

Still the best value

Caltech tops the Kiplinger list again

By McKenzie Day
STAFF WRITER

For the third year in a row, Caltech nabbed the top spot in Kiplinger's Best Value for a private university.

The financial magazine bases its top fifty list on academic quality and affordability, looking at twelve criteria that ranged from average debt to admission rate. Caltech won with its low graduation debt and low student to faculty ratio, based on data from Peterson's, an online guide to all levels of higher education.

According to Peterson's, Caltech students graduate with only \$6,268 in debt, making Caltech one of only two colleges on the list whose debt stops at four digits. Caltech also leads its competitors with its 3:1 student faculty ratio.

Other big names on the list include Yale at number two, Princeton at three, and rival MIT in eighth. Rice, in fourth place, boasts 5:1, with a 6:1 ratio reflecting more of the competing top schools.

Whether or not Caltech will remain at the top of this list in 2009 remains to be seen. The strain of the declining economy is causing the financial aid office to move funds from merit to need-based aid, and therefore change the cost of Caltech's education.

Caltech forced to cut budget by \$25 million

By David Renshaw
STAFF WRITER

In a speech to staff members about Caltech's financial situation in Beckman Auditorium last Monday, President Jean-Lou Chameau wasn't pleased to be the bearer of bad news.

"I can assure you that I have not slept much in the past few weeks," he said, before outlining sweeping budget cuts that the economic downturn has necessitated, including a 25 percent reduction in the campus library budget.

According to Chameau, in the last six months of 2008, Caltech's endowment probably shrunk by 25 to 30 percent. The actual number has not been released.

"Within a few weeks we will have a number, and it will likely be in that range, hopefully on the lower end," he said.

The endowment provides about 20 percent of Caltech's operating budget. Payout is based on a three-year average of the endowment's value, so even if the endowment recovers some losses, the effect of the downturn will be felt for at least the next three years.

Revenue from tuition will probably also shrink as families require more financial aid, and revenue from gifts will shrink as charitable foundations find their own portfolios hurting. Tuition provides about 5 percent of total operating revenue, and gifts provide about 15 percent.

Between 45 and 50 percent of operating



revenue comes from research grants and contracts. This money is not directly harmed by the market decline. However, competition for grants with other schools is likely to tighten. The Obama administration has promised to provide more federal funding for science, but it is as yet unclear whether Obama will be able to deliver and, if so, how much Caltech will benefit.

To deal with the squeeze, expenses will be decreased by 5 percent for fiscal year 2010, or between 25 and 30 million dollars. Changes implemented this year will reduce expenditures for 2009 by about 15 million dollars.

Reductions and Layoffs

Salaries make up between 60 and 65 percent of expenses, according to Chameau. "We will not be able to avoid a number of position reductions and layoffs," he said.

At this point, the auditorium became silent. Chameau then reassured his audience that he would try to minimize the use of such measures.

Chameau proposed three guidelines for deciding how to reduce expenses. First of all, Caltech must limit the impact on its core mission of education and research.

Second of all, Caltech must make changes that make sense in terms of long-term efficiency. Water and electricity together cost Caltech about \$20 million dollars every year, said Vice President for Business and Finance Dean Currie. A town hall meeting in late February or early March will discuss in depth the efficiency measures that Caltech plans to take and is already taking.

Three, Caltech must delay those things

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Priceless piano burned in fire

Police investigation to find arsonist is ongoing

By Casey Jao
STAFF WRITER

The Dabney Lounge piano received an unwelcome holiday gift over winter break. On Christmas Eve, someone entered Dabney Hall and set the nine-foot long concert-grand ablaze. The fire alarm soon activated and the sprinkler system doused the flames, but not before they had gutted the piano.

The 85-year old Steinway and Sons piano is considered a complete loss.

Gregg Henderson, chief of Caltech Security, said that "we know that someone was in [Dabney Lounge] just prior to the fire alarm going off. And we caught him on tape." Because the investigation is still ongoing, many specifics remain confidential.

However, Director of Security Operations William Heim, who is managing the case, stated: "We are actively investigating this [incident] with the Pasadena police and fire departments and will continue to do so until it is resolved."

Meanwhile, Mr. Heim stressed that it is "important... for our community to come together."

Mr. Henderson emphasized that "any information anyone can bring forward will be held in complete confidence."

According to Mr. Henderson, the Dabney Lounge fire alarm activated at approximately 9:52 PM



The piano in Dabney Hall before the fire.

on December 24, 2008. Security personnel responded within two minutes and were greeted by a smoldering carcass. Because the piano was located directly beneath a sprinkler, fire damage was localized to the instrument. This "very fortunate" coincidence po-

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Admissions spike, but money dries up

By Chris Kennelly
STAFF WRITER

The Caltech applicant pool has surged once again. 1050 students applied for Early Admission this year, up from, up from approximately 800 last year, and regular action applications increased to 4400 students, up 12% from last year, reports Rick Bischoff, Director of Admissions. 227 were accepted from the EA pool, 40% of whom were women. Underrepresented minorities also fared better than before.

"We've been very concerned about the economy and its impact," said Bischoff. "We pushed very aggressively in October. We did the easy stuff: more email and more communi-

cation."

As part of the push, the Admissions office started blogs and webinars. The office partnered with QuestBridge to reach out spur more applications from high-ability, low-income students.

Caltech's blogs differ somewhat from the usual admissions blog: "Were trying to build it around issues and topics [unlike our competitors' admission blogs]," says Bischoff. In the past week, Jules Gould, Avery House Chancellor, came on to blog about ME72.

The early webinars have been phenomenally successful: A one-hour November webinar attracted 450 students. Doing that in-person would require dispatching admissions officers to hotel conference rooms in several cities to

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Olive oil underwent healthier, tastier changes this year

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In defense of opt-out health insurance

By Wesley Yu
STAFF WRITER

Last week, I wrote a piece supporting Caltech's decision to allow students to waive health insurance. I said that students with double coverage will save \$2,000 each year, not a small sum in these tough economic conditions. Since then, I've heard some valid concerns about Caltech insurance. Those concerns are addressed here:

Concern: Since students who are double covered will be waiving Caltech insurance, the smaller pool of graduate students and others who depend on Caltech's policy will suffer higher premiums and fewer benefits.

Answer: Though there will be some changes to Caltech's insurance plan, they might not be as devastating as you might think. This week, Human Resources received bids from insurers, which

will determine the costs and benefits for next year's plan. Though the specifics of the bids will not be released publicly until Wednesday, people familiar with the bids are confident that changes will not be significant.

"Premiums always go up, but I think we'll be able to keep the costs from rising significantly without compromising benefits," says Angelica Santana, the Benefits Lead at Human Resources. The Health Committee will review the bids this Wednesday.

For graduate students, faculty and administrators are still working out the effects of the opt-out system. "It's still on the table," says Professor Anneila Sargent, Vice President for Student Affairs. "Caltech has a Cadillac of a health plan compared to other colleges, so hopefully we'll come up with some way to minimize the changes for graduate students."

Concern: If students are cov-

ered by their parent's health insurance, isn't it possible for the student's privacy to be violated?

Answer: No, parents won't necessarily be informed of a student's medical issues. "When my children were in college, I wasn't informed of what medical care they received, so there's no reason Caltech students will have their privacy violated," said Sargent.

Concern: What happens to a student with inadequate insurance or one who loses insurance in the middle of the year?

Answer: First of all, students will have to show that their health insurance meets certain requirements before waiving Caltech's plan. The requirements are designed to make sure students have adequate access to care in the Pasadena area and will receive a minimum amount of treatment. Caltech will not check these requirements, but will take students' word.

"We have to rely on people's honor, but if this becomes a problem, we will check more rigorously," says Prof. Sargent.

In cases when a student is either not covered for an emergency or has lost insurance, Caltech will make sure care is given. "The Institute will step up. Our students will not suffer because of change in insurance policies. In the event of an emergency the Institute will make sure students do not have lapses in care," says Prof. Sargent.

Of course I haven't covered everything that might concern you. But I do hope that knowing people are honestly working to resolve the most pressing issues surrounding the change in insurance policy will make you more willing to give this plan a try. If you have concerns or feel differently about the policy please write back to tech@caltech.edu.

We'd like to know your opinion.

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

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Business Managers
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Following in the footsteps of greatness ...or simply hoping for imitation?

By Travis Scholten
CONTRIBUTOR

If you look on the Caltech admissions site, you'd find a lot of web pages dedicated to the accomplishments and accolades of Caltech's faculty and alumni. From founder Robert Millikan to Gordon Moore, from Frank Capra to Linus Pauling and Richard Feynman, no doubt that many important contributions to science (and society in general) originated from the classrooms and labs of this Institute.

On that very same site, you'll find this statement: "Caltech is a scholarly and creative community where history and tradition coexist with a passion for innovation, intense intellectual curiosity, and a healthy amount of craziness...."

Now, I can agree with the last part of that line, but the first two phrases seem to stick out in their own special way. They stand in direct contrast to the Student Experience Conference report, where the following description of "Caltech Syndrome" was offered:

"Students come to Caltech highly passionate, excited, and interested in science, but a significant portion of them loses that passion by the end. Students feel like their intellectual curiosity has been crushed out of them, which is a comment that prompted many in the audience to laugh and raise their hands in agreement. Students all thought that science is cool, but then sometimes in the structured classes students lose sight of the coolness, learning that science is not what they liked before starting at Caltech." (SEC

report October 2008, page 21)

Now, it is not my purpose in writing this editorial to criticize the Institute or its workload. I agree there are many facets to the student-school interaction, none of which can be properly explored in an editorial.

Instead, I would like to turn your attention to this drastic contrast between the Admissions website and the SEC report. More specifically, I would ask you to consider the following question:

Are the Institute and the student body actually working toward the ideals and values that scientists like Feynman and Millikan stand for, or are they content to just try to imitate them?

What I mean is this: Scientists like Millikan and Feynman (especially Feynman!) were creative, engaging, curious people. They did what they wanted because they loved to do it.

While the work they did was primarily based in equations and math, it was the creative spark that those men possessed which made the equations possible.

Try to develop the sum-over-histories approach to quantum mechanics without asking the question "I wonder what happens if a particle chooses every possible path to travel?"

Try to measure the charge-to-mass ratio of the electron without being creative enough to design and build the apparatus to conduct the experiment.

No doubt it takes a certain flavor of mind to visualize and syn-

thesize new ideas.

So where do we stand as a community today? I think that each member of the community – faculty, students, and administration alike—all should put a little effort in trying to incubate a culture of creativity here at the Institute. Within these three different roles, there are many perspectives that should be addressed, but I hate to waste paper:

Faculty: Feynman was an amazing teacher. I realize that

"I feel that too often students don't say something about an issue that is bothering them because they feel nobody will listen to them anyway. We need to move past this roadblock, because otherwise nothing will ever change."

there are few who can imitate his style and manner of instruction, but the role of a professor at this school has never been just to convey information; it has been to inspire students to be bold, to be willing to try new things and foray down new paths of inquiry.

Instead of drowning students in facts and forcing them to digest huge quantities of information, faculty should focus on ensuring that not only do students understand the fundamental principles of the subject at hand, but also that they are also able to synthesize in creative ways this information and apply it in unique ways.

Administration: The role of administration has always been to take a 'big picture' look at the Institute, and develop the policies and procedures that enhance student life. I would challenge the administration to look at its poli-

cies and genuinely consider the possibility that some are actually stifling student creativity and expression. (The Core Curriculum is always something that comes up, so I don't feel I need to club that horse over the head anymore.)

Students: Students are the purpose of this school. It is our duty to ensure that the changes we feel need to be made are actually done. The current ASCIT restructuring plan is an example of such positive change.

I feel that too often students don't say something about an issue that is bothering them because they feel nobody will listen to them anyway. We need to move past this roadblock, because otherwise nothing will ever change. I would encourage this student body to look for ways they can make a small contribution toward making this Institute better.

Now, I'm only a freshman. I fully appreciate the fact I have such a limited experience with Caltech that I could be completely way off the mark with my comments. Nevertheless, even if I am, I think we all should take the time to look at our role with respect to the greater Caltech community, and ask:

'Am I really trying to make this place a school of learning that would be worthy of a teacher like Feynman or Pauling, or am I just trying to get by? Am I following in the footsteps of greatness, trying to learn how I can apply the lessons of their lives to my own work and research, or am I content for mere imitation?'

You can click your heels, but there's no place like Caltech

By Lauren Stolper

CONTRIBUTOR

As director of study abroad and as someone who did a graduate degree at Edinburgh many years ago and lived on the ground of St. John's College for several months more recently, I enjoyed reading the opinion pieces on study abroad and Caltech by Marissa Cevallos and Joel Nikolaus. They both made some excellent points and raised issues to contemplate regarding study abroad. I would like to enlarge on one point Joel made and on a second, both authors made.

Joel characterizes the "climate" of Cambridge as being cold and distant and he was not referring to the weather, but to the social climate of the university. This is the 10th anniversary of Caltech's exchange with Cambridge, which started in January of 1999, when four intrepid Techers landed in Cambridge in January. It was cold, but they enjoyed their experience so much that this pilot program has now allowed over 100 Caltech students to spend a term in Cambridge and return to tell the tale.

Entering any large university

(10,000 students for Cambridge and 20,000 for Edinburgh including graduate and undergraduates in all programs, e.g., medical school, law school), is going to be very different from the academic village of Caltech. (Note that former President David Baltimore very aptly characterized Caltech as one of the last academic villages in the very best sense of the meaning of a village or community.) At any large university classes are bigger and lectures are more formal, and this may make things seem more distant or aloof to the visitor.

At Cambridge discussion happens in the small supervisions that are related to lectures. And just as lecture quality at any university can range from tedious to terrific, supervisions can range from going over the problem sets to going well beyond the material presented in lecture.

Since, as the old saying goes, beauty, or in this case Cambridge, is in the eye of the beholder, I have included a few remarks that I received today from students who have just finished their first

week at Cambridge.

Although the climate is cold right now in Cambridge (about 45F), they are finding the Cambridge faculty and students to be warm and welcoming. Of course, they are also finding differences and are trying to put these in perspective. And that's why one travels to another culture.

Sujitha Martin '10/Engineer-

"While she returns to the same landscape and people, her voyage to Oz has developed her perspective and her own character. She now appreciates what she once took for granted and has a more charitable view of the place from which she came."

ing says, "As for meeting other people. I have met with my "parent" Alex Mansfield. He is a really nice guy. He has been very helpful. Even before I got to St. Catherine's he answered so many of my questions. People are really nice here. As for academics, it is really great. I really like the professors."

Matt Thill '09/Math muses, "My classes have been pretty good so far, though it is a little intimidating that there isn't much collaboration. And I have to say

I am not terribly looking forward to having class on Saturday (not uncommon in the maths department). But I like the math faculty that I've met so far, and the Pembroke College DoS (advisor) for Part II math students. Dr. Datta is very friendly.

After one of his instructors mentioned a Caltech faculty member during lecture, Matt introduced himself as being from Caltech and says that he "ended up walking back to town with him, talking about the differences between the math programs here (Cambridge) and in the States."

Sean Marney '09/CS observed that, "the frosh who share my stairwell were very inviting early on, and were excited to see the "new Noah and Joel (who were the fall Caltech students at St. John's College). I haven't really made any deep connections yet, and I'm not sure exactly what all interests we share, but they're trying and that says a lot."

Clearly, the social and academic "climate" one experiences abroad will vary. The skies are not always sunny and blue, but neither are they dark and overcast.

Finally, regarding the excellent point that both authors made about study abroad helping one to better appreciate Caltech, I would like to switch from a weather to a literary comparison. I suggest we all recall the story of Dorothy and her trip to the Land of Oz.

Dorothy longed to find adventure and left her family's farm to see the world. Unfortunately, she picked a bad day to go weather-wise and was transported by a twister to Oz where she had many adventures and made new friends, as well as meeting some folks not to her taste.

We all know that at the end of her visit Dorothy chants the phrase, "There is no place like home," and is transported back to Kansas and her family's farm. While she returns to the same landscape and people, her voyage to Oz has developed her perspective and her own character. She now appreciates what she once took for granted and has a more charitable view of the place from which she came.

The voyage of study abroad may not take students as far as Oz, but they can have a voyage that is just as enlightening.

And my thanks to Joel and Marissa for their thought provoking opinion pieces.

FIXING ASCIT 2009

We need a new plan, but not this one

Proposal to restructure ASCIT still needs work

By Noah Tanabe

EXCOMM CHAIR

As you've all no doubt heard, the election next Monday is going to be an important one for ASCIT. In addition to the presidential and vice presidential elections, we have an opportunity to completely change the face of ASCIT for years to come.

By now everyone has received the email announcing that Dvin Adalian's proposed bylaw changes will be on the ballot. After much deliberation, the Executive Committee has decided to put our own plan for ASCIT onto the ballot as well.

Although Dvin worked with the ExComm for much of last term, he has chosen to revert to a much earlier version of his proposal, one that we feel is dangerously lacking in a number of areas. We say that this took much deliberation because we hope that our two plans will not interfere with each other and have neither pass.

ASCIT is undeniably broken, and we would rather have Dvin's plan than nothing just as we're sure Dvin would rather have ours than allow the current system to remain. However, there are a number of aspects of Dvin's plan that give us serious concern, and show a surprising lack of thought from its author. We wish to discuss two of them here, and hope that everyone will do the research to uncover many other differ-

ences.

First, Dvin's timeline for election ASCIT officers has some surprising problems. Under his plan, every single ASCIT officer would be elected in a single election in the middle of second term. First, this is a strange departure from having the President elected beforehand, which gives everyone much more information as they run for or vote on the other ASCIT positions.

Second, this timeline tragically fails to take into account the House system and its own election process. By placing ASCIT elections right in the middle of election season, it gives students of different houses different perspectives on the election.

For instance, Moles, who will have gone through Hovse elections weeks beforehand, will know what their Hovse government looks like and what their own obligations Hovse will be. They will be able to make much more informed decisions about whether or not to seek ASCIT office.

On the other hand, Pageboys, who will have barely begun thinking about their elections by the fifth Monday of second term, will look at ASCIT elections differently. Under the current system, in which ASCIT elections are before Page elections, many Pageboys choose not to run for ASCIT positions in the hopes of getting a House office, and both Page and ASCIT suffer because

of the lack of representation in ASCIT government.

In addition, Dvin's plan is very little change over the current system when it comes to accessibility for the average student. Though positions are created and destroyed and responsibilities shuffled around, his plan is just as aloof from the student body as the current system.

We made our plan with accessibility one of our chief goals. For instance, we hope to encourage student participation in ASCIT by reviving the very old tradition of Corporation Meetings. In our plan, we require the Board of Directors to hold a Corporation Meeting at least once a term, at which any student can stand up and ask questions of the Board. These meetings will allow students to easily demand changes of ASCIT or even amend the bylaws without all the paperwork and legwork required by the current system or Dvin's plan.

In conclusion, ASCIT should be for everyone. We constructed our plan from the ground up making sure that every student, regardless of House, year, or any other factor, has a great opportunity to take part in ASCIT at every level. While Dvin's parallel efforts are commendable, they fall short on too many issues. We hope that everyone will take time to consider these proposals carefully, and that we can all work together to create a better ASCIT for everyone

A plan inspired by students

By Dvin Adalian

IHC SECRETARY

When I initially heard that the ASCIT Excomm was looking to revamp ASCIT I thought that maybe we'd finally have an ASCIT that students can get behind, or at least not be annoyed by.

A couple months later some powerpoint slides appeared describing a new system with 8 additional positions and more ambiguity and bureaucracy than ever. It was disappointing. I had thought about ASCIT's operational problems extensively in the past year, and had come up with what I thought was a more functional ASCIT in that time and discussed it with other students.

I figured I'd give my critique to the Excomm since I expected that students would not take to their new plan at all. After a number of discussions explaining what I thought, attending two Excomm meetings, and finding stubborn resistance to any simplification of our already confused system, I realized that new ASCIT was going to be just the same as the old ASCIT as long as old ASCIT was planning it.

I had received a lot of encouraging opinions from students outside the Excomm on the new structure and bylaws I had written and decided to keep working that way. I tried to ask everyone I could, across the Houses, various government officers to see what concerns or suggestions they had.

I wanted a plan that reflected what the students actually want ASCIT to get done. Go ahead and read the annotations if you

want to see the number of changes and thought put into every change based on the input of over a hundred students.

As for the election timeline, I put the BoD elections as far back as possible considering the fiscal year ends March 1st which means the new BoD has to decide and approve a budget by then. In the new system the BoD has been simplified, their roles clearly defined, and to create even more accountability a true independent oversight committee with a representative in each House was created to ensure that the BoD is doing what the students want. Corporation meetings are still available, but you can give input directly to the BoD (most of us live within 200 yards of each other and the Olive Walk meetings) or to the oversight committee member in your House.

I've never heard that increasing the number of people at a meeting makes it more effective. Frankly I was expecting to see more differences between the two structures based on the fact that my plan has been openly shared for quite some time.

Three months ago my plan with six elected BoD positions was a huge contrast to Excomm's seventeen. Yet today it would seem that my structure appears from the Excomm as well - with a flair of poorly thought-out changes. Make your own opinion as to whether my changes fall short of what's needed.

I'd rather see either proposed plan happen over nothing. Feel free to shoot me an email or find me in my room and I can answer any questions you have.

Olives get a tasty, healthy upgrade

By Eric Chang

STAFF WRITER

Did you notice an improvement in the taste of Caltech's Olive Oil this year?

You're not the only one. Last year's Caltech Olive Oil came from olives that were completely infested with fruit fly larvae, causing the olives to rot. But in 2008, Facilities began to spray the olive trees to kill fruit fly larvae.

According to Olive Harvest coordinator Erin White, less than 10% of olives are infested after being sprayed. "Our total approach to caring for these trees has changed," said White. "We used to treat them as ornamental trees whereas now we treat them as fruit trees."

The trees are sprayed with Spinosad GF-120, an EPA and FDA approved organic product derived from bacteria in the fermentation process of Jamaican rum. This new approach must abide strict regulations from the California Department of Agriculture, including making monthly reports of how and what is being sprayed on the olive trees and an annual inspection.

Spraying regulation follows a campus-wide trend. With the help of new Sustainability Programs headed by John Onderdonk, grounds-keeping practices on campus are becoming more organic and environmentally friendly. "A lot of people think

we use a lot of chemicals, but we don't," said Delmy Emerson, Director of Facilities Management. "The amount we use is a little."

Olive trees will continue to be sprayed with Spinosad GF-120 every seven to ten days, because the chemical naturally breaks

down after a few days. Spraying is set to stop a couple weeks before the start of the Olive Harvest to allow the chemical to break down before olives are picked.

In April, a low-cost and organic method will be used to further decrease the fruit fly infestation.

Holey water bottles, filled with water and two to three yeast tablets, will be hung from each olive tree to trap for the fruit flies. Fruit flies are attracted by the yeast tablets but unable to escape from the bottle.

Other factors could have af-

ected the new taste of Caltech's Olive Oil: the blend of the various green, red, purple, and black olives, the percent content of fatty acid and peroxide in the oil, and the sunlight and temperature conditions the olive oil is subject to.



Photo by Jonathan Tsai

Bottles of Caltech's homemade Olive Oil, like these sold in the Caltech Bookstore, no longer contain olives infested with fruit fly larvae like last winter's olive oil. A *California Tech* taste test last year found the brand to be mediocre.

Blue Bloods: read for another bite of vamp love

By Sarah Marzen

STAFF WRITER

Who doesn't like a trashy vampire romance novel?

Maybe a lot of you. But that's not the point. The true trashy vampire romance novel never fails to reach its target audience, the overly romantic tweens, and often grabs a few innocent bystanders along the way.

In case you haven't heard, trashy vampire series are more popular than ever due to a very popular vampire series called *Twilight*. Someone even made a hit blockbuster movie from the first book, and the star of the movie was Robert Pattinson, the British actor who played Cedric Diggory in the fourth *Harry Potter* movie.

But sadly enough for *Twilight* fans, the *Twilight* series is finished. Stephenie Meyer is pulling a J. K. Rowling and capitalizing on *Twilight*'s success by writing a second version of *Twilight*, from Edward's perspective- but it doesn't really matter. The conflicts of *Twilight* are solved. Now, it's time to move on.

Over Winter Break, I perused through Borders and found a new vampire romance series to latch onto: the *Blue Bloods*!

The series is a fusion of *Twilight* and the TV show *Gossip Girl*. All of the vampires are beautiful and/

or handsome, slender and/or built, and rich from seemingly endless endowments that were started hundreds of years ago.

Supposedly, blue bloods also have highly developed aesthetic senses, and do their best to culture the brutish "red bloods" via fashion shows, art galleries, and indie movies.

I don't want to spoil the small amount of plot that the series contains (and really, who cares what the plot is anyway), so I'll just say this: the blue bloods are in danger from the "silver bloods", an even more dangerous race of vampires. This conflict will drive the entire series. There's a mysterious prophecy, an undercover predator, forbidden love, and lots of feeding.

You may or may not be wondering, how does *Twilight* compare to *Blue Bloods*? Why do people actually read these vampire romance series anyway? What makes one trashy series better than the next?

I've never met a single guy who liked reading these novels, so I'll answer the question from a girl's perspective.

The primary draw of a vampire romance novel comes from the ability of the reader to identify with the girl heroine. If the girl lead is unappreciated and wonderful, then the series will be more successful.

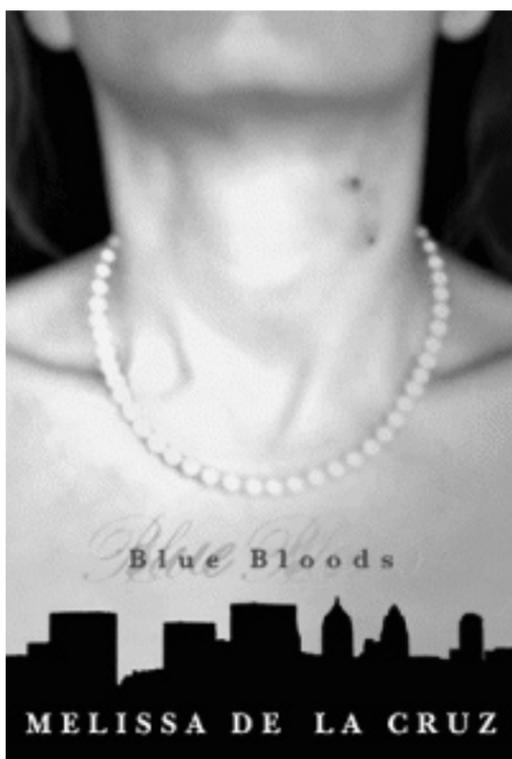
Blue Bloods essentially creates

four heroines. If you don't identify with the nice, shy, unpopular main heroine, then you can bond with any of the three supporting heroines, who range from popular and pitifully bitchy to once-powerful and wise! Melissa de la Cruz was one smart writer.

The secondary draw comes from the dreaminess of the guy hero—if he's hot and unattainable, you've got a hit. Why unattainable? Well, usually the readers of these novels have crushes on the popular guy in school who is "out of their league" and probably already dating the head cheerleader. Making the guy lead unattainable allows tweens to live their romantic dream lives vicariously through the girl lead.

There are two main men in *Blue Bloods*. The handsome, talented, and conscientious King-of-Highschool is Jack Force, a blue blood who's in a committed relationship with his sister. (How's that for unattainable?) Ollie is the sweet, sensitive, loyal, non-vampiric best friend who wants more than friendship. Again, Melissa de la Cruz presents the reader with options- you can fantasize about Ollie or Jack- making the series palatable to a larger pool of people.

If you read through this entire "book review", then you might enjoy *Twilight* or *Blue Bloods*. Check something out at a bookstore near you.



Blue Bloods
Author: Melissa De La Cruz
List Price: \$15.99 (Amazon: \$10.87)

Grandview Palace II: quick and greasy

by Andrew Freddo and Dannah Almasco

Overall Grade: B-

Introduction: Problem – After a busy long weekend, we didn't have time to go out for dinner, but still wanted to provide a food review. Solution – Ordering Chinese delivery from Grandview Palace II.

Goal: The last time we ate Chinese food was dim-sum at Empress Pavilion in Chinatown. How does Grandview Palace II compare for a dinner much closer to home?

Stockroom Options: Overall, Grandview Palace II has the same choices as any other Chinese take-out restaurant, including chicken, beef, and seafood options. There are also special combinations and complete lunch meals.

Materials and Cost: To start, we ordered steamed dumplings (\$6.50). We then had orange chicken (\$10.50) and the sizzling seafood hot plate (\$10.50). Lastly, we had pan-fried triple delight noodles (\$8.75).

Observations:

There were 8 dumplings in the order, more than enough for a

couple of people. Unfortunately, the wrapper was very doughy and thick. Still, the filling tasted very fresh, like it was made right when we ordered. There were fresh greens inside, along with the meat, which was redeeming.

The orange chicken was very refreshing and full of citrus flavor. There were even orange peels mixed in! Upon opening the package, the orange smell permeated the room. Though the chicken was fried, it was not overly crispy. There also was a bit of spice in the dish, too, which was good to compliment the sweet orange flavor.

The sizzling seafood hot plate was not true to its name: it did not arrive sizzling. It did not even arrive very hot, only lukewarm. Some of the fish pieces were way too big for a single bite, though tasted fresh. Most of the vegetables also were good, with the notable exception of the mushrooms. These were extremely rubbery and left a bad aftertaste.

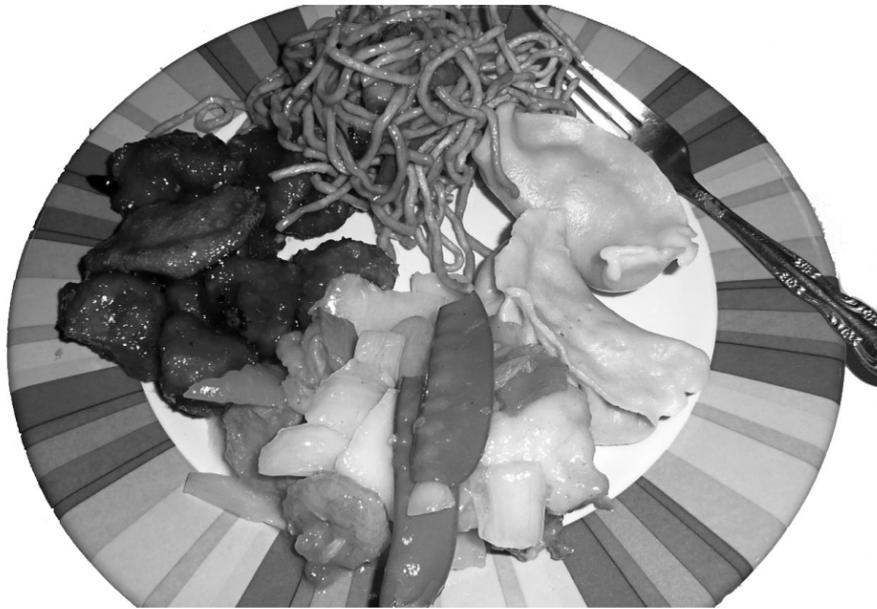
Finally, the triple delight noodles needed to be mixed very well before eating. The top layer was extremely crispy, with soggy layers below. All the sauce, meat, and vegetables were located in this bottom layer. Overall, the flavor was bland and greasy; it

was overly filling and not worthwhile to eat much with the other available options.

Delivery Specifications: One positive aspect of Grandview Palace II was its delivery. The food arrived within 25 minutes, even shorter than the 30-45 minutes that was estimated! The restaurant knew exactly where to go when we mentioned Caltech, and the ordering experience was very pleasant overall.

Conclusion: Though the first impressions of Grandview Palace II were very good, the food did not completely follow through. Each item had some redeeming quality, but, save the orange chicken, was too greasy to fully enjoy.

Tips: When ordering from Grandview Palace II, try to avoid the more oily sauces, instead ordering the meat dishes.



Who: Grandview Palace II
Grade: B-
Web: www.menupix.com/losangeles/restaurants.php?id=203807#
Phone: (626) 564-0808

ASCIT Elections Reminder: Nominations and Sign-Ups for ASCIT President and VP remain open on the Olive Walk until Tuesday, January 20 at 5:00 PM.

Notice of Bylaw Amendment Vote:

On January 26th, there will be a vote on the most recent proposed bylaw change. Polls will be open from 10:00 AM to 11:59 PM. For more details, see the below information on the bylaw changes and consult a recent email from the Elections Chairman, which includes links to detailed information. Questions or concerns? Contact the Elections Chairman, Jason Cerundolo, at jrc@caltech.edu.

This is a short summary of the bylaw amendment. The proposed changes in this amendment are very extensive, and everyone is strongly encouraged to read through the text of the actual amendment.

- Bylaws updated to reflect current situation, specifically with regards to technology.
- The jobs of ASCIT and its officers are clearly defined, and the BoD is restructured to be more streamlined.
- Vice President position is replaced by ARC Chair and IHC Chair.
- Director-at-Large position removed.
- Operations Director position created to oversee operations including ASCIT publication, property, and clubs.
- Secretary is appointed instead of elected, similar to the IHC.
- BoD operations pertaining to funding approvals, staff, voting, resolutions and policies are better defined.
- Excomm and Election Committee are combined into a Review Committee, appointed by the IHC. The Review Committee serves as oversight and manages elections and consists of one student from each House.
- The elections process is streamlined and updated. Elections are moved back so as to not conflict with House elections.
- In the event of vacant office, the Review Committee may appoint a temporary acting officer or call a special election to fill the position.
- Explanation of dues and club funding is simplified.
- Stipulations for funding publications are updated.
- Unnecessary and redundant language is removed and simplified.

ASCIT Board of Directors Meeting – Minutes

January 14, 2009

Officers Present: Caleb Ng, Zachary Higbee, Joel Nikolaus, Angela Zah, Tzong-lian "Will" Tsay, Matt Czubakowski
Officers Absent: Chris Watson, Ekta Bhojwani, Michelle Jiang

Call to order: 10:55 pm

President's Report:

Publications: Some concerns about the Big T and donut and performance based bonuses. Caleb will speak to devteam about ensuring donut is updated and all appropriate forms online.

New By-Laws: Dvin has drawn up a new version of the bylaws. Excom will have its own version of the new bylaws by this Friday. For either to be on the ballot for this coming year, a petition with signatures president's approval must be in by the 30th, but Excom's will only be included if there are clear distinctions. In any case it needs to be publicized and there should be some public forum to discuss the issue. Might be able to combine with the currently planned pre-elections party/barbecue.

ASCIT Dues: Caleb recommends increasing ASCIT dues by \$5 a term, due to adjustment for inflation and new expenses. Allocation of new funds would among other things go to the Tech (required 10%) and an increase in multi-house funding.

Motion to approve an increase of ASCIT dues. VOTE: Passed (6-0-1). Bylaws prohibit increasing dues without student approval so the issue will be addressed again at the next meeting.

Coffeehouse Hours: Need to make sure that BoD members are always there during publicized times. New coffeehouse hours will be Monday 10:30-11:30 and Wednesday 12:00-1:00.

ARC Chair Report:

Student Faculty Conference: One of the dance clubs needs to be contacted about securing Ramo for the day of the conference.

Miscellaneous

Screening Room: Now reopened. The combo is (4-15-3).

ASCIT Meetings: Some discussion about moving meetings to a more accessible time and location for students. Currently set to remain in SAC 15. Next meeting will be Tuesday evening at 10 pm.

Meeting adjourned: 11:45 pm

Submitted by Joel Nikolaus, ASCIT Secretary

News Briefs

A bigger chunk of tuition will now go toward ASCIT and IHC

Both ASCIT and the IHC voted last week, separately, to increase student dues.

But not to fear—according to IHC Chair Chris Watson, the House due increase will not raise the cost of mandatory fees. Instead, the amount of money students pay towards Caltech's general budget will decrease. Currently, students pay \$849 each year towards the general budget.

ASCIT dues are now \$30 per term, instead of \$25 per term. The extra money will be used "to cover freshman lunches at the Ath, help fund Caltech Y events, more multihouse event funding, and a couple other [things]," said ARC Chair will Tsay in an email.

The baseline for House dues is now \$45 per term, instead of \$35 per term. Houses can still charge

House members more than \$45 per term, but a recent IHC resolution caps House dues at \$65 per term. According to Ruddock President Sean Marney, Houses that charge more than the baseline will decide how to enforce payment of the additional dues on their own.

ASCIT dues and House dues are both part of a Caltech undergraduate's "mandatory fees". In 2005, student government representatives and administrators decided to make ASCIT membership mandatory. At the time, students suspected that allowing undergraduates to waive ASCIT membership could lead to a significant loss in ASCIT revenue, according to Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Erica O'Neal.

Forty percent women admits

ADMISSIONS, FROM PAGE 1

give presentations.

No more merit scholarships

Shifting economic times have changed the way Caltech approaches financial aid. Most notably, Axline and Presidential Scholarships are being discontinued for incoming students.

"The bigger issue is we only had five take Axlines out of 25 offered," said Bischoff. "We knew this was going to happen because our competition for those students is Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and MIT. When Harvard and Princeton announced changes to their financial aid, we knew this would happen."

The change will allow financial aid to expand need-based financial aid. This year, Caltech will have no parental contribution for families with incomes under \$60,000, whereas last year only loans were

Chamber concerts this month will use replacement piano

PIANO, FROM PAGE 1

tentially averted a much more grisly outcome.

Equipment in the basement of Dabney also took a beating. A telephone switch and some office equipment live beneath Dabney Lounge. Both were damaged by sprinkler water seeping through the floor. Several parts of campus lost telephone service, said John Dundas, director of IMSS Voice and Data networks.

IMSS technicians toiled through the Christmas holiday to restore functionality by December 26.

As for the piano, said Mr. Henderson, "the damage was phenomenal." The piano is for all practical purposes a total loss. Bernard Alexander, the piano's chief technician, stated that at among other things, the strings, bridge, and soundboard – the heart and guts of the instrument – would need "complete replacement."

Destroyed on Christmas Eve was not just a beautiful instrument but really "a work of art" that had been carefully preserved for generations, said Delores Bing, director of Caltech's chamber music program. The piano emerged in 1923 from the New York factory of Steinway and Sons, one of the world's most renowned piano manufacturers. According to Bing, many piano connoisseurs

consider the pianos from those years among the finest that Steinway has ever crafted. Bernard Alexander, the piano's current technician, said that among other factors, "[Steinway] had access to incredibly good wood" during those years. During 2003 and 2004, the piano underwent surgery by "some of the finest Steinway technicians," said Bing. The soundboard, action, hammers, and case all underwent extensive restoration.

Installed initially in the Athenaeum, the piano migrated to Dabney lounge in the mid-1980s where, until its untimely death, it had been used by student chamber groups; the Glee Clubs; and for numerous public events, such as the Lagerstrom Concert Series.

Despite the unexpected turn of events, the upcoming chamber music performances will proceed largely as planned. They will occur in Dabney Lounge on Jan. 24, 30, 31, and Feb. 1st. A piano will be rented from a local area piano



The inside of the Dabney piano after the fire.

eliminated for these families.

The Box is still missing

Applications without the Box continue for the second year. The admissions committee is satisfied with the change and is convinced that the Box, or lack thereof, hasn't swayed admission decisions. Eliminating the Box has allowed the admissions office to put together files for readers far earlier than in the past.

Upcoming science and religion talk provokes a flurry of fliers

At Caltech's first Veritas Forum on February 5th, Director of the Human Genome Project Francis Collins will speak about the intersection of science and religion.

Fliers publicizing the event filled with famous quotes about science and religion can be seen across campus, and have already provoked corresponding "Villitas Forum" fliers. Messages on the Villitas Forum fliers range from quotes about an iPhone from "Jesus" to Voltaire's famous quote, "A witty saying proves nothing."

Organizers of Veritas Forum are unperturbed, as long as the Veritas Forum fliers aren't covered up by the Villitas Forum fliers. "It's not that big a deal," said Dahvyd Wing, who is in charge of gathering feedback about the forum and who knows the people who put up the Villitas fliers. "They're just acknowledging that the Veritas Forum fliers are just

witty quotes."

Some students have interpreted the Villitas fliers as protestations of the Veritas Forum—skepticism that the Veritas Forum will actually be an open discussion, given Collins' and Veritas Organization's Christian affiliation. But Veritas Forum organizers hope that "it [the Forum] will lead to more openness."

"He's [Collins] really popular mainly because he's so open to questions," said Sunny Chan, one of three Veritas Forum organizers. Chan sees the Veritas Forum as a neutral forum for open discussion, but hopes that the Forum isn't the end of open discussion of science and religion. The organizers are already thinking about follow-up events, from book readings to informal discussions at Red Door Café.

Although the forum is organized and geared towards the Caltech community, students from nearby schools are invited, and the event is open to the pub-

lic. Caltech Public Events has roped off the middle two columns of Beckman Auditorium, plus a few rows—although according to Chan, Public Events is "skeptical" that enough Caltech students will come to fill that space.

The Veritas Organization helps organize Veritas Forums at universities across the country, connecting interested students at those universities with high profile speakers on and off-campus. The money for the event, however, comes from other organizations—for Caltech's Forum, the nearly \$10,000 required to reserve Beckman Auditorium and other miscellaneous expenses came from a combination of Moore-Hufstedler funding, the Templeton Foundation, an unnamed private organization, ASCIT, the Caltech Y, the Graduate Student Council, and individual students and alumni. Organizers are still looking for funding for food.



Photo by Jonathan Tsai

Anna Hiszpanski giving here SURF presentation at the Doris S. Perpall SURF speaking competition this last Thursday. After narrowing down to eight finalists, the winners were 1st Evan Gawlik, 2nd Mitch Wang, and 3rd Kimberly Scott. Both Gawlik and Wang had spent time working with their mentors prior to the summer. The lesson to take away (assuming you want to give your SURF presentation 4 times) is commitment. Wang advises "tell jokes."

Layoffs likely in budget cuts

BUDGET, FROM PAGE 1

that can be easily restarted. To this end, a slowdown on faculty hiring has been initiated, and building renovations have been delayed.

Chameau noted that, compared to other universities, Caltech is actually in a good position. Many universities rely on endowment payouts for up to 30 percent of their budget, and on tuition for up to ten percent. According to a publicly released financial report, Harvard used endowment payout for 34 percent of expenses in the 2008 fiscal year.

Chameau also mentioned that, thanks to prudential decisions by the trustees, a large percent

of Caltech's money is in liquid assets. "We do have a large amount of cash—by the way, which is not dollar bills under my pillow," he said.

In the end, Chameau's message was hopeful. "The best institutions, because they have the best people, find ways to get more than their fair share of resources when times get tough," he said.

As to the library, University Librarian Kimberley Douglas declined to comment on specifically which programs will be reduced. As an example of the kind of sacrifice that might need to be made, she mentioned the current \$50-per-term printer subsidy given to students.

According to Douglas, the total cost of this subsidy is "not a trivial sum." To deal with the budget cuts, she suggested that everyone ask, "What things can we all do to make this work?"

ASCIT bylaw change to come to a student vote next week

By Joel Nikolaus

STAFF WRITER

Download the original attachment

Over the next couple weeks the student body will be faced with not one, but two chances to essentially rewrite the current ASCIT by-laws.

Current IHC secretary Dvin Adalian sent a formal petition, along with over 300 undergraduate signatures, to the BoD yesterday morning. As stipulated in the ASCIT by-laws such a petition must be put up for a vote, currently scheduled for the 26th.

Since then, the ASCIT Excomm has finalized its own version of new by-laws and plans to also

submit a petition. Alternatively it can seek approval from the current BoD.

There are a number of differences between the two plans.

Among them, Dvin says that his plan will better “connect the houses to ASCIT,” and that by creating an interhouse review committee the “houses are a good way of providing accountability.” He sees his plan as conforming to the current student mentality rather than the other way around.

Noah Tanabe, Chairman of ASCIT Excomm, says Excomm’s plan’s placement of elections is an important difference. The plan would explicitly accommodate house elections and also includes review committee similar to the current Excomm.

The two plans originally in-

cluded more significant differences, but during collaboration over first term Excomm has incorporated many new ideas from Dvin’s version of the bylaws. Noah says that “some of the ideas when played out as thought exercises proved to be pretty silly,” and that Excomm has a “different vision than last summer.”

Still, while many differences were worked out and “a lot of ideas included,” Noah says that he found the collaboration to be one sided and that Dvin was unwilling to include some of Excomm’s better ideas in a compromise.

Dvin says Excomm was still clinging to the old ASCIT and that “in the end it was not fixing the bureaucracy.”

The commitment to such differences is strong enough that there

are still two different versions of the by-laws, but those differences underlie the otherwise strong similarities and shared motivations.

Both Noah and Dvin say that ASCIT is broken and both sets of bylaws are aimed at making ASCIT more efficient and more accountable, by streamlining the structure and more clearly defining responsibilities.

Both are confident that their respective plan is the right way forward. Dvin says there has been substantial effort to “reach everyone and give everyone a chance to make changes,” including individual members of Excomm and most members of the student government.

He says that there is “more respect for change from the outside,” and sees his version of the

by-laws as such an outside proposal. With the support for the petition “far exceeding what was needed” he is confident it will gather enough support.

Noah finds it “interesting that Excomm is so closely associated with ASCIT,” and he thinks that regardless of that perception Excomm can get its plan approved. “If it is a good plan it will pass. Trust [students] to see that for themselves.”

Regardless of which plan students choose to go forward with (if any at all), Noah and Dvin agree that both plans are “a step in the right direction.”



“I have a dream...”

To commemorate the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, you are invited to join us for the following events beginning Tuesday, January 20. For detailed information about each event and to RSVP (when required) visit: <http://www.cpg.caltech.edu> and scroll to the bottom of the page.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Week (Jan 20 - 24)

Inaugural Address Breakfast - President Barack Obama
Tuesday, 7 AM - 10 AM, Chandler Dining Room

Video: “Martin Luther King: I Have a Dream”,
Wednesday, 12 Noon - 1 PM, Center for Student Services, 2nd Floor
(Lunch Provided, RSVP Requested)

Keynote Luncheon: “Principles of Community Organizing & Civil Rights” by Victor Griego, Jr.
Thursday, 12 Noon - 1 PM, Dabney Lounge
(Lunch Provided - RSVP Required)

Video Presentation: I Have A Dream - 1963 March On Washington,
Friday - All Day, Center for Student Services, 2nd Floor & The Caltech Y

MLK Service Project
Saturday - Meet at The Caltech Y

These programs are sponsored by the Cultural Programming Group, which is comprised of representatives from the Caltech Women’s Center, Office for Minority Student Education, International Student Programs, the Caltech Y, and Office of Campus Life.

Dear Dr. Smart

Dear Dr. Smart,
I'm short and people are making fun of me for it. What should I do?
Sincerely, Napoleona

The fact that people are making fun of you signifies that they harbor insecurities. Obviously, you're better than them at something and they're jealous so they lash out at your shortness. If you screwed up your life by taking shots of espresso back to back every week since you were four it's no business of theirs. Since they are trying to mess with your psyche, you have the right to return fire. Find and exploit any weaknesses they possess. If one of them is a germaphobe, then cough all over

their hand towel before their very eyes. If one of them is in a relationship and is easily jealous, then steal his or her significant other (bonus points if you and the significant other are of the same sex because that is sure to make the bully uncomfortable). If one of them is middle-class, insult the fact that he or she is too rich for financial aid but too poor to afford paying tuition. Remember: everybody has a sweet spot and if you hit it in just the right way, all your dreams will come true.

Dear Dr. Smart,
People say I look very suspicious, even when I'm not doing anything suspicious at all. I can't help it, but my natural demeanor

seems to give people the wrong impression. Worse, I can't even get away with suspicious activities because they always think I'm up to something. Is there some way I can get away with pranks and schemes without giving them away?

Yours truly, Sketchy McSketcherson

Yes, Sketchy, this is an easily solved problem. You need plastic surgery so your face no longer looks suspicious. That way, nobody would suspect you, especially when you're actually doing something worthy of suspicion. You'll get away with anything, possibly even murder, depending on how much you spend on the

surgery. Also you will be more attractive and confident, and you will end up a more successful person.

Dear Dr. Smart,

I get bored easily. I am considering World of Warcraft but everyone says it's really addictive. So there must be a better way. How should I spend my time?

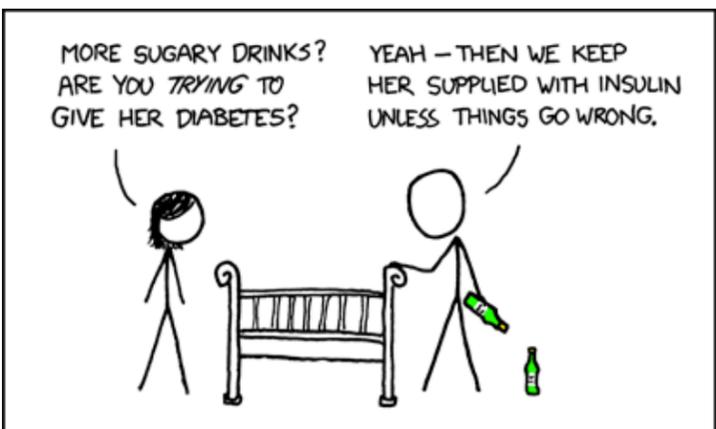
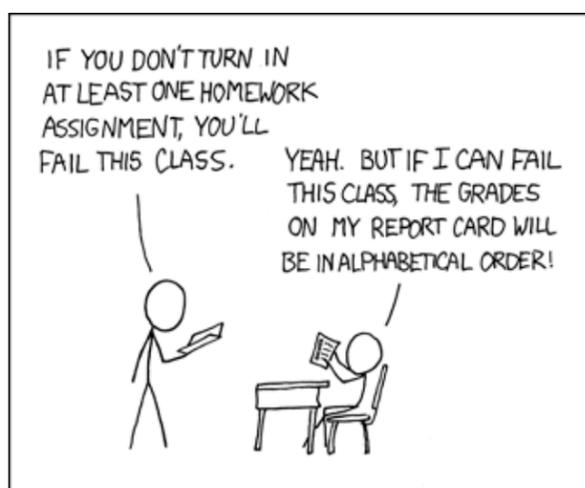
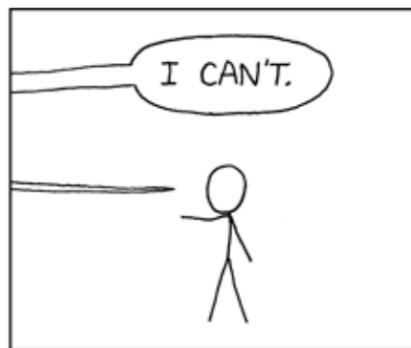
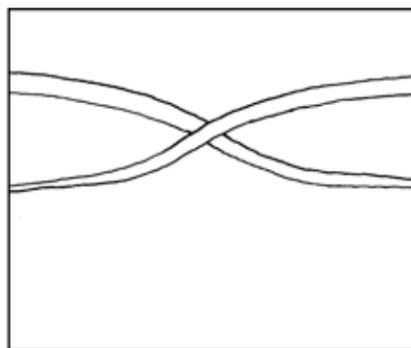
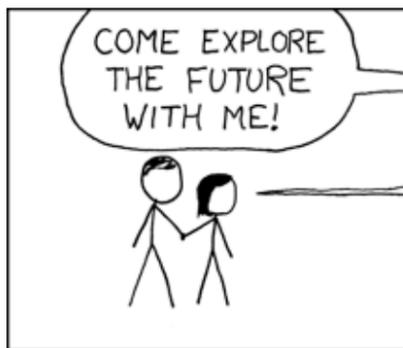
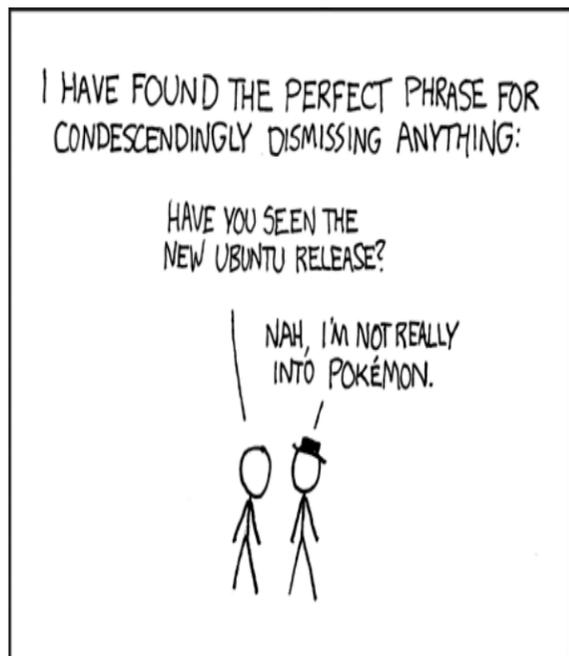
Yours truly, an obvious moron

World of Warcraft? More like Crack of WarCrack. As I always say, everybody needs a vice. A good vice can be a drug, like marijuana, a dessert, like key lime pie, or a video game, like Call of Duty. However, some vices do more harm than good. Crystal

meth and heroin, for example, are drugs that will be bad vices. Likewise, World of Warcraft is a terrible choice for a vice. It's extremely addictive and not at all worth the time invested into it. There are so many alternatives that will be more rewarding. If you end up overweight, lazy, and seated at the computer for hours on end playing WoW, you have a problem and you need help. If you can, by some miracle, limit your gameplay to maybe two or three hours a week, you might be fine. Likewise if you can manage, by some miracle, to limit your crack consumption to one rock a week, you may as well enjoy a crack vice.

Comics: XKCD week

by Randall Munroe



I TAKE THE JURASSIC PARK APPROACH TO PARENTING.

The California Tech
Caltech 40-58
Pasadena, CA 91125