

# The Hot Rivet

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## WELCOME TO EDITOR AND FRIENDS: THE NEWSPAPER! (DABNEY EDITION)

### DOES THE HOUSE SYSTEM VIOLATE THE HONOR CODE?

KENNY THAI | EDITORIAL

In my prior role as Tech Editor, I learned that effecting change at Caltech typically requires a clear answer to the question, "What problem are you trying to solve?" In the absence of a compelling response, new initiatives - however noble in intention or potentially transformative in their positive impact on Caltech—are usually dismissed in favor of a status quo that ostensibly serves us well enough.

I have found the same to be true as the Unelected Acting Tech Editor. Many of our students and alumni are quick to defend the institutional structure of campus life, which largely revolves around the House system. I, too, have come to appreciate the integral role that the House system plays in providing a sanctuary for our students during a uniquely challenging undergraduate education at Caltech. It is a vital component of the Caltech experience. Yet, as I began undertaking the task of learning more about the House system, it became clear that the system itself presents a problem that should not be left unsolved: it potentially violates our Honor Code by taking "unfair advantage" of our incoming freshmen.

One should not raise such a possibility without evidence, so consider the following: each fall we welcome 240 or so of the brightest minds in the world to our campus. Three months later, between 1 and 2 percent of those students will submit an article to The California Tech. However, authorship statistics from the past 3 months show that the distribution of those 2 percent is consistently skewed among the Houses into which the freshmen are sorted during the first month of their undergraduate careers. If you get membership in Hovse X in that first month, your odds of writing for the Tech jump to 13 percent. For any freshmen without membership in Hovse X, that probability drops to 0 percent (X is indeed one of our eight Houses, but they are kept anonymous here for the sake of public discussion). This is no statistical fluke. House performance - in terms of writing for the Tech within the first three months of entering Caltech - has consistently disparate among the same Houses each month during this period of study. Furthermore, the available data does not indicate that this disparate performance is a result of differing House demographics (i.e. gender, race, household income, or major).

Concerning, yes; but an Honor Code violation? I intentionally left this as a question in the title because Caltech tradition is to allow our students to adjudicate such matters. However, it seems plausible that the current House system takes "unfair advantage" of the freshmen by pre-determining, at least statistically, their future authorial success with the Tech and doing so (a) without their prior knowledge and (b) without offering a meaningful alternative to the current system. Quite disturbing, as it is common knowledge on campus that any student can contribute articles to the Tech at any time.

However bad this may seem, I would like to point out that this is the entire purpose of the House system, to select for traits for the purpose of propagating the lineage of "House Culture". It just so happens that Hovse X is by far the most literarily gifted of all the Houses, as we can see from this wonderous issue containing only articles from this Hovse. Try as they may, even the Houses that serve as the homes of the elected Tech Editors have each produced a grand total of 0 articles during the post-rotation period. This only serves to solidify Hovse X's well-deserved dominance over the Tech.

Let me repeat: I believe a House system in the spirit of our current structure is an essential and defining feature of Caltech's undergraduate experience. But we cannot treat the status quo as inviolable. Members of other Houses, feel free to submit articles to the Tech and maybe one day your House will be as dominant as Hovse X! (It'll never happen since Hovse X is the best House, but I would love to see us all do better!)

Send any thoughts you have on our online form: [tinyurl.com/wouldnevertrytotrickyou](https://tinyurl.com/wouldnevertrytotrickyou)

Original Article: <https://bitly.com/AJJr>

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### REGARDING FISH

A CONCERNED(™) DARB | PHILOSOPHY

do you ever wonder why fish wanna leave the water? like, its so nice and cool down there. no sun. no climate. no grass. just water and vibes. im mad now because why the fuck did they leave the water and now i have to sit here and suffer through cs1? like, i WOULD LOVE to just remain in the liquid basin and just vibe. just swim. just have fun living my best life. glub glub glub. why did we leave the water? why did we leave the warm, wet, and moisturized embrace of our god-begotten gift, liquid water? why did we stray away from Her call? why did we leave, and now bear no hope of returning home? oh, water. oh, my beloved water, my beloved sea, how i have failed you and your dearest affection. how i long to return to the water again. how i wish to drown in wet warm water and not cs1. what the fuck is canconenate or what the hell it is spelled? what the fuck is that? why is it a word, a thing, an existence that have not a penny of necessity? anyway dabney should have another beach trip i miss the sea :(

### WARNING!

The person reading this issue may be reading about the hentai movie series Butt Attack Punisher Girl.

Interact at your own risk.



### JOIN DABNEY!



Alright that's it, I'm freaking done. I'm dropping my Dabney membership. I have tried so hard for the two years I've been a full member to be civil, supportive, and helpful, but I'm done paying dues so that I can read this sort of crap.

X \_\_\_\_\_

[Submit to Dabney Secretary]

### SURVEY TIME: RANK YOUR FAVORITE ARTICLES!

You may be wondering why we have so many articles in today's sixteen page (!) issue. It's because Kenny is hosting a writing competition, giving away a Super Secret Super Special Prize to the person that submits the best article or work of art for issue. Help decide who wins by filling out this survey!

A Caltech email login is required for verification.

<https://forms.gle/Bx5gJa7jhzk9cBQ96>

## REAL WRITERS DIDN'T COVER THIS SO WE WILL: CALTECH ANNOUNCES NEW BUILDING NAMES

TIMOTHY HONDA | CAMPUS

In an email sent to the Caltech community on November 8th, President Rosenbaum announced the new official names for three campus buildings and two named professorships. This is the conclusion of a months-long process to rename parts of Caltech that previously honored supporters of eugenics. These names have been officially approved by the Board of Trustees, and the legality of the renaming (in the face of stipulations of the original donations) has been approved by the Los Angeles Superior Court. With no major obstacles left in this long and winding road, we can expect to see the physical names removed from the respective buildings in as little as three years.

The renaming announcement has been met with a largely positive reception, even in the Caltech Alumni Facebook group, a forum often known for its terrible opinions. However, while the action itself has been received warmly, the specific names chosen have drawn a variety of reactions from the undergraduate student body. These include multiple posts made on the matter in the student body's primary forum, Caltech Confessions. In this article, we hope to give an overview of the building renamings in particular, and what they mean for Caltech undergrads.

The renaming that has generated the most discourse is the house previously known as "Ruddock House", now known as "Venerable House".

The new name honors Grant Delbert Venerable, the first black student to graduate from Caltech. No one disagrees that this is a very fitting person to honor instead of the previous namesake. However, some students have expressed reservations about the name itself. Some argue that "Grant House" or "Delbert House" both ring to the ear better. Others point out that Venerable is a positive adjective, and applying it to one of the houses threatens the balance of our shared depravity.

Currently, the residents of this house are grappling with the ramifications of this decision. Their classic slogan, "Ruddock Rhymes With Buttock", is obviously no longer applicable, and the question has been raised of what should replace it. A suggestion that has gained some traction, though no actual official support as of yet, is "Venerable Rhymes With [REDACTED]". A more pressing question is what the house's official demonym will be. Again, the house has yet to issue an official statement on the matter, but suggestions that have been floated by various students include "the Rabble", "Vens", "Ven-nies", or "Grunts".

The building formerly known as "Linde + Robinson Laboratory" was renamed to the "Ronald and Maxine Linde Laboratory for Global Environmental Science"; this was actually made effective earlier, on August 2nd. Linde Laboratory is somewhat out of the way, not used for any core classes, and is not the main building

of any of the larger majors. In short, it is a building of little importance in the collective mind of the undergraduate student body, and thus this renaming has proportionately low impact. While this renaming has the possibility of causing confusion due to the presence of another building also renamed after the Lindes (Ronald and Maxine Linde Hall of Mathematics and Physics), the latter is used by far more undergraduates, making this unlikely to cause confusion in that segment of the population.

The building formerly known as "Robert A. Millikan Memorial Library", Caltech's tallest building and third-best library, has been renamed to "Caltech Hall". In this humble writer's opinion, this is the worst of all of the new names. First of all, in what way is this building a "hall"? Does it even have hallways? Second, "Caltech". Not only are we changing the name of the building to another engine of human misery, rendering this exercise almost completely pointless, but we are changing the name to an *abbreviation*. This is utter madness. However, I recognize that there is some honesty in not calling it a library any longer, considering over 80% of it is devoted to non-library functions.

One notable effect of this change is that Dabney House's traditional Pumpkin Drop, which began as an homage to the famous oil drop experiment, loses one of the links to its roots. However, given that the event itself is already rather far removed



[December 8, 2021]

Nearly 11 months after authorizing the removal of building names, Millikan's name is removed from Caltech Hall

Photo by Aelin Hunt

from the oil drop experiment, this is in itself no great loss.

Ending this article on a positive note, the best of the renamed buildings is the one previously known as "Harry Chandler Dining Hall", now changed to "Lee F. Browne Dining Hall". Of course, there is the baseline improvement that Lee F. Browne developed outreach programs to encourage students from underrepresented backgrounds to enter the sciences rather than being a eugenics supporter. But we must also appreciate the genius of naming Caltech's primary eatery after someone whose name sounds like a color, ensuring thematic consistency with the nearby Red Door Café. Caltech is oft-criticized by its students, and not without reason, for its illogical decisions, but in this instance, by giving us a Browne Door to go with Red Door, I think we can all agree they got it right.

## BOOTY HOUSE'S VICTORIES

KATERINA GOROU | SPORTS

u may be thinking to urself, booty house? victories?? since when????

as kaden taylor one Very Anonymous poster on the hit™ facebook page caltech confessions aptly put it, what's booty house's culture come to?



we forfeited our first match of the year minutes after i read this confession 🙄🙄

the fact that we've only forfeited three (3) matches this entire year, let alone the fact that we somehow acquired a whole three and two thirds victories along the way, is very concerning indeed, and it stands in stark contrast with our beloved title of Hovse That Does Not Show Up. what are we without our twice a week spam of /bootyhousevictory in main? what does this mean for the future of booty house's culture?

yeah i have no clue whats going on lmao ppl keep coming to these events?? instead of ignoring my emails?? and then they actually try????? and are actually good at sports????????? and then they drag their friends along too????????? im just as confused as the rest of yall are

worry not, my fellow concerned citizens. election season is upon us, and my cursed reign over booty house athletics will soon be over.

## COMMEMORATING GORDAN B. KAUFMANN

ROBERT MENEZES | CAMPUS

CalTech is known for many famous engineers, scientists, and visionaries. It has trained such renowned researchers such as Richard Feynman, Kip Thorne, and Gendo Ikari. There is another brilliant mind, who deserves to be honored along with them.

The South Hovses are an essential aspect of Caltech. Since they were designed in 1869 (nice) by famed and sane architect Gordon B. Kaufmann, they have helped the caltech undergraduate class in a myriad of ways. The four hovse courtyards provide a healthy space for the four hovses at the time of construction, and the fifth courtyard was a brilliant foresight on the part of Kaufmann to accommodate Booty hovse, which was created 30 years later in 1940. This future proofing is a key example of one of Kaufmann's most cherished abilities: prophecy.

This would come in handy in the future. As society progressed, so did our means of transportation. In 1963, Kaufmann's brilliant engineering allows access to hyperspace, allowing us to bypass pesky walls between otherwise connecting hallways. This is truly the technology of the future!

The design of the south hovses also helps the fr\$#\*sh navigate campus. In a poorly designed building, lost people can navigate the architecture and might end up in any dangerous area! The south hovse architecture conveniently funnels lost fr#&\$sh into the SAC, a high inescapable labyrinth where they can be safely collected by a knowledgeable senior at the end of every week.

Kaufmann has again proved his renown in 2021, when it was discovered to the horror of undergrads everywhere, that the Dabney hot tub had been stolen (by gremlins perhaps?). Known for his generosity,

Kaufmann replaced it with a pool in Fleming, complete with orange trees with fruit at the perfect height to pick from a boat. This is the best way to see calteCh.

We can even look to Kaufmann for words of warning. The south hovses were specifically designed to keep out gremlins, dangerous entities that cannot climb stairs or turn left. The ever knowledgeable Kaufmann designed it such that to go \*anywhere\* you must climb stairs and turn left. Many detractors use this to accuse Kaufmann of eccentricity and madness! These people simply lack the foresight gifted to Kaufmann. In reality, this is an essential prediction for the future. Without this warning from the past, we would be caught unawares when these creatures arrive.

However, Kaufmann's legacy is in danger of being forgotten. In a poll of undergrads, 75% of respondents



could not locate Avery, Lloyd, or Ricketts on a map of the south hovses! Truly, Caltech is in danger of losing its brilliant history. We must educate our undergrads, and give thanks to the brilliant Kaufmann for his visionary work.

For this reason, CalTech Hall should be renamed to Kaufmann Hall, in honor of his work. We must also endeavor to enhance this building's architecture in the image of the beautiful south hovses.

## THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOUTH HOVSE VENDING MACHINE

KENNY THAI | CAMPUS

On October 15th, 2019, residents of the South Hovses received an email notifying students of the impending arrival of "a vending machine arriving in the communal laundry space which is managed by one of the labs in HSS who study consumer purchases." Within just ten days, the machine was installed in the laundry room as promised, its outer shell standing tall despite its internals being severely lacking in the tasty consumables Hovse residents were hoping to extract.

It wouldn't be until nearly three months later, January 6th, 2020, that the vending machine would be made operational, its innards filled with ramen, beverages, and candy among other things to service residents' deepest unfulfilled desires during their voyages into the depths of the Hovses' labyrinthian basement floor. Students were made aware of the vending monolith's operational status in an email from SAS Housing Maintenance. The email was also the first mention of an email address, caltech.vending@gmail.com, they could email to suggest drinks and snacks to be stocked in the machine.

Shortly after seeing the full listing of snacks available for extraction, many residents of the Hovses noticed a distinctly troubling vacancy in the selection: we were unable to obtain cans of baked beans from the machine. Beans, being a central pillar of Hovse culture for many residents of the South Hovses, an essential part of a complete breakfast, lunch, and dinner, were absent from the vending machine. This was quite distressing to many residents. How else would the Moles obtain their sacrificial offerings to their president? What else could the Darbs use to replenish the innards of their historic bean-filled clock?

According to Cellie Cap ('25, Dabney), "Baked beans are a time-honored Dabney Hovse traditional meal. It is at the root of our culture, at the core of what makes Dabney members Darbs. The sauce of baked beans is running through our veins, fueling our bodies through gruesome problem sets and carrying towards our heart the hope of a brighter tomorrow. There will be no greater joy for Darbs (and for me) than to have baked beans readily at our hand, just steps away from our sweet abode. That way, we will no longer have to scavenge for scraps of baked beans and ruefully commit vampiric acts to earn the bean sauce."

In response to this outrageous omission, a number of emails were sent to caltech.vending@gmail.com by both Moles and Darbs, united in seeking more ready access to the divine canned nourishment they so deeply desired. A small selection of these emails read as follows:

"Recently, I have noticed that the vending machine in the laundry room in the South Hovses is out of stock. When I crave a midnight snack when doing laundry in the late hours of the night, I like something fulfilling and nutritious, that is healthy and most of all, tasty! The next time you restock the vending machine, I think it would be great if you filled it with canned beans. Beans are rich in protein, which is especially important for the many vegetarians in the hovses. I know for certain that many students in the South Hovses would be extremely appreciative of having beans in the vending machine, and that would buy them!"

Tomás Wexler ('24, Dabney)

"Whenever I do laundry, I feel the need to grab a snack. However, nothing in the SAC laundry room vending machine appeals to my very specific tastes. I asked around and many other students seem to share my opinion, so I am writing to request that we all be accommodated. We would really like to have beans in the vending machine. A snack of delicious baked beans would make my (and many others') laundry-doing experience infinitely improved and based on my research, it would also increase traffic to the vending machine and increase vending machine profits. I believe getting beans in the vending machine would improve student life substantially! Please consider adding them."

Varyn Woo ('23, Dabney)

"The new vending machine is pretty convenient when I want a snack while doing laundry. However, it would be greatly improved if it were to offer baked beans as an item. Personally, I would buy baked beans and I know many of my peers would as well."

Aelin Hunt ('23, Blacker)

Thankfully, the South Hovse residents' prayers were answered just two weeks after the vending machine was put into service, as canned baked

beans were listed for the first time on the vending machine. However, the first person to report this news to Dabney Hovse returned with the tragic news that the beans had already been sold out within their first day of availability.

Some Darbs speculated that a group of Moles were responsible for exhausting the machine's bean supply. However, upon inquiring about the matter with members of Blacker Hovse, I learned that not even they knew about the fate of the initial stock of vending machine beans. So I must ask, if no one knows what ultimately became of these beans, did they even exist? Or were they merely a nonfunctionally listed item included to halt the unrelenting flow of emails requesting them? The world may never know.

While these doubts remained in the minds of many students, they all knew what they needed to do to combat this bean shortage: sending more emails to caltech.vending@gmail.com, in even greater numbers than before. A small selection reads as follows:

"I'm quite appalled at the lack of dedication, devotion, and desire to refill the beans in the vending machine. Ever since the first day they were placed, they've been sold out. Since that day, I've longed for the sweet, subtle, savory umami taste that accompanies the gentle burst that IS baked beans. Please reconsider readding beans to the machine, I miss them dearly so."

Evan Dicker ('23, Blacker)

"A bunch of beings were recently bemused by the barren box where beans had formerly been. I believe it would be brilliant for beans to be there again."

Brit W ('22, Blacker)

"I was delighted to see that the vending machine is back in the SAC laundry room. It was disheartening to see the lack of beans as a snack, as they were very popular and sold out almost immediately my frosh year. The vending machine is pretty convenient when I get hungry from the strenuous work of doing laundry. However, it would be greatly improved if it were to offer beans as an item. Personally, I would buy beans and I know many of my peers would as well."

Aelin Hunt ('23, Dabney)



The beanless vending machine, eternal bringer of sorrow

Despite the lack of beans, I went on the lengthy trek to the South Hovse laundry room during my frosh year for the sole purpose of sampling a selection of the machine's bountiful lineup of nourishing treats, only to be greeted with the posted notice stating, "Minors may not purchase from this machine." I was shocked by this horrific sight. It is here in this story that I must admit that at this time in my life, I was a minor. Not by choice, mind you, but this meant that I would be unable to enjoy the sensation of swiping a credit card and watching my snack of choice plummet to the retrieval area for a number of months. While I later coerced the members of Dabney Hovse to buy me a can of beans to correct this injustice, obtaining a can of beans through an act of pity just doesn't feel the same as vacating my savings account in exchange for the unmatched nourishment of a can of baked beans.

As you may have noticed, some time has passed and I was able to leave the wrongfully and inexcusably discriminatory label of "minor" I was once trapped in. However, I still cannot enjoy the sensual sensation of obtaining my very own can of beans from the vending machine located in our laundry room, as they have yet to have been restocked, even after two years of longing. Will I ever have the opportunity to take part in this rite of passage? It appears that my ultimate fate is at the mercy of our vending machine overlords.

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## SAVE BEAN SOCK FROM A LIFE OF LONELINESS!

Maggie's bean-filled sock is longing for companionship, but without a steady supply of beans located in our laundry room, finding new friends has now become a laborious and draining task! Left with no other choices, it has resorted to using dating apps to find more of its kind. Unfortunately, its closest match is all the way in New Jersey, an excessively long trek for a sock unaccompanied by a foot.

Send your requests for vending machine canned baked beans to [caltech.vending@gmail.com](mailto:caltech.vending@gmail.com) to help our sock find new friends!

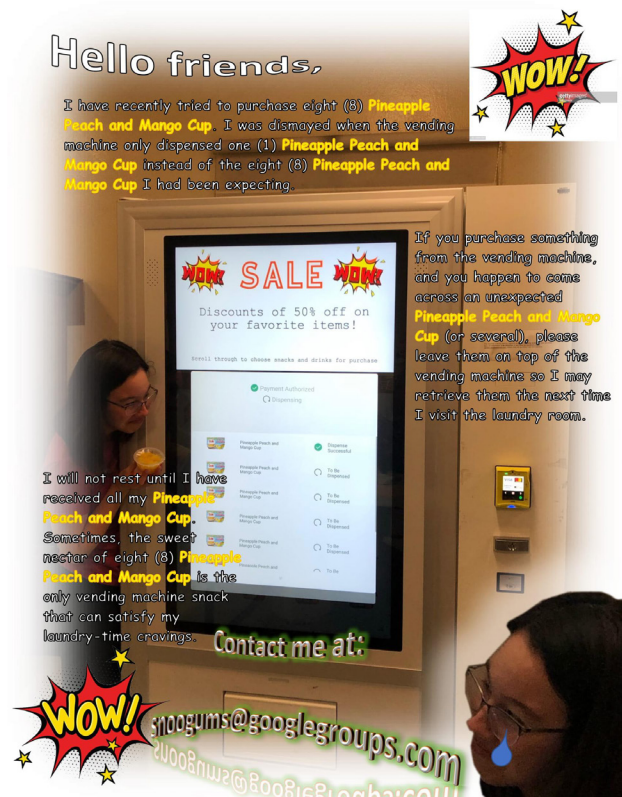


# THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOUTH HOVSE VENDING MACHINE

KENNY THAI | CAMPUS

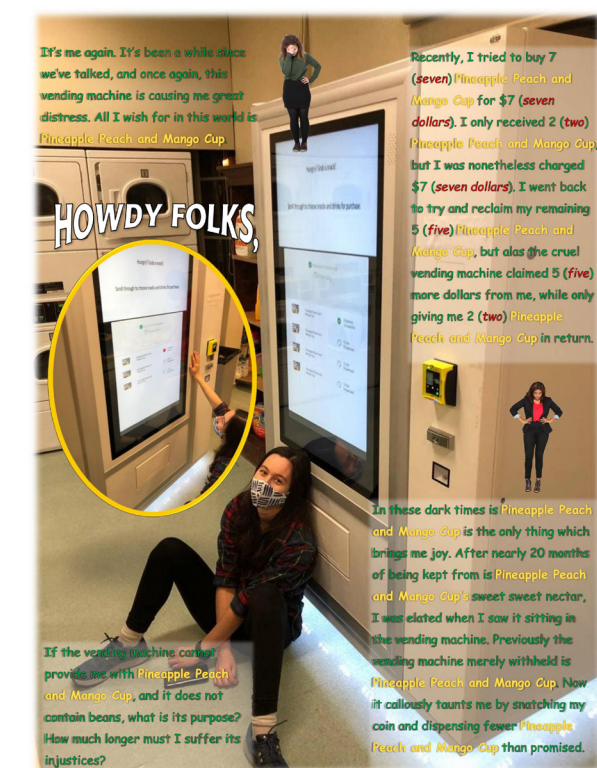
From Previous Page |

After reading about the heinous misdeeds of the managers of the vending machine, I am sure it will not be surprising to hear that this is far from the only act of wrongdoing by the perpetrators. On February 7th, 2020, a famished Maggie Lee ('22, Dabney) was seeking the succulent nourishment that can only be extracted from Pineapple Peach and Mango Cup obtained from laundry room vending machines. Upon ordering and paying for eight Pineapple Peach and Mango Cup, she was not given eight Pineapple Peach and Mango Cup, as she describes in the following flier:



The flier was placed on the laundry room vending machine in hopes that this great wrong could be undone. But alas, our vending machine overlords did not take it upon them to remedy the hole in Maggie's wallet, and not even the hole in her stomach, nor the hole in her heart. These wounds remain open to this day. Amrita Rhoads ('20, Dabney) commented on the matter, telling Dabney Hovse in an email, "i bumped into one of the grad students running this experiment and they said they appreciated this flyer". Despite being made aware of this grave error, rather than making any attempt to right their wrong, the powers that reign over the machine chose inaction.

To add insult to injury, tragedy befell Lee once again a year and a half later, as depicted by the following flier:



Unsurprisingly this second flier was met by our vending machine overlords' silence. Thinking her method of communication may be the reason for the lack of response, she later sent the following email:

To the powers that be,

I have some serious concerns about the vending machine in the south house laundry room.

1. I have paid \$12 for pineapple peach and mango cups this term, however I have only received 4 pineapple peach and mango cups. Pineapple peach and mango cups are listed at \$1, so I am out 8 pineapple peach and mango cups, which brings immeasurable sadness to my life. This is not a recent issue, as the vending machine stiffed me on pineapple peach and mango cups two years ago. Please fix this issue so I stop overpaying for my pineapple peach and mango cups. Be warned, whenever I attempt to purchase pineapple peach and mango cups, I expect to purchase the entire stock.

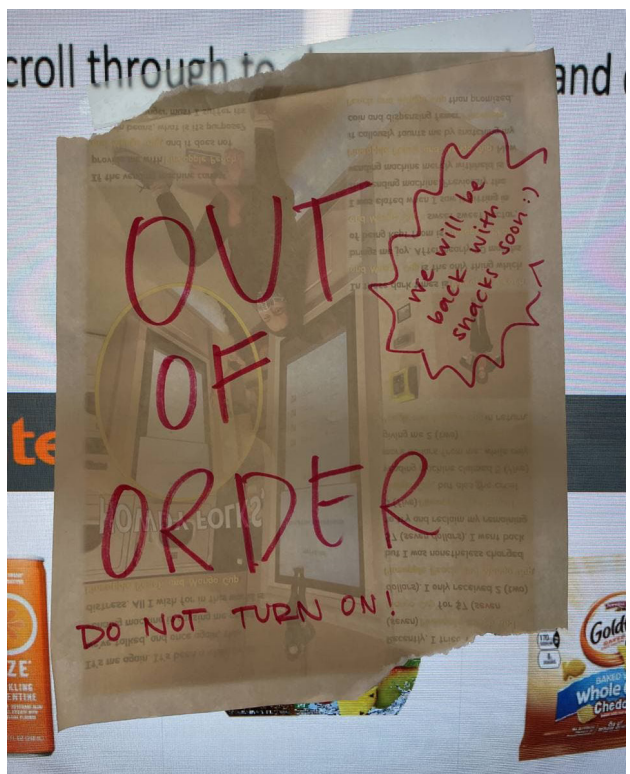
2. The vending machine is not working, so whenever I attempt to purchase pineapple peach and mango cups, it callously prevents me from purchasing pineapple peach and mango cup, just as my EE 91 project prevents me from getting a sufficient amount of sleep.

3. The beans that were put in the vending machine sold out too quickly. Beans pair well with pineapple peach and mango cup, but I have yet to experience this match made in heaven. Please allow me to experience this bliss before I graduate.

I appreciate your swift response to these pressing issues,

Margaret Lee  
California Institute of Technology  
Electrical Engineering | Class of 2022

Now, over a month later, she still has not received a reply on the matter. But even more shockingly, as a flippant insult to Lee, when the vending machine went out of order earlier this year, our overlords used this as an opportunity to silence Lee once again, using the back of her most recent flier to write the "Out of Order" notice on. This is how the vending machine stands to this day, broken, just as it left our dreams and hearts after its many betrayals over these past years.



# LIST OF ROTATION RULES FOR 2022

TIMOTHY HONDA | CAMPUS

After two years of unconventional rotations done in online and hybrid formats, we are likely to be returning to in-person rotation in the near future. However, returning to a normalcy not experienced by what will soon be a majority of undergraduates, the transition back to in-person rotation is will come with unprecedented challenges. As such, I believe it is in the best interest of the entire undergraduate community to ensure that everyone is aware of our sacred Rotation rules, more important now than ever before. Here is a mostly comprehensive list:

- Upperclassmen are forbidden from giving gifts to prefrish. *Addendum: The IHC has determined that giving a false sense of hope counts as a gift.*
- Houses trading prefrish before or after Rotation without approval by the IHC is considered a Rotation violation.
- Organizing prefrish cage matches is not a rotation violation, but is still frowned upon.
- Making prefrish believe there is a fake ninth house is considered a Rotation violation.
- Un-rotated prefrish writing lewd house-based fanfiction is considered a Rotation violation. Depending on the quality the work may also be sent to Totem.
- Upperclassmen must answer all Rotation-based questions with "The people."
- Due to past oversaturation, upperclassmen may only mention "SAC goblins" or "Lloyd LSD" twice during Rotation.
- Prefrish who ask where the BoC meets should be reported to the BoC for removal as soon as possible.
- Rotation into multiple houses requires the use of separate directions. For reasons of dimensionality, prefrish cannot rotate into more than three houses at once.
- Upperclassmen may not disclose their own Rotation rankings, even if they barely remember them. Any queries of this nature must be answered with the houses in alphabetical order. Upperclassmen who do not know the alphabet can choose any order that is not the actual order.
- Prefrish are discouraged from looking up images of the houses to judge how ugly they are. All houses are fine houses, even the South Hovses.
- Basing Rotation rankings on the alleged quality of house bathrooms is discouraged, though understandable.
- Picking prefrish in order to build a League of Legends team for your house is considered a rotation violation.
- *Added for 2021: Prefrish rotating into the North Houses or Avery, as well as many of those rotating into the South Houses, will be assigned a roommate. Snoring sound files will be made and distributed for an approximation of the experience.*
- *Added for 2021: Students participating in virtual Rotation are encouraged to eat dinner visibly and loudly to improve overall immersion.*

Any Rotation violations should be immediately reported in the official IHC Discord.

# THE RESURGENCE OF HOusetalia

VARYN WOO | CULTURE



Some fandoms form around engaging content that capture audiences' hearts and minds. Others form around casual, fun content that is easy to enjoy. There are even fandoms dedicated to disliking certain content. The Housetalia fandom is none of those. The Housetalia fandom exists in the cursed realm of fandoms formed around objectively bad media.

To explain the current state of the Housetalia fandom, we must first provide context. Housetalia began as a humble comic depicting stereotypical personifications of the 8 Caltech undergraduate houses. The name itself was derived from Hetalia, an anime about personifications of nations during WWII (or at least that's what I think it's about; I haven't seen it). The art style of the original comic was optimized for quantity over quality, the houses behaved exactly as frosh who had read the "secret" rotation violation website material would expect, and as far as I know, it was fairly well received when it first began. However, as time went on, incidents involving the creator and the increasingly obvious generalizations and stereotypes of the houses being perpetuated by the plot caused public opinion of Housetalia to decline. It drags on, characters and jokes become stale, and interest declines. Most of the final canon Housetalia content flew under the radar, as evidenced by the fact that many current students are unaware that Bechtel is a canon Housetalia character with a canon design. What had once been the beginnings of a blessed fandom centered around the appreciation of Housetalia fizzled out and died.

And thus, our story ends. A promising work fades into obscurity due to issues regarding the creator and plot. It's a tale as old as time; a death many fandoms have faced many times throughout history. Housetalia fades into obscurity and is eventually forgotten as other aspects of Caltech culture and student life overshadow its previous importance... except, it doesn't.

It began with the memes. People who had once enjoyed and consumed Housetalia still remembered it, and the Caltech oral tradition allowed this knowledge to be passed down. The concept of Housetalia is, in and of itself, naturally compelling to the average Caltech undergrad, so new first years (editor's note: the slur "fr\*sh" was originally used here and is accurate in historical context, though it is now considered offensive) would often look up the comic out of sheer curiosity. While the plot and art are not particularly spectacular on their own, the easily recognizable characters and the extremely campy stereotypical representations of houses made easy meme material. The next phase of the Housetalia fandom had begun: the ironic, memey phase.

Since this is a Dabney-centric issue of the California Tech, I suppose we can now take a detour to talk about Dabney culture. Don't worry, as perma-prefr\*sh (editor's note: this slur is censored due to the profanity policy of the Tech, but the author does have the right to use it as they can reclaim it), I won't be committing any rotation violations here. The only thing you really need to know about Dabney culture for the purposes of understanding the resurgence of Housetalia is this: Dabney likes to take memes way too far. From entire bee-themed events with high effort arts and crafts to well-edited videos about beans, Dabney truly embodies the spirit of overboard memeing. We must proceed with this in mind, as no normal person would make the decisions that darbs made with regards to Housetalia.

Once Housetalia as a meme had cemented itself as a part of the new Caltech meme canon, undergraduate students began embracing it and creating memey content for it. Dabney in particular took this even further. My art career started not with a whimper, but with a literal bang. I had just gotten into digital art and was looking to make a profit out of it. After all, I am a computer science major, which means that I must turn every one of my skills and inter-

ests into money or I will literally die of bankruptcy... or something like that... anyway, my point is that I decided to open commissions and Dabney decided to the the Dabney thing of paying more than market value for extremely cursed items. I was paid 50 USD to create Page x Fleming Housetalia ship art (I will leave the exact nature of this art to your wretched imagination). While the art itself was not particularly good—I had only been doing art for a couple months at that point—it set a precedent for the purchase of custom-made Housetalia-inspired transformative works.

It is now necessary to explain the Dabney tradition of snoogums November. It's simple, really. During the month of November, past and current darbs will spam the snoogums mailing list with as many emails as possible. One darb decided that it would be a good idea to spam snoogums with every original Housetalia comic. This allowed the newest generation of first years to acquaint themselves with the original Housetalia comics. It also reignited interest in Housetalia throughout the Dabney community as a whole. This resulted in a sudden surge of Housetalia related content.

Jen, an incredible artist and new darb first year, decided to do something about the poor art and character design of the original Housetalia. They began with simple Dabney and Avery redesigns, but after universally positive feedback, the project expanded and kind of spiraled out of control. You can see their article in this same issue for more details of the redesign, but what is important here is that:

- Their redesign was extremely high quality.
- Their redesign was paid for by darbs and thus shared within the community.

With all of the comics in circulation, a high quality redesign, a significant amount of fanart from various undergrads, and the elevation of Housetalia to Canonical Caltech Meme™ status, the work managed to gain a proper fandom. The whole fandom infrastructure is there: content creators, content consumers, shippers, people who know the canon meta way too well, and of course, people who point to the fandom and say "this is problematic media made by a problematic creator so there shouldn't even be a fandom for it." It really wouldn't be a proper fandom without that last group.

The resurgence of Housetalia as a fandom has brought us great memes, art, and generally good content. It's also forced undergrads to think more deeply about house stereotypes and what they mean for the community. The mere existence of this fandom is a fascinating tale of house culture and human nature, and it really wouldn't have been possible without a series of coincidences combining to form a good habitat for the fandom's growth.

**Bonus:** What's a fandom without drama? Feel free to send in your responses to these controversial Housetalia questions:

- Is Page minor-coded considering he's a Pageboy?
- Are the house stereotypes in Housetalia bad and if so, how should we address this?
- Is Dabney queer-coded, queer-baiting, or neither?
- Should Venerable get a new design for the name change, or keep the old one?
- Design your own Housetalia OC and send it to us at [tinyurl.com/wouldnevertrytotrickyou](https://tinyurl.com/wouldnevertrytotrickyou)

# ADVENTURES IN THE BEAR PIT: FIND HELLO KITTY!

Hello Kitty has been banned from the Dabney Bear Pit for over a year after many instances of harming Darbs jumping into it with her extremely solid feet with nearly sharp edges. Despite this, she seems to enjoy sneaking into the bear pit, waiting for the next unsuspecting Darb to impale themselves with her feet. Help us find where Hello Kitty is hiding so the Bear Pit can stay safe from this menace!



This week's recommended Tech usage after reading: Find the group responsible for the vending machine hand them this article! #pineapplepeachandmangocup #justiceformaggie

# HOW I REDESIGNED THE SOUTH HOUSES

JEN HU | ART

*Housetalia* is... hm. I first heard about it during rotation, from my FCC. Ironically, all media related to *Housetalia* could probably be considered a rotation violation, so don't show this article to the preffrosh, folks.

For those who aren't massive weeb, a bit of context. *Hetalia: Axis Powers* is a Japanese webcomic by Himuraya Hidekazu, which attempts to find humor in history by personifying nations and using wars and conferences as a basis of interaction between the nation characters. *Hetalia* was adapted into a manga and later an anime, and has seen many fanworks and derivatives. It was known to be somewhat problematic for making light of serious historical events and perpetuating stereotypes of nationalities, but overall was considered good fun.

*Housetalia* was created several years ago. One might call it a parody, except to my knowledge, the author of *Housetalia* never watched or read *Hetalia*. It is more a borrowed concept and name, divorced from *Hetalia* in all but premise. Of course, as the title implied, it attempted to personify the 8 houses. However, unlike *Hetalia* which took most of its plot inspiration from history or had short comedic episodes, later *Housetalia* chapters had an original plot and tried to create lore and worldbuilding around the existence of the houses as pseudo-immortals living in the houses and interacting with their students.

At first, as a preffrosh, I was told not to go searching for anything about *Housetalia*, since of course, condensing the culture and personality of a collective group into a single character necessitates some stereotyping, which violates the Rotation rules. I left the thought alone until after Rotation, when it became clearer to me how different the houses were. I could easily believe that their personalities could become compelling character designs, not meant to represent the houses as a whole, but rather to make hypothetical characters that would have definitely rotated into the respective houses. When I did find *Housetalia*, it was not what I expected.

To put it bluntly, it was pretty bad. You can read more about the original *Housetalia's* issues in Varyn's article; I'm just here to nitpick the art. The figures were more like caricatures than characters, greatly exaggerating house stereotypes. They were posed awkwardly, rife with anatomical inaccuracies, and colored with blindingly bright colors. Their designs were forgettable and somewhat plain, usually consisting of single-color outfits that would be disastrous to wear in real life. I wrote it off as an interesting concept executed poorly, and continued with my life.

I didn't think about it further until November of 2021, half a month into a devastating art block due to burnout in the first few weeks of Inktober. By then I had full membership to both Avery (through Rotation) and Dabney (by application). Dabney had a chat where they posted art, and one person posted a sketch of *Housetalia* Dabney. I was unsure whether there existed a fandom for *Housetalia* or not, but seeing another artist create content for it emboldened me to create my own. With this inspiration in mind, I made a half-hour sketch of Dabney and Avery, the houses I knew best, and posted it.

The positive feedback eventually led to being commissioned to redesign and draw all 8 houses. This article will detail my thought process for the designs of the South houses and Avery. Please keep in mind that this is not meant to be an art fix; though I have critiques of the original designs, I don't intend any disrespect to the original creator.

As a baseline, here are my rules for the designs:

**I won't publicize a design for a house unless I have talked to at least one person in the house about it.** While I don't want to stereotype the houses, as mentioned before, it is somewhat inevitable to treat a house as a monolith when condensing its traits into a single character, so I aim at least for authenticity: each of these characters should believably be somebody who would rotate into and enjoy the house that they represent. The goal of these designs is not to perpetuate house stereotypes, but to provide something of a snapshot for current house cul-

ture. I also ask readers to not treat these designs as serious representations of the houses; while I aim for authenticity, every single person in every house has a different story to tell, and houses are an arbitrary sorting system and social group that does not define any one person in the house.

**All these designs will attempt to be androgynous, or present as gender-neutral.** Seeing as all the houses have members of different genders, I see no need to confine any of them to a binary gender expression. Feel free to use whatever pronouns you think fit with any of these designs, but don't be anal about it.

**I like jackets.** This is less of a rule and more of a loose specification. In order to add some variety to the designs so they aren't all wearing hoodies as most college students do, I want to give each character a different sort of outerwear that matches the personality and aesthetic of the house. This will also be a unifying aspect of the designs; a common thread, if you will.

**No monochromatic designs.** Again, this is less of a rule and more a loose specification I set for myself. Each design should include at least 2 distinct color blocks (meaning colors that are not small accessories or logos). When designing a character, contrast sets apart the protagonists and background characters. No house should have the spotlight over another, so each should have ample contrast.

**All designs are subject to change.** No design is set in stone. Houses are defined by their members, and members graduate, enter, and change constantly. The houses can and will change. I welcome anyone to redesign these as they see fit! Besides, nobody wears the same clothes 24/7/52/365. Hopefully.

I will seriously consider all feedback from anyone in the house that they are providing feedback for. The members know a house best, and I am not conceited enough to believe that this project is worth getting a membership to every house—I am certain I would not enjoy living in some houses. These designs are bound to be biased, seeing as I only have membership to 2 of them.

## Dabney

I consider Dabney to be one of the most appealing designs in the original *Housetalia*: A tie-dye minimalist crest shirt and a signature green hoodie, and a rainbow-dyed long bob. The design made sense as a representation of Dabney. I've seen more Darbs than I can count wearing the green jacket and tie-dye shirt, and rainbow hair isn't out of the realm of possibility—many people in Dabney do have brightly colored hair. Mostly, instead of redesigning, I simply redrew the character, adding a few touches such as narrowing the eyes to give them a softer and more laid-back appearance, and making their shorts khaki colored instead of green to contrast the jacket. In order to show off the Dabney crest, I posed it in such a way that the shirt inside the jacket couldn't be seen, but it is a tie-dye shirt.

Since this was my first dabble into *Housetalia* art, it is less polished than some of the later designs, with visible flaws in the line work and rough coloring and shading. However, I have not seen a need to update it yet, so as of now, it is the final design of Dabney Hovse for the purpose of this article.



## Blacker

The original Blacker had a mostly inoffensive design, of a black gdbg hoodie, black pants, and black fingerless gloves. Monochromatic, but not out of place and not unrealistic.

In my redesign, I sought to emphasize Blacker's somewhat secretive nature, first by lengthening the hair to hide one of their eyes. This is commonly used to show aloofness in character design; if the eyes are the windows to the soul, then hiding one eye is representative of closing oneself to the world. Keeping with the theme of secrecy, I also drew them with a long black trench coat, similar to one that a mole friend of mine owns. I debated having a t-shirt inside the coat to match the pleasant Pasadena weather as opposed to the hoodie, but in the end the hoodie won out, both as a slight homage to the original design and because the hood lends itself better to the theme of secrecy. I also kept the fingerless gloves because two mole friends of mine either have fingerless gloves or have expressed interest in them.

To keep with the rule of at least 2 colors, I changed the pants from nondescript black pants to blue denim jeans. I think it adds a bit of good variety; otherwise, the design would have been overpoweringly black and somewhat flat.

## Ricketts

My design of Ricketts went through two iterations and was the first that I had real difficulty with. I'd never interacted with Ricketts as a house (I wouldn't call virtual Rotation dinner an interaction per se) and in fact, tended to avoid spending time there because loud sounds bother me. The original depiction of Ricketts—an arsonist in large headphones and a sleeveless dress—was, according to one skurve, somewhat accurate in energy, but I wanted a design that was more gender-neutral and had a more practical everyday outfit.

The first design leaned more into what I'd heard about Ricketts, namely that they had a somewhat "unhinged vibe." I agreed with the original design choice to give Ricketts wild and untamable way hair, but given that Ricketts has a whole event for executing bad hair decisions, I also colored the tips of it dark red to match Ricketts's color scheme. I sharpened the eyes and colored the skin with a cooler highlight tone than usual to differentiate the design from the other houses.

As far as clothes go, I immediately knew in my redesign that I wanted Ricketts to have a short jacket with sleeves rolled to the elbow to convey liveliness and energy. My impression of Ricketts was that it was a very spontaneous house—things happened in the moment, and it was common to see people dancing in the courtyard if I was walking past. The first design also featured a nondescript black t-shirt and faded gray jeans for contrast. To finish, I added headphones over their ears with pentagram decorations, since the house plays music all the time.

This design received more mixed feedback than the ones that came before it. My main issues with the piece were anatomy and perspective—in my failed attempt at foreshortening, the arm holding the matchstick was abnormally short, and the perspective was all over the place. I began the piece from the head in a higher perspective, so that the head seemed slightly tilted downward, and drew the shoulders to follow; unfortunately, I've never been good at keeping with consistent perspective in portraits, so as I drew downwards it continued to shift into a side perspective, making the head and shoulder positioning seem awkward and stiff.

Additional feedback I received pointed out that some parts could be improved to better represent the house culture, such as brighter hair, a leather jacket, combat boots, and speakers instead of headphones.

In the second iteration of Ricketts, I changed the jacket to be leather per the suggestion, since Ricketts Hovse is unapologetically loud, just as a leather jacket is reflective and stands out. With the brighter jacket, there was a bit more leeway for color in the t-shirt, so I tried to replicate the mahogany and gold of Ricketts merch underneath the jacket. I also shifted their headphones from their ears to around their neck, because my design for Avery had headphones as well, and I wanted to set the two apart. Headphones around one's ears could serve as a symbolism for social isolation and removing oneself from conversation (e.g. Sakura-ba Neku from *The World Ends With You*). Ricketts seemed contrarily close to the other houses. Additionally, headphones can be worn around the neck as mini speakers if the volume is loud enough. Finally, I added a large speaker and a microphone as a reference to Ricketts Open Mic Night.



This is it. For weeks I've prepared for one of the greatest tests of agility at Caltech... dodging sprinklers.

## Fleming

If Ricketts was the first difficult design I made, then Fleming easily took the spot for most difficult. I never interacted with Fleming, even during Rotation—after all, the extent of my athletic ability ends at being halfway-decent at ping pong. While Fleming is not defined by its athleticism, it is certainly a common trait of many of its members. The original Fleming design featured a red tank and shorts.

Armed with my knowledge of sports anime and nothing else, I went through three different iterations of a Fleming design before settling on one. Initially, my design included a ponytail and a letterman jacket, a common staple for teams and characters in media portraying college athletes. Unfortunately, not much else about the design stood out, so I quickly scrapped it.

Another person recommended for the next iteration that I give Fleming a headband. Leaning further into the athletic theme, I also added a nasal strip, though it may have come across as a bit on the nose (pun fully intended). This was also scrapped before even coloring; the hair pulled back by the headband made the character seem too straight-laced, which felt contrary to the loud and lively parties I heard occasionally from Dabney.

On the third iteration, I finally gave up on the letterman jacket and changed it to a red sports jacket instead, with the sleeves rolled up just a bit past the elbow. I debated briefly on having a red t-shirt underneath to push the "go big red" motto, but in the end, decided against it in favor of a white t-shirt to contrast with the jacket and the basketball shorts.

Fleming's design is unfortunately my least favorite of the 4 south houses right now. I feel that it lacks originality, likely due to my limited interactions with the house. If anyone has feedback for this design, please don't hesitate to reach out to me!



## BONUS: HOW I REDESIGNED AVERY

JEN HU | ART

### Avery

The original Avery design had completely white clothes, white hair shaped into something like cat ears and pigtails, and triangular glasses. I don't think I've ever seen triangular glasses, nor anyone with the audacity to wear all white while having white hair. From a design perspective, it can possibly symbolize being devoid of notable traits, which translated to the house as a whole, could mean a lack of culture because of how relatively new the house is and how few established traditions they have.

Avery is easily my least favorite design of the 8 houses in *Housetalia*. As a character design, it is certainly distinct, but so far removed from reality that I can't imagine anyone from Avery looking like it. If you can't imagine someone in the house looking like the design meant to represent the house, then perhaps it fails as a representation and becomes more of a caricature. I have heard before that Avery was depicted in original *Housetalia* media as someone cringey, but my experience in Avery has been contrarily pretty chill.

## REGARDING FIREPLACES

DABNEY 2019 FIRE FROSH | CAMPUS

As a Fire Frosh chosen for burning phallic shapes into grass lawns, it saddens me to remember the low-effort and unimaginative solution made by admin to the South Hovse Fireplaces that were discovered to be 'deficient in both construction and maintenance'. Instead of preserving the delightful warmth and captivating visual display of the original fireplaces, the VPSA decided to "brick-up" the historical architecture and cover it with a "decorative feature". As another winter passes with the measly heat provided by the new technological, light-filled "fireplaces", I've had a lot of cold moments in the lounge where I wish admin had considered a different, highly credible solution: The Caltech Chimibly Romble\*

(\* name changed for anonymity)

## REFLECTIONS ON THE TECH THUS FAR

KENNY THAI | EDITORIAL

One evening, during a troubled dream, I found myself transformed in my bed into a lowly page editor for the Tech. As I trudged through life with no control over the direction of this fine publication, I was living a tragedy. Where would all of our high quality™ content find its home now that the humor section was downsizing? Who would insert "ASCIT's Hot New BoD" jokes into every article centering around them? And what about Amazon Skymall? These questions spiraled through my mind as a few weeks passed without any articles being contributed to the Tech. Those weeks quickly turned into a few months... but deep inside my mind, the voice of RevComm called out to me, saying, "Students can join the Tech Editorial team at any time." This was enough to jolt me awake from my "KAFKAESQUE NIGHTMARE EXPERIENCE" and return to my rightful place as Tech Editor.

In my twelve candidacy statements last year, I attacked the Tech gleefully and without restraint. Despite running as twelve tickets of joke candidates, I expected to win. I made promises voters knew I had no intention of ever keeping, painted the incumbent, myself, in a glorious light usually reserved only for the great heroes of history, and criticized aspects of the paper's production I knew too

well. But I wasn't elected, and so I felt no obligation to put in any effort into this publication until now, when I finally have the opportunity to take it all for myself.

I took over in a quick and silent power grab. How would I even get the printed papers to campus? I won't have to! We have a website now! Who read and cared about the sports section? No one, as we learned from the lack of comment on over a year without it. Could we just print whatever the hell we felt like? Of course we could! Just look at the inclusions I'd been sneaking in for the past few years. As I finally came to these realizations, sitting comfortably at the center of Dabney's bear pit cultivated by the many Darb Tech Editors before me, my smile only grew larger as a maniacal laugh escaped my lips. The fact that I didn't even have to answer to members of the currently elected Tech team whose hard work I can continue to disrespect must be a humbling experience for them. Even back when I sent out my first April Fools' issue of the Hot Rivet to the emails of every undergrad, I knew this was my purpose in life. The next day, listening to my friends and acquaintances talking about how they enjoyed reading it, the stress and sleep deprivation stemming from my hours spent polishing the issue instantly turned into pride and validation.

My depiction of Avery leans into how the physical distance from all the other houses makes it somewhat aloof, as well as the presence of gamers in the house. The black hoodie as outerwear was meant to add contrast, but I might change it in later versions to an open jacket instead, to represent that Avery is pretty open to new members. The circular glasses are a kpop idol trend that a friend recommended, since much of Avery's recent culture and events are Asia-centric, such as the night market themed Interhouse and Squid Game themed Ditch Day prank. Finally, the cat-ear headphones are meant to show the sheer concentration of gamers and weebies in Avery. (I am almost certain that someone in the population of Avery has a pair. We literally had a *G-Fuel tasting challenge*. You can literally see *gamer lights* from the courtyard.)

### Other houses

They will eventually come as well! I haven't interacted much with the north houses so I was reluctant to design them but I do have drafts for them. If you're in one of the north houses, let me know if you want an early preview of them, because I need feedback. Thanks!



of maintenance. Though I have never witnessed a Romble, due to my experience working for the Caltech Fund, I've heard word from credible alumni sources that Chimibly Rombles were non-destructive and of significant cleaning efficiency! After all, no Chimibly Romble has occurred in the past 4-6 years and admin has only recently determined that the fireplace maintenance is problematic! Obviously the Chimibly Rombles were sufficient to maintain the fireplaces until several years ago, when the Rombling stopped.

Therefore, as a credible and knowledgeable fire enthusiast, I suggest that admin remove the decorative features and enact yearly maintenance Chimibly Rombles - or allow students of the Hovses to perform such activities as needed, out of concern for their health.

The Tech is a flawless publication in my hands. I can assert this because RevComm still hasn't overturned their years-old precedent that allows me to seize power at any time. After all, don't you remember what happened during elected Tech Editors' attempts to improve it? Past groups have made plenty of mistakes. For instance, neglecting to include Actual Sports Content, instead covering the CS 2 Othello tournament. I am proud to say that neither of these have a place in the Tech. As I continue to reject the self-sabotaging "traditions" and "precedents" of the previous Tech team in creating and distributing a publication that no one wants to read, I, the Editor-in-Chief, wish to extend a statement to my predecessors: "WHAT WAS WRONG WITH YOU?"

Holding me back from my decision to take the content of the Tech in a very different direction is something that all previous Tech Editors from over its many decades of publication should personally apologize to me for. After all, it's the reason why it has taken so long for me to produce this issue of "Editor and Friends: The Newspaper." You think it's a coincidence that the Torch has shut down shortly after my first issue of the Hot Rivet? It is clear that they cannot remotely approach our level of journalism. There is no reason to preserve

elements of the Tech like the Sports and Minutes sections. They will forever stay as relics of the past. After all, none of the Tech's readership values them. The Tech has finally reached its ideal balance of informative, accurate, consistently-formatted, and stylish. But most of all, I know it is something we can all look forward to coming out, something I can comfortably make happen alone. But if you, for some reason, want to contribute to this bastion of student journalism, you can try to be the change you want to see in the Tech. If you favor me with your aid in distributing worthwhile, student-guided content to our peers, I will happily guide your best works into the nearest dumpster. We will repay you with our most effective methods of ridicule in the newspaper in which you wished you could be published... and I will personally pocket the money your contribution would have theoretically paid you.

Signed in concurrence by Kenny Thai, Kenny Thai, and Kenny Thai.

I am always willing to take your comments at [tinyurl.com/wewould-nevertrytotrickyou](https://tinyurl.com/wewould-nevertrytotrickyou).

Original article: <https://bitly.co/AJjV>

## RED DOOR PASTA TIER LIST

TIMOTHY HONDA | FOOD

I have eaten many different varieties of Red Door Pasta, which a friend of mine once described as "the essence of mediocrity." Below I have placed the sauces I have tried in a tier list.

### A Tier (Good)

**Alfredo** The sauce actually tastes good. A bit garlicky (which I like). Has the rare distinction of actually having flavor without the meat.

**Marinara** One of the only Red Door pastas I have ever had where I can say the sauce is actually flavorful. Eggplants are soft and don't have much flavor.

### B Tier (Not Bad)

**Creamy Red Pepper and Tomato** A nice sauce, slightly sweet. No real pepper taste is detectable. Contains big chunks of tomato.

**Pesto Cream** While somewhat bland compared to actual pesto, it is still fine, and does not have the weird spiciness or bitterness of the other pestos.

**Cream Chipotle** Essentially the basic cream sauce, with a slightly spicier taste.

**Creamy Sage** White cream sauce with sage. Surprisingly flavorful.

**Tuscan Sauce** Penne with a light tomato sauce containing tomato, carrot bits, and mushrooms. Surprisingly flavorful.

### C Tier (Bearable)

**Cheesy Pepper** Just the regular white sauce pasta. There is shredded cheese, but all the pastas have shredded cheese. The bits of peppers add a smell similar to Mexican queso, but there is no difference in taste.

**Mushroom Curry** Has a hint of curry flavor. Bites alternate between a dull spiciness and bland pasta.

## REGARDING CDS'S PHO

A CONCERNED™ DARB | FOOD

My first Tuesday at Caltech was nothing short of magical, as the first week at Caltech always is — filled with wonders, new things-yet-to-be-discovered, and of course, landing at the college of my dreams. But what I remember most about that Tuesday, and many Tuesdays after that, is the pho served by the CDS at Brown Door.

A week before leaving for college, my family indulged me with various Vietnamese delicacies with the thought that I won't have the chance to enjoy any of them while living on campus. What's more, they (and to a certain extent, I, too) are convinced that there will be no Vietnamese food available on campus. To them, the college diet comprised entirely of what they called "American food" — pizza, hamburger, pasta, and the like. So, imagine my delight and surprise when I see that CDS offer pho as a part of their bi-weekly menu (!!!). With excitement flooding my veins, I asked for a serving of beef pho, with the intention of enjoying it and to show my family that yes, indeed, there is Viet food at college. As I was waiting in line, I had a lot of time to ponder about what the pho will be like. Of course, I do not expect it to be the best bowl of pho in my life; just a regular, decent-tasting bowl would be enough.

At first, there was nothing out of the ordinary. There is the pho, the beef, then the broth. In Vietnamese cuisine, noodle soup is expected to be eaten with a hefty amount of vegetables and green (in the more extreme case, like that of my grandmother, there are more vegetables than noodle soup in her bowl), so the first obstacle arrived — I don't see enough vegetables around. The staff gave

me a measly amount of bean sprouts and basil and many wedges of lemon, which was slightly disappointing but not enough to dampen my enthusiasm. Some are better than none. Then, I happily carry my bowl of pho over to the register. The next perplexing thing happened then: they have sriracha, but no hoisin sauce? None? Not even one single packet? Not at the pho stall, not at the register? How?

But alas — I recollected my composure. Maybe their broth is good enough that they consider hoisin sauce obsolete. Which is impossible, given that even the best bowl of pho in my life only gets complete with hoisin sauce, but alas the hubris of mankind is unavoidable and often misplaced. Worst case scenario, the pho will not have that subtle sweetness and aromatic feel that are so crucial to a bowl of pho. But alas, I swept over all the slightly disorienting things about CDS pho (including the fact that shrimp pho exists, which was a detail I chose to gloss over because hey; America already gentrified sushi, how can pho be immune?). With only a slight frown, I squeezed in two wedges of lemon, squeezed in my two packets of sriracha, still silently lamenting the lack of hoisin sauce, and tried the pho.

It was perfectly mediocre. Not the best bowl of pho in the world, of course, but I have never had that expectation in the first place. After taking a picture to show my mother, I continued to eat my pho. The broth had just enough pho flavor to keep me from complaining that it was not pho broth. The pho noodles

**Cream Tomato** Bites of this pasta range from flavorless to not bad. The taste is sometimes drowned out by the gumminess of the pasta.

**Yellow Curry** Tastes like a cream sauce with a slight hint of spice and curry aroma. The real curry flavor is only detectable when you get a fair amount of the sauce in a bite. Not bad.

### D Tier (Unpleasant)

**Creamy Sundried Tomato** Strangely and unpleasantly tart.

**Creamy Tomato with Bacon** A very weak sauce. Came with corn for some reason.

**Creamy White** Essentially the same as the other white sauces. Came with a variety of vegetables (apparently spinach, carrots, and cilantro), which gave it a weird texture.

**Pesto** Varies in quality and taste between different days. Sometimes it is oddly spicy. Another time it was not spicy, but suffused with a dull bitterness.

**Jalapeño Creme** The same basic cream sauce, but made slightly worse by the sharp scent (and slight taste) of jalapeño.

### F Tier (Disgusting)

**Arugula Walnut Pesto** A very bitter pesto, likely due to the arugula. While I'm not very familiar with the flavor of walnuts, I couldn't taste anything resembling walnuts; I don't know if that's good or bad. The shredded chicken was very dry.

**Lemon and Herb Alfredo** One of the best sauces, ruined by the excessive sourness from the lemon.

**Mushroom, Tomato, and Thyme** One of the blandest things I have ever tasted in my entire life. Would be almost inedible without meatballs to provide flavor.

**Puttanesca** Overpoweringly bitter olive flavor. Very little trace of the characteristic spice of puttanesca.

*Timothy Honda is a columnist for the Tech.*

were almost cooked perfectly, having a slight crunch to it as one unfortunate time (thankfully, this was the only time that this happened to me), and the serving is slightly not hot enough, but I concede on this point, for I do not wish to burn my fingers. The cut of beef is not the usual cut for pho, but alas beef is beef; I do not wish to be too demanding.

That was my first experience of the CDS pho, and the most general rating I have of it: perfectly mediocre. It is pho enough that I cannot complain that it is too Americanized (except for the shrimp pho, which is entirely an American invention), but not pho enough to make it fantastic. It will do it if you desperately crave the taste of pho, or, in my case, the taste of Viet food, but it is certainly not representative of how pho should be.

Every other-other Tuesday, I consume the CDS pho. One day, the worst thing that could have happened happened.

My first warning was the egg-white-ness of the broth, the same color as if one was washing their rice, or in this case, boiling their noodles. I was immediately taken back. However, the busyness of Brown Door, coupled with the fact that I do not wish to waste food, I tried to salvage the broth. I hold no illusion that the broth will be anything but absolutely devoid of taste. After four wedges of lemon and two packets of sriracha, all hope was lost. The pho tasted nothing but the mildly spicy and extremely sour; the lime and sriracha that I used was measly against the

temperous beast that is the flavorless broth. Did they make it worse? Did they alleviate the pain I would have otherwise felt? I do not know. What I know is that, whatever feeble goal they accomplished, it was to protect me from knowing the unholy, blasphemous true nature of the broth



that day. I declared this not on the ground that there was some, but negligible taste of pho. No, there were none. There was no flavor. Nothing but lukewarm water and whatever substance the eggwhite-color came from. I do not know why I take the next, the next, and then the next bite, if not for sheer stubbornness and the unwillingness to walk back to the line, but I did, at the cost of my taste bud and happiness. At last, I could not handle it anymore. I left the bowl of pho 17/18 full.

That bowl of pho traumatized me. I debated for hours whether to let my mother know of this treachery. I dare not consider telling my grandmother — it would ultimately break her heart. I let the pain simmer within me, trying to contain the darkness and hatred within the walls of my heart. It pounds on my feeble muscles, my mind, my taste bud, but I reasoned that this must be just a particularly bad pho day out of the myriad of pho days in CDS history. I banished the devil out of my mind for the rest of the day.

That was not the end of the story. If that was it, I would not have been here, sharing this story, pouring anguish and anger from my fingertips onto every letter on the page.

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## REGARDING CDS'S PHO

A CONCERNED™ DARB | FOOD

| From Previous Page |

As if to taunt me, fate has decided that pho will be served as one of the dinner soups for that same week. I remember the feeling of my heart dislodged from my chest and falling into the abyss of terror when my girlfriend informed me, on Wednesday, in the dinner line, that pho will be a part of our dinner that week's Friday. Yes, I remember: it was on Friday that the pho will be served.

Let me take a deep breath and regain my composure.

Now, let me tell you why that is wrong, profane, impious, sacrilegious, unholy, distasteful treatment of pho I have ever seen in my life.

First of all, pho is not made to be an accompanying dish to a bigger meal. No. Never. Pho is made as its own grandeur, its own glory basked under the limelight and attention it deserves. Pho is, in itself, a self-contained meal, which, unlike the "self-contained" quiz of Ch1a, is truly self-contained, fulfilling, nutritious, and wholly capable of delivering happiness with its own presence, all contained in a typical pho-sized bowl.

The minuscule, feeble paper bowl of the House kitchens was a desecration of the pho's goodness. Pho is enough on its own: it has carb (noodle), protein, fats and minerals, (meat, which can be either beef, chicken, or otherwise, well-seasoned tofu), vitamins (bean sprout, basil, culantro), and of course, water. It supplies all the necessary nutrients, and the volume of a single serving should be a serving big enough to satisfy one for a meal. There is absolutely no reason why pho should be, or could be, miniaturized such that it can be a side dish. Even the smallest serving of pho is often enough to be the main dish. Any smaller than that, and the pho is no longer a pho — just a poorly-made excuse of one. Of course, b\*by servings are exempted from this distinction, although experts still debate whether b\*by servings is a valid caliber of serving.

And so I did. With the most anguish and fury I can muster from my frail, nasally voice, I warned Darbs of the crime CDS committed on the pho, and what peril awaited us. I know Darbs are intrinsically adventurous and daring people — no doubt they might try to experience the beast themselves to understand the horror buried deep in its bland, tasteless broth, but as a wise Vietnamese native who has not only experienced firsthand the CDS pho for that week but also, as anyone can tell by now, Vietnamese, I forbade them from trying. Of course, drowned in grief and despair, I sounded like a madman. A desperate one. Darbs, of course, like any reasonable and sane individuals, asked me to elaborate on my warning. But as if my mind was taken over by a sense of fear, of foreboding, of futuristic visions that boil the blood in my vein and blinded my eyes, my words must have not been concise and sane and reasonable enough. But could anyone blame me, after all I have gone through that week? After that bowl of pho put me through?

Second of all, how were they going to serve the pho? Will there be an additional server to boil the pho and serve the noodle, hired out of the whim, hired for only one night and then left to wander the world by themselves for the rest of eternity? Oh, I know that will not be CDS's solution. The pho will be left in the broth for the entire night. Oh, just the thought, the lingering memory, is enough to bring me an enormous amount of pain, enough to stunt my heart and cease its rhythm. Oh, I dare not relate to you, dear reader, how horrible of an act it is, to leave the noodle within the broth for an ex-

## REGARDING TOFU

A CONCERNED™ DARB | FOOD

tofu no good. do you ever think about how tofu is made? no? thats right. they dont want you to know: because to know is to understand, and to understand is to destroy. they fear our power: our big, moist, oily hands that are strong and can translate an enormous amount of force to seek to destroy their flimsy little body. so how are soy made? ground

ted amount of time. If you know of osmosis and how any type of dry noodles is hydrated, you will understand. I need not to say more and horrify your soul and taint your day with despair.

Third of all — the most trivial yet the most influential infliction of my agony — the memory of Tuesday's pho at Brown. I shall not repeat my complaints, as I am confident that anyone could understand how, after that bowl of pho, I cannot bear to see CDS pho again, let alone at my own residence, my home, the sweet abode I am confined to for the rest of the school year. Oh, to think that the pho at dinner might be even worse — no lemon, no basil, no beansprouts, amidst the already too-loud absence of hoisin sauce. This cannot be real. It cannot be. This tremendous disrespect to pho, my third-favorite noodle soup, the token Viet dish, the icon of her culture. This cannot be real.

I anguished over the news for the rest of house dinner, unable to think of anything else but the impending danger. No, I must alert my housemate of this monstrosity. I must let them know better. I must not let that horror fester in the heart of my beloved Dabney. If I cannot prevent that tragedy from occurring, the best I can do is shield as many people away from it as possible. No one from Dabney will consume the pho, I decided. I must act immediately.

And so I did. With the most anguish and fury I can muster from my frail, nasally voice, I warned Darbs of the crime CDS committed on the pho, and what peril awaited us. I know Darbs are intrinsically adventurous and daring people — no doubt they might try to experience the beast themselves to understand the horror buried deep in its bland, tasteless broth, but as a wise Vietnamese native who has not only experienced firsthand the CDS pho for that week but also, as anyone can tell by now, Vietnamese, I forbade them from trying. Of course, drowned in grief and despair, I sounded like a madman. A desperate one. Darbs, of course, like any reasonable and sane individuals, asked me to elaborate on my warning. But as if my mind was taken over by a sense of fear, of foreboding, of futuristic visions that boil the blood in my vein and blinded my eyes, my words must have not been concise and sane and reasonable enough. But could anyone blame me, after all I have gone through that week? After that bowl of pho put me through?

soybean. what do they do with the remains of the body? juice it. how brutal. tofu is made out of the blood of beans. BEANS. B E A N S. the holy grail; our holy grail — beaten and destroyed, ground down to ashes and blood extracted to make t o f u. a white, bland, lifeless substance, so alien a form to the vigorous, the lively, the boisterous spirit of beans. their birth is from evil, and to evil shall they return. stop tofu. make better tofu. #beanlesstofu

Amidst this tremendous effort, my mental fortress collapsed. I could not hold this disrespect, this mockery of our cuisine, our culture. I told my mother of this slight to our honor — and immediately got met with laughter. "This is why you should have gone to Rice," she texted back. I decided to interpret this as her being so appalled at this travesty that there is no thought in her mind but to pull me back home, regardless of the difficulty in doing so amidst the travel requirement and a drastic change in the quality and location of my education. To her, there is nothing worse than her child consuming this atrocity assuming the trenchcoat of a meal. No, if I was at home and going to Rice, I could still taste the authentic, flavorful, hoisin-sauce-including bowl of pho. If only I was not so far out of her reach and my grandmother's glorious recipe of pho. Talking about my loving grandmother, she was at a loss for words at my complaints, which were no less concise and no more censored than what I present to the readers

today. I could tell, through the phone, she was trying very hard to hide her offense and despair — or to not to laugh. Her gentle words soothe the worst of my pain, "Come home, and I will make pho for you," she said. The memories of a truel, authentic, flavorful, hoisin-sauce-including bowl of pho flood me with a sense of nostalgia, of longing for home, half a continent away — so far of reach, yet so close, if only the bowl of pho in my mind can materialize in front of me, or the mental strength of my mine can replicate its taste on my tongue. Or, according to my mom, go to Rice.

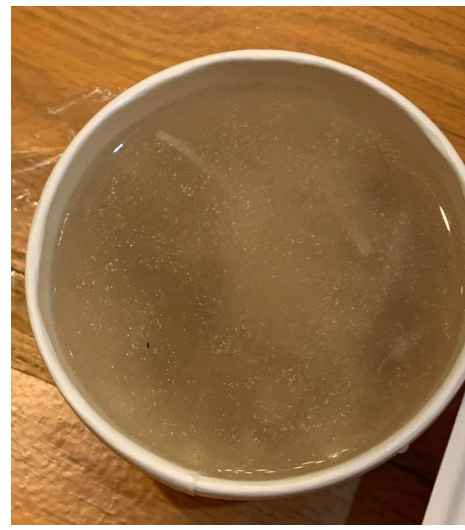
But alas, all of my effort, however glorious and backbreaking it was for me, was not enough. Despite my fervent campaign, some naive Darbs took on the challenge. They wanted to defeat the beast, to behold themselves the true identity of CDS pho in its minimized, yet arguably more nefarious, version. I think a single drop of tear rolled down my cheek, against my best effort to repress my immense horror. In public. Oh, I have not cried in public in years. But nothing could have prepared me for this betrayal, this distrust, this depravity that plagued my mind for a week and now have the audacity to come into my house, my home, my beloved ding hall with its barely-functional and frequently-violated dinner bell. I let out a pained cry that reverberated against the ancient walls of Dabney, letting the frequency of my misery penetrate through very cracks of woods and every living

fiber of those who occupied the ding hall at that time, collateral damage as they might be. I am sure my grief was frightening to witness. If it was not the horrible taste of the pho that let Darbs consume more than one spoon of pho (which it was), it would be the sheer terror in my eyes, boring into their soul that fateful night. Now they know.

## REGARDING PENGUINS

A CONCERNED™ DARB | FOOD (PRE-COOKED)

i have a fear that penguins are secretly evil and is trying to sabotage me from the north pole like they are waiting for something. for a sign. no way they are just resting eating mating having fun in the north pole, there is no goddamn thing there except white, blinding white expanses of snow. what do they have to do but to plan for



And that was the end of the story. There was no happy ending here — except for a small victory that soothed my heart: every Darb who tried the pho (there were two) agreed that the pho was abysmal. But there were many lessons to be learned (TLDR:)

• Be cautious of the CDS pho

- Do not eat the pho if the broth has no color, or has an egg-white veneer to it
- Pho should have hoisin sauce
- Please, CDS, invest in seasoning.
- Please, CDS, give us some hoisin sauce. I know you have them. They exist in the Mongolian section. Please give us hoisin sauce.

Lastly, to CDS:

Please, I beg of you from the most fathomless corner of my heart, put more seasoning into your food. As for the most specific and delicate case of pho, there are many fast and convenient options to season your pho, one of which I doubt you have not tried: instant pho flavoring cube. Just a small cube out of the six-maybe-nine cubes available in one packaging is enough to flavor at least 20 servings, as my grandmother discovered while trying to make 10. I'm sure your budget can afford one of those scrumptious, dense-of-pho-flavoring cubes that are wildly available at every Asian grocery store. Please buy them. Please feel free to take money from our tuition to buy them. Pleek.

Also, if you go, don't forget hoisin sauce packages this time. Pleek.

## N REASONS WHY CELLIE SHOULD GO TO THE GYM

LILIA ARRIZABALAGA | FITNESS

**1) You could become strong enough to prevent your execution**

Maybe if you go to the gym enough and you learn how to do even one proper push-up, you could stop yourself from being executed. Or you could learn how to run away fast enough to escape the dining hall before being executed.

**2) Help Dabney win a real Dabney victory**

Maybe if you went to the gym with me we would be able to hit a volleyball over the net and contribute to the team instead of actively hurting it. Who knows, one day we might even win a match without needing our opponents to forfeit. /realdabneyvictory



**3) Be strong enough to stop your enemies from turning off Sticker**

If you get strong enough, you can play Sticker\* all you like and annoy everyone around you and nobody will be able to stop you and your giant muscles from playing that abomination of a song that thinks using a godawful slide whistle as its base is a good idea.

\*Sticker is a menace to society and is to be avoided at all costs. It is also a song by NCT127 who I have been told are themselves not fans of the song, indeed the universe has some questions to answer about how said menace to society ever got released as a song. At this point you might be tempted to listen to it, "it cannot possibly be that bad" you think to yourself, "I've heard mine diamonds, surely I will be okay", but no you won't be because as soon as you open that infernal song and hear those first haunting 4 notes played on what is possibly the worst instrument ever invented you will forever be cursed with the knowledge that a song that seems designed to antagonize exists and more than that somehow gained 72 million views on youtube with only 51K dislikes.

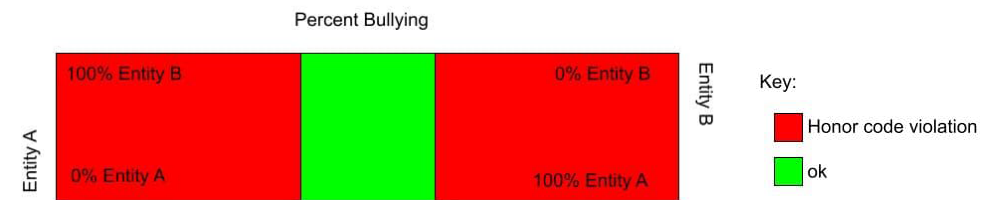
**4) Focus your brain so you don't lose your remaining marbles**

Exercise is good for mental health! so if you go to the gym more, you might be able to make it through another term without losing your very few remaining marbles. Your box of marbles can only help so much, the gym can help more.

<sup>1</sup> Source - My brain, this seems like it's a fact.

**5) You can think about the moon while you work out**

The gym is a great place to think about the moon and be gay. You could even think about killing the moon with all your newfound strength. As you lift your weight, you can think about how much weight the moon must lift when it pulls the tides in.



**6) Bullying is only acceptable in the Goldilocks zone\***

Due to your frequent bullying of me for being a m\*nor and from In\*\*\*\*\*. I have to bully you into going to the gym to restore the world to its natural order. I can only bully you for liking K-pop so often so the remaining difference must be made up by me bullying you to go to the gym. I would prefer if this process did not include me dragging you, so your cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

\* I do not condone bullying, ask your doctor if bullying is right for you.

**In conclusion, Go to the gym, Cellie!**

## THE EMOJI MOVIE: AN UNDERRATED MASTERPIECE

TIMOTHY HONDA | MOVIES

Hollywood's unoriginal, corporate impulses. But as things like *The Lego Movie* or *Kingdom Hearts* have shown (come on, *Final Fantasy + Disney?*), a weak concept can be elevated by superior execution. And it's that execution that charmed me as I watched the film.

I want to focus on three main points: animation, story, and characters. One of the things that *Into the Spider-Verse* was lauded for was its jaw-dropping animation. The motions are fluid and dynamic, the color palette is bold and striking, the characters are uniquely stylized yet seamlessly integrated, and the whole film is suffused with a cool comic book aesthetic. Though *The Emoji Movie* is not quite at the same caliber, it clearly follows in the same spirit. Despite the title, the movie actually takes the viewers on a tour through various "worlds" representing different apps on a smartphone, including Just Dance, Dropbox, and Instagram. Each of the apps is richly realized, with unique and vibrant designs loaded with detail. Dropbox, for instance, is imagined as a futuristic city shuttling packages around a network of tubes.

The characters as well are very nicely animated. While there aren't any action scenes as grand as Miles Morales swinging from a building, the characters are all given appealing designs and clean animation. The emojis are immediately recognizable as the symbols they're based on, with the perfect amount of secondary features to make characters of the same emoji immediately differentiable (similar to *Finding Nemo*). This isn't just limited to emoji, either, and we see the same creative vision brought to the portrayal of other smartphone denizens, including a firewall and Internet trolls.

Finally, we come to the characters themselves, the heart and soul of the film. While it's hard to fully describe the depth of these characters without spoiling key parts of the film, I will say that the main emojis are some of the most fully fleshed-out characters I've ever seen in fiction. Gene's struggle for acceptance, both by society and himself, is moving and nuanced,

the premise is probably the main reason we all hated *The Emoji Movie* early on. The concept sounds like a joke, a parody of the worst of

So it looks pretty, but what about the story being told? There's only so far you can go with great visuals and a weak story; just look at *The Good Dinosaur*, or *Tales of Earthsea*.

Again, while I am obligated to say that it never reaches the heights of *Into the Spider-Verse*, it still has an engaging and original plot, which is refreshing in the modern film industry. *The Emoji Movie* tells the story of Gene, a "meh" emoji who has a unique malfunction that causes him to make different expressions when he emotes. This makes him different, causing the rest of the emojis to regard him as a pariah. When the autocratic emoji government decides to have him executed, he leaves the emoji city of Textopolis to find a way to fix his malfunction.

This main plot is brilliantly intertwined with the story of Alex, a middle school boy who is the owner of the phone Gene lives in. Without spoiling the plot, a central theme of the story is the way in which we communicate. For Gene, his malfunction causes him to communicate his emotions in a way that emoji society finds repulsive. For Alex, his story centers around his attempts to ask his crush to a school dance: in other words, how to communicate his feelings. This actually justifies the use of emojis as a central element rather ingeniously, since, as the movie says, "Emojis are the most important form of communication."

informed heavily by director Tony Leondis' own background as a closeted gay man. Gene's love interest and the other main character, the hacker emoji Jailbreak, is a strong, independent icon who provides deep and topical feminist commentary that is at no point forced or confused. Alex meanwhile is almost painfully relatable to modern teenagers with his everyday trials and tribulations.

My comments so far on this film have been very positive, so I feel obliged to say that this is still a flawed film. Unfortunately, except for Alex, most of the human characters are underdeveloped, especially Alex's crush Addie and his best friend, whose name I cannot remember. The humor is for the most part surprisingly witty, but I feel it failed to utilize the comedic potential of Patrick Stewart's poop character. It's plot drags a little in the second act, and I think we should have seen more of Gene's parents. However, it is still my belief that the criticism this film received was unearned. Whether because it serves as a prelude to Sony's future success, or just because it's a solid animated film, I highly recommend watching *The Emoji Movie*.



## DREAMS: A RETROSPECTIVE OF SHARKBOY AND LAVAGIRL

TIMOTHY HONDA | MOVIES

The *Adventures of Sharkboy and Lavagirl in 3-D* is a 2005 movie directed by Robert Rodriguez. I put it in a category of what I call “nostalgic movies,” films that I watched as a young kid but never returned to, allowing them to burrow into my unconscious as a vague yet strangely memorable experience, not unlike a particularly intense fever dream. These are the kind of movies that make you think, “Oh yeah! That was a thing!” The other films I put in this category include *Sky High* and the *Spy Kids* movies, the latter also directed by Rodriguez.

*Sharkboy and Lavagirl* tells the story of a young boy named Max. Max is an avid dreamer, telling stories about his OCs, the titular heroes Sharkboy and Lavagirl, and recording them in his dream journal. However, his insistence that his dreams are real makes him the object of mockery by his classmates, particularly the bully Linus, who defaces his dream journal. Everything changes for Max when Sharkboy and Lavagirl actually arrive at his classroom, asking him to come with them to his dream world to save it from a sinister evil.

Shortly before I left campus, I had the opportunity to rewatch this film, which I had seen multiple times as an elementary schooler but never again since. It’s interesting to look back at things you liked as a kid from a more discerning and mature view. Such a retrospective look doesn’t even have to be bad. For example, coming back to Lilo and Stitch as a teenager, I was pleasantly surprised by the emotional depth of the movie, which I had missed as a kid. Sometimes, looking back lets you see a beauty you had overlooked while you were there.

*Sharkboy and Lavagirl* was not like that.

The first thing you realize is that this movie is surreal, even more than *Spy Kids*. One of the main villains

has powers of electricity, and commands dogs that are made of electrical plugs. Sharkboy (played by a young Taylor Lautner) does a weird song and breakdance (?) to get Max to fall asleep. At one point Max uses his dream powers to make a “brainstorm,” causing human brains to rain from the sky. Watching it now, I was struck by how many times I had to ask myself, “What?”

That said, being surreal isn’t a bad thing. But as I watched, something became increasingly clear, something that my younger self had never considered: the plot of this movie is terrible. (Spoilers ahead, if you actually want to watch this film.)

For example, Max’s parents are shown in the beginning to be going through a rough patch. The two of them regularly fight, with the implication that they are considering divorce. In the dream world, Max’s parents are giants who appear happy together. It is mentioned that this symbolizes Max’s dream of having a happy family. His parents don’t appear again until the climax in the real world, where the threat of their imminent deaths gets them to admit that they really do love each other. And... that’s it. Nothing in their lives has changed. They have been largely absent from the movie, but the ending just has them reconcile with no real buildup at all.

The main problem however is that the film is thematically very hazy. The theme of this movie is dreams, both in the literal sense and the aspirational sense. This is hammered in throughout the film; the word “dream” or a variant thereof is said around 184 times in the course of the film. More specifically, the ultimate message seems to be encouraging viewers to “dream a better dream,” to maintain hope instead of cynicism, and to strive for a better world. This is a fine message on its own, but the movie doesn’t really support it. Sure,

the words are said a lot, but the plot just doesn’t have a lot to do with it.

Max’s arc in the movie is for him to become a better dreamer. In the physical sense, this means that he can influence the dream world at will, like in a lucid dream. In the metaphorical sense, we are told it means for him to dream an unselfish dream. The latter leads into the former: when he is encouraged to dream better dreams, he is able to come into his powers. But I have no idea what it’s supposed to mean. Max was never portrayed as selfish. Nor does this pivotal scene involve him making a great sacrifice or wishing for something against his own self-interests; he literally just decides to “dream better.” In fact, his only real development in the story is he becomes more confident, but that’s not what the theme is supposed to be, and it is largely driven by the fact that he is a reality warper.

The main villain also makes no sense. Mr. Electric is the dream form of Max’s teacher (George Lopez), who has become discontent with his position of running the power plant. Consequently, he teams up with Minus, the dream incarnation of Linus, to destroy the dream world, and after Minus’ redemption decides to go to Earth to kill Max. (Yes, he can exit the dream world. I haven’t figured it out, either.) Mr. Electric has nothing to do with the main theme at all, and having your main antagonist be completely orthogonal to the thematic content of your story is dubious to say the least. To be sure, Sharkboy at one point says that dreams are Mr. Electric’s weakness, and we know he intentionally keeps the children of Max’s dream world constantly awake so that they don’t dream, but we are never shown why this is the case. It’s just more telling instead of showing.

Perhaps most galling is how Mr. Electric is defeated: not by dreaming, not by hoping, but by Max giving his classmate a magic amulet owned by



her dream counterpart, which Max had picked up earlier. This amulet gives her the powers of her dream self (implied to actually stem from one of her dreams, somehow), allowing her to defeat the villain. None of this had anything to do with Max or his growth as a character. Not to mention that this classmate is for the most part not an active part of the movie’s plot, making this a massive *deus ex machina*. I just... I just don’t understand why this was the ending.

This has been a cathartic experience for me. I don’t wonder why I liked this movie. After all, when I was a kid, I didn’t dislike any movies. Sometimes when we pull back the fog of our memories we find that what we had thought were gems shine just as bright years later. The truly good movies, like *Lilo and Stitch*, are like that. But for *Sharkboy and Lavagirl*, pulling back the curtain only revealed just how bad of a film it truly was. While it was too formative (and, admittedly, too distinctive) for me to truly forget, I cannot recommend this film as a good movie. But if you’re looking for a weird fever dream of a film to laugh at, or just a nostalgic trip, this film should do just fine.

## SIX YEARS AGO IN THE TECH: DOES THE SORTING HAT VIOLATE THE DECREE FOR THE REASONABLE RESTRICTION OF UNDERAGE SORCERY?

SEVERUS SNAPE | EDITORIAL

In recent years I have served as your Potions master, as your Defense Against the Dark Arts professor, and now as your Headmaster. In these roles, I have learned that effecting change at Hogwarts typically requires a clear answer to the question, “Professor Snape, why are you doing this to us?”

Alumni of Hogwarts occupy prominent positions throughout the wizarding community and often become alarmed when changes to time honored traditions of our institutions are proposed, even if these are the traditions most likely to be taken advantage of by miscreants. However, after deep consideration, I have realized that important questions need to be raised regarding the houses of Hogwarts. As you all know, the sorting into houses is carried out by the sorting hat using the spell of Gail and Shapley to access the magical powers of initiates to Hogwarts before they

have become full members of the institution. We must ask whether this is a violation of the Decree for the Reasonable Restriction of Underage sorcery and we must ask whether it causes harm to the students to which it is applied. Such a suggestion should not be made without evidence.

Therefore consider this. There are two houses of Hogwarts which we shall from now on refer to as X house and Y house. You might ask why we must refer to these houses as X house and Y house. It is because of MERPA, the Magical Education Rights And Propriety Act. MERPA which has recently been passed by the Ministry of Magic requires that whenever we discuss the happenings at institutions of magical learning, whatever we say does not convey any useful information. The beauty of referring to these houses as the X house and the Y house, is that whatever I say, it will not be possible for you to determine which houses I am referring to.

Students in X House are highly likely to have a proper appreciation for the dark arts. They are more likely than students in other houses to have an aptitude for potion making. Their careers often turn to positions of serious responsibility within the ministry of magic. Students at Y House are unlikely to possess any practical magical skills preferring to leave their marks on Hogwarts on the quidditch pitch. If they go on to serve in the ministry at all, it is in insignificant postings like the muggle artifact department, and they’re just as likely to take jobs in joke shops. A member of such a muggle institution as the UCLA football team is just as likely to have a significant impact on the future of magic as a member of the Y house.

The impact of belonging to X house and Y house is disparate and the available data do not indicate that this is caused by any other demographic factor. It is not because of

differing proportion of muggle-born or pure-born in X house and Y house. It is not because of differing proportions of witches and wizards. It is not because the students in Y house all like to party while the students in X house spend all their spare hours reading arcane tomes in the Hogwarts library.

I have often said to my introductory potions classes, “Few of you will ever come to appreciate the gentle art and subtle science which is potion making.” What I always meant was that students would not come to appreciate it because of their own failings, but now I see it is because the insidious sorting hat has placed them in Y house. Is it fair for us to do this to underage witches and wizards through no fault of their own?

If you have constructive ideas about how to stop the sorting hat from destroying the art of potion-making, please drop me a line at [ssnape@hogwarts.edu](mailto:ssnape@hogwarts.edu).

## ANALYZING BUTT ATTACK PUNISHER GIRL: WHAT CAN HENTAI TEACH US?

A TIRED DARB | MOVIES

**Author’s Note:** Please be aware that any references to the source material are from memory and notes I took while watching the movie. I refused to view it more than once.

Make no mistake, Butt Attack Punisher Girl (BAPG) is softcore hentai. While BAPG attempts to explore serious religious themes, it fails to articulate a concrete thesis. Any consequential commentary drowns in a sea of explicit boob and ass close-ups. Certainly, juxtaposing a young, innocent girl with a strong, barely-clothed superwoman provides the opportunity for a biting and humorous criticism of religious fervor and societal pressures on women, but BAPG spends so much time on undressing its strong female lead that it fails to undress the toxic gender norms it attempts to critique.

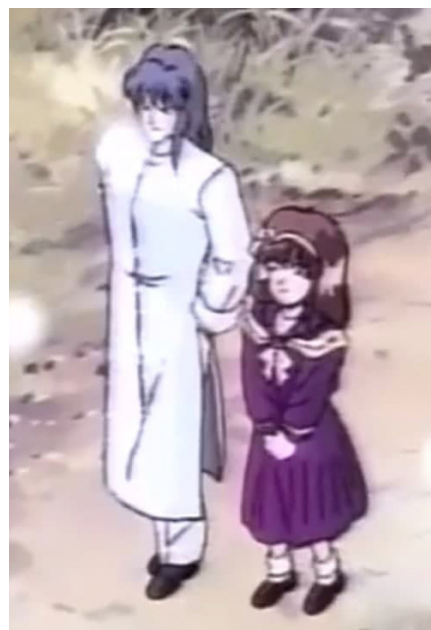
The movie attempts to criticize intense religious fervor, however, through its treatment of Mari, a strong conclusion is never reached. Mari is characterized with two personas: meek innocent schoolgirl and bold confident BAPG. The men in Mari’s life heavily encourage her to be a submissive faithful schoolgirl. Mari’s Christian father, who likely fueled Mari’s religious fervor from a young age, scolds her after her epic victory over the Black Buddhas, an organization fighting to forcefully convert everyone to their “one true religion”. Mari’s father berates her for her scandalous dress and conduct while hardly congratulating her on her major accomplishment. Mari’s father represents a darker side of religious devotion, as more traditional Christian religion says women should be chaste, feminine, and submissive. BAPG does not dress conservatively, and fighting evil is not very submissive and feminine. Mari wants the freedom to practice the faith she truly believes in, but the more traditional side of that faith severely restricts her. Her father’s commands create an interesting juxtaposition. Even after winning a battle for religious freedom, religion still prevents Mari from fully embracing her identity, but this time it is her own faith. Here, the movie has an opportunity to explore and critique the dangers and consequences of blind faith to any one religion, however these themes lack depth and exploration. Mari’s father is not introduced until the third act, leaving little time to flesh out any story with him. Additionally, the latter half of the movie focuses on Mari’s relationship with Saori. There is not enough time to explore the newfound religious freedom in the aftermath of Mari’s victory over the Black Buddhas. Certainly people rejoice after the Black Buddhas are defeated, but the audience never sees what religious freedom means for anyone. Our only glimpse of this so-called religious freedom is Mari’s interaction with her father where he tries to restrict her identity. This movie tells us that restrictive religious fervor is bad but it never shows us why religious tolerance is good.

Throughout the movie, Mari is consistently shown to be innocent and naive. When Tobishima asks her out, she doesn’t even realize it’s a date, and then she freaks out, realizing she has no idea how to prepare for a date. Saori takes charge and prepares Mari for their excursion. Mari’s father treats her like a child, scolding her and telling her that she needs an attitude adjustment. After Mari expresses admiration for BAPG and her bravery in the movie’s opening scene, Tobishima claims that the Black Buddhas stripping people of their religion is not as bad as a woman showing her butt in real life. He says that BAPG shouldn’t use justice as an excuse, and that she has no right to be called a woman due to her actions. He goes on to conclude that BAPG’s actions cause great shame. Mari seems to be young and impressionable, and she clearly respects Tobishima’s opinions. These words seem to have a large impact on her self-image, as

Despite her struggles with restrictive faith, Mari chooses to embrace her own identity. In the end, Mari is taken away by her father because

she chooses to fight for her beliefs and defeat the Black Buddhas once and for all, even after her father forbids her to do so. Unfortunately this also takes her away from Saori who has become a close friend and lover. However despite her father’s cruelty, Mari and Saori decide to persevere; they will continue to love each other even though they’re separated and Saori will keep the peace of religious freedom at their school while Mari will spread it wherever her father sends her. She never loses sight of her values and she commits to spreading them wherever she can, and through her connection with Saori, she is able to maintain the good work she has already done. This is a great message about embracing one’s own identity regardless of the potential consequences, but since this storyline is confined to the last third of the movie, it becomes rather secondary. Mari does not become a woman with total agency until the very end of the movie. She is constantly guided by the opinions of the men in her life, whether it is her father or Tobishima (her love interest) telling her that women shouldn’t be brave and strong, or the Buddha (the one who granted her powers, not to be confused with the Black Buddhas) giving BAPG missions. Fighting to finish the Black Buddhas off for good is the first major decision she makes for herself, and even the power-granting Buddha encourages her to turn from him. Growing from a submissive schoolgirl to a strong woman who makes decisions for herself certainly is character growth, but given the constant objectification of her body throughout the movie, this growth feels like an afterthought. There is no indication that Mari ever is able to claim bodily autonomy and decide how she wants her body to be displayed. Her decision to embrace her identity and fight for her beliefs would have been more impactful if the movie had not spent so much time treating Mari’s body as a toy.

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Mari and her love interest Tobishima walking to school.



Mari, transformed into Butt Attack Punisher Girl.

she looks up to BAPG for her heroism. Mari is constantly treated like a young child and told that any sort of independence and bravery from a woman is shameful and wrong. Saori is the only person in Mari’s life who encourages her and helps her instead of scolding her. However the movie never explores the idea of gender norms and expectations comprehensively, so it is difficult to determine whether it is playing into traditional gender stereotypes (ie men are strong and controlling while women are submissive and nurturing), or it is attempting to subvert them. However, given this movie’s general attitudes towards women, it is likely the former. While Mari grows into a stronger and more confident woman by the end of the movie, it is rather unfortunate that these damaging stereotypes are never fully addressed.

The treatment of women throughout the movie is rather troubling, and this treatment is never condemned. The opening monologue creates tension between perfect order and discipline (important qualities of a good woman) and the power of love (what women desire). This implication that women cannot have both is inherently misogynistic as it suggests that love and desire ‘ruin’ a ‘perfect’ woman, and the implication that a woman can be ‘perfect’ if she subscribes to a narrow set of ideals sets an unattainable image, which is sexist and unhealthy. Truthfully, the movie’s attitudes towards women are extraordinarily confused. The initial conflict is between BAPG and the Black Buddhas, however Tobishima, Mari’s love interest, is conflicted between his love for Mari and his devotion to the Black Buddhas. The Pope of the Black Buddhas acknowledges that love is only a distraction, and Tobishima should devote himself fully to their cause, but the Pope concedes that it is okay for Tobishima to love Mari because she is hot. This objectification and hyperfixation of Mari’s

"Tobishima claims that the Black Buddhas stripping people of their religion is not as bad as a woman showing her butt in real life."

appearance is gross. She has many great qualities, such as kindness and concern for others, which are valuable and noble traits. The movie does not attempt to correct the Pope’s disgusting comments about her appearance. While he is defeated in the end, there is no direct connection between his defeat and his assertion that it is okay to lust after Mari because she’s hot. Mari’s value depends on her appearance and her ability to be a “proper woman” rather than her own character, wants, and desires.

The movie is littered with gratuitous shots of Mari’s body, particularly when she is in her role as BAPG. BAPG wears a sumo belt, a revealing top, and nothing else. The sumo belt is the source of her power, so if it is removed, she will die. Since BAPG’s costume is so revealing, there is ample time to show closeups of her boobs and her butt. Truthfully, fight scenes tend to spend more time focusing on BAPG’s body than her actual fighting ability. BAPG is an extremely capable fighter and warrior, as she is able to defeat the Black Buddha’s most powerful warriors, so it is a shame the movie does not depict her skills nearly as much as her physical features. Additionally, since the source of BAPG’s power is her sumo belt, her enemies are incentivized to take it off. This leads to various distressing scenes where an adversary is attempting to forcefully remove BAPG’s clothes. These scenes take up much more time in fighting sequences than scenes of BAPG as a capable fighter. These scenes are not humorous or fun to watch, they’re rather upsetting and uncomfortable. The desire of the movie and BAPG’s enemies to remove her clothes against her will prevents meaningful exploration of empowering themes, instead centering Mari’s distress and fear.

Even though Mari/BAPG is the hero of the movie, she is constantly treated with disrespect. The movie fails to make any meaningful commentary on the potential pitfalls of religion or society’s treatment of women. Instead, it is a bad movie searching for excuses to show closeups of a young woman’s body.

## AMAZON SKYMALL

KENNY THAI | COLUMNIST

Welcome back to Amazon Skymall! Each time this column is published, we hold a raffle where we [not] randomly select one of our lucky readers and give them the item of their choice from our hand-picked selections! The "NO" option exists for when my promised wages aren't delivered by our Business Manager and I refuse to pay for an item out of my own pocket.

Enter this week's raffle by using the QR code (right) or the link below:

<https://forms.gle/DNSeUuXVuWuiLDHh7>

Note that we (still) make no claims that the winner of the raffle is determined randomly



+9 colors/patterns

Yeah I'm Into Science Hentai Lover T-Shirt

★★★★★ ~ 89

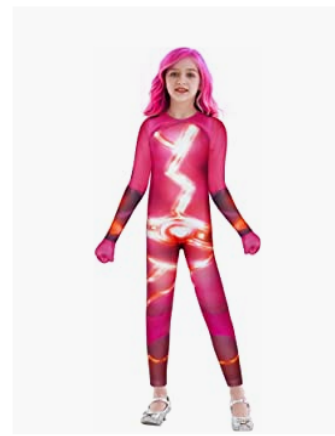
\$16<sup>99</sup>



Resinta 24 Pieces Hand Clappers Plastic Noisemaker Noise Makers with Drawstring Bag for Fiesta Party Birthday Favors, 7.5 Inch

★★★★★ ~ 194

\$12<sup>99</sup>



CECELI

Lava Girl Costume Sharkboy and Lavagirl Cosplay Jumpsuits...

★★★★☆ ~ 7

\$30<sup>99</sup> \$55.99

# NO

free

## THE ORIGINS OF THE AMAZON SKYMALL

NORMAN CHUNG | CAMPUS

In the beginning, there were the deities above. Omniscient entities, blessed with the power to make any one of their wildest dreams into reality. With such fearsome abilities, they had nary a care in the world, save one: they were bored. Every food and drink the deities could even think to consume was one handwave away from creation. Every ounce of knowledge which could be attained had been tucked away in their minds eons ago. The deities had long exhausted every method they could find in an attempt to entertain themselves. They desired to give their limitless power purpose and to be feared for such power. And so, Caltech's undergraduate population was born.

The many deities disagreed on how to treat their new playthings. Some were kind, creating Houses where the undergraduates could live, mingle, and bring various amalgamations of a thing called "house culture" to life. Eateries sprung up all over the undergraduates' campus, allowing them to feast whenever they pleased (for the most part). Sanctums of learning dotted the land, allowing the undergraduates to devote themselves to whatever they desired to learn. Other deities were not so kind, drafting up forms of punishment known as "problem sets," plaguing undergraduates with an ailment called "sleep deprivation," corrupting the numerous eateries with deplorable dishes, and forcing days to contain only twenty-four hours. In short, the deities profoundly affected each and every aspect of the undergraduates' lives.

But before long, the deities grew bored once again. There was only so much space for them to work with in the lovely state of California, and soon there was no more room to make any more houses, eateries, or sanctums of learning. Moreover, though inflicting pain onto the undergraduates was always fun for the more sadistic deities, there were only

so many ways those deities could do so. Finally, despite all of their efforts, the undergraduates did not fear the deities. On the contrary, the deities were only a passing thought, if that. Day after day, the undergraduates took the deities' gifts for granted, explained away their many troubles with terms like "underfunded," "procrastination," or "CDS food." The deities needed new ways to bring joy, inflict pain, and remind the undergrads who was responsible for their fortunes and misfortunes. They needed the California Tech.

And so, the deities exacted their will. A select few undergraduates were blessed with a sliver of the deities' power to create, granting some the power to write, others the power to edit, others still the power to use Adobe InDesign. They were tasked with transcribing the deities' words, thoughts, and degenerate senses of humor to the Caltech population at large, making them more aware of who was responsible for their fortunes and misfortunes. In return, they were promised unrivaled fame as transcribers of the words of gods and given several hundred times the wages of ASCIT, the BOC, and the CRC combined. Soon, the deities thought, all of Caltech would learn to fear them for their might.

However, there was one final problem which had to be overcome. True, there was now a medium through which the deities could communicate with the Caltech population at large, and there were now servants who could ensure the survival of the medium, but how could the deities ensure that their words were being read? And so the deities gathered their thoughts once again, gave this final hurdle undivided time and devotion, and came up with a truly groundbreaking idea: the Amazon Skymall. It was decreed that in exchange for being a faithful devotee to the language of the gods, a reader of the California Tech would be given a chance to receive divine recompense in the form of a sacred relic

after every issue. These sacred relics would be brought to life by the deities themselves, placed onto the Amazon market, bought by the workers of the Tech, and hand-delivered to their new rightful owners. Despite the shifting selection of relics in every issue, one relic in particular remained as an option for the most faithful: a large, extravagant "NO!" in glorious Comic Sans font, allowing the truly devout to give back to their highly educational, amusing, and nutritious school newspaper.

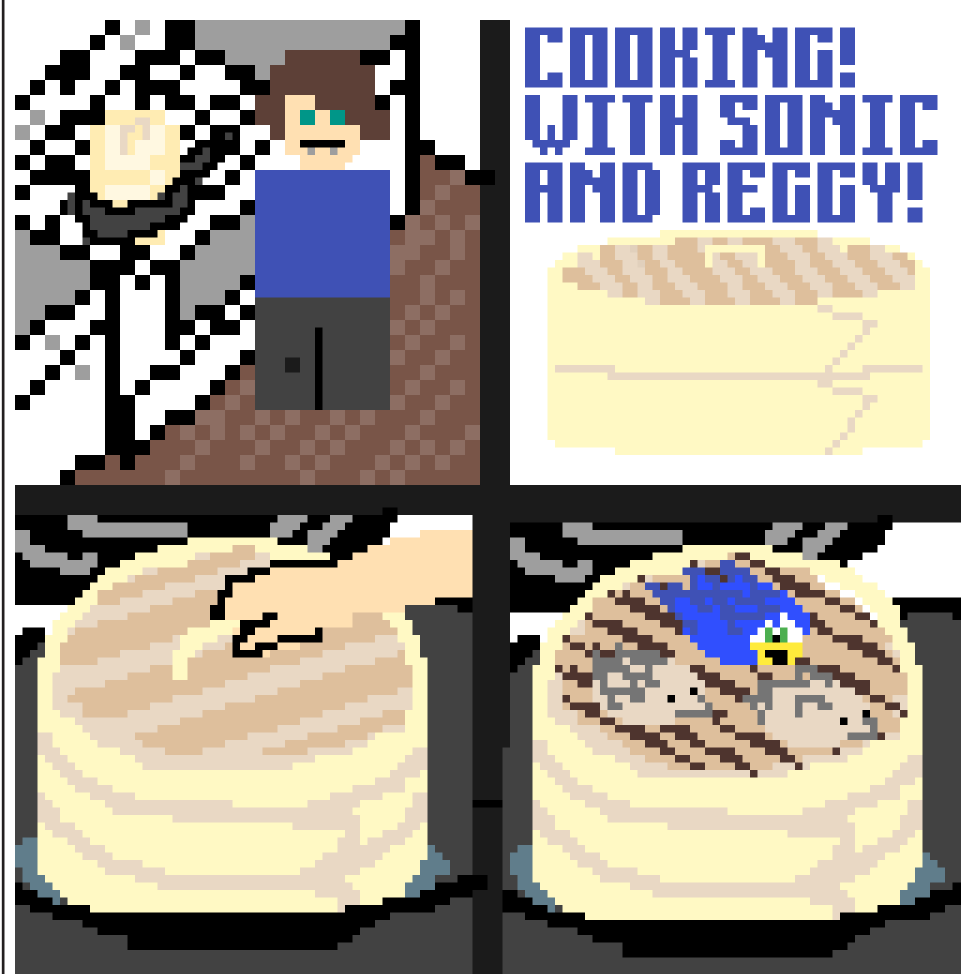
Thus, the Amazon Skymall was brought to life, and with it came an invigorated, reverent readership. The deities found pleasure in inspiring writers with new content and in selecting a new, spicy collection of relics ripe for the picking after every is-

sue was released. On the other hand, the Caltech population learned to relish delving into the enigmatic minds of the deities above, began to appreciate their tenderness and curse their sadism.

To this day, the deities are hard at work, informing students of current Caltech events, spreading joy and laughter, dealing untold amounts of psychic damage, making themselves known to the mortals below. Servants of the California Tech are hard at work, ensuring that the words of the deities above are as eloquent as possible. Of course, at the center of this fine publication is the crown jewel that brings readers back for a chance to earn themselves some godly souvenirs: the Amazon Skymall.

## ADVENTURES OF SONIC AND REGGY

REGGY GRANOVSKIY | COMICS



## THE GREAT TQFRS OF HISTORY

COMPILED BY TIMOTHY HONDA | HISTORY

### TQFR 1978–79

#### AMa 95abc: Introductory Methods of Applied Mathematics (Keller)

The comments received for this course were highly unusual, both in their length (about half of them were at least half a page long, and several of these had extra sheets attached), and in the extreme nature of the views expressed. The comments were, with one exception (and even that was qualified), unanimously negative. Virtually everyone said that Dr. Keller was a very unclear, very unorganized lecturer. Several people (16% of the respondents) claimed that the lectures contained frequent errors. Other specific complaints included: major typographical errors on homework sets and 2/3 of the exams (30% of respondents); little correspondence between the subject matter in homeworks, tests, and lectures (18%); and the fact that the published grading scheme was replaced at the end of the term with one that seemed, and according to one person was admitted by the instructor as actually being, arbitrary (26%).

The major criticism of Keller seemed to be that he had little rapport with the class and dealt very poorly with students on an individual basis. Forty per cent of the respondents said the [sic] he "didn't give a damn" about the students. The following incident seems indicative: "He [Keller] has told me, 'Get out of here. Don't bother me with this.'" when I went to see him concerning a typo on one of the tests. Also, he told me after the 2nd-term midterm (which contained a typo), "Do not assume anything on the final to be a typo." There was a typo on the final. I did not assume it was a typo (per his instructions) and did the problem as was. The TA who corrected it knocked off 15 points because I did not correct the typo and do the problem the way it was intended. I went to see Dr. Keller about it. He told me, "Any idiot could see it was a typographical error," and when I reminded him of what he said to me previously, he said, "You should learn to think for yourself." May his soul rot in hell." Ten complaints of the actual course content were expressed; indeed, 23% of the respondents said it was a shame that they had to take such an important required course from such a poor instructor. Several people even blamed the Institute for this choice, and for being inflexible when the class protested ("Why doesn't the Catalogue state that this is a country club for tenured Ph.D.'s with a large young staff to help in the labs and wait on tables in the Athenaeum?") In conclusion, 1/3 of the respondents stated that Keller was the worst instructor they had ever had, and 20% felt that he should never be allowed to teach another course again (this does not include those that felt that the instructor should receive capital punishment for his behavior). This editor realizes that the views expressed in this summary are harsh, but they are representative of the disgust, anger, bitterness, and, in some cases, hatred expressed in what were by far the worst comments received for any course in the past several years of the report.

### ChE 63 abc (Ferron)

The course was taught by a visiting professor who was generally viewed as being a very poor teacher. A disturbingly large number of the respondents said they were glad that he is gone.

### EE 117ab: Power Electronics (Cuk)

"Good Heavens! A well-taught course!! Right here at Caltech — I had lost all hope after Ph 2c."

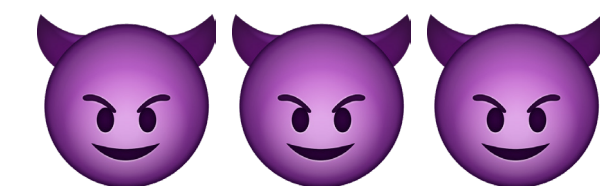


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## GITHUB IS FANTASTIC

A DISAPPOINTED DARB | TECH

Whenever you need Fortran examples, what Microsoft should have included in the latest Windows update, or loose code to add to your collection, GitHub is the place to go. On one fine California afternoon (I never wake up before 1), I stumbled upon the fine voxel editing soft where Goxel. Goxel has all the things any good voxel editor has, the ability to edit voxels. I happily downloaded and booted up my new application, but was horrified to see that the image icons for tools were much too small. This is both the strength and weakness of GitHub. You see, none of the code on GitHub works perfectly, but you may download and edit it, or so I thought. All I wanted to do was double the image size. Why must it be so hard? It took me two days! Two days of hard labor! Just to change the tool image size! Two days of reading through C, that's not even a programming language it's an element. After all of that I only changed 8 lines. All that suffering, blood sweat and tears for eight lines! Eight puny, insignificant lines. But do you know what the best part is? I'm not going to make a pull request! The next sorry sucker will need to go through all the hardship I have. The cycle will continue!



### The ASCIT C.L.U.E., 1991–92

#### Ch 1abc: General Chemistry (Lewis)

The homework in the beginning was definitely crule [sic] and unusual punishment. Apparently Professor Nate Lewis has never heard of the Bill of Rights.

#### Ch 10abc: Frontiers in Chemistry (Barton, Lewis)

Ch 10a&b were great, but only if you enjoy eating pizza.

#### Ph 240: Simplicity and Complexity (Gell-Mann)

The name of this course should really be "The Murray Gell-Mann Appreciation Hour, with our host Murray-Gell Mann."

### The ASCIT C.L.U.E., 1993–94

#### Bi 123: Genetics Laboratory (Lipshitz)

My initial expectations for taking this class were those of fear, extreme stress, and frustration. Moreover, these fears were reinforced by rumors that students quickly became "slaves to their animals."

#### CNS/CS/EE 184abc: Analog Integrated Circuit Projects Laboratory (Mead)

This class is designed to be taken concurrently with CNS182. When used as directed, the synergistic play between the two classes is paralleled only by a few, rare combinations: peanut butter and jelly, Calvin and Hobbes, Dabney House and legal trouble, etc.

#### CS 1: Introduction to Sequential Programming (Taylor)

It would be helpful if the title of this course ("Introduction to Sequential Programming") were changed to "If You Don't Already Know How to Program in C, It Sucks to Be You."

#### EE 40: Fundamentals of Energy Processing Systems (Cuk)

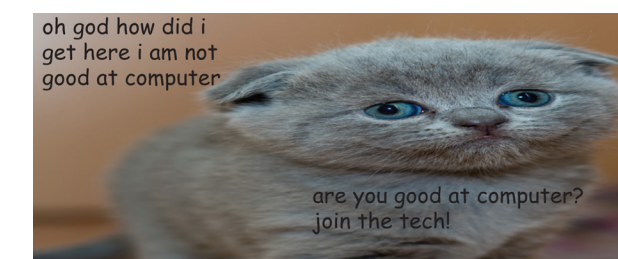
This course should be called "Meet the T.A." because that is the only way you can get any of the problems right [...] The T.A.s were not just helpful — they were necessary. Even with all their help, a LOT of people still got reamed on the homeworks because the T.A.s gave partial credit like it hurt them to do it. I personally think this class is useless, and I am glad it is over.

#### Hum 7b: American Society and Politics (Kousser, Simon)

After we had read the first book, Kousser informed us that it had been assigned for the sole purpose of teaching us to "not trust everything you read." The moral I learned was not to trust everything (or anything) he said.

#### L 103abc: Intermediate French (Orcel, Cortey)

Mme. Cortey is not a very good teacher. She likes cats more than her students.



## The California Tech

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Kenny Thai

PAGE EDITOR

Kenny Thai

COPY EDITOR

Kenny Thai

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Kenny Thai | Justin Toyota

Norman Chung | Jen Hu

Varyn Woo | Robert Menezes

Katerina Gorou | Sophie Piao

Lilia Arrizabalaga

ARTISTS

Jen Hu | Kenny Thai

Reggy Granovskiy

BUSINESS MANAGER

Daniel Contaldi

ADVISOR

Richard Kipling

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## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TECH WHILE I WAS AWAY?

SOPHIE PIAO | HISTORY

As one of you may know, I was one of the Editors-in-Chief of the Tech from 2018-19. Kind of. Not really. I went on leave in December 2018, only becoming an enrolled Caltech undergraduate again in September of 2021. By then, the other students with whom I had been elected had already graduated, and I had mostly forgotten about my time at The Tech, especially since I didn't do much for it while I was there.

But Kenny would not let me forget in peace. At times it felt like he was the ghost of the loose ends I had left behind, haunting me. The way he asked me if I cared to contribute to this issue, it was like he knew I was the only one who could get to the truth. It was then that I knew. My first and last genuine attempt at journalism (probably) would uncover the mysteries that led to my haunting and finally put to rest my unsettled curiosities and misgivings. What exactly had happened to The Tech while I was gone? How had it come to take its current form? I grimly set out in search of answers.

To make sure my investigation would not be sullied by the meddling of any forces that might have been pulling the strings I intended to untangle, I had to go to sources I knew I could trust. That meant Kenny was out, and so were all the other current Darbs who may have been subjected to his influence. Better to have less information than a wealth of blatantly biased misinformation. As I kept asking questions, names, groups of people, connections began to emerge, shifting into an undeniable pattern.

"A gaggle of mole frosh," one of my sources answered when I asked about my group's successors. "...And...Kenny." I was shocked by how early on Kenny had entered on the scene. When I thought about it a little harder, I realized I totally already knew this when it happened. That it

was suppressed in my memory could only be due to some sinister technique, such as hypnosis.

(An interjection, ten minutes later into the interview: "There was someone between you and The Gaggle Of Mole Frosh. Was that...Albert? And maybe Umesh?" No additional relevant information was given about these (maybe?) Tech editors of yore. Again, probably hypnosis. Did these people even exist? I mean, I knew Albert I guess. But even so, it was inconclusive- what if that was just what Kenny wanted me to believe?)

Another interviewee said, "I literally have no idea, sorry..." It appeared that this coverup went deep. There was almost no information to be found, so early in the chase. When I asked what the quality and content of the paper was like under the editorship of The Mole Frosh And Kenny, I received a damning reply: "I didn't read it."

As I continued my interview, I cursed Kenny under my breath. It was becoming more and more likely that he was my enemy #1, and he was more steps ahead of me than I could have dreamed. I should have known that he would anticipate my inquiry and make it such that the parties I would interview would have no information to leak to me. It would have been child's play for him to accomplish this by simply putting out a The Tech that they would not read.

I had known these sources of mine to be faithful readers of, even contributors to, The Tech while I had been co-editor. But in this interview, I was hearing only things like, "I graduated during the pandemic, so I kinda just assumed The Tech died." "I knew that they still kept publishing it on the library thing...but I didn't really have any reason to read it." "I was still a student then...If I didn't read it then, nobody's going to read it now." This change in their attitudes towards the paper shocked me, but I pressed on.

"The diagramless crosswords were probably diagramful," one of them conjectured, referring to a beloved feature of the puzzles section instated by my co-editors. Maybe this was how Kenny manipulated our former readership? A promising line of investigation, at least until...

"No, I think that happened before," another interviewee supplied helpfully. "Dan [Xu] ran out of them at some point...I definitely didn't read it after."

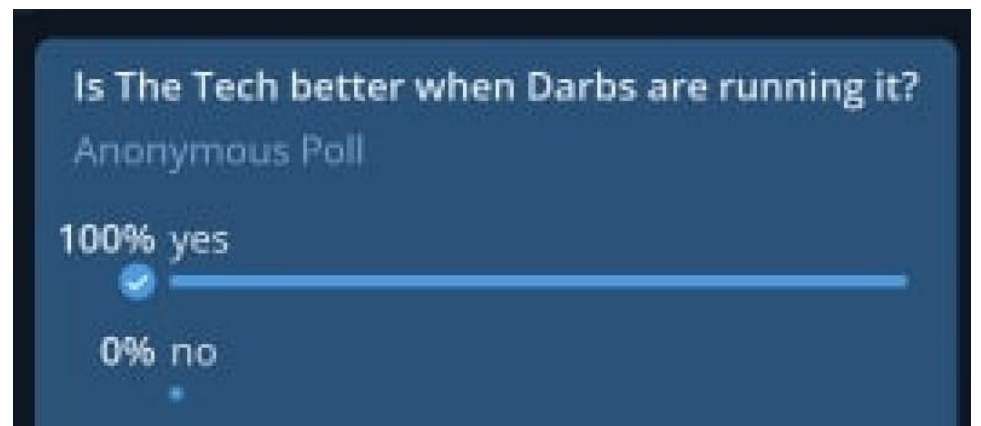
"Oh, I see, it's all coming together," an interviewee exclaimed breathlessly, "remember when you went to the journalist training or whatever [at the LA Times] and they said that you being Dabney president and on the press was a conflict of interest?" This was confusing to me but nevertheless exciting. I did remember this, but it never actually became a problem, as far as I knew. At least, I knew more certainly than anything that I had cleanly washed my hands of The Tech when I went on leave. Before then, even. What could they have meant by this?

But then, the same interviewee started to have doubts. "The more I think about this, the less it makes sense," they muttered, when another voice cut through, like a crack in the icy surface of a frozen pond.

"The Dabney shadow government [took] control of the press," they asserted. I was struck dumb by this. A flash of blinding truth overtook me as the pieces quickly flew into place in my mind. My co-editors, who I had believed to be my comrades...Milan, who had been a rumored high-ranking official in the Dabney shadow government. Dan, who, tremulous whispers claim to this day, may even have been one of the founders of that wretched, half-mythical institution.

The interview came to an abrupt end. I realized that one of the interviewees to whom I'd been speaking had themselves indisputable ties to the shadow government, and that it was not out of the question that they had spoken to the others beforehand...I was overwhelmed with paranoia. Cold seeped into my gut. Exactly how deep does all of this go? Who was the mastermind behind all this manipulation of the press? As I am surrounded everywhere with enemies, I have nowhere to turn for an honest answer...nowhere but Kenny himself. Maybe I could ask him for what answers he would see fit to give me. Maybe he would even speak with me honestly, pawn to unsuspecting pawn.

That is, if the shadow government doesn't get me first.



## ASCIT 2022 WINTER ELECTION CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

### Sophie Piao, Sophie Piao, Sophie Piao, and Sophie Piao running for Tech Editor

If elected, we will take the Tech in a bold new direction. We propose:

- a 4 page limit to reduce printing costs
- a hard limit of 2 articles per issue to ensure that only the highest quality journalism is distributed
- Interviews with new members of administration, clarifying their opinions on matters important to the student body. We believe that the current Tech Editors gravely missed a vital opportunity to help Caltech learn about our new Provost.
- a hand-curated mail order catalogue of about 5 items—like SkyMall but with Amazon. We will show you things you didn't even know you needed!

We will keep the best parts of the Tech: the comics and sports with captions. The remaining space will be filled with crossword puzzles, word searches, sudoku, KenKen, and other puzzles and brainteasers to distract you from the pain that is Caltech. Additionally, letters to the editors must be 280 characters or less. If the President can dictate national policy within this limit then you can voice your concern within this limit too. Finally, we will forego our salaries as Tech Editors, student waiters, and TAs to fund prizes for weekly raffles within the Tech in order to promote readership, which has historically been abysmal.



# #Sophie4MoreYears