



An example of an altar dedicated to a departed loved one. In this case, that loved one is Jim Morrison. Page 3

-Amol Kamat

Caltech scientists find normal communication possible between severed brain hemispheres

KATIE NEITH
Caltech Science Writer

PASADENA, Calif.—Like a bridge that spans a river to connect

two major metropolises, the corpus callosum is the main conduit for information flowing between the left and right hemispheres of our brains. Now, neuroscientists at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) have found that people who are born without that link—a condition called agenesis of the corpus callosum, or

AgCC—still show remarkably normal communication across the gap between the two halves of their brains.

Their findings are outlined in a paper published October 19 in *The Journal of Neuroscience*.

Our brains are never truly at rest. Even when we daydream, there is a tremendous amount of communication happening between different areas in the brain. According to J. Michael

Tyszka, lead author on the *Journal of Neuroscience* paper and associate director of the Caltech Brain Imaging Center, many areas of the brain display slowly varying patterns of activity that are similar to one another. The fact that these areas are synchronized has led many scientists to presume that they are all part of an interconnected network called a resting-state network. Much to their surprise, Tyszka and his

team found that these resting-state networks look essentially normal in people with AgCC, despite the lack of connectivity. “This was a real surprise,” says Tyszka. “We expected to see a lot less coupling between the left and right brain in this group—after all, they are missing about 200 million connections that would normally be there.”

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Helping readers to burst out of the Caltech bubble

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

Voting in Tunisia	1st free election of Arab Spring reform movement that began last year [BBC]
Libyan freedom declared	42 years of oppression ends with Gaddafi’s death – hope for new era [CNN]
NASA refueling stations	\$ 86 billion – cheaper than heavy rocket plan to visit deep space [NYTIMES]
No debt agreement yet	€ 1 trillion may be needed for European bailout to restore stability [CNBC]
More fighting in Yemen	9 people died in recent violence between government and opposition [CNN]
Terrorism in Colombia	10 soldiers killed by guerrillas – kidnappers target families of leaders [CNN]
Earthquake in Turkey	1,000 buildings destroyed – 85 dead – 500 injured – others trapped [BBC]

Food with Mannion!

Do you like eating food?

How about free food at nice restaurants?

Ever want to tell the world exactly what you think of said food?

The Tech will be beginning a new column to chronicle the foodie experiences of new writers every other week... The Catch: They'll be going head-to-head with Tom Mannion who will be reviewing the same restaurant. If you have ever thought you were more of a gourmand than our resident master chef, now's your chance to prove it!

Email us for a spot on the list at tech@caltech.edu

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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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Write articles for the Tech

get paid up to \$30

CHILLAX – A relaxation group for stress management

Mondays 12-1; October 24 – November 28, Winnett Lounge

FREE

Health education and the counseling center are proud to sponsor a 6 week to educate and teach students how to manage their stress. The group will cover time management, muscle relaxation, getting great sleep, mindfulness meditation and dealing with holiday and exam related stress. Lunch is not provided but there will be participation prizes and giveaways.

October 24 – Overview of stress – What is it, where and how does it affect you, and simple breathing exercises to get stress under control.

October 31 – time management

November 7 – sleep management

November 14 – Progressive muscle relaxation

November 21 – mindfulness meditation

November 28 – Coping with holiday and exam stress

Feynman teaching award nominations

NOMINATE YOUR FAVORITE PROFESSOR FOR THE FEYNMAN TEACHING PRIZE!!!

Here's your chance to nominate your favorite professor for the 2011-12 Richard P. Feynman Prize for Excellence in Teaching! You have from now until January 2, 2012 to submit your nomination package to the Provost's Office to honor a professor who demonstrates, in the broadest sense, unusual ability, creativity, and innovation in undergraduate and graduate classroom or laboratory teaching.

The Feynman Prize is made possible through the generosity of Ione and Robert E. Paradise, with additional contributions from an anonymous local couple. Nominations for the Feynman Teaching Prize are welcome from faculty, students, postdoctoral scholars, staff, and alumni.

All professorial faculty of the Institute are eligible. The prize consists of a cash award of \$3,500, matched by an equivalent raise in the annual salary of the awardee. A letter of nomination and detailed supporting material, including, but not limited to, a curriculum vitae, course syllabus or description, and supporting recommendation letters

should be directed to the Feynman Prize Selection Committee, Office of the Provost, Mail Code 206-31, at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, 91125. Nomination packages are due by January 2, 2012.

Additional information including guidelines for the prize and FAQ may be found at <http://provost.caltech.edu/FeynmanTeachingPrize>. Further information can also be obtained from Karen Kerbs (626-395-6039; kkerbs@caltech.edu) or Stacey Scoville (626-395-6320; staceys@caltech.edu) in the Provost's Office.

News update from Caltech Today

Neuroscientists make novel discovery on hemisphere connectivity

Continued from page 1

“How do they manage to have normal communication between the left and right sides of the brain without the corpus callosum?”

The work used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to demonstrate that synchronized activity between the left and right brain survives even this sort of radical rewiring of the nerve connections between the two hemispheres. The presence of symmetric patterns of activity in individuals born without a corpus callosum highlights the brain’s remarkable plasticity and ability to compensate, says coauthor Lynn Paul, research staff member and lecturer in psychology at Caltech. “It develops these fundamental networks even when the left and right hemispheres are structurally disconnected.”

The study that found the robust networks is part of an ongoing research program led by Paul, who has been studying AgCC for several decades. AgCC occurs in approximately one of every 4000 live births. The typical corpus callosum comprises almost 200 million axons—the connections between brain cells—and is the largest fiber bundle in the human brain.

In AgCC, those fibers fail to cross the gap between the hemispheres

during fetal development, forcing the two halves of the brain to

communicate using more indirect and currently unknown means.

theories that link impaired brain connections with clinical conditions including autism and schizophrenia.

“In the 1960s and 1970s, Roger Sperry at Caltech studied ‘split-brain’ patients in whom the corpus callosum was surgically severed as a treatment for epilepsy,” explains Paul.

“Our research on AgCC has moved in a different direction and focuses on a naturally occurring brain malformation that occurs before birth. This allows us to examine how, and to what extent, the brain can compensate for the loss of the corpus callosum as a person grows to adulthood.”

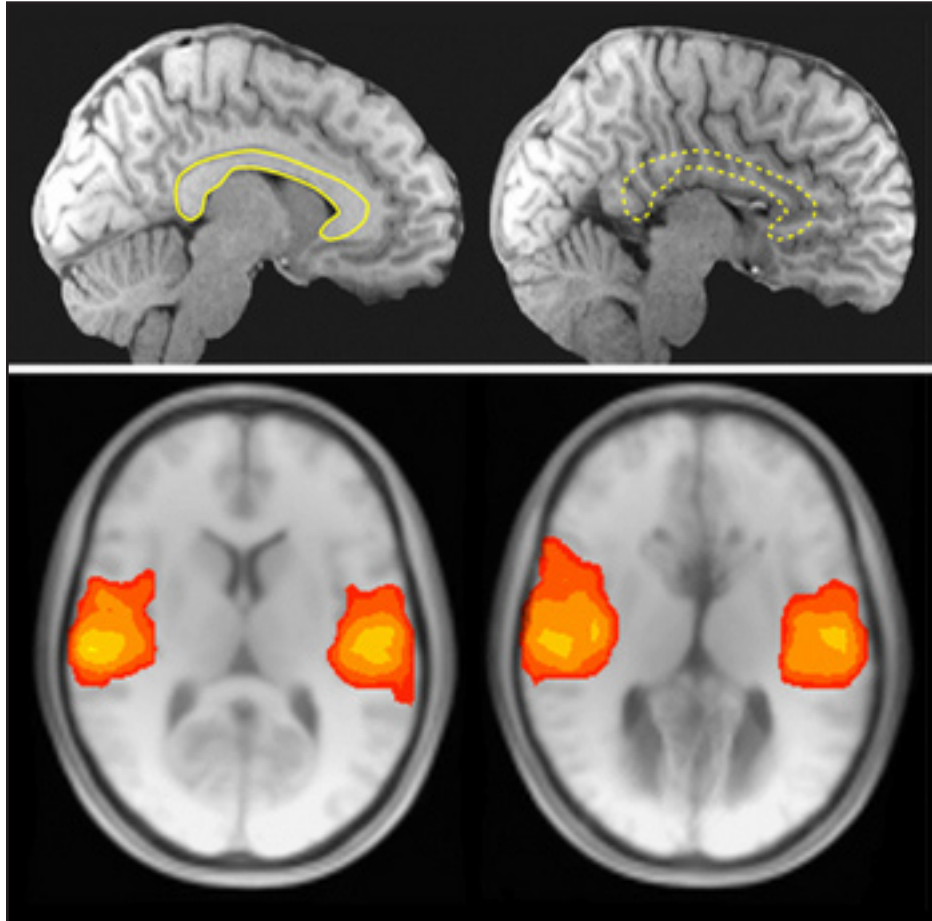
According to the team, the findings are especially valuable in light of current

“We are now examining AgCC subjects who are also on the autism spectrum, in order to gain insights about the role of brain connectivity in autism, as well as in healthy social interactions,” says Tyszka.

“About a third of people with AgCC also have autism, and altered connectivity in the corpus callosum has been found in autism. The remarkable compensation in brain functional networks that we found here may thus have important implications also for understanding the function of the brains of people with autism.”

The work in the paper, “Intact bilateral resting-state networks in the absence of the corpus callosum,” was carried out in the laboratory of Ralph Adolphs, Bren Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Caltech, with the help of postdoctoral scholar Daniel Kennedy.

It was supported by funding from the Gustavus and Louise Pfeiffer Research Foundation, the Simons Foundation, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression.



Top: The normal brain on the left contains an intact corpus callosum, while the brain on the right does not. Bottom: Despite the fact that the corpus callosum in the brain on the right is severed, it shows symmetric patterns of activity like the healthy brain. -today.caltech.edu

Day of the Dead festival is to die for

AMOL KAMAT
Sports Editor

On Saturday, the Los Angeles community celebrated el Dia de los

Muertos at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery. The Caltech Y provided discounted tickets for many lucky students to attend this festival of festive festivities (with churros). FACT: I was one of those students.

Upon arriving at the cemetery, I was immediately struck by the fact that we were actually at a cemetery. Stands were placed on graves while listless children played on headstones (as did some adults). Perhaps more concerning was the fact that some of the shops were actually placed on top of graves (the guy selling cross necklaces on a Jewish Mausoleum was particularly surprising). Actually, most concerning was the fact that people enjoyed pork burritos and bacon wrapped hot dogs on top of the predominantly Jewish graves (for those of you less culturally sensitive folks, just understand that this is a big no-no).

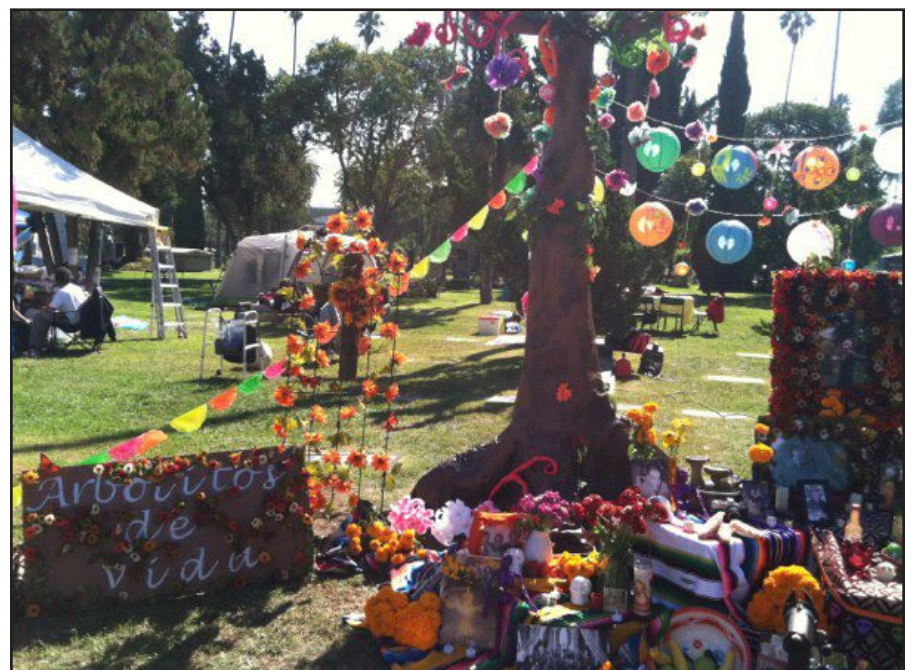
Despite my concerns for the dead, the festival was actually pretty fun. There were many beautifully decorated altars celebrating the lives of the dearly departed (including one for Jim Morrison and one for dinosaurs) and many shops selling handcrafted goods. Most importantly, there was delicious Mexican foodstuffs (and Thai foodstuffs for some reason) and alcoholstuffs. A great

time was had by those who could drink. After stuffing my face with nachos, horchata, and Minute Maid Frozen Lemonade, my group and I enjoyed a reenactment of an Aztec ceremony in which a small painted child rose from the dead, or something, and danced with maracas and an eagle-man. It was cool. Then, he died again, I think.

Next, a marimba ensemble entertained us with, according to Vishnu Manoranjan, “bouncing grooves and multilayered vocal attacks.” Young Mr. Manoranjan

also broke out into song and dance in front of the Minute Maid saleswoman, so his opinion may not really be valid, here. Overall, the festival was a lot of fun and taught me a lot about Mexican culture. The entire affair made me feel like I was living an Oingo Boingo music video. I encourage all of you to attend next year’s Day of the Dead festival, as it is truly an experience you have to witness for yourself.

By the way, I have to add, Indian incense smells much better than Mexican incense.



Left: Even dinosaurs received a memorial. Above: The trees were decorated to represent life.

-Amol Kamat

Caltech Couture: One student's take on fashion

ALEX LANGERFELD
Columnist

So Caltech, we've been here together for at least a month now. We're getting to know each other pretty well and as a consequence, complications may have already started to rise. There is nothing wrong with this as long as these issues are handled maturely. Unfortunately I, as well as many other people here, am rather disappointed with the maturity level of such a seemingly "smart" campus. I will keep this one short but I think that the following letter from one of our fellow Techers gets the message across quite clearly:

"Just because you have finished slaving through high school and entered a fresh new world at college with expectant faces who don't know who you were or what you were like back then does not give you a free license to gossip like the average middle school girl. Talking about other's lives does not make you more socially active.

"And facebook stalking doesn't mean that you're popular. I have heard the phrase "this is a small school" frequently, but there's a logical misstep in assuming that warrants the transformation of an incident in someone's personal life into the big news of the day for everyone on campus. Sure, it might be tempting to spill the latest raunchy tidbit to others, but it would only be so tempting to talk about it if you didn't have anything interesting to say about your own life.

"Stop being jealous of the exciting lives of other people on campus, even if they might not have been too discreet or have made the best decisions.

"Stop ruining their reputations and their social lives here. It's talking behind people's backs that chases the people with more interesting lifestyles and personalities at Caltech off campus and causes them to find friends and venues elsewhere. Honestly, most people



Senior Michael Wu likes to do things a little differently, from the way he reads the newspaper to the classy way he dresses. In fact, his style is so distinguished that the bookstore has begun carrying Caltech bowties at his request.

at Tech range between the fairly to the very awkward. So everyone loses when the more outgoing students stop associating with other Techers. To do this to them is a disservice to yourself, them, and the rest of the student body.

"I can recall a group of my friends who had sworn together never

to date or flirt with Caltech girls because of the flak they received from people in their houses. They all moved off campus, and now rarely appear at social events. They were a mixed bag of students who were very fun to hang out with, and who always actively looked for ways to elevate the mood and to explore places outside of Tech. Their many

friends from neighboring colleges would agree that they would have been a valuable addition to any club, fraternity, dorm, study group, party or any gathering of people. And why did these wonderful and smart people come to this conclusion?

"Because 'this is a small school'? Spare me. It is because people at Caltech students may be among the smartest people in the world, but all too often they do not mind their manners. Mind your own beeswax, make us all happy. You know who you are."

I'd like to reiterate that if you are one of these ceaseless busybody gossipers, perhaps this is because you haven't found other channels for your energy. At Caltech, this isn't really a problem. There is always more work to do, if nothing else! This will only get you ahead in the long run!

It also helps to put things into perspective. Most of the subjects of gossip are nothing when put into a larger perspective.

If our campus is so gossipy on the whole, I can only conclude that we are a fairly fortunate bunch that hasn't encountered many of life's real problems.

Finally if you are one of the victims, don't lose your spirits! You are probably just doing it right.

However if you are affected by stories that you hear about yourself that you never knew about, just make sure you don't give any reason besides the idleness of others' minds to give rise to such stories.

- Jonathan Schor

Love,
Alex.

“It's talking behind people's backs that chases the people with more interesting lifestyles and personalities...off campus...”

Things to check out in the coming week:

~ October 2011 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
23	24	25	26 -Soccer vs. La Verne -Men's Water Polo vs. Occidental	27	28 -Women's Volleyball vs. CMS -Rave: HARD Haunted Mansion Day 1 (Fatboy Slim, Rusko)	29 -Soccer vs. CMS -Men's Water Polo vs. Pomona-Pitzer -Rave: HARD Haunted Mansion Day 2 (Skrillex, Major Lazer) -Rave: Escape from Wonderland (Afrojack, Dash Berlin) -Rave: Monster Massive (Moby, Armin van Buuren)

Featured Event: HARD Haunted Mansion

HARD is a set of national music festivals begun by Gary Richards in 2007. HARD Haunted Mansion is a Halloween-themed two day concert set featuring mainly DJ-based and electronica artists.

50/50 blends humor and emotion seamlessly

CAROLINE YU
Staff Writer

Yes, cancer can be funny. Facetious, but full of heart, *50/50* is a lively everyman tale about cancer, friendship, and love. Adam (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) is diagnosed with a rare spinal cancer and is given a bleak 50-percent prognosis of survival.

With Seth Rogen as his usual raucous self, Joseph Gordon-Levitt as the quiet hero, and Anna Kendrick as the likeable, but unlikely love interest, *50/50* successfully balances tragedy and humor tastefully.

Adam, the main character, is a 27-year-old producer for the Seattle Public Radio. He leads an ordinary life, with glassy Rachael as his girlfriend and Kyle (Rogen) as his best friend. When he is diagnosed with cancer, everything changes. Beneath the forced laughs and banal reassurances is *The Big C Word* that they increasingly cannot avoid. As Adam wrestles with nausea from chemotherapy and a suffocating fear of death, he leans more and more on those around him.

Kyle seizes on all the secondary facts, joking that “if [Adam] was a casino game, he’d have the best odds.”

From hash brownies to using cancer as a pick up line, Kyle deals with his best friend’s mortality in his own bumbling way.

Rogen does a fantastic job as Kyle, delivering the same type of raunchy comedy that he did in “Zack and Miri Make a Porno” while never leaving in doubt the strength of his friendship.

Katherine, played by Kendrick, is Adam’s inexperienced and appealingly awkward therapist. She struggles to translate textbook knowledge into practice, but still manages to win over Adam with her sincerity.

Kendrick is likeable and realistic as Katherine, and has good chemistry with Gordon-Levitt.

Anjelica Huston is the needy, dramatic mom. She is the type that calls nonstop, worrying over minute details. Huston brings refreshing clarity to the role, toning down the hysteria with human compassion and weakness without losing the hilarity of the stereotype.

Finally, Gordon-Levitt cannot be forgotten. His is a subdued role that, in the hands of another actor, could easily have been overshadowed by Rogen.

However, Gordon-Levitt handles the role with remarkable subtlety, displaying a quiet heroism that brings balance to a film that revels in uncomfortable punch lines. Like in *500 Days of Summer*, Gordon-Levitt walks the emotional tightrope, striking the tricky balance between saccharine and disingenuous.

Director Jonathan Levine nimbly navigates between uproarious comedy and the brutal reality, emphasizing the human side of cancer.

Screenwriter Will Reiser also based the script off of his own real-life experience, so it is no wonder that the tale is delivered with refreshing honesty.

In the end, *50/50* is 100-percent enjoyable.

Laughter really is the best medicine.



<http://shannonmcm.com>

Winner of Swagged Truth’s first contest *The Decemberists’ newest album truly measures up to previous work*

RYAN KEELEY
Contributing Writer

The King is Dead is the Decemberists’ sixth studio album, and their first since the release of their ambivalently criticized album *The Hazards of Love*.

That album epitomized the trend of frontman Colin Meloy’s songwriting that saw the length of their songs consistently increase from the nine-minute “The

Mariner’s Revenge Song” off the album *Picaresque*, to the fifteen-minute long “The Island: Come and See / The Landlord’s Daughter / You’ll Not Feel the Drowning” and the three part “The Crane Wife,” off the album of the same name.

This trend outpaced many listeners’ attention span in this rock opera of epic narrative.

Meloy seems to have learned from *The Hazards of Love*, as their next Smiths-referencing album

harkens back to their earlier albums in terms of its lack of unifying narrative.

This is not a derivative rehashing of their earlier work, however, but the result of their transition of genres from prog-folk to Americana. One of the most memorable tracks is “Rox in the Box.”

This catchy shanty evokes the labor struggles of Butte, Montana and makes you want to take up the miners’ struggle and “sing our songs to the headframe’s creaks and moans.”

The band also breaks out the fiddle for “All Arise”, a honky-tonkesque ditty, and the pedal steel guitar for “Rise to Me” for some unique and memorable music.

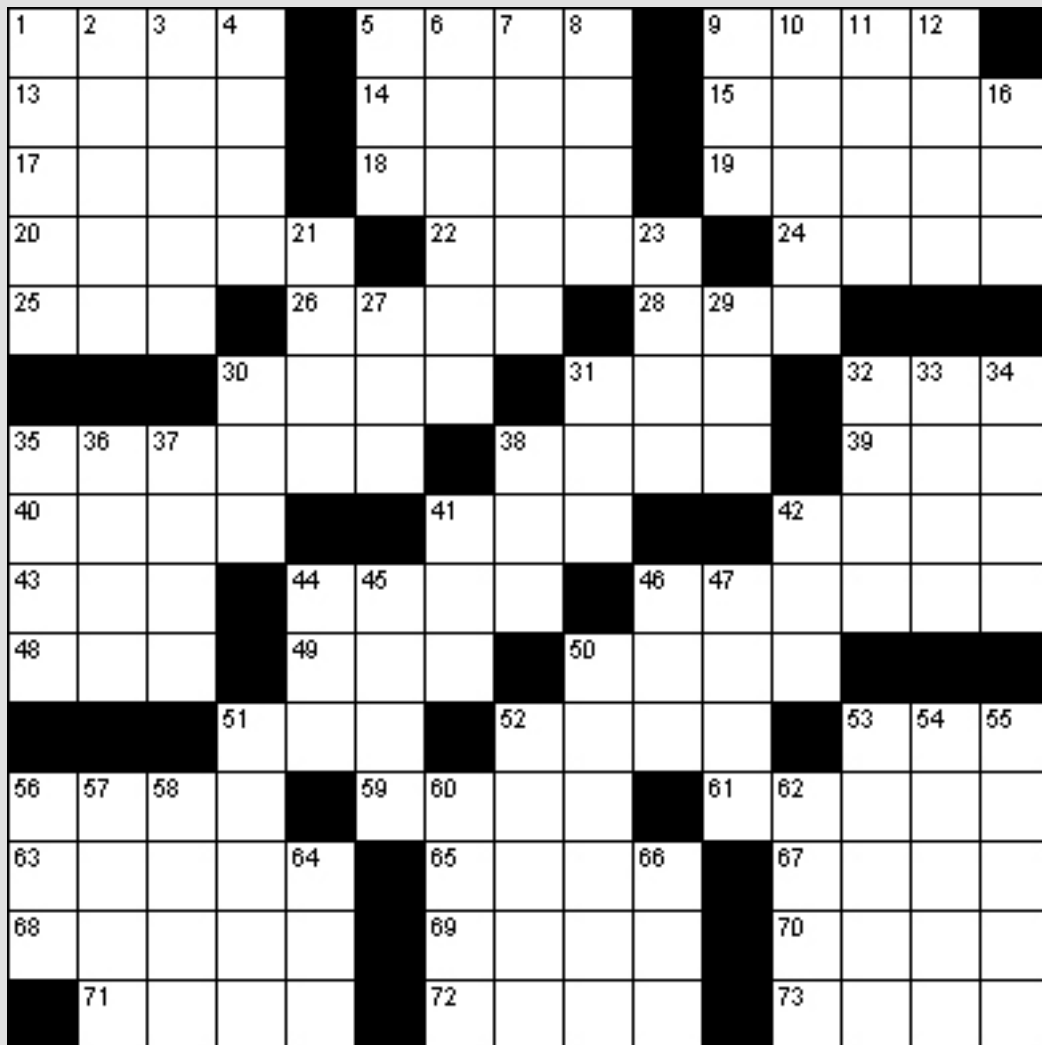


amazon.com

“ One of the most memorable tracks is ‘Rox in the Box.’ This catchy shanty evokes the labor struggles of Butte, Montana and makes you want to take up the miners’ struggle and ‘sing our songs to the headframe’s creaks and moans.’

All in all, *The King is Dead* is another great example of The Decemberists’ hallmarking exquisite storytelling and wordplay, set against the backdrop of mellow folk-rock chords.

Today's Puzzle: Crossword



- Across**
- 1. Hard currency
 - 5. Remain
 - 9. Fiend
 - 13. Not in favor
 - 14. Impulse
 - 15. Arboreous
 - 17. Protective covering
 - 18. Repast
 - 19. Hostel
 - 20. Extemporize
 - 22. Unit of length
 - 24. Pedal extremities
 - 25. Golf accessory
 - 26. At another time
 - 28. Weep
 - 30. Evidence of past injury
 - 31. What person?
 - 32. Resort spring
 - 35. Brash
 - 38. Plunder
 - 39. Church bench
 - 40. Molten rock
 - 41. Peg
 - 42. Halo
 - 43. The night before
 - 44. Paste
 - 46. Two and a half dozen
 - 48. Marsh
 - 49. Pinch
 - 50. Intuitive awareness
 - 51. Litigate
 - 52. Toothed wheel
 - 53. To the rear
 - 56. Notion
 - 59. Average
 - 61. Type of duck
 - 63. Mass meeting
 - 65. Type of meat
 - 67. Actor's part
 - 68. Jack
 - 69. Fit
 - 70. Metallic element
 - 71. Was cognizant
 - 72. Vegetable
 - 73. Transmit
- Down**
- 1. Unit of weight for precious stones
 - 2. Positively charged electrode
 - 3. Took without consent
 - 4. Sound system
 - 5. Final aggregate
 - 6. Shudder
 - 7. Once more
 - 8. Shout
 - 9. Nocturnal bird
 - 10. Disney character
 - 11. Traveled by horse
 - 12. Boundary
 - 16. Up to now
 - 21. Endorse
 - 23. Reverberate
 - 27. Negative vote
 - 29. Decay
 - 30. Body of water
 - 31. Was victorious
 - 32. Branch line
 - 33. Saucy
 - 34. Not present
 - 35. Musical notation
 - 36. Possess
 - 37. Fifty-fifty
 - 38. Prevarication
 - 41. Young animal
 - 42. Be unwell
 - 44. Large antelope
 - 45. Security interest
 - 46. Beverage
 - 47. This place
 - 50. Gender
 - 51. Balm
 - 52. Small aquatic bird
 - 53. Love
 - 54. Criminal
 - 55. Fashion
 - 56. Irritate
 - 57. Clammy
 - 58. Panache
 - 60. Elliptical
 - 62. Part of the eye
 - 64. Coniferous tree
 - 66. Albanian monetary unit

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

Answers to last week's crossword from puzzlechoice.com



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

Upcoming Event: Dava Sobel Book Signing

What?: Reception & Booksigning for Dava Sobel, author of *A More Perfect Heaven: How Copernicus Revolutionized the Cosmos*.

When?: Tuesday, November 8, 2011
5:00 pm to 6:30 pm

Where?: The Planetary Society
85 S. Grand Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91105

Telescope viewing to follow

Questions?
Call 626-793-5100
Visit <http://planetary.org>

Interview with Caltech soccer player Vishnu Manoranjan

AMOL KAMAT
Sports Editor

AK: So tell me about how Caltech soccer is doing this year.

VM: Caltech soccer has had an up and down year, I think. We got a lot of new talent, a lot of new players, and we have had a deeper team, I think, then we've had in previous years. But, at the same time, we've struggled with various things such as formations and injuries toward the end of the year. We're a young team, so we still need to learn. I think experience is going to be a critical thing going into next season.

AK: That was a very boring answer.

VM: laughs heartily I think we peaked a little early. This happens every season, you have a lot of momentum coming out of preseason but once the school year starts, we...most of our first wins have been at the very beginning of the school year or before the years starts.

AK: What do you think is the biggest shortcoming of the team?

VM: Probably our lack of possession. This isn't just the fault of our offense, but of our defense as well. Our team needs to get better at being able to keep the ball for more than a few passes.

AK: What do you think of the administrative aspect of Caltech sports in terms of upkeep of fields, training rooms, and the like?

VM: I think that it needs to be better. I have heard complaints from multiple teams about inadequate facilities, and I know from the soccer perspective that our field has not been very good and that there has been money in

the athletic department being sent to other things, like the scoreboard. I don't know the exact situation behind that or if that money could have gone to the field, but I know that almost every member of the team would have preferred that it go to the field. I think baseball feels similarly.

AK: Do you think better facilities would translate into more wins or at least closer games?

VM: I don't think we can guarantee that we'd be playing better, but it will be a better experience for the team. I think we might win more games because although our field is currently the hardest to play on in the SCIAAC, it's really hard for us to and doesn't confer much of an advantage to us. I think the point is that there was some money available that went to the scoreboard and that money seemed like it was going to get spent whether we improved or not, and I think the athletes would have preferred that it go to the field

AK: What's your perfect sundae?

VM: My perfect sundae involves a great deal of chocolate syrup and nuts. Was that the sundae you were referring to?

AK: Yes.

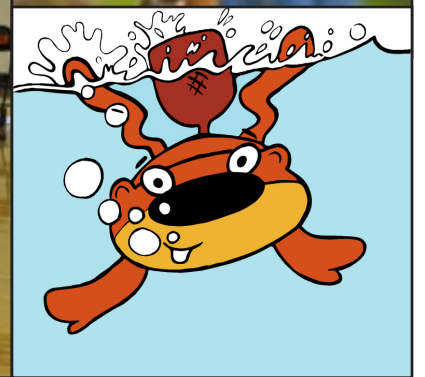
VM: And a book, if it's the other Sunday.

At this point, Vishnu ranted about how being at Caltech made him associate reading with being bored and that he falls asleep every time he reads a novel for pleasure due to this Pavlovian conditioning. This went on for a while, but I was eating at the time, so I didn't really take notice. Also, his voice gets easier to ignore the more you listen to it.



Guess which one is the midfielder for Caltech soccer. HINT: It's not the giraffes.

-Amol Kamat



This Week in Sports Quotes!

"I know we don't win a lot, but...I forget what I was gonna say."

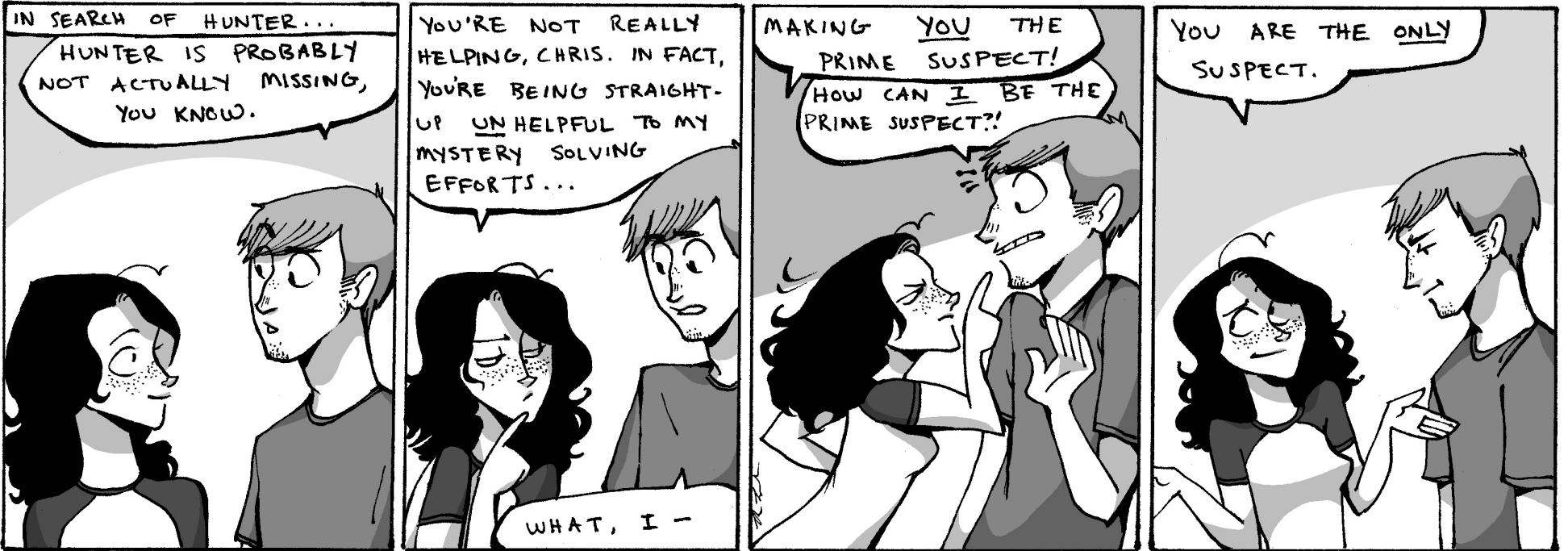
"You can't drink before rifle shooting in the NCAA?! That's why we don't have a rifle shooting team."

"What if we gave the basketball team those 'Flubber' shoes?" "They'd probably still lose..."

"Caltech athletes gain most of their weight from drinking....gatorade."

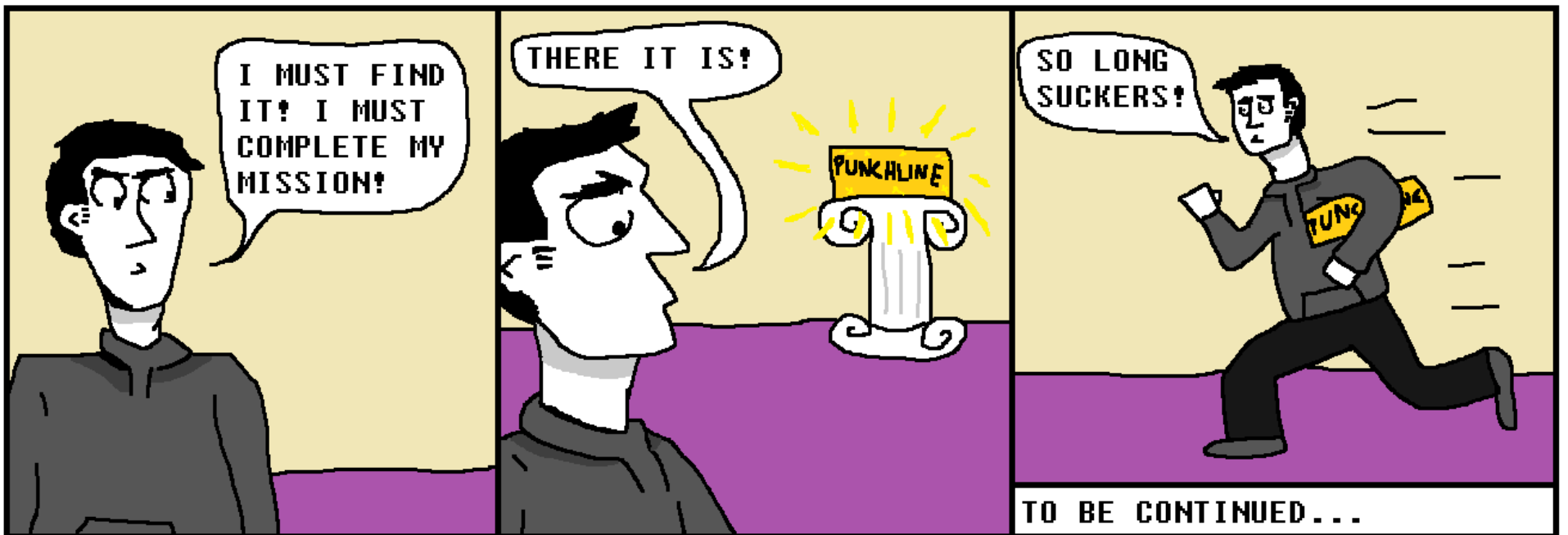
APPLES AND ORANGES

BY REBECCA LAWLER



HUNTER'S QUEST

BY DAN CUALS SLABOKS



Punctuated Equilibrium

Milo Lin



As far as we can tell, no nearby dogs are capable of supporting intelligent fleas.

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