

THE CALIFORNIA TECH



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PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

MARCH 2, 2009

Lower crime rates this year, but bike thieves get smarter

By Sarah Marzen

COPY EDITOR

This fiscal year, nobody's personal property has been stolen, and property crime on campus has dropped by roughly 80%, based on Caltech Security data collected to satisfy the federal Clery Act.

The Clery Act, updated in 2008, requires college security departments to publish and distribute their Annual Campus Security Report by October 1 of each year, among other provisions.

Crime at Caltech for this reporting year includes burglaries, arson of the Dabney piano, and auto thefts of cars parked on Hill.

Caltech statistics are entirely based on who calls in to report crimes that have occurred. "People are pretty good about calling in," said Security Chief Gregg Henderson. Caltech Security receives a total of 48,000 calls every year, for everything from request for escorts to reports of crimes.

However, there are unreported crimes. Caltech senior and former Dabney House President Kee Scholten went out for lunch, and when he came back, his wallet and phone was gone. Initially, he thought he might have lost it. "By the time I realized it must have been stolen, I was in Texas and it slipped my mind," wrote

Scholten in an email.

Bike thefts

Despite the lower overall crime rates, bike thieves are getting smarter. U-locks, typically the safest way to lock up bikes, are being cut in random locations at random times all over Pasadena—including at Caltech.

"There are some leads there," said Henderson. Caltech Security is working with the Pasadena Police Department to find the stolen bikes. "It's an external crime," he said.

When the stolen bikes are found, the Caltech-registered bikes will be returned to their owners, and the other bikes will be put up for auction.

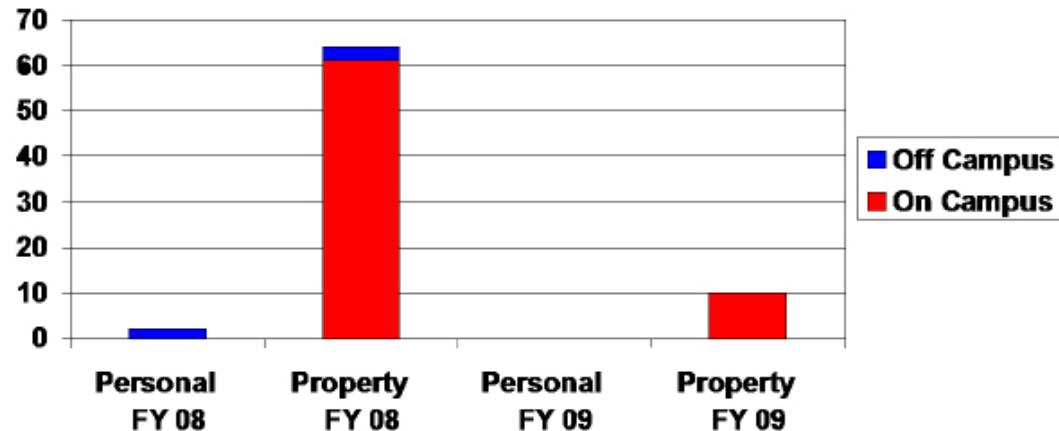
Exactly how the thief or thieves cut the U-locks without anyone noticing is still a little mysterious. According to Henderson, cutting a U-lock with brute force would require bolt cutters four feet long or a battery-operated saw.

"The U-lock is the best method of securing a bike," said Henderson. "I still recommend it."

Until 2004, most U-locks could be opened by using a ballpoint pen on the pin tumbler lock mechanism. Kryptonite changed their U-lock's locking mechanism to a disc-style cylinder soon after the pen trick was publicized on YouTube.

No personal crimes or off-campus crimes this year

Personal and Property Crime FY08-09



Property crime only involves crimes that take money or property without using force against or threatening to use force against the victim. Personal crimes involve contact between the victim and assailant. "FY" is the fiscal year.

No layoffs for Security Certain programs put on hold

By Sarah Marzen

COPY EDITOR

According to Security Chief Gregg Henderson, Security isn't seeing any layoffs from Caltech's budget cuts.

However, Security will now have to be "extremely cautious" about paying for overtime. According to Henderson, Security employees typically work overtime to fill vacancies caused by a sick or missing employee.

"We'll be running a little bit lighter sometimes with safety and security," said Henderson. "We'll have to prioritize." Medical emergencies and safety emergencies will still be responded to promptly, but lower priority security services (e.g., escorts) will see a "delayed response."

Security will also not see funding for equipment that they initially expected to receive—a new security vehicle. Currently, Security has one car that is used sixteen hours a day, according to Henderson.

"We'll get a car somehow," said Henderson. "Maybe we'll get a retired car."

One other pending Security program—replacing all outside entrances to buildings with card access technology—will be put on the backburner. Card access technology would be "easier to maintain" than keys, said Henderson.

Henderson estimates that key-based perimeter entrances will be replaced with cardswipes in three to five years, although there's "no real timeline."

"[The lack of funding] doesn't mean it's dead," said Henderson. "We're just not pushing it.... The question is, are there available funding sources?"

Installing one card reader costs roughly \$8,000, although card readers cost \$18,000 in packs of four. The recently passed national economic stimulus package budgets over twenty billion dollars for research and education, and Security might be able to piggyback a request for card readers onto research grants.

For example, Security might argue that card swipe technology would secure the safety of the expensive research equipment inside certain buildings.

By Joel Nikolaus

STAFF WRITER

Caltech students, known for their no-work, party-heavy lifestyles, will apparently have to bring off-campus fun indoors.

The Deans have tentatively decided to introduce a new off-campus party policy, although the policy has not been officially amended. The new policy requires that off-campus parties be moved indoors and limited to no more than 25 guests.

According to IHC Chair Pallavi Gunalan, Dean Hall said that the new policy is meant to prevent Pasadena from cracking down on Caltech about the noise complaints by neighbors of Caltech's off-campus housing.

The administration will still approve of barbecues during the day, said Gunalan—the chief problem with off-campus parties is the loud music late at night. According to former ASCIT Social Director Ekta Bhojwani, there have been noise complaints for daytime events as well.

Gunalan thinks that the new policy is reasonable, but she and the IHC have not officially accepted the changes.

She said that she still "plans to ask the IHC if they think it is reasonable and what issues they have with it," and then will meet with the Deans again to iron out the final details.

Caltech's reaction

Many Caltech students seem to share an understanding attitude towards the change, but many students also believe that the restrictions are being tightened too much.

"[Fleming is] understanding of the school's need to keep a handle on things, and that any policy needs to be a concession between students and the administration," said one member of Fleming House. "But students like to have fun."

Fleming House senior Bhojwani, believes the new restrictions are "just going to cause more problems," and that

"People will still have the parties and with no one to watch, things will get out of control."

-- Ekta Bhojwani, Caltech student

parties, particularly traditional off-campus parties, will continue regardless of the change in policy.

"People will still have the parties and with no one to watch, things will get out of control," said Bhojwani. The consequences, she said, will only be negative.

A neighbor of one of the off-campus houses agreed. When asked about his noise complaints to Caltech, he said that he knew the noise and behavior would be much worse. However, he

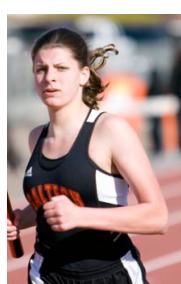
did say it was not unusual to be kept up on weekends and that the behavior was irritating.

Other Caltech students also said that while Caltech students may still receive noise complaints, Caltech is relatively sedate compared to other schools. "I was worse when I was a student," said the complaining neighbor. Other colleges across the nation—Boston College, Northeastern, and Williams—have also seen recent crackdowns on the volume of music and amount of alcohol at off-campus parties.

The Deans are still discussing the policy with the IHC, and therefore the policy is not supposed to go into effect for another couple weeks. However, the policy is already affecting off-campus parties. When Paul Fleiner submitted an application for the approval of Page House's traditional second term party, he was surprised to have it rejected by the deans because of the size of the guest list.

Fleiner said the new policy will "take a large part of social life out of the mix" by confining students to campus. Still, he does not expect the policy to change, and "hopes we can get this last Page tradition in before closing down off campus parties."

Page's party is traditionally supposed to be this coming weekend, and Page House President Brain Go is talking to the Deans to try to push the party through.



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OPINION

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MARCH 2, 2009

THE CALIFORNIA TECH

Beware the 26th floor

By Professor Bradford Cornell
CONTRIBUTOR

There is a story that I tell my students in BEM 107 that has such relevance not only to the current financial crisis, but also to the career aspirations of Caltech students that it is worth sharing more widely.

In 2002, I was contacted by a major East Coast financial institution that was being sued regarding a financial derivative product. The plaintiff who had purchased the product alleged that the finance firm had failed to adequately disclose the risks associated with the derivative.

I was flown to New York to interview with company executives and lawyers in an elegant top floor dining room. During lunch, we discussed the general background of the case, how the product was sold and so forth. As lunch was ending, I was asked if I had any more specific questions regarding the case. I said yes, I wanted to understand the models that the institution had used internally to assess the risk of the derivative. They looked at each other and said that to get those questions answered I would have to go to the 26th floor. When

I asked what was on the 26th floor, they said some Chinese and Indian guys who do a lot of complicated math.

It turned out that there were some Chinese and Indian guys on the 26th floor, but the math was not that complicated and their models for the derivative products were excellent. However, the risk assessments produced by those models depended on how they were seeded (i.e. on the initial conditions), and the input assumptions came from elsewhere. In light of this, I told the executives that the key to the case was not the models, but the inputs. The firm decided to hire another expert and eventually settled the case for an undisclosed amount.

Today a similar refrain can be heard with respect to the financial crisis. One of the claimed reasons for the financial meltdown was the failure of mathematical models of financial products. That allegation is both unfair and inaccurate. Once again, the main culprit is not the models, but the inputs. No matter how elegant the model for a mortgage derivative security, if that model is seeded with unrealistically optimistic assumptions regarding the time path of future housing prices, it will produce misleading results. In most cases, those input assumptions regarding

housing prices did not originate with the people on the 26th floor. The problem, in short, was not a failure of financial technology, but a failure to integrate technology with marketing and management.

What does all this mean for Techers? As you develop your careers, you need to beware of the 26th floor. The fact that you are here at Caltech means that you are fortunate enough to be endowed with unique intellectual talent. Optimally utilizing that talent is both personally rewarding and socially beneficial. The established mechanisms for scientific research and peer review are a partial solution of optimally utilizing scientific talent, but the story of the 26th floor suggests that it is not a complete solution, particularly outside the bounds of academia. To think in cost benefit terms, the failure to integrate financial technology and financial management may well end up costing this country on the order of \$1 trillion dollars. Most of the blame for this fiasco lies with the managers—but not all. Technically skilled people who were satisfied to linger on the 26th floor bear some responsibility. The main point of your years at Caltech is the acquisition of knowledge, but it is worth spending a few moments thinking about how you will put that knowledge to work lest you end up on the 26th floor.

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Registration: True inconvenience

By Daniel Haas
CONTRIBUTOR

A few days ago, I was reminded of an issue that more directly annoys me than any of those. Let me run through a familiar scenario for you:

7:45 AM - My alarm goes off. I groggily shake myself awake, then panic and figure out which classes to take next term.
7:55 AM - I know which classes I'm going to go for first.
7:58 AM - I'm compulsively hitting the refresh on my browser.
7:59 AM - The refresh time grows exponentially from ~2 seconds up to around ~15 seconds over the next minute.
8:00 AM - A tiny button appears on the page. I've missed seeing this button before because it's so unnoticeable, at my own expense. I click the button.

8:00:05 AM - Frosh Hums fill up
8:00:10 AM - Chem 3a afternoon sections fill up
8:00:18 AM - Maximum Enrollment classes fill up
8:01 AM - I hit "Submit to Advisor" and crawl back into bed, setting my alarm for 3 more hours.

Not one student past first term can't relate to the above. Some have their academic schedule planned, some have the occasional term without high-demand classes they need to muscle their way into, but other than that it's the same situation in rooms across campus as we unite to compete for our desired classes in that half minute after 8:00 AM.

There are some who sign up for everything, putting themselves at around 100 units. It reserves their spot, but they don't have to hit submit to advisor for another

few weeks. Now they can debate the relative merits of each class at their leisure, and can also give spots to their friends. Who cares if they bumped some nameless person from a hum, as long as they have their own choice now?

Should my next three months be determined by this thirty second interval? Does it really need to happen at 8:00 AM, 2 hours before most of the institute has even considered hitting the snooze button? Why can I not sign up for two courses without an add card just because the organizational meeting for one conflicts with the other? Should I really be forced to decide whether I want to go for an evening section or an interesting Hum, because I can't click fast enough to get both? Should my schedule be held at the whims of my internet connection, giving an unfair advantage to those living on campus? Are we an institute based on merit/need, or on APM?

Sure, I'll admit, this is hardly the most pressing issue facing Caltech today. People accept second choice classes, they deal with morning sections, they get add cards signed for courses they were unable to get on time. What bothers me is that it seems like such an easily remedied problem, and yet it continues because none of us see the need to change something that only comes up for 30 seconds every 3 months.

Perhaps we could fix the system so that it warns you of time conflicts, but still allows you to sign up. We could have this happen at noon, or better yet midnight, instead of at the crack of dawn. We could institute a policy of class preference that doesn't depend on some wild-west style quick-draw. I don't know- I just figure with the quality of minds we have here that we could have devised a better system than this.

Dr. Not-so-smart is not so smart

By Perrin Considine
CONTRIBUTOR

I think the Dr. Not-so-smart column of the last week was done in bad taste and worse humor. In particular, the advice to "I'm-in-love-with-a-gay" was ineffectual and unclear as to whether it actually had a purpose in being printed. It seems that the response was supposed to be funny first on the basis that gay men would be perfect boyfriends, and finally because the perfect solution for women is to de-gay the hot guy man because "gay-ness is not genetic."

I'm guessing that both of these ideas were supposed to be so outrageously funny because they are opposite to the view that young, enlightened people often supposedly take. However, if this was your thrust, I really don't think you achieved your aim. As for the advice: "your

job is to seduce the gay guy so that he realizes that he's actually straight" -- perhaps this would be funny if it wasn't actually something we've heard dozens of times in the media and in real life as well. It's actually an issue, but it's neither been reinvented, nor presented in a different light by Dr. Not-so-smart. Just because something is taboo does not make it thought-provoking, and thus worthy to print.

Please realize, I'm not simply objecting to the article because it involves gay people, or because it's an attempt at humor, or because it goes for a less-than PC treatment. But because of the lack of originality, I fail to see how this work can possibly be of service to the public.

I think it's wonderful to poke humor at painful topics, but I really don't think that happened in this article.

We are all people of faith

By John Liu and Wesley Yu
CONTRIBUTORS

"The parrhesia of faith must be matched by the boldness of reason."

-- Pope John Paul II

We are all people of faith—a belief in the truth of a person, idea, or thing. From the monk who prays from sunset to sundown, to the physicist who assumes that the universe began as a tightly packed singularity, to the writers of this article (us) who believe their words may be relevant and

Consider the string theorist who strains to capture a glimpse into the untestable limits of metaphysics, or the stem cell researcher who must balance the weighty issues of ethics, health, and the sanctity of life. Even though science may not be able to answer all these questions, we still ask them. But since science is restricted in its ability to address the world, perhaps there are other valid and compelling venues to discover truth that complement science in its verity and intellectual integrity.

Two weeks ago, Dr. Francis Collins spoke at the Veritas Forum

"And if science is restricted in its ability to address the world, perhaps there are other valid and compelling venues to discover truth that complement science in its verity and intellectual integrity."

worthwhile to someone out there, to the reader of this article (you) who—without reading it yet—has not written off this article as a waste of their time, every one of us uses a splash of faith in our lives.

Yes, on its own, faith can be dangerous. Faith without an effort to critically examine basic assumptions can cause irreparable harm. Examples from history tell us that believing without thinking can cause untold suffering.

As future leaders in science and engineering, we are thus obligated to think rigorously about what we believe in, whether the existence of the supernatural or the power of science to fully explain our world and its existence.

We, of all people, see the limits of science. Yet we as scientists are still innately curious, even beyond the limits of the currently observable and purely natural.

about how faith and philosophy could broaden our perspectives and help us think about questions science is powerless to probe. Using his own conversion from atheism to Christianity as an example, Dr. Collins challenged us to engage our intellects in the pursuit of truth.

So why not be open?

This is not a call to blind faith. It is surely not a call to join the chanting masses or notorious Religion of which we are all wary. It is an earnest appeal to both the skeptic and the curious in all of us: let us seek the truth we long to find.

The same group that brought you the Veritas Forum has invited Harvey Mudd mathematics professor, Francis Su, to moderate a discussion on faith and science this Wednesday at 5 pm. Let's learn from each other!

ASCIT Board of Directors Meeting – Minutes

February 27, 2009

Officers Present: Anthony Chong, Andrey Poletayev, Pallavi Gunalan, Maral Mazrooei, Nadia Iqbal, Michael Maseda, Laura Conwill**Officers Absent:** none**Guests:** Victor Chu, Michelle Jiang, Joel Nikolaus, Sarah Marzen**Call to order:** 12:16 PM**Funding:**

- **Multihouse Funding Request:** Page will play Fleming in dodgeball Sunday at 3 PM and would like to use their portion of the Multihouse funding.
 - **Motion to approve** the use of Page's Multihouse funding for dodgeball, as mentioned above. **VOTE: Passed (5-0-0)**
- **Bonuses:** Mike suggests that ASCIT should meet with the DevTeam before handing out bonuses. In addition, maybe they should be invited to the next BoD meeting to assure everyone is on the same page regarding expectations.

President's Report:

- **ASCIT BoD Retreat:** Meet at Tom's house at 4:15. We will discuss our goals for the coming year on Saturday morning. We will also discuss staff member positions.

Officer Reports:

- **V.P. of Academic Affairs (ARC Chair):** Meetings with division chairs have been started. The ARC is working on updating TQFR.
- **V.P. of Nonacademic Affairs (IHC Chair):** The IHC is dealing with the off-campus party policy, as they have had issues with people not getting parties registered. Pallavi says they are going to discuss this with deans. The IHC is revising the mural policy. They have met with student housing chair and plan to meet Anneila. The fire marshal has been conducting inspections and objects to Lloyd's Lower Crotch area; a compromise is being discussed.
- **Operations Director:** Mike is trying to track down SAC 15 keys; some house presidents might have one. It is important to know the number of SAC 15 keys in existence, and who is in charge of each. Frosh lunches at the Ath could be held somewhere else, as eating at the Ath once a week eats up a large portion of ASCIT's budget. Pallavi, Mike, and Maral will meet to come up with a better alternative.
- **Treasurer:** Funding is not required for food for Social D meetings. Maral and Nadia will meet soon to discuss social team budget, as Nadia wants to plan an event for the end of term. ASCIT has an alcohol budget which used to be used for ASCIT Happy Hour, but in the past two years has gone towards end of term parties, which is a good use for the money.
- **Social Director:** Nadia talked to Cameron this week about PFW. There will be two social hours: one right when the prefrosh arrive, and another some evening during the weekend. The carnival will still happen, but will not be as elaborate as last year's. Anthony says the dunk tank, cotton candy and popcorn, and obstacle course are the most popular carnival events from last year, so we should make it a priority to include those.
- **Secretary:** Laura is going to update the display board on the Olive Walk with the new BoD. Maral suggests covering the bulletin board with colored paper first to increase its aesthetic appeal.
- **RevComm:** The RevComm has talked about resolutions; much of it needed updating even before the new bylaws were implemented. Joel will schedule a meeting with Anthony to discuss this.

Scheduling:

- **Installations Dinner:** The Installations Dinner will be Thursday, March 5, at Tom Mannion's house. Details to come.

Other:

- **ASCIT Formal:** The ASCIT Formal may be eliminated, and replaced with another event such as a concert. Anthony and Pallavi will talk to each of the house presidents and ask them to get feedback from their house.

Meeting adjourned: 12:53 PMSubmitted by Laura Conwill
ASCIT Secretary**Weekly Meeting - Lloyd - February 26, 2009**Present: Sly, Max, Nick, David, Pallavi, Benji, Brian, Daryl, Robbie, Dvin
Guests: Nadia, Kolodrubetz, Kirit, MarzenStuff From Last Week:

Off Campus Parties:

- Apparently Dean Green is implementing the new OCA party policy already.

Committee Rollover:

- Interviews for IHC Secretary and RevComm Chair will be this weekend

Mural Policy:

- The Student Housing Committee may be done evaluating the policy
- Pallavi will go talk to Anneila and Joe Shepherd and get it signed.

Prefrosh in Lloyd

- Robbie does not know who the "prefrosh" was that DanO talked to at Lloyd interhouse. Someone probably just lied to DanO.

Darb Snowball Attack

- The IHC liked the cupcakes from Max, so no resolution will be passed to punish Dabney. Instead, a new apology cupcake policy shall be implemented in case any house hurts another one's feelings.
 - Max would like to note that the baked goods from Dabney are delicious.
 - Max would also like to note that at the last IHC meeting he did not retreat. He boldly advanced in a backwards direction.
 - Dvin inquired about the whereabouts of everyone's boxers, in particular Max's, as both of their boxers may or may not have been stolen by Pallavi. Max later commented he thought it was funny Dvin brought this up, as he had not yet had a chance to wash his boxers...

Faculty/Alumni lists

- The presidents got the faculty lists from Dvin, but didn't get the lists with the faculty that are interested in visiting the houses from Mannion. Dvin will email the lists of faculty alumni to the house presidents and a spreadsheet of the faculty.
 - Benji said he emailed the list of interested faculty that he got from Dvin to Tom, but hasn't heard back.

Grad Student/Faculty In Houses:

- Pallavi says that Anneila mentioned in passing at the BoD meeting that the administration was considering having non-RA Grad students in the houses. Our plan to interact more with the faculty and the grad students is to show the administration we can interact with them without having them live in the House and so that they back us up.
 - Benji says it's harder to interact with the grad students - it's not free to invite them to dinner.
 - Dvin: The IHC only interacts with Student Affairs, not the faculty (only the MOSH), and we don't get a chance to talk with faculty about bigger issues.

Bod Stuff:

- SexComm Reps. - Nadia said she heard people might not come and may send frosh instead. It's important that all the social reps attend. The meeting will be Tuesday during lunch. Reps should email Nadia if they can't show up.

Other Stuff:

- The IHC has a new member/mascot, Blu, Pallavi's cat. In related super important news, Robbie named his black cat Blackie...
- Visiting: Benji wants to visit other houses during next week's dinners because of OPI. Later in the week would be best for Ricketts/Dabney, everyday but Tuesday would work for Blacker.
 - It was agreed that the presidents and a few people from every house should visit other houses.
- New IHC Meeting days: Tuesday works for everyone.
- Fire Safety: Robbie says that lower crotch is dismantled because it is not fire safe (the couches jut out) and housing says they are afraid of the fire marshal getting Caltech in trouble. Lloyd had the same problem last year with housing, who didn't enforce the policy because they didn't think the fire marshal would check on them. Lloyd tried moving the couches back after the fire check and housing found out.
 - Housing also is complaining about Lloyd and Avery's shoes outside their doors as a fire hazard (Nick thinks the shoes are a "fire convenience").
 - Robbie says they'll try to stall, and Pallavi will talk to Peter Daily and Tom Mannion.
- Some presidents wanted to know who was paying for Page's new stuff. Brian said he thinks housing is paying for it, but he'll ask the deans where the money is coming from. He would like to point out that page has not gotten new things for their lounge or beer room in a while.
- Dvin says the new IHC should stay on top of the frosh camp and new bookstore issues so we can make sure they become something students want.
- Dvin talked to Tom, who wants to do Mudeo during alumni weekend. Daryl said Tom Lampo was in charge of it last year.
- Benji asked who ran Kelrof last year, Marzen said that Eichenlaub did.
- Dvin will ask Tom what's going on with House endowments and the IHC should keep on top of the faculty board committees. Some of the committees haven't met this year.

DOÑA ROSA ON ARROYO

by Andrew Freddo and Dannah Almasco

Introduction: Whenever driving to 110, we always pass Doña Rosa on the corner of Arroyo Parkway. It looked interesting, and we wanted to try its Mexican food.

Goal: Is it more worthwhile to walk 25 minutes to Doña Rosa or just down to Lake for Chipotle?

Stockroom Options: Doña Rosa has a wide sortment of Mexican specialties, including tacos, burritos, and baked goods. They dub themselves a “taquería and bakery,” so we were especially looking forward to try something sweet.

Materials and Cost: We ordered beef taquitos (\$7.85) to split as an appetizer. For our main courses, we ate the carne asada quesadilla (\$7.75) and the torta cubana (\$7.85). We wrapped up our meal with a pumpkin empanada (\$1.35).

Observations:

One order of beef taquitos came with three, which is a good amount to split between two or three people. It also comes with rice, beans, and guacamole on the side. They were crispy on the edges, but a bit too soggy in the middle. They were stuffed full of juicy beef.

The carne asada quesadilla sure came with a lot of carne! The grilled beef was mixed with hot melted monterey jack cheese, and this quesadilla was not a standard thin take on the dish – it was very thick and very filling. Unfortunately, it was a bit messy and greasy, but still enjoyable and full of flavor.

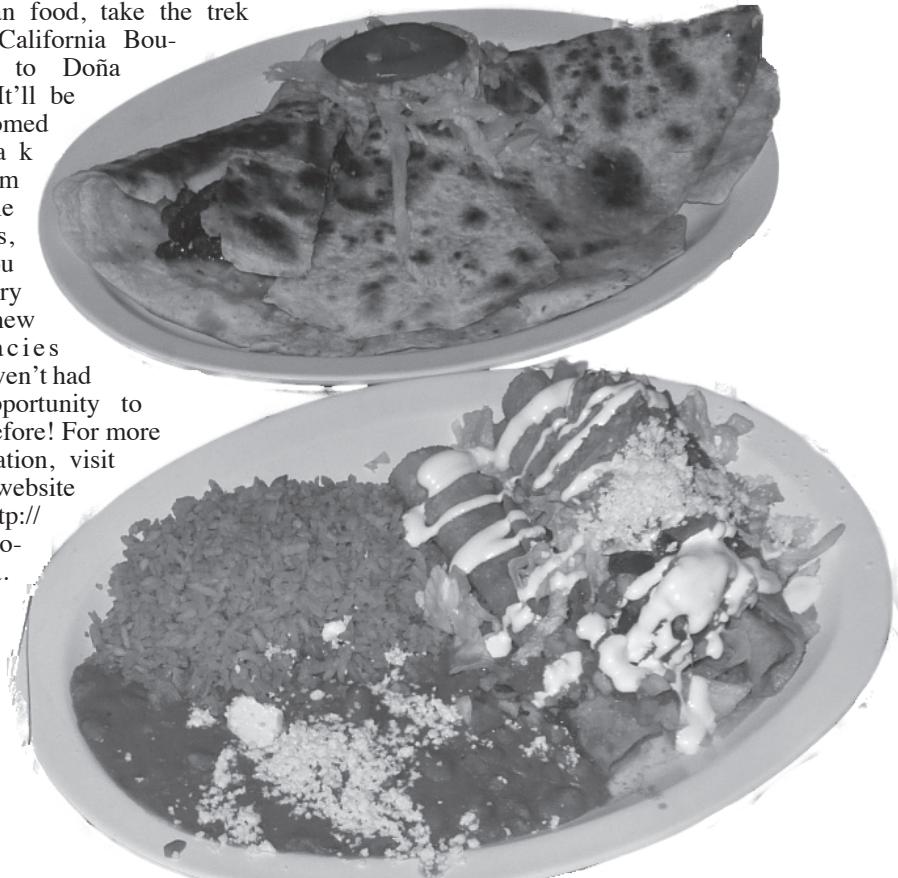
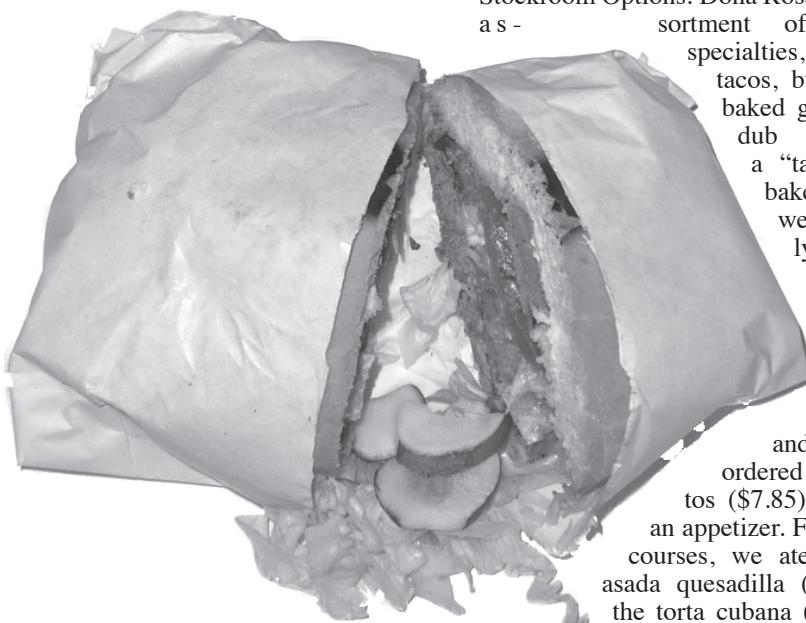
The torta cubana also had a lot of meat –

this time, with pulled pork, beef, and some ham. We were a bit disappointed that there was not more ham, but otherwise the sandwich came out very hot and crispy. Don’t expect any condiments, save some guacamole, on this sandwich. There was no lettuce or other veggies to counter the dense meat. So be prepared to eat!

Finally, so we could try something sweet from this Mexican bakery, we settled on the pumpkin empanada. The pumpkin tasted very different from pumpkin pie – though it was still sweet, it was not overly sugary and tasted like pureed pumpkin before it’s made into a pie. The filling itself was not evenly distributed through the empanada; it all was on one side. The shell and filling both were very fragrant with cinnamon.

Atmosphere: To our surprise, Doña Rosa is a counter-service restaurant. They both have inside seating and a heated, enclosed patio on the street that you can enjoy your meal on. The tables are a bit close together, and overall it is a very casual restaurant, with a focus on the food.

Conclusion: For a more authentic take on Mexican food, take the trek down California Boulevard to Doña Rosa. It’ll be a welcomed break from Chipotle burritos, and you may try some new delicacies you haven’t had the opportunity to taste before! For more information, visit their website at <http://www.dona-rosa.com>.



OVERALL: **B +**

“Throw Me Something, Mister!”

by Neha Samdari

Every time the word “Mardi Gras” or “Fat Tuesday” is mentioned, I immediately think of New Orleans – the music, the purple-green-gold costumes, the parties, the sporadic flashing, and the scores of colored beads and other trinkets being tossed into crowds of hooting revelers screaming those four infamous words “Throw me something mister!” I think of families and friends enjoying the rhythms of “Nawlins” music and feasting on Cajun and Creole food and I think of elaborate floats depicting scenes from children’s stories and mythological events.

With this bold representation of Mardi Gras in the United States, it is easy to forget the roots of this international celebration. How and when did this huge mid-winter party get started?

Mardi Gras is thought to have kicked off long before Europeans set foot in the New World. Ancient Romans and Greeks celebrated a circus like festival, with days of feasting and drinking, not entirely unlike the Mardi Gras we are familiar with today. This festival related to their gods of agriculture, pastoral shepherds and even fertility. In fact, the term “Carnival”, which is often used synon-

ymously with Mardi Gras, is derived from a Latin phrase that means “farewell to the flesh”.

When these cultures began to embrace Christianity, this pagan tradition was converted to a Christian celebration, with the feasts and festivals becoming symbolic of a period of merriment that precedes the penance of Lent. During Lent, the religiously faithful refrain from a number of indulgences of the “flesh”, including eating meat. However, even today, pagan gods are often honored at the parades – many floats still don the regalia of the Greek god of wine, Bacchus, during Carnival celebrations.

The party crossed the Atlantic and came to America on March 3, 1699 with the French explorer Iberville, who camped on the Mississippi River about 50 miles south of the present location of New Orleans. Realizing that his date of entry coincided with the Mardi Gras in Paris, where it had been celebrated since the middle ages, he reasonably named the site Point du Mardi Gras. By the mid 1820s, Mardi Gras became firmly rooted in New Orleans culture and today, the city’s celebrations are considered one of America’s biggest parties, with towns and cities around the world joining into the fun.

Italy: The “Carnivale de Venezia” is notable for huge masquerades, which were banned during the 1930s, under Italy’s Fascist rule. Over the centuries, there have been various attempts at banning the use of masks, but they remain a central feature of the Venetian Carnival.

USA: Perhaps the most famous celebration of Mardi Gras happens in New Orleans, particularly in Bourbon Street. Even after Hurricane Katrina hit, celebrations continued as locals saw them as an affirmation of life. Each year over 750,000 king cakes are sold in New Orleans and over 50,000 more are shipped to other states around the nation.

Slovenia: Known as “Kurentovanje” where people make noise with bells that are attached to their hips. Voracious doughnut eating is also a tradition

Argentina: Most famous for the dancing carnival in Buenos Aires with dancing Murga troupes



Brazil: Known as “Shrove Tuesday” Glorious parades attract hordes of revelers, families, and in particular, many members of the gay population (notably spectacular drag queens).

The Concise Dictionary of Principal Mardi Gras Terms:

- Krewe – a general term used to describe all the non-profit organizations that take part in Carnival festivities.
- Captain – the leader of each Mardi Gras organization
- Court – the king, queen, maids and dukes of a Mardi Gras organization
- Dubloons – coin-like objects that are often thrown from floats to members of the crowd. They contain the krewe’s insignia on one side and the parade’s theme on the reverse.
- Invitation – a printed request for attendance at a Mardi Gras masquerade, however, to be eligible to enter, these invitations must be referred to as “tickets”
- King Cake – an oval, sugared cake with a plastic baby doll hidden inside. The person who gets the slice of the cake with the doll inside it, becomes the crowned “king” and is responsible for buying the next colorful cake.
- Throws – Inexpensive souvenirs that are tossed from floats by krewe members in response to calls of “Throw me something, mister!”. These souvenirs can be beaded necklaces, dubloons and even cups.

Australia: Known for the scores of gay parades, which take place in the streets of Sydney. Event organizers chose the theme “A Brave New World” in 2006 to celebrate three decades of the annual gay festival and the fight for acceptance and equality.



I would like to thank Thimal de Alwis for providing useful insights to Mardi Gras celebrations after having experienced them first hand in Louisiana.

Informatics prof wins teaching prize

Informatics professor Jehoshua "Shuki" Bruck is the latest recipient of the Feynman Prize for Excellence in Teaching, Caltech's most prestigious teaching award that comes with a \$3,500 cash prize and an equivalent raise in annual salary.

Last year, Bruck taught the menu class IST 4, which introduces Boolean algebra as it relates to programming, computability, logic, and information theory. Bruck, who joined the Caltech faculty in 1994 and was the founding director of the Information Science and Technology (IST) program in 2003, was a resident professor in Avery last year.

Saving energy: a town hall meeting

The Caltech Facilities Department will host two Town Hall meetings to discuss savings through energy conservation on Tuesday, March 3, from 10 to 11:30 a.m., and noon to 1:30 p.m. in the Beckman Institute auditorium.

All members of the Caltech community are invited to attend to learn what is being done on campus to save energy and participate in a discussion on energy conservation.

From Caltech Today

Student funding gets a fresh look

ASCIT may cut the spring formal

By Joel Nikolaus

STAFF WRITER

ASCIT is looking to trim its own waistline--and not by abstaining from Friday morning donuts.

Like the administration, current ASCIT president Anthony Chong wants to reevaluate just where ASCIT is putting its money.

In the process he said he plans to have the BoD "reevaluate every event funded by ASCIT," not allocating money simply based upon "historical precedent."

The biggest item currently on the table is ASCIT formal. Even with only a portion of the formal funds coming from ASCIT itself, last year the BoD budgeted \$6,000 for an event whose total cost ended adding up to something over \$20,000. While ticket sales made up for some of the difference, the rest came from a variety of sources around campus. With the current economic situation, some of those funds may no longer be available.

The high cost, a subject of criticism in the past, has prompted the BoD to decide whether the formal is worth the high sticker price. Chong said "it would be nice if we could make it cheaper," and since the rental of the venue forms the largest portion of the cost, around \$20,000-\$30,000,

that may be a possibility.

If ASCIT could work out a deal with another venue, perhaps on campus, it would bring substantial reductions in cost, according to Angela Zah, former ASCIT Treasurer.

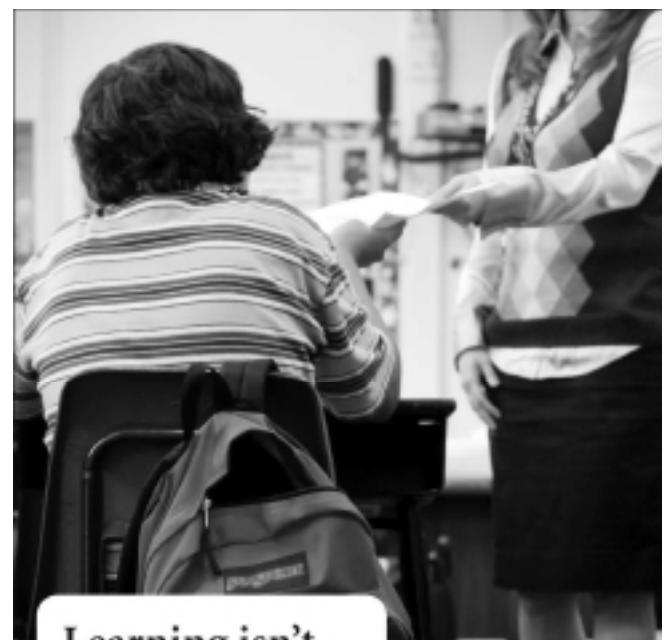
Assuming that the venue was covered, she said that the \$6,000 budgeted for the last year could run formal. Unlike Caltech as a whole, the current economic situation has not had a direct impact on the funds available to ASCIT.

But the issue of ASCIT formal is not just about funding. The same issue about the event itself and the possibility of changing the event entirely. And not just to something cheaper.

Chong said he thinks "ASCIT has the potential to put on at least one major event a year," he said that ASCIT formal may not be the best way to do that. He said he does not have a good feel for what the students think about the event but is considering other options, like a concert.

Although a concert might cost more money than ASCIT formal, Chong said he thinks there might be alternative funding available such an event. In December 2005, ASCIT Social Director Dima Kornasovskiy brought Jimmy Eat World to campus for one night with over \$20,000 in MHF funding.

Correction to last week's paper: Daniel Obenshain is the current Dabney House Vice President.



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News Briefs: The World Outside Caltech

By Pradeep Ramesh

STAFF WRITER

Nairobi, Kenya:

A nation once lauded as an example of democracy and emerging prosperity is teetering on the brink of civil war. A recently published report by the UN's chief investigator in Kenya estimates that as many as ten million people will suffer from starvation this year due to civic unrest.

Farmers have been prevented from returning to their farmlands, further exacerbating the food crisis. Tourism, one of Kenya's leading economic sectors, has suffered a significant downturn from the global financial crisis and the year-old coalition government is commonly viewed with distrust and hate, having failed to accomplish its promised objectives. Rampant corruption has stalled development and foreign aid and has triggered numerous street protests and demonstrations in the capital.

Although Kenya is one of the poorest countries in the world, its politicians are among the most well paid, a fact that has widened the gulf between the disillusioned public and the ruling class. The violence began when supporters of Raila Odinga

accused incumbent President Mwai Kibaki of engaging in election fraud to stay in power.

The nation has been in a constant state of civic unrest since last year's disputed election; although the violence has somewhat abated, a poor rainy season has exacerbated the drought and famine sweeping across the land.

By Garrett Lewis

STAFF WRITER

Filling out the nominations

President Obama once again filled out his cabinet nominations over the weekend by nominating Kansas Governor Kathleen Sibelius for Secretary of Health and Human Services. The position was previously offered to former Senator Tom Daschle, who withdrew after it was revealed that he had failed to pay back taxes for the use of a limousine. The selection of Sibelius, a two-term governor and former insurance commissioner, brings another popular voice into the President's circle, but throws a wrench in efforts by Democrats to take over a solidly red senate seat in 2010.

Obama's budget plan

Meanwhile, Obama's budget plan is taking center stage as both parties line up for a partisan battle that will largely take place in the Senate. Early successes by the administration in healthcare, stimulus, and gender equality are being called the "tip of the iceberg." The President will not only be competing with Republicans, but Congressional leadership that has its own

agenda.

Washington, D.C. gets a vote

The Congressional agenda includes a recently-passed bill giving the District of Columbia a vote in the House. The bill passed narrowly after including legislation in the Senate requiring the overturn of most of the Capitol's gun laws. This amendment will face difficulties in conference as the two chambers try to reconcile differences between their respective bills. If the bill is eventually signed by the President, it will face legal challenges over the Constitutional rule that "The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several states." The District of Columbia is not a state.

Election 2012 already

In the march to 2012, the presidential poll at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference revealed continuing support for Mitt Romney, who won with 20 percent of the tally. Governor Bobby Jindal was second, followed by Ron Paul, Sarah Palin, and Newt Gingrich. Neither Palin nor Jindal attended the event, which is generally considered an early proving ground for potential candidates.

Track and field compete in Rossi Relays

By Yang Yang
STAFF WRITER

Quick quiz: Is a ‘relayer’ someone who dresses up in matching spandex with three friends and carries a baton around for as little time as possible, or an overachieving hen on a mid-afternoon reprisal of her morning egg-making ritual?

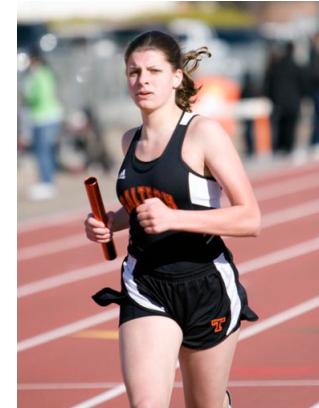
Answer: Stop being close-minded. Why can’t you have both? There’s a natural human urge to take every phenomenon and package it neatly as this or that category, but in doing so we close ourselves off from a fantastic array of ways to view the world around us.

For example, Alex Lapides laid down the 400m leg of the men’s Sprint Medley Relay early last Saturday during the annual Rossi Relays track meet at Claremont College. The team combined for a 3:45 mile, taking tenth place of 17 while edging out several SCIAC competitors. Just a few hours later, Alex relaid a relay leg by really legging another 400m to anchor the men’s 4x400 race. There, Caltech posted a new season best of 3:35, improving over their time of 3:38 from the home meet two weeks ago.

Should we interpret Lapides’ pained facial contortions during this reiterative lap as a noble battle against fatigue for the sake of his team’s glory? Instead, open your mind to new possibilities – perhaps he was dealing with the effort of laying an egg halfway through the race. He was certainly clucking a lot just before. (By ‘clucking’, I mean ‘whining’. Also, I really hope this egg-laying theory accurately explains that bulge in his speedsuit.)

Quick quiz: Sixteen Beavers are running in four separate Distance Medley Relay teams of four runners each. Each runner on a team will run a different distance – either one, two, three, or four laps. How many different complete team orderings are possible if two teams are women’s teams, two are men’s, and one particular runner must run either a 400m or 800m? Also, the race is about to

Run like the wind



Picture from Caltech Athletics

Suzanna Piatt races in the 13th annual Rossi Relays hosted by Claremont-Mudd-Scripps.

start and everyone is asking where that one guy is. Nobody has seen him since he said he was “going to a better place” and took off jogging thirty minutes ago.

Answer: One. From where I was standing on a hill at the far side of the stadium, Techers were indistinguishable.

The top performance of those teams came from the women’s ‘A’ team, which ran 14:19 for 15th place (of 18).

Quick quiz: What is an anagram of the word “relay”?

Answer: A permutation of

the letters ‘r-e-l-a-y’. What, not satisfied with a literal interpretation to the quiz question? If you want a deeper one, just peel back a ‘layer’.

All told, Caltech competed in four different relays at Rossi – the sprint and distance medley and 4x100m and 4x400m relays. The men won the second heat of the 4x100m in 44.67s, as Noddy Eruchalu burst past the Vanguard team on the anchor leg. The women’s 4x400 effort secured them a 4:32 finish, more than a full second ahead of slowest of three teams from Concordia (and only twelve seconds behind the fifth of five teams from Point Loma Nazarene). Most athletes ran three races, forming ‘layer upon layer’. (Which is an anagram for exactly what they did: ‘replay your lane’.)

Quick quiz: What should distance runners and field event-like people do when the sprinters are all playing at relays?

Answer: Forget it, and play with themselves. That’s just what Sachith Dunatunga and Andrew Gong did, as they both set lifetime bests at 3000m (9:52 and 10:00 respectively.) Stephanie Wuerth, Clara Eng, and Masha Belyi all improved their lifetime bests, too, as they moved onto or improved their times on the Caltech all-time top ten lists for the same distance. (I don’t know whether they were playing with themselves or each other, but whatever they were doing it was obviously right.)

The team will face the full competition of the SCIAC for the first time in 2009 next weekend at the SCIAC Invite at Redlands, which is the last of the info I have to relay.

Sports News Briefs

By Yang Yang
STAFF WRITER

Baseball

The Caltech baseball team finished its three-game series with Whittier on Saturday on a high note with its best defensive effort this season, taking the second game of the weekend double-header to nine innings before losing 9-0. Normal NCAA mercy rules calls for a game to be discontinued when one team is leading by 10 runs or more after the sixth inning; before Saturday seven of Caltech’s first eight games were terminated by the mercy rule before the ninth inning.

It is the first time this season

that the Beavers have held an opponent to single digits in scoring. Caltech held the Poets to four scoreless innings to end the game.

Water Polo

The women’s water polo program will return to full NCAA competition this year. Although the team was forced to cede from SCIAC due to a lack of undergraduate players, the squad will have enough players this season. The Beavers will start their season against Gannon on Friday at 5:00 p.m.

Upcoming Games

March 4, 2009
Men’s Tennis
vs. St. John’s (Minn.)
3:00 PM

March 5, 2009
Women’s Water Polo
vs. Gannon
5:00 PM

March 6, 2009
Baseball
at Pomona-Pitzer
2:30 PM

March 7, 2009
Fencing
at Stanford, NCAA
Western Regionals
9:00 am TBA

March 7, 2009
Track and Field
vs. SCIAC Invitational @
University of Redlands
3:30 pm TBA

Preview: March 7, 2009
Women’s Tennis
at La Verne
9:30 AM
@ Bonita HS

March 7, 2009
Baseball
vs. Pomona-Pitzer
11:00 AM

March 7, 2009
Women’s Water Polo
at Cal Lutheran
12:00 PM
Cal Lutheran Spring
Tournament

March 7, 2009
Baseball
vs. Pomona-Pitzer
2:30 PM

March 7, 2009
Women’s Water Polo
vs. Gannon
5:15 PM
Cal Lutheran Spring
Tournament @ Oak
Christian HS

March 8, 2009
Men’s Tennis
at La Sierra
3:00 PM



The Weekly Scoreboard

Feb. 24

Men’s Basketball v. Claremont-M-S L 89-55

Feb. 27

Baseball at Whittier L 15-2

Feb. 28

Baseball at Whittier L 15-4

Baseball at Whittier L 9-0

Men’s Tennis v. Redlands L 9-0

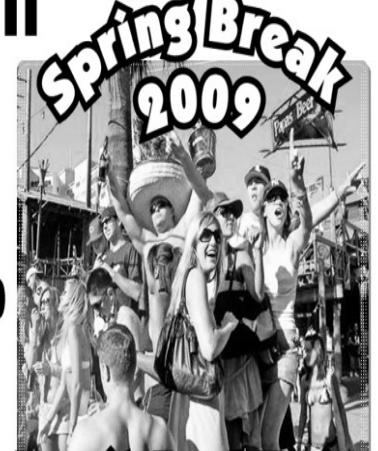
Women’s Tennis v. Redlands L 9-0

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Dr. Irrelevant, Ph.D. - yes, another Doctor

Dear Dr. Irrelevant,

I think my boyfriend may be cheating on me. He keeps acting distant, he forgot my birthday, plus I've seen him making out with another girl multiple times. What should I do?

Suspicious

Dear Suspicious,

I've heard countless complaints like yours before, and I'll tell you what I've told them. The key difference between the alligator and the crocodile is the snout. An alligator has a pointed snout, while the crocodile's is more rounded (Note: if you're close enough to see this, you're probably too close!)

You're more likely to encounter an alligator than a crocodile in North America, though there have been cases to the contrary. In the water, there's very little you can do against alligators, so I would recommend not falling in. On land,

you should remember to run in a zig-zag pattern, because alligators are surprisingly fast, but cannot turn well.

I hope this helps, and good luck!

Dr. Irrelevant

Dear Dr. Irrelevant,

I came to Tech to major in Chemistry, but now I'm having second thoughts. I think I want to become a writer now, even though it would pay much less. Should I follow my heart, or should I go for career success?

Unsure

Dear Unsure,

I too have wondered about my intended career path many times. When I was a child, I wanted to be an astronaut so much. We lived on a small farm, where there was an old train track that bordered between us and the neighbors. Every New Year's, since we were too poor to afford

fireworks, and since they would have no doubt lit the field on fire, my father and I would go to the train tracks and lay a penny for every year I'd been alive.

When I was seven, one of the pennies was knocked off and hit my father in the eye. He collapsed and I had to run back to the house to fetch my mother. We were too poor to take him to the hospital, so he became blind in one eye. I know it wasn't my fault, but I still blame myself sometimes.

So you see, things will work out.

Dr. Irrelevant

Dear Dr. Irrelevant,

I think I'm a woman trapped in a man's body. What should I do?

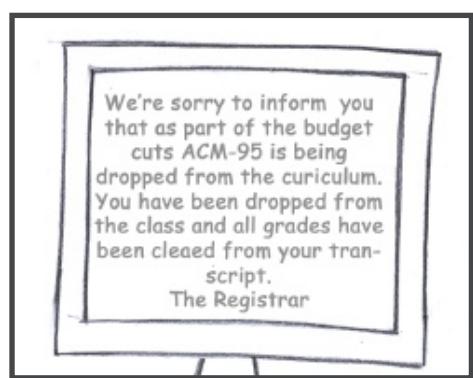
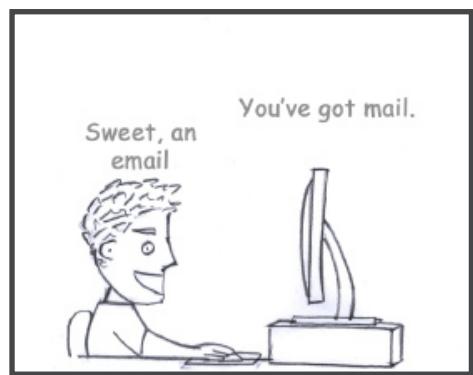
Living a lie

Dear Living,

There's an ancient Russian proverb

that reads, "Do not search the fields for potatoes, because when you return a bear will have ransacked your house and eaten your first-born child."

Dr. Irrelevant



'Drop Day' by Ma Prunes

'Like Mother, Like Daughter'

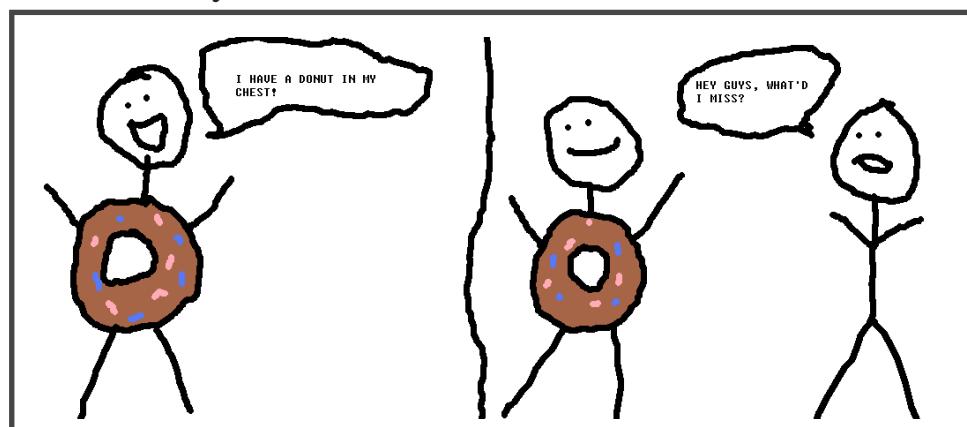
by Will Carrillo

Comics



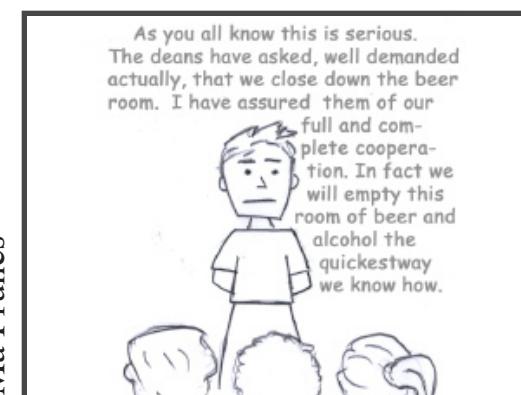
Well... I guess it's a compliment to the Mother...

'Woo Yeah' by Cromwell McDonald



"We like you.
Come visit us
at our meetings
in Blacker
Dining Hall
Mondays and
Fridays during
lunch."

Sarah Marzden



'The Beer Room' by Ma Prunes



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