

## McAfee Says Free Econ Textbook Use Disappointing: Few Adaptations, Revisions

By **Natalya Kostandova**

STAFF WRITER

Three years since the completion of its original version, Dr. Preston McAfee's Introduction to Economic Analysis continues to undergo a variety of changes. Unlike its usual counterparts, McAfee's brainchild is an open-source textbook that is updated constantly and is currently expected to face some major modifications. In addition to working on a complete revision of the book, as well as introducing an additional author, McAfee recently granted Flat World Knowledge, a start-up publishing company that is due to start its operation in 2009, the rights to his book. Flat World Knowledge will edit and peer-review the book, while providing it free online and at a low cost in print, as well as allowing instructors to adopt and edit the book for their own use.

McAfee, who joined Caltech's faculty in 2004, became intrigued with an idea of creating a free textbook when he was asked to teach Ec 11 and found that none of the standard economic books available for use were appropriate. In fact, McAfee found them "widely inappropriate, and some actually stupid." Taking into consideration the over \$100 prices for these books, McAfee decided to embark on a mission to create a book that would not only be available free, but would also serve as a bridge between a lighter introduction to economics and a more developed, advanced textbook that takes into consideration the mathematics of economics as well as a wider variety of topics.

Encouraged by the positive reaction from administration and by the environment of the institute, with Caltech, according to McAfee, "full of people who act differ-

ently," McAfee went on to create a book that not only includes a myriad of topics on introductory and intermediate subjects, but also some topics that have rarely been addressed before, like multi-tasking development. McAfee's book has been downloaded about 15 thousand times in full length, with one thousand physical copies having been purchased so far.

Although Introduction to Economic Analysis has been used as a primary course textbook in Harvard, Claremont McKenna, Verona University, West Chester University, Simon Fraser, as well as by Prof. Simon Wilke, who taught Ec 11 at Caltech in previous years, McAfee is disappointed that his book did not become a huge collaborative project he intended it to be. Although the textbook has been used extensively, in particular by individual engineers, there have been few adaptations and full-scale revisions by other users.

To McAfee, existence of appropriate and affordable, or in this case, free, textbooks is important. "Our business is creation and dissemination of knowledge," McAfee said about Caltech. "We've been doing well with creation, but we've really fallen down on the dissemination part." With McAfee heavily opposed to the high prices charged by publishers for ideas developed by other people, writing Introduction to Economic Analysis became a way to provide students with material without going through the publishers and expensive materials.

Although McAfee does not profit from his textbook, he is not bothered by such lack of profit from his creation. He said, "If I want to make money, I consult."

McAfee, the J. Stanley Johnson Professor of Business, Economics, and Management, is currently on leave to Yahoo!.



## Caltech VS. Harvard Airs Week of November 10th

**Teachers**, from left, Craig Vieregg, Dannah Almasco, Josh Weiner, Ryan Newton, and Mike Gherini participated last Saturday in the Family Feud College Tournament in Hollywood, California. The single-elimination tournament lasted all day and will air the week of November 10th, 2008.

## Alumni Gift Allows Students to Travel for Personal Growth, Not Academics

By **Marissa Cevallos**

EDITOR -IN- CHIEF

More students will be able to travel to foreign countries on Caltech's tab after a recent alumni gift.

The San Pietro Travel Fund grew to \$350,000 after Craig San Pietro '69 augmented the prize last week. Founded in 2006, the prize allots \$12,000 each summer for a handful of students to visit any country.

Last summer, three pairs of students traveled to China, Ireland, and Uruguay. The recent gift should allow another prize for 2009, according to Fellowships Director Lauren Stolper.

The restrictions on the travel prize are few—it must be non-academic, it may last anywhere from two weeks to three months, and current sophomores, juniors, and seniors may apply. There are no GPA requirements, and as pointed out in the application, students may visit countries with travel warnings.

Rene Davis '08 and Nick Goeden '08 spent two weeks in Ireland this June on \$4700, from playing music in bars in Galway to discovering—through pub banter—the tense relations between

the religiously divided north and south of Ireland.

The most trying time for the pair was a sleepless, homeless night in Cork waiting for a morning train. After missing the last night train out to Galway, they hopped from pub to pub trying to find anywhere that was open 24-hour. Davis said she "caught a glimpse of what it must be like to be homeless" as night watchmen shooed them away from the bus stops they ducked under to keep out of the wind.

"It was a humbling experience, and really opened our eyes to one aspect of human suffering," said Davis.

Brandt Belson '08 and Zhonglin "Johnny" Zhang '08 had to revise their trip to Western China after the Sichuan earthquake hit.

"For a while weren't even sure we could go at all," said Belson, "but in the end we only missed a few places."

Belson said the highlights of the trip were the national parks in the Jiuzhaigou Valley, a 1992 UNESCO World Heritage site known for its waterfalls, and at Huanglong, where calcite deposits color the 2.5 kilometer river stretching from an ancient Buddhist temple to the Xishen Cave Waterfall.

Staying within budget wasn't a problem, Belson explains, as goods were relatively cheap, but not being able to speak to anyone in English was a big challenge.

"At times it felt like I was watching a TV show in another language."

San Pietro isn't a stranger to unexpected travel experiences. He's been "held up in Mexico City, had a bus driver handcuffed and arrested in the Yucatan, driven through rivers in Honduras, and been married in Peru..." according to a laundry list of off-beat travel experiences on the Fellowships and Study Abroad website. San Pietro has traveled to almost 40 countries since graduating from Caltech in 1969.

"Exotic travel is giving oneself the opportunity to be in cultural and physical situations so different from what one is accustomed to that one is mentally challenged and feels more alive than usual," writes San Pietro on the website.

"This travel has greatly enriched my life and I want to make similar experiences available to Caltech students."

The deadline for summer 2009 proposals is March 1. An informational meeting for prospective applicants will be held on Nov 21 at noon in the Brennan Conference Room.

The Deans Office is looking for tutors in all courses but especially the core.

The pay ranges from \$12.50 to \$15.50 per hour depending on your year of study.

Please have anyone interested and qualified complete the enclosed forms and return them to the Deans Office attn:

Beth Larranaga: [rosel@caltech.edu](mailto:rosel@caltech.edu).

Caltech VS. Occidental

page 7



### In This Issue

The Last Debate  
New Kids on the Block  
Infinite Jest a Blast to Read

page 2  
page 3  
page 6



Defending Political Activism  
page 6

## Election 2008 The Last Debate

**By Wesley Yu**  
STAFF WRITER

Students at Caltech may have a new friend in the White House: Senator Barack Obama. In

the last Presidential debate of the 2008 election season, Obama made very clear his commitment to increasing federal funding for research, especially in the areas of alternative energy and education. He also committed to making college affordability a priority in his administration.

By contrast, Senator John McCain has proposed spending freezes, rejecting what he deems overspending in favor of "reform."

The most concerning thing about Senator McCain's position in Wednesday's debate was his willingness to cut the federal budget without carefully considering the consequences. Though his intentions of reducing the national debt and eliminating beauracratc waste are admirable, funding for research and education would likely be decimated in a McCain administration. Senator Obama

takes a completely different approach. He said during the debate that "if we're going to get serious about solving problems, we need to give more funding to research." Obama seems to

### On The Issues

**Energy: Obama**  
**Education: Obama**  
**Economy: Obama**  
**Foreign Policy: McCain**  
**Healthcare: Obama**  
**Fiscal Responsibility: McCain**  
**Overall Winner: Obama**

understand better the crucial role of science in maintaining this country's position as the world's leading military and economic superpower.

The most heated part of the debate was when the candidates were asked about the negativity in their respective campaigns. Obama, who by some measures has spent the most on negative ads in the history of Presidential campaigns, was unapologetic. He quickly turned his focus to the problems facing the country saying that people are "are less interested in our hurt feelings during the course of the campaign than addressing the issues that matter to them so deeply."

Accused of allowing racism and violent comments in his rallies, McCain said that he was proud of the people attending his rallies, but would repudiate any such comments. But in the same breath, McCain fired off several unsubstantiated accusations about Obama, perhaps forgetting that he had just denied being negative. Senior moment, perhaps?

### The California Tech

Caltech 40-58, Pasadena, CA 91125  
advertising e-mail: [business@caltech.edu](mailto:business@caltech.edu)  
editorial e-mail: [tech@caltech.edu](mailto:tech@caltech.edu)

*Editor-in-Chief*  
Marissa Cevallos

*Business Managers*  
Robin Abraham

*Photography Editor*  
Jonathan Tsai

*Layout Editors*  
Hanna Liu  
Yang Yang

*Webmaster*  
Michael Comstock

*Staff*  
Dannah Almasco  
ZeNan Chang  
Molly Davis  
Andrea Dubin  
Mark Eichenlaub  
Andrew Freddo  
Anna Hiszpanski  
Michelle Jiang  
Robert Karl  
Chris Kennelly  
Natalya Kostandova  
Vibha Laljani  
Harold Martin  
Sarah Marzen  
Sara McBride  
Craig Montuori  
Sonia Tikoo  
Gloria Tran  
Wesley Yu

*Circulation*  
Aryan Safaie

*Adviser*  
Dr. Gary Libman

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](mailto: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](mailto:business@caltech.edu). For subscription information, please send mail to "Subscriptions."

## Caltech Goes Too Far

**By Evans Boney**  
STAFF WRITER

I am writing this in response to the campus email we have gotten recently about political activism. This represents my personal opinion and is no way representative of the Caltech student opinion. I support Barack Obama. I think you should too. I am outraged.

Here's why: I recently bought an Obama-Biden Campaign flag for use outside my personal residence (which happens to be a Caltech owned lease property). I was told today, 3 days after we put it up, that security was going to throw it away if I didn't take it down. This is an absolute outrage and I will not stand for it. I do not care if Caltech wants to remain non-partisan, this is over the line. I will absolutely fly my campaign flag outside my personal residence and, just for good measure, maybe I'll invest in some Obama '08 curtains.

Caltech goes too far with section G of their current graduate

housing agreements, which, according to Senior Director of Housing Tim Chang, prevents graduate students from posting campaign flags in or around their residence because it "alters" the residence. Yeah, right. I doubt a sign in a window, or stuck in my garden, or hung outside my door really alters the feng shui, much less the foundation, of my apartment.

This leads me to question the email sent earlier this summer by Hall Daily. While he claims "Caltech encourages freedom of expression, and Caltech faculty, students, and staff are free to join with others in support of candidates for public office or in furtherance of political causes", it appears this is not the case, to the extent that my opinions are to be suppressed at my very residence. Therefore I wonder, was that email meant to make students stop and think before they express themselves poilitically? I know that so far my efforts at "freedom of expression" have been seriously discouraged by Caltech Housing.

If you support a candidate on this campus, do it loudly. Put up a campaign flag in your personal residence, paint a mural, wear an Obama or McCain shirt, and do whatever the heck you want short of actually altering anyone's property. Organize a Democratic students rally, march from one end of campus to another, do a politically motivated hack (it would get some press...), show the world that you care.

We may live at Caltech, but our rights don't end here. Join me in expressing your disgust with the stifling of graduate student political opinion by sending a blank email to Tim Chang, Senior Director of Housing at [tpkmc@caltech.edu](mailto:tpkmc@caltech.edu), subject "Change Section G".



## From the President's Desk...

*Improving the Caltech student experience: Venturing beyond the "bubble"*

**By Caleb Ng**  
COLUMNIST

A common thread at the eight colleges and universities visited during the Student Experience Trip was the "bubble," the modern student's version of the ivory tower.

Since we generally think that the "bubble" is an experience unique to Caltech students, the SET Team was quite surprised to observe it elsewhere. And it is perhaps true that we are more prone to disconnect from the outside world, even as a presidential election and the financial crisis swirl around us.

Caltech's core educational objective is "to provide an outstanding education that prepares students to become world leaders in science, engineering, academia,

business, and public service."

No matter which of these we choose, as leaders we should strive to make a positive impact on people from all backgrounds. Exposure to different environments can provide context and perspective to enable us to do so.

Students at Caltech have many opportunities available to them. Two good starting points when seeking guidance are the little t and donut, two ASCIT publications with extensive listings of new and interesting food and cultural options in Pasadena and the greater Los Angeles area.

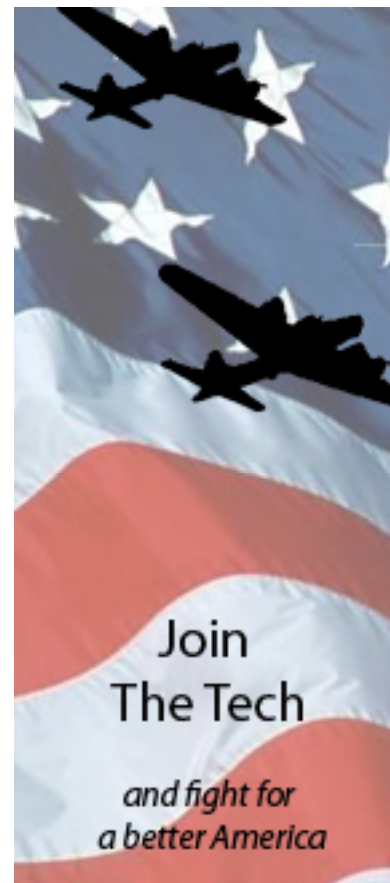
In fact, since LA is the entertainment capital of the world, you should take advantage of social team-sponsored trips like last year's trip to The Price is Right or the Caltech Y-sponsored Explore LA series.

MOSH Cathy Jurca brings

students to various musical and theatrical events with faculty members, and Campus Life has a stockpile of Metro tokens available for students. Even including the study abroad programs and travel grants barely scratches of what Student Affairs offers in this realm.

If nothing within the dizzying array of existing options piques your interest, you can follow the example of one Caltech sophomore, who recently founded the Fun Club.

The ASCIT leadership will be taking an off-campus retreat next weekend to consider other new ways to continue improving the Caltech student experience in this and other ways. Be a part of the conversation—let us know your needs and wants, concerns and suggestions.



## The New Kids on the Block

### Caltech welcomes new faculty

#### Jean-Paul Ampuero Saenz, Assistant Professor of Seismology

Jean-Paul Ampuero, a Peruvian citizen, earned his degrees at University of Paris. Ampuero's research focuses on assessing, preventing, and mitigating earthquake hazards, "in particular in large urban areas close to subduction zones, like in Peru, my native country. I am building up a team around the broad earthquake physics theme, with a



Photo from : [www.gps.caltech.edu/people/ampuero/profile](http://www.gps.caltech.edu/people/ampuero/profile)

mixture of theoretical, computational and observational approaches," said Ampuero Saenz, "Students are welcome to join us."

#### Matilde Marcolli, Professor of Mathematics

The Professor of Mathematics studied Theoretical Physics at the University of Milan and received his PhD in Mathematics at the University of Chicago. After working at MIT and the Max Plank Institute for Mathematics, Marcolli traveled through 21 countries organizing conferences, lecturing, and training graduate students. Amongst all his work, the math professor plays didgeridoo, reads the ancient Greek classics, and writes science fiction stories in his free time. Marcolli holds a unique view on government politics, or the lack of it. "I am an anarchist," said Marcolli, "but I would vote for Obama if I could."

#### Thomas F. Miller, III, Assistant Professor of Chemistry

After completing his BS at Texas A&M University, Miller received his PhD at Oxford University under a British Marshall scholarship. Miller works with theoretical chemistry with his new lab group of 2 graduate students and 2 post-docs. Miller's lab devices methods to predict chemical processes such as how biological molecules interact and function. "I have worked with people here before," said Miller "I like the heat and am excited to be back." On November 14, you can watch the young professor and his wife run at the 1st Annual Pasadena Marathon.



Photo from: <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~matilde/work.html>

#### Matthew Shou-Chung Shum, Professor of Economics

Matthew Shum studied at Columbia University and received his PhD at Stanford. After teaching in Toronto and Johns Hopkins, he is now the Professor of Economics at Caltech. "I am amazed at the undergraduate's strong math background," said Shum, "It is a pleasant surprise and makes my students fun to teach." [no photo available]

#### Erik Snowberg, Assistant Professor of Economics and Political Science.

After finishing his BS in Physics, Mathematics, and Earth Science at MIT, Snowberg spent four years working with computer startups before getting his business degree at Stanford. The professor teaching business strategy and public policies has once run for city council during his undergraduate at MIT. "Students think of humanities as filler, something they have to take," said Snowberg, "I hope to change that perception."



photo from : <http://www.hss.caltech.edu/~snowberg/>

the  
**Hertz**  
FOUNDATION  
*freedom to innovate*

**Floris van Breugel**  
Biological Engineering

CONGRATULATIONS

**The Fannie and John Hertz Foundation** announces a Fall 2008 Fellowship Award to California Institute of Technology student, Floris van Breugel.

Mr. van Breugel is one of 16 Hertz Foundation Fellows chosen this year to receive a five year **Graduate Fellowship Award of up to \$240,000** in the Applied Physical, Biological or Engineering Sciences.

The Hertz Foundation would like to extend congratulations to **The California Institute of Technology** for attracting this Fellow to its graduate program.

Learn more or Apply for a 2009 Hertz Foundation's Fellowship  
[www.hertzfoundation.org](http://www.hertzfoundation.org)

## deshaw.C:3141: warning: unused object 'suit'

There are some financial firms where technology doesn't take a back seat. The D. E. Shaw group is a highly successful investment and technology development firm with an international reputation and a decidedly different approach to doing business. We offer a stimulating work environment and colleagues from the strongest technical programs in the world. They're not conventional "financial types," but then again, neither are we.

The firm currently has openings in quantitative analysis, software development, information technology, computer architecture, and computational chemistry.

*Members of the D. E. Shaw group do not discriminate in employment matters on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, military service eligibility, veteran status, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, or any other protected class.*

Our work environment is challenging but surprisingly flexible—from the clothes you wear, to the time you get to the office, it's pretty much up to you. And we compensate our extraordinary people extraordinarily well.

To apply for an interview, log on to NACELink. If this isn't possible, please send a resume and cover letter stating your GPA and standardized test scores, broken down by section where applicable, to [jobs@deshaw.com](mailto:jobs@deshaw.com).

[jobs@deshaw.com](mailto:jobs@deshaw.com)

DE Shaw & Co



"I believe the work that I do matters."



**MYEISHA PEGUERO GAMIÑO, MAHOD '03**

Vice President and Corporate Giving Manager  
Washington Mutual, Inc.

### *What's your journey?*

APU's graduate business degree reinforced Myeisha's desire to be a leader of change through Washington Mutual's community programs.

To learn more about Myeisha's inspiring story, and to explore the accelerated and traditional MBA and Master of Arts in Human Resource and Organizational Development programs:

**CLICK** ➤ [www.apu.edu/explore/sbm](http://www.apu.edu/explore/sbm)

**CALL** ➤ (866) 209-1559

**EMAIL** ➤ [sbmgrad@apu.edu](mailto:sbmgrad@apu.edu)

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT » Graduate Programs

## CALTECH MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

## A LEADERSHIP FORUM

## PRESENTS

# MATHEMAGICS: MATH MADE MAGICAL!

Dr. Arthur Benjamin will dazzle and delight you with his dynamic “Mathemagics” presentation. In his day job, he’s a professor of mathematics at Harvey Mudd College. In his other calling, he’s a Mathemagician, taking the stage in a tuxedo to perform high-speed mental calculations, memorization, and other astounding math stunts. Join us for an enthralling session of mental gymnastics, together with some awe-inspiring magic tricks.

Dr. Benjamin specializes in combinatorics, game theory, and operations research. He earned his B.S. in applied mathematics from Carnegie Mellon University and his Ph.D. in mathematical sciences from Johns Hopkins University. He has written three books and is co-editor of *Math Horizons* magazine. In 2000, the Mathematical Association of America awarded him the Haimo Prize for Distinguished Teaching. *Reader’s Digest* called Dr. Benjamin “America’s Best Math Whiz” in their “Best of America” issue.

This event is free. All members of the Campus and JPL communities and retirees are welcome. Following the performance, there will be a book-signing session, and pizza will be served. The CMA gratefully acknowledges the Caltech Y and the Caltech Math Club for help in promoting this event. For more information, please send e-mail to [cma.announce@jpl.nasa.gov](mailto:cma.announce@jpl.nasa.gov) or call Doris Shimabukuro, (626) 395-3652.



Photo by Harvey Mudd College/Kevin Mapp

Photo by Anne White

## Arthur Benjamin

Professor of Mathematics,  
Harvey Mudd College

**TUESDAY,  
OCTOBER 21,  
2008**

**12:00 NOON  
TO 1:15 P.M.**

**RAMO  
AUDITORIUM,  
CALTECH**

**PIZZA SERVED  
AFTER  
PERFORMANCE**

Membership in the Caltech Management Association is open to JPL and Caltech employees and contractors for \$10 per year. Join now or renew your membership for Fiscal Year 2009 by visiting <http://cma.jpl.nasa.gov/membership.html>

# *A postmodern novel... ... that might make your head explode.*

by David Renshaw

I first came across David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* about four years ago. A friend of mine had buried his nose in it for practically the whole summer.

What intrigued me was that he had a hard time explaining what the thing was even about. The most I could gather was that *Infinite Jest* is zany, satirical and difficult, that it somehow involves competitive tennis and drug addicts, and that its action takes place in the Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment.

It was not until this spring, after reading another work by Mr. Wallace—who is, by the way, a certified MacArthur genius—that I decided finally to give *Jest* a go. That other work was the 44-page essay *E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction*, in which Wallace dissects the relationship between two of his central preoccupations.

It is devastatingly lucid, relentlessly analytical, and a roaring good time to read. I was sold.

My ten-dollar tenth-anniversary 2006 edition *Jest*, containing 1079 dense pages of Wallace, arrived from Amazon the following week. It has more than fulfilled my expectations.

So many things happen in *Infinite Jest*, and the thread connecting them is at times so thin, that any plot summary is likely doomed to be a gross simplification.

Much of the novel deals with the wake left by the brilliant but tragically aloof James O. Incandenza, a man who “lived up to his own promise and then found thing after thing to meet and surpass the expectations of his promise in, and didn't seem just a whole hell of a lot happier or tighter wrapped than his own failed father....”

In his first career, Incandenza was a optical scientist, developing “annular fusion,” an energy-producing process which miraculously creates no waste, but the grotesque side-effects of which nonetheless have rendered large tracts of New England uninhabitable.

Next, he made a fortune in the business world and then founded a tennis-centric boarding school.

Finally, in his forties, Incandenza launched a career as a director of small-audience art films. The last work he finished before killing himself (with a microwave oven) was a movie that is reportedly so addictively entertaining that it's deadly. Québécois terrorists are now trying to obtain the master copy in order to wreak havoc in America, in retaliation for the U.S.A.'s forceful cession to Canada of the now uninhabitable New England territory.

Thus the stage is set. The narrative spotlight of *Infinite Jest* is then shared among (with many others): 17-year-old Hal Incandenza, a tennis/literary prodigy with a marijuana problem; older brother Orin Incandenza, NFL punter with a hankering for young & married mothers; Joelle van Dyne, the Prettiest Girl Of All Time, but never seen without a veil these days; Don Gately, a recovering Demerol addict and one-time burglar who unfortunately chose the wrong Canadian to burgle/rob; Rémy Marathe and Hugh Steeply, a legless triple agent and an obese transvestite who discuss at length, and cartoonishly symbolize in their persons, their respective Canadian and American worldviews.

The novel follows these characters as

they search for James Incandenza's lethally addictive film and as they struggle against their own addictions to alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, sex, abuse, television, self-improvement, self-pity, and just about anything else you can think of.

Perhaps the reason that *Infinite Jest* is so difficult to summarize is that it really doesn't have a plot in the traditional sense. What it has is more like a loose framework from which are hung a dizzying series of standalone anecdote-type stories that are thematically related and happen to converge somewhat as the novel moves forward.

All of this makes for terrific, if unconventional, entertainment. Many of the short stories concern the Incandenza past; one of Wallace's principal aims, it seems, is to paint an intricate portrait of this wildly dysfunctional family.

The result is frighteningly interesting. We watch the Incandenzas in action. We enter their heads, e.g. “One of his troubles with his Moms is the fact that Avril Incandenza believes she knows him inside and out as a human being, and an internally worthy one at that, when in fact inside Hal there's pretty much nothing at all, he knows.”

His Mom Avril hears her own echoes inside him and thinks what she hears is him, and this makes Hal feel the one thing he feels to the limit lately: he is lonely.”

We come to love their quirks. We learn what they think of themselves and one another. The best part is when we are treated to extensive psychoanalyses by family outsiders. This comes only after we have already had plenty of time to learn about and identify with the Incandenzas, so it feels rather like a direct diagnosis of the reader. It is quite enlightening. I almost want to hire Mr. Wallace as my personal psychiatrist.

One of the greatest pleasures of *Infinite Jest* is experiencing Wallace's cunning analytical sense. The novel includes several charming essay-like passages on semi-fictional topics such as the failure of videophones, the decline of cable television, and the taxonomy of depression: your dull “simple melancholy,” e.g. “post-[metaphorical-]carrot anhedonia,” versus your actively painful “psychotic depression.”

Philosophical musings are also sprinkled throughout, and it is amazing how sincere and accurate Wallace can be without sounding sappy. But perhaps most fascinating are the places where Hal and Joelle articulate complex these about James Incandenza's movies.

These time-out-for-film-criticism moments allow Wallace to comment obliquely about *Infinite Jest* itself, to reassure any reader whose interest might be flagging by page, say, 742—and they are also entertaining in their own right, as pieces of energetic and plot-furthering analysis.

Of course, it's easy for an author to be cunningly analytical about his own fictional creations, but something about these passages is inspiring to me, in the same way that I imagine watching *Kill Bill* must be inspiring to martial-arts wannabes—it's obviously choreographed, but beautiful nonetheless.

Simply put, *Infinite Jest* gives me new faith in the powers of verbalization and

analysis. You might just want to become a philosophy major after reading it.

Wallace's prose itself is another high point. His writing style shifts to match the voice of whichever character is currently center of attention. At the one end of the spectrum we have the crisp, articulate thoughts of Hal Incandenza. At the other end we have the character-revealing misspellings of Don Gately (e.g. “highatus” and “objay dart”) and the amusingly faltering syntax of a native speaker of Québécois French.

We are treated to an erudition on pharmaceutical compounds and to a propensity for breathless run-on sentences. Sometimes Wallace gets a little too long-winded or smart-alecky, but these moments are rare. Mostly, he just demonstrates how talented he is at taking modern conversational American English, bending it to his will, and making it lyrical.

Here is single sentence, to give you an idea:

“The Crocodiles up front look into the rearview mirror and narrow their baggy bright-white eyes at Gately in the sagging backseat with the other new guys, and the Crocodiles say they can't even begin to say how many new guys they've seen Come In and then get sucked back Out There, Come In to AA for a while and Hang In and put together a little sober time and have things start to get better, head-wise and life-quality-wise, and after a while the new guys get cocky, they decide they've gotten 'well,' and they get really busy at the new job sobriety's allowed them to get, or maybe they buy Celtics tickets, or they rediscover pussy and start chasing pussy (these withered gnarled toothless totally post-sexual old fuckers actually say pussy), but one way or another these poor cocky clueless new bastards start gradually drifting away from rabid Activity In The Group, and then away from their Group itself, and then little by little gradually drift away from any AA meetings at all, and then, without the protection of meetings or a Group, in time—oh there's always plenty of time, the Disease is fiendishly patient—how in time they forget what it was like, the ones that've cockily drifted, they forget who and what they are, they forget about the Disease, until like one day they're at like maybe a Celtics-Sixers game, and the good old Fleet/First Interstate Center's hot, and they think what could just one cold foamer hurt, after all this sober time, now that they've gotten 'Well.'”

To adopt Graham Robb's turn of phrase: you will not be the same person after reading *Infinite Jest*, and not only because it will take a noticeable fraction of your lifetime to complete.

Make no mistake, *Infinite Jest* is difficult. Wallace has in fact admitted to writing “sentences that are syntactically not incorrect but still a real bitch to read.

Or bludgeoning the reader with data.

Or devoting a lot of energy to creating expectations and then taking pleasure in disappointing them.”

But if you can handle the beating (and if you have sufficient leisure time) you'll probably come out asking for more.

*Infinite Jest* is at once apocalyptic and banal, funny and sad to the extreme. Above all it is entertaining. Give this one a look.

## Sports Briefs

### Soccer Looks to bounce back following home losses

The Caltech men's soccer team will be looking to end their four-game homestand on a high note on Wednesday after dropping three straight against Haverford, Redlands and Occidental last week. The team was outscored a total of 11-1 in the three games they played, with the long goal coming in a 5-1 defeat against Haverford last Monday. The losses dropped the team's record this season to 0-14-1, including a winless 0-10 in conference play.

The team had several spots to fill this season following the graduation of five seniors last year, including all-SCIAC second team Nathan Chan.

"One player who has stepped up to fill the gap is Gray Chadwick," team captain Daryl Coleman said. "At the beginning of the season he stepped in as goalkeeper and did a great job there [but with the arrival of freshman keeper Marcus Lucas] he has become just as big of an asset on the field."

Junior Tyler Volkoff has picked up some of the slack on offense by scoring five goals this season. The team has already equaled the number of goals they scored last season with seven.

"So far this season we've played really well," Coleman said. "While there have been a few games where we haven't done so well, this team is by far the best performing team I've seen during my time here. Against CMS, we played really well as a team. We've had quite a few starters out with injuries, but the team really stepped up and played well."

### Volleyball works back from injuries, illnesses

The Caltech women's volleyball team finished winless in four matches at the West Coast Baptist tournament held Friday and Saturday. The lady Beavers were dropped in three straight sets against Southwestern (Az), Multnomah and West Coast Baptist during round robin play and were knocked out in the single elimination phase by No. 1 seeded Southwestern again on Saturday.

Although Caltech were swept in all their games at the tournament, the team came within five points of winning several.

"It was frustrating," team captain Katie Peters said. "We came close in too many games to not win any."

For the majority of the team, the tournament format with back-to-back games was a new experience. In addition, the team is finally integrating injured starters back into the lineup.

"We're working a lineup that is relatively new," Peters said. "The team as a whole is getting over injuries and illnesses, and we finally have our stronger players being able to play at one time. Those two games were the best performances we had against both Southwestern and West Coast Baptist. We definitely played harder and kept the intensity up, we allow the other team to go on very few long runs."



**Top - Sophomore Alan Pezeshki goes for the ball as a Tiger defender closes in during Saturday's 3-0 loss against Occidental.**



**Right - Senior Pradeep Bugga runs down a loose ball while teammate sophomore Dongjin Seo watches. Occidental improved its record to 6-3-1 with the win while Caltech (0-10) is still seeking its first SCIAC win.**

## Upcoming Games

**Oct. 21**

Women's Volleyball at CMS  
7:30 P.M.

**Oct. 22**

Men's Soccer vs. Cal Lutheran  
4:00 P.M.

Men's Water Polo vs CMS  
7:00 P.M.

**Oct. 24**

Women's Volleyball at Cal Lutheran  
7:30 P.M.

**Oct. 25**

Men's Water Polo vs La Verne  
11:00 A.M.

Men's Soccer at La Verne  
11:00 A.M.



## The Weekly Scoreboard

**Oct. 13**

Men's Soccer vs. Haverford L 5-1  
Women's Volleyball vs. La Sierra L 3-0

**Oct. 15**

Men's Soccer vs. Redlands L 3-0  
Men's Water Polo vs. Chapman L 22-9

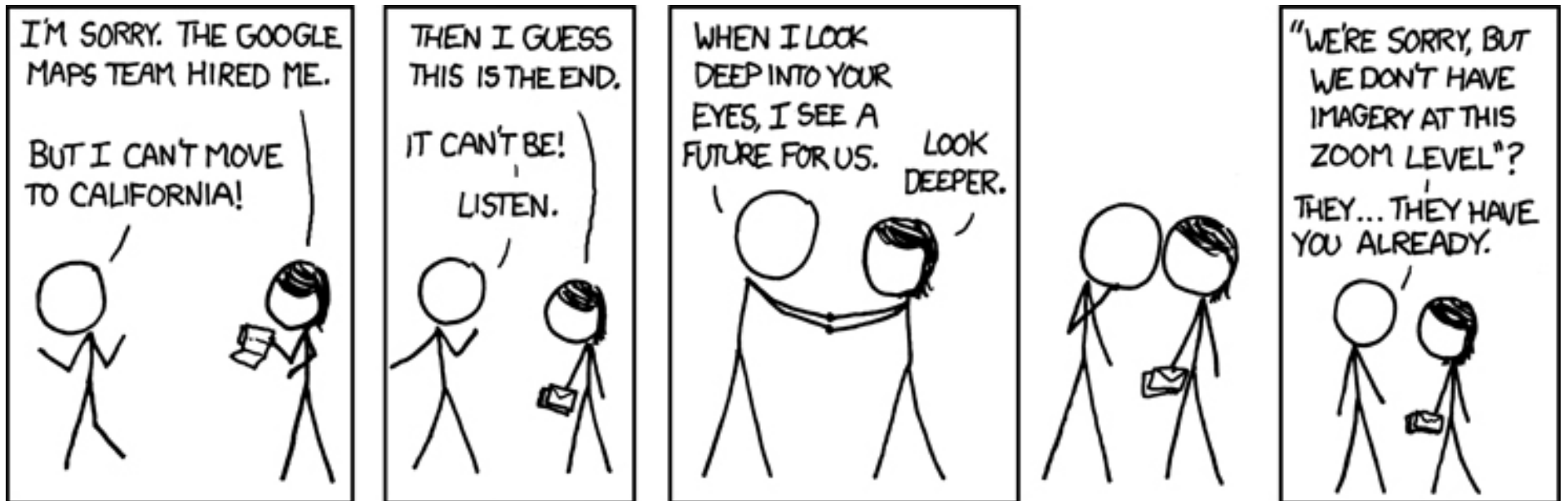
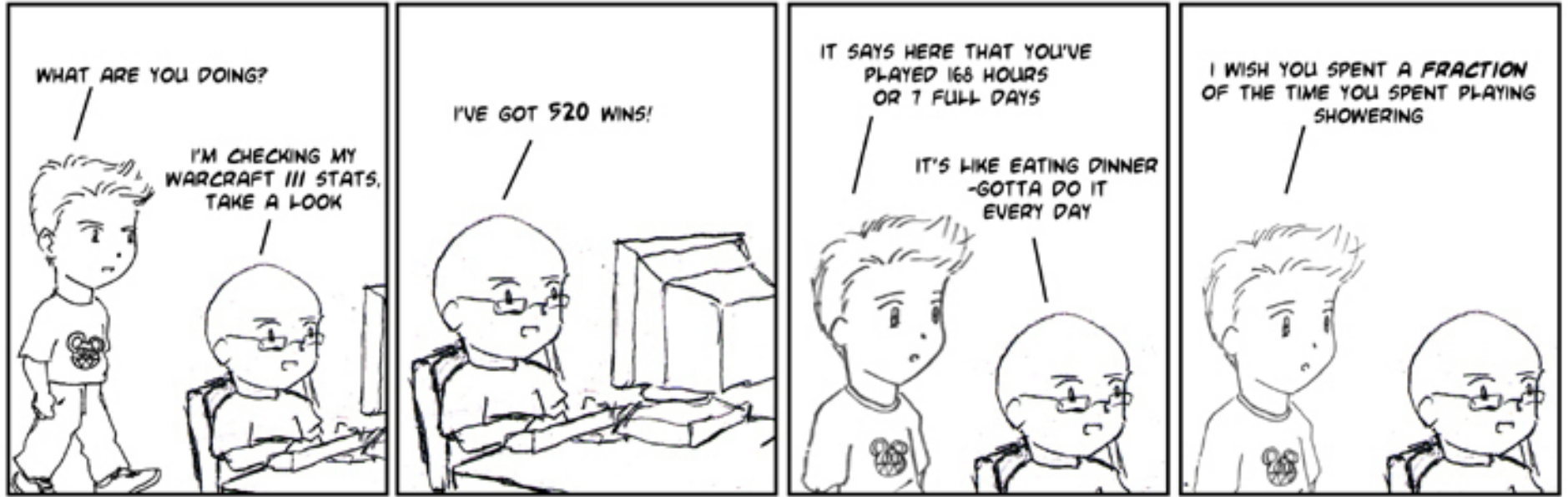
**Oct. 17**

Women's Volleyball vs. Southwestern (Az) L 3-0  
Women's Volleyball vs. Multnomah L 3-0

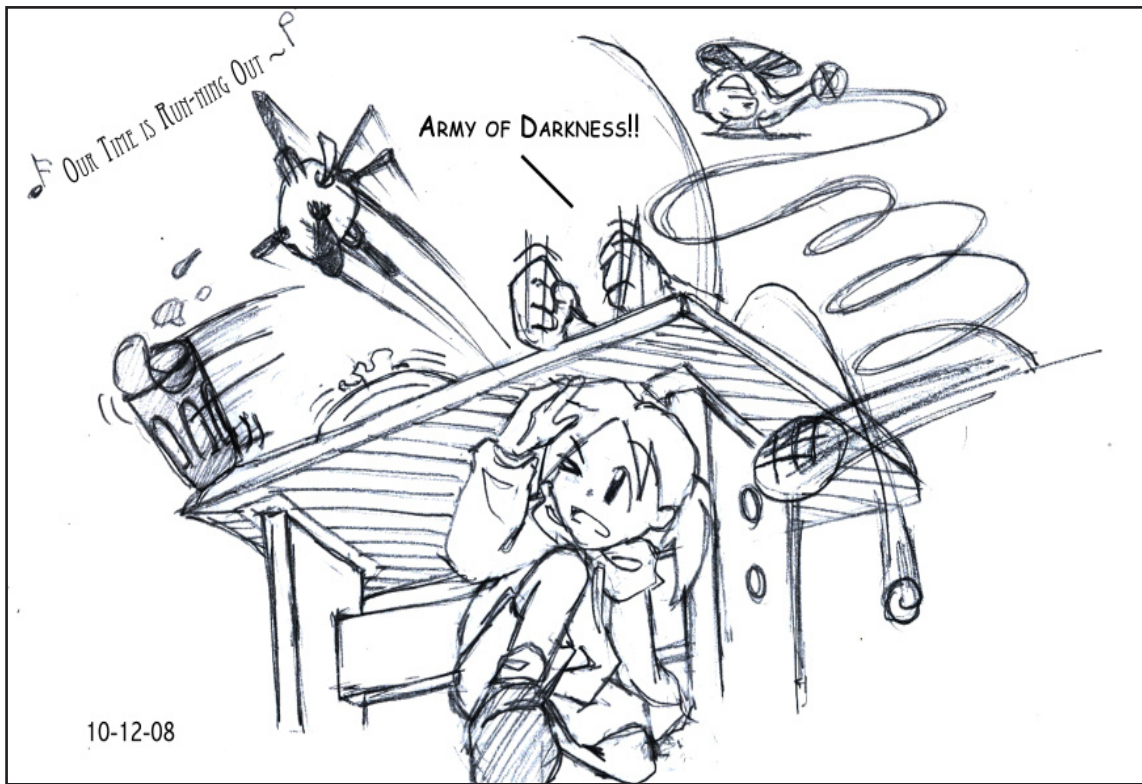
**Oct. 18**

Men's Soccer vs. Occidental L 3-0  
Women's Volleyball vs West Coast Baptist (Az) L 3-0  
Women's Volleyball vs. Southwestern L 3-0  
Men's Water Polo at Whittier L 21-8

## Comics



xkcd by Randall Munroe



### Surviving Dinner 101



### Free Stuff Fair

#### MORNING ROUTINE:

1. WAKE UP
2. CATCH UP ON THE LIVES OF FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD
3. GET OUT FROM UNDER THE COVERS

LAPTOPS ARE WEIRD.

xkcd by Randall Munroe

The California Tech  
 Caltech 40-58  
 Pasadena, CA 91125

Crippling Depression courtesy of Tim Wan, Mike Yeh, Ben Lee

Never Too Late to Transfer