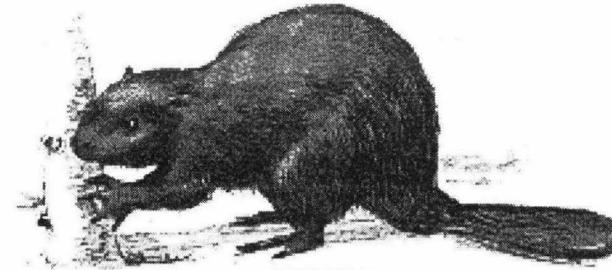


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## MLK Jr. Day

No AFTERNOON CLASSES

see Monday

# The California Tech

VOLUME CI, NUMBER 12

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 14, 2000

## PRESENTATION ON MLK DAY COMES TO TECH

BY TECH STAFF

On January 17, from 13:00-15:00 in Ramo Auditorium, Allen Counter, associate professor of neurology and europhysiology at Harvard University, will give a special presentation. This presentation is in honor of the 71st anniversary of the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., on January 15th.

The event, sponsored by Caltech, is scheduled for the afternoon on Monday. Regularly scheduled classes are canceled for that afternoon to observe the holiday.

Counter is the director of the Harvard Foundation, whose mission is "to promote the advancement of peace and education, and an atmosphere of civility, intercultural understanding and racial harmony." This program has provided extremely successful during its 19 years under Counter's leadership, and represents a model for intercultural relations for other universities.

Counter has also written a book entitled, North Pole Legacy: Black, White and Eskimo, which especially attempts to bring to light the extremely important role which Matthew Henson played in Peary's journey to the North Pole. Primarily because Henson was black, he never received the same honors as Peary. Thanks in large part to Counter's work, in 1996, the United States Navy commissioned the U.S.N.S. Henson, an oceanographic explorer ship, in Henson's honor.

Counter's most important current work is his attempt to create the first memorial to African-American slaves. He has petitioned the President of the United States for such a memorial to be established on the Washington Mall in D.C.

Counter's talk is open to all members of the Caltech community, and promises to be an educational and enriching experience for those interested in sharing in the memory of the great activist, Martin Luther King, Jr.

## LA Aeronautics recreates Kitty Hawk

BY JON FOSTER

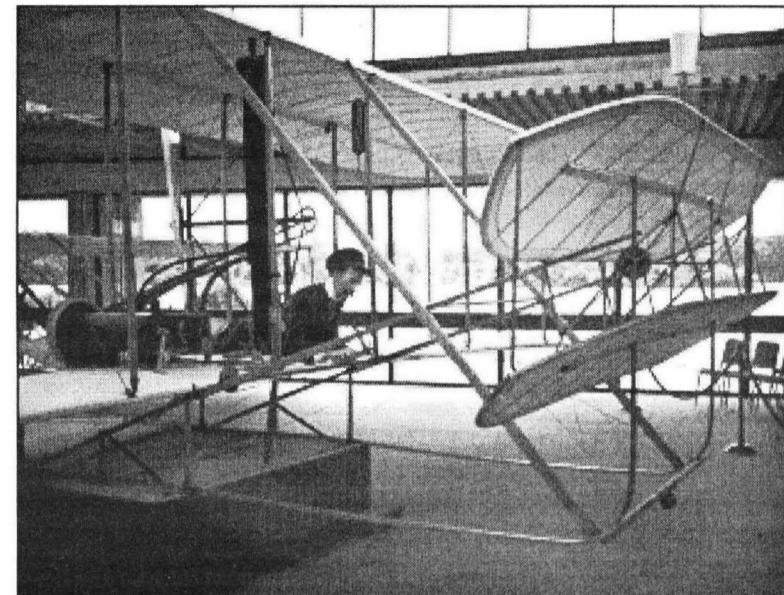
"What happened in aeronautics after the Wright brothers?" As Dr. Fred Culick was the first to point out in his lecture to a filled-to-capacity Beckman Auditorium, the answer to the question his title posed is: *everything*. In just over 65 years, the human race had pictures of Earth from space. Culick's talk on January 12th, part of the Watson Lecture Series, dealt only with the short few years after the Wright's momentous flight at Kitty Hawk.

The Wright brothers stumbled across the secret of how to keep their plane stable by warping the wings, and were able to put this knowledge to work in a very short time. Their first flight came in December, 1903, lasting only 12 seconds. Still, they improved on this, and it was 4 years before anyone else could match the flying ability of the Wright brothers. The climate at the time was one of intense competition, as many different

teams, especially a great number of French ones, were making some progress, but never quite stumbled across the right geometry. During that time, the brothers traveled throughout Europe, and negotiated with the American government, in an effort to sell their plane without giving away the secret of their success.

A large part of Culick's talk was to address the question of why, although the first flight occurred in America, within only a year after the first public flight of the Wrights' plane, French aviators held all the flying records. The main reasons were an intense interest in aeronautics in France at the time; a lack of other participants in America; and the stubbornness of the Wright brothers, who were reluctant to make changes to their design.

Culick then went on to describe the fascinating project he is currently working on. The Los Angeles Section of the American Institute of Aeronautics and



A model of the Kitty Hawk Flyer, displayed at the Wright Brothers memorial near Blue Devil Hills, North Carolina.

Astronautics is reconstructing a copy of the Wright brothers' original "Flyer." Culick will be the pilot of the craft when it is completed, and he is also advising on the project.

The recreation will be somewhat modified, because an accurate recreation of the "Flyer" would really be quite dangerous to fly. "There was no such thing

as liability at that time," said Culick, as he described the work which the group had done over the last 20 years. The myriad tests and regulations the group had to meet at every stage in the process are a far cry from the reckless climate of excitement that prevailed in the field at the time of the birth of the first true airplane.

## little t progresses on path to completion

BY JUSTIN KAO

Despite speculation to the contrary, the *little t* has not disappeared down a black hole's gaping maw. The long-awaited 1999-2000 edition of ASCIT's guide-to-everything is scheduled to reach student hands in the next four to six weeks. While the *little t* is usually distributed

early first term, this year's edition was delayed by several factors, leaving upperclassmen to rely on old editions and freshmen to go without. According to business manager Erik Dill, the "biggest problem was the new Oracle [accounting] system" put in place by Administrative Process Engineering last July. Advertising revenues had to be col-

lected in order to pay the publisher of the *little t*. However, due to problems with Caltech's new accounting system, it was difficult to get Caltech advertisers billed. As on-campus organizations comprise about two-thirds

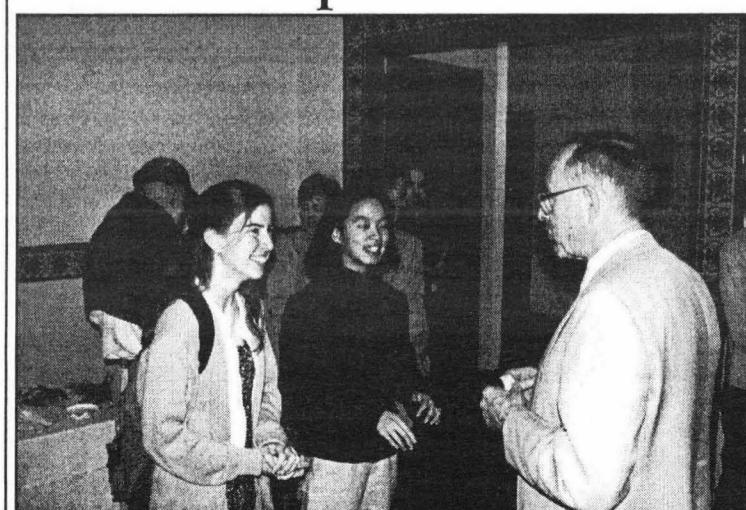
of the advertisers, nothing could happen while "Caltech ads were not paid for." Other difficulties included incomplete records from previous years that "slowed down getting ads" and poorly documented procedures. The current plan is to have

ASCIT provide the *little t* with a loan to pay for publication while the rest of the bills are being collected. Says Erik, "it should be sent to the publisher within the next week and a half or so, contingent on ASCIT

[temporarily covering the costs.]

After it is received by the publisher, it will take approximately 20 days to be printed, "depending a lot on their load." If all goes well, it'll be out "sometime in February." We certainly hope so.

## SURF Competition winners



The 1999 Perpall SURF Speaking Competition winds down with a reception for the winners. Here, Katie Noyes (3rd) and Ming Chen (2nd) speak with JPL's William Whitney. See page 4 for the winner!

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# Editorial

## Fithos Politic

by David Guskin

A fundamental understanding of politics and government is, for obvious reasons, not a requisite skill for Caltech life. In the world of science and math, a Tech can lose themselves in equations and research and never think about the "Real World". So upcoming House and ASCIT elections come as a relief to some, as a change of pace to others, and as a nightmarish glimpse of the Outside to the rest.

You may be telling yourself that elections and student government in general don't have anything to do with you, your life, or your future. Well, you're wrong. At some point in your Caltech career, it's likely that you'll deal with the people "behind the scenes" or, at least, with their work. You're reading this Tech, aren't you?

Especially at a school like Caltech, where the students are given so much freedom in

their studies and social life, it's important to place responsible and effective people in places of power. But another, larger concern (and maybe not so obvious) is that in a collaboration-rich environment like Caltech, leaders need to work well with each other.

Take our current IHC, for instance. They work extremely well together, and as a result, each individual House president is better able to deal with matters closer to home, instead of wasting energy arguing about other things. They laugh together, eat Kripsy Kreme together, and generally have a good time together. Much better than the alternative, involving fisticuffs and lots of badness.

It may not be a primary concern that a House president be a good IHC member, but it's definitely something to consider when faced with a blank ballot and a list of equally fine

candidates.

On a similar note, consider each candidate not as a free-falling particle in a vacuum (I apologize for the science analogies), but as one individual in a sea of interrelated and interdependent students. How will the introduction of a work-savvy but sociopathic into the government mix affect how your dues are spent? Will that person be able to handle people, as well as workload and responsibility?

Fundamentally, government is based on the will of the governed. That's the essence of democracy, and a fact of many other political systems as well. In practice, however, it's easy for those in power to remove themselves from the watching eyes of the public and work together behind closed doors. This isn't necessarily bad, though many raise the charge of conspiracy and say leaders ignore their wishes and do

what they want.

Often we forget that our behind-the-scenes elected officers are people, too. Though they may be intensely bitter about their heavy work loads, they're no less approachable than any other sociable Caltech student. Well, maybe even more so than that, since they are presumably social enough to be well-known.

Be aware, and think about your choices for candidates. It may turn out that the person you select as your next House president is a blood-thirsty pirate. Do you want a blood-thirsty pirate for president? Or a Spanish Inquisitor for BoC Chair?

Of course not. So be careful when you vote, and analyze every aspect of your potential leaders. They may lead you, but they don't have to own you.

Ω



## Treasurer

*Ell appointed*

BY TECH STAFF

Sandra Ell, who has been acting as treasurer for Caltech since 1998, was appointed as the Institute's treasurer and chief investment officer on Nov. 4th, 1999.

Ell is a Certified Public Accountant and worked with the U.S. General Accounting Office prior to coming to Caltech in 1984. She is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and serves on a citizen's advisory committee for the city of Pasadena.

Since coming to Caltech, she has performed numerous roles. According to William Jenkun, vice president for business and finance, in the time she has already served in this capacity, "[Ell] has managed operation of the treasurer's office superbly."

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## The Outside World

BY NICOLAS BREEN

SEATTLE, WA - Bill Gates stepped down as CEO of Microsoft Corp. on Thursday, handing the position to long time partner and Microsoft president Steve Ballmer. Gates, while remaining as the corporation's chairman, will be filling the newly-created position of chief software architect, stating that he wished to dedicate his time "to what I love most - focusing on technologies for the future," emphasising Windows 2000. Gates expects software to be at the center of the New Digital Age.

NEW YORK, NY - On Tuesday, Internet services provider America Online announced that

it was purchasing media conglomerate Time Warner in a \$183 billion stock swap, the largest corporate merger in history. AOL founder Steve Case will become the chairman of the new company, while Time Warner's Gerald Levin is slated for CEO. As the two companies have little overlap in their core businesses, the merger is expected to pass antitrust regulators. The merger, providing Time Warner's traditional media with access to AOL as a distribution channel, is built on the idea that content will be at the center of the New Digital Age.

SHEPARDSTOWN, WV - Peace talks between Syria and Israel are still unconcluded, but sources indicate that both sides

are still negotiating, with Syria likely to offer "friendly and good neighborly relations" with Israel, including key concessions such as open borders, trade agreements, and full diplomatic ties. The most critical issue, ownership of the Golan Heights, has not yet been resolved. Israel, which seized the territory from Syria in 1967, claims they need the Heights as a military buffer; Syria demands the return of their former land.

MEDITERRANEAN SEA - At least 23 people are still missing following the crash of a Swiss-registered plane near the Libyan coast. The private plane was ferrying workers of Libyan-based Sirte Oil Co. between their Tripoli headquarters and

outlying oil fields. Identities or even nationalities of all the passengers have not been released.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In a unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Driver's Privacy Protection Act of 1994, prohibiting the sale by the states of driver's license databases - usually including names, addresses, social security numbers, photos, and more - without certain regulations. The DPPA was passed after a stalker in California used the database to find a minor celebrity, and murder her. Although the original act established an "opt-out" system to avoid having a record sold, later Congressional legislation has strengthened it to an "opt-in" system.



### If not for your sake, then for his

Bulbasaur are a combination of Grass-type and Poison-type Pokémons. Because they are Grass-type Pokémons, Bulbasaur have plant-like characteristics such as the large, leafy growth on their back. Over time, Bulbasaur will evolve into Ivysaur and Venusaur.

TYPE: Grass/Poison

LENGTH: 0.7 m

WEIGHT: 6.9 kg

Have you seen Katy's Bulbasaur?  
Email [isaacs@its.caltech.edu](mailto:isaacs@its.caltech.edu)!

**Bulba. Bulba bulba. Saur.**  
**Work for the Tech.**

# The Incredible Justin Ho



# The Ticket Stub

By Justin Ho

The Talented Mr. Ripley (A-) rated R for much ado about head-bashing

The most striking feature about Mr. Ripley (Matt Damon) is that he is not so talented after all. Rather, he is a man of good fortune with the benefit of living in a not-so-clever world which allows him to cover up his mistakes. He is actually quite careless and clumsy, but that certainly makes him all the more human. Though Tom Ripley's killing spree would place him amongst notorious serial killers and the fictitious Hannibal Lecter (though lacking the appetite factor), Mingella's Ripley is far from the calculating, menacing evil which imbued the Ripley of Patricia Highsmith's crime novel upon which the film was based. Rather, Ripley's pilgrimage in the film to post-war Italy was with good

intentions. Mistaken as a Princeton graduate, Ripley is directed by Mr. Greenleaf, a shipping tycoon, to Mongibello, Italy in search of his son Dickie (Jude Law) on a \$1000 salary in the hopes of mediating a return. Seeing a means of advancing himself beyond the piano tuner and restroom attendant lifestyle, Ripley obliges. But what could simply be a scenic repose in a foreign land becomes an invitation out of poverty and an opportunity for Ripley to become a fake somebody instead of a real nobody. Transported to the land of copper-toned bodies and upper-class decadence, Ripley is egregiously out of place. Sporting a rather laughter-inducing physique and plodding incongruously along the sand, he seems like an outcast to everything including himself. On a whim, Tom is invited into Dickie's small circle of friends, where his

mild reserve continues to set him apart from the playboy lifestyle that Dickie has created for himself. To maintain this lofty position, Tom consummates a love of jazz and hones his craft of mimicry for Dickie's amusement, but his great skill also turns out to be Tom's downfall. Spoiled and ever-craving new forms of entertainment, Dickie epitomizes emotional detachment and the jaded wealthy. Whether subconsciously using Tom or consciously making Tom a member of his fraternity just so that dropping him will be any more pleasurable later, Dickie has no sympathy. Just as quickly as Dickie's attention focuses to one person, his patience likewise flees. Like his father's money, Dickie flings himself about the clubs and formal parties of Italy with carefree style. And certainly, his freedom to do so is coveted. The entire sequence during which

Tom and Dickie become ostensibly closer is almost surreal: masked in a grainy elegance as the camera shifts from sailing adventures to smoky jazz clubs, from men rough-housing to women gliding through cobble-stone streets almost aimlessly. It's a perfect utopia sans irresponsibility. But despite the growing bond between Tom and Dickie and their mutual intoxication of the lethargy around them, Dickie's need for Tom for entertainment is waning while Tom perversely sees each passing day as one step closer to truly become the fun-loving, jazz-virtuoso he feigns he already is.

Ultimately, Dickie is careless-treating people as transient commodities and as a means rather than an end. He exchanges friendship and affections capriciously and pays with dire consequences. As the anti-hero of the film, Ripley's vulnerability works in the film's favor. Rather than being an utterly immoral, calculating character, Ripley is gentle and only violent when cornered. He becomes fiercely protective of his newly-acquired station at the expense of someone else's identity but he is only psychopathic by accident. Indeed his first role in another's cessation of being was a crime of passion. Rather than representing a psychotic for whom murder is second nature, Ripley's acts reflect more so of a person doing bad things, a latent psychopath in the guise of a normal human being. When the very bad deeds being to haunt Ripley, he has many reasons to run. Indeed juggling two identities gives him an adequate escape route and the

crime detection practices are utterly rudimentary. Yet, Ripley remains, comfortable with the luxuries he has purchased with someone else's money while the rest grow suspicious by degrees. This reflects his growing confidence and mastery of assimilating identities, tragically to the point that the life he has consumed supercedes his personal happiness as well. The tone of the film changes abruptly when Ripley transforms from tragic puppydog Dickie-follower into the abyss of the criminal. The cinematography is less refined, and the increasing frequency of night scenes mirrors the darkness into which Ripley descends. Likewise, the film assumes a more frantic pace filled with coincidences and chance encounters which keep Ripley on a tight leash of impersonation. It is in this second half when the remainder of the ensemble truly emerges: Marge (Gwyneth Paltrow), as the mentally-unstable fiance ignored by an absent Dickie; Merdith (Cate Blanchett) whose impeccable timing and fleeting appearances throw a wrench into Ripley's dual personalities; and Robert Kingsley (Jack Davenport), who vies for Ripley's affection as the object of a not-so-subtle homoerotic longing. Because of the mood swing, the film almost feels like a disjunction. There are two distinct halves leaving different tastes. But of course, the transition from nice guy to murderer should be distinct, though the portrayal of psychopath as human and naive still eerily beckons empathy.

## Abu-Mostafa wins Kuwait State Award

*Caltech EE Professor becomes youngest person to win*

COURTESY MEDIA RELATIONS

The California Institute of Technology's Yaser Abu-Mostafa, professor of electrical engineering and computer science, received the Kuwait State Award in Applied Science on November 29.

The \$50,000 award includes a gold medal, and recognizes original and fundamental research in a designated area of applied sci-

ence. This year's area was information science and technology. Abu-Mostafa's work on neural networks, learning from hints, and computational finance was cited as the pioneering contribution that merited the award.

Abu-Mostafa is the youngest person to receive this award since its establishment in 1979. The awards ceremony was televised live in a number of countries. A reception by the Emir of Kuwait at

the Royal Palace followed.

Abu-Mostafa received a BSc from Cairo University in 1979, an MSEE from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1981, and a PhD from Caltech in 1983. At Caltech he won the Clauser Prize for the most original doctoral thesis. He has been teaching at Caltech since 1983, and was recognized in 1996 with the Richard P. Feynman Award for Excellence in Teaching.

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# Y news

by Kenneth Kuo

This coming weekend, the Y is hosting a series of cultural events for the Caltech community. These events begin this evening with our social activism speaker, Adam Werbach, who's background is explained in more detail below. In this upcoming Sunday, there exists a Y trip to the J. Paul Getty Museum. There has been a very positive response to the trip. Sign-ups are full at this point in time,

but if you are interested, please still call the Y at ext. 6163 to see about getting placed on a waiting list. If anyone has any particular idea or event that they would like to see occur on campus, feel free to present your ideas to us either by phone or by coming to one of our weekly meetings. As a reminder, Project Angel Food will be occurring this week. The purpose of this program is to deliver food to housebound people living with HIV/AIDS. This project takes but one hour time on Friday and takes place roughly from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM. For more information, please e-mail Ying Tian at [ying@cco.caltech.edu](mailto:ying@cco.caltech.edu).

## Today:

Later this afternoon/evening, the Caltech Y will be hosting Adam Werbach in the 2nd installment of our Social Activism Speaker Series. Werbach, age 26, is the best known conservationist of his generation. He was elected as the 46th president of the Sierra Club, the oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization in America, at the age of 23. His many accomplishments include the campaign to pass the strongest clean air standards in America's history and the fight to protect more than two million acres of wilderness. In his two terms as President, Werbach has completely revitalized

the membership of the Sierra Club (i.e., increasing membership to 600,000, bringing down the average age of a member by a decade, and guiding the organization back to financial health). Werbach's keynote talk entitled "Act Now, Apologize Later" will occur at the Beckman Institute Auditorium at 8:00 PM. This talk is free and open to the public. From 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM, there will be a grassroots organizing roundtable at the Avery Library. Space is limited for this roundtable so please contact the Y at (626) 395-6163 to sign-up.

## General Info:

The Caltech Y holds

weekly meetings on Mondays at 12:15 PM in the Y Lounge which is behind Steele House. We welcome anyone who is interested in learning about what the Y does or who wants to get involved. Bring your ideas, your friends, and your lunch. If you would like to get e-mails about Y-events, Y-outdoor events, or Y-community service events, please e-mail Elisa Chiang at [polaris@cco.caltech.edu](mailto:polaris@cco.caltech.edu) with the e-mail mailing list you would like to placed on. Also, if you have further questions concerning any of the activities mentioned above, feel free to e-mail me at [dogbert@cco.caltech.edu](mailto:dogbert@cco.caltech.edu).

## A.S.C.I.T.

## Minutes

JANUARY 7, 1900... OOPS... 2000

### Minutes of the ASCIT BOD Meeting, 1999 January 7

Present: BOD minus Hanna, Danny, and Melvin; Felix Ng.

Meeting called at 14:35.

Guests Felix asks for money for a joint APSU-CCSA-KSA-Caltech C Lunar Festival. The specified budget is \$2,200 to provide a Chinese Lion Dance, Korean Music Group, Vietnamese Dance, "Other Performing Artists," and Chinese and Korean food at lunch on February 7.

#### Other Business

Web Project Jonathan Dama is interested in working on the web project. Baldeep will meet with him to discuss it.

Audit General Counsel's office sent a convincing legal argument to the IRS last month, but we haven't heard back from them. Apparently the IRS agent that was handling the audit has left the IRS without leaving a forwarding address. General Counsel's office, our bookkeeper, a contractor hired by General Counsel, and a tax guy are following up.

CLUE Melvin reports (through Baldeep) that the CLUE is being worked on.

Movies The BOD discusses the movies and decides to suspend funding. Separate planning will be done to better structure some sort of regular social event.

Upcoming Elections Nominations for the office of ASCIT President and Vice-President will open at 8:00am on Wednesday. Sign up and wield the power of the Donut.

Closed at 15:00.

BOD decides to delay deciding on the funding requested by Felix.

Adjourned at 15:01.

Respectfully submitted,

Baldeep  
ASCIT President

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**WEB CAREER DAY**  
**Saturday January 22**

**8:30am - 2:30pm**

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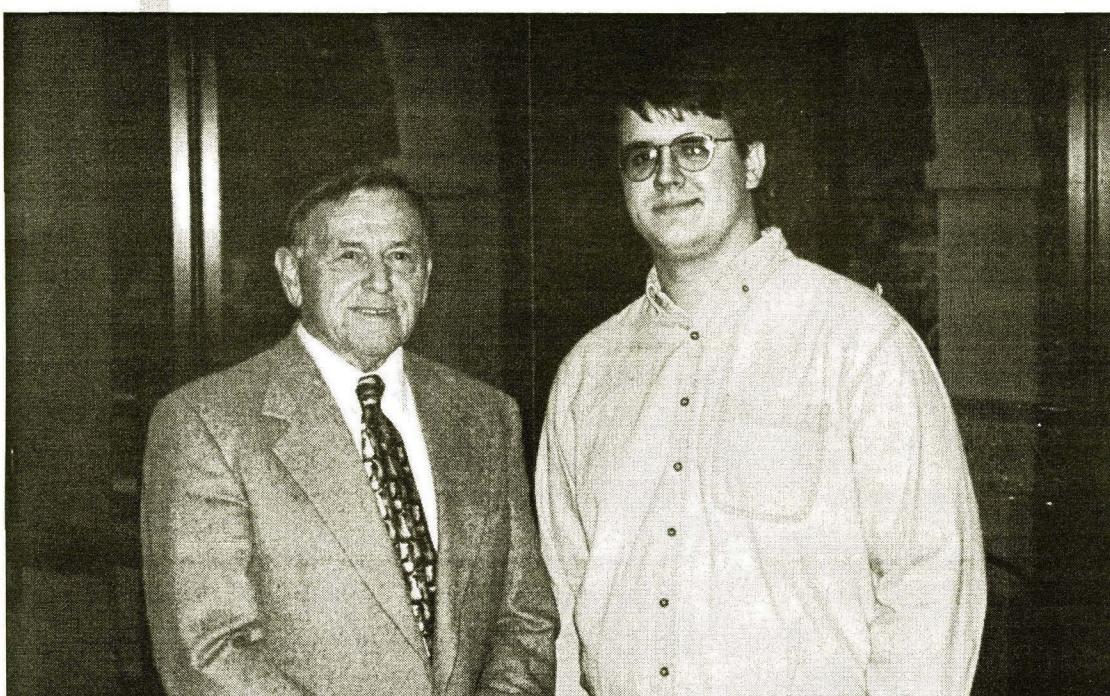
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To schedule an interview e-mail your resume to: [recruiter@latimes.com](mailto:recruiter@latimes.com) no later than Tuesday January 18. Successful candidates will be advised in advance. Free parking in the Los Angeles Times parking garage, 213 S. Spring St.

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## SURFers



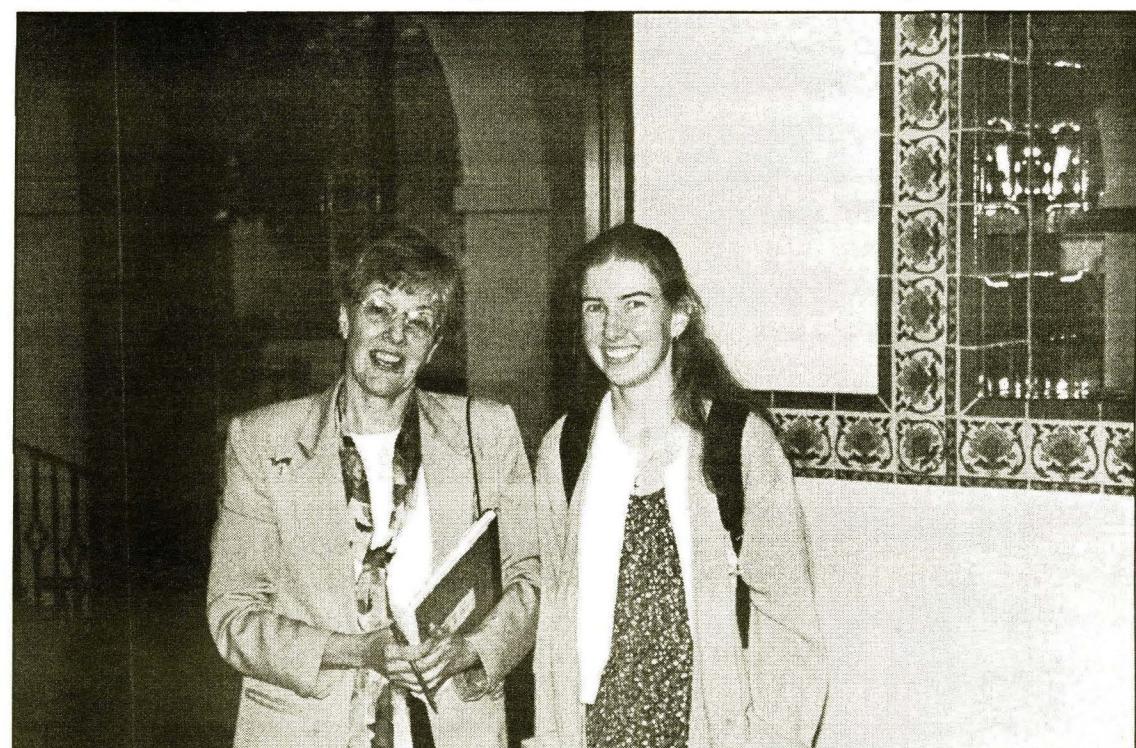
SURF Speaking Competition winner Peter J. Freese, with Robert C. Perpall



Perpall, with 2nd Place SURFer Ming M. Chen



Carolyn Merkel, director of the SURF Program, presents the awards.



Carolyn Merkel and 3rd Place winner Katie Noyes, Merkel SURF fellow, pose for the camera.

DORISS S. PERPALL  
SURF Speaking awards

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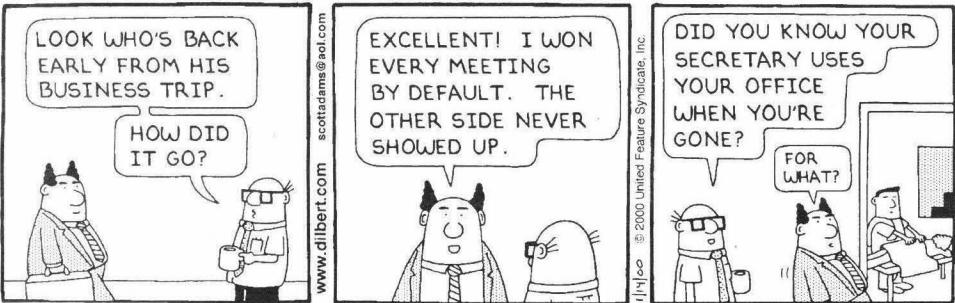
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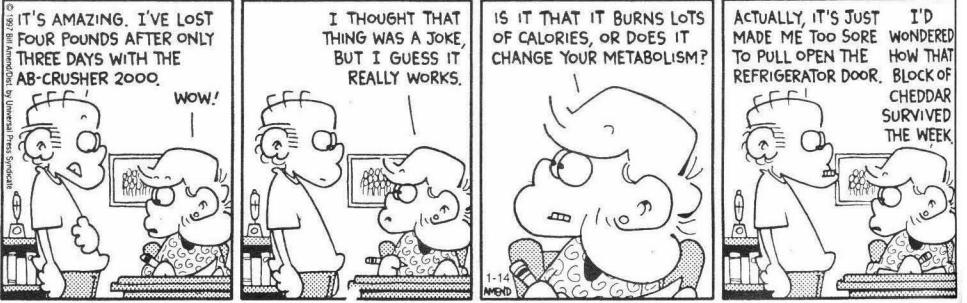
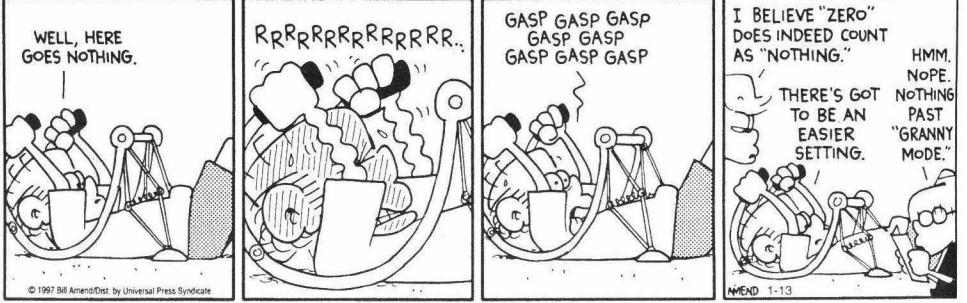
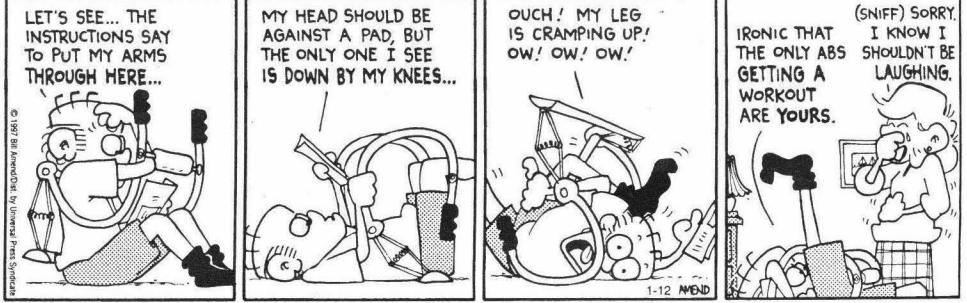
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*Starring Ralph Fiennes  
THE END OF THE AFFAIR  
Daily [11:30] 2:05 4:40 7:15 9:50*

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*Directed by Pedro Almodovar  
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Daily [12:30] 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:20*

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*Based on the novel by Jane Austin  
MANSFIELD PARK  
Daily [11:30] 2:10 4:50 7:30 10:00*

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*Starring Ed Harris  
THE THIRD MIRACLE  
Daily [11:30] 2:10 4:50 7:30 10:10*

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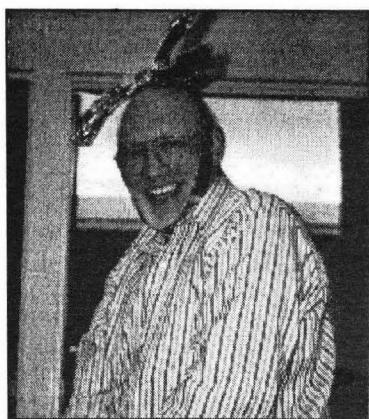
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# Dean

## Dean's Corner



### **Y2K, YOK?**

by Jean-Paul Revel

22) and that at least one Denmark bank ran into troubles. Closer to home, in New Mexico, half of the Motor Vehicle Offices could not issue driver's licenses, some workers in Alabama could not be paid, and meteorological Doppler systems shut down briefly in Chicago, according to the LA Times of 1/10/00. Of course, Chicago weather being what it usually is this time of year, the inability to predict bad weather could be seen as a blessing in disguise.

Last week, it seemed that the threat of a Y2K bug bite had just been a bad dream. Or was it? It is hard to tell. Maybe Y2K was never the threat that it was made out to be, with world finance collapsing, planes falling out of the sky and who-knows-what other calamities as faithful electronic servants paused in their ordained activities to ponder whether this was the beginning of the 20th century or that of the 21st. It has been argued that the predicted apocalyptic events would not have taken place even if no "fixes" had been made. After all, countries where very few precautions were taken did not suffer a meltdown or accidentally fire off their missiles. But then, one can also argue that the world as a whole did not collapse precisely because there were intensive preparations elsewhere. The bug was real, even if its effects were not felt as brutally as expected. I understand that there were malfunctions in the breath testing machines used on drunken motorists by the Hong Kong police (*The Economist*, Jan 8, 2000, pp.

Let me tell you about the bug I ran into, right here in Pasadena. You see, over the week end I had to replace one of the controllers of the watering system for our garden at home. The old one packed up, but that was not a Y2K problem, just one of planned obsolescence. I went to the hardware store, bought a surprisingly cheap replacement, and went to install it. After I had all the leads connected, I began programming the thing, and discovered that the default date on its calendar was 1/1/1996. When I went to change the date, I was able to enter 1997, '98, '99 and even 2000 but no month or day of the week. After trying a few

times, thinking I surely had made an error, I had to quit. The readout looks funny now, but I don't really care, as long as functionality is not impaired. What importance does it have if my lawn gets watered on indeterminate dates? I suppose it would matter some, if I worried about which day of the week the sprinklers did their thing - not on Wednesdays, because that's when my wife tends her flowers and she hates getting wet, but that is easy to take care of.

I'll just have to watch for Feb. 29th, when Y2K intelligence leads me to suspect my sprinklers might get their days mixed up. But so what, I'll just have to remember to check that things are OK. Come to think of it, maybe that's why this particular brand of controllers were much cheaper than the others on the shelf. In a perverse sort of way, finding this minor bug made me feel good. At least I have proof that may be the mass hysteria the world suffered may have had some basis after all.

Now, having a well documented water controller was not worth even a very small part of the \$100 billion spent nationwide on Y2K. About \$150 million of that was expended in LA County itself. The County's

chief information officer indicated that 36,000 programs which were not compliant had to be fixed. But the attention paid to the systems, the upgrading and modernizing that went on as a result of the scare, was probably all to the good, and would have had to be spent sometime soon anyway.

But that's not the end of Y2K related expenses, not by far. Many big companies have filed claims with their insurers claiming that they were covered against losses from "any destruction, distortion or corruption of any computer data, coding, program or software". It is further argued that payment is due under the "sue and labor" clause. Sue and labor covers the cost of sandbagging a factory to prevent worse damage caused by floodwaters.. Y2K patches are considered the equivalent of sandbags against their insurance policies. Of course the insurers don't want to be saddled with these expenses. So GTE, Xerox, Nike, Unisys and others have filed suit against them.

And if that were not enough there has also been claims against companies for royalties to be paid. While stuck in traffic Bruce Dickens, a Southern California software engineer, dreamed of a simple Y2K fix. He filed a patent application for his idea and was granted it. Since many of the fixes used turn out to be based on the same or similar approaches, he is now asking for what he sees as his

due, reports Elaine Korry of National Public Radio. It will not come as a surprise to anyone that companies so approached are refusing to pay, arguing that Dicken's patent was improper in the first place. Not so say Dicken's attorneys. The US Patent Office is looking into the matter. It is an issue that will only take a few years to resolve.

But wait, it is not all over yet. What about the threat of February 29th, the supernumerary leap year? A year ending in 00 is normally not a leap year except if, like 2000, it is also divisible by 400. This is commonly said to be such an esoteric event that it will trip off another spate of problems. I don't know if other fixes also attempted to repair this potential problem. I also don't know if a fix is really needed. Leap year occur every four years, so 2000, 4 years after 1996 is a leap year that comes when it should. What the rule says is that a year ending in 00 is not normally a leap year (unless divisible by 400). So my guess is that any problem should make itself felt, not this coming Feb. 29th, but Feb. 29, 2100. We may be YOK after all, but not so our descendants. As the French say: "Après moi, le déluge," i.e., very loosely translated, none of us will live that long, even if advances in medicine will make reaching 100 routine.

A bientôt.

*Jean Paul Revel*

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# Mints

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The Caltech Student Investment Fund** is now accepting applications for club funding. If your club would like to apply for money, you can download an application from: <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~sif/clubs.html>. Funds are limited and the deadline for applications is January 14. If you have any questions, please e-mail [sif@its.caltech.edu](mailto:sif@its.caltech.edu).

**Caltech guitar classes for the winter quarter** will meet on Tuesdays in SAC Room 1, starting on January 11 as follows: Beginning Guitar Class 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.; Intermediate Guitar Class 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.; Advanced Guitar Class 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Classical and flamenco repertoires are explored, but techniques transfer to other styles of guitar. The Beginning Class includes a jazz/folk chord system. Classes are free to Caltech students and other members of the Caltech community (space permitting). Undergrads can receive 3 units of credit. The instructor, Darryl Denning, has an international background in performance, teaching and recording (two of his CDs are available in the Bookstore). Mr. Denning can be reached at 323-465-0881 or by email at [ddenning@caltech.edu](mailto:ddenning@caltech.edu). The guitar home page is at [www.cco.caltech.edu/~musicpgm/guitar.html](http://www.cco.caltech.edu/~musicpgm/guitar.html).

**Jewish volunteers needed to mentor teens with diabetes**, special program to work with the Jewish Federation's L.A./Tel Aviv Partnership. Sponsors will have the opportunity to mentor adolescents who can benefit from their invaluable experience in managing diabetes. For more information, contact Beverly Daley at 323-669-2490, [bdaley@chla.usc.edu](mailto:bdaley@chla.usc.edu), or Fredi Rembaum at 323-761-8155, [frembaum@jewishla.org](mailto:frembaum@jewishla.org).

**The Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena** announces free admission for students throughout 2000. The Museum is located on the corner of Orange Grove and Colorado Blvd. Parking is free and no reservations are necessary. Museum is open Wed., through Sun., noon until 6:00 p.m. Students showing student ID at the entrance will be admitted free of charge. For more information, contact Kimberly Gilhooly, 626-449-6940 x405.

**Help make a child's holiday wish come true** by volunteering to be a Big Brother. Catholic Big Brothers matches volunteers of all faiths to fatherless youth who need a positive adult influence in their lives. For more information about how you can fill this need, call 888-463-4066.

**The Measurement Science Conference (MSC)** luncheon will be held on January 20, 2000 at the Disneyland Convention Center in Anaheim, California.

**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 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\* 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\* Lit 180\* "Knowing, Madness, and Murder: Selections from American Literature" Instructor: Martha Banta; M 1-4pm 1e Dabney. The HSS division is also offering another section of Hum 7a American Society and Politics - Winter Term. Instructor: Kousser; T 7:30-9:30pm & F 3-4. Copies of HSS course schedules are available in 228 Baxter.

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## EVENTS

**Ninth concert of the L.A. Philharmonic's 1999-2000 Community Concert Series**, Fri. Jan. 21, Sir Roger Norrington leads the L.A. Philharmonic and vocal soloists in Sir Michael Tippett's oratorio, "A Child of Our Time." This performance is free and open to the public, and takes place at Wilshire United Methodist Church, 4350 Wilshire Blvd., in L.A. For information, call 323-931-1085.

**Manfred Honeck Makes L.A. Philharmonic debut** conducting Mozart, Prokofiev, and Johann Strauss, Jr., Jan. 13, 15, and 17 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, at 8:00 p.m. Tickets (\$15 - \$70) are now on sale at the Philharmonic's Music Center box office, all Ticketmaster outlets, and by credit card phone order at 213-365-3500. Call 323-850-2000 for more information.

**The Winter Festival**, sponsored annually by the Pasadena Folklife Co-op, will be held on Jan. 23, Sun., from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Temple, 150 N. Madison (at Walnut). A \$5.00 donation will be requested at the North entrance. Folks are welcome to participate or simply observe, they can wear costumes or not. For more information, contact Sylvia Stachura, 626-300-8138 or Marshall Cates, 626-794-9493.

**Music Director Jeffery Kahane and the L.A. Chamber Orchestra** will continue their "Made in California" season with the guest appearance of the exciting young California pianist Christopher O'Riley on Fri., Jan 21 in Royce Hall, UCLA, and Sat. Jan. 22 at the historic Alex Theatre in Glendale. The concerts will begin at 8:00 p.m. Tickets may be purchased by calling 213-622-7001 x215, M-F 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Caltech Jazz Bands**, under the direction of William Bing, present their annual winter concert, "Jump, Jive, and Wail." This is a free concert and open to the public. Featured on this concert will be guest artist John DaVera. Concert will be on Sat., Jan 22, 8:00 p.m. at the Beckman Auditorium on the Caltech campus. For more information, call 626-395-4652.

**The Gerald Wilson Orchestra** will appear on Sat., Jan 15, 8:00 p.m. in Caltech's Beckman Auditorium. Tickets are \$25, \$21, \$17, youths 12 and under receive \$4 off. Student and senior rush tickets will go on sale for \$10 beginning one-half hour before the performance (subject to availability). Tickets can be purchased at the Caltech Ticket Office, and are also available at all Ticketmaster Ticket Centers. For more information, call 888-2CALTECH or 626-395-4652.

**"Sundays Live"** chamber music series, presents the Thuringer Salonquintet performing music from old and new Vienna, 6 p.m. Sun., Jan. 16, at the Leo S. Bing Theater, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. For further information, call 213-485-6873.

## SCHOLARSHIP

**Work Abroad with IAESTE in 2000!** Since 1948, IAESTE, the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience, has given students the opportunity to experience the world. Opportunities exist for: -Engineering and science students who want to be placed into paid technical internships in engineering, computer science, mathematics, natural and physical sciences. -Work permit service for students who have identified overseas internships. -Students to start local chapters of IAESTE on campus. IAESTE will offer three \$1000 scholarships for students placed into IAESTE internships. Students can connect to IAESTE on the web, <http://www.aipt.org/iaeste.html>.

**The Getty Grant Program** - Multicultural Undergraduate Internships at the Getty Center. Internship is designed for students who are members of groups underrepresented in museum professions. Applicants must be currently enrolled undergraduates in the Los Angeles area, and will have completed at least one semester of college by June 2000, and will not graduate before December 2000. The internship provide stipends of \$3,000 for ten-week summer internships in specific departments of the Getty Museum and other programs located at the Getty Center, beginning June 19, 2000 and ending August 25, 2000. Application forms and additional information are available from the Grant Program office or online at <http://www.getty.edu/grant>.

Deadline is March 1, 2000. Contact 310-440-6645 or 310-440-7320 for more information.

**The Literature Faculty is pleased to announce the 54th Annual McKinney Competition.** The Mary A. Earl McKinney Prize is awarded each year for excellence in writing. Only full-time students officially registered at Caltech

as undergraduates are eligible to enter the competition. Prizes will be given in three categories: poetry, prose fiction, and non-fiction essays, all submissions must be typed and double-spaced. Include your address and phone number. In the poetry category, entrants may submit up to three poems. Submissions of prose fiction should not exceed 12,000 words. The prize in each category will be \$300. Only one entry in each category, submit works to Professor Jenijoy La Belle, Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences, 101-40, by no later than March 31, 2000. No entries will be returned. Winners will be announced in May. Previous winners in any one category are not eligible for the competition in that category. If you have any questions, contact Prof. La Belle, extension 3605, or Barbara Estrada, extension 3609.

**Andover Teaching Fellowships.** 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. 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 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 for female college juniors has begun. 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 at [www.eliewieselfoundation.org](http://www.eliewieselfoundation.org), or call 212-490-7777.

**The American Society of Naval Engineers (ASNE)** is offering scholarship awards of \$2,500 for undergraduates and \$3,500 for graduate students for the 2000-2001 academic year. Applicants must be an U.S. citizen and demonstrate a genuine interest in a career in naval engineering. Selection criteria will be based on the candidate's academic record, work history, professional promise and interest in naval engineering, extra-curricular activities, and recommendations of college faculty, employers, and others. Financial need may also be considered. All graduate students must be members of ASNE or SNAME (Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers). Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office. For further information you may contact: The American Society of Naval Engineers, 1452 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3458 or phone (703) 836-6727. The website address is [www.navalengineers.org](http://www.navalengineers.org). Entries must be submitted to ASNE by February 15, 2000.

**The College Women's Club of Pasadena Scholarship Foundation** is accepting applications for scholarship and fellowship awards for the 2000-2001 academic year. Applicants must be female, U.S. citizens, full-time undergraduate and graduate students, sophomore or above, and must have a 3.0 or higher G.P.A. To apply, submit an application form, a one page, typed essay, a current academic transcript, and three letters of recommendation, preferably, from professors familiar with the student's aspirations and achievements. Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office. Entries must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office by February 8, 1999.

**The American Chemical Society Scholars (ACS) Program** will award approximately 100 scholarship awards to undergraduate students interested in four-year degrees in the chemical science. High school seniors who will be entering college for the first time as undergraduates are also eligible. Applicants must be African-American, Hispanic, or Native American and be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. These scholarships are valued at up \$2,500 for the academic year. To apply, applicants must submit a application form, a current academic transcript, and two letters of recommendation. Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office. Entries must be submitted to ACS by February 15, 1999.

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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