0/0)

-OASIS is looking for \$500 for their cultural show. Approved (7/0/0)

-The Science for Social Impact forum wants to bring out speakers to be on a panel. They need to pay for parking permits, lunch, facilities, etc. Michael Ferrara requested \$200. This is the first year they have done this, but they want to make it annual. It is open to entire Caltech community including undergrads. Approved (6/0/1).

-Angela Zah requests funding to take Professor Gilmartin out to lunch at the Ath. along with Kelly Lin, Ellen Hsu, and Jean Sun. Approved (5/0/1).

***Formal**

-Ekta reported that we made about \$450 from Spiderman ticket sales, and we received \$4000 from housing. We are paying

\$1500 for limos as transportation this year to ASCIT formal.

***Other**

-ASCIT speakers are still ASCIT speakers, they are not Rickett's.
-Ricketts needs to show Angela receipts from Interhouse so they can get money.

-Patrick has contacted committees about the appointed members.

-Zack is Elections Chair for this coming election. Approved (6/0/0)

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).

ANNOUNCEMENTS**Voting on ASCIT bylaw change runs today from 10:00 - 23:59**

Voting on the proposed ASCIT bylaw changes regarding the structure of the BoC and IHC will run Monday, May 14 (today) from 10:00 AM to 11:59 PM.

Ballots may be cast either on the Olive Walk in paper form or online at donut.caltech.edu/survey.

The first 24-hour protest period will begin after 11:59 PM today. A summary of the proposed changes can be found at www.its.caltech.edu/~cgonzo/summary.ppt. Please e-mail any questions to elections chair Zack Higbee (zhigbee@caltech.edu).

OASIS to present Indian dance and stage show Friday in Ramo

Annual OASIS Cultural Show:
"Roo-ba-roo" (Urdu for "face to face")
Friday, May 18, 2007, 6:30 PM,
Ramo Auditorium

The Organization of Associated Students from the Indian Subcontinent (OASIS) will highlight Indian culture at the Annual Indian Cultural Show. The program includes:

* A humorous play based on the experiences of a "fresh off the boat" undergraduate Indian student at Caltech and his experiences as he gets accustomed to the crazy life of an undergraduate at Caltech, and learns to live with an inevitable "culture-shock",

* Classical Indian dance performances based on the art form called Kathak.

* A play based on the acclaimed Satyajit Ray movie, "Agantuk" (The Stranger).

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To request more information and to pick up an application, please contact Cameron Pinckney, pinckney@admissions.caltech.edu, or stop by and pick up an application at the Admissions Office (Steele House).

Application deadline: Monday, May 21st. Interviews will be held shortly thereafter.

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Ricketts opts for Thursday Night Thinking

RICKETTS, FROM PAGE 1

that Ricketts's efforts to rectify the damage were "nice."

Ricketts's reaction and quick steps to rectify damage seems to have appeased at least some of the students whose rooms were damaged.

"I was sort of upset, but it's repaired now," said Blacker senior Randall Wald, whose doorframe was damaged. "I do not feel I was specifically targeted; they were just being rowdy."

For other students, the damage was more than an inconvenience. Said Dabney sophomore Andrea Dubin, "I was working at the time, and wanted to be left alone, and I was sick, and my door got broken and I couldn't be left alone anymore. I kind of freaked out; I was annoyed."

The apologetic stance from Ricketts has also been met with understanding at least from Housing.

"College events tend to be a little more emotional and lively," said Chang.

"It happens. It's a part of college life."

In addition to damaged doorframes, a seniors-only tarp was torn down in Fleming. Moody said that a Ricketts senior pro-

ceeded to hold the tarp up until it could be repaired so that underclassmen could not see. "People got carried away," said Moody. "We certainly didn't go out with malicious intent. Most people did not know that the damage was going on."

Members of Ricketts realized soon after the House Tour just what the extent of the damage this year had been, and took steps to rectify it as quickly as possible.

Groups of House members, some led by Ricketts Vice President Matthew Wierman, went back to other Houses in order to clean up debris left by the House Tour and to see what they could do to repair any damage.

"[Ricketts] acted immediately, and as completely and thoroughly as we could," said Moody. "I wish we could have done more."

Once it became clear that damage could not be repaired independently, Ricketts immediately offered to pay any costs associated with the repairs.

From Chang's perspective, the extreme degree of damage was unfortunate because, "Who wants damage [to newly renovated buildings]?" Also, on an interpersonal level, he said that this "could be very traumatic," if one of the students whose rooms were damaged had past experiences with violence or breaking and

"I think that individuals should step forward...they're going to have to look at themselves in the mirror," said Chang. "Hopefully the whole house does not get all of the punishment."

Moody is especially remorseful about what occurred. "My one regret is that I did not say explicitly [before the first House Tour], 'Do not cause damage.'"

A few of the students of the damaged rooms say they aren't pressing the issue.

"They're paying for it, they

came around with donuts...it wasn't intentional and they've done what they needed to do," Wald said.

Said Dubin, "A lot of people were very apologetic. [Ricketts Vice-President Matthew] Wierman kept asking me if my door had been fixed, and they all seemed really concerned. They were pretty good about trying to make sure that everything was okay."

"College events tend to be a little more emotional and lively. It happens. It's a part of college life."

-Tim Chang

Senior Director of Student Housing

entering that were unknown to members of Ricketts. However, Chang noted that there would be no way to know about something like that in advance.

His main concern, it seemed, was that the aftermath of this event would stress Housing employees' already busy schedules. "We just want to be happy, and when something like this happens it puts a damper on the good feelings going around," said Chang.

Students awarded Hertz, Churchill scholarships

BY NATALYA KOSTANDOVA

The Churchill Scholarship

The Churchill Scholarship, established in 1963 at recommendation of Winston Churchill himself, recognizes 11 students from institutions from the entire country. The scholars are study at Churchill College, Cambridge for a year, with their tuition and fees paid by the Churchill Foundation. The students also receive a living stipend for the time being that they are in England.

Recipient: Emily Russell, Blacker, Physics Major

Emily Russell became one of 11 students nationwide to receive the Churchill Scholarship this year as she gets ready to graduate from Caltech with a degree in Physics. While she is not entirely sure what research she will pursue in Cambridge next year, she hopes to work on a project in either condensed matter or astrophysics.

"I'm thrilled about it," said Russell about the prospect of studying in Britain. "It's a little bit daunting to leave the country for a year, but I've heard really good things about it."

For Russell, studying in a different country is not an entirely new notion, as she studied abroad in Edinburgh through Caltech's exchange program. While she is unsure about many aspects of what is to come next year, Russell is confident about her passion in physics.

"I was about 10 years old when I discovered that astronomy was the coolest thing in the world," said Russell. Growing fascinated with science in a summer camp, Russell further developed her interest as she got older, although switching emphasis from astronomy to fundamental physics during high school.

While at Cambridge, Russell also plans to participate in theatre

and hope to explore Britain and Europe.

The Hertz Fellowship

This year, three out of fifteen students chosen for the fellowship from institutions nationwide come from Caltech. The fellowship, established in 1963, supports the chosen students for five years of graduate studies in the area of applied science, giving the recipients more freedom to select research projects and advisors. The Hertz fellows are selected following an initial application and two rounds of interviews.

Recipient: Michael Busch, Graduate Student, Astronomy

A graduate student in Astronomy, Busch will use the fellowship to continue his studies at Caltech. Although he has not yet selected his thesis topic, he is likely to conduct research in an area related to asteroids and their observation.

One of the topics that catch Busch's attention is development of asteroid radar. Although radars are used for their monitoring, asteroids are too small and can not be traced with a high resolution from a ground. Busch hopes to use interferometry, a technique of using data from a series of telescopes spread throughout a wide area, to obtain more precise information about the asteroids.

For this recipient of the fellowship, fascination with planetary science also began before most people even hear about existence of black holes. For Busch, reading Cosmos by Carl Sagan made all the difference.

"It was his very eloquent way of describing planetary science," said Busch about Sagan. "I read it when I was about ten years old. It captivated me and hasn't let go since."

Recipient: Matthew Fisher, Senior, Avery, Computer Science

For Matthew Fisher, receiving the fellowship was a big surprise. Doubting his chances from the beginning due to the relative unpopularity of computer science among the fields that are characteristic of Hertz Fellows, Fisher was close to giving up on the application process.

"I was originally going to drop off because it was bad timing - I had a paper due," said Fisher.

To him, however, receiving the fellowship made all the difference. "Actually, if I wouldn't have gotten the Hertz, I wouldn't have gone to grad school."

Fisher will attend Stanford in the fall and currently plans to work on research relating to vision and simulation. While he does not have a particular project in mind, he says that Stanford offers a wide variety of choices that

suit his interests.

After completing the grad school, Fisher plans to work on graphics in a company like Pixar, Applied Minds, Vision, and possibly "Microsoft, if nothing else."

Recipient: Jane Wang, Senior, Fleming, Chemistry

For Jane Wang, there is not much that is more exciting than seeing science applied to real life. It is such an application of chemistry that she will work on during her years as a UC Berkeley grad student.

Wang plans to channel her research in an area relevant to catalysis chemistry. "I just think it's so cool how you can go from what you do at a bench top to industry and real world - that's what in-

spired me to pursue catalytic reactions," said Wang.

Wang previously worked with Amgen on a project exploring the binding pocket of kinase, which gave her experience with intelligent design chemistry. She also became fascinated with experiments conducted in Professor Grubbs's labs, in which Grubbs and others explored metathesis using wooden baseball bats.

According to Wang, much of the credit for her success should go to Caltech. "It helps you build killer intuition and a broad-base knowledge not just about Chemistry that I wouldn't have been exposed to at other places."

Wang will start her graduate school experience three weeks after graduating from Caltech.

Fleming repaints cannon red



Meng Tan and Sierra Petersen, sophomores in Fleming, repaint the Fleming cannon to its original color.

Food Review: Broad Cafe goes Mex

BY ANDREW FREDDO
AND DANNAH ALMASCO

¡Hola! Welcome to our first food column for The Tech. We are Andrew Freddo and Dan-nah Almasco, here to critique your food options in Pasadena. As freshmen, we have spent our time here in search of satisfying and unique restaurants that can spice up your life at Tech. It only takes one person to write a food review, but it takes two to offer a comprehensive evaluation of the

Asada Torta, and the Cheese Enchiladas Latinas. All ranged from \$5 to \$5.50.

Observations:

The burrito: fortunately, this burrito follows basic thermodynamic principles; its entropy increased very rapidly as it was eaten. Unfortunately, this means the tortilla broke easily and spilled its contents onto the plate. The chicken and beans were a bit dry and underseasoned, leaving the burrito as a whole without much moisture. It is possible that lack of guacamole, sour cream, and salsa

contributed to this dryness. Still, this was a very filling meal.

The torta: the beef could have been more moist and flavorful. Contrastingly, the bread was

very soggy and not toasted, as a 'torta' should be. The sandwich was also lacking in the distinctive Mexican staples of guacamole and sour cream, which means it was essentially no different from an ordinary beef sandwich. As a beef sandwich, it was satisfying, and there definitely was enough for a good-sized meal. As a torta, however, it was disappointing.

The enchiladas: these had a good flavor, and were good to eat with the burrito and torta as it was very moist. They were very cheesy, but packed no punch. The refried beans that went along with it were exceptional and very creamy. They



Photo by Jonathan Tsai

Dannah Almasco, front, and Andrew Freddo, back, grab a sandwich from Broad Cafe. The Broad menu changed from Thai to Mexican food last week.

Editor's Grade: B

(We actually liked the chips)

restaurant. We hope our viewpoints can guide you to make educated food decisions at Tech.

Goal: To review the newly revamped Broad Café, which just switched over from Thai to Mexican.

Stockroom options: The menu of the new Broad ranges from Mexican standbys such as fajitas and burritos to classic grill items and sandwiches which have remained on the menu.

Materials and Cost: To get a sampling of the new selections, we ordered the following: the Broad Chicken Burrito, the Carne

complemented the rice, which was also true to authentic Mexican cuisine. The lettuce and tomato on the side lightened up the dish.

The chips: in any Mexican restaurant, the chips can make or break a meal. The chips from the new Broad were a bit on the thick side, and were also too oily with little flavor. Salsa probably would have helped, but may not be able to go through the thick chip.

Conclusion: La Parilla at Broad is a good attempt by food services to bring variety and depth to Caltech Dining. You get a lot of food for not too much money but you have to be willing to make a small sacrifice in Mexican authenticity. Some small adjustments to the food preparation methods have

the potential for a lot of improvement, and if you are looking for a change of pace and something

different, check it out!

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Ditch Day: The lost art of brute force stacks

How Techers used to get down and dirty on Ditch Day, and why they still should

BY ERIN FLANAGIN

At some point during a Ditch Day stack last year, between fighting the "X-Men" with water guns and climbing the giant antenna on the Winnett center, I found myself talking to my dad, who was on campus for his 30 year reunion. He had seen some of the stacks around campus (which mostly meant watching groups of Techers run around in various colors of silkscreened t-shirts) and decided to share with me some bits of Caltech lore.

In the seventies, he said, Ditch Day stacks were a little different than they are today. While almost all of today's stacks are a spinoff of what he calls "finesse stacks," there once existed an entirely different breed of stack called the "brute force stack". Finesse stacks involved a series of puzzles that would eventually produce the combination to a stacked room. Brute force stacks usually couldn't be tackled without a jackhammer.

The original idea behind stacking was to prevent underclassmen from trashing the rooms of seniors who had made themselves scarce on Ditch Day. Seniors would brag in the preceding weeks that no underclassmen would be able to break into their rooms, but most still left bribes in the form of food and drink in their rooms to dissuade those who had gotten inside from trashing the room. The most confident seniors left no bribe.

Underclassmen would find themselves up against rooms that resembled bank vaults, with all of the challenge of breaking into one without the threat of being arrested. Doors and windows were boarded off; even the mirrors, lights, and sink were secured. Underclassmen would then attack the room from all six sides to try to gain entry. One year, some underclassmen in Page even prepared scaffolding before Ditch Day to reach seniors' windows on the second floor.

I was told the story of one particularly avid stacker, Lou Scheffer (BS '74 MS '75), who loved Ditch Day so much that he spent three years (once as a senior, once while getting his master's, and once as an alumnus) stacking rooms. Intrigued, I prompted my dad to contact Lou through the alumni association, and ended up with several e-mails from this

former Techer describing all sorts of stacking escapades. Here is an excerpt describing the stack that he prepared during his senior year, slightly modified for clarity:

"For the window, the first layer was a plywood sandwich with an interior of tar-coated fiberglass. This was supposed to be a pain for circular saws. Behind this were steel boxes (each 1/4 the width of the window, full height, and about 4 inches thick). The boxes were full of reinforced concrete. The window defense worked fine that year - the underclassmen cut through the plywood/tar/fiberglass combination, got to the metal boxes, which they attacked with an arc welder from the student shop. However, the concrete acted as a heat sink, so they could not cut through the steel plate.

Unfortunately, I had run out of time and the door was not so securely braced - just a quick 4x4 dropped into place between the door and the far wall. However, at floor level the far wall had a metal radiator cover, not concrete, and a brute force (what else?) attack on the door bent the door, and the radiator, enough to open the door a crack. Working through the crack, they were able to remove the 4x4 and open the door. This is the year they put a pig (w/manure) in the room. I offered bacon to anyone who would help me clean up but was told the pig was just rented."

Tar-coated fiberglass? Reinforced concrete? Clearly, Lou took stacking seriously. It is also a testament to how long ago this was that most Pagedudes today would consider spending an entire Ditch Day cutting and melting their way through a window to be a completely ludicrous proposition.

The next year, Lou applied a similar design to his stack, ditching the fiberglass but keeping the concrete, and correctly bracing



An underclassman goes through a wall under a sink in Page in 1976.

the 4x4 against the far wall. He also had to barricade the lights, which are actually a point of entry for second story rooms in the North Houses. Despite these efforts, however, the stack was again foiled. "Unfortunately," Lou told me, "the undergraduates had learned from their experience, and had gotten a welding torch rather than an arc welder. With this and a jackhammer they were able to cut through the window protection despite the concrete. They did nothing to the room since it was basically already trashed." Therein lies the glorious irony of brute force stacks: the best way to prevent underclassmen from trashing your room is to do it yourself first.

Lou and John Denker ('75) returned the next year as alumni to help senior John Baker ('76), "another brute force kind of guy," build a better stack. He still remembers the fatal flaw that allowed the underclassmen to penetrate the room. They used a

"really thick window defense" with layers upon layers of fiberglass, metal plates, and railroad ties interlaced with rebar, but when barricading the sink, they assumed a simple 4x4 braced against the ceiling would suffice. Clever underclassmen actually cut through the wall beneath the sink, unbolted the sink, and lowered it

out, gaining entry to the room.

To allow himself to enter his own stack, Lou built "a small electronics box" attached to the doorknob. Applying a signal at a specific frequency and voltage for about a minute would trigger a motor to move the 4x4 bracing the door against the back of the room.

Also, Lou recalled that seniors who failed to ditch were chained to trees. Ditch Day was quite certainly a much higher stakes game in the seventies.

Of course, these days, performing even such a delicate maneuver as removing part of a wall and a sink to get into a stacked room would give the housing director a heart attack. Ditch Day has evolved into a more docile, press-friendly event, with most stacks resembling more of a campus-wide scavenger hunt than a break-in. The senior-underclassman rivalry is gone and seniors are sometimes even on call for underclassmen having problems with their stacks. This happened during the stack I participated in last year, and a senior even came back on campus to fix the problem.

Shortly after that senior re-

ditched, I was approached by a camera crew that wanted some other Pagedudes and I to jump into a pool of mud (which wasn't part of our stack) so that they could film it for the evening news. Knowing how much the news has ridiculously distorted stories about Pagedudes in the past, I was disgusted. Would the seniors

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in the seventies have imagined that one day Ditch Day would involve underclassmen doing fake activities, jumping into the mud just so the ten o'clock news had an amusing story to air?

To be sure, though stacks today only vaguely resemble those prepared 30 years ago, they are still ingeniously planned and prepared, and still preserve the spirit of Ditch Day as a unique tradition of Caltech. Personally, I loved every minute of the stacks I've participated in so far, and I'm sure that most other underclassmen share my sentiment. What is important, though, is that we remember the significance of our traditions, and their origins. In the case of Ditch Day, these origins are simply the act of breaking and entering into peoples' rooms while they skip school. And if that isn't the best premise for a school tradition then I don't know what is.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Lou Scheffer and my dad, Steve Flanagin ('76) for providing me with the stories and knowledge I needed to write this article.



John Denker, wearing a "Page Dude" shirt, stands inside his stack in 1975.

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Post-Caltech plans: what to do if you graduate

BY HAMILTONY FALK

Someday, almost many of Caltech students end up being seniors who will graduate. When this time finally comes, you'll probably realize that there are more decisions in life than whether to go to the C-store or coffee house, or if you really need to start that set tonight or can it wait til tomorrow at 4 AM.

Probably chief among these new decisions is the one about what you want to do in the post-Caltech portion of your life. There are options of various grad schools, jobs, military service, taking time off, retiring and many others. As an invaluable service to those soon to go through these decisions, I'll break down the pros and cons of the various choices.

The most common path for Caltech undergrads is to subject themselves to more schooling in the sciences, and go to Grad School in their major. This is a good idea if you want to prolong your time as a student because you fear real life, and also because you can keep ignoring financial realities because you'll have a small salary/stipend to live

off of, and also helps you pursue your love of science¹. Plus, everyone is doing it, you're not cool if you don't do it, do you want to be the only one not going to grad school?

On the other hand, it means you'll never escape the depressing and low paid world of academia (unless you do) and despite what they tell you, grad school will probably be more like Tech than any other thing you could do. You'll be forced to be some insane tenured professors slave, work 26 hour days and 14 hour nights, and live in cardboard "graduate housing."

If you're a wuss, you can also try to get a Masters degree instead of a PhD, giving you the same choices in another year, but that's the coward's way out.

Another option that continues your schooling, but gets you a little bit out of the sciences is to go to Law, Med or Business school. These have similar short turn benefits and problems of science grad school, except that you will be hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt more short term, and

many hundreds of thousands of dollars richer in the long term.

Unfortunately you'll probably need a higher GPA and professors that don't hate you to write recommendations², so this option tends to be only available for those too in love with science to be interested.

If you'd rather avoid spend-

Just remember, if you put "wrote real, investigative news for the Tech" on your resume you can get almost any job you want.

ing more time studying and being graded, you may want to get a job. You can work as a scientist or engineer for some tech company, or in business or some other field unrelated³ to your time at Tech. This has the benefit of instant gratification monetarily, as well as being as far from the Caltech experience as possible.

On the downside, you're giving up on science, and you wasted four years of your prime at a very very difficult school when you could have been at Ohio State

partying.

You could also do Teach for America or decide to teach science below the college level as a career, but this is another cowards way out, so you can claim you're in "science" without the pain and misery (although you will get the low salary and constant politics).

Another option would be to do something EXTREME, or possibly to the max, such as joining the military, the Peace Corps⁴, a jam band, a cult or become a helicopter pilot that fights crime (as a were-wolf). I'd tell you all the good and bad parts of these, but it's pretty obvious you shouldn't do any of them. You're just not cut out for them, as a Techer, except for Were-wolf Dave, who would probably be really good in a jam band.

Your final option is taking a year off. This is recommended for people with very wealthy and giving parents, winning lottery tickets, people who are sure they're finally going to start turning a profit playing online poker and seniors who are reading this and didn't realize until five minutes ago that it is May, and prob-

ably too late to apply for a job or grad school.

This will make you less money than a job, but more money than non-science med school. It will be more fun than most of the other options, but also more boring and of course you'd be wasting your life. That is why this is probably your best choice, since it really is a middle ground in most ways.

So now you know all your options, and hopefully you'll make a wise decision (although, lets admit it, you're probably going to screw this one up too). Just remember, if you put "wrote real, investigative news for the Tech" on your resume you can get almost any job you want.

Footnotes

¹ As if you still love science.

² Nelson Gelatin Dessert

³ Bees! In the room next to the silver sailfish.

⁴ Hopefully by now you're assuming that these footnotes are going to be used as clues for Ditch Day. But before you jump to any conclusions, consider that I might just be lazy and didn't feel like including real footnotes. Or did I?

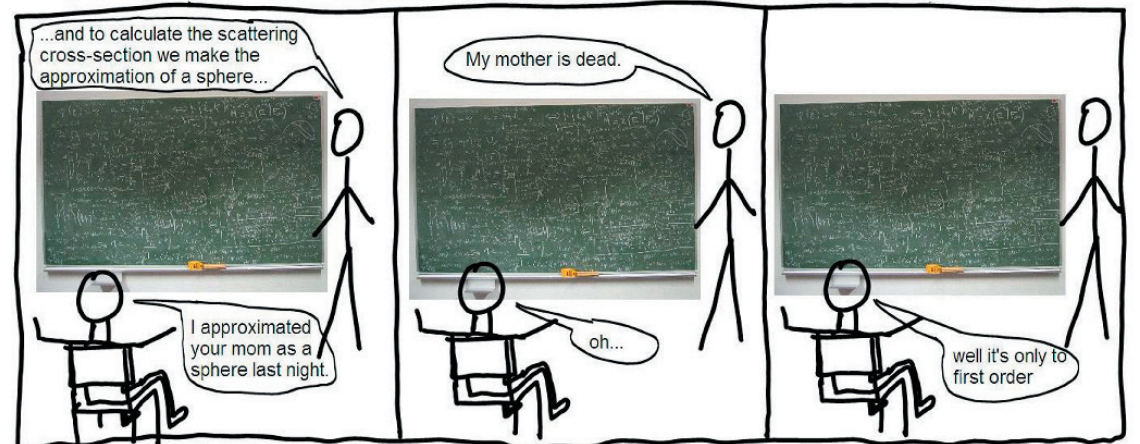
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