

The California Tech

VOL. CXXIII No. 5

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2020

TECH@CALTECH.EDU

RUDDOCK IMPRESSES WITH 'DR. WHOPI'

DEVIN HARTZELL | FEATURE

Last Saturday Night, Ruddock House held their annual interhouse party, called OPI. This year's theme was Doctor Who.

In order to maintain a cohesive party while still fitting the theme, Ruddock had to coordinate the construction of their dance platforms with large art pieces, according to Elaine Lowinger '21. The party featured a TARDIS-themed entryway, a life-sized Dalek, a light-up house crest, a TARDIS console with reactive LEDs synchronized to music, and elaborate art based on the show both around the dance platform and inside the dining hall and lounge.

According to Lowinger, "the biggest thing for Ruddock is trying to get everyone in the house involved in some fashion," between prepar-

ing the themed food, building the dance platforms, or working on the art pieces. According to Aditi Seetha-

raman '23, who painted a design on the house piano, "It was a lot of hard work, but it was really worth it!"



Images from OPI (Clockwise from left: Daniel Contaldi, Daniel Contaldi, Ray Sun)

CORONAVIRUS CASES POP UP ACROSS U.S. OVER WEEKEND

MICHAEL VALVERDE | News

The coronavirus has spread through the United States this weekend, with urban centers such as New York City and Chicago announcing their first confirmed cases of the illness. In Washington, the death of two elderly men prompted governor Jay Inslee to declare a state of emergency, urging residents to remain home if sick and practice good hygiene.

Things did not go much better in the rest of the world, with countries such as South Korea seeing a massive surge of cases over the past week. To date, there have been over 88,000 confirmed cases worldwide, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths.

Looking towards home, two cases were confirmed in the Bay Area, both without any obvious cause; the patients in question had not traveled to China recently, nor did they knowingly encounter someone who did. This may suggest that they received the virus from someone else in America who was not diagnosed.

Fueled by fear of the coronavirus, the global economy took a substantial hit this past week, with more than six trillion dollars in market value being wiped from stock markets around the

world. The New York Stock Exchange saw a particularly bad decline, with the Dow Jones losing 3,500 points last week, its worst weekly performance since 2008. This mainly stems from the shutdown of factories and stores abroad, especially those in China, which has been hit especially hard by the coronavirus.

Hearing such bad news, panicking and fearing the worst is a natural reaction, however, at the time of publication there are no known cases in Pasadena and the risk of infection for the general population is low. That being said, we should all be proactive in minimizing the chance of an outbreak occurring, both for our sake and for those around us. John Y. Tsai, MD, Medical Director of Student Services and Julia M McCallin, Associate Professor for Human Resources have recently sent out an email to the Caltech Community with some helpful tips on preventing infection, reprinted below for ease of access. We should all strive to follow these guidelines to create a safer campus.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your

hands) or wear a mask when coughing or sneezing.

- Wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Do this frequently, and certainly after sneezing, coughing, or before/after touching your face.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible.

- Avoid contact with others who are sick and do not travel while sick.

- Get an influenza vaccine if you have not already done so.

CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS ARE TODAY!

Remember to vote!
Go to registertovote.ca.gov for more information.

L SECURES PODIUM, 200 FLY RERCORD ON SCIAC'S DAY FOUR

MARK BECKER | SPORTS

COMMERCE, Calif. (Feb. 23, 2020) – The Caltech men's swimming & diving team went out on a high note on Sunday with freshman Shoonhsin Li (Horseheads, N.Y. / Horseheads) staking his claim with the third-fastest 200 Fly time in the conference on the final day of the 2020 SCIAC Championships.

Li broke his own program record in the prelims, touching the wall in 1:49.63 to enter the finals seeded third, rounding out a clear top three among SCIAC swimmers in the event. When the night session rolled around, the rookie standout not only matched his third-place finish in the prelims, but dropped his record-breaking time an additional eight-tenths of a second, cementing his status among the 200 Fly NCAA 'B' cut. Li's big performance also helped lock the Beavers into a sixth-place finish among the nine conference teams with 322 points, beating out Chapman University, Whittier College and the University of La Verne.

Three Beavers also competed in the 1650 Free finals with freshman Nathan McAlister '23 capping off an impressive weekend with a 12th-place 16:38.90. Adam Kogan '21, the school record holder in the event, came in 14th with a 16:44.17 while freshman Isaac Smith '23 rounded out competing Beavers with a 17:04.10. All three times represented seasonal-best. Meanwhile, an additional three Beavers made Sunday's 'B' finals. Freshman George Wythes '23 posted a season-best 1:57.19 in the 200 Back but was unable to replicate or better that time in the finals.

Joshua Lee '23 and Jeffrey Ma '22, who appeared in the 'B' finals of the 100 Breast earlier in the weekend,

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CALIFORNIA PLAYS OUTSIZED ROLE IN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

DEVIN HARTZELL | NEWS

Everybody knows that today is Election Day in California (if you didn't know this, put down this newspaper and go vote as soon as possible!). The Presidential Primary election has received its fair share of coverage in the media; after all, California's Democrats care deeply about who they will choose to take on President Trump in November.

However, the big names on the ads you've probably seen on the TVs in Chandler aren't the only people (or issues) on the ballot this Tuesday. There are a score of other elections happening at the same time, which have high stakes for millions of people in Los Angeles County and California.

CONGRESSIONAL AND STATE SENATE PRIMARIES

Aside from the race for President, Rep. Judy Chu is up for re-election against two Republican challengers: Beatrice Cardenas, a real estate agent, and Johnny Nalbandian, an entrepreneur and founder of a seafood company. Also on the ballot is Independent Christian Daly, a community activist and deputy county supervisor. Under the California nonpartisan blanket primary system, the two candidates who get the most votes today will appear on the ballot in November.

State Sen. Anthony Portantino is up for re-election against two write-in challengers: Kathleen Hazelton (R) and State Sen. Evan Wecksell (L). Hazelton doesn't appear to have an online presence, but Wecksell, a tutoring business owner, does. This race also follows the top-two primary system, meaning that the two candidates who get the most votes will appear on the November ballot.

HIGH-STAKES DISTRICT ATTORNEY ELECTION

However, one of the highest-stakes

elections comes at the local level: the race for Los Angeles County District Attorney. According to an LAist report, the District Attorney Office is one of the largest in the country, overseeing more than 1,000 lawyers and jurisdiction over the county's 10 million residents.

More importantly, though, the candidates in the race have vastly different visions for how the office should be run. According to an LA Times report, incumbent Jackie Lacey is running against two progressive challengers, who are part of a nationwide effort to elect more reform-minded district attorneys. While Lacey's office has won a number of high-profile cases including the conviction of Marion "Suge" Knight for manslaughter, progressive activists have criticized her reluctance to prosecute police officers for unnecessary use of force.

Lacey is noteworthy for being both the first female and first African-American district attorney in the county. Her upbringing in South L.A. also informs her decision-making: according to an interview published in the LA Times, she recalls being scared of gang violence while walking to school in the mornings, and her father was shot in the Crenshaw district after supposedly painting over gang graffiti.

Since she was elected in 2012, she has instituted a policy of diverting mentally ill people away from the criminal justice system towards treatment, and recently secured dismissal for 66,000 marijuana-related convictions, according to the LA Times. However, she opposed Proposition 47, an effort to reduce some drug-related and petty theft convictions from felonies to misdemeanors, and opposes the elimination of cash bail. She bills herself as a "reasonable reformer" and has the endorsement of the unions representing LA's police officers, who have spent \$1.8 million on her behalf.

While Lacey opposed Proposition

47, one of her opponents, George Gascon, is the man who wrote it. Gascon is a former LAPD officer who rose through the ranks to become assistant chief and then chief of police in Mesa, AZ, later moving to San Francisco, where he was appointed District Attorney in 2011. Gascon notably supports the elimination of the death penalty and cash bail and expunged marijuana convictions in San Francisco before Lacey did. Gascon has the endorsements of Sen. Kamala Harris and Rep. Maxine Waters, who has been a longtime advocate for criminal justice issues.

The other candidate in the race is Rachel Rossi, a former public defender and congressional staffer. During her time working for Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL), she helped develop the First Step Act, which "reduced mandatory minimum sentences at the federal level and increased the chances for minimum-risk inmates to receive early release," according to an LA Times report. While Rossi does not have prosecutorial experience, she stands out as an advocate for racial justice, and says that she would stop prosecuting crimes committed by the homeless. She similarly opposes the death penalty and cash bail.

ANALYSIS: CANDIDATES DIFFER IN VISION

While all the candidates in this race agree in the need for reform, they differ in their visions and governing philosophies. Gascon and Rossi argue for a fundamental transformation of the criminal justice system, arguing that many of the system's current problems are caused by deep systemic racism. According to the LAist report, "Lacey says it's important to be aware of things like racial income disparities, but adds, 'people make bad decisions.' Lacey sees her main priority as protecting the victims of crime."

According to the LA Times report, Gascon may be gaining a foothold in Lacey's base of support in South L.A. The general feeling among voters there is that Lacey hasn't been responsive

to their concerns since taking office, though not very many are engaged in the race. According to Imagine Justice, a group supporting Gascon, voter outreach in South L.A. is key to their campaign strategy. Furthermore, the police officers' support for Lacey may disenchant progress-minded voters, because a key issue in the race is Lacey's reluctance to prosecute police officers for their use of force.

KEY POINT: ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

No matter the outcome on Tuesday, the election for District Attorney will surely have a direct impact on people's livelihood. The District Attorney has the ability to shape policy themselves, without having to go through a legislative body like the President has to. While many voters are concerned about the Trump Administration, this election could drastically shift the state of the justice system in this county and could have repercussions around the country. Choose wisely.

DEVIN'S OPINION

I'm from Hawaii, where judges are appointed by the Governor. I find it very strange that California elects its judges. There are scores of judges up for election this year on the primary ballot, alongside a myriad of legislators. It seems that people would likely be inclined to support the "toughest" judge, who convicts the most people, which isn't necessarily a good thing. Although I don't have any evidence to support this, it is my opinion that, sometimes, it's good to have leniency in the criminal justice system.

Devin Hartzell is a political columnist who needs to stop mentioning that he's from Hawaii.

SURVIVING ON THE FLEX PLAN

LORENZO SHAIKEWITZ | REVIEW

The Flex Plan is the lesser known of the two undergraduate meal plans. Compared to the simpler Anytime plan, the Flex Plan's \$235 lower price comes at a cost. The Flex Plan provides \$525 in dbal (declining balance that can be used to purchase food from CDS), Open Kitchen access, and waited dinner meals during weekdays. Students under the Flex Plan are also able to purchase retail items at Red Door, but are its benefits really worth the inconvenience of its limited balance?

After spending most of this term on Flex, my answer is a resounding yes. \$525 amounts to \$47.73 to spend a week (including finals week), or \$6.82 per day. That doesn't seem like much, but if used well, it's more than enough to comfortably sustain yourself without being a major inconvenience.

The trick of the Flex plan is taking advantage of free things: open kitchen for breakfast and coffee, Pizza courses, and free meals from campus

events. Home cooking and externally purchased meals from ventures off-campus are additional sources of food which don't deduct from your balance. With some minimal planning, you should be able to go either Saturday or Sunday without a meal from CDS, increasing your daily dbal allocation to \$7.95 per day.

That amount of money covers about a meal a day. During weekdays, breakfast and dinner are available for free, so the only meal you need to worry about is lunch. From my experience, the average Chandler meal is no more than \$7.95, so you should be set.

If you switch to this system, you're likely to spend even less on average. The amount of free events, cost-effective food, and days when cooking is far faster and better than Red Door lines may surprise you. And, there'll be less pressure to buy that extra dessert or eat that huge meal. Try it out for a term.

"OUT OF BOUNDS"

WAYNE DINUNZIO | CREATIVE PIECE

Out of bounds. A position that was filled by himself as he flailed and threw himself off the ledge. He screamed and pounded his throat against the wall as he fell, bleeding profusely, but not prior to before another blow to the head. He grunted and clutched at his head, staggering as he fell. Soon, he was no longer in view, and the edge of the stage was his.

"Now I have shown you that you can do what is within limit," he said to the students, as he stood up and stretched his long pigtails dog-tail. "Now I have shown you that you can do what is within limit," he said, and started running through the crowd, "Now I have showed you that you can go beyond what is within limit."

The crowd roared in approval, and then another, and another. Adjutant took the pigtail from the student who had shown him his appreciation and gave it to him, saying, "Now you know what is within limit."

The next student was a contemporary with the arts and had also shown him some classical poetry. "How do these things come into being? How are they produced? I was really asking myself these questions. After a short chat, I decided to find out myself. The answer, of course, was that they were all born from him. Growing up, he had collected a collection of books on everything from medieval history to current affairs. "I asked him where the books came from, and he just showed me the back of his head, saying that they were pretty much all purchased from him," I recalled. "He was quite amazing!"

Wayne Dinunzio is a columnist for the California Tech. We really should stop giving him the keys to the Tech room.

ASCIT PASSES AMENDMENTS 1, 2, AND 6, BUT REJECTS 3 AND 5

ALEJANDRO LÓPEZ | ANALYSIS

In an election with unusually high turnout for one of its kind, students expressed their preferences on five amendments to the corporation bylaws recently proposed by the Board of Directors.

Three of the proposed amendments passed with relative ease, with Amendment 1 simply replacing a section accidentally deleted during the previous set of amendments back in June. The deleted section included the timing of turnover for most positions on the Board of Directors and the effects of leaving it out would have remained ambiguous.

Amendment 2 makes an unprecedented but welcome change to the

publishing requirements for The California Tech, reducing mandatory publishing from weekly to biweekly or monthly. Current Director of Operations Rachel Sun (MechE '21, Fleming) commented "it is great that the student body passed an amendment for the Tech to publish biweekly since it will help sustain the newspaper in the long run. This will hopefully lighten the financial load and weekly workload on the Tech editors and allow for an improved undergraduate newspaper." But a majority of voters rejected another amendment regarding the newspaper, one that would change the office of editor from elected to appointed.

Another pair of amendments

Amendment	Yes	No	Abstain
1	169	11	21
2	159	26	16
3	73	108	20
5	95	93	13
6	158	21	22

VALUE YOUR DEMOCRACY WHILE YOU STILL CAN

BILGE GUNGOREN | OPINION

Democracy: on the surface, it seems like a simple concept to rely on the public's voice and opinions on matters concerning the government. Yet, in practice, democracy can be complicated. It is something that all modern countries aspire to, and claim that they have—regardless of the fact that many of countries whose name contains the word itself are the least democratic on earth. As someone from Turkey who witnessed several elections under suspicious circumstances (alleged power outages, strange appearances and disappearances of ballots, pro-government favoritism by the high election council)

Still, it sometimes seems like no country can get it right. For someone who's seen five suspicious elections—with alleged power outages, appearance or disappearance of ballots, or the very many government-favoring decisions of the high election council—and voted in one that eventually got cancelled because of a pointless reason, and someone who doesn't remember a time where Turkey wasn't ruled by our current president, I can say that Turkey is definitely one of the countries lacking in the fundamentals of democracy. To delve into the reasons and consequences would take more than what I have space for, so instead, with the upcoming presidential elections in the U.S., I will instead talk about most recent local elections, and how the seemingly unbeatable government took a harsh blow.

For years in Turkey, we've seen the ruling party breeze through elections—their candidates pretty much dominated the local elections in 2014, they succeeded in changing the parliamentary system to presidential system, and their candidate, Erdogan, who's our president now, won the election and became the president in the first round. A lot of the changes the ruling party brought to Turkey were to strengthen their hold, which is pretty much why the government now has

the reputation of being a dictatorship. However, their religious promises and conservative policies resonated with a large number of Turkish voters, which allowed them to keep their stronghold even with the increasingly undemocratic policies. That is, until the recent economic recession, and the alienation of a large number of people who didn't agree with them. Still, Turkey was lacking another strong candidate that could rile people up as Erdogan did, and have the support of people—at least until the recent local elections.

Now, I would like to point out that anything I say here will come from the point of view of someone who opposes the ruling party. The local elections on March 2019 was the first time ever I voted. Normally, I would've been extremely excited—I could finally state my opinion, even if it was just one vote. However, it seemed to me like that one vote would not matter—not when we were sure the ruling party would dominate the elections. In my opinion, there was no way even the strongest opposition candidate, Ekrem Imamoglu—the previous mayor of one of the neighborhoods in Istanbul, and an all-around well-liked but not very well-known candidate, couldn't beat the previous prime minister, who was the candidate for the ruling party. We went to the elections, thinking it would be the same as it always had been—the ruling party easily winning all the big cities and painting the country yellow—which was their color. We still voted, as was our duty, and I forgot to look at the results for a while as I was studying.

At least until pops of red, which is the opposition's color, started replacing yellows on the Turkey map shown on the news. The opposition was winning in some of the cities, taking the lead from the ruling party. First, it was the coastal cities. Then, to a lot of people's surprise, the capital Ankara. However, everyone's eyes were on Istanbul, easily the biggest city in

concerned the recent controversy over dropping ASCIT membership. Amendment 6, which creates an explicit procedure for students to drop membership by contacting the President in writing, passed with strong support. But Amendment 5, which would have eliminated ASCIT dues and considered student fees sufficient for membership scraped a narrow majority but failed to reach the required supermajority.

The BoD voted to withdraw a proposal for one final amendment, originally numbered 4, because it would have accidentally deleted a critical section that defines the elected positions on the Board of Directors.

Turkey and a commercial hub, where the ruling party's candidate was holding a slim lead over Imamoglu, who claimed that according to the results in his hands, he was winning.

Then, the news agency stopped releasing the results. For almost twelve hours, no one knew the winner until the high election council declared that Imamoglu won. This ushered in two weeks of multiple complaints by the ruling party about how the election were conducted, the recounting of votes in certain neighborhoods, and finally Imamoglu was declared the mayor. He sat in that seat for about two weeks before the elections were cancelled, on the grounds that voting officials weren't chosen legally. To this day, no one from the ruling party was able to explain why that affected the results, even though that had to be proven for the elections to be cancelled. But again, in a non-democratic country, the words of the ruling party comes above the law.

Not that cancelling the election mattered in the end. Imamoglu won again, by 800,000 votes instead of a mere 13,000. More importantly, though, he became a national hero and a symbol of democracy all over the country. The voter turnout at the second elections was higher than the first one, and people rallied behind Imamoglu to oppose the ruling party. Remember when I said one problem opposition had was that there wasn't a strong candidate that had a chance to win against Erdogan? Now they had one, and the ruling party put him in that position themselves by making him a victim of a corrupt system. Now, after years and years of desperation, we had hope. Hope that things could change.

Sometimes, it feels like one vote in elections won't matter. It feels like our opinions won't be heard, which makes it hard to care and take the time to vote. I certainly felt the same way during the last elections, as well as a lot of people supporting the opposition, but if those 13,000 voters felt the same way, now the ruling party would still be holding Istanbul in their hands,

and we wouldn't be talking about this. That one vote, at that time, mattered. So don't give up. Don't think it won't make a change. Vote. Who knows, you might end up with an Imamoglu in your hands as well.

Elections in California are TODAY—you really, really should vote, it can make a difference. Go to registerto-vote.ca.gov for more information. Bilge Gungoren is originally from Istanbul, Turkey, and is a page and opinions editor.

NEWS TICKER

JOSHUA PAWLAK | NEWS & EVENTS

OPI HAPPENED

Ok, I admit it was pretty cool

REDDOORLINE.COM SHUT DOWN

For one glorious week from February 18th to February 26th, students were granted a gift: no longer would they have to make the long trek to Red Door Café without knowing what line length they would encounter when they arrived. Alas, it was not meant to be.

CALIFORNIA TECH REMAINS “INDEPENDENT”

The proposed Amendment 3 to the ASCIT bylaws, which would have made the Tech Editor a committee-appointed position, was voted down in a 78-108 vote (with 20 abstaining).

DABNEY INTERHOUSE NEXT WEEKEND

On a completely unrelated note, Drop Day was last week.

CALTECH ORCHESTRA PERFORMS THIS SATURDAY/SUNDAY

They perform at 8:00PM on Saturday and 3:00PM on Sunday, with guest violin soloists Laura and Jennifer Frautschi. The program includes Fêtes (from Trois Nocturnes) by Debussy, Concerto for 2 Violins in D Major by Bach, and Symphony No. 5 by Shostakovich.

INTERHOUSE COMMITTEE CHAIR CANDIDACY STATEMENTS (2 CANDIDATES)

Rachel M. Sun

Running for: IHC Chair



Hi everyone!

My name is Rachel Sun and I am running for IHC Chair this upcoming year. I am running for IHC Chair because I care about the student body. I want to enhance the House system and give back to the Caltech community. If elected, I plan to improve communication between students and administration while looking out for the student body's needs and interests, refine the Rotation schedule and algorithm, and restructure mechanisms such as Orange Watch.

With my previous experience on ASCIT as Director of Operations and Secretary, I have the experience needed for this role. On ASCIT, I expanded the club funding budget and worked closely with the Tech Editors to ensure the Tech's short and long term success. I have and will continue to push for ASCIT to use their budget to maximize student benefit. Over my past couple years on ASCIT and on the Social Chairs Committee, I have learned to work effectively and champion student interests with administrators. I have developed strong relationships with many administrators and know how to navigate procedures at Caltech. If elected as Chair, I will be able to start pushing for student requested changes immediately.

I have had countless meetings with administrators and in each one, I have always advocated for students, whether it be preserving the House system, raising student concerns about issues ranging from Bechtel to changes in parking policies, or pushing to improve communication between students and administrators. If elected, I will gather student feedback and raise concerns to the correct avenues and see that these issues are addressed; I will also ensure that the student body is informed of not only the changes that occur, but also the reasoning behind these changes.

The IHC Chair's job primarily involves Rotation. Rotation is a long and tiring process for both frosh and upperclassmen; I plan to discuss Rotation changes and refinements with the IHC and survey the student body to make Rotation a less exhausting process for everyone. I will do my best to tailor Rotation and orientation to everyone's busy schedules. Rotation may not be a comfortable process for everyone, so I promise to demonstrate kindness and empathy if anyone reaches out to me during Rotation. In addition, I believe the algorithm can still be improved as overall frosh satisfaction this past rotation was not the best. I would encourage the IHC to discuss improvements to the algorithm to increase frosh satisfaction in house placement while maintaining house input. In the same vein, I would also push to ensure frosh who do not want to live in Bechtel will not be forced to live there.

There are many improvements that can be made to help make life at Caltech safer and more enjoyable for students. Orange Watch has the potential to be an effective mechanism of keeping students safe at parties. I would like to improve Orange Watch infrastructure by creating a clear communication chain between houses and pushing for training sessions to be scheduled at more convenient times. I also plan on introducing Orange Watch into freshman orientation so all students are trained in alcohol safety and bystander intervention and houses have a larger pool of potential volunteers. Orange Watch is a tough job, so I would also like to implement a reward system for all who volunteer. There is

a gap in understanding between authority figures (i.e. Security) and students. While they mean well for students' safety, it often feels like students are being watched by authority figures waiting to punish them. I hope to bridge this gap by pushing for the IHC to work directly with security to better understand the reasoning behind their actions while clarifying students' understanding of their processes and motivations and ensuring that security treats students fairly. I also want to make sure that the alcohol policy is safe and legal, but not unreasonable to those over 21 by continuing IHC's discussion regarding the alcohol policy with student affairs. As for promoting a more enjoyable experience at Caltech, I plan to use the IHC and ASCIT budgets to run inter-house events, increase faculty-student interaction, and most importantly, make students' desires a reality.

Over the past year, it has been my pleasure to listen to students' opinions and concerns and address these issues effectively. I will continue to do whatever it takes to advocate for students and ensure that the IHC does its best to work on issues that matter to students and have a positive impact on their lives at Caltech. I understand that being IHC Chair takes significant time and energy, especially during Rotation. I am fully prepared to devote myself to this job to make Caltech a better place. Caltech is good, but it can be so much better. Let's get to work.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me via Facebook Messenger or email at rmsun@caltech.edu.

Kiruthika M. Devasenapathy

Running for: IHC Chair



For the many of you who have better things to do with your time, a summarized list of goals I intend to work towards as a Interhouse Committee Chair are as follows:

- Generate more avenues of direct communication between the undergraduate student body and relevant administrators.
- Establish a system where expectations from administrators are clearly and specifically communicated to house leadership in a timely manner, and vice versa.
- Continue with data-driven reform of the Rotation process, both for this year and in forming the foundations for the next.
- Work with security to create more event-specific and flexible protocols that prioritize student safety.
- Increase transparency and build a stronger student governance relationship with those in charge of assessing Caltech liability concerns.
- Streamline the current Orange Watch organization process to minimize miscommunication.
- Follow through on the in-progress Institute policy reforms from the previous IHC.

Before elaborating on the specifics of some of the above goals, I also wanted to briefly outline why I am running for this position instead of stepping back and luxuriating in the blissful freedom of senior year. For one, I have immense respect and love for the unique cultural community of Caltech, and I want to

UNCONTESTED ELECTION STATEMENTS (1 CANDIDATE/TEAM EACH)

Douglas Nicholas Currault

Running for: Board of Control Chair



"The Honor Code is one of the best things about Caltech. Not only does it allow us to enjoy privileges like take-home exams and a collaborative approach to learning, but it creates a general atmosphere of respect and trust among students and faculty. Ultimately, it is the dedication and thoughtful participation of students through things like the Board of Control that allow this system to continue."

I said this when I ran for BoC Secretary a year ago and it still remains true. Since I first joined the BoC two years ago, I have seen many cases from every position — Representative, Secretary, Acting Chair — and helped to increase the fairness and clarity of the BoC process through the bylaws amendment last June. I would like to continue being involved with the BoC as Chair next year to ensure that the Caltech community continues to enjoy the advantages that the Honor Code provides.

BoC Leadership is responsible for leading the activities of the BoC, receiving reports of alleged Honor Code violations, organizing and scheduling the cases, and articulating the Board's recommendations and reasoning to the Deans. The Chair also serves as a member of the Routing Group, which helps determine who should handle ambiguous cases of Honor Code violations (the BoC, CRC, Deans, Title IX office, etc.)

I think my experience thus far on the BoC equips me to handle these responsibilities. If you have any questions about me or the BoC, feel free to email me at ncurrault@caltech.edu, message me, or find me in person!

Timothy Alan Yao

Running for: Board of Control Secretary



One of the amazing aspects about Caltech is its devotion to collaboration through its honor code. This academic environment allows students to achieve a greater ability to learn with their peers. Furthermore, the honor code builds a community of trust where students can feel comfortable collaborating, which is not only an integral part of academic life at Caltech but the larger scientific community as well.

The Board of Control plays a significant role – through the dutiful work of students – in upholding the Caltech honor code, in turn maintaining an environment where students feel safe working with others. It is for this reason that I chose to run for BoC rep a year ago. As BoC rep this past year, I sat various cases as part of the Board and as acting secretary. Through these, I gained experiences regarding the workings and responsibilities of the BoC and BoC secretary – experiences that I believe make me well suited to handle the duties of being a member of BoC leadership. As BoC secretary, I will continue to actively help uphold one of the best things about Caltech – the honor code – as well as work as a liaison between students, administration, and faculty to continue to promote academic collaboration in our community.

Feel free to contact me via email (tayao@caltech.edu) with any questions.

ensure that for at least one more year, we can continue to uphold the best parts of it. I also recognize that in the interest of inclusivity, several of the concerns that administrators have brought up throughout the years must be addressed. Rejecting those concerns out of hand, out of fear that the traditions we love will be lost forever, has so far not worked in our favor. That said, we are Caltech students--and I refuse to believe that the fantastically talented people I have gotten to know over the past three years cannot, given access to the right administrators and with the best systems for reform in place, develop solutions that actually work for our best interests. As IHC chair, I aim to provide that access and make systems of reform that last beyond my term. This leads into my first goal as IHC chair:

- Generate more avenues of direct communication between the undergraduate student body and relevant administrators.**

Having worked closely with the Office of Residential Experience (ORE) and Caltech Security as one of the two social vice presidents of Ricketts, I have already had the opportunity to build relationships with several of the administrators who have the ability to make the aforementioned goals a reality. As a member of both Ricketts and Ruddock house, I would like to think that I have also had the privilege of building relationships with a diverse subgroup of all of you, the Caltech undergraduate body. However, though I aim to work as an unbiased mediator, many of my choices and decisions are informed by my own experiences at Caltech. Therefore, I want to work with the ORE to establish frequent and regular opportunities for students to communicate with relevant administrators. While the current system of occasional office hours does allow for some student input, a significant amount of it occurs only after a change has been decided (and usually, poorly received). Allowing students to directly interface with administrators on the Event Registration Committee, Board of Trustees, and other relevant groups, at an event where discourse on the subject is openly welcomed, increases transparency and student input.

- Establish a system where expectations from administrators are clearly and specifically communicated to house leadership in a timely manner, and vice versa.**

As a social vice president, I noticed that many issues that arose with regards to Ricketts Interhouse occurred due to miscommunications between student leadership and administration. Many administrators were unable to give us clear expectations even until the Thursday before, either because they assumed that we had the same knowledge as previous years of the executive committee, because negotiations were still occurring on their side, or because of vague wording. From speaking to the other social organizers and presidents, I found that this issue was not unique to Ricketts.

I believe that a large part of making the parts of student life we value flexible to improvement and resistant to change that is not in our interest is about framing, communication with, and expectations from administrators. I want to work with the ORE to enact reform not only on our side but on their side, to continue standardizing the processes for event registration and other house event related protocols, and to designate student and administrator roles responsible for timely and clear communication.

- Continue with data-driven reform of the Rotation process, both for this year and in forming the foundations for the next.**

Sarah Crucilla, the ACRL, and the IHC of the past two years have done a lot of the legwork for accommodating Bechtel and the recent policy changes into Rotation. Even so, as with any newly established system, there are still a lot of minor issues to work out for the upcoming Rotation. To address these, I

intend to consider both student input, administrative restrictions, and the performance of the algorithm on as many potential and edge-case situations that I and the new IHC can think of. To be completely honest, while I find the lack of transparency with regards to the new algorithm to be frustrating, I do not believe that radical reform can be implemented before the next year of prefrosh arrive. However, I do believe that we can still make meaningful modifications that allow for better results without pushing administrators to fits of apoplexy, and that we should begin conversations with the new VPSA about bigger changes as soon as they are settled into their role.

- Work with security to create more event-specific and flexible protocols that prioritize student safety.**

Since the beginning of the shift from Caltech's in-house security to Allied Security, I have heard from many students about instances where following the protocol to the word resulted in students feeling like their safety and well-being was sidelined in the interest of avoiding legal retribution. Given that Caltech is an institution that has to account for liability issues, this is somewhat understandable. I believe there is a middle ground to be struck by working closely with security, house leadership, and potentially even the legal office to create improved protocols.

- Increase transparency and build a stronger student governance relationship with those in charge of assessing Caltech liability concerns.**

Building a direct link between house leadership and the administrators who assess the risk potential of our events will help inform the way we design them. The reasons for why new events were rejected by the Event Registration Committee were often unclear, but referenced liability issues. By working ahead of event registration with those best informed about Caltech's institutional liability, we will be better able to structure our events for the best chance of success, so I plan on making this an opportunity available to all house leadership and social organizers as IHC chair.

- Streamline the current Orange Watch organization process to minimize miscommunication.**

Having been on Orange Watch and on the social organizers committee, I've seen the issues that occur when the communication line for getting Orange Watch out has so many middlemen. In Ricketts, the Head PA had to message the Ricketts-specific chat to get the names/information. This was sent to the social VP, who sent it to the party organizer. The organizer compiled the information from all the houses and sent it to the IHC chair, who would then send it out to the rest of the school. As many of us have found, this process is very susceptible to error and also takes an unnecessarily long time because of the number of intermediates. I want to make a full groupchat of everyone who is orange watch trained and create a campus-wide Orange Watch coordinator to assist in adding new members, removing old members, and double-checking the final compiled lists for accuracy.

- Follow through on the in-progress Institute policy reforms from the previous IHC.**

This specifically refers to moving forward with the reforms to the Alcohol Policy, and continuing discussions with administrators about the nature of/potential for Bechtel representation on the IHC. For more information, please see the IHC meeting minutes.

If you made it this far, thank you! If you have any further questions with regards to the above or my position on other issues, I check Facebook messenger every 20 seconds and my caltech email (kdevasen@caltech.edu) a little less regularly.

UNCONTESTED ELECTION STATEMENTS (1 CANDIDATE/TEAM EACH)

David Melisso

Running for: Board of Control
Unaffiliated Rep.



The Caltech Honor Code is a defining feature of Caltech. It removes many of the inefficiencies that come with a lack of trust. Beyond simply allowing us to have take-home exams, giving students greatly increased flexibility, the Honor Code allows us to collaborate more than we compete. Whether on sets or on projects, we can trust the fellow members of the Caltech community not to take advantage of us and our hard work. The Board of Control lets us have confidence in the Honor Code, making the Honor Code more than just a statement.

One of the most important roles the BoC has is deciding the exact course of action to take in order to prevent further unfair actions. While there are punitive measures, there are also educational measures which allow students to learn from their mistakes. The discretion the BoC has over their recommendations makes the BoC less of a punitive board than it is a measure to protect the fairness in the Honor Code. I believe this is one of the best parts of the BoC, as it allows the board to make the decision which will be the most fair in a given situation.

As a BoC Unaffiliated Representative, I will uphold the fairness guaranteed for all students by the Honor Code. If you have any questions for me, feel free to email me at dmelisso@caltech.edu.

Sara Fish

Running for: Conduct Review Committee Student Co-Chair

Since it's me, I should clarify—I am seriously running for CRC Co-Chair. My relevant experience includes having served as a BoC rep for two years and having served as a CRC rep for the last year. As a CRC rep, I have served as interim Co-Chair for a case. Thus, I am familiar with the CRC process and am able to work well with Dean Weyman (the other CRC Co-Chair).

There are two reasons why I would like to be CRC Co-Chair. One, I care about the Honor Code, and I would like to help uphold its spirit. Two, I believe that the CRC could be greatly improved by adopting more consistent procedures. I plan to work with previous CRC Co-Chairs and Dean Weyman to improve the CRC's process.

This statement is deliberately brief—feel free to reach out to me (via email, messenger, or in person) if you have any questions. Have a nice rest of winter term.

CORRECTIONS

JOSHUA PAWLAK | EDITOR'S NOTES

We thought we caught them all, but we didn't... Here's what we messed up in the last issue:

On page one, we stated that the volume number for the issue was CXXIV. It was CXXIII.

On page two, we misspelled one of our reporters' names, Michael Valverde.



ARC MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES FOR 1 MARCH 2020. TAKEN BY DANIEL NEAMATI, ARC SECRETARY
PRESENT: ARUSHI, DANIEL, RAY, ALICE, ANNA, MOHINI, MAGGIE, SOPHIE, CHLOE, ANJINI, SCHUYLER

PROGRAM UPDATES

Student Faculty Lunches
- Good turnout! (30+ people)

Course Advising

- Took place last week
- If you have suggestions for future advising sessions (e.g. for time, location, food, structure, etc.) please message your friendly neighborhood ARC rep

Bi/BE/CNS Showdown 3/8/20

- March 8 from 4-5 pm in the Hameetman, clubroom 3

Course Compliments

- Has been updated

Research Page

- New updates (a few in GPS now!)

POLICY UPDATES

- CH 1B FERPA

> IF YOU DID NOT FILL OUT THE FERPA WAIVER, PLEASE FILL IT OUT ASAP

- ACCREDITATION - CO-CURRICULAR SUPPORT

> THE ARC IS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE INTERESTED IN BEING A PART OF THE FOCUS GROUPS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE MESSAGE ERIKA, ARUSHI, OR DANIEL

ARC MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES FOR 23 FEBRUARY 2020. TAKEN BY DANIEL NEAMATI, ARC SECRETARY

PRESENT: ARUSHI, DANIEL, MOHINI, MARCOS, SOPHIE, ANNA, AANICA, SCHUYLER, MAGGIE, ALICE, ERIKA, MEGAN, RAY, AMY

NEW REPS: AANICA (RICKETTS)

PROGRAM UPDATES

Student Faculty Lunches

- Happening on Thursday (Feb. 27)

Course Compliments

- Has not yet been updated on the website
- Please send us your compliments! You can win a free lunch/dinner with the person you compliment!

Research Page

- The new research page updated (ARC website at arc.caltech.edu)

HOUSE ADVISING

- NORTH HOUSE ADVISING SUNDAY

- SOUTH HOUSE ADVISING WEDNESDAY?

- AVERY/BECHTEL ADVISING DURING DINNER?

TRANSITION TO GRADES PANEL ON FRIDAY

- AT NOON

- ARUSHI TO EMAIL THE LIST

- ASK LYNN TO SEND IT OUT AS WELL

ASCIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES FOR MARCH 1, 2020. TAKEN BY LC CHEN.

Officers Present: Varun Shanker, Rachel Sun, Arushi Gupta, Yuying Lin, LC Chen,

Guests: Grace Ding, Neil Sanderson, Zoe Rock, Polina V., Eric Han

Call to Order: 8:05

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (VARUN):

Bylaw results came out
IHC elections out next Monday
Faculty Board meeting tomorrow

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

V.P. OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ARUSHI):

SFL went well
Course Compliment lunches
Academic year research page updated

V.P. OF NON-ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (SARAH-PROXY):

OPI happened this past weekend
Staff award application will go out tomorrow
Chair elections will be March 9
Secretary will likely be chosen soon after that
VPSA meeting tomorrow

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS (RACHEL):

Tech editor election on Monday
Clean up financial systems
Midnight Donuts

TREASURER (YUYING):

Clean up financial systems

SOCIAL MANAGER (JEN - PROXY):

Working on planning events this term

SECRETARY (LC):

Donut website

GUESTS:

Pitch for Fishing Club, Ricketts/Page, P/F party, dance club beginner performance
If anyone has any questions or concerns about a section of the minutes please email the appropriate officer. We are happy to answer any questions.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:30

ASCIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 23, 2020. TAKEN BY LC CHEN.

Officers Present: Sarah Crucilla, Varun Shanker, Yuying Lin, LC Chen, Arushi Gupta

Guests: Tony Kukavica, Jen Yu

Call to Order: 8:05

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (VARUN):

Bylaw amendments
New Donut

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

V.P. OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ARUSHI):

SFLs are Thursday 2/27
Option and course advising happening in the houses
Drop day Wednesday, registration starts Thursday

V.P. OF NON-ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (SARAH-PROXY):

Leadership week went well
Affiliated Faculty Program
OPI this weekend
PFE

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS (PROXY):

New Donut site

TREASURER (YUYING):

Nothing to report.

SOCIAL MANAGER (JEN - PROXY):

Color Me Mine event went well
New events
Formal details

SECRETARY (LC):

Donut email problems

GUESTS:

Pitch for Chess Blitz tournament
If anyone has any questions or concerns about a section of the minutes please email the appropriate officer. We are happy to answer any questions.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:30

ARC TIP OF THE WEEK

Make sure to meet with your advisor!

ADVERTISE IN THE TECH!

TECH@CALTECH.EDU

The California Tech

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Devin Hartzell | Joshua Pawlak

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Bilge Gungoren | Kenny Thai

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ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES

RAY SUN | PUZZLES

Months	Games	Developers	Downloads
March	Wizard World	Apptastic	8.9 million
April	Angry Ants	Novio	5.5 million
May	Flowcharts	Digibits	2.3 million
June	Vitalinks	BeGamez	1.5 million
July	Bubble Bombs	Vortia	6.8 million

Puzzle 1

Years	Friends	Activities
2001	Ellen	hiking
2002	William	kayaking
2003	Henrietta	camping
2004	Isabel	skydiving
2005	Rochelle	cycling

Puzzle 2

Storage	Phones	Brand Names	Prices
2 GB	Alphalon II	Opel	\$199
4 GB	Epplex 7s	Andromeda	\$75
6 GB	Winnow XD	Volkia	\$225
8 GB	Zennia 580	Technitron	\$165
10 GB	Portimax C	Mobilex	\$25

Puzzle 3

Note: Ray was busy with OPI this week, so unfortunately we don't have new puzzles for you. Hope you had fun with the last week's puzzles!

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dear Editors,

I am writing to encourage students to oppose the bylaws amendment to be voted on with ASCIT elections next Monday. The ASCIT BoD recently voted to propose a new version of amendment 5 from last week after it failed to obtain the required 2/3 majority to pass. I would argue that the amendment has issues beyond its initial failure to guarantee funding for the Tech – most notably, it removes ASCIT's financial independence. This amendment does not simply align the ASCIT bylaws with administration's practices. As of now, there is an understanding that Caltech collects dues on behalf of ASCIT (\$30/term as per the bylaws). While they are collected through the Bursar's office, they remain dues paid by members (just as House dues are), setting ASCIT's budget. The new amendment removes ASCIT's ability to control its budget in any meaningful way. It simply declares that payment of student fees to Caltech satisfies ASCIT's dues requirement, leaving ASCIT's funding up to Caltech as whatever portion of student fees it wishes to appropriate for ASCIT. If this amendment passes, ASCIT will have lost its financial independence and any claim at being a student organization – for all intents and purposes, it will be part of Caltech Student Affairs. ASCIT provides many important services to students, including the essential function of publishing an independent newspaper. If students desire to keep ASCIT independent of administration, they should voice their opinion to the BoD and to administration by voting in opposition to this amendment.

Yovan Badal

EDITORS' NOTES

Write for the Tech!

Email tech@caltech.edu

FACULTY SPOT-LIGHT: ADAM BLANK

ALEX HONG | INTERVIEW

Adam Blank is a teaching professor in the CS department. He teaches CS 2 (Intro. to Programming Methods), CS 3 (Intro. to Software Development), CS 24 (Intro. to Computing Systems), and the CS 11 interview prep and the ICPC competition tracks.

The department is looking for more people to compete in ICPC, an international programming competition. This year, Caltech came in 14th in the US and Canada (and more importantly, beat Stanford and Berkeley).

Interview conducted and condensed by Alex Hong, with Hopper the dog on her lap.

Q. What kind of research do you do?

A. I'm teaching faculty, so I'm primarily judged on my teaching, not on my research. But when I do do research, it's focused on education. I'm interested in how to teach computer science in a way that gets people invested, makes a diverse population interested in it, and is effective as opposed to just reading slides.

Q. Your research page says you're working on semi-automated proof-grading?

A. Yeah, so that's something I've worked on in the past. I'm not currently teaching any classes with proofs, so I haven't been working on it lately. But the general idea is instead of having people just submit a PDF, having them use a website that tries to infer relationships between variables, definitions, consequences of implications, etc., all based on either machine learning or regular expressions. This way we can tell the TA that "Look! This variable was defined all the way over here", so it's easier to read the proof. I'm interested in informal proofs that you would turn in like a math or CS class and how to make those easier to grade and more effective to write. It's like a typechecker for proofs instead of programs.

Q. Are there any other projects that you're working on?

A. There are three things I'm working on, all with different students. In our



Adam Blank. Daniel Contaldi

intro CS classes we have queue software that allows students to say "I have a question", and it inserts them into the queue, and they ask their question when they get to the top. Ideally they're happy and don't have any more questions, but realistically they have more questions and re-insert themselves at the bottom of the queue and keep waiting to get to the top again. It's a really inefficient, ineffective system. And sometimes, the questions are such that if we knew what they were, we could give hints without human interaction. What I'm interested in is making the queue software smarter. Can we use keywords or something to determine if there's a way that the students can be helped without having to wait half an hour. One possibility would be a scaffolded debugging process, since a lot of the questions are "my code doesn't work, I don't know what to do." The system could guide them through, asking them to answer questions, so that by the time the TA gets there, either we've rubber-ducked the solution; or the TA now has all this extra information that would've taken a while for the student to give.

I'm also interested in data structure visualization. In Eclipse, you could use the debugger and it would show you all the data structures as you're building them. Now we use IntelliJ, so the whole thing is useless. One of my projects is working with a student to port it into IntelliJ and make it smarter.

Another project is data structure comparison. Basically tests (in CS 2 in particular) are very opaque, and kind of just tell you "look! The sizes are wrong". What do you even do with that? What you'd really like is to have multiple different comparison tools

for each type of data structure where it can say, "ok, in your tree, it looks like this thing does not follow the binary search tree property" or "in a heap, it looks like you've percolated too far" or "in a hash table, this doesn't have the right hash code".

Q. What's your CS background?

A. I focused on teaching. I like to joke that I got a minor in TAing, because I started TAing my sophomore fall and managed to TA eight times between then and graduation - basically two classes at once. I spent 20 or 30 hours a week TAing, since it was something I was invested in, and I did it at the expense of taking classes. I was much more interested in the things I was working on (like the proof stuff, which I started back in undergrad). I also like to joke that I came up with Gradescope before Gradescope existed - but Gradescope won, so oof. I did a lot of work on a similar system, but since it was solo it was difficult to gain traction.

Q. Given that you have so much TAing experience, is there something different about Caltech students or Caltech itself that you've noticed?

A. Yeah, there's a bunch of things that are different. I've taught at CMU and University of Washington; I've seen a private school and a public school. The thing that I think is striking about Caltech students is how much they care and how hard they try. If you give them a problem, there's very little chance they'll give up on it unless they need to move on to another set. That's the only reason they'd ever move on, and sometimes not even then - sometimes they do this to their own detriment. But that's the biggest thing I've noticed - they take pride in what they're doing, and there's a lot of effort to solve the problem and understand the solutions, not necessarily for the grade. They want to be able to say "I get this now".

I think the biggest thing that's interesting about the difference between Caltech and other places is the size. At UW, I taught a 600-person course. So when faculty here talk about a "big course" there's a very large disconnect. I actually think of 150 as relatively small, but it's the right size. What I'm interested in is interactions with students, and I care very deeply that every student who wants an interaction gets an interaction. I love that Caltech is the size that it is, because it allows me to do my job more effectively.

CALIFORNIA TECH EDITOR (1 TEAM)

Devin Makana Chotzen-Hartzell, Alexandria Hong, Bilge Gungoren, Daniel Goncalves Contaldi, Kenny Thai, and David Melisso

Dear Members of ASCIT,

Over the past month, it has been our pleasure to serve as your editors of the California Tech. It has been refreshing to restore the voice of the student body to the halls of campus, and have a meaningful journalistic presence on campus. So far, we've investigated changes to institute policy that have affected the lives of students, and will continue to do so fairly, in the interest in making the Caltech undergraduate experience more equitable and just for all involved.

As Tech Editors, we will build on

the progress we've made over the last term, having produced a body of informative, high-quality articles that is fitting for an esteemed institution such as Caltech. However, there are still stories left unreported and voices yet to be heard. Though we started this job with limited knowledge and experience, we have shown that we are capable of running the Tech in a way that is consistent with the expectations of a student newspaper.

A major change we have made from the previous candidate is our monetary compensation for the hard work

of the many contributors that make our consistent publication schedule possible. Over the next year, we plan to increase the solvency of the Tech's financial situation by seeking out advertisements from local businesses to keep this practice sustainable. We will also expand our perspective by inviting guest contributors from all reaches of campus, so the Tech can truly become the voice of the student body. There is so much potential for what we can accomplish.

2020 CALTECH UNDERGRADUATE WRITING PRIZES

Each year, the Division of Humanities & Social Sciences awards a number of prizes for undergraduate writing. Consider submitting your work to be recognized and rewarded for your work as a writer.

SUBMIT YOUR WRITING TO THESE PRIZES:

Hallett Smith Prize

Awarded to an outstanding essay related to the work of Shakespeare.
Prize amount: \$500.00

Mary E. Early McKinney Prize in Literature

Awarded to the best original poetry and fiction. Submit up to three poems. Fiction should not exceed 12,000 words – one submission. Prize amount: \$500.00/each category

McClure Memorial Communications Prize

Awarded to the best academic writing in three categories: English, history, and philosophy. All essays must be written in a Caltech Humanities course. Please combine prompt with essays (in one file) that includes course number & professor's name. Essays written for courses may be revised before submission. No word limit. Prize: \$500.00/each category

Submission Guidelines: Deadline: April 3, 2020

Only current enrolled full-time undergraduate students may submit. Entries should be double-spaced PDFs. Students can only submit one paper per category. Winners are announced in June, and their names will be in the commencement program in the year that they graduate. Winners' writings will be archived using CODA through the Caltech Library. Email entries to Cecilia Lu at cecilia@caltech.edu, noting the prize to which you are applying in the email subject and filename. Example: McClure Prize—History. If you have additional questions, do not hesitate to contact Cecilia.

Copies of last year's prizewinning writings are stored in CaltechTHESIS and you may view them by visiting this writing center webpage: <http://writing.caltech.edu/community/prizes>

CALTECH Division of the Humanities & Social Sciences

MOVIE REVIEW: SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

JUSTIN TOYOTA | REVIEW

Those who read another one of Caltech's esteemed publications, the *Stall Street Journal*, may know that, in 2019, I listed *Sonic the Hedgehog* (2020) as one of the most anticipated movies of the (then upcoming) decade. I had meant it satirically—I had claimed, for example, that it would follow the plot of *Sonic '06* and star Margot Robbie—it was actually the one movie on the recent release schedule I was actually looking forward to seeing. Not because I hoped it would be good, but because I hoped it would be bad. It seemed that a video game movie, from *Sonic* of all things, already having faced controversy over originally hideous graphics, had a great potential to be bad. It was actually quite disappointing when I saw the initial review aggregate on Rotten Tomatoes and saw it score in the mid-sixties. To me, that seemed like the worst possible outcomes; not horrendous enough to be fun, but not good enough to be amazing.

Nonetheless, it was still the *Sonic* movie; it wasn't something I could just ignore. On Valentine's Day, having no romantic prospects of any kind, I went with some other members of my house to see if it truly lived down to the mediocre reviews. After watching some fifteen minutes of previews and nearly one hundred minutes of film, I can tell you that I would personally rate the movie around a 6 or 7 out of 10 as well, but not for the reasons I had assumed. *Sonic the Hedgehog* is a bad movie that I would still unironically recommend to people.

For those curious, here is a quick rundown of the plot: *Sonic* was born on some other planet, and since birth had been gifted with extreme speed. He is raised by an owl named Longclaw, who tries to hide him from crea-

tures that want to exploit his power. One day, they are attacked by just such creatures, and Longclaw sacrifices herself so that *Sonic* can escape, giving him a bag of rings that act as interdimensional portals. He ends up on Earth near an American town called Green Hills, and grows up alone hiding in the forest nearby. He idolizes the town sheriff Tom, and yearns for companionship. Eventually, in a bout of frustration of loneliness, he triggers a massive electromagnetic pulse that gets the attention of the government. After losing his rings in an accident, *Sonic* gets Tom to help him recover the rings while evading the mad scientist Dr. Robotnik.

That Let me explain. From a structural standpoint, the movie is god-awful. The first thing you notice is that the pacing in this movie is often too fast. (If you want to make a joke about the *Sonic* movie going fast, rest assured that I already did it.) A good example is the death of *Sonic*'s parent figure, Longclaw, who is killed by echidnas in order to let *Sonic* escape. If you think this is a spoiler, don't worry: this happens in the first few minutes of the movie. I had assumed that *The Good Dinosaur* or *Batman Begins* had the most efficient parent kills, but they have nothing on this movie.

The conflicts of this film are also rather strange at times. It's difficult to really believe *Sonic* is in any kind of danger when he is so much faster than everyone else. The sheer extent of his speed is demonstrated in a scene that rips off the Quicksilver scenes from *X-Men* or that scene from *Over the Hedge*, where he moves fast enough that everyone else seems static. For most of the film, Dr. Robotnik is not nearly that fast, so why should I be concerned about *Sonic*'s safety? Per-



Swimmers starting a race at the 2020 SCIAC. Mark Becker

LI SECURES PODIUM, 200 FLY RECORD ON SCIAC'S DAY FOUR

MARK BECKER | SPORTS

| CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 |

returned to swim in the 200 Breast during the evening session, posting a 2:08.92 and 2:12.82 respectively in Sunday's 'B' finals.

Caltech capped off the day – and meet – with the 400 Free Relay in the evening. Caltech's 'A' team featured freshman Reid Banchella (Miami, Fla. / MAST Academy) in addition to Wythes, Lee and Kogan. The quartet combined for a 3:13.16, marking a three-second seasonal improvement while Kogan swam the fastest 100 Free split of the four out of the anchor (47.04). The 'B' team, which consisted of sophomore Rafael Santiago (Manila, Philippines / Phillipine Science), junior JD Walker (Grand Blanc, Mich. / Grand Blanc), sophomore Thomas Barrett (Chatham, N.J. / Chatham)

and sophomore Timothy Yao (Thousand Oaks, Calif. / Dougherty Valley), upped the season's best 'B' time by six seconds in the same event to 3:13.67, nearly beating out the Beavers' 'A' team.

The men's swimming & diving team will now eagerly await the official news as to whether or not Li's 'B' cut time in the 200 Fly will be enough to send him to the NCAA Championships. The full list of participants will be revealed in the next week. Head Coach Andy Brabson and the Beavers will return their entire 18-man roster next fall and will be gunning to make more history at next year's conference championships.



Sonic the Hedgehog movie was released on February 14th. IMDb

haps aware of this, the movie injects an argument between *Sonic* and Tom in the middle which during the movie seemed petty and after the movie seemed superfluous.

I could list off other gripes. Despite the importance of Longclaw to *Sonic*'s backstory, she is almost never mentioned again after those first few minutes. Tom's wife comes along for the final battle, but she does nothing of any importance. There is an excessive amount of product placement (most notably Zillow and Olive Garden), probably to fund the graphics patch. There are some very cringey moments: at two distinct points in the film, *Sonic* does a Fortnite dance. Despite all of this, though, despite my many complaints about the plot and the cringe, I still think it is definitely worth watching.

Part of the reason I recommend this movie is that it is actually, unironically funny. Though I can't think of any off the top of my head, there are a lot of jokes that land throughout the film. I found myself (and the rest of the audience in the theater) genuinely laughing quite often. Tom, the main human character, was somewhat underdeveloped, and his arc never felt particularly interesting or compelling; but his chemistry with *Sonic* is enjoyable, and he has some fun moments. When the movie doesn't take itself too seriously and just takes you on a ride, it really shines as an enjoyable experience.

The stand-out part of this movie and one of the best examples of "not taking itself too seriously" is Jim Carrey's portrayal of Robotnik. In every scene, Robotnik is off-kilter and ridiculous, from his lightning-fast technobabble to his strange sexual tension with his assistant. At no point does he seem like a villain that makes the viewer's blood run cold like Vader or Hannibal Lecter—even in *Sonic*'s

darkest hour, the line he makes is comedic—but that's part of the fun. It's fun to watch Carrey just cut loose and portray someone this inherently weird. A little after the middle of the movie, there is a roughly two minute scene that's just Robotnik dancing around and doing science things. It's even dumber than it sounds, but the movie would be far worse if that scene was removed.

Sonic the Hedgehog is like a car made of 2x4 and filled with rocket fuel. You don't need to look that closely to see that it's fundamentally unsound. It's probably going faster than it should. But if you just lean into it and go along for the ride, it can be a hell of a lot of fun. If you want movies to have a semblance of an original or well-designed plot, look elsewhere. But if you want to just have a wild, goofy experience, I would highly encourage you to check this movie out.

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