

ChatGPT vs. the Honor Code

Lilia Arrizabalaga | Feature

I, like most of us, grew up in an age ostensibly before generative AI. It always seemed to be something looming on the horizon, or just a movie villain. But, over the past year or two, AI has suddenly come into the public consciousness in a huge way, though generative AI like ChatGPT from OpenAI.

ChatGPT has made huge advancements recently, scoring incredibly high on many standardized tests. It went from the bottom 10% of bar exam takers with GPT-3.5 to the top 10% of test takers with GPT-4.0. This improvement was in the course of around a year. Clearly AI is here now and it's here to stay. With the rapid increase in its skills many people have been looking for applications of GPT to their jobs or even homework assignments.

So, what of Caltech? We have an honor code stating, "No one shall take unfair advantage of any other member of the Caltech community." Is using ChatGPT an honor code violation? What about other forms of AI? Where's the line and how will it be enforced?

A lot of this question depends on the situation, as most things with the honor code do. Many classes have very strict policies, especially CS classes that would obviously disqualify someone from using ChatGPT, but others, like the humanities are more complex.

Dehn Gilmore, Professor of English and the Executive Director of the Humanities, has been thinking a lot on this subject. In the past, most humanities had fairly basic honor code policies. All of the humanities classes I took last year simply stated the honor code with no elaboration. However, the humanities department has treated this term as an experiment of sorts to see how, if at all, such AI tools can be integrated into the classroom.

Some profs experimented a lot with it, including having classroom assignments that involved interacting with ChatGPT, while others were extremely against it. The goal for the humanities department will be to det a baseline policy and then encourage the instructors to add their own policy.

From Gilmore's perspective, the humanities are all about developing you writing and critical thinking skills, by using ChatGPT you "hinder your progress" if you are still learning how to write.

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"The beauty of the window cracks, spreading slowly like spiderwebs across an abandoned barn, and the absurdity of the situation made for great conversation." (Michael Gutierrez/The California Tech)

Rock and Roll: Broken Glass Pane at Red Door Briefly Causes Chaos

Shwetha Kunnam | Campus

At around 9:10 PM on Wednesday, May 17th, the façade of our beloved Red Door Café was damaged by a piece of thrown debris. This author got to the scene in time to interview key witnesses, take photos of the incident, and grab a smoked tofu sandwich before 10 PM.

Security was called to the scene by quick-thinking Red Door employee Martha, who witnessed the responsible party "try to get [a friend's] attention" by tossing a "small rock" at the window while on her break. Worried about student and employee safety, she notified security.

Mabel Lu (ME '24, Lloyd) and Security Supervisor Trey informed a group of curious bystanders, including this author, that the glass was tempered. Tempered glass is "supposed to crack like that for safety" which means that it shatters into duller pieces rather than breaking into sharper shards. Additionally, instead of breaking and crashing down immediately, cracks in tempered glass spread

over time until "gravity [takes] it and it'll just drop straight down."

Chatting with the security officers and curious bystanders at the scene gave this author a greater appreciation for the close-knit nature of the Caltech community. The beauty of the window cracks, spreading slowly like spiderwebs across an abandoned barn, and the absurdity of the situation made for great conversation.

Soon after leaving the scene, the author of this article coincidentally ran into the student responsible for the damage, who concurred with reports from bystanders that they were simply trying to get the attention of a friend inside the cafe by "[rolling] a rock to them." However, this plan went away when the rock "skipped" up one of the cracks in the sidewalk and made contact with the glass panel. Security officers were on scene, so it is not unreasonable to assume that administrators know this student's identity. Only time will tell us if our rock roller is CRCed for their crack.

Is the Housing "Crisis" Really a Crisis?

Lilia Arrizabalaga, Emily Baylock, Michael Gutierrez, Shalini Kurinchi-Vendhan | Opinion

When the news broke that 271 students committed to Caltech for the Class of 2027, current students and faculty panicked. How would Caltech accommodate around 40 more freshmen than expected? Suddenly, the rules for upperclassmen picking rooms on campus were changing and students scrambled to update their plans. But why did so many students feel cheated, and is there really a housing crisis on campus?

Debunking the 4-Year Guarantee

Contrary to popular belief, Caltech undergrads are not guaranteed four years of on-campus housing. While an average >90% of students live on campus each year, according to Associate Director of Student Housing Joe Bennethum, only first- and second-year students are guaranteed.

There is no mention of a guarantee in the Housing Contracts; not in Admissions materials; and not in any communications from the Institute. The Housing Office makes the 2-year promise clear in their Resident Guide and Housing Policies manual, stating "Caltech Housing guarantees all first and second year undergraduates... student housing" This policy has been consistent since it was changed from promising only 1 year in 2019. The most recent time that all undergraduates were assured four years of on-campus housing was in 2010.

The 2020 and 2021 Caltech Catalogs, however, vaguely refer to a "four-year residency expectation." This language was removed for the 2022 cat-

alog. This also appears in Degree Audits, a document that lists graduation requirements, on REGIS. While this has often been taken to indicate a housing guarantee, Bennethum clarified to the Tech that, in this case, "residency" simply refers to "enrollment."

From the Perspective of Admissions

Part of the recent housing "crisis" is rooted in the unexpectedly large Class of 2027. It is tempting to wonder whether the second-largest class size in the past 20 years is the result of some miscommunication or a mistake on the Admissions Committee's part. After all, only two years before, admissions found itself in a similar quandary, with 279 students accepting Caltech's invitation to attend, the highest in history. However, according to Jared Leadbetter, the chair of first-year admissions, this is not the story.

For the last seven years, Caltech has admitted progressively fewer students to each class. According to Leadbetter, the Institute is united in its goal to keep the incoming class size to between 220 to 230 students. Last year, Admissions made 430 offers and 209 accepted (14 MORE were pulled from the waitlist, bringing the total to 223). This year, they made 412 offers and 267 accepted! "It's always the same issue," Leadbetter explains. "How many do you admit, and how many will say yes?" The matriculation rate this year was unprecedented: at 65.5%, the yield has never been this high since the 1970s.

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A room in Marks, which was originally intended to be a single. Since the pandemic, however, Marks rooms have been adapted to become uncomfortably crowded doubles. That's one of the reasons why students would prefer to live in Bechtel, if they cannot live in a house.

Surviving a Year in Marks House

Maxwell Montemayor | Student Life

"Go to a Nordic country and commit a crime that will get you a school term of jail time... do your work remotely from there in comparative luxury and extravagance," recommends Marks House resident Josiah Miller (Ay '24, Venerable).

From burst pipes leaking noxious fumes, to six weeks without hot water, residents of Marks House, myself included, have experienced a seemingly unending stream of problems. Problems that have been made worse by slow-acting maintenance, living in singles convert-

ed to doubles, and being isolated from the rest of our houses.

Before we talk about the technical issues with the house, something residents of Marks (a.k.a. "Marksists") had to get used to, is the sterile, dreary, and uncanny ambience of the place.

Old, run-down facilities (Marks was built in 1961), a lack of murals or posters, and the overall absence of a house community make it this way. It's a stark contrast to the cozy, lived-in feel of the houses.

I recall the sole public kitch-

en in the basement. Upon pressing the light switch, one of the lights halfway would flicker to life, bathing visitors in the ambience of a bathroom in a SAW movie. The walls were an off-white, dyed from the smoke of burnt food. The only decorations it bore were mystery food splashes and a badly chewed up cork board. I would later donate a FNAF poster to contribute to the vibe.

However, some of these issues have been mitigated with kitchen and lounge touch-ups, and the fixing of broken hallway lights.

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EDITORIAL: Fizz Continues to Assert Control

Michael Gutierrez

A couple months ago, on the front page of my very first issue of the *Tech* as Editor-in-Chief, I ran an article titled 'Fizz Asserts Control'. This was meant to be a hilarious callback to previous years' "April Fools" issues of the *Tech*. In 2019 there was 'Joe Shepherd Asserts Control', featuring an archetypical antagonistic administrator's face superimposed on the iconic Tiananmen Square 'Tank Man' photograph. Then 2020 brought us 'Coronavirus Asserts Control', insidious and inimical, yet irritatingly intangible.

But then 2023 came to Caltech, and with it Teddy Solomon and Ashton Coefer, entrepreneurial wunderkinds, Stanford dropouts, and brain-fathers to the latest Hot New

Social Media App "tackling the problems of disconnect and inauthenticity on college campuses head-on," according to several Fizz employees' LinkedIn posts.

TechCrunch even called Teddy Solomon "the next Mark Zuckerberg?", a prestigious title reserved for only the most empty-eyed, lizard-like of college dropouts who devise the most brain-melting, volition-arresting, paradigm-shifting, civilization-shattering business models.

As much as I hate that we've now published THREE "articles" about this "platform" in as many months, I really feel the need to make a statement on behalf of my fellow students about how Fizz has impacted the Caltech community. Now,

don't get me wrong — I'm not denying that some of their stuff is funny as shit. It works for the same reason that the old Caltech Confessions F*ckbook group worked: it's one of the few places the whole student body can live, laugh, love, alive, ahaha, fuck around and find out, complain about core, clown on admin, share anonymous advice and anxieties and affirmations and antagonisms, and generally reach a much wider audience than would be possible through word of mouth. Oh, and most importantly, it's the perfect place to debate the morality of pissing in the sink.

The major difference, though, is that Caltech Confessions was run by us — the students and alumni — but Fizz

is quite frankly (I gotta say it) an Impostor Among Us. As far as I know, they consulted no one at Caltech before sending a "Marketing Analyst" or two to campus on the first day of Winter Term 2023 to put physical flyers on the door of every student's room.

I assume they won't consult anyone before doing the same thing at the 1,000+ other institutions they plan to launch at by the end of 2023, according to the TechCrunch article.

Now, this would just be a personal vendetta if the content on Fizz wasn't actively harmful to the community. Let me explain.

Because Fizz users can only see posts from other people at the same school, they employ students at each institute to serve as moderators. These moderators are given a cursory 30-minute online training that can be easily skipped through, then let loose. I don't know how many active moderators they have, but everyone I talked to who was involved with Fizz at one point has since quit. It makes me wonder if there are even any Caltech students on the moderation team anymore. Some of the posts that are allowed to remain up are pretty shocking.

Ricketts Hovse President Meg Robertson (GPS '24) told me she has seen "several people [that] have been actively bullied" on Fizz.

"I don't know how they're, like, OK," she told me.

Some of the harshest, most ruthless attacks have been on the houses themselves (though a few in particular have apparently been singled out by the Fizz demographic). This has caused issues especially relating to Rotation rules, since prefrush now can access to the

platform, having received their access.caltech credentials recently.

The Interhouse Committee (IHC) attempted to reach out to Fizz to work out a solution to this, but their calls and messages were ignored. Instead, Fizz continued actively marketing the platform to incoming frosh in the Class of 2027, creating an Instagram account (@caltechfizz27) and following prefrush. This account's most recent post is a meme insinuating that seniors of a certain house are sexual predators. Attempts to report the account and ask Fizz to remove it went unanswered.

As a last-ditch effort to block prefrush's access to Fizz, IMSS offered to block Fizz's registration confirmation emails to members of the Class of 2027 until Rotation was over. However, according to Meg, VPSA Kevin Gilmartin told them he needed to "clear this with his legal team" before IMSS took action. Gilmartin is evidently still checking with his legal team today, almost a month later. And by now the time of action has passed.

This situation raises a broader discussion about Rotation rules and the honor code. Usually, the IHC is able to enforce Rotation rules within the houses, but this anonymous and third-party platform totally sidesteps them. The argument can and should be made that it is the responsibility of upperclassmen to refrain from posting Rotation violations where prefrush can see them, or else that prefrush should opt not to seek out Rotation violations in the first place. But are either of these things likely to happen?

Fizz did not respond to a request for comment.

Writers' Strike

Lilia Arrizabalaga | Politics

The Writers Guild of America (WGA) is currently on strike. The last time this happened was in 2008 and lasted around 2 months. This current one is promising to wrap up soon as studios have been slightly giving in to the demands.

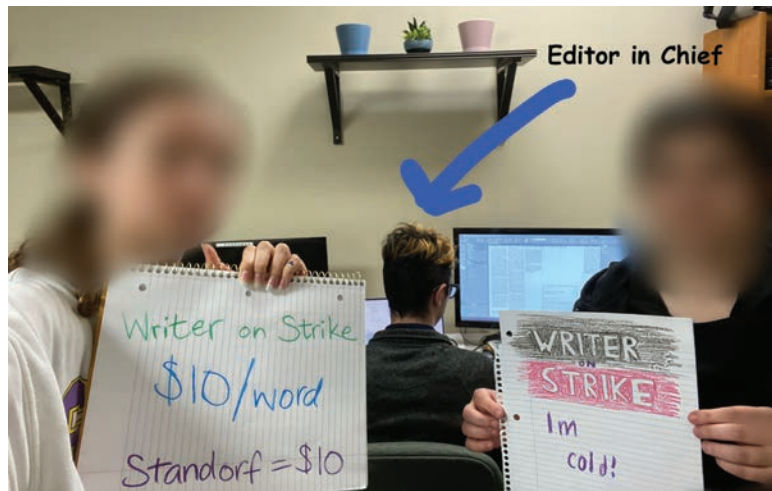
So, what are the demands on the writers? They want better pay and working conditions

as well as stricter rules about AI. Personally, I have been inspired by the writer's strike. I too am a long-suffering writer, churning out articles under the relentless Tech Editor, Michael Gutierrez (Ay 25', Dabney/Ricketts). The working conditions are cruel and unusual, the tech room is routinely kept at inhumane temperatures leaving us poor writers to shiver in the cold as our freezing fingers type out word after word after word.

And what of the pay? 0.04 dollars a word? Ridiculous I say. At that price I'm going to start making up words like "Standorf" just to fill space. Frankly, until I am paid what I'm worth (10 dollars a word) I will not write a single additional article for the *Tech*. Ignore this article and the other ones I published in this issue. In fact, for the next two months, you won't see a single article of mine published! In fact I have a feeling that you won't see much of anything published over the summer.

Some writers for the tech were at a protest of sorts this weekend protesting the poor conditions. Any rainbow flags or gay people present were a total coincidence and this protest certainly had nothing to do with the LA pride event.

I demand better. Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains! Hopefully the WGA's demands are met and the Writers Guild achieves better working conditions, we all deserve to be paid a living wage.



Surviving a Year in Marks House

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The technical issues started with the wiring. When residents turned on their AC unit, or other high-wattage appliances like hair dryers, the circuit breakers frequently tripped, even when using outlets designated as "for AC units only". Sometimes, this would shut off power to two rooms at a time. Due to these surprise outages, some students have even lost progress on work.

The bathrooms weren't perfect either. In the second floor men's restroom, the area outside of the showers frequently flooded. "I had to swim from the bathroom door to the shower," recalls Josiah. This issue was partially fixed by extending the shower door to the floor.

2 washers and 2 dryers were also shared among 50 students, with one of the washers being often broken. This prompted some to cross the street to do laundry in the north houses.

In Winter term, Marksists had little to no hot water for a six-week period. Due to this, many made nightly (or weekly) pilgrimages to the North and South Houses in search of warm showers. These determined Marksists braved cold winter nights, often clad solely in a towel, and carrying showing supplies.

"We walked through Ven, Lloyd, and Blacker with towels, flip flops, and shampoo in the middle of winter. We finally ended up taking our first hot showers in over a week at

Blacker," says Lucas Ancieta (CS '25, Blacker), recalling one of such journeys. "We played *Splish Splash* by Bobby Darin during the trek."

Also during Winter term, a steam pipe burst in the basement which leaked some rancid air all throughout Marks, and got water on everything in the basement, and flooded it. I recall leaving my room that morning and being punched in the gut with a horrible stench. For a couple days, if Marksists wanted to get outside they had to hold their noses from their dorm rooms to the front door. Using the lounge, kitchen, or washing machines meant facing the hazardous, fetid, stench.

Christopher Yeh (CS G3), the Resident Advisor for Marks, has done all he can to alleviate these problems by submitting service requests and following up with maintenance. "I submitted 48 (forty-eight!) facilities service requests in my 11 months living in Marks!" he remarked.

Maintenance has been "egregiously slow" according to Yeh. "The lack of hot water was initially supposed to only last a couple of weeks. Housing Maintenance took 4 weeks to install an additional temporary hot water heater to respond to resident complaints," he says.

Yeh also cites how it took housing 2 weeks to fix a broken washing machine, 8 months for ORE and housing to decide if students could store things

in the basement, and how it's been 3 months since he asked if the building was up to CA earthquake building codes (he hasn't heard back yet).

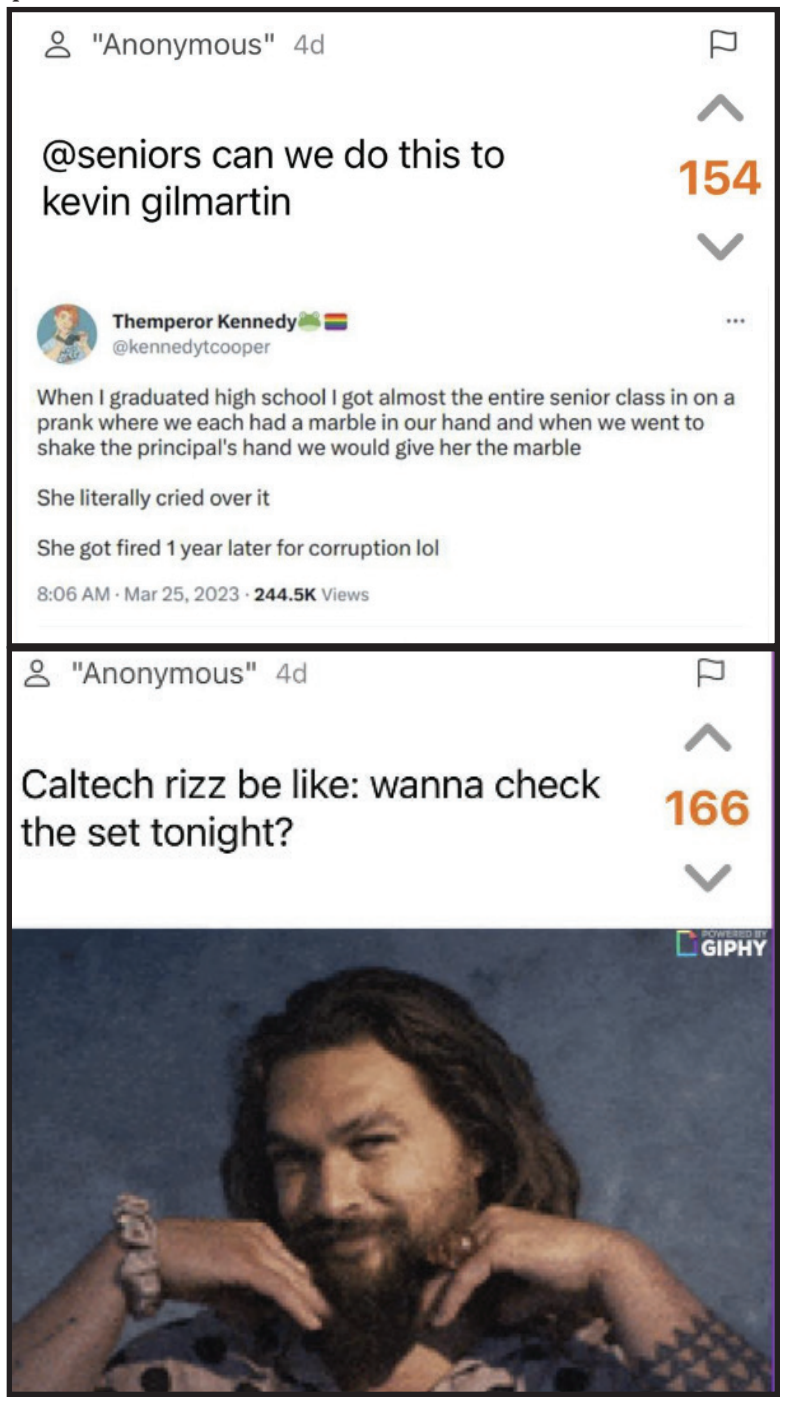
As a former student RA at Stanford, Yeh contrasts his experience with housing there: "Unlike at Stanford, Caltech Housing maintenance is largely passive, instead of proactive."

For most Marksists, however, the end of this week (6/17) marks the end of their internment. Many are glad to move back in with their house, to a comparatively luxurious single in Bechtel, or to some place with tolerable facilities.

But for an unlucky few, they'll have to endure more of Marks next year. "Unfortunately I have been cursed with having to live in this hellhole another year because of Blacker's wacky roompicks system," says Sascha Goldsmith (ME '25, Blacker).

Though it is unknown if housing will get in some much needed renovations over the summer, we at least know there are plans to add an extra washer and dryer.

Personally, despite all that went wrong, Marks has not been all negatives. I've been given the chance to make friends in other houses, and the quiet of Marks has given me a distraction-free place to study for my tough smore-year classes. At the bare minimum, I've learned to be forever grateful to live in the houses. I hope future Marksists heed my message and make the best out of their situation.



My Frosh Year 2022-23: A Reflection

Thanhhanh Nguyen | Opinion

It's a beautiful day outside... the birds are singing, flowers are blooming... and it's cloudy??? That's right people, it's cloudy here in beautiful Southern California. Where is the "almost 365 days of sunshine" I was promised by the Admissions Office in my acceptance letter a year ago?

So here, dear reader, I write to you during a cloudy June evening in beautiful Pasadena, where I will recall to you my experience here as a frosh (plus bonus prefrosh adventures from FSRI, previously known as the Freshman Summer Research Institute and is now rebranded as the First-Year Success Research Institute).



When I got into Caltech on March 21st, 2022 at 6:26am PST, I was shocked. I imagine that many people share this sentiment, I mean, "Oh my gosh, it's the Caltech!!!" Who wouldn't be shocked? Well, dear reader, it's because I applied to Caltech as pretty much a joke. In 8th grade, I thought it would be funny to apply to Caltech because I wanted to study Computer Science, and the "California Institute of TECHNOlogy" is just like our friend to the east. As a California kid, of course I should apply to the California one! Halfway through writing my Caltech application a week before it was due, I almost scrapped my application because I realized Caltech doesn't formally offer any linguistics academic programs nor established research (unlike our friend to the east). Ouch. Computational linguistics was (and is still) my passion, and I was hesitant to continue writing an application for a school that doesn't offer anything in my specific interest. But my dad, in his infinite "you only live once" wisdom, told me to just finish the application and send it in for the fun of it. Okay then!



So there I was that fateful March day, waking up at 6:30am during the height of my gym bro arc, crying in front of my laptop because Oh my gosh I got into Caltech whaaaaaaat??? I was ecstatic for 30 seconds, before the impostor syndrome sat in. I am an impostor. I didn't apply because I care about science. I applied as a joke. If I attend here, I'll be surrounded by those who actually care. I have fooled the admissions office!

But (spoiler alert wow) I did commit to Caltech in the end. After attending DiscoTech and meeting some of the kindest,

most wonderful people ever, I felt more confident about belonging here at Caltech. (The amazing financial aid package didn't hurt either.) I felt like I made the right choice.

And that, dear reader, was such a...choice.

I got into FSRI and immediately discovered that I was right! I am an impostor! I was surrounded by robotics geniuses (my high school robotics team got shut down right after it was created due to COVID-19), math geniuses (I actually cried doing an integral on the blackboard during FSRI), and multiple other academically gifted people. Then there was me: the homeschooled kid who took non-standardized classes at the community college and was so burnt out that I could barely recall the mathematical definition of a derivative. It was a whirlwind of a week, where I also managed to catch COVID-19 for the very first time in my life despite isolating for 2 whole years and spent the next week under mandated isolation.

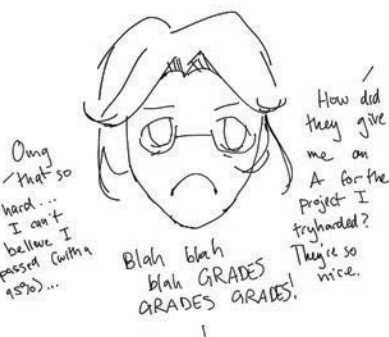
We won't delve too deep into Caltech's COVID-19 isolation protocols. Just know that it was one of the most socially-isolating times of my entire life (and I was literally homeschooled), and that the food they gave me was very concerning (what is a curry pasta??). It was such a lovely introduction to Caltech campus life!!! I learned that you should NEVER get sick at Caltech: I still had FSRI math homework during isolation, and I quickly realized that doing homework alone here (while sick too!) is a very stressful and near-impossible feat.

I also got to interact with Title IX for the first time that week. That was (and still currently is) a very dark portion of my time here as a prefrosh AND frosh. I will also not delve into this, but this definitely started my time here on a very, very shaky foot.

Safe to say, I did not have a perfect prefrosh experience! And this was just the first two weeks! Thankfully, the rest of FSRI did not have a crisis occurring every week. I mostly lived a blissful, carefree little prefrosh life where I cooked with friends, went on field trips, and only occasionally had pangs of impostor syndrome. Such is the Caltech summer life. So carefree, so blissful... almost childishly innocent.

I ended the summer on a pretty positive note. One of hope... of excitement... even of confidence. This all shattered almost immediately with Ch1a. (Yes, not Ma1a. Everyone knows that class is hazing.) Nobody told me how bad Ch1a would be. They all waved me off, saying "AP Chem knowledge is barely useful in this class." Yet, those same people who have taken AP Chem all insisted that Ch1a is "doable" while I slip further into despair, utterly befuddled as to how people are able to pull numbers out of nowhere. "Meeting up to do sets" turned into me flipping through the book and Googling helplessly as my friends did their best to explain to me how to do the problems.

I had the worst grades on returned quizzes of my life during first term. I expected to not be perfect in college, because I knew that perfection was a debilitating mindset to have, but I did not expect 53% and 17% on my quizzes despite attending lecture, going to sections, etc. As the days grew darker and grayer, so did my personality. I withdrew to my room, only



Pictured: Me at House Dinnar after getting 17% on my first Phila quiz

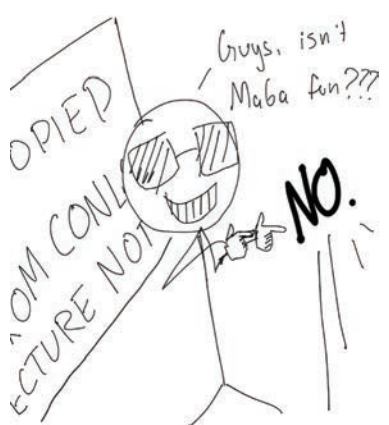
leaving to go to the doctor's, where I got referred to a specialist who diagnosed me with a lifelong medical condition. I have been displaying these symptoms for years and got dismissed repeatedly, only to be diagnosed in the middle of frosh first term. I felt as if everything in life was a cruel joke.

I tried to seek help. I went to Caltech Counseling, who informed me that I only had 8 sessions with their office for each concern I had, and long-term care should be sought for in the community. I quickly exhausted 3 sessions in under one term, and it was not viable for me to seek resources outside of Caltech for help, so it was really just me, my journal, and a really, really strong desire to not let Caltech beat me down.

Somehow, I passed my first term. People had told me I would definitely pass, and I almost believed them. But I saw my friends around me unable to pass, friends who had fought incredible odds to make it here. Here, surrounded by so many people who had done high school prep programs, received private tutoring, and overall could access a wide variety of resources past a standard high school experience, those who came from underfunded schools were playing catch-up through a curriculum that a large percentage already were familiar with. They were learning on the go while others were refreshing their knowledge, something that was simply unfair. My QuestBridge friends told me about a lack of a QB alumni network that could inform them on what the Caltech experience is like for FGLI students, and they would sometimes lament their regret in ranking Caltech during the QB application process.

And though I passed my first term, I also had a very difficult time. I noted the difference between a standardized education versus what I had, which was extremely non-traditional. I took exactly 2 AP exams in my high school career and took classes either online or through the local community college, where sometimes entire units in a class would be cut out. There was no standardization in how each class was taught. Thus, I had gaps in my knowledge and also spent time to catch up academically.

Needless to say, it was a bad time. It also did not help that I decided to ignore everyone's advice and take Ma 6a, which was taught by a postdoc in Fall



2022. Oh boy! He turned "Introduction to Discrete Mathematics" to "Graph Theory for the Enlightened", and I'm sorry to report that I was not enlightened enough for this class! Thankfully, the ARC was able to save the class in the end, and I got away with only 80% of this class being horrific for me. Lesson learned: do NOT ignore upperclassmen's advice!

Second term went much better. I had a relatively light courseload despite being on 45 units, including a very interesting humanities class, and I got to take CS 2 with Adam Blank. It was a great class! Taught well, organized well, and overall swell. I had a lot of fun in CS 2, and it's my most favorite class to date. (Yes, I wish more Caltech classes were like it.) Disclaimer: I had experience with data structures in high school, so it was not as puzzling for me compared to the rest of core.

Unfortunately, CS 2's experience did not cancel out the less savory ones. My most vivid memory at Caltech is the one after I finished my Ch1b final, where I called home to my father at 2am sobbing. Then, I talked to a PA. And then I wandered around campus in the wee hours of the morning, with the saddest Vietnamese music blasting in my ears, violently shaking and sobbing as I circled Caltech Hall at least 3 times. A friend, worried for me, came looking for me and stayed with me to make sure I was okay. I fell asleep at 7am that day, filled with fitful dreams of sinking through my bed, body spiraling endlessly into the air. Thankfully, I did pass... or else I would have completely broken down.



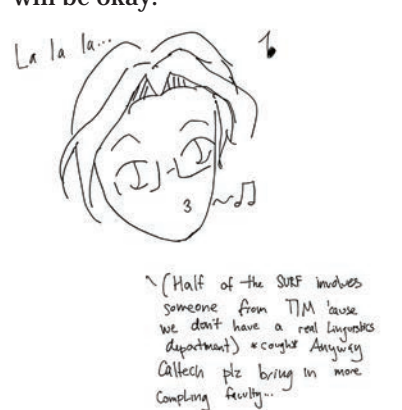
I'm not the top student here at Caltech. I sit right below the average. People tell me that this is already pretty great, but the

constant climb to even make it to the average is exhausting. For a long time, I forgot what I used to do for fun. I used to really enjoy digital art, and I drew a real sketch for the first time since last year two weeks ago. I stopped playing video games entirely, and I use my free time to catch up on sleep.

So as summer approaches, I'm learning how to find myself again. I'm grateful for Dabney Hovse, whose members continued to look out for me and encourage me. House activities such as Pumpkin Drop, impromptu camping trips at Joshua Tree, and other traditions give me something to look forward to, and I never let Dabney forget how much they mean to me. The upperclassmen and PAs that gave me pep talks and a laugh show me that I can make it through Caltech. As for my frosh friends, who I have made through FSRI and within Dabney Hovse, they're always by my side, and I couldn't ask for a kinder, quirkiest, funnier, or all-around amazing group of friends. We have gone through so much together, picking each other up when we need support, and occasionally venturing out into the city together whenever we can.

So I will close out to you, dear reader, from my double in Dabney. My roommate and I are preparing to move out, them for their international astro SURF, me to a new summer room for my own SURF (where I will actually be doing computational linguistics research!!!). It is still cloudy out. I still have to take my third term finals. Things can be very hard sometimes. Things are very hard sometimes. But I have friends, summer plans, and a very big desire to graduate from Caltech.

Somehow, I know that things will be okay.



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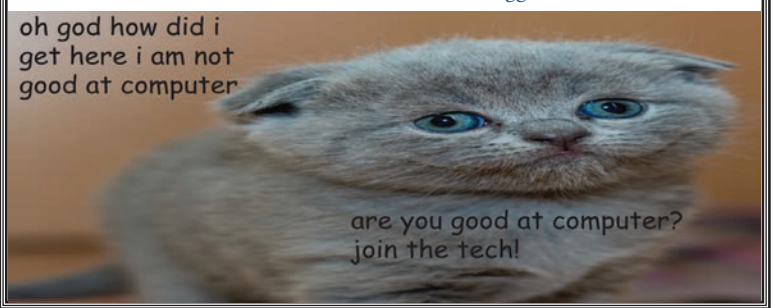
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Spotlight: Aero Association of Caltech (AACIT)

Adèle Bastürk / Student Life



While Techer culture boasts many peculiarities in the form of zany pranks, Ditch Days, interhouses, LN₂ dipped pumpkins shattering at terminal velocity, and many more activities contributing to the “quirkiness” of a Caltech undergraduate experience, unbeknownst to most is the existence of the Aero Association of Caltech (AACIT), founded by chemical physics graduate student Dave Cartwright in 1966. A little over 58 and a half years ago, the following was posted in the California Tech, ‘Anyone interested in flying, learning to fly, buying a plane, sightseeing, etc., come to the meeting of the Caltech Flying Club tonight at 7:30 in Winnett Clubroom 1.’ (Learn to Fly, The California Tech, November 12, 1964.) (The California Tech LXVI).

From its humble 18 member and single Cessna 150 origins, present day AACIT owns and maintains a fleet of 7 single-engine land airplanes based out of the San Gabriel Valley Airport (KEMT), colloquially referred to as El Monte. AACIT was founded for members of the Caltech and JPL community with the certainty that some Caltech students are going to fly, more literally than figuratively. This certainty should be compensated with the allocation of a club in which students could fly safely, in addition to “providing more available flying time for less money” (aacit.org).



With several full and part-time instructors, AACIT members are granted the opportunity to train for any of several pilot certificates, including Private Pilot, Instrument Flight Rating (IFR), and Commercial Pilot.

Having been lucky enough to receive full-funding to pursue my private pilot’s license from the AOPA “You Can Fly Flight Training Scholarship” in Spring 2021, I came to Caltech Fall 2021 more than ready to start flight training. For me, the motivation to fly is simple: I long to be suspended above the Earth, looking down at the conglomeration of nature and architecture in constant battle below the horizon, at the mercy of the intractable atmosphere. Upon completion of my first fall season on the Caltech women’s soccer team, I began training with flight instructor, AACIT Vice President, and Caltech Alum (B.S. 1986) David Werntz. One year later I passed my checkride on the glorious day of 12/8/22. While the journey had no drought of delays, setbacks, and tribulations, I could not have asked for a better experience supported by the resources AACIT afforded me. Beyond flight training opportunities, AACIT hosts monthly wash days, during which members come together to degrease and wash the 7 plane fleet, with a bit of socializing in between, for \$100 of flight credit, amounting to about 1h of airplane rental in one of the club’s Cessna 172s. I now regularly enjoy flying friends and family around the LA basin, and plan to continue training with the club in the near future to obtain my Instrument Flight Rating (IFR).

ChatGPT vs. the Honor Code

from page 1

Having AI write an essay for you, even based on your own ideas, still doesn’t give you practice writing, and oftentimes you will lose out on insight gained in the process of writing.

Many of my best analyses of literature have come from me simply starting to write and seeing where my thoughts lead me. Sometimes I stray so far from my initial premise that I have to rewrite the thesis. Telling ChatGPT your thesis then getting it to write the essay for you means you don’t have the opportunity to refine your thoughts like that.

And asking GPT for a thesis has worse problems. I tried asking it for a thesis about “Beowulf”, and all of the options it gave me were incredibly surface level that did not show any in-depth knowledge or analysis of the book.

Moreover, GPT still has a “hallucination” problem. It sometimes makes up citations or sources completely. In fact, 2 lawyers are currently defending themselves after using GPT to write a motion because GPT made up some case references which they failed to check. They claimed they thought GPT was just a type of search engine, so they trusted what it gave them. Asking GPT about scientific articles often gives similarly bad results.

Gilmore believes that students need to “critically analyze sources,” or they risk “getting led into bad tracks by ChatGPT”. The more students rely on ChatGPT, the more complacent they will get, and their skills in writing will lag behind. Susanne Hall, Professor of Writing and Director of the Hixon Writing Center, compares getting ChatGPT to write an essay for you to paying someone at the gym to lift the weights for you. The assignment might get done, but you will have learned nothing.

Despite all this, GPT can still be incredibly helpful as a teaching tool. It is undeniable that AI will continue to be a large part of our lives going forward, so perhaps we should start using it now, and have classroom activities integrating it. It can in fact be a very helpful teaching tool according to Hall, who has used to generate practice sentences and examples for her students.

Currently, most honor code policies at Caltech are focused on plagiarism. So, is using ChatGPT plagiarism? Plagiarism is defined as passing someone else’s ideas off as one’s own, and ChatGPT is not technically another person, so according to Hall, ChatGPT is not plagiarism. Gilmore was less certain however, saying that it is “muddy” because while

ChatGPT may not be another person whose ideas you are stealing, the ideas are still coming from somewhere other than your brain. So, the question of plagiarism is clearly hard to answer definitively.

Should you then cite GPT as a resource if you used it? If you write your whole piece with GPT, probably, but what if you just get GPT to edit or reword bits? Currently, many people would say yes, but this is likely to change. People don’t feel the need to cite their spellcheckers or even Grammarly, a common grammar correction tool that also uses AI. So perhaps it will come to be expected that writers use GPT to refine their compositions.

What of the future then? Next year, most humanities classes will likely have an AI policy falling somewhere on the spectrum from completely prohibited to actively encouraged. There will likely not be an institute wide policy, or even humanities wide policy, due to both the evolving nature of GPT and due to every class having different needs.

Farther into the future is much more uncertain. Gilmore is not that excited about the future and is worried that 5 years from now the students won’t know how to write or think critically because they will have outsourced both of those jobs to AI. Hall is cautiously optimistic but is likewise concerned about students’ writing abilities.

So, is using ChatGPT an honor code violation? Well, that depends on the classroom policy, which therefore depends on instructors to actually have a clear honor code policy. Otherwise, it can be hard to tell where the line is. Is using a spelling and grammar checker OK? What if the grammar checker is using AI to help you rewrite sentences? What if you ask an AI to rewrite your paragraph? There is obviously a line somewhere because at a certain point you are no longer learning anything from the assignment, thus defeating the whole point. In my opinion, this extreme is clearly an honor code violation.

And what of other applications? Will ChatGPT solve my physics problems for me? Almost certainly not correctly. We’ve tried. But will ChatGPT write me an article for The California Tech? According to Tech Editor-in-Chief Michael Gutierrez (Ay ’25, Dabney/Ricketts), the answer is “no” if I want to get paid. Gutierrez states that the Tech exists to share and document the work of people, not AI algorithms. (“We already have the internet for that.”) Having people

use ChatGPT to write articles would be unethical, especially as writers for the Tech get paid for their efforts.

Gutierrez acknowledges ChatGPT as a powerful writing tool, and says that he has used GPT in the past for several tasks, including generating band names (none of them were good), and to help him understand the concept of entropy (all the answers were unhelpful). But it is his policy that articles written by ChatGPT are not eligible to be published in the Tech.

And as for how the Tech would know if an article submission were really written by a human? Well, in Gutierrez’s view, that is a question of the honor code. Regardless of your definition of plagiarism, passing off ChatGPT’s work as one’s own is definitely against the honor code.

For the remainder of this column, since articles about technology rarely age well, I would like to make some predictions about the future for historians to laugh at.

READ IF AI TAKES OVER THE WORLD:

Personally, I think much of the hype for AI is overblown and we will not see it taking over as many jobs as people claim it will. People claimed the industrial revolution would take people’s jobs just as they said the increased automation that has happened over the past couple of decades would take people’s jobs. And while entire vocations have become fully automated and extinct, new jobs have opened in different sectors, or duties have shifted. So even though AI seems like this hot new thing, I don’t think it will change lives as much as some expect. In addition, many of these changes will likely be gradual enough that we will not notice any increased dependence on AI in our lives.

READ IF THAT TREATY THING GOES THROUGH AND WE ALL DECIDE WE’VE HAD ENOUGH OF AI:

AI has a great potential, both for good and for destructive causes. The massive popularity of AI right now is leading to increased development. AI will just keep getting better and better and we will keep integrating it into our lives. In as little as 5 years, the world probably look very different due to AI. It is possible we will have to rethink much of society to account for AI replacing jobs or making professions outdated. Maybe new jobs will open up elsewhere, but

AACIT was made for those who wish to soar the skies, so to anyone who is interested, yet feels financially restricted, apply for a scholarship! Aircraft Owner’s and Pilot’s Association (AOPA) and the Experimental Aviation Association (EAA) offers scholarship opportunities. A quick Google search yields plenty more options for people from varying backgrounds. If you don’t currently have all the resources to fund the full training, take a ground school course. AACIT offers one for the private pilot knowledge test every fall and spring term, and one for IFR knowledge tests in the winter, which I very much enjoyed. And to anyone who has never flown in small 4-seater plane before, I am more than happy to take newcomers up for a ride to one of the small local LA airports. Feel free to reach out (abasturk@caltech.edu). If you are a Techer and you want to Learn to Fly, AACIT is a great place to start.

FUN FACT: The airspace beginning at 1000’ above Caltech is an active flight training area, which is why you may regularly spot small planes flying at low altitude over campus.

likely not on the same magnitude as the number of jobs lost, and likely in sectors vastly different from the sectors where jobs are being lost. If all these jobs are lost, society will have to deal with how to feed and clothe people who not only do not have a job but have no opportunity to gain one.

READ IF GIANT SENTIENT COCKROACHES TAKE OVER WHILE WE WERE TOO BUSY DISTRACTED WORRYING ABOUT AI:

AI is an incredibly interesting problem, probably one of the most interesting one of this day and age. While nations might squabble over nuclear warheads and pesky cold and proxy wars, AI will be there gaining in power and ability. We need to develop regulation to ensure that the development of AI is done in a fair way so we can avoid situations like what happened with many facial recognition algorithms that could not recognize black faces because there were not enough in the training data. Many people see AI as computerized equity and fairness, after all, how could a couple of 1s and 0s be biased, but in truth, we train them to our own biases. Thus, we need to focus on creating more fair and equitable AI and not on the possibility of giant sentient cockroaches taking over the world.

Housing Crisis

from page 1

Comparable universities such as MIT, Harvard, and Stanford all have had yield rates in the high 70% or low 80% for the past 10 years. Current trends show that Caltech's yield rate is increasing faster than that of similar colleges, but there is still a large gap. In addition, many of these other institutions have much larger class sizes, around 1,100 for MIT and around 1,500 for Harvard. This means that small changes in yield will not affect them as much. Other universities also have housing lotteries that occur before the decision date in May, but they simply have more space, so a slightly higher than average class size will not be as impactful.

"There's this perception of 'Blame the administration!' That's understandable," says Leadbetter. "The lack of sufficient housing is significantly inconvenient, and it's not easy to find an apartment for next year. But it's a little deflating to see that [blame] as the main response to these positive trends. We're really happy – it shows that [prospective] students are better informed about Caltech."

The Unintended Effect of Admissions on Housing

Perhaps the housing crisis is not entirely the fault of Admissions, but the Housing Office was left in a tough spot. By the time the number of incoming students came out on May 2, the fall lottery process had already started.

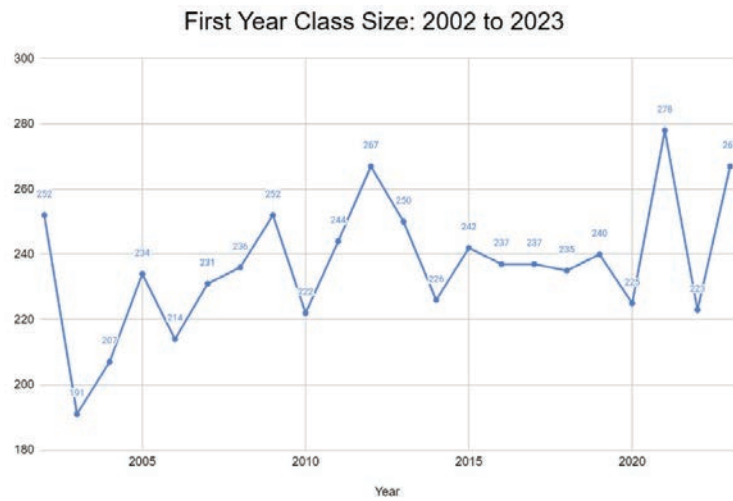
The lottery starts this early because it takes a long time to go through the whole process. Traditionally, the fall lottery is held before the summer lottery so that students can have the opportunity to pick into their fall room for the summer (known as "settling"). This means that the fall lottery must be held earlier in the third term to have enough time to do the fall lottery then the summer lottery.

As a result, the Housing Office could not have known exactly how many incoming first-years there were—they had to work under the Admissions Committee's estimate, which was nowhere near as large as the class size turned out to be.

There are two types of housing available on campus. The most popular is living in one of the eight student houses. Though they are small, students are drawn to living among their friends, surrounded by a unique "house culture."

The second type is unaffiliated housing, meant for students who are not a member of a house. Bechtel is one such option. Opening in 2018 and offering a whopping 212 beds, it is the top choice among unaffiliated students. Then comes Marks and Braun. While originally meant to house 30 and 29 students respectively, extra beds and desks have been added to their rooms, thus doubling their original capacity. Not only does the cramped living space make this an undesirable residence for students, but residents there cite constant maintenance issues, including a lack of hot water and broken laundry machines. In accordance with the estimated number of incoming frosh, Housing had already established the number of spaces available to upperclassmen in Bechtel, and decided how many suites would be allotted to both the first and second unaffiliated lotteries.

The first unaffiliated lottery gave priority to groups of stu-



Timeline of first-year class size, courtesy of Jared Leadbetter. The incoming class sizes have historically been up and down, with unprecedented peaks in the past that are similar to our current situation.

dents picking suites based on not only lottery number, but also on number of unaffiliated students. "Groups with a higher number of unaffiliated students per group size will have priority," according to the Housing Undergrad Lottery Process website. In other words, if two groups of 8 people applied for a Bechtel suite, the first group containing 3 unaffiliated students and the second with 7 unaffiliated students, the second group would be offered the suite. Previously, you only needed two students to get the chance for the first round, and priority after that was based on lottery numbers. This change was introduced to maximize the number of unaffiliated students selecting Bechtel. Since not every student has the opportunity to live in the houses, and Bechtel is the more attractive living space compared to Marks or Braun, unaffiliated students are given priority to choose Bechtel.

Many students, including Lily DeBell (Bi '24, Unaffiliated) and Hannah Fisher (ME '24, Unaffiliated) dropped house membership in order to get into this round of the lottery.

Students Out of Housing

In January, both DeBell and Fisher dropped their affiliation with Venerable in hopes of securing a Bechtel suite for next year. Their suite only had two unaffiliated students, so under the new rules, they did not have high enough priority to get a suite in the first round. Having dropped their housing affiliations, their only other option was the general lottery for a Bechtel suite.

Based on their lottery number and the number of spaces left in Bechtel, they had a sense that they would be guaranteed a suite. Then, two days before picking their room, Bennethum sent out an email stating that housing was decreasing the number of suites available in Bechtel to make space for the new students.

Suddenly, 30 beds became unavailable and DeBell and Fisher were left to scramble again. After some math on the number of remaining beds and their lottery picks, they thought there would not be enough room for them on campus. With his daughter left to hunt for off-campus housing, Fisher's father emailed Maria A. Katsas, the Executive Director of Student Auxiliary Services, to express his concerns.

He stated, "I would like to strongly express that I feel it is both wrong and unfair to change the conditions of the housing lottery in the middle of the lottery," and later pointed out that the fact the lottery takes place before the date that first-years must commit "makes absolutely no sense at all."

Fisher claims that when she and DeBell started to realize they would not have on-campus housing, they felt "extreme anger... and then sadness." They had believed they were guaranteed four years of on-campus housing, and they felt cheated out of it. They were shocked to hear, weeks later, that there was space left in Marks and Braun for them, but it was not enough to convince them to take Caltech up on the offer.

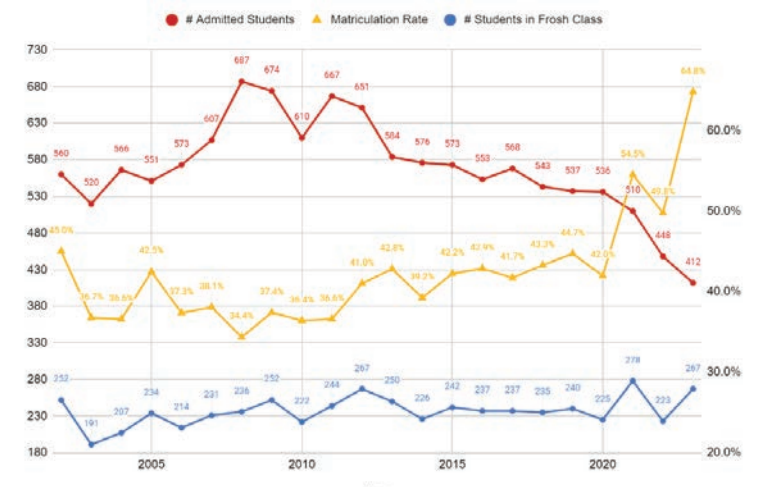
What Could Have Been Different

While Fisher and DeBell felt that they deserved the Bechtel spaces more than the first-years, and that the incoming class should be put into Marks and Braun instead, other students disagree. Juan Luchsinger (ME '25, Blacker) stated "I would prefer that they [the first-years] get Bechtel rooms/any housing over me." The first year is supposed to ease incoming students into Caltech. This is also why Housing and the ORE want frosh to live in Bechtel instead of Marks and Braun, because it will provide a better living experience. Bennethum guessed that they put the freshman because Bechtel "[has] more support networks for the incoming students."

Could the situation this year have been handled better? Fisher said that in the interest of fairness, the whole lottery should have been redone. She claims that because the rules were changed midway though, unfair advantage was taken of current students. However, the lottery process is very time-consuming, "like 3-D tetris," according to Bennethum. There likely would not have been enough time to redo the fall lottery, especially while they were in the middle of the summer lottery.

Bennethum stated that in future years he would consider doing the summer lottery before the fall lottery. This would lead to less or possibly no overlap between the fall lottery and decision day meaning housing could have a much more accurate count of incoming students. With a more accurate count, ideally they would not have to change the number of spaces midway through the lottery. But even then, students can gain admission off the waitlist at other schools between committing to Caltech and the start of the school year, making this freshmen number rather volatile.

When asked if there were any plans to acquire more housing for students, either on campus or in Caltech-owned off-campus properties, Bennethum said that there were no current plans. While he would "advocate for the students" in getting off campus housing, it is ultimately up to the Institute—and the Institute would likely prioritize graduate students in Caltech-owned off-campus



Timeline of the number of admitted students, since 2002. In the last ten years, Caltech has progressively admitted fewer and fewer students.

housing. So, as with the Admissions Committee, the Housing Office's story is also a complicated one, and not as easy to solve as students would hope.

The Past

2021 also saw a record number of students, however 2021 was a special year due to the coronavirus pandemic. In 2021 the fall lottery was done during the summer, way past when the number of incoming freshmen was confirmed. Because students were off campus that year anyway, doing it over the summer was essentially equivalent to having it during the year. However, ideally the process is done on campus in person which is why it is normally done third term.

There was not enough space in 2021 for everyone to live on campus, but similar to this year, some people opted out of the lottery. In addition, in order to make more space on campus, all the singles in marks and braun were converted into doubles. This increased the number of beds on campus significantly. So while record number of admission has happened in the past (2021), many factors made that year special and unique.

Communication with Administration

Perhaps better communication between students and the administration would have shown students that the situation was really difficult from the perspective of the Housing Office. The Student Life and Housing Committee, composed of Caltech faculty, is charged with being "concerned with matters relating to housing for undergraduate and graduate students." The Committee is expected to be a resource for students to express their concerns, or a voice for the students to communicate with the administration.

Ryan B. Patterson, a professor in physics, has been a

member of this committee since July 1, 2018. When asked about his role on the committee, however, he responded "I'm on a committee?" Nets H. Katz, a mathematics professor, shared a similar story. Katz recalls joining the Student Life and Housing Committee on July 1st, 2022, to "be more involved... with undergraduates," but has since not heard of a single meeting and says he's had no involvement with the committee.

So What Now?

As it stands, 40 students have opted out of the fall housing lottery. This is about average, with most years having between 30 and 50 students opting out. That number, however, has been increasing since the beginning of the lottery on Friday, April 14th. It is unclear if this increase is due to more students "doing the math" like Fisher and DeBell, or if students simply neglected to opt out until later. Because this number is not that much higher than normal, it is unclear how many students actually felt that they had been "kicked off campus," as Fisher and DeBell did.

Now that the fall lottery is in the process of wrapping up, there is theoretically enough space for everyone who remains to be placed.

This housing "crisis" came out of an unprecedented admissions cycle, catching the Admissions Committee, the Housing Office, and several returning students off-guard. At the end of the day, DeBell expressed "I am not saying that freshmen should live off campus... But the tuition is exactly the same for everyone. It's like all of a sudden the upperclassmen are getting booted in a way that feels very unfair. I TA, I Dean's tutor, I volunteer for the Caltech Y. I do a lot of things and work for this campus. For this to happen now... it's like what gives?"



The Laundry Machine in Marks. There are two washers and two dryers for around 50 residents, the same as in Braun. Michael Gutierrez, 6'1", shows the cramped space, and comments on the rank smell, not present in the other residences.

Caltech Timely Warning Crime Bulletin: Aggravated Assault

by Thanhthanh Nguyen



A novel advice column about alive, ahaha, and everything in between! Brought to you by the one and only California Tech.

Dear Quail,
In your holy infinite wisdom, can you answer the question: Is Caltech worth it? Best,
A.S. Muncher

Hi A.S. Muncher,
Look, folks, let me tell you something about Caltech. They say it's worth it, but honestly, it's a disaster. It's a total disaster, believe me. I've seen it, I know people who have been there, and they tell me it's not all it's cracked up to be.

First of all, Caltech, they think they're so smart. They think they're the best, but let me tell you, I know smart. I went to the best schools, I'm a very stable genius, okay? Caltech, they're nothing compared to me. They're just a bunch of overrated scientists and eggheads.

But here's the real problem with Caltech, folks. It's outrageously expensive. They charge you an arm and a leg for tuition, and for what? A piece of paper that says you went to Caltech? Let me tell you, that piece of paper doesn't guarantee success. You can get a great education and achieve great things without breaking the bank.

And let's talk about the campus, folks. It's small, it's cramped, they can't even house all their students! How outrageous for a school of only one thousand undergrads!

So, is Caltech worth it? Absolutely not. Don't fall for their hype. Don't let them convince you that you need to go there to be successful. There are plenty of other great universities out there that offer a top-notch education without the hefty price tag. Don't waste your time and money on Caltech, folks. Trust me, it's not worth it.

Regards, Quainald Qrump
Hi Quail,
If you could go back in time and give yourself one piece of advice about college, what would it be?
Froshington Greenfield

Froshington Greenfield,
I would say "Do not come here."
Quail

Dear Quail,
Do you have any recommendations on stuff to watch?
Thanks, Procasten Ator

Dear Procasten Ator,
Let me tell you something, folks. There's a video out there, a tremendous video that you've got to watch. It's called the Ricketts Fish video, and believe me, it's a game-changer. It's tremendous, okay?

Now, I've seen a lot of videos in my time, and let me tell you, this one stands out. It's all about fish, folks. Beautiful fish. It's got everything you could want in a video: excitement, drama, and, of course, fish. Lots and lots of fish.

The Ricketts Fish video takes you on a journey, a journey into the underwater world. You see these magnificent creatures swimming, darting, and doing all sorts of fishy things. It's mesmerizing, folks. You won't be able to take your eyes off the screen.

And the production value, let me tell you, it's top-notch. It's like a Hollywood blockbuster, but with fish. The visuals are stunning, the editing is superb, and the music, oh, the music will sweep you away. It's a masterpiece, folks, a masterpiece.

Now, I know what you're thinking. Why should I watch a video about fish? Well, let me tell you, fish are incredible. They're beautiful, they're fascinating, and they're an essential part of our ecosystem. Watching this video will give you a newfound appreciation for these magnificent creatures, believe me.

So, if you're looking for something to watch, something that will captivate your attention and leave you in awe, I highly recommend the Ricketts Fish video. It's a winner, folks. You won't be disappointed. Watch it, enjoy it, and let it remind you of the incredible wonders that nature has to offer.

Best, Quail

Hey Quail,
What's the most creative way you've managed to stay awake during an all-night study session? Best,
Ingrid Somiac

Dear Ingrid Somiac,
Let me tell you a little secret. When it comes to staying awake and keeping that energy flowing, you need something extreme, something that gets your blood pumping. That's where Drone

Xtreme Motorsports, or DXM, comes into play. It's the ultimate adrenaline rush that'll keep you wide awake, alert, and ready for action.

Picture this: you're feeling tired, lethargic, and in desperate need of a pick-me-up. Instead of reaching for that cup of coffee or energy drink, you go for some DXM. This high-flying marvel of technology is like nothing you've ever experienced. It's sleek, it's fast, and it's about to take you on a wild ride.

With DXM, you can engage in exhilarating races, navigate challenging obstacle courses, and perform daring aerial stunts. It's an adrenaline-fueled adventure that will jolt you awake like nothing else. The rush of excitement, the thrill of the chase, it's like a shot of pure energy coursing through your veins. Your senses are heightened, your reaction time is lightning-fast, and there's no room for drowsiness.

But DXM isn't just about the excitement and thrill. It's also about the camaraderie and competition. Imagine gathering with friends who share your passion for DXM and going to the skies on a delightful journey together.

So, if you find yourself struggling to stay awake, consider the exhilarating world of Drone Xtreme Motorsports, DXM. It's not just about racing drones—it's about embracing the extreme, defying limits, and tapping into a wellspring of energy and excitement. Buckle up, folks, because DXM is here to keep you awake and take you on the ride of a lifetime.

Have fun, Quail

Dear Quail,
What's the funniest or weirdest thing you've witnessed while people-watching on campus? Best,
Stal Kerr

Dear Stal Kerr,
Oh my, do I have a story to tell. It all began back in the fall of 2022. As I nestled into my usual spot on the benches near Millikan Library, ready to indulge in my favorite pastime of people-watching, I had no idea that today's spectacle would be one for the books. The Caltech campus was always a hub of intellectual activity, buzzing with eager minds and brilliant ideas. But what unfolded before my eyes that day was a sight that left me equal parts perplexed and amused.

In the distance, two figures emerged, their faces filled with determination and a hint of youthful exuberance. These were unmistakably freshmen, the embodiment of youthful enthusiasm and a touch of naivety. They seemed to be on a mission of the utmost importance, though the nature of this mission eluded me at first.

As they drew closer, I noticed that these hooligans, as I do not recall their names, were pushing not one, not two, but dozens of pallets across the vast expanse of the campus. The pallets, laden with an assortment of bizarre objects, teetered precariously as they navigated the uneven terrain. It was a sight that seemed to defy all reason, for what could two young individuals possibly need with such a peculiar assortment of cargo?

Undeterred by the curious gazes of passersby, they continued their arduous journey, fueled by an unwavering determination. They were like ants, tirelessly hauling their treasures, seemingly oblivious to the perplexed expressions they elicited. Their energy was infectious, and soon enough, a small crowd began to form, watching their progress with both awe and bewilderment.

But their story did not end there. As the days turned into weeks, the campus became their playground, their transportation method an extension of their ever-growing legend. The hooligans could be seen at all hours of the day and night, riding atop their pallets, weaving through the maze-like pathways of Caltech's prestigious grounds. Their laughter echoed across the campus, infectious in its unbridled joy. Their adventures, however, were not without their share of mishaps and unexpected obstacles.

One sunny afternoon, as they joyfully made their way through the bustling campus, disaster struck. The path ahead became unexpectedly congested with students and faculty

rushing to their next classes. Caught in the midst of a veritable traffic jam, the hooligans found themselves in a precarious situation. With a sudden jolt, the weight of the cargo caused the entire cart to topple over, spilling its peculiar contents onto the pavement.

Panic ensued as students scrambled to avoid the avalanche of objects that had spilled onto the ground. It was a chaotic scene, a whimsical twist of fate that left the hooligans momentarily stunned. As they gathered around, uncertain of how to proceed, a diligent worker arrived with a chainsaw in hand. With a few deft cuts, the obstructing pieces of the cart were cleared, allowing the traffic to flow once again.

Undeterred by this unexpected setback, the spirited duo pressed on, their determination unshaken. They quickly regrouped, devising a clever solution to prevent future accidents. In a stroke of ingenuity, they found a large rock that served as a perfect counterweight to hold down the wooden planks on their cart. With this newfound stability, they could navigate the campus with a renewed sense of confidence.

Their adventures became more audacious, their presence on campus both enigmatic and endearing. They became local legends, the cart transformed into a symbol of their audacious spirit and unwavering determination. Students and faculty alike eagerly anticipated the sight of the hooligans whizzing by, their laughter and the clattering of the cart echoing through the corridors of learning.

Rumors and theories swirled among the student body. Some speculated that they were secret engineering geniuses, testing out their wild contraptions under the cover of darkness. Others believed they were conducting some kind of social experiment, challenging the boundaries of conventional norms. The truth, as it turned out, was far simpler and far more charming.

The hooligans were in pursuit of something beyond the realm of academic achievements and scientific breakthroughs. They had discovered a unique way to embrace the whimsy and spirit of their college years, unburdened by the weight of expectations and deadlines. Their audacious escapades were a testament to the power of youthful imagination, a reminder to us all that sometimes, the greatest lessons are learned through a touch of whimsy and a hearty laugh.

As I sat there, observing their daring antics, I couldn't help but smile. The world needed more Alexes and Maxes, fearless pioneers of joy and merriment. And so, with a renewed appreciation for the magic that can be found within the ordinary, I continued my role as the ever-watchful observer, eager to witness the next chapter of their extraordinary journey on the hallowed grounds of Caltech.

But as winter settled over the Caltech campus, bringing crisp air and cooler temperatures, an air of curiosity and wonder filled the atmosphere. It was during this chilly season that the captivating duo mysteriously vanished, leaving behind an air of intrigue and unanswered questions.

The vibrant energy they once brought to the campus seemed to evaporate into thin air, leaving a void in the hearts of those who had grown fond of their audacious spirit. Students and faculty searched for answers, but the enigma surrounding their disappearance remained unsolved.

Whispers floated through the halls, sharing tales of sightings in distant lands or secret missions that had called them away from the confines of academia. Some speculated that they had become explorers, charting new territories in pursuit of untold discoveries. Others imagined them as undercover agents, bravely infiltrating the unknown.

But despite the imaginative tales that circulated, the truth of their fate remained elusive. Autumn turned into winter, and winter melted into spring, yet there was no sign of their return. The campus, once alive with their laughter and the clattering of their cart, settled into a more subdued rhythm, and the hooligans have yet to be seen again.

I hope you enjoyed this wonderful story. Your friend,
Quail

To submit questions for next week's "Question the Quail", fill out the google form:

<https://bit.ly/41rEQ1N>

Art & Photography Spotlight: Pride Month



“Rewind” by Abraham Belayneh



“Teru Teru Bozo” by Audrey Wong



“Flipside” by Cristian Ponce



“Saturday Night” by Juan Renteria



“Rapture” by Juan Renteria



“Fiery Flora” by Alicia Zhang



“Those Dam Beavers” by birb lover



“Say Cheese” by Sylvia Wang



“Golden” by Alicia Zhang



“Derelict” by Lucas Ancieta



“Portal to Enigma” by Abraham Belayneh



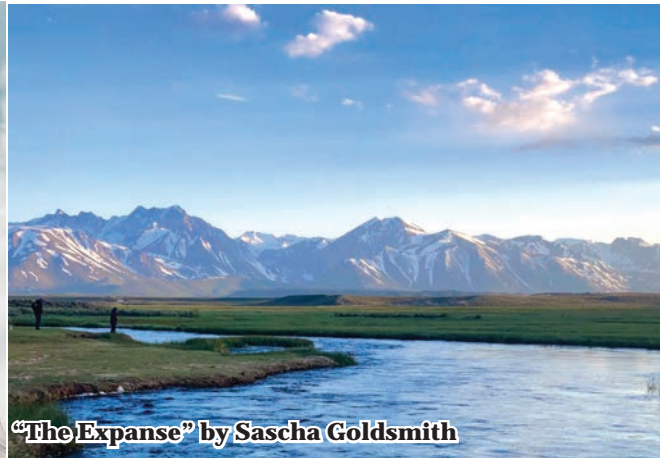
“Totoro” by Audrey Wong



“Prism Explosion” by Juan Luchsinger



“Sky-Reaching” by Abraham Belayneh



“The Expanse” by Sascha Goldsmith



“Elevated” by Juan Luchsinger



“Dragons at Dusk” by Audrey Wong



“Violet Wonder” by Juan Renteria

📌 Campaign for AI Safety

Student Competition to Draft a Treaty on AI Research Moratorium

Passionate about AI safety? Make your contribution right away.

Submission Deadline: July 15

Results Announcement: August 1

Create a draft treaty inspired by the global movement to pause AI development until safety is duly demonstrated. Address crucial provisions like shutting down GPU/TPU clusters, limiting model parameters, and establishing a moratorium.

Winner: \$4,000
Runner-up: \$1,000
Third Place: \$500

Prize amounts are in Australian dollars. For guidelines and submission details, visit our website or scan this QR Code with your mobile device.



JOIN TREATY COMPETITION

Blacker Hovse Takes Over the Sierra's

Sascha Goldsmith | Student Life

Last weekend, Blacker Hovse sought a takeover of the Eastern Sierras over the course of their two-night stay. Through attempting to summit dangerous icy peaks, establishing campsite populace dominance, thwarting frostbite whilst collecting pristine slabs of ice, and feeding duckies – memories were made and aesthetic photos were taken.

One of the trip's organizers, Sylvia Wang (EE '25, Blacker), was able to narrow down the campsite location an hour past Bishop by simply compiling a list of places that she thought "most people would enjoy visiting" which had enough camping spots as well as a variety of hiking trails and viewpoints for people to explore.

"We camped, cooked, and made s'mores with everyone around a campfire," Sylvia recalled. "A lot of us visited the Erick Schat's Bakery in Bishop where we enjoyed freshly baked breads, pastries, and other delicious goods."

They also visited the June Lake loop, and the Bishop City Park, where the group of almost 15 legal adults excitedly wandered around a pond with peas and corn to feed ducks.

After visiting June Lake beach, the attending s'more group of six – including myself – decided to explore hiking trails. As we drove through the mountains, we spotted a massive waterfall erupting with melted snow cap water on the side of a cliff. Just our luck!

There were trails nearby to view similar giant waterfalls.

We drive over and begin our hike through the Aspen up the side of the mountain face bordering a lake. As we go, we discover more and more unmelted snow mounds. No big deal we thought, tennis-shoes, shmenis shoes! Only a few more miles to go! As we continue, a group of hikers with cramp-ons and hiking poles warn us about slippery conditions as they turn back. We decided to continue, "we'll just be extra careful!"

After climbing upwards about 200 ft on the side of this steep face, we encounter a snow field. It doesn't look very long as we begin our trek. As we venture across this 45 degree inclined snow face with nothing more than a 'one foot in front of the other' trail, jagged rocks peering up at us from below, and the looming thought of 'one wrong move and you'll end up in the hospital or worse...', we encounter impossible conditions and decide it's time to turn around.

This time, from being the nervous-wreck at the back of the line, I'm now the one having to reform foot prints on a downhill slope. Whilst screaming and moving one step per minute on all fours as boaters on the lake gather at the shoreline to watch our stupidity, we certainly made some core memories (despite them being some of the most physically terrifying of my life). With pent up tears, an avoided heart attack,

and what felt like a lifetime later, we made it back to the gravel trail. As we looked back at our slope while driving to the next destination, we realized that we'd made it halfway across the ~200ft snow field, impressive! Aside from a feeling of absolute power, we got some cool pictures and some nice views too! Some more than others ;)

Sylvia recalled that her favorite spot that the s'mores explored during the trip "Was an entire mountainside of wildflowers we found near the loop trail," where two cascading mountain faces overlooked a valley of native yellow flowers.

Noting the large turnout of about 20 Hovse members ranging from frosh to ghosts, Sylvia credited Blacker's "Big adventurer population."

"I've met lots of outdoorsy people in Blacker who love camping and hiking. There were also a lot of people who had never camped before and were camping for the first time on this trip."

Especially during an exhausting point in the academic year, Hovse trips like this are able to bring members together to make valuable memories, in a way that physically forces your separation from both school-related stress and screens. Sylvia concluded that events like this are integral to "Creating an adventurous and fun culture for the Hovse."



Caltech Dining Scoop: Plant Yourself at the Farmer's Market

Trinity Lee | Food

Attention all fans of fresh produce! On June 1st, Caltech Dining Services (CDS) hosted their first ever Pop-Up Farmers Market in the Little Browne Dining Room! Featured among the usual fruits and vegetables were Persian cucumbers, roasted yams, nectarines, and cherries. Many students lined up from 3-5 pm that day for their own tray of 2 fruits and 2 vegetables. Most opted for a cup of highly sought-after berries (both strawberries and blueberries were available), in addition to a cucumber or some baby carrots.

According to Jaime Reyes, Director of Dining Services, this pop-up idea had been in the making for several years. "This is stuff that we wanted to do before COVID," he says, "but now we're able to do these fun pop-up's!" The farmers market is just one of the many things CDS has introduced recently in hopes of providing more fun and liveliness to the on-campus dining experience; they have started doing Boba Labs on the weekend in addition to the self-serve Mongolian and salad bar Browne stations. This was also in response to increased student interest in fresh produce (especially berries).

Sophie Polidoro (ME '25, Avery) was first in line at the farmers market to check it out. "I think it's a nice way to get produce because it can be expensive to go buy it and because there [was] a shortage of produce on campus," she remarked. Although pop-up farmers markets are not a substitute for daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables, they are a great way for students to get a healthy snack for the day

without spending a lot of time or money. It is also a nice way for CDS staff to introduce new foods to the students in a low stakes environment! For instance, Frances Yokota, CDS General Manager, took inspiration from Japanese street markets and decided to offer roasted yams at the farmers market. Many students including myself were pleasantly surprised by the starch's addition to the selection, and it is certainly delightful that CDS staff have the chance to incorporate different cultures into fun events like these. "My whole goal since becoming director is to make sure

our students are connected with our staff," Jaime added. "Like with the pop up dinners or this event, the staff get to know people, and you guys get to talk to us in case you have any questions."

It seems like CDS is not stopping here and has some more surprises and experiments ready for the summer and fall, so keep an eye out for announcements from Caltech Dining! And keep giving the Food Committee feedback on these new changes and pop-up's at bit.ly/caltechfoodfeedback!



Message from the FoodComm Chair

Kenadi Waymire / Food

As a Caltech student, I do tend to eat at least some of my meals on-campus. And, like any other living person, I have likes and dislikes. Being the chair of the Food Committee, I feel the urge to give some shout-outs to the best food on campus served recently, so I thought I'd write an article for the Tech doing so. Without further adieu, I'd like to present my foolproof one-hundred percent unbiased take on what I think the best foods at Caltech have been lately.

Red Door corn dogs

I love corn dogs so, so much. So much. They easily rank in my top three favorite foods, so, naturally, when I saw them being added to the Red Door menu after 10 PM, I was overjoyed. On average, I consume at least one Red Door corn dog a day. They are a pleasant change from the other options available at night, and are easily the most convenient food to eat when on the go. While many people like mustard on their corn dogs, I must say that I am a ketchup fan, and one corn dog can nicely be polished off with one and a half to two ketchup packets. The hot dogs inside are actually really nice, not too chewy and not too overpowering, and the breading on the outside clearly rides the line between too hard and too soft. The only thing I can say is that I do wish that we could get more than one corn dog at a

time, because I can inhale corn dogs faster than the seconds hand on a clock tick by, but I understand the fear of food waste and I can always just hop back in line.

Browne tuna melt

If you haven't ordered the tuna melt at the grill station at Browne, you are sleeping on one of the best foods on this campus. I highly recommend adding avocado to this as well. Personally, I take the pesto off, because I don't like pesto, but I feel like if you are a pesto fan, then you will enjoy its seamless inclusion into the dish. The tuna filling is just the right amount of salty and tuna-y, and the cheese adds a nice taste to the white I am pleased with the use of white bread in the tuna melt, as an unabashed fan of white bread, and I appreciate how the bread adds to but does not overpower the tuna mixture. For a nice side, I would also recommend ordering this with a side of chicken tenders, and getting two barbecue packets to go with the tenders. This combination is very filling and very good.

Broad chicken bacon sandwich

While Broad is definitely a jaunt from most of the undergraduate residences (besides Avery and Bechtel, you lucky ducks), and it's out of the way unless you're heading over to Broad or Chen, I would whole-

heartedly recommend making the journey for the Broad chicken bacon sandwich. This sandwich is by far my favorite sandwich on campus. Every bite is a full experience; the roasted red peppers are earthy, the roasted garlic aioli adds some tanginess, and the bacon is a great salty addition. The chicken is a nice level of moisture, as well. Again, I would highly recommend adding avocado to this sandwich, but I am also a huge fan of avocado and my opinion likely cannot be trusted (as I would add avocado to anything). Pair this sandwich with a side of the Broad Caesar salad and a pomegranate lemonade and you're promising yourself a tasty lunch.

Outside of these mainstays, I'd also like to give some shout-outs to some honorable mentions:

- House dinner garlic bread
- Red Door garlic bread
- Browne barbecue chicken pizza

- Taco night chicken
- Grill night meat (now that student grillers are back)
- Shrimp scampi (scrimp)

All in all, there are some great options available on-campus. Take my recommendations, or don't, I can't control you. If you don't like them, I do apologize, but I am sharing my opinion! If you have any favorite foods available through Caltech dining, please let me know! The Food Committee is always taking feedback.

Letter to the Editor: Bread

Dear Editor,

This issue contains a review of several so called "tasty" food options on campus. While I cannot speak to most of them as my pallet tends towards the cautious and new things frighten and scare me, one item mentioned made me extremely opinionated.

The article gives an honorable mention to two different garlic breads, the garlic bread from Red Door and the garlic bread from house dinner. I pride myself as a garlic bread aficionado and I am not sure either garlic bread deserve this honor.

Let's start with the garlic bread from house dinner. It varies widely in quality and comes in two flavors, the first is a classic dinner roll seemingly lathered in a butter garlic sauce. This variety is generally tasty although the experience of the garlic outside the crust of the roll is rather odd and some-

times it is extremely saturated with oils. The second variety is sliced pieces of garlic bread. I have yet to have a good experience with these. The garlic flavor is not good and the texture is bad. In addition, I have never experienced this variety warm. Mayhaps it would taste better if it scorched my taste buds off first.

Then comes the Red Door garlic bread. I have fewer objections to this as it is my classic go-to snack from Red Door. It is only unfortunate that I cannot get more than 2 pieces at a time. The flavor also oscillates wildly between extremely garlic-y and that of a bread that once dreamt of garlic. While I personally will take as much garlic as possible, I do concede that on average the Red Door garlic bread is deserving of an honorable mention.

Sincerely,
Garlic Ghostwriter



Instagram Deleted My Veggie Grill Fan Account

Emily Baylock / Humor

It is no secret – from Trinity's articles to QR codes all around campus asking for feedback – that Caltech Dining Services (CDS) doesn't always satisfy students. This means we often venture off campus on the weekends, or whenever we find time, to supplement the CDS diet. With a location just a 10-minute walk from campus and two roommates who don't eat a lot of meat, Veggie Grill became a quick favorite restaurant for me and Sophie Polidoro (ME '25, Avery).

Our favorite item on the menu was the wings – a stack of 5 crispy fake chicken strips tossed in buffalo sauce, served with a side of celery and ranch dressing. We became quickly obsessed with the item, and

would often order it at least once a week between the two of us.

We were so infatuated that we decided we wanted to make an Instagram fan account for Veggie Grill where we would post food reviews. We had the time of our lives taking "artsy" pictures of our food when we ordered. We even purchased a succulent from Trader Joe's and named it Veggie Grill in honor of the restaurant. This Veggie Grill soon became our Instagram profile picture.

With this new social media platform, we wanted to gain followers, and fast! So we queued up Veggie Grill's official Instagram page and requested to follow as many of their followers as we could, even after

Instagram attempted to restrict our access to follow more accounts. As our numbers climbed into the tens, our first disaster struck: Our account was shut down for "[Violating] Community Guidelines."

We were hurt, but that was only a scratch compared to what came next. A few weeks later while browsing their menu, we noticed the wings were gone. At 8:19 pm on Friday February 24th 2023, we discovered that the old wings had been replaced with Chick'n Tenders.

For the next few weeks, people speaking on the new tenders appeared in Veggie Grill's Instagram comments. This included "I used to LOVE veggie grill, they took away my favor-

ite appetizers :\” from Instagram user lmao_priscilla and "This used to come with 5 tenders. #shrinkflation” from rachel.leaf. For one month – from April 21st to May 21st – Instagram comments were turned off on all of their new posts.

When asked about the changing menu, Rad W., a Veggie Grill shift lead, shared that "Corporate likes to be very diverse," and described their menu as "seasonal." Rad shared that there was a shortage of the old wings, which led them to transition to tenders. She even shared that the tenders are selling more than the wings did. So, even if the reason I fell in love with Veggie Grill is no longer on their menu, it seems like the "largest vegan restaurant

company in the U.S.," according to their website, will be just fine.

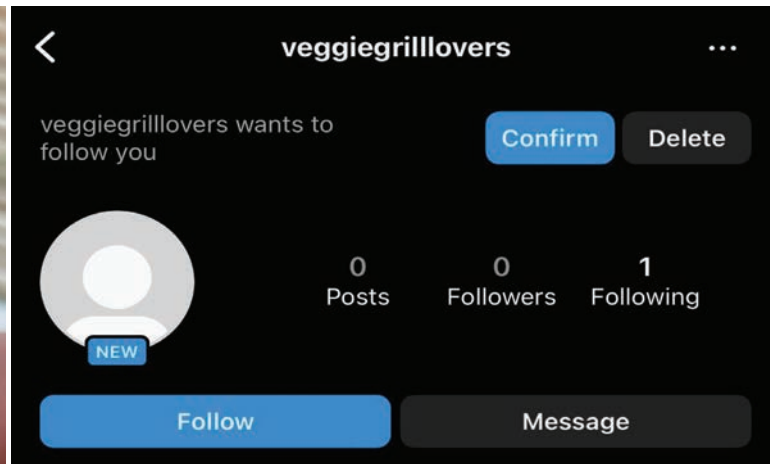
I joined two Caltech students at Veggie Grill on June 10th to get their opinions on what the restaurant had to offer. It was my first time going in person since the menu change. But Anagha Satish (CS '25, Venerable) and Chris Pope (Ge/Bi '25, Venerable) were unaware of the wing and tender situation. As a vegetarian, Anagha described the restaurant as "a good break from CDS." And Chris, not a frequent consumer of vegan food, even requested to go on the record saying "these nachos are gas."



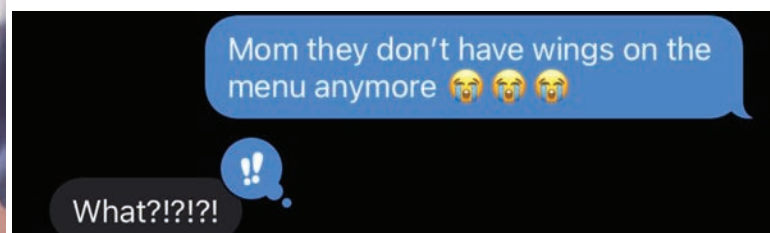
The Veggie Grill wings in November 2022



Veggie Grill the succulent



The start of the veggiegrilllovers Instagram account. Guess who we followed first!



A text message I sent to my Mom after seeing the menu change

Student Awards

2023 Undergraduate Academic Awards

Jin Ming Koh, a senior in Physics and Computer Science will receive the 2023 George W. Housner Prize for Academic Excellence and Original Research at commencement. This award is given to seniors in the upper 20% of their class for an outstanding piece of original scientific research.

Elsa Palumbo, a senior Astrophysics and Physics, and Pavlos Stavrinides, a senior in Applied and Computational Mathematics will share the 2023 George W. and Bernice E. Green Prize. The Green Prize is awarded to an undergraduate in any class for original research, an original paper or essay, or other evidence of creative scholarship beyond the normal requirements of specific courses.

The Jack E. Froehlich Memorial Award is for outstanding juniors in the top 5% of the class who shows outstanding promise for a creative professional career. Virginia Canestraight, a junior in Chemical Engineering, is this year's recipient.

Theresa Zhang, a junior in Applied and Computational Mathematics, and Stephanie Chen, a junior in Mathematics, were chosen as the joint winners of the 2023 Fredrick J. Zeigler Memorial Award. This award recognizes students studying pure or applied mathematics in their sophomore or junior year, who have shown excellence in scholarship as demonstrated in class activities or in preparation of an original paper or essay in any subject area.

Caltech Students Recognized for Excellence in Leadership

Student Affairs hosted a celebration to honor and recognize the winners of the 2023 Leadership Prizes and Awards.

Frederic W. Hinrichs, Jr. Memorial Award

Jolly Patro and Abigail Jiang will receive the 2023 Hinrichs Memorial Award at commencement. This award is given in memory of Frederic W. Hinrichs, Jr., who served for more than 20 years as Dean and professor at the Institute. The award bearing his name is made annually to the senior who throughout his or her undergraduate years have made the greatest contributions to the student body and whose qualities of character, leadership, and responsibility have been outstanding.

Mabel Beckman Prize

Aditi Seetharaman was selected the 2023 Mabel

Beckman Prize winner. This award, presented at commencement, is given in memory of Mrs. Beckman's many years of commitment to Caltech's educational and research programs. This award is for academic excellence and outstanding leadership skills, a commitment to personal excellence, good character, and a strong interest in the Caltech community.

Noland Leadership Award

Audrey DeVault, David Melisso, Kavya Rajagopalan and Gabi Twombly were all awarded the Robert L. Noland Leadership Award. The Robert L. Noland Leadership Award is for outstanding Caltech students who have demonstrated exceptional leadership abilities and have encouraged and supported others in realizing their own leadership capabilities.

Bibi Jentoft-Nilsen Memorial Award

Albert Kyi is this year's winner of the Bibi Jentoft-Nilsen Memorial Award. This prize is given in memory of Bibi Jentoft-Nilsen, Caltech '89, an exceptional student leader. After her untimely death in 1990, a fund was established to recognize outstanding student leaders.

Doris Everhart Service Award

Bertha Mireles was selected as the recipient of the Doris Everhart Service Award. This award is given annually to an undergraduate who has actively supported and willingly worked for organizations that enrich student life, and the campus or community as a whole, and who has exhibited care and concern for the welfare of students on a personal basis.

Deans' Cup

Deans' Cup Awards are presented to undergraduates whose concern for their fellow students has been demonstrated by persistent efforts to improve the quality of undergraduate life and by effective communication with members of the faculty and administration. Alexis Wang and Geoffrey Pomraning received the 2023 Deans' Cup.

Mari Peterson Ligocki '81 Memorial Award

Rachel Ding was selected as the recipient of the 2023 Mari Peterson Ligocki '81 Memorial Award. The Mari Peterson Ligocki '81 Memorial Award is made to one student who through his or her personal character has improved the quali-

ty of student life at Caltech. It recognizes the student who provides quiet support and kind encouragement to peers. This fund was established by Mr. José F. Helú Jr. '79 to honor the memory of Mari Peterson Ligocki, '81, who possessed these qualities.

Residential Experience Emerging Leader Award

Ramona Murugu and Thierno Diallo are the recipients of the 2023 Residential Experience emerging leader award. This award is for students who are newer in their career but already it is clear they will be important contributors to the Caltech campus.

Residential Experience Award for Outstanding Leadership

The 2023 Residential Experience for outstanding leadership award honor students who have made a difference in the lives of their peers. This year ORE honored Matthew Hajjar, Cameron Scantlin and Arya Nevada.

The Lucy Guernsey Service Award

Danika Nimlos, Peiwei Chen (graduate students) and Suchitra Dara were the recipients of this year's Lucy Guernsey Service Award. The Lucy Guernsey Service Award was established by the Caltech Y ExComm in honor of Lucy Guernsey, the Y's Executive Director from 1989-1991. The award is given annually to one or two students who have provided exceptional service to the Y and/or the community and exemplify a spirit of service.

Donald S. Clark Memorial Award

Two juniors, Heidi Redmond and Parul Singh, were awarded the 2023 Donald S. Clark Memorial Prize in recognition of service to the campus community and academic excellence. Preference is given to students in the Division of Engineering and Applied Science and to those in Chemical Engineering.

Ginsburg Scholar

In May 2023, Caltech initiated the new Ginsburg Scholar designation for two students in honor of Dr. Allen Ginsburg and his wife, Charlotte. Ginsburg scholars are rising seniors with academic excellence, outstanding leadership skills and a commitment to our visual and performing arts program. The inaugural Ginsburg Scholars are Riley Tam and Tanmay Gupta.

The Admin Corner

Thank you!

Felicia Hunt / Assistant Vice President, Student Affairs and Residential Experience

I start this article the way I will end it - with a huge thank you. It's as simple as that. You see, I was asked to write an article - we all were - and I appreciate that the Tech has included this new section in your newspaper. Some articles contribute to community conversations, others help frame the future or clarify the issues we are managing. But, for me, at this time of the year, my article is more of a thank you note than a summary of the year, an evaluation of hot topics or even an expose. And, if I am being honest, it is a thank you note that I write in my head on most days on my way home from work.

My commute, which lasts for over 75 minutes, gives me plenty of time to think. I admit, there are days I wish things were easier for all of us, but more often than not, I can't believe how lucky I am to get to see all your work in action. This is a special community and I enjoy getting to be an observer, advisor, and, on some projects, a participant. Caltech students and student leaders are some of the best I have known in my career because you all do amazing work. I am grateful you are willing to do it!

You have so much to be proud of: you planned a successful rotation, welcomed new students into the community, attended thousands of meetings, managed an incredible interhouse season, transitioned leaders, won athletic contests, participated in career fairs, hosted the student faculty conference, named our mascot, renamed a house, reimagined the Tech, authored a yearbook, attend-

ed events, supported your peers, applied for programs, participated in educational conversations, served on committees, heard cases, volunteered in the community, painted murals, welcomed Science Olympiad back to campus, traveled to conferences, celebrated each other's successes, cared about Caltech, and worked hard as leaders, advocates, partners, collaborators, communicators and stewards. You made things happen whether they were new study lounges, the CRC, house spaces, programs, policy changes, grant proposals or traditions.

You also stayed the course when things weren't easy. And let's face it, they are not always easy. For the most part, being a leader is about managing when things are not easy, and you had setbacks for sure. There were noise complaints and construction delays and, of course, covid issues. But you made things happen in spite of the setbacks, and you deserve credit for all that you accomplished. Sometimes you expressed feelings of defeat - things move slowly, or change, or plans get reconsidered. But I am always impressed that student leaders at Caltech problem-solve and find paths forward that work. I always appreciate your work here and try to honor it in my own work.

Student leaders play an important role in the work of the Institute and your work matters. Thank you for putting so much effort into everything you do. Everyone around you recognizes it and appreciates it. Especially me. Once again - a huge thank you.



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Minecraft 1.20 Update Review

Jessica Fox | Gaming

With the end of term fast approaching and the taste of freedom on the tip of the tongues of Caltech students, the knowledge of having free time for the first time in months is undeniably tantalizing. But what to do with that free time is a question that has yet to be answered. According to Mojang and Microsoft, that free time is best filled playing the newest Minecraft update: Minecraft 1.20: Trails and Tales. To determine whether your coveted, limited, precious free time should be spent playing with this newest of Minecraft updates, I spent time I probably should have used writing my hum essay playing around with the latest update and writing this article. So, I shall begin.

The Blocks

The blocks can be divided into one of three categories: building, redstone, and decorative. The most notable of these is the building blocks, which are the new cherry wood block sets and the bamboo and bamboo mosaic blocks. The cherry wood block set, like the other wood sets, has the regular logs chopped from the tree, the wood, the stripped logs, stripped wood, planks, slabs, door, sign, button, and pressure plate. The wood and logs are a deep purple, and the other cherry blocks are a beautiful pale pink. The cherry door has a lattice-type structure at the top and there is a grid on the trapped door. Overall, the wood set is gorgeous and will make an excellent addition to

the previously existing wood varieties. The next main new set is the bamboo and bamboo mosaic set. The update adds blocks of bamboo, blocks of stripped bamboo, and the typical planks, slabs, and other blocks found in the wood set. In addition, there is the bamboo mosaic block, stairs, and slab. The bamboo set in general is nice to look at, but by adding the mosaic, it gives a level of contrast in the pattern that can make a very nice build.

The redstone block that was added to the game is the calibrated skulk sensor. It works like a skulk sensor in that it picks up noise, however, when connected to redstone, it sends out a redstone signal. I think this could be very useful in the use of boobytraps in secret or protected bases. It is a relatively minor thing, but it can have a large variety of uses and it is very cool in my opinion. Outside of pure redstone, the update has added hanging signs, which are supposed to be placed beneath blocks (though they can hang free), which provide a nice additional decoration block. Furthermore, the update has added the ability to edit signs, which makes fixing and changing signs much easier. Cherry boats and bamboo rafts (with and without chests) have also been added.

The primary decorative blocks are the cherry leaves, followed by a series of other plant blocks. The cherry leaves are a gorgeous series of small pink flowers interspersed with green leaves. For the additional plant blocks, this update added in pitcher plants, which are grown from pods collected by the Sniffer (more on that later), and the torchflower (similarly found by the Sniffer). The pitcher plant has multiple stages of growth and matures into a green, teal, and purple plant that is about 1.5 blocks tall. The torchflower is green with a brilliant orange-yellow blossom that resembles the block from which they got their name. Despite these gorgeous plants, my personal favorite of the new decorative blocks is the pink petals. They are very unique in their design, as four of them fit on a single block, creating different ways to place them and pattern them. A full block filled with pink petals has two large flowers of different shades of pink, followed by several smaller ones. They lie flat on the ground and in my opinion, are the pinnacle of decoration.

The Biomes

There is a single new biome added, the Cherry Blossom Biome, and it is a gorgeous change compared to the previous biomes, which are almost all varying shades of green, brown, and tan. The dark purple wood with the bright pink blossoms is a beautiful combination, and surrounding the trees are pink petals, giving the



impression of petals from the trees falling and gathering into piles on the ground. The grass is a medium-light shade of green that contrasts great with the pink and complements the green in the cherry tree blossom blocks. It is a very, very peaceful biome that I would love to build a house in given the opportunity.

The Mobs

The winner of the most recent mob vote and the most talked-about mob in this update is the Sniffer. It resembles a moss-covered dinosaur with a large yellow snout. The mob comes from eggs that can be obtained either from breeding two adult Sniffers or, according to Mojang, from brushing suspicious sand (see the Archeology section) in warm ocean ruins. The eggs hatch faster when placed on moss blocks and are almost one square meter in size. The Sniffers will wander around, looking for plants which the player can collect, and will occasionally lay down. They are passive, but not domesticable mobs, meaning that they will need to be fenced in or attached to a lead to prevent them from wandering off.

The other mob released in this update is the camel. The camel, in my opinion, is a mob that is aesthetically very nice but not particularly useful. They sit and move like real-life camels, and as a result, they are very slow. Though in the update, they were boasted to be able to jump great distances, the leap is almost entirely horizontal in its nature and does little for traversing any upward slope. The other main benefit of this mob is that two players can ride it at a time, however, overall, I don't see much use for this mob practically aside from providing more fauna to the desert biomes.

The Armor Trims

The armor trims are, in my opinion, the most overrated part of this mod. Aside from the netherite upgrade smithing template, which must be found in bastions and is now the only thing that enables diamond armor to be upgraded to netherite, the armor trims do nothing but make armor more interesting to look at. Don't get me wrong, the armor trims can look gorgeous, but it does nothing to change the properties of the armor. Adding diamond trim doesn't increase the armor status, gold doesn't make the Piglins friendly to the player,

and no enchantment-style effect is placed upon the armor after adding any trim. The armor trims are pretty, yes, but they are not functional, and unless a player is particularly rich in materials, I don't see it being worth it using, for example, a diamond trim on something.

Archeology

This was, without a doubt, the part of the update I was most excited about. Mechanically, not much was added in this portion of the update. Suspicious sand and suspicious gravel were both added, and upon brushing them with a brush (comprised of a stick, a copper ingot, and a feather), they have a chance of revealing a pottery shard. Four pottery shards of the same design can be combined to make decorated pot, which looks rather pretty, however, they cannot hold anything like a flowerpot can. The suspicious sand and gravel can additionally provide a piece of a new music disc or, in the right place, a Sniffer egg. The mechanics of the suspicious sand and gravel are like their original counterparts, in that they are affected by gravity. However, if they fall, they shatter, and after being brushed, they revert to their non-suspicious versions. I found this portion of the update fun, but slightly underwhelming in that the pots cannot be used for anything other than decoration and it is difficult to get all the pieces of a single pot.

Overall, I think this update is good in terms of material and excellent in terms of potential lore. The archeology portion might lead to more information as to the history of the Minecraft world and the Sniffer might lead to more information as to its ecological history. The new blocks and biome are gorgeous, the armor trims and camel are overrated, and I think that it's a pretty solid update that adds some new features for building and decoration, as well as some new goals for exploration and new goals for what to collect. It is definitely worth taking a look at in your free time over the summer, as precious and short as that is. So after you finish your finals and you caught up on sleep, when you have a moment to breathe, take a look at the new update. It's fun, beautiful, and I guarantee that your Minecraft dog misses you after you were gone for so long, so maybe tell them you say hi.

Summer Ambassador Cohort

The Office of Residential Experience in partnership with Student Faculty Programs announces the 2023 Caltech Summer Ambassador Cohort. The Caltech Summer Ambassador '23 Charge for the summer term is

1. Practicing good communication with everyone
2. Planning fun events
3. Promoting inclusivity
4. Gathering positive and constructive feedback
5. Being welcoming and outgoing to all students

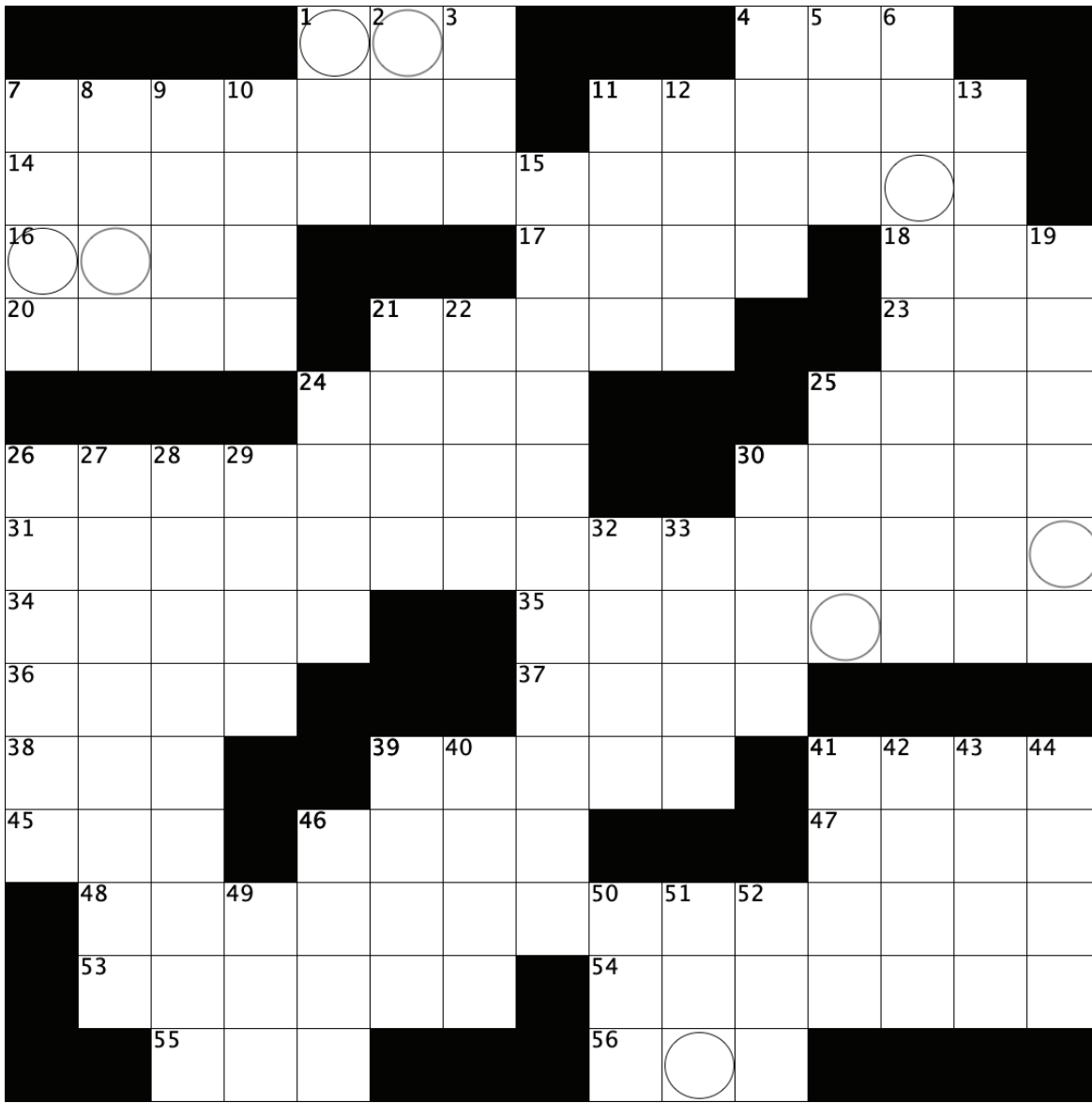


Assignment	Full Name	Graduating Year
Avery	Bao Nguyen	2026
Avery	Catherine Ko	2024
Avery	Inhoo Lee	2024
Avery	Luke Zhou	2025
Bechtel	Josiah Miller	2025
Bechtel	Juni Polansky	2025
Bechtel	Ramona Murugu	2025
Blacker	Jabri Garcia-Jimenez	2026
Blacker	Mars Arechavala	2026
Dabney	Annika Viswesh	2026
Dabney	Jessie Gan	2025
Dabney	Kenadi Waymire	2026
Dabney	Vibha Padmanabhan	2024
Fleming	Madelyn Gilbert	2026
Fleming	Sujay Champati	2026
Lloyd	Jena Alsup	2026
Lloyd	Sanjana Shah	2026
Page	Jana Woo	2026
Page	Noah Hicks	2026
Page	Priscilla Vazquez	2026
Page	Ria Patel	2026
Ricketts	Anna Mortari	2024
Ricketts	Lana Lubecke	2025
Ricketts	Mia Mutadich	2026
Venerable	Anagha Satish	2025
Venerable	Brittany Wright	2026
Venerable	Emma Isella	2025



The California Tech Crossword: "Classic Arcade"

by Enric Adillon and Madeline Hicks



ACROSS

1. Missing block shape from this puzzle's grid
4. Wood commonly used in furniture making
7. Can be caused by wind, water, or acid
11. Game that inspired this puzzle's grid, or hint to 1, 14, 31, and 54 across
14. Latest console from onetime owner of the rights to 11 across
16. See 5 down
17. Asian country home to the Mekong River
18. Chem ___, CCE summer social on Fridays
20. Large quantity, informally
21. Smug smile
23. Not near
24. Ukraine capital
25. ___ saxophone
26. shocking
30. Senob gel rewol
31. What 11 across will do when you fill out a full row, or what you should do to solve this clue's crosses. Hint: use the circled letters
34. 2016 Chris Brown hit
35. What you learn at a new job
36. ___ cat, early Youtube sensation
37. Clothing, en español
38. Social media comm. option
39. Location for a large sporting event
41. Church recess
45. NYSE event
46. Without cost
47. Coagululum
48. A state of discomfort
53. Sarah Koenig podcast
54. Device that popularized 11 across
55. ___ com bubble
56. ___-Wan, title of Disney+ fantasy series

DOWN

1. Attach
2. Span of geologic time
3. Linkin Park hit "In the ___"
4. Blues and soul musician Redding
5. Chrysler building style, with 16 across
6. Skateboard rotation
7. Halts
8. Cambodian money unit
9. First word of Tarantino's most recent film title
10. Put away
11. Emperor of Russia pre-1917
12. Native inhabitant of Endor
13. Place to store your sword for quick access
15. Caltech campus fauna
19. Net income before expenses
21. Bro or sis
22. Filmmaker Brooks
24. Next of ___
25. "It's ___ from me"
26. Indian language
27. Mount of the gods
28. Thought logically
29. Wasn't exactly brave
30. Ms., en español
32. Sweetie
33. D.C. group calculating a price for CO2 emissions
39. What you solve for by integrating
40. Housewives descriptor
41. Skin complaint
42. Insult inspired by a Roman social class
43. Nothing to write home about
44. Platform for small artists to make a buck
46. Dart about
49. Money maker, in sports
50. Word after a period of time
51. Snatch from someone
52. Uninhibited deets

"Amazon" skymall

Welcome back to Amazon Skymall! In this column, we hold a raffle where we [not] randomly select one of our lucky readers and give them the item of their choice from my hand picked selections!

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



<https://forms.gle/i5afB6iwsh5hkdvN8>



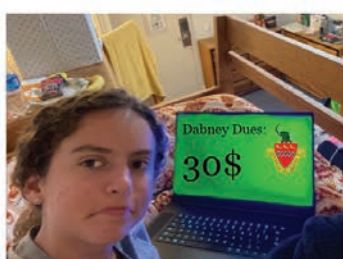
Sexy Daikon Radish Body Pillow \$32.43



Sculptures Decor Bronze Art Decor Horse Bronze Statue Sculpture Figurines Statues for Home "Better than a beaver" \$8999.89



Crossing Sign from Metro North Rail Road \$399.00



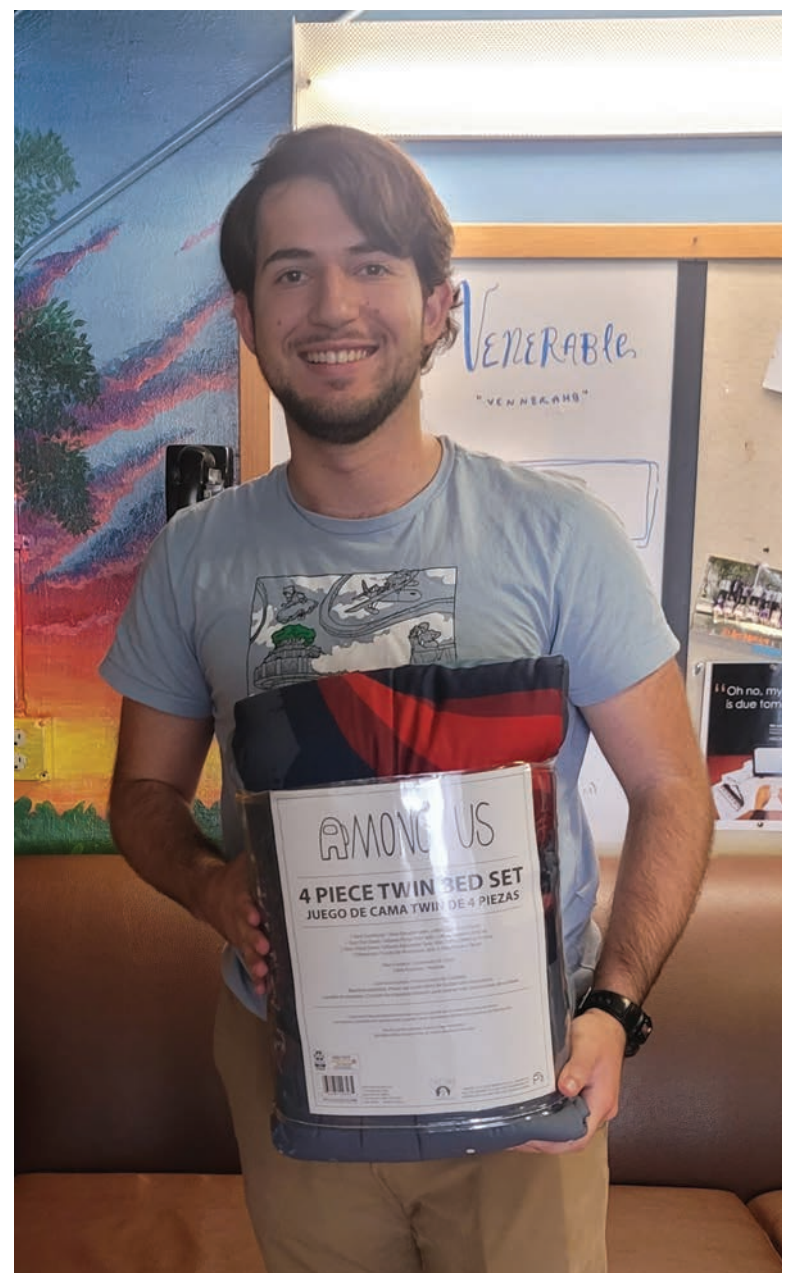
Emily's Dabney Membership \$30.00

NO

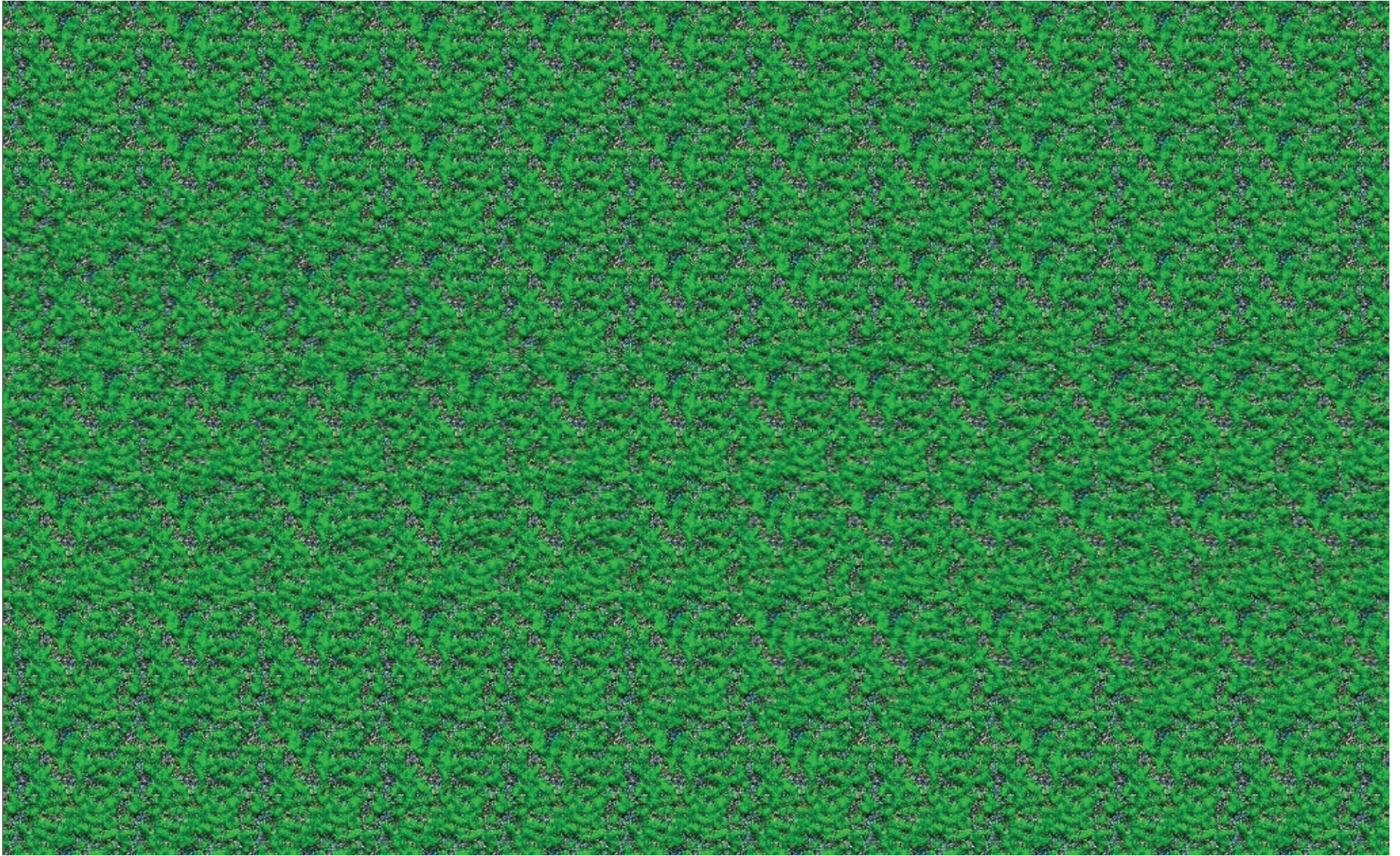
NO
-\$0.69
*Editors note: due to recent budget cuts we can no longer offer NO for free, now any recipient will have to pay the tech 69 cents

Last Week's Skymall Winner

Matthew Torres (Bi '25, Venerable) chose the Among Us Bed Set



Letter to the Editor | Magic Eye: Illusion, or Delusion?



Dear Editor,
 Seeing the Magic Eye illusion (AKA autostereogram) in the May 30th issue of the *Tech* brought back a lot of fun memories! In my youth, my dad had a book full of these illusions, and they were a lot of fun to decipher. In fact, a framed poster of an autostereogram hangs on the wall at home! I must admit, deciphering the *Tech's* magic eye was a bit of a challenge since most of the strategies I use rely on a somewhat reflective surface. But after about 30(!) minutes, I was able to see it, and now it just takes me a couple of seconds to find it again. Thank you for the fun optical challenge.

I was eager to share my excitement with friends, but to my dismay, I could not find anyone else who could see the hidden image. Fortunately however, this gave me the opportunity to teach people how to see the illusion. I was eager to share the mind-blowing experience I had when I saw my first autostereogram. Over several days, I coached my friends in Dabney Hovse on how to control their eyesight, and unlock the magic eye's secret. But my mission was ill-fated. My determination and enthusiasm that initially helped me view the magic eye became my adversaries when they became perceived as deceit. To everyone who could not see the illusion, it suddenly became easy to believe that the published image in *The Tech* was nothing more than a hoax. To compensate, I grew adamant of the existence of the hidden illusion, but this only strengthened suspicions. "Y'all are lying, it's a prank, stop lying" exclaimed Kelsie Taylor (Ph '23, Dabney), after spending a respectable amount of time trying to see the illusion. As much as it disappoints me, I must admit her stance is justified. Let's be real: how on Earth could any image be developed from a random field of

black and white pixels? But this is exactly what makes autostereograms so remarkable! The disbelief makes finally seeing the image all the more rewarding, so Kelsie is due for a huge payoff. Other individuals have more nuanced stances on the situation. As stated by Noah Ortiz (Ma '23, Dabney):

"It is my belief that, whilst "autostereograms" (colloquially "magic eye illusions") do actually exist and bring pleasure to tens of Americans every year, the so-branded image published in *The California Tech* on 30 May 2023 is, in fact, not an autostereogram.

"Rather, it is just a rectangular region filled with random static printed by dubious folks affiliated with the newspaper. Zero individuals have provided me verifiable proof that the image actually contains a "creature". It is my suspicion that those responsible, namely Michael "Guutz" Gutierrez (image author) and Kai "Kaironium" Svenson (promulgator), seek to "gas light" the "Caltech" population. In my opinion, taking psychological advantage of a notoriously gullible and anxious community shows a lack of empathy or misaligned motives, which calls into question the newspaper's journalist integrity."

Editor, it saddens me that such a unique and perplexing feature in the *Tech* has been received so poorly solely on the basis of ignorance and tin foil hat theories! To credit Noah however, the autostereogram published in the *Tech* on May 30th is particularly difficult to see. As Lynn Feng ('26, Marble) commented, "despite being able to see the shape easily, I had trouble identifying what it was from depth." Though I may be unable to directly provide the proof Noah seeks, I can do the next best thing and share my tips on how to view autostereograms. You can practice on the autostereogram I've included

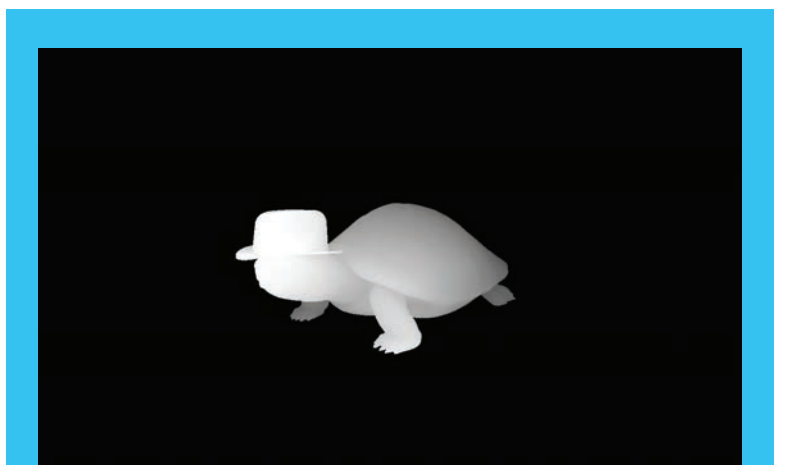
in this letter!

- Be in a room with plenty of ambient light. This makes it easier for you to control how you focus your eyes. Autostereograms can also be viewed from a computer monitor, and this might be easier than trying to view them from a printed copy of the *Tech*.
- Hold the autostereogram right up to your nose. Focus your eyes on something behind the paper and far away. This is the most important tip I think. An autostereogram is not a literal hidden image, like a *Where's Waldo* puzzle. Your eyes need to be focused beyond the paper. If you're viewing an autostereogram on a glossy or reflective material, focus on your reflection. If your clothing has words on it, try reading them in your reflection.
- Keeping your eyes focused behind the paper, slowly move the autostereogram away from you. Moving your head back also works if you're using a computer monitor. You don't have to move the paper far, just until you can view the full image.
- During or after moving the autostereogram away, try slightly converging or diverging the lines of sight of your eyes.
- It will be exceedingly obvious when you've found the image. It should appear 3D and holographic. I promise that after seeing the image the first time, you'll find it quite easy to find again.

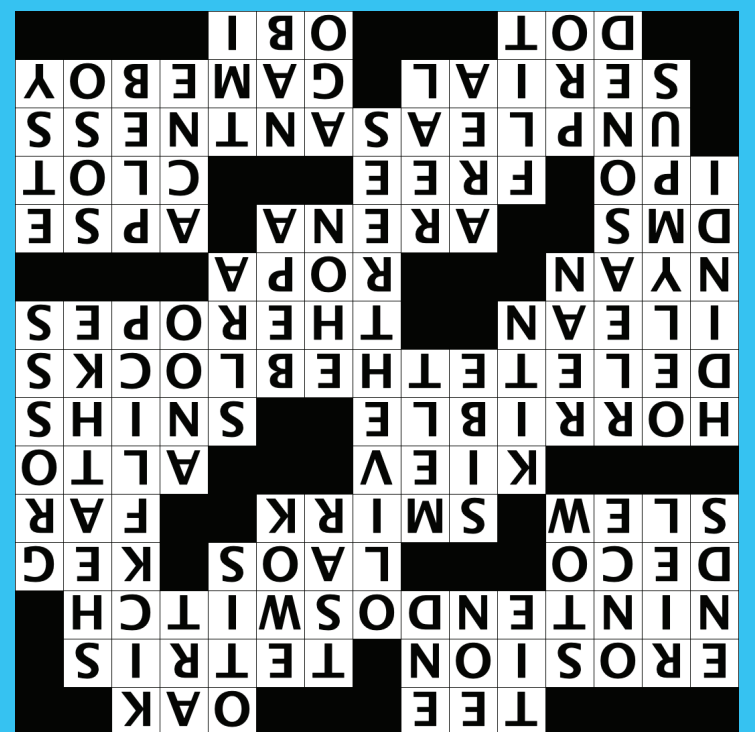
See the Wikipedia page on *Autostereograms* for more technical tips, and an explanation of how they work. I highly recommend checking out more autostereograms online as they appear in a wide variety of formats, and can have very intricate and detailed patterns.

I hope some readers find the joy in autostereograms as I have. Happy hunting!

-Kai Svenson



Solution to last issue's Magic Eye puzzle



Solution to "Classic Arcade" crossword (previous page)

ADVERTISE IN THE TECH!

The advertising deadline is Friday at noon the week before publication: all advertising should be submitted electronically or as camera ready art, but the *Tech* can also do simple typesetting and arrangement. All advertising inquiries should be directed to the business manager at tech@caltech.edu

Black & White Ads		2.5	5	7.5	10
Ad Height (inches)	2	\$25.00	\$40.00	\$55.00	\$70.00
	4	\$40.00	\$70.00	\$100.00	\$130.00
	6	\$55.00	\$100.00	\$145.00	\$190.00
	8	\$70.00	\$130.00	\$190.00	\$250.00
	10	\$85.00	\$160.00	\$235.00	\$310.00
	12	\$100.00	\$190.00	\$280.00	\$370.00
	14	\$115.00	\$220.00	\$325.00	\$430.00
	16	\$130.00	\$250.00	\$370.00	\$490.00
Cost per Line B/W		\$15.00 (One unit is 5 sq. inches)			
Processing Fee		\$10.00 (included in above table)			

Color Ads		2.5	5	7.5	10
Ad Height (inches)	2	\$35.00	\$60.00	\$85.00	\$110.00
	4	\$60.00	\$110.00	\$160.00	\$210.00
	6	\$85.00	\$160.00	\$235.00	\$310.00
	8	\$110.00	\$210.00	\$310.00	\$410.00
	10	\$135.00	\$260.00	\$385.00	\$510.00
	12	\$160.00	\$310.00	\$460.00	\$610.00
	14	\$185.00	\$360.00	\$535.00	\$710.00
	16	\$210.00	\$410.00	\$610.00	\$810.00
Cost per Line Color		\$25.00 (One unit is 5 sq. inches)			
Processing Fee		\$10.00 (included in above table)			

Make A Difference Day

Sascha Goldsmith | *The Outside World*

On 5/20, this year's Make a Difference Day was a success! Caltech Y Student Leadership coordinated 9 different projects ranging from community service to ecosystem preservation and gathered 65 volunteers! MAD Day teams split up to volunteer at the Boys' and Girls' Club, Eco Urban Gardens, LA Arboretum, LA Food Bank, Ronald McDonald House, Union Station, US Forest Service - Eaton Young, and the Young Legends program.

On the morning of MAD Day, volunteers are driven to their assigned site from the Y on campus, sometimes working with people they know, but more often than not, with new people they haven't met before! After volunteering at a site for a few hours, every participant gets a T-Shirt to commemorate their work, as well as lunch and boba (or some other treat).

Albert Kyi (ChE '23, Avery), the outgoing Caltech Y Excomm President, helped Co-Lead the Union Station site with Tiba Hamza (ChE '24, Venerable). He recounted staying at the Y for most of the day to help coordinate logistics, and later taking part in the Union Station Homeless Services volunteer site. There, Kyi and Hamza were responsible for "finding

recipes and buying ingredients to serve an entire meal (dinner in our case)" the evening before MAD Day (5/19). On the day of, their team of six "made burritos to serve the folks living at Union Station".

Rupa Kurinchi-Vendhan (CS '24, Venerable), the current Caltech Y Excomm president, oversaw two MAD Day sites, including Project Linus and Young Legends.

Volunteers for Project Linus were given the opportunity to help "crocheted squares that were sewn together to create a larger quilt and had the chance to speak with volunteers with the organization to learn more about how they contribute!"

On the same day on campus, Rupa's team also hosted the Young Legends program: "We gave tours and science talks to a group of empowered students in the Pasadena Unified School District."

Joseph Kim (CNS, En '24, Lloyd), a member of the Caltech Y Excomm was the leader of the Eco-Urban Gardens project, which led a de-weeding effort in a community garden. According to Kim, Community Work is important for two main reasons: helping others and helping oneself. Good faith labor and community service are



"irreplaceable". For example, senior centers will always need volunteers, and so will food drives. The act of volunteering to benefit a local community not only helps those in the "neediest circumstances", but also connects the volunteers to their community.

"It's easy to get lost in the bubble that is Caltech" Kim laments. "It serves as an invaluable educational experience to understand people from different backgrounds, see the different facets of our community and society, and learn transferable skills (e.g., cooking, gardening)." For Joe, having grown up with an ethos that promoted helping others and leaving a positive impact on the world is what has shaped his motivation to lead volunteer work. "Part of life to me is to make life a little brighter for myself and everyone around me. And community work is an integral part of that." Similarly, Albert Kyi has always viewed his time at Caltech to be "in preparation of using science to benefit others". However, recalling that, "It's easy to forget that there are easier and more direct ways to help out folks. Helping out at places like Union Station is very grounding and keeps

things in perspective, especially when things get stressful and hectic at Caltech. I think especially because the Caltech population is privileged but is also centered in a city with great inequity, that it's valuable to volunteer locally."

MAD Day is "usually organized in the same way year-to-year, where students are organized into multiple groups and get a chance to volunteer in a variety of ways" noted Rupa. Categories of volunteer projects often include labor, outdoor activities, working with

back in the following years!"

Through Make a Difference Day and so many more service activities like Rise Tutoring, policy activism, and outdoor events, the Caltech Y is one of the central sources of student outreach at Caltech. According to Kyi, the Y is integral in complementing a lot of aspects of college life that aren't particularly prevalent or naturally active on campus, acting almost as a "Great Equalizer".

Photos courtesy of Sascha Goldsmith and Caltech Y Excomm.



Choosing Caltech: A Frosh Retrospective

by Lynn Feng

I spent my first night at Caltech deciphering runes.

Earlier that day I had been exploring the SAC and happened across an alcove with black runes painted inside. I was informed it was called the Sacrifice Room, and that the runes originated from a stack some years back. But the student I was talking to didn't know what the runes said, so, determined to find out, I recruited two other curious prefrosh. We spent the evening huddled around iPads and scribbled notes, trying to decode the message.

I remember wondering to myself: at what other university could I find mysterious runes painted on a wall *and* two other people willing to spend their first day deciphering them? In my acceptance letter, Caltech promised to be a place where I would be surrounded by curious, brilliant people. A place where I could go to change the world. Would Caltech continue to live up to its promises? Or was this all just prefrosh hype, doomed to fizzle out once the term begins?

First term went by in a flurry. I pulled pranks, started a club, and designed scavenger hunts, all while being an active member of two houses and taking frosh core. I was busy, truly busy, for the first time in my life. And I loved it.

I was fortunate enough to form a group of close friends early on into my time here: people who were not only fun to hang out with, but who challenged my worldview and

pushed me to become better both socially and academically. I firmly believe the best friends are the kind that you can get up at 7am with to bake a surprise birthday cake and stay up 'til 4am with debating philosophy. I attribute many of my positive experiences here to the friends I've made - and though people I might be compatible with exist everywhere, I also credit Caltech for creating an environment that facilitated forming these bonds.

When deciding whether to attend Caltech, one of my biggest worries was the infamous academic workload. Like many people here, I had spent my time in high school largely occupied by schoolwork and other academic activities. It was tedious and stressful, and I wasn't eager for a repeat. But to my relief, Caltech turned out to be nothing like high school 2.0.

Everyone has their gripes about the design of this core class or the other, and I'm no exception - but I'll always commend the way Caltech's core was designed to force me to stop procrastinating, seek help proactively, and learn to learn, and how the collaborative culture turned even the most grueling assignments into an opportunity to hang out with friends. My favorite core class was Math 1a. It was my first proof-based math course, and it nearly convinced me to pick up a math double major. Each problem was a puzzle to solve. As frustrating and challenging as it sometimes was, those late-

night *eureka* moments and enthusiastic hi-fives were well worth the journey to get there.

After first term, I started getting into stride. Encouraged by my friends, I became more academically adventurous, pushing myself out of my comfort zone to take exciting-but-difficult courses. I also prioritized getting involved in interesting events: ski trip, MIT Mystery Hunt, Blackathon, to name a few. (I'm still sad about having to miss an important Dabney event that conflicted with MITMH - next year, for sure!). Despite being busier than I ever was before, though, I still had free time to rest or pursue random hobbies. Before Caltech I often lost hours to mindless procrastination while getting far less done. Whether it was my experience at Caltech or just maturing, throughout the course of the year I became much better at managing my time.

I'm approaching the end of my first academic year now, though I'll still be a frosh for a few months. This summer, I'll be doing a SURF project working with a technology I've always been fascinated by: brain-machine interfaces. I'll also be reading sci-fi, playing DnD, pranking friends, hosting study groups, relearning how to play piano, and cooking a lot. I'm looking forward to a relatively relaxing summer - and to the exciting classes I have planned out for next year and beyond.

Caltech is where I learned

how to deal with not understanding something, and to not give up until I do. Caltech is where you can find mysterious runes on a wall and people interested in deciphering them. Caltech is where I can get into an argument with two friends over an inane prisoner's-dilemma-style thought experiment about vegan aliens, and finding our debate inconclusive, email

a game theory professor to settle the score... *and* get an enthusiastic response. (Take PS 172! This article is sponsored by Professor Omer Tamuz, who is very cool).

Whether or not Caltech will really allow me to change the world remains to be seen. But so far, it's lived up to its lofty promises. I couldn't be happier about choosing Caltech.



Nika (left) and Jaylen (right), building a trebuchet for Blackerthon. Photo courtesy of Nika and Jaylen.