



Caltech is good investment, says PayScale

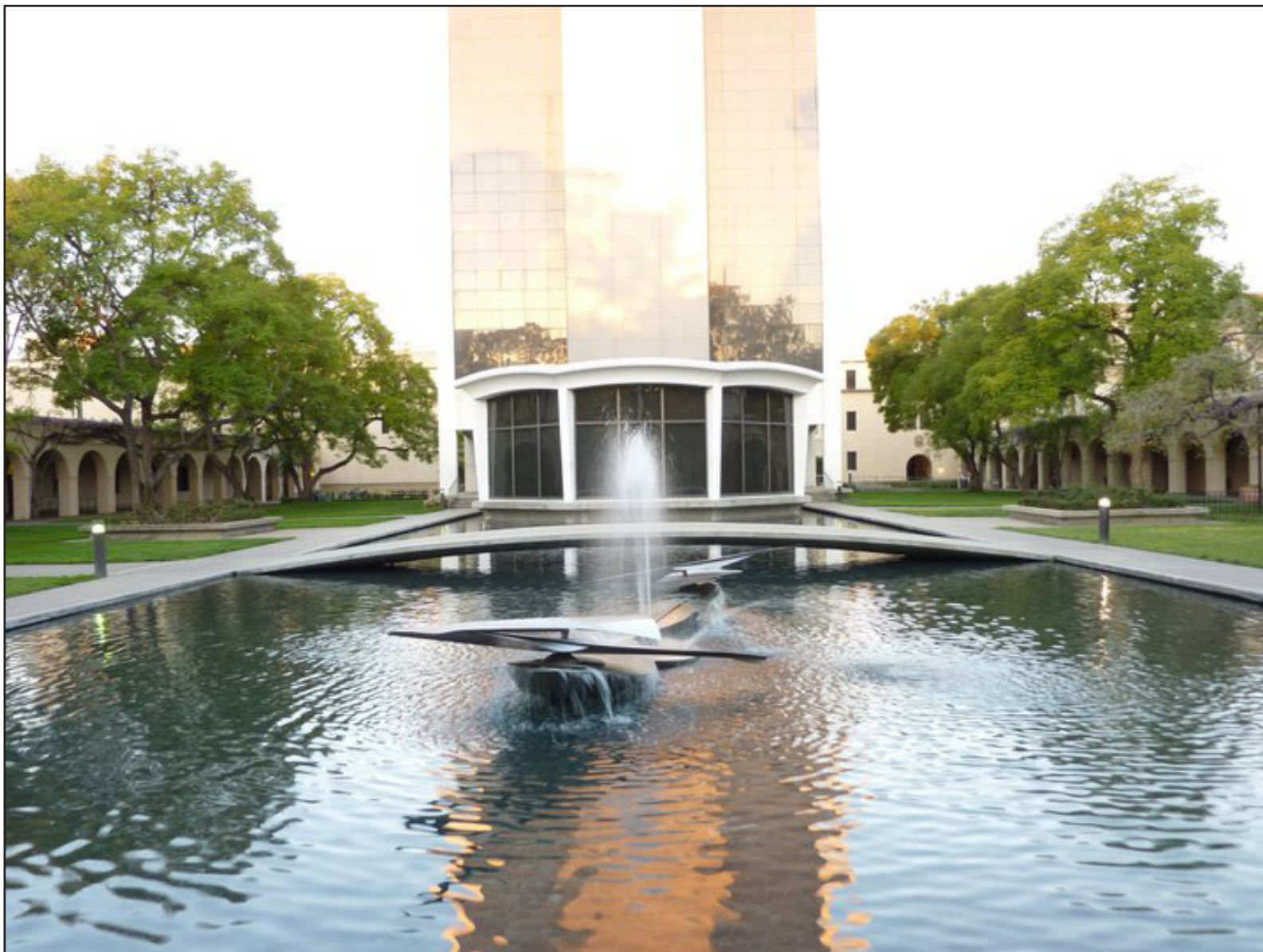
SARAH MARZEN

Copy Editor Emeritus

According to PayScale, Caltech gives you more “bang for your buck” than any other university in the world, beating out Harvey Mudd in second and MIT in third.

PayScale calculated the expected payback on tuition for nearly seven hundred colleges and universities by surveying the median salary of graduates for the past thirty years and comparing that to their expected tuition cost and the expected pay for a high school graduate. One catch is that the survey didn’t include graduates that obtained anything higher than a bachelors degree, and also excluded graduates that worked outside the U.S. As PayScale noted in its methodology, “For some liberal arts, Ivy League, and highly selective schools, graduates with degrees higher than a bachelor’s degree can represent a significant fraction of all graduates.”

When PayScale factored financial aid into their calculations of tuition, Caltech fell below MIT, several Ivy League schools, Georgia Institute of Technology, and University of Virginia. Taking into account financial aid, PayScale estimated that over a thirty-year period, a



Caltech excels not only in being a good investment, but also provides beautiful views for undergraduates

Caltech B.S.-only graduate would earn \$1,809,000 over someone who went to work right after high school.

The survey didn’t account for the types of bachelors-only degrees that come out of each school, making these results less legitimate.

An engineering major is bound to have an easier time finding a job than a philosophy major—the average salary of an engineering major is over \$60,000, while the average salary of a philosophy major is \$39,900, according to PayScale.

PayScale makes money by selling salary compensation

information to individuals seeking employment, and was named one of the hottest Seattle companies and top 10 products of 2006 by HR Executive.

Caltech is often well-ranked against our peers.

These rankings range from standard to wacky. US News tends to rank Caltech’s undergraduate

- Sandra Fang education in the top ten every year.

But last year, Caltech was rated by the Daily Beast as one of the happiest schools, primarily because Southern California has great weather and we are near Los Angeles. Caltech was also placed on a Daily Beast list of the fiftiest most-stressed colleges.

In this issue

NEWS

Senior class gift is revealed **3**

OPINION

Handmer offers fix for Caltech funding **4**

FEATURE

Caltech band members visit China **5**

SPORTS

A photo shoot of sports remembrances **7**

HUMOR

New faces in the Humor section **8**

News briefs from around the globe

Provided by Tech correspondent Sam Barnett

Need to know

< **100** words about the world this week – topics sorted from good to bad

by Sam Barnett – links to full stories available at barnett.caltech.edu/news

Another increase in jobs **244,000** more jobs in April – however, 13.8 million still jobless [LA TIMES]

California tax revenue \$ **2.5 billion** more than expected will help ease state’s large deficit [CNN]

Improved fuel efficiency **111** miles per gallon with GM’s Volt – recharging is expensive though [CNN]

Gas prices keep rising \$ **4** per gallon (new national average) – highest average ever was \$4.11 [CNN]

Protests in Mexico > **65,000** demonstrators demand end to drug violence – silent march [CNN]

Mississippi River flood > **1,300** residents had to evacuate their homes in Memphis, Tennessee [AP]

More fighting in Egypt > **200** wounded from violence between Muslims and Christians [NY TIMES]

Please join a selection of Caltech's Chamber Musicians on Sunday, May 15 at 3:30 in Dabney Lounge for an afternoon of music appreciation. Reception to follow.

See the full program at:

http://www.music-theater-art.caltech.edu/chamber_music/index.html

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Write articles for the Tech

get paid up to \$30

ASCIT minutes

April 24, 2011 (Last Week's Minutes)

Officers present: Chris Hallacy, Margaret Chiu, Diego Caporale, Mario Zubia, Prakriti Gaba, Laura Santoso
Officers absent: Laura Conwill
Guests: Cole Hershkovitz

Call to order: 8:48pm

President's Report:

- Trustees: The Trustees came through campus last week. Everything was fine and dandy; they are happy.
- Protest issues: The two main issues will be split:
 - The IHC will primarily take care of housing concerns (ex. ACs) and work with Mannion, Asimow, and Daily.
 - Hallacy will work on getting together a mental health committee which will ideally include members from the ASCIT BoD, IHC, GSC, UCCs, RAs, and a few key administrators and staff.
- Finances: We have enough reserved money in the ASCIT accounts for the formal, so we will move some money from the slush fund (buffer fund) into the ASCIT endowment so that we can gain more money in the future.

Officer's Reports:

- VP of Academic Affairs (ARC Chair):
 - ARC events: Most likely, faculty committee meetings will be May 7 and the teaching awards will be on May 27
 - Option Socials: The ARC is trying to organize socials for various options with different professors, but they are busy this term so this will likely be postponed until next term.
 - Dean's meeting: Prof. Kewitt is concerned about lecture attendance and would like to make Caltech more fun so people go to class.
 - Year-round Research: The SFP office was contacted. There used to be something called UROH which posted research opportunities during the school year, which they will try to get started again.
 - Professor of the Month: The ARC is picking the new Prof of the Month this week!
 - Course Concerns: It seems like several professors have been sick or missing often, which stops class. The ARC will talk with Melanie Hunt about developing a policy for absent professors.
- VP of Non-Academic Affairs (IHC Chair) – Report from Hallacy:
 - Dean's meeting: Prof. Kewitt really wants to move rotation out of the first week of academics because he is concerned that it is detrimental to the start of classes. Any change is unlikely to happen for this upcoming year because commitments have already been made, but there may be change in following years (ex. Bringing upperclassmen on campus before classes start and having rotation then).
 - ACs: The IHC is deciding which house the new AC will live in and is determining the group that will be part of the selection process for the two new ACs that will come in 2012.
- Director of Operations:
 - Yearbooks: Diego is working with yearbook people to find people who want to get involved next term. He is also turning a room in the SAC into a yearbook publication room by getting it furnished and getting a computer with In Design. Still needs to distribute old Big Ts to professors.
 - Clubs: Club funding is almost done. Diego will send out the emails letting clubs know how much funding they received and the BoD's suggestions.
 - Screening Room: Sound card and subwoofer are in the works.
- Treasurer:
 - ASCIT Formal funding: Mario got money from the funding office to cover transportation to the formal plus an additional \$4k. He will apply to alumni funding this week and contact security so that we will have some at the formal.
 - Other: Mario did reimbursements, and he will itemize our budget by term.
- Social Director:
 - ASCIT Formal:
 - Concert conflict: The people who want to go to the formal who have a concert that night will be able to get out by 9:30. We will start dinner on the yacht at dock if necessary.
 - Avery conflict: Avery has an event at 7, so we will try to get them an extra bus so they can leave later.
 - Beverages: We are going to try to at least get unlimited non-alcoholic drinks for the whole night (instead of a cash bar).
 - Movie night will be planned after the formal.
- Secretary:
 - Olive walk boards: The Olive walk boards are now water-proofed. We will likely be able to use the two other boards on the side as well.
 - Student faculty committees: Will contact the SFCs and arrange for them to give updates once a term to the BoD so that the BoD knows what they are doing.

Meeting adjourned: 10:05pm

Caltech discovers “gambling region” in brain

KATIE NEITH
Caltech Science Writer

When a group of gamblers gather around a roulette table, individual players are likely to have different reasons for betting on certain numbers. Some may play a “lucky” number that has given them positive results in the past—a strategy called reinforcement learning. Others may check out the recent history of winning colors or numbers to try and decipher a pattern. Betting on the belief that a certain outcome is “due” based on past events is called the gambler’s fallacy.

Recently, researchers at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and Ireland’s Trinity College Dublin hedged their bets—and came out winners—when they proposed that a certain region of the brain drives these different types of decision-making behaviors.

“Through our study, we found a difference in activity in a region of the brain called the dorsal striatum depending on whether people were choosing according to reinforcement learning or the gambler’s fallacy,” says John O’Doherty, professor of psychology at Caltech and adjunct professor of psychology at Trinity College Dublin. “This finding suggests that the dorsal striatum is particularly involved in driving reinforcement-learning behaviors.”

In addition, the work, described in the April 27 issue of *The Journal of Neuroscience*, suggests that

people who choose based on the gambler’s fallacy may be doing so because at the time of the choice they are not taking into account what they had previously learned or observed.

The focus of O’Doherty’s research is to understand the brain mechanisms that underlie the

controlling these strategies that drive behavior,” says O’Doherty, who conducted the study along with postdoctoral scholar Ryan Jessup.

The team asked 31 participants to complete four roulette-wheel tasks while lying in an MRI scanner. For each round, the

while, the researchers studied the brain activity of participants, with a focus on how they appeared to choose colors.

“The dorsal striatum was more active in people who, at the time of choice, chose in accordance with reinforcement-learning principles compared to when they chose

choose something if it has won a lot recently, and less likely to choose something if it has lost a lot recently. The opposite is true of the gambler’s fallacy.

“The task was novel because making decisions based on either reinforcement learning or the gambler’s fallacy is not rational in this particular task, and yet most of the subjects acted irrationally,” explains Jessup. “Only 8 out of 31 subjects were generally rational, meaning they simply chose the color that covered the largest area in that round.”

“It is very important to try to understand how interactions between different brain areas result in different types of decision-making behavior,” says O’Doherty. “Once we understand the basic mechanisms in healthy people, we can start to look at how these systems go wrong in patients who suffer from different diseases, such as psychiatric disorders or addiction, that impact their decision-making capabilities.”

The study, “Human Dorsal Striatal Activity during Choice Discriminates Reinforcement Learning Behavior from the Gambler’s Fallacy,” was supported by a Science Foundation Ireland grant.

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Once we understand the basic mechanisms in healthy people, we can start to look at how these systems go wrong in patients who suffer from different diseases...that impact their decision-making capabilities.

- John O’Doherty

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decisions people make in the real world.

To study this kind of decision making in the lab, his team gets study participants to play simple games in which they make choices that result in winning or losing small amounts of money. To make these games interesting, the researchers often present simple “gambling” scenarios, such as playing slot machines or roulette.

“For this particular study, we were interested in what part of the brain might play a role in

volunteers were asked to choose a color on a tricolored spinning wheel. If the wheel stopped on their color, they won two euros. (The study was done at Trinity College Dublin.) For each round, participants were charged a half euro, regardless of the outcome. All

according to the gambler’s fallacy,” says Jessup. “This suggests that the same region involved in learning is also used at the time of choice.”

The two types of strategies are actually contradictory because in reinforcement-learning behavior, one would be more likely to

Seniors plan to donate chess table

PERRIN CONSIDINE
Contributing Writer

Fundraising is about to ensue this week for the 2011 Senior Class Gift.

This year’s gift—a concrete chess table in front of the RF courtyard—will require \$2000 to be raised by graduating seniors. Last year, seniors donated about \$3000 to plant two blood orange trees somewhere around the orange walk. Money raised will be used to purchase, ship, and install the chess table (which includes two seats) with a small plaque.

Seniors may contribute to the class gift to show appreciation for their social, academic, and personal growth at Caltech. They may be even more inspired by the incentive of a 12-course Mannion dinner for the house with the highest percentage of seniors who donate \$10 or more.

With 80% participation, an average gift of about \$12 is necessary to reach the goal, although donating one’s graduation year in cents (\$20.11 this year) is a long-standing tradition.

Fundraising will have a unique twist this year.

The class goal is to make the process as unified and un-bureaucratic as possible, by raising the required amount of money promptly—in under a week, if possible. In contrast, previous fundraising ventures have tormented senior classes for “ages” before raising the requisite amount of money.

Once the forms are available to seniors, the class will try to raise the money within their self-imposed deadline of one week.

This efficient plan already faced a hurdle when donation forms were not made available over the weekend of May 7th and 8th as planned.

The idea of a chess table was conceived by Tom Mannion, Assistant Vice President of Student Life at Caltech, and considered alongside other ideas including those brainstormed by seniors.

After the most favored gift ideas were rejected due to issues of feasibility and potential lawsuits, seniors agreed to push for a chess table in April.

THE 31st annual
BANDORAMA

Directed by William Bing
Friday and Saturday
May 13 & 14, 2011 @ 8:00 pm
Ramo Auditorium

Featuring
Caltech-Occidental Concert Band
Caltech Monday Jazz Band
Caltech Thursday Jazz Band
John Daversa, guest composer
Paul Asimow, guest conductor

“Galdalf” by Johan De Meir
“Concerto for Cellphone and Band”

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
NO TICKETS ARE REQUIRED
INFO: (626) 395-3295 or bands.caltech.edu

A solution for uncertain federal funding

CASEY HANDMER
Contributing Writer

It has often been said that there is no average reader of the *California Tech*. If there were, however, it would almost certainly be a procrastinating undergraduate. Indeed, few grad students seem aware of the existence of the student newspaper. When asked for a comment, most grad students insisted that, to be fair, they were equally unaware of everything else.

Why this apparent disinterest in the world around them?

Why such dissonance between the curious heart of the scientist and his myopic world-view?

As confirmed by a recent fictitious scientific literature meta-survey, grad students at top research institutions such as Caltech basically do all the work. Indeed, to quote Chemistry/Chemical Engineering Chair, Professor Jacqueline Barton, "They make the place run, and, quite frankly, they run the place." From such a perspective, it is not surprising that few grad students have the time to learn to read, let alone read the student newspaper.

Few senior faculty, well accustomed to the perks of free labor, expressed surprise at this. While a few conceded that their students were occasionally and unofficially permitted to peruse www.icanhascheezburger.com, most agreed that recreational activities of any sort detracted from the research that they were "so well paid for".

And paid for they are!

At Caltech, most grad students are supported by RA or TA stipends to the tune of \$26,000 p.a., which over a five year PhD works out to just under \$8 an hour. That's roughly the same as flipping burgers, but with more flexible hours and more relaxed requirements on dress and hygiene, which, according to a seventh year pure math grad student who preferred to remain anonymous, made all the difference.

From the Institute's perspective, though, it's not quite a done deal. When a grad student is enrolled, the institute makes a commitment to pay him for the duration of his degree.

With most PhDs averaging five to six years, that's a substantial investment, even for practically infinite, highly skilled (if slightly

emotionally unstable) labor. In particular, six years outlasts the average electoral cycle, and even small to medium scale cycles in economic prosperity.

During periods of financial largesse, universities across the country have taxpayer-funded research dollars to dispose of, and, as previously outlined, the most efficient machine for converting money to citations is via grad students.

A research university like Caltech is never wanting for high quality applicants, and a quick perusal of enrollment records demonstrates enrollments increase during times of increased federal funding. Public universities such as the UC system are more dependent upon state funding, and to that extent are suffering more as a result of the recent economic downturn. At Caltech we are fortunate to be insulated to some extent from the variable nature of the tax base, but it's not all sweetness and roses on the other side.

In recent years, Caltech has seen the fruits of consistent and careful research spending culminate in highly impressive rankings in a number of different university ranking systems.

In particular, the Times Higher Education World University Rankings placed us first (for fundamental scientific research) in 2010, despite being about a tenth the size of most of the other heavyweights.

But before we rush to make a down payment at BevMo, it is worth considering that an unmaintained reputation is scarcely a reputation at all. All universities get fatter to some extent during years of plenty – the true test occurs when the institute is required to tighten its belt during times of economic uncertainty.

In the past year, the possibility of large cuts to federal scientific research funding, which is the backbone of academic research in this country, has loomed on the horizon to near certainty.

While the institute guarantees the funding (subject to performance) of every enrolled grad student, it does them no good if new places must in turn be slashed. Without grad student labor to grease the wheels of the academic machine, it all comes to a grinding halt. During times of reduced federal funding, the continuation of excellence

must be supported through other means.

Alternatives include foreign investment, industry partnerships, defense funding, and private donations.

All have a role to play in bearing the load.

The first two in particular bear the brunt of additional funding in other countries. Australian

endowment, which today stands at \$1.55 billion.

With an annual market return of 6% (after inflation) that's capable of funding about 3500 grad students (as an equivalent unit of wealth).

Of course most of the money is spent on capital improvements, building, maintenance, staff salaries, and expensive but shiny lab equipment.

he was a grad student just twelve years ago.

Today this added boost has propelled him to the top of his field and, ironically, provided him with the knowledge to be an expert teacher.

To ensure continuing excellence, an institution like Caltech must diversify sources of income with which to fund its research staff

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To ensure continuing excellence, an institution like Caltech must diversify sources of income with which to fund its research staff and grad students in particular.

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universities in particular count foreign investment and industry partnerships as more than 10% of net Australian gross domestic product.

For reference, US military spending was about five times as much during the same time period. Nevertheless, foreign grants for foreign students remain an important source of funding.

Industry partnerships and defense funding remain similarly important and, as defense is more robust to economic downturns, is an essential part of any hedge against economic instability.

Finally, Caltech is incredibly fortunate to receive the philanthropic donations of wealthy alumni and others. In particular, Gordon and Betty Moore have donated more than \$6 x 10⁸, an almost unbeatable sum. Many others have also contributed to the Caltech

Individual departments also encourage donations and endowments. As an example, David and Barbara Groce recently endowed a graduate fellowship in theoretical physics – a field in which grad students have long been resigned to earning their keep through grading and undergrad teaching.

Professor Yanbei Chen was the first beneficiary of this gift when

and grad students in particular. When federal funding cannot be relied upon, this need becomes particularly keen.

While Caltech grad students rely on the endowment to cushion their incomes from the vicissitudes of fate and thus remain blissfully unaware of the world beyond Holliston Avenue, the maintenance of such a safety net must not be taken for granted.

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Indeed, to quote Chemistry/Chemical Engineering Chair, Professor Jacqueline Barton, "They (graduate students) make the place run, and, quite frankly, they run the place."

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¡VIVA AMERICA!

MONDAY
LUNCH: Tacos
Art Exhibition
HOUSE: Enchiladas, Churros, Horchata
Film: Toy Story 3

TUESDAY
LUNCH: Argentinian Asado
Tango Dancers
HOUSE: Alfajores, Empanadas, Maté
Film: Motorcycle Diaries

WEDNESDAY
LUNCH: Paella
Flamenco Dancers
HOUSE: Flan, Croquetas, Sangria
Film: El Mariachi

THURSDAY
LUNCH: Choza Mama
Peruvian Dancers
HOUSE: Cajetas, Arroz y Pollo, Jugo de Piña
Film: Rudo y Cursi

FRIDAY
LUNCH: Rice & Beans
Samba Dancers

SATURDAY
COMMUNITY DAY: noon, B.I. Lawn Taquero, Bouncing Castle, Piñatas
9PM: Latin Party

SEMANA '11
MAY 9-14
LATINA

Sponsors CLASES, Caltech Y, ASCIT, GSC, Student Affairs, Club Latino ©2011 Brandon Comella

Caltech musicians perform in China

WILLIAM BING
Director of Bands

Members of the Caltech-Occidental Concert Band and Jazz Band traveled to Beijing, China, over spring break.

They performed at the Great Wall and also held a joint concert with the Tsinghua University Symphony Orchestra. Their trip also included many tours of famous landmarks in Beijing, including the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven.

If eating snake is your idea of a good time, then you should have been with us on our recent trip to China.

If that doesn't appeal to you, you could have always tried the scorpion. Or the starfish!

True enough, that's what some daring Techers had for their dinner.

Myself, being a vegetarian, settled for the boring fare in the boiling hot pots in the local

in on the act, as one-by-one, they would stand in front of the band while we were playing to get their picture taken with the ensemble.

I attempted to buy some tea at the Great Wall to help me stay warm. One of the band members, a young lady, had some and had paid twenty yuan for it. When I went to buy the same beverage, the clerk wanted to charge me twice as much as he charged our young female band member.

So, I went back to her, and asked her to order it for me.

She did, and paid the special Great Wall rate for young females, half as much as he was going to charge me. Maybe some things are the same all over the world.



Crowds in front of the Bank of China gather to begin the daily rush of business.



Band members sit down to begin a well-deserved traditional meal.

mall. While my food wasn't as adventurous, getting to sit next to some of the locals made for some good conversation.

Only days before, we were having snacks at the Great Wall. When we performed there on the second day of our trip, the wind was blowing so hard we had a tough time keeping our music stands upright.

And it was so cold that intonation went with the wind to parts unknown. However, undeterred, we soldiered on, and the performance was a "howling" success.

That is, for the most part, it was more humorous than musical as we dressed the part for an arctic expedition, rather than a concert. In fact, we had special sweatshirts designed by the wife of an alumnus who plays clarinet in the band. The pictures from that concert are as funny as our attempts to stay in tune in that freezing weather. Some of the audience members even got

A highlight for most of us on the tour was our concert at Tsinghua University.

Tsinghua University is one of the top schools in China. For some months, we had been preparing for the opportunity to interact with this prestigious school, which is often said to be the "Caltech" of China.

After a formal ceremony in the afternoon, we got down to business with a rehearsal followed by a catered dinner.

That is, if you call take out from McDonalds something special. I guess the cool thing about McDonalds in Beijing is that it has a delivery service.

Truly, China is ahead of us in many ways.

So, the concert went well. The Caltech-Occidental Band played beautifully.

Our concert featured two new compositions, one of which was written by Caltech

alumnus Dr. Leslie Deutsch. Dr. Deutsch is presently the Chief Technologist and manager of the Architecture, System Engineering and Strategic Planning Office for the Interplanetary Network Directorate at NASA's Jet propulsion Laboratory.

Also well-received was vocalist and Caltech alumnus, Kjerstin Williams, who is now making robots at Applied Minds in Glendale.

A member of the flute section, Teresa Liu, who is from China, arranged one meal that did hit a home run.

Her father and a business associate set up a banquet for the entire tour group, which was the best meal of all the meals we had in China by far.

There was Peking duck, whole fish, and even the vegetarian table scored some interesting and tasty treats, which was more impressive

than it sounds since everyone was sick of bok choy at this point.

And we weren't without tours! The Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven, Summer Palace and visits to pearl and silk factories were all part of the package deal as students got out of the "Caltech Bubble" and came back with plenty of stories of the world outside.

At the jade factory, most of the students passed up the chance to buy a finished work of jade for the opportunity to buy jade in its raw form.

I'm sure the store didn't know what to make of us.

Finally, after eating our way through China, we came home to Caltech, where many students rushed out as soon as the bus arrived on campus to go to In-n-Out

Turns out one can only go for so long without a burger!

It was good to be home.

- Marissa Barrientos



Members of the Caltech Band strike a pose in front of a Chinese landmark.

- Marissa Barrientos

Today's Puzzle: Sudoku

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

[<http://www.puzzlechoice.com/>]

Answers: *Last week's crossword from puzzlechoice.com*

	E	E	L		A	B	E	T		A	T	O	M	
M	I	M	E		P	E	A	R		T	H	R	O	B
I	D	E	S		E	D	G	E		E	R	A	S	E
T	E	R	S	E		L	E	E	S		E	L	S	E
T	R	Y		A	J	A	R		H	E	W			
			T	R	A	M		V	I	M		A	D	O
B	O	T	A	N	Y		M	E	N	U		B	I	B
O	N	Y	X			B	I	T		A	L	S	O	
A	L	P		H	O	A	X		A	P	I	E	C	E
R	Y	E		O	A	R		D	I	L	L			
			A	P	T		H	E	R	O		S	A	G
P	I	L	L		S	L	U	R		Y	E	A	R	N
A	B	O	D	E		A	M	I	D		A	U	R	A
L	I	B	E	L		N	A	V	Y		S	T	O	W
	S	E	R	F		K	N	E	E		Y	E	W	

“La Femme” suggests five date locales for male Techers

LA FEMME
Contributing Writer

Hi guys. I'm your lady. The one you're planning to ask on a date. Despite the subtle signals I waft in your direction, you still don't know what I want to do when or IF I say 'yes.' Don't worry, I know that you can be a bit daft. So while you try to figure out my code words and facial twitches, here is an explicit list of fun things that will keep me happy.

Breakfast

Breakfast can produce some of the most casually romantic moments. It's a great first date, or a nice change if we've been going out to dinner for a while.

And since it's rare, it can be quite special. Russel's, Julienne, Marston's, and Green St. are all in Pasadena and are all great options.

Pitfalls: Bed hair and morning breath. Also, be on time!

An Afternoon at the Museum

Here's one that will satisfy my artsy side. The Norton Simon Museum is one of the best collections in Southern California, and it's totally free for students. Plan to spend several hours at the museum and then stroll down to Old Town for a nice dinner. If there's time between the museum and your dinner reservation, visit some of the shops or get a cupcake at Dots. Yes, it's hard to eat a cupcake without getting some chocolate on your lips, but we can fix that. Oops, did I just kiss you?

Pitfalls: Don't be a know-it-all, but be interested in the art. Know something about a piece, and tell me its story.

The Movie

Don't just take me to the theatres, put a personal touch on this old standby. Set up a projector, a comfy couch, and make some popcorn. If you're going to be ambitious, make the popcorn yourself.

Buy the kernels at the supermarket, and season it to taste. You can also get a nice dessert, like ice cream and a cobbler from the Cobbler Factory. Try to think about things I like, that's what will make it personal. And, you know, if you put a personal touch on this date, maybe I will too.

Pitfalls: Pick an appropriate movie.

Steak Dinner

This one is a classic. And think about it...you cooking raw meat over an open fire.

For all I know you were out hunting that morning, too. Talk about fulfilling primal needs.

But before you get too excited, read on. There's nothing worse than the smell of burnt meat or burnt you.

This date will take some skill and time, so keep it simple.

Don't try to do too much or it might get messy. A good steak, some easy sides, and a sweet finish are all it really takes.

If you want to fancy it up a bit, put a personal twist on one of the sides.

During the dinner, you shouldn't be doing any real cooking because while I'm there, you should be making good conversation and keeping your eyes on me.

Detail is what will make the night magical. Pick a nice location. Consider lighting, noise, privacy, and view.

Find a white tablecloth, solid silverware, and a pair of wine glasses.

If you're not sure about the wine, ask an expert (Tom Mannion and the MOSH are two of them). And don't forget a candle. It makes your eyes look pretty.

Pitfalls: Barbeque can leave a smell on your clothes. Don't smell like smoke at the table.

You also might want to practice this routine with your buds before trying it on me. It's easy, but you'll want some experience. I like experience.

Santa Monica

For those of you with a car and a day to kill (dang seniors!), a trip to the Santa Monica Pier and the surrounding area is a flexible and relaxing adventure.

Spend half a day at the Getty Villa in Malibu and drive along the beach for a pleasant afternoon on the pier.

Feed my sweet tooth with a sundae or malt at Soda Jerks, and do some people watching.

Walk down to Venice Beach and find an interesting trinket to give me as a memory.

If we stay until sunset, find a romantic outlook, then take me to Blue Plate Oysters and get a half-dozen oysters to share. It's cute, easy, and fun. Oh, and bring an extra jacket.

Trust me, you'll like how I look in your clothing.

Pitfalls: There are lots of options, so have some structure in mind. Have some good ideas, and be spontaneous around the framework.

Also, remember freeway traffic and weather.

Sincerely,
LaFemme

Nothing happened.



Remember?

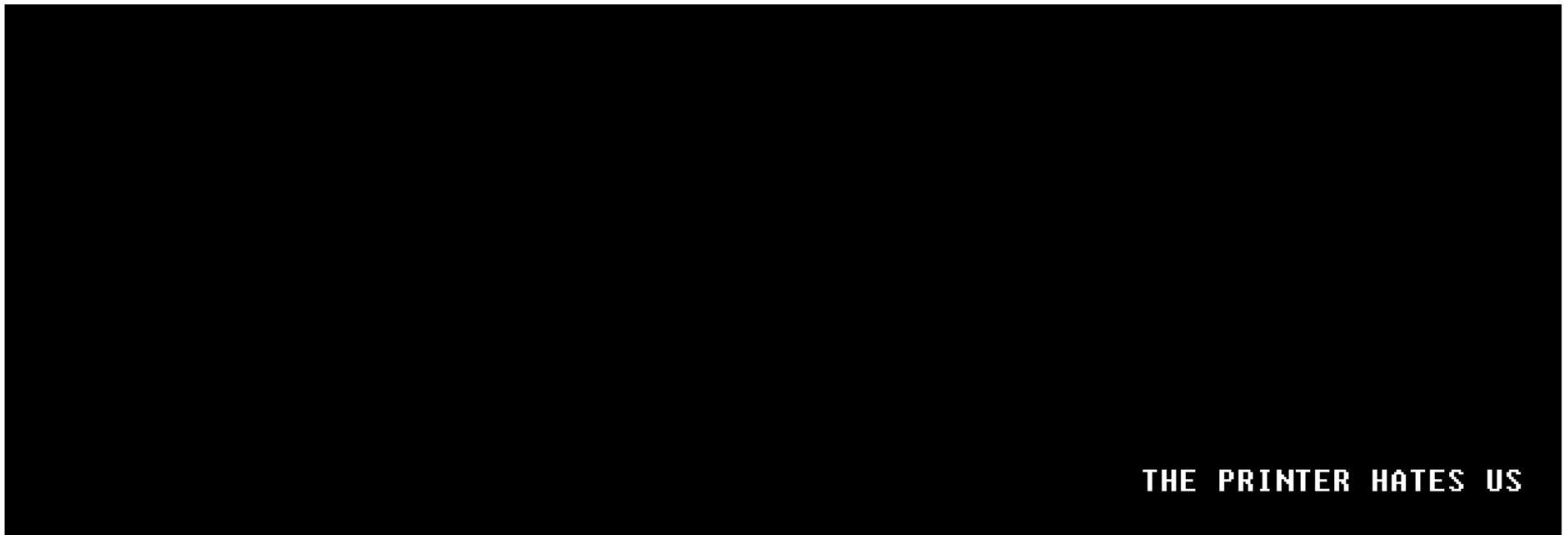
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