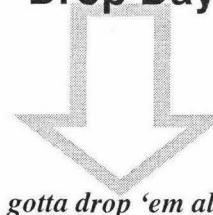


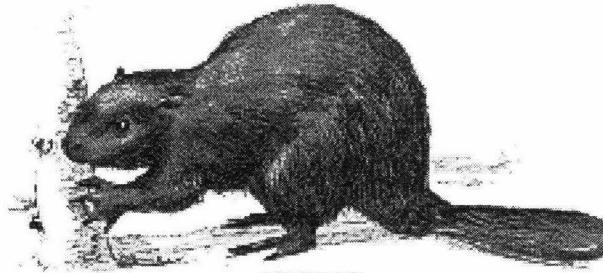
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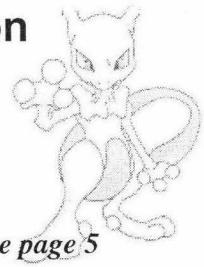
wednesday

gotta drop 'em all!



## Pokémon

*the cartoon  
the movie  
the legend*



gotta read it all! see page 5

# The California Tech

VOLUME CI, NUMBER 8

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 12, 1999

## ADMISSIONS STAFF BLAMED FOR WWII

BY JON FOSTER

On November 10th at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, Dr. Jeane Kirkpatrick laid the blame for Hitler's entry into politics and subsequent initiation of WWII on the admissions staff at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, where Hitler was twice rejected. As Kirkpatrick put it, those were the two most expensive rejection slips ever.

This digression was merely a sample of Dr. Kirkpatrick's engaging and informative talk entitled, "The Great People who Make Great Events." Her view of history is very much opposed to the Communist view she helped contain during her term as US representative to the UN under Reagan. She believes that people with extraordinary vision, whether noble or twisted, take advantage of the situation and the apathy of others to change the world. Hitler, Mussolini, Lenin, along with Churchill, Roosevelt, and Truman, were all examples of surprising leaders; men with very little in common except that they had a definite vision or plan for the future.

On the day after the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, Kirkpatrick also included Reagan, under whom she served as a member of the Cabinet and NSC, in this group of surprising visionaries. She discussed his inexperience when he first came into politics, which was overcome with his ability to learn very fast and she highlighted his clear sense of what he felt had to be done to contain Communism. Reagan was "not a patsy," a belief she iterated several times, recalling many occasions on which she watched him deal with Soviet leaders. She regretted that he was not in a position to have the last laugh now that his "crazy" idea of an SDI may come to fruition.

In the end, she called for us not to sit passively by while men with great - but twisted - visions threaten the security of the world. As she put it, "No matter what we face, if we think clearly, and act boldly, and do not fear, we will find leaders who will see even more clearly, and will lead us through."

## Math could save life, grow investments

BY DAVE GUSKIN

Bobby Teenager is driving down the highway near his home to go meet a few of his friends. It's been a chilly day and — unbeknownst to Bobby — the roadway is now covered with "black ice," undetectable yet deadly. Suddenly, Bobby spies an obstruction in the road — another car is dead, sitting directly in his path! Bobby slams on the brakes and swerves, but since his car is on ice, the swerving causes the wheels and Bobby to skid wildly out of control.

Could mathematics have saved Bobby's life? Cleve Moler and the folks at Mathworks Inc. believe so, and the key lies in incredible software packages such as MATLAB that can solve the complicated mathematical prob-

lems involved quickly and efficiently. In Bobby's case, the solution to a simple set of 30 ordinary differential equations could have prevented horrible death and/or injury. By implementing anti-skid steering measures designed

tory of using computers to solve complicated problems in the mathematical world. In addition to car skid concerns, MATLAB has been used to decrease seek times on all forms of digital media readers and increase re-

*"In Bobby's case, the solution to a simple set of 30 ordinary differential equations could have prevented horrible death and/or injury."*

with the help of MATLAB, large car companies can reduce total braking distance significantly in situations like Bobby's.

In his lecture this past Tuesday on the applications of MATLAB to everyday problems entitled "Math Could Save Your Life", Moler expounded upon the his-

turn-risk ratios for investors. Moler claims that easy-to-use packages such as MATLAB aid engineers to design simple solutions to complex problems.

Moler, a former Caltech undergraduate, spent much of his talk giving examples specific to MATLAB, but he also delved

into the physical and mathematical underpinnings of how MATLAB and other math programs work. Via the car skid and investment problems, Moler demonstrated how a rather complex set of non-linear equations (with a large number of degrees of freedom) could be reduced into a solvable problem using MATLAB utilities.

Although the focus of his talk was engineering applications for MATLAB in the business world, Moler was quick to point out how valuable knowledge of computational utility is for scientists and students alike. His urging to the audience to explore the power of mathematical packages rang true, for those who listened knew that if math could save little Bobby's life, it might well save their own one day.

## Huerta comes to Tech

Caltech hosts three activism speakers

BY ANDREW HAVER

Dolores Huerta, Minority and Women's Rights Activist, Opens Caltech Y Social Activism Speaker Series on November 19

Dolores Huerta, a nationally recognized minority and women's rights activist will be leading a Grassroots Organizing Roundtable and speaking on "Political Organizing: Key to a Non-Violent Movement." The co-founder of the United Farm Workers with Cesar Chavez, Huerta has faced down strike-breakers and police, led grape boycotts, and been repeatedly assaulted and imprisoned in her quest for social justice for women, immigrants, and people of color. Huerta's efforts have brought about major changes including collective bargaining for farm workers, pesticide bans, and an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

The Grassroots Organizing Roundtable from 4-5 p.m. on November 19 provides the opportunity for Caltech students and other members of the Caltech community to learn from an acknowledged expert in the field. Anyone with ideas for activism work, regardless of the cause supported, is encouraged to bring their ideas to get feedback and suggestions from Huerta. The roundtable will be

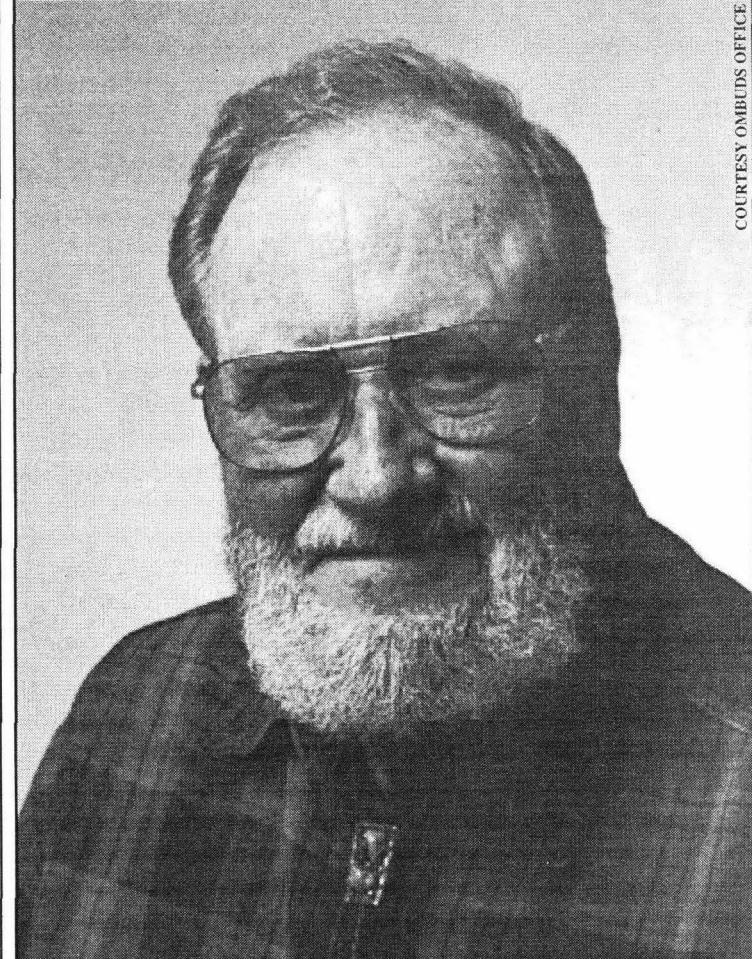
held in Avery Library. Anyone interested should email athena@caltech.edu or contact the Y at ext. 6163 to sign up.

The day will conclude with a 7:30 p.m. talk given by Dolores Huerta in Beckman Institute Auditorium on the topic "Political Organizing: Key to a Non-Violent Movement" in which she will discuss her experiences working for farmworkers' rights.

Adam Werbach, who at age 23 was elected president of the Sierra Club, and Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Prize winning coordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, will be the second and third featured speakers this year. Werbach will be on campus on January 14 and Williams will be here April 21. For more information about the speaker series, contact the Caltech Y at ext. 6163.

The Social Activism Speaker Series is presented by the Caltech Y with generous support from the President's Office, GSC, ASCIT, Campus Auxiliary and Business Services, the Women's Center, Jack & Edith Roberts, Student Affairs, Minority Student Affairs, International Student Programs, and Avery House, the Pasadena Foundation, and the San Diego Foundation.

## Mentor Ray Owen supports outreach



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Dr. Ray Owen, mentor par-excellence and Professor Emeritus of Biology, supports Connect@Caltech, a new program designed to aid members of our community in mentoring and networking.

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# News

## The Outside World

by Nicholas Breen

**Bogota, Colombia** - Seven people were killed by a car bomb outside a busy shopping center, with dozens more wounded, mid-day Thursday. The second bombing in a week, it is considered retaliation for the Supreme Court's decision to extradite two suspected drug traffickers to the United States for trial. This would be the first such extradition since 1991. President Andres Pastrana responded to the attack by ordering the suspects' immediate extradition.

**Foggia, Italy** - A six-story apartment building collapsed early Friday morning. Seventeen people have survived, out of approximately 75 that were believed to be in the building at the time. Fire continues to burn beneath the structure, hampering attempts at rescue, and authorities do not expect to find any more survivors. The cause of the collapse is still unknown, although structural failure is considered most likely. The building dates to an economic boom in the 1960's, when the high rate of construction meant that building codes were often ignored.

**London, England** - Parliament has passed the House of Lords

bill, the first step in eliminating that 800-year-old body. Nearly 600 hereditary peers will be leaving the House, and the remaining 92 are most likely to receive the cut when the next step is implemented. Although the House of Lords has little real power, abolishing the Tory-dominated chamber has long been part of the Labour party platform. Under the Labour leadership of Prime Minister Tony Blair, plans to replace the House with a democratically-elected body have been proceeding.

**Santa Monica, California** - In recent weeks, the cities of Santa Monica and San Francisco have passed ordinances banning ATM surcharges for use by customers of other banks. Several other cities in California and New York have such legislation pending. In retaliation, Bank of America and Wells Fargo have reprogrammed their Santa Monica ATMs to reject all customers from other banks. Bank spokesmen defend the move as necessary to protect their own investments, and plan to add the ban to San Francisco soon. The banks have also challenged the legality of the ordinances in federal court, with the first hearing set for Monday.

Ken Walsh powerfully argued for curriculum change in last week's letter "Please Offer Sex110abc". I'm not really qualified to teach the course that he suggests but I would like to clarify a few things about our software engineering for Web applications course.

We don't offer our class because there were 70 students who wanted to take it. We don't offer our class to teach students about any particular software product, open-source or otherwise. We don't teach our class because the Web is "in". We teach the course because it introduces students to a broad range of advanced computer science topics within a context that will be familiar and relevant to them. Many of these topics aren't covered at all in the current Caltech CS curriculum.

For example, Caltech has no class on relational database management systems, the core enabling information system technology of the last thirty years. We could adopt a traditional course and traditional textbook in this area, but the students would fall asleep writing

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Web Curriculum has its own merits, applications to advanced technology

register.photo.net/ )

Sincerely,

Aurelius Prochazka,  
Ph.D. (Caltech '97)

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[editors@tech.caltech.edu](mailto:editors@tech.caltech.edu)

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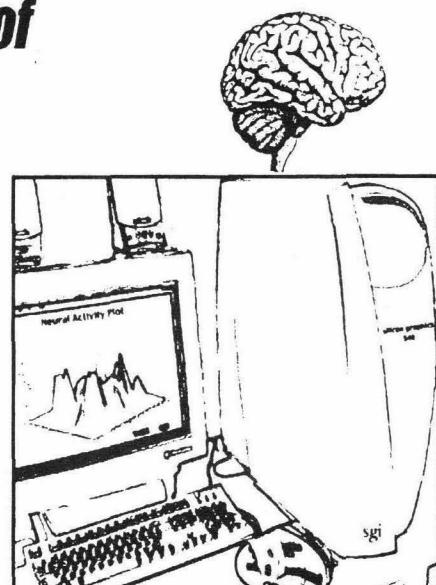
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# Opinions

## What about Iraq?

*Stop the bombing, end the sanctions*

BY SONALI KOLHATKAR

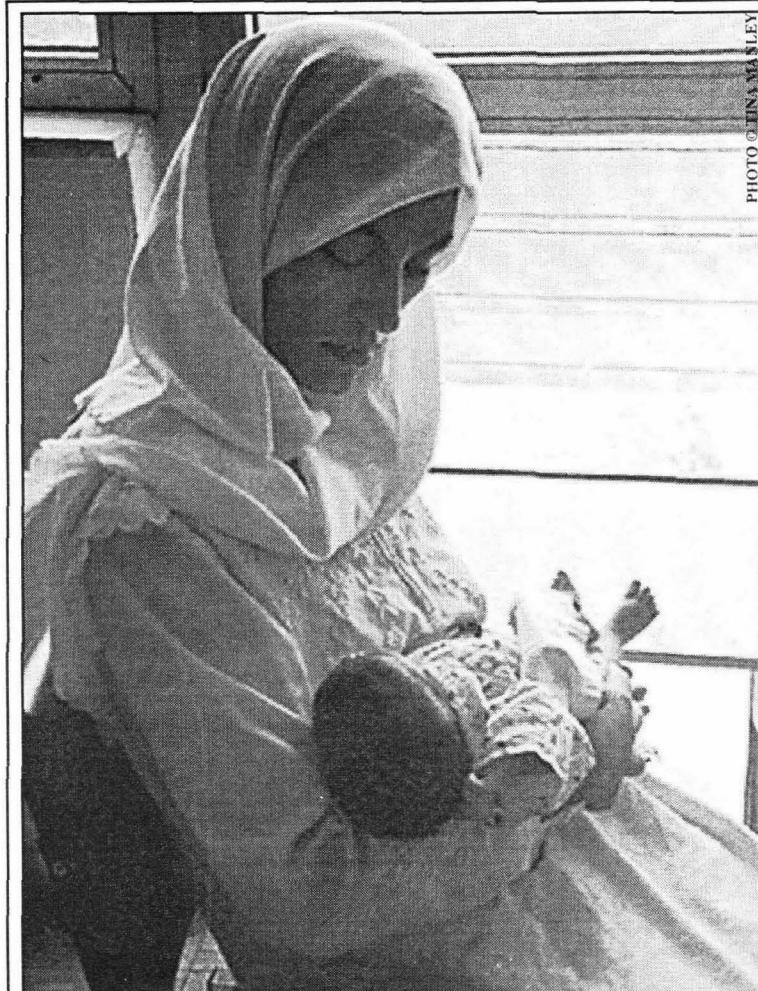
It seems we have all forgotten about that far off country called Iraq. Our senses have been dulled by catch phrases such as "no-fly zones," "weapons of mass destruction," etc., etc., which are as nauseatingly overused in the press as terms like "ethnic cleansing" or "national security." Today we barely see or hear anything in the newspapers about the regular air strikes by the United States and the United Kingdom or the continuation of the economic sanctions against Iraq. Is it not shocking to the majority of normal, compassionate individuals in the world that a country torn by poverty over nearly a decade of economic sanctions and ravaged by the after effects of anti-tank bullets suspected to be toxic, is being bombarded daily from the skies by the bastions of "Western Civilization" within their self-declared "no-fly" zones? Since January 1999 the US and UK have performed well over 200 air strikes against Iraq, routinely killing and injuring civilians - the very civilians who the so-called Allied Powers claim to be protecting from Saddam. Among the targets destroyed by US bombs were the UN World Food Program warehouse holding 260,000 tons of rice, Qurnah hospital in Basra, a cotton

factory in Baghdad, a main water system in Karrada, a secondary school in the Northern Kurdish region, and a grain storage building in Salahiddin (taken from a UN survey of bombing damage, January 1999 Reuters report). Additionally, over 50 civilians have been killed by bombs, and nearly 200 wounded since this January alone. Over the last year I have constantly heard the following response to any arguments against the bombing of Iraq and the sanctions against it: "well, if only those Iraqis would oust that tyrant Saddam, everything would be wonderful, the sanctions would be lifted, the bombs would stop." The implication of this evasive position being, "And while they allow him to stay in power, the Iraqis are suffering a well-deserved fate".

What does the world gain by imposing sanctions on Iraq, a country devastated and falling apart under the weight of 8 years of US/UK aggression? Perhaps one can discern the massive Western concern over an Iraqi threat by examining some of the items banned to the Iraqi people as part of the sanctions which include an oil embargo. Among them are: ambulances, basic medication, books, magazines (including scientific and medical journals), bicycles, toys, cameras, chessboards, tissue

paper, toilet paper, candles, carpets, chairs, children's clothing, bathing suits, combs and hairpins, hats, shoes and sandals, paints, computers, watches, flower pots, forks and knives, pens, shampoos, thermometers, petroleum jelly, and even waffle irons (Compiled by E. Davidsson, December 1997). And this is just a fraction of the entire list.

If the list of banned goods seems to imply something other than a way to render harmless the Iraqi dictator, one could examine the direct effects of the sanctions on Iraq in order to assess their efficiency at subverting possible aggression by Saddam Hussein. One year ago, a Reuters report (August 1999) quoted 1.4 million Iraqis were dead as a result of the US/UK backed sanctions. Former United Nations humanitarian coordinator for Iraq, Dennis Halliday, who resigned in protest of the sanctions last year, reported that 5000-6000 Iraqis are dying each month (London Guardian, January 1999) and pleaded "We must find another solution". Most analysts admit that the sanctions strengthen the Iraqi leadership and further weaken the people of the country. A 1998 UNICEF report on the effects of the sanctions imposed on Iraq finds that the alternative solution, a UN sponsored "Oil-for-Food" plan has not yet resulted in adequate protection of Iraq's children from malnutrition/disease. Those children spared from death continue to remain deprived of essential rights." Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein stays



Iraqi mother with sick infant

firmly in power.

The countries most responsible for the suffering of Iraqi people are the United States and the United Kingdom who have openly defied the UN Security Council's unanimous rejection of their use of force by continuing air strikes against Iraq and vehemently supporting the economic sanctions. A March 22, 1991 New York Times article explains the United States' reasons for keeping the sanctions in place: "... by making life uncomfortable for the Iraqi people it will eventually encourage them to remove President Saddam Hussein from power." This attack on the people of Iraq is in direct violation of numerous international agreements, among them the Geneva Conventions, the International Conference on Nutrition, the Constitution of the World Health Organization, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the crime of genocide, the Convention of the Rights of the Child (which the United States alone refuses to ratify), the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and, ironically, satisfies the conditions that define international terrorism according to the United States Legal Code (Title 18 §2331). Additionally, according to Noam Chomsky, a leading US foreign policy critic, "It costs the US/UK nothing to keep a stranglehold on Iraq and to torture its people — while strengthening Saddam's rule, as all concede. There is a temporary oil glut, and from the point of view of the oil majors (mainly US/UK and clients), it's just as well to keep Iraqi oil off the market for the moment; the low price is harmful to profits." (Taken from Znet Commentary, early 1999).

It is clear enough who benefits from the effects of the bombing and the sanctions and who suffers. That this world allows such an atrocity to occur is shameful. That the United Nations allows and sponsors it is testimony to the free reign of terror in today's world. It is clear that the sanctions and

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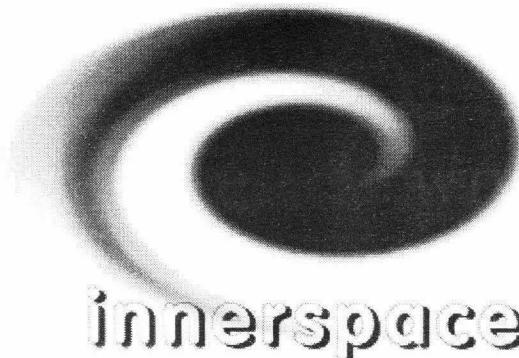


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# Inner Y



**innerspace**

It's 2 am. I am sitting in front of a computer screen at Palomar Observatory taking data for the Digital Sky Survey and writing this column. It's the most fun I've had in weeks. No, that's a lie, but I'll expound on it after a minor digression. The most fun I've had in weeks occurred last night, when I went to see a very odd movie: "Being John Malkovich." This was perhaps the strangest and funniest movie I've seen in a long while. I highly recommend it, though those of you who don't appreciate odd and/or sexual humor may not like it.

Now, where was I? Ah yes, I'm at Palomar, writing my column while I wait for an Abell cluster to expose. I'm not even an Astro major; I'm in engineering. I suppose I could launch into another "why Caltech is so cool" column from this point, but I won't. And because you all loved it oh-so-much last week, I will now present you with another tirade of wonderfully bitter rhetoric from yours truly.

First off, I am increasingly concerned with the use of disclaimers on my recent columns in the Tech. I'm afraid at some point they'll just replace the entire logo with one! (Don't even think about it...) And just to be sure, I don't really hate you *all*, as the last one claimed, just most of you. "You" being the general populace, not necessarily Techers. For the most part, I

think people at Caltech are the best society has to offer. Pretty sad, huh?

My primary concern today is how the general populace looks at science and scientists. Many things bother me about how our heathen and dim-witted underlings (I *almost* used the word brethren, but that wouldn't be very accurate) — who have an unfortunately large amount of control over our lives — view people of science, and indeed science itself. For the most part, the "average guy on the street" doesn't know jack about science. Hell, half of them probably still think that the sun goes around the Earth and that if you don't say the right sequence of magic spells every so often you'll be forever tormented in some horrific afterlife by little red men with horns! (Actually, lots of them believe the latter, but that's another story.) They don't know anything about how science works, why it works, and who works on it. Why is this, you may wonder? Well, my answer is pretty simple: *they're stupid*. Not only are they stupid, but they are stupid and lazy. The lazy part is pretty important, because I think that most people can pretty much understand most ideas, it's just that the "average" person doesn't put in the effort required to overcome the inertia of his inferior intellect. The "average" person will be content with letting others do the dirty work of figuring out

the mysteries of the universe and designing his cell phone and television, while he wastes his time on the trivial details of the rest of human society (and sometimes not even terribly much of that).

The situation is even worse, my friends, than my previous paragraph makes it seem. Because not only are these people ignorant, they are ignorant en masse in a democratic society that bases its standards, laws, and values on the will of the stupid! Yes, stupid people are, at least, the theoretical base of power in this nation. And that means they have the power to decide things that will affect your life as a scientist (and a generally intelligent person). How so? Well, the obvious one is funding. NASA, the NSF, and various other groups are controlled by the government. The government tells them how much money they get to give to people in basic research, and guess who tells the government what to do: the stupid people! Money is not their only source of ignorant power, however. They can also pass laws that are stupid, thus restricting your freedoms as a scientist and an individual (recall the "crush videos" law from my last column). Stupid people in power also affect the lives of children, who will, thanks to their elders, grow up to become more stupid people. Take, for example, the recent actions of the Kan-

sas school board. These incredibly stupid people have decided to stop requiring the teaching of both Evolution (which is as close to a firm scientific fact as any other) and the idea of scarcity of resources. Why? Because they come into conflict with what's written in an ancient work of fiction!

Want more examples? How's this one: a judge in Texas (of all places) recently sentenced a student to time in Juvenile Hall for writing a Halloween story for class that contained plot elements similar to the massacre at the high school in Littleton. Last I checked, it's not a crime to think bad thoughts or write nasty stories! If this were the case, we'd have a pretty boring body of literature and movies to choose from. But, thanks to the wonders of our all-too-free society, a truly stupid person managed to become a judge and sentenced a creative student to prison time for the content of his school project. Does this scare anyone else? I personally don't want any part of my fate to be willfully decided by someone who is apparently the intellectual equivalent of a retarded third grader. In fact, I don't even think people like this should be allowed to procreate. The last thing the world needs is more stupid people, and that seems to be the first thing it always gets! The world population is growing fast — over six billion now — and most of them are stupid.

Most of them will fill meager positions in life and perform unimportant jobs that will one day be taken over by more efficient (and possibly more intelligent) robots.

I often wonder what will happen when the various tasks performed by the majority of the human population are taken over by machines that can do the job better, faster, and with fewer complaints. What will the "average person" do? It's possible that a new age of reason will dawn, and every man will be a philosopher and scientist with the newfound time he has. Or, it's possible that these people will become completely expendable and will ultimately be bred out of the species by evolution or some other means. Or, my personal favorite, the robots will eventually be intelligent enough to usurp human supremacy on the planet and decide to run things themselves. Somehow I doubt the robots will have the same sorts of problems that I've been discussing for this entire column.

No matter what the future holds, I'm sure stupid people will be with us for a long time to come. Until they're gone, just remember: you're probably smarter than them, so take advantage of it. Sell stuff on eBay. Found a religion. Write for the Tech (I couldn't resist...). But whatever you do, don't forget that they're everywhere, they're stupid, and they're dangerous.



by Kenneth Kuo

The holiday season is now slowly encroaching upon us. Unfortunately, as Tech students, we still have to trudge through weekly homework sets and make sure we don't go completely insane at the thought of final examinations. So, here's a little blurb about something other than academics. The Y is in need of volunteers to tutor middle and high school students. Remember, if you are on

Federal Work Study, you will be compensated at \$12/hour for your services. For more information, please contact the Y at ext. 6163. While you're calling, ask about the other service activities we sponsor. Also, if you have an urge to organize something like a hiking or biking trip, you could try doing it through the Y. For those who are planning on going camping in the coming holidays, keep in mind that the Y rents out various forms of camping equipment. Contact the Y for more information.

#### This Week:

As usual, Project Angel Food will be occurring today. This program involves delivering food to housebound people living with HIV/AIDS. It takes

but one hour of time on Friday from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, please e-mail Ying Tian at [ying@its](mailto:ying@its). Today the Caltech Jazz Band will be performing in our Noon Concert series on the north side of the Winnett Student Center. If you want to relax for a moment and listen to musicians of the Caltech community, the north side of Winnett is the place to be during lunch.

#### Next Week:

The Caltech Y will be premiering its Social Activism Speaker Series on Friday, November 19th. Dolores Huerta will open the series, speaking on the topic "Political Organizing: Key to a Non-Violent Movement." Huerta is reknowned for co-founding the

United Farm Workers of America (UFW) union with Cesar Chavez, who called her "totally fearless, both mentally and physically." Her accomplishments include collective bargaining for farm workers, banning dangerous pesticides and increasing the Federal Minimum Wage. Currently, Huerta holds the position of Secretary-Treasurer of the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO. Huerta will be holding her keynote talk in the Beckman Institute Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. This talk is open and free to the public. Huerta will also hold a grassroots organizing roundtable from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Avery Library. Space for this roundtable is limited so please contact the Y at ext. 6163 to sign-up.

#### General Info:

The Caltech Y holds weekly meetings on Mondays at 12:15 p.m. in the Y Lounge located behind Steele House. We welcome anyone interested in getting involved with the Y or learning about what it does. Bring your ideas, your friends and your lunch. If you would like to receive e-mails about Y-events, Y-outdoor events or Y-community service events, please e-mail [Elisa Chiang](mailto:Elisa.Chiang@cco.caltech.edu) at [polaris@cco.caltech.edu](mailto:polaris@cco.caltech.edu) and state which mailing list you would like to placed on. Further questions concerning any of the activities mentioned above should be directed to [dogbert@cco.caltech.edu](mailto:dogbert@cco.caltech.edu).

# Just When You Thought it was Safe to Read *The Tech*...

By Jason Meltzer

Adam<sup>2</sup>

## MEWTWO STRIKES BACK

For those of you not in the know, a brief introduction is in order. The Pokémon world is inhabited by Pokémon instead of animals. There are over 150 varieties of Pokémon which can be caught and trained by humans. Each of these 150+ Pokémon has different abilities and strengths. For example, electric Pokémon are strong against water Pokémon. The protagonist, Ash Ketchum, is a Pokémon trainer. He and his friends Misty and Brock travel together on a simple mission: capture Pokémon, teach them and pit them against those of rival trainers to make them stronger and more experienced. This is the premise of the cartoon and Gameboy game.

*Mewtwo Strikes Back* is about Mewtwo, a feline biologically engineered Pokémon clone. He is designed to be the strongest Pokémon in the world, stronger even than Mew, the supposedly extinct psychic Pokémon whose DNA was used in the cloning procedure. Mewtwo's strength is apparent within moments of his awakening as he destroys the island lab of his creators in a brilliant psychic flash. Trying to find his purpose in life leads him to the conclusion that he must cleanse the planet of all humans.

This movie captures everything you love about

Pokémon: all the action, all the drama, all of Meowth's bad puns and all the cuteness. The newest Pokémon, Mew, is amazingly cute as he floats around inquisitively, soaking in his new surroundings. His cuteness rivals that of Pikachu. We are brought to tears when Ash's Pikachu refuses to fight and is relentlessly slapped in the face by his poké-clone. We are at the edge of our seats when the evil Pokéballs are chasing Pikachu and all he can do is run as fast as he can and electrocute with a thunderbolt from his red cheeks until he can't carry on any longer. We

*We are brought to tears when Ash's Pikachu refuses to fight and is relentlessly slapped in the face by his poké-clone.*

are moved by Ash's braveness as he stands up to Mewtwo.

But then the movie fails us miserably with its lame attempt to tell kids that they can accept each other's differences and that neither human nor Pokémon need to fight. It proceeds to throw in the song styles of such artists as Britney Spears, NSYNC, 98 Degrees and Baby Spice. It would have made sense to have the pumping techno track from the trailer blasting us out of our seats during the climactic battle sequence between Mewtwo's new breed of Super Pokémon Clones and

their natural born counterparts (Pokémon-mon-mon), but instead WB Studios felt that a pop song about brotherhood and love would fit better...go figure.

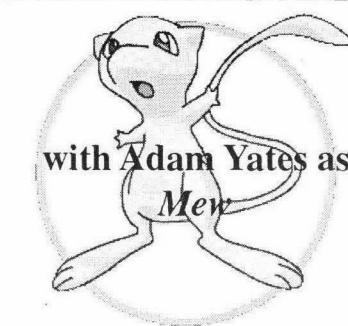
Music and message of morality aside, *Mewtwo Strikes Back* is a work of art. But as has been proven over the years, not all art needs to be loved. One suggestion for anybody who plans to go to this movie without sufficient experience in the world of Pokémon: don't walk out after the 22 minute short, "Pikachu's Vacation", which precedes the feature. Pokémon isn't as bad as that!

Although the Bulba-bye is quite catchy.

With a title like *Pokémon: The First Movie*, one must wonder about Warner Brothers' /

Nintendo's intentions. I think they are clear. With a hit cartoon, airing 12 times per week, 3 Gameboy games, a Nintendo 64 game, a trading card game, a Burger King promotion consisting of a different toy every day for 3 months, countless toys, clothing, backpacks, and school supplies, and a first movie, I see them milking this cashcow for all it's worth and then some. Here's looking forward to the *Pokémon: The Second Movie*.

pika!



## Being Adam Villani

*movies and more from the mind of villani*

by Adam Villani

*Bringing Out the Dead*

Basically a retread of *Taxi Driver* blended with "ER," *Bringing Out the Dead* was not very good for a Martin Scorsese movie. Nicolas Cage plays his frenzied ambulance driver more or less as a hyper duplicate of his character from *Leaving Las Vegas*, Tom Sizemore Xeroxes his part from *Natural Born Killers*, John Goodman plays a not-funny version of his role in *The Big Lebowski* and Patricia Arquette kind of shows up and doesn't do much. It's all stuff we've seen before in more coherent, purposeful movies, and scenes that are supposed to be poignant just turn out goofy. There were still a few nicely done scenes, and the Robert Richardson cinematography was quite energizing, but overall this was very minor Scorsese.

*Being John Malkovich*

This is by far the weirdest movie to come out of Hollywood in a long time and it's a

blast to watch. John Cusack plays a downtrodden puppeteer who finds a mystical portal into John Malkovich's mind, and wacky metaphysical hijinks ensue as he starts selling tickets for the experience and Cusack's wife (Cameron Diaz, totally de-glamourized) starts enjoying being a man a little too much. John Malkovich certainly deserves the good sport award for playing this Bizarro version of himself, but the real credit here goes to first-time screenwriter Charlie Kaufman for coming up with the ideas and to director Spike Jonze (best known for doing music videos and skateboarding tapes) for executing them so well. Motivation begins to suffer somewhat toward the end as the characters are forced to act in stranger and stranger ways, but I appreciated how the filmmakers vigorously explored the myriad questions posed by such a can-of-worms setup. This brilliant, hilarious movie is definitely one you don't want to miss.

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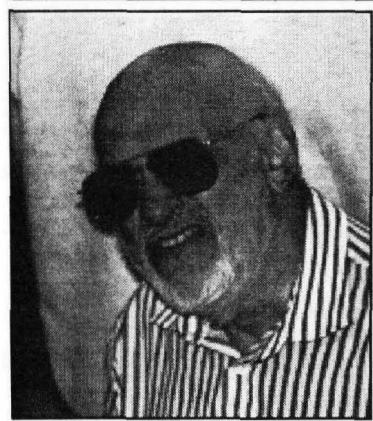


## Dean

## Dean's Corner

*And justice for all*

by Jean-Paul Revel



It has been all over the radio for a week now, it has been all over the newspapers (at least it was before the EgyptAir catastrophe), it has been discussed on talk shows, and has rocked the nation's financial markets. There are those who applaud and those who boo, there are serious interviews and there are those who see nothing new. And what is it? Something as important as Chechnya or Ingushetia? A good try, but no, it is all taking place here, in the USA.

You give up? Well, OK, I'll let you off the hook. It is all about the man we love to hate, the boy genius, entrepreneur fantastic, Bill Gates. By astute wheeling and dealing, and with a knack for predicting what tools will be required to run once and future computers, he created a huge empire - so huge and encroaching that, by now, it is being accused by the Department of Justice, of being a monopoly. I guess being so pursued has to do in part with becoming noticeable as the richest man in the world (look at [www.webho.com/wealth.html](http://www.webho.com/wealth.html)). He has passed the

Aga Khan, who was worth his weight in gold, diamonds and platinum (see the old photos at [globale.net/~heritage/sultan/jubileepg.html](http://globale.net/~heritage/sultan/jubileepg.html)). Things have come to a pretty pass when such exotic and romantic images as those of the Khan with "bullet-proof boxes of diamonds," are pushed aside in the news by stories about crass utilitarians, the Gates' of the world, technocrats, gray, drab (looking) personalities. Their dyspeptic appearance is nothing like that of the Aga Khan, who judging from his pictures was obviously a lover of all the good things life has to offer.

We should not be too harsh on our local Croesus, however. There is some romance in this boyish man, who dropped out of Harvard to pursue a dream along with his friend Paul Allen. The pair was inspired to write an operating system for the MITS-Altair, the world's first commercially available personal computer. I remember reading about the computer at the time it came out and coveting one for myself; but I did nothing more than drool, while Gates and Allen worked away... but

that's not really where I want to go.

What actually intrigued me and got me started thinking was an NPR Morning News interview of Seattelites (if candidate Bush can make up names, so can I) by reporter Wendy Kaufman. Some of the people she spoke to thought that Judge Penfield Jackson's finding of fact last Friday - that Microsoft had wielded monopoly power to harm consumers and squelch competition - was not appropriate. One said that the judge's evaluation of Microsoft was "ill advised;" someone else, that it was "a knee jerk reaction." Another interviewee went much further, saying he thought that the judge had already made up his mind before hearing the evidence, else the judge could not have reached the conclusion that he did. So far as I can tell, there is nothing to support this latter assertion, and it was probably uttered in frustration. All these comments must of course be taken with a grain of salt, and pepper too; better yet, gallons of coffee. Shopkeepers from Seattle and its surroundings are rightly afraid of losing business, and investors of losing money, maybe even their retirement nest egg if Microsoft should stumble. In fact, Microsoft stock did drop in value after the judge's announcement, but soon recovered as the

market realized that there was a long way to fall before the company would go belly up. One commentator recalled that splitting AT&T into a bunch of Baby Bells ended up being quite profitable for the investors... why should it be different in the case of Microsoft if it too should be dismembered?

While it is rather unlikely that the judge would have prejudged the case, the mere fact that the possibility came up, is a worrisome signal. The American Way relies on the unerring functioning of the judicial system, as unerringly as humanly possible. It would be shocking if decisions had been reached on faulty premises even if they were in the best perceived interest of the citizenry....

So could it be that the frustrated interviewee's statement indicates an erosion of confidence in our judicial system? There are already other rumblings. A few weeks ago it surfaced that official accounts of the events in Waco had left out things which might have proved embarrassing to the law enforcement agencies involved. Because of these omissions, those who want to believe that the fire in the Branch Davidian compound had been set by the Feds, rather than by Koresh and his followers, now have more ammunition to use for their cause. More disturbingly than that, once it is known that some things are swept under the carpet sometimes, it becomes impossible to completely trust the system on other occasions. How can one believe that true justice is ever achieved?

Sham justice has too often been used as a tool to get rid of "undesirables." They have done nothing wrong, but have committed the crime of not belonging to the group in power. The Nazis are a familiar example. They projected a façade feigning the rule of law, while committing some of the worst atrocities of the century (well... there are unfortunately quite a few runners up). "Arbeit macht frei" / "Work brings freedom" - Ed.] proclaimed the sign arching over the entranceway of one concentration camp, but the road actually led to the gas chambers. In that case also, the truth was not completely told. What was displayed for general consumption was the renewed wellbeing of a reborn Germany. What was kept out of view was that this required the extermination of those who dissented, and even of those which were suspected to sometime in the future be drawn into the ranks of the dissenters. Yet we must be proud of the American Civil Liberties Union supporting the Nazis' right to march in Skokie, even though many upright citizens were offended at this display. The march could not be prevented. Doing so would have brought us to the same level as the Nazis themselves. May the Truth prevail and Bill Gates be... this is getting too long, so

A bientot

*Jean Paul Revel*

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# Mints

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Discussion Group:** extends invitations to the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Discussion group, which meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 8:15 p.m. until 10:15 p.m. in the Health Center lounge. This is a confidential meeting and does not imply anything about a person's sexual orientation. The group usually discusses a particularly relevant topic and then moves on to the general discussion. Refreshments are served. For more information, call x8331.

**The Dean of Students Office needs tutors** in all areas -- help is especially needed with the main Institute requirements e.g., MA1, MA2, PH1, PH2, CH1, etc. The pay is \$8.50 per hour. A strong understanding of the subject matter, patience, and the ability to communicate well are the qualities needed as a tutor. If you are an upperclassman and would like to be a Dean's tutor, please stop by the Dean's Office to see Sandra located in 102 Parsons-Gates.

**The Totem**, Caltech's literary magazine, welcomes written and artistic contributions and editorial input from students; this year, we are seeking graduate student works in addition to undergrad creativity. Please email [totem@its](mailto:totem@its) or mail to Totem Editor, MSC#610 with your submissions, and also to be added to the mailing list

**The Caltech Ballroom Dance Club** [CBDC] will be starting their next series of classes, i.e. for the second half of the '99 Fall Quarter. For more information, see [www.caltech.edu/~ballroom](http://www.caltech.edu/~ballroom) or call 626-791-3103.

**H & SS Division** offers the following Selected Topic Courses for winter term 2000: H 161 Rethinking the 1960s\*, Lit 180 Science & Literature in 19th Century England\* Lit 180 Knowing, Madness, and Murder: Selections from American Literature\* SES/H 169 Milestones in the History of Astronomy from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period\* SES/PL 169 Topics in Philosophy of Psychology: The Nature of Intelligence\* SES/PL 169 Philosophy of Probability\* Copies of HSS course schedules are available in 228 Baxter.

**Hollywood Square** -- If you have a group of 15-25 people, age 16 and older, you can have fun and earn money by becoming a member of the studio audience. Reservations are being taken for the following dates with arrival times of 10:00 a.m. and 1:45 p.m.: Nov. 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21 and Dec. 4, 5, 11, 12. For more information, call 323-575-2448 and ask for Karen or Heather.

## EVENTS

**The Opus Chamber Orchestra** will perform live at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, Nov. 14, 2:30 p.m., \$36; call 818-623-7391 for more information.

"The President's Own" United

States Marine Band at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, Nov. 12, free admission, contact 626-795-9311 for more information.

**Cal-Stewart's 26th Annual Toy Train Meet** at the Pasadena Center, Nov. 14, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., \$5 admission; call 909-860-2122.

**John Moran Auctioneers** Antique and Decorative Art Auction, Nov. 16, at the Pasadena Center, 3:15 p.m. Preview and 6:15 p.m. Auction. Call John Moran Auctioneers at 626-793-1833 for more information.

**What do Collapses of Past Societies Teach us About Our Own Future?** -- presented by Jared Diamond, professor of physiology at the UCLA School of Medicine, at the Los Angeles Central Library's Mark Taper Auditorium, \$10; Sunday, Nov. 14, 2 p.m., reservations are advised, call 213-228-7025 for more information.

**The Caltech-Occidental Concert Band**, directed by William Bing, presents Music of Winds: 1900-2000, a concert featuring Music by Ives, Copland, Holst, Tichelli, at the Beckman Auditorium, Fri., Nov 19, 8:00 p.m., featuring tuba soloist Brad Dooley, and guest conductors Paul Asimow and Jason Chua. For information, contact 626-395-4652.

**Earthquake Preparedness Training** will be offered by the Pasadena Fire Department through the Safety Office. Training will be from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon in the Baxter Lecture Hall on Tuesday, November 16th. Learn what to do before, during, and after an earthquake. The session is limited to the first 100 people who sign up. For reservations call Caprice Anderson at 626-395-6727.

**Stressed???** Sign up for the Stress Management Workshop. This workshop will include a mixture of informal lecture and experiential exercises focusing primarily on basic relaxation techniques and time management skills. The 4-session workshop will meet on consecutive Mondays (November 8, 15, 22, 29) from 12:00-1:00 p.m. in the Health Center Lounge. Space is limited, so please call x8331 to reserve your place in the group.

Caltech Instrumental Music Departments presents the **Caltech Swing and Jazz bands** at a noon concert today noon to 1 p.m. in front of the Red Door Cafe, come and enjoy the Jazz spirit.

Caltech Folk Music Society presents **Chris Proctor**, Sat., Nov. 13, 8:00 p.m. at Winnett Lounge, \$12 general admission, \$4 Caltech students and children.

Caltech will serve as host school for the **1999 Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference** (SCIAC) men's water polo championships, scheduled for Sat.-Sun., Nov. 13-14, at Braun Pool on the Caltech campus in Pasadena.

**A Caltech-Japan Internship Program** Information Session will be held on Friday, November 19, 1999 from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. in the Winnett Lounge. Pizza will be pro-

vided. All students interested in participating in a summer internship program in Japan are encouraged to attend. Interns who have previously participated will be giving a presentation. Please contact Dr. Kayoko Hirata, ext. 4210, or e-mail [hirataj@its.caltech.edu](mailto:hirataj@its.caltech.edu), if you have any questions.

**Crisis in East Timor:** Pamela Sexton, the U.S. coordinator for the largest vote observer project in East Timor, and Atanasia Pires, an East Timorese active in the underground resistance, will speak on the ongoing crisis in East Timor. Winnett Lounge, at Noon, on Tuesday, November 23. Sponsored by the East Timor Action Network, Amnesty International Group 22, and the Caltech Women's Center. For more information contact [byron@cco.caltech.edu](mailto:byron@cco.caltech.edu)

**Fleming Frosh Party/Luau**, Saturday Night, 9:00 p.m. - 2:00 a.m. free beverages, music, and dancing.

**Dr. Jed Z. Buchwald**, Professor/Director - Dibner Institute, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "Power, Personality, and Optics in Napoleonic France", Room 25 - Baxter Building, Friday, November 19, 1999 at 4:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served Seminars are on the Caltech campus and are open to the community at no charge. For information, contact Marion Lawrence at (626) 395-4087 or [marion@hss.caltech.edu](mailto:marion@hss.caltech.edu).

## SCHOLARSHIP

**Truman Scholarships**-Juniors interested in a career in some area of public service (broadly construed) should consider this scholarship. The Truman Foundation seeks students seeking careers in the not-for-profit, government, or education sectors who seek to make changes and influence public policy and programs as professionals. Applicants should have an excellent academic record and considerable public or community service experience. More information is available in Fellowships Advising and Study Abroad. The campus deadline is January 10, 2000.

**Andover Teaching Fellowships.** Seniors, are you uncertain about what to do next year? Would you like a chance to live in a different part of the country in a beautiful setting? Phillips Academy, Andover has ten to twelve fellowships for graduating seniors who would like to teach at Andover for the 2000-01 academic year. They also have a special summer teaching assistant program you can apply for. Applications are available in Fellowships Advising & Study Abroad. Feb. 16 application receipt deadline. Note that

Andover is in Massachusetts.

**The Jewish Free Loan Association** is offering interest-free student loans to qualified individuals for tuition, books and supplies, and living expenses. Applicants must have completed a minimum of one year of undergraduate study and have a 2.5 GPA or above. For further information, please contact the Jewish Free Loan Association at (213) 761-8830 or (818) 464-3331.

**The John Gyles Education Fund** is offering scholarship awards up to \$3,000 for the 1999-2000 academic year. Applicants must be Canadian or U.S. Citizens, have a 2.7 GPA or above, and demonstrate financial need. Criteria other than strictly academic ability and financial need are considered in the selection process. To obtain an application, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: The John Gyles Education Fund, Attention: The Secretary, P.O. Box 4808, 712 Riverside Drive, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada E3B 5G4. Filing dates for mailing documents in 1999 are April 1, June 1, and November 15.

**The Measurement Science Conference** (MSC) has established fund to grant scholarships to students in an Engineering or Science or Quality Assurance degree program. The scholarship program places emphasis on papers or projects that discuss the advancement of measurement science technology. Applicants must be U.S. Citizens, have a overall grade point average of 3.2 or higher, completed at least 24 units of upper division courses in Engineering or Science degree or five courses in a Masters Degree Program in Quality Assurance. Current members of the MCS Committee are ineligible for this scholarship award. Also, applicants must be able to attend the Measurement Science Conference luncheon held on January 20, 1999, at the Disneyland Convention Center in Anaheim, California. Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office. For further information you may contact: Rick Careytte, MSC scholarships Chairperson, Teledyne Electronics Technologies, Marina del Rey Facility, 12964 Panama Street, Los Angeles, CA 90066-6534. Entries must be submitted by Nov. 26, 1999.

Students and faculty are invited to submit proposals to the **National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance** (NCIIA) by December 15 to fund student projects and faculty courses and programs that enable students to pursue the development and steps leading to commercialization of their innovations. Two types of NCIIA grants are offered: Advanced grants of up to \$20,000 to student innovators provide support for the development of new products and technologies with

commercial potential and Course and program development grants of up to \$50,000 to faculty to provide support for the creation and operation of classes and programs. Please contact the NCIIA to obtain additional information at [www.nciia.org](http://www.nciia.org) or by phoning Phil Weilerstein, NCIIA Director, at 413-587-2172.

**The National Academy for Nuclear Training** is offering \$2,500 scholarships to eligible students majoring in nuclear engineering, power generation health physics, or chemical, electrical, or mechanical engineering with nuclear or power options. Applicants must be U.S. citizen or U.S. national, considering a career in the nuclear power industry, minimum GPA of 3.0 as of Jan. 1, 2000, at least one but no more than three academic years of study remaining to graduation, and free of post-college obligations or active military service. Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office. For further information you may contact: National Academy for Nuclear Training Scholarship Program, 700 Galleria Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30339-5957 or via e-mail at [nanteap@inpo.org](mailto:nanteap@inpo.org). Entries must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office by Jan. 29, 2000

**Glamour Magazine's 2000 top ten college women** competition has begun. This competition recognizes the exceptional achievements and academic excellence of female college juniors from across the country. It's an ideal opportunity for talented students to be rewarded for their leadership roles on campus and in the greater community. Winners receive \$1000, coverage in the October issue, and the opportunity to meet with top professionals in their field, usually during a few-day stay in the New York City. The competition is open to all full-time juniors regardless of major or GPA. All entries must be postmarked by Jan 31, 2000. Contact the Dean of Student Office, 102 Parsons-Gates, for the application.

**The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity** announces the Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics Essay Contest 2000, a contest designed to challenge college students to analyze urgent ethical issues confronting them in today's complex world. Juniors and seniors are encouraged to compete for awards of up to \$5,000. Information is available at [www.eliewieselfoundation.org](http://www.eliewieselfoundation.org), or call 212-490-7777.

To submit an event for the Mints, contact [mints@tech.caltech.edu](mailto:mints@tech.caltech.edu) or mail your announcement to Caltech 40-58 Attn: Mints. Submissions should be brief and concise. Email is preferred. The editors reserve the right to edit and abridge all material. Deadline is noon Wednesday. Unless specified, all mints will run for two weeks.

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