

The California Tech.



VOLUME CVIII, NUMBER 22

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

APRIL 1, 2007

FIRE RAZES SOUTH HOUSES; 50 INJURED

**"SDRAWK CAB YROTSIH
GNINNUR" NO KEAPS
OT GNIKWAH NEHPETS**

FAMED PHYSICIST TO
LECTURE ON SPACETIME

OR ATHLETIC COMPETITIONS

OR AROMATIC HERBS AND SPICES

OR POSSIBLY UNDERWEAR

SPECULATIONS ON GENERALIZED PATH
INTEGRALS, INFORMATION LOSS IN BLACK
HOLES DEEMED "ADORABLE"

BY MARK EICHENLAUB

World-renowned sports historian Stephen Hawking will give a mixed-up lecture on the origins of reverse-direction athletic competitions, entitled "Running History Backwards", this Tuesday, April 3 at 8pm in Beckman Auditorium.

Dr. Hawking will also present his talk to Caltech undergraduate and graduate students Monday April 2 at 4pm, because Caltech's young scholars, "need their brainy-sleep and should not be kept up beyond their 9 o'clock bedtimes," according to a girl who said she couldn't go out with me for the same reason.

The lecture by the famed chef and author of bestseller *The Pistachio In a Nutshell* will speak on topics of spice and thyme. Those wishing admission will have to prove their devotion to the cause by jumping over a black hole, dodging the flaming "arrow of time", and waiting in line for tickets, which will be distributed at 8am the morning of the public lecture at the Public Events ticket office.

The line will form long before the 8am ticket distribution, and is likely to stretch across the Court of Man, creating a phenomenon known as a "Public Events Horizon".

While waiting in line, disciples of the great cosmetologist are encouraged to entertain themselves with such activities as fishing ants out of the lawns' wormholes, or, if they are single, flirting (but please try to contain your naked singularity). No consumption of alcoholic beverages will be allowed, as tolerance is being set at Absolut Zero.

Graduate and undergraduate students will not require tickets for their lecture, and are welcomed to "simply waltz in here [Beckman Auditorium] like they own the place," said my mom, while talking about something completely unrelated.

Dr. Hawking, though widely known as a top underwear designer and author of the popular *A Timely History of Briefs*, is the Lucasian Professor at Cambridge, which means he knows a whole



Students Simon Kornblith and Katie Shakman flee the inferno of the South Houses last weekend.

SOUTH HOUSES CATCH FIRE AT LEAST THREE TIMES OVER WEEKEND

*Safety-Minded Alarm System Supporters Vindicated As Lives Are Saved;
Dry Instant Ramen, Indoor Frisbee Playing, and Arson Variously Blamed*

BY HAMILTONY FALK

Criticisms of the fire alarm systems in the South Houses were silenced this weekend as those formerly making them fled a fire that damaged portions of all four South Houses.

Less than an hour after the initial fire was put out, another occurred that destroyed Fleming, Ricketts and Blacker, and just before the printing deadline of the Tech today another fire had started that seems likely to completely destroy Dabney and those parts of the SAC that were still standing. There have been no reported deaths, although as many as 50 students remain in the hos-

pital after receiving first degree burns and suffering from smoke inhalation.

The first fire is believed to have been caused by students burning food in the kitchens, after an unopened package of ramen noodles was microwaved in a failed attempt to cook it. The second fire was caused by someone hitting the fire alarm with a Frisbee, which set off the alarm, which for some reason caused another fire.

The third fire is believed to have been arson. The fires quickly spread through the empty spaces above the rooms of the houses; asbestos insulation, a suspected carcinogen, was removed from these spaces over

the summer and replaced with newspapers and oil soaked rags. Additionally, the fire department was delayed in getting to the fires because they were forced to park in the California parking structure after they were threatened with a ticket for eyeing a parking space in the synchrotron parking lot.

The fires have 'renovated' the reputation of those who supported the installing of the extensive fire alarm system that has been in place in the house. The alarm system, which consisted of fire alarms in every room, including bathrooms and closets, and every 6 feet along hallways, that

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lot about "Star Wars", and also has a fair deal of knowledge on the underappreciated "blast from the cosmological past" hit summer flick, "American Graffiti," which started a universe of good times with a big bang at the box office in 1973.

Hawking, the famous circus clown, revolutionized the theory of balloon-animal-making with his early work on inflation. In recent years he has become a great popularizer of clown science, whose explanatory ability lies in his precocious power for finding apt metaphors of remarkable grace and clarity. "The best way to understand the shape of a balloon is to realize that it is finite without bounds, kind of like the

geometry of the universe as pictured in imaginary time," Hawking says.

His books and lectures on the art of clowning are infused with a subtle and sophisticated wit. "Gravitation cannot be held responsible for people falling in love -- I mean cheap banana peel gags," Hawking is famous for saying.

"Oh wait, yes it can. Nevermind. Forget that. Just pretend I never said it. Man I feel like such a ditz," he added thoughtfully.

Professor Hawking has also dabbled in physics and mathematics, which I think is just SO CUTE! "The Euclidean path in

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Hawking, hawking.

**BRETT FAVRE THROWS
FOOTBALL BACK IN TIME,
KILLS ADOLF HITLER**

**FOOTBALL AT PRESS
CONFERENCE EXCEEDS
SPEED OF LIGHT**

**Hitler Suicide
Mystery Solved**

**ESPN COMMENTATOR: "IT'LL BE
PRETTY MUCH IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP
FAVRE OUT OF HALL OF FAME NOW"**

BY HAMILTONY FALK

At a press conference last Thursday Brett Favre, legendary quarterback for the Green Bay Packers, solved the historical mystery of why a football was found in the bunker in which Adolf Hitler was found dead near the end of the Second World War.

Although the other members of Hitler's party were revealed by an autopsy to have been poisoned, there was no trace of toxin in the blood of Hitler, and it was believed he had died from some sort of blunt trauma. Favre's fingerprints were found burned into the ball by his mighty grip after an investigation that started with Favre throwing a ball so fast it disappeared.

Physicists suggested it may have gone back in time because of its extreme velocity, and are now studying the ball to see if time travel has had any other effects, although there are questions as to whether time-travel or exposure to Favre would be greater factors in any changes in the ball.

After having given a wink and shrug in response to questions about the date of his possible retirement, Favre became irate or "competitive" at a question that stated that perhaps possible number one draft pick JaMarcus Russell had a stronger throwing arm than Favre. Russell has demonstrated that he can throw a football 80 yards but Favre has been the uncontested champion of arm strength for more than a decade. To show that his arm still "had it" despite his advanced age (Favre will turn 73 on July 4th) Favre asked a trainer to fetch him a football. He then proceeded to throw the football towards the back of a conference room, although witnesses say the ball had barely left his hand when it disappeared with a loud pop.

A team of physicists from the University of Wisconsin who had been studying Favre to determine

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**Table Tennis Places 14th
In Nation**

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IN THIS ISSUE

Caltech's financial aid not too shabby
Damage fund endangered
Flatland and Batcave gone
Women's frisbee beats USC

**Women's Water Polo
Starts a Brand New
Season**

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Financial aid still going strong

Even after budget cuts, Caltech is still best value for private universities

BY ANNA HISZPANSKI

Most farmers would agree: it's tough to get more milk out of a cow while giving it less to eat. However, the Financial Aid Office managed to devise a solution.

When the institute-wide budget cuts were made last year, the Financial Aid Office, like most departments on campus, experienced a cut in its budget. Tuition, however, increased. The Tech recently sat down with Financial Aid Interim Director, David Busse, to find out what changes were made and how they will affect students and to survey on the larger scale Caltech's financial aid program.

According to Busse, Caltech dealt with the budget reductions in part by introducing a self-help package for this year's freshman class. The changes are to be grandfathered in and do not affect current sophomores, juniors, or seniors.

As Busse explained, future students are now expected to save \$1,500 to contribute towards their education and earn \$2,000 in work-study. Because freshmen cannot work their first term, they are also expected to take out a \$3,500 loan. In effect, the change replaces some of students' grant aid with loans.

However, this change comes at a time when a couple of schools have been in the news for completely eliminating student loans from their financial aid packages. Princeton was the first university to replace student loans with grants a couple of years ago, and since then a few schools have followed by eliminating loans for low-income students. Davidson College made the announcement merely two weeks ago that

it would be eliminating student loans completely from financial aid offers.

Caltech in fact tried a similar strategy of reducing loans and increasing grants a few years ago, but the trend was unsustainable. The current changes in financial aid packages were needed, in part, because of the strain created on the financial aid budget by the increase of grants:

strongest financial support in the country for its students. In fact, Kiplinger's Financial Magazine ranked Caltech #1 in its survey of Best Deals for 2007 among private universities. Even with its elimination of loans, Princeton came in 6th place.

According to Kiplinger's survey, currently the average debt a Techer graduates with is \$5,500, although this may increase when this year's freshman class gradu-

5 percent annually. However, as Busse notes, "the base has become so big that even if you go up three percent, that's still a pretty big increase."

According to Busse, universities in the past discussed with one another how much to increase tuition annually, "but then the government said that was price control and we couldn't do that."

But Busse offers some hope

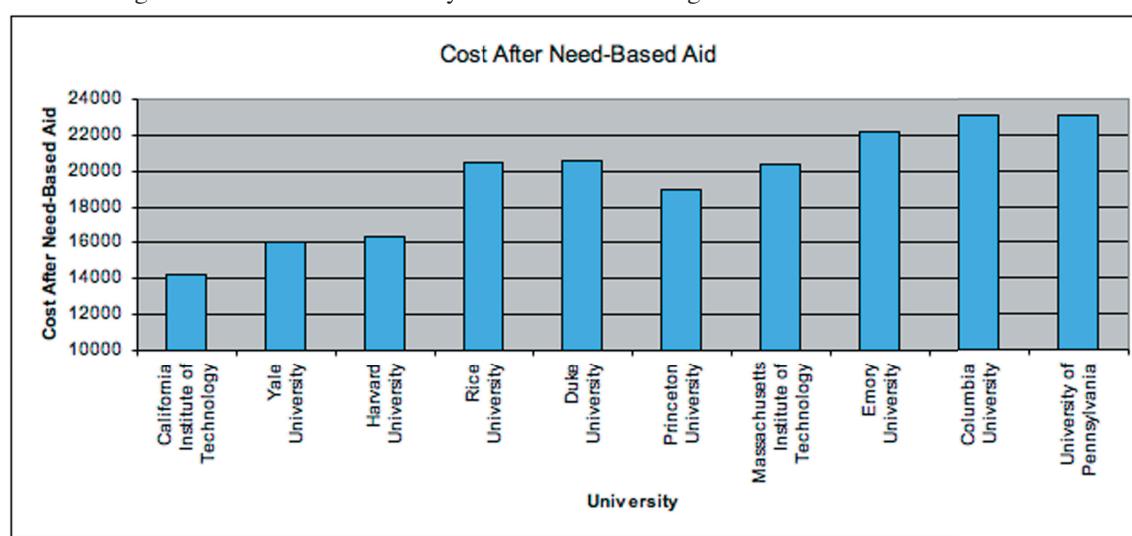
that when people are considered for admissions, their financial need is not considered [except for international students]. Once decisions are made and they come to us, whether students' need is \$10,000 or \$40,000, we meet their need," said Busse.

In addition to its need-based aid, also significant is the amount of money Caltech gives in merit-based aid. Of the approximately \$12 million given in aid this year, about a quarter was spent on merit-based aid.

The sizeable sums of merit-based aid are reflected in Caltech's figures in the Kiplinger survey: according to the survey, the average annual cost of Caltech after applying non-need based aid is \$11,777. Most of Caltech's competitors' figures are over \$40,000.

While the cost of education and the way it is funded may change, one constant students may count on is Caltech's commitment to making it possible for students to attend, regardless of their need.

"Caltech students are very fortunate because it is a superb academic institution and it's committed to meeting full need, mostly through grant aid," said Busse. "My perception, as a visitor to Caltech, is that there's a strong dedication to that [policy]. With the endowment Caltech has, I don't think that's going to change."



"Caltech, like most schools, used to use loans in the financial aid packages. Sometime in the early 2000's, they wanted to pattern after what Princeton was doing, which was to substantially lessen the amount students need to take out in loans. After 4 or 5 years, Caltech realized it could not sustain it... In a sense, Caltech is coming back to what it used to do and what most schools do."

However, despite the increase of loans over grants and the additional health care fee for students in the Class of 2010 and beyond, Caltech still has among the

ates. Only Harvard and Princeton have figures that are also under \$10,000. All other schools ranked as the top 50 Best Deals have students graduating with between \$14,000 and \$30,000 of debt.

"As prices increase, at most schools besides Caltech, students are graduating with more and more indebtedness. That's a national concern since students are choosing their careers based on what they can get paid for rather than what they love to do," said Busse.

Nationally, tuition at most schools increases between 3 to

to parents worried about rising costs of college: "The numbers will continue to go up, but the grants will go up, too. Colleges are in the business of educating students so they can't price themselves out of the market."

Two important factors to consider, Busse says, is whether or not a school has need blind admission and whether it meets 100% of a student's demonstrated need. Caltech, he notes, does both and is only one of about 50 schools in the country that meets 100% of demonstrated need.

"Caltech has been and continues to be need-blind, which means

"P.D.Q. Bach" to give on-campus performance

BY NATALYA KOSTANDOVA

Peter Schickele, a renowned composer, performer, and satirist, will hold a concert on Monday, April 9, at 8pm in Dabney Hall, with his music performed by the Armadillo String Quartet as well as guest artists. The concert, free

to public, will comprise of Schickele's After Hearing Bach, Quintets for Piano & Strings Nos. 1 & 2, and Chapbook for piano six hands.

Schickele, who has composed over 100 serious works, is also recognized for his satiric works under pseudonym P.D.Q. Bach, a forgotten and least liked son of Johann

Sebastian Bach. The music written by P.D.Q. Bach, which is often performed by unusual instruments like kazoo, slide whistle, balloons, lasso d'amore, and bicycles, often parodies works of widely recognized classical composers.

Schickele has earned four Grammy Awards and has performed in

ternationally, as well as throughout the United States.

In addition to the concert, Schickele and the Armadillo String Quartet will give a lecture on April 9 at 4:30 pm in Dabney Lounge, also open to all Caltech students.

SFC convenes Thursday

BY RAM KANDASAMY

Classes will be canceled on April 5th. Although it won't be Ditch Day (that's always tomorrow), this Thursday is when the Student-Faculty Conference will be held. This all-day event at Ramo Auditorium allows the students and faculty to discuss academic issues and possible changes that need to be made. President Chameau and Provost Jennings will be there to open the conference, along with many members of the faculty. The Academic and Research Committee (ARC) is largely responsible for this conference, and ARC Chair Caleb Ng describes the event as "one of the most effective forums for the student body's academic-related concerns".

The day will begin with talks about the Honor Code and the quality of life, followed by talks on the core curriculum and ev-

ery option, with a lunch break squeezed in between. These sessions will not be your standard one hour lecture. The first half-hour will be the presentation, followed by thirty minutes of discussion, where students are free to ask questions and voice concerns to faculty.

Former ARC Secretary and Co-Chair for the Chemistry/Chemical Engineering Committee Ekta Bhojwani says, "If you have a problem with Caltech, this is the place to go to fix it." She cites the changes to Bi 1 as one of the many results of the Student-Faculty Conference.

ARC Chair Caleb Ng adds that "It is important for students to also turn out to visibly support SFC in order that this year's student concerns and proposals are validated."

For more details on this important event, please visit <http://donut.caltech.edu/~arc/sfc.html>.

Announcements:

Beckman Political Internships available for upcoming summer

The internship, supported by friends of Arnold O. Beckman, will pay a stipend of \$6,000. It allows a selected intern to spend the summer working in the office of a politician or a government agency and to see from the inside the process of government. The applicant is expected to make arrangements with the appropriate political persons or organizations. The internship is open to any Caltech undergraduate who intends to be a student here next year. If interested, submit a proposal describing where and how you would use the stipend along with one faculty recommenda-

tion, to the Deans' Office, 210-87, or email demuth@caltech.edu, by MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2007

New Academics and Research Committee Formed

At their final meeting of the winter term, the ASCIT Board of Directors approved the Academics and Research Committee's (ARC) recommendation of Brandt Belson and Vibha Laljani as representatives-at-large. A few days before, ARC had selected Daniel Lo as its Secretary. The full committee, listed below, will begin work on a number of items, including the 30th Annual ASCIT Teaching Awards, after the Student-Faculty Conference on April 5, 2007.

Correction:

Table tennis coach Wei Wang was not an Olympic silver medalist as claimed in the Feb 26 edition of the Tech, but a member of

the American Olympic team and inducted into the USA Table Tennis Hall of Fame.

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The advertising deadline is 5 PM Friday; all advertising should be submitted electronically or as camera-ready art, but *The Tech* can also do simple typesetting and arrangement. All advertising inquiries should be directed to the business manager at business@caltech.edu. For subscription information, please send mail to "Subscriptions."



BY VIBHA LALJANI

THE WORLD

Iranians protest outside British Embassy, Tehran

About 200 people, including Iranian students, threw firecrackers and aimed projectiles at the British Embassy in Tehran during a protest. The people were demonstrating against illegal entry into Iranian waters of 15 UK Royal Navy personnel on March 23.

London is demanding the release of these 15 sailors who were captured. However, Iran has not allowed British Embassy access to the Britons who are being held at an undisclosed location.

On Sunday, April 1, Defense Secretary Des Brown said that the two nations were

in 'direct bilateral communication'.

No one was hurt and nothing was damaged during the protest.

TECHNOLOGY

Blind to see web videos

IBM is soon to launch a browser it has designed to make audio and video content accessible to the visually impaired people. The software, which has been nicknamed A-browser, short for Accessibility-Browser, was created by a blind employee - Dr Chieko Asakawa - in Japan.

IBM hopes that the A-browser will allow blind people the same control over multimedia that everybody else has using a mouse.

IBM said that it will be available later this year, most probably for free. Dr. Asakawa

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- On-Campus Branch
- On-Campus ATMs

was inspired by her increasing frustration in being unable to access huge amounts of web content.

The screen readers and self-talking browsers that are currently in use are not able to handle situations involving audio and video animation especially when it starts playing as soon as the page loads. Using the A-Browser, a visually-impaired person has greater control over media content using pre-defined shortcuts.

ENTERTAINMENT

NY Chocolate Jesus exhibit cancelled

An art gallery in New York cancelled an exhibit of a chocolate sculpture of Jesus Christ after protests by a group US Catholics.

The exhibit is a naked sculpture of Jesus Christ standing six-feet tall with its arms outspread. It was designed by Cosimo Cavallaro. It was to be displayed was to have been displayed Monday, April 2, at Manhattan's Lab Gallery.

The timing caused a protest because it is the week of Easter. The Housing Smith Hotel that houses the Lab Gallery cancelled it after the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights called for a boycott.

Compiled from BBC, CNN, New York Times

ASCIT minutes: New DVDs for library

Officers Present: Chris Gonzales, Mike Grinolds, Andrea Dubin, Angela Zah, Ekta Bhojwani, Patrick Herring, Daryl Coleman, Zack Higbee

Officers Absent: Mike Woods, Caleb Ng

Guests: Yan Zhang, Dan Lo, Justin Chen

*Funding

-We are still running on last BoD's budget until April 1st

-Yan asks for \$500 for the quiz bowl team to go to Nationals at the University of Minnesota. They have asked for this amount of money previously and it has been granted. The club has open membership and any member can come to the tournament. The club is partially funding the trip by running a high school tournament on the 30th and combining it with Make a Difference Day. Approved 5-0-0.

-Justin Chen and Dan Lo from the long boarding club asked for \$300 to start up their new club. They would like to purchase safety equipment (3 sets of pads and helmets) as well as a longer long board. Approved 5-0-0

*Club fair at prefresh weekend.

-35 clubs have contacted Andrea requesting booths.

-There will be a dunk tank and a sticky fly wall. Ekta is still finalizing the schedule for the dunk tank, but Professors have

BUSINESS

WTO opposed to US gambling ban

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is against the US gambling ban because a certain US legislation targets only offshore based gambling websites. The WTO said that the US could resume blocking such websites only if these legislations were equally applied to US companies that offer off-track betting on horse racing.

The application against this US law was taken to the WTO by the twin-island Caribbean nation Antigua and Barbuda. A host of online gambling firms are based there.

SPORTS

Gators top Bruins – Part II

The Gators of University of Florida beat the Bruins of UCLA 76-66, Saturday, March 31. As the Bruins left the court, looking dazed, at 61-45 in favor of the Gators, the scene could just be a replay from last April. Same opponent, second year!

The Gators' victory against the Bruins sets them up in a match against Ohio State on Monday evening at the Georgia Dome. Last year Ohio State lost to the Gators 86-60.

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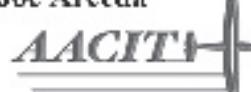
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Crimson creams women's water polo 17-2

Vacationing Harvard women enjoy their only CA win



Preetha Sinha, co-captain, rushes past her Harvard guard.

BY MARISSA CEVALLOS

Caltech's water polo women had no choice but to get an intense workout last Thursday against the vacationing Harvard Crimson. Caltech had only one sub.

"It's really depressing when the other team subs out their entire team and we only have one," said Erin White, who has played on the team for two years.

But despite the dismal 17-2 score, no one on the team would agree that the game was a knock-out.

"We played a lot tougher than the score indicates," said Christine Parry.

"We just played a really tough team," said Chelsea Sharon, a team captain. "Some of the girls were like trees."

Parry and Sharon made Caltech's two goals in the second half, after recovering from a 7-0 halftime. Co-captain Preetha Sinha had more than a few close attempts at the goal, but was consistently blocked by Harvard's San Diego goalie.

And despite the attempts of Caltech's seasoned goalie Becky Streit to block the Crimson, Harvard's slick offense had little problem maneuvering the ball for score after score. Caltech's only saving grace was its defense. In a game where Caltech forced twelve

kick-outs—a flagrant foul—on Harvard, and Caltech was only guilty of two, it's clear that the Beavers did more than just play aggressive Boston women.

"We have good position," said Parry. "Getting a lot of kick-outs is one of our main strengths as a team."

Though the team doesn't even have enough players to keep the bench warm, Parry is able to point to one benefit to having a small roster.

"I know how every teammate plays," said Parry. "We're more trusting as a team than we used to be."

But despite the home pool advantage, Caltech couldn't count on the Cambridge team, which plays indoors all season, to be distracted by the southern California sunlight.

"Just about all of our girls are from California," said Harvard team captain Lauren Snyder. "A few are from the LA area."

Perhaps Harvard's earlier losses to Cal Baptist, Redlands, and Pomona spurred them to win at least one game—and definitively—before heading back to the East coast after spring break.

Surprisingly, Caltech wasn't the only team with scientists in the pool.

"About half of the girls on our team are bio-chem or pre-meds," said Snyder.

Table tennis goes to nationals



Radhika Marathe prepares to return a shot at nationals.

BY DAVID CHEN

The women's table tennis team placed 14th in the nation last weekend at the National College Table Tennis Championship Tournament at Ohio State University.

The team was invited to participate in this National tournament based on their performance in the Southern California Regionals. Pauline Ku, Radhika Marathe, Jiaqi Guo, and Janet Sheung participated in both the regionals and the national tournament.

Michael Woods, an avid table tennis player who served as one of the team's coaches, said that he was surprised the team made nationals since they competed against some strong teams.

UC San Diego and USC also made nationals, making Southern California the most represented region with three teams.

Texas Wesleyan, the only school to give table tennis scholarships, won first place in the nation and Stanford University placed second.

The players enjoyed the competition and noted that there were some close matches. In one match, Jiaqi Guo narrowly defeated an adversary from UCSD in the final set, after the first four sets resulted in a 2-2 tie.

Woods noted that "Table tennis is an interesting sport since it's very dependent on dedication and skill." He explained that height and age do not confer an advantage.

Woods said that there is ample interest in table tennis at Caltech.

"It's delightful that every table tennis class is always full," said Woods, also praising the coach, a former member of the US Olympic team.

Jed Yang, another student who served as the team's coach, went with the team to the Nationals, hosted this year at Ohio State University.

Jiaqi Guo said that she enjoyed not only her own matches but watching the other players since they were so intense.

The team plans on returning to Nationals next year, but Jiaqi noted, "We need more recruits."

Each team played four singles matches and one doubles match. Each match is based on five sets, with a set won at 11 points. More details on the tournament are available at <http://www.buckeyetc.com/nctta2007/>.

The Athletics department funded the airfare, ASCIT covered the registration fees, and Tom Manning provided for the hotel.

Caltech topples Trojans 11-10



Katherine Poulin, left, smacks down the disc in front of her USC offense during a scrimmage on Sunday afternoon. This is the second time Caltech's women's team has defeated USC, but by a narrower margin than February's 10-2 blow-out.

Photo by Matthew Glassman

GAYpril Events

Make a Difference Day:

Saturday, March 31st

All day

Sign Up through the Caltech Y

Dinner and a Movie: "Another Gay Movie"

Friday, April 13th

7:00pm

2nd Floor Center for Student Services

GAYpril Ice Cream Kick Off

Free Ice Cream , Ally pins and Resources

Monday, April 2nd

11:00-2:00pm

Near C-Store

Day Hike

Saturday, April 14th

10:00 am

Switzer Falls

RSVP required...limited spaces!

Friends for Life: A Night of Comedy

Tuesday, April 3rd

8:00pm

The Laugh Factory

LGBTQ Graduate Student Social Hour

Friday, April 20th

7:00-8:00pm

The Rathskeller

LGBTQ & Allies Discussion Group

Tuesday, April 3rd &17th

7:30-9:30pm

Health and Counseling Center

Conference Room

Pre-frosh Club Fair

Saturday, April 21st

4:00-5:30pm

Olive Walk

Prism Coffee Hour

Wednesday, April 4, 11, 18 & 25th

3:00-4:00pm

The Red Door Café

Clubbing in West Hollywood

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Hot off-campus picks absent from lottery

Batcave and Flatland get the boot from Housing; will be used for grad or faculty

BY DANIEL ROWLANDS

Housing has decided to reshuffle its properties again, and this year two of the most popular off-campus unaffiliated locations have been removed from the unaffiliated lottery.

The houses at 555 S. Catalina and 240 S. Michigan, commonly known as Batcave and Flatland, will be renovated during the summer and then used as furnished housing for new and visiting faculty.

In previous years, these houses went to people with the top several picks and the groups of people they pulled in as housemates (ten to twelve people for Batcave and six for Flatland).

Even before Batcave belonged to Caltech, it housed undergrads. According to one of this year's Batcave residents, Fedor Manin, he once got a knock on the door from an alum from the sixties who had lived in Batcave as an undergrad and said that, at the time, "the house used to be rented out by a professor's wife or something."

Despite the fact that Batcave and Flatland have been among the first places picked in the unaffiliated lottery, Batcave was half full two years ago and again this year after a number of residents moved into the South Houses second term. Flatland has also been incompletely filled for the last two years.

However, Marie Lara, Housing Office Assignments Coordinator, indicated that this was not the reason for removing them from the lottery: she said one of the reasons for the change was a wish to concentrate undergrads in the same part of campus along with a need to provide more faculty and post-doc housing.

As part of the process of moving all undergraduate housing closer together, they have been replaced with the thirty rooms in Braun House, twenty rooms of which were Ricketts and Fleming off-campus alleys during the South House renovation and graduate student housing before

that. Housing has been reassigning properties to different groups since the 2004 merger of the formerly independent offices of graduate, undergraduate, and faculty housing. Marks and Braun Houses were transferred from grad student to undergrad use, two faculty houses were assigned to grad students and this year, Batcave and Flatland will most likely be made into faculty housing. It is intended that Marks and Braun will remain unaffiliated undergraduate housing permanently.

Nine rooms in Marks are assigned in an early picks process for current residents and a similar process may be instituted in Braun in the future, but the rest of the rooms will be available in the general unaffiliated lottery and

available to all undergraduates. If needed due to increasing demand, Housing may add more spaces to the undergrad housing pool, possibly including returning Flatland and Batcave to undergraduate use.

Lottery Options

Avery also has an internal lottery for eighty-three spaces open to current residents and each of the other seven Houses has room picks open to all full members of the house for spots in that House. Besides the rooms in the Houses (66 to 94 depending on the House), the Houses other than Avery also control the process by which full members can pick rooms in off-campus properties controlled by the house. These off-campus alleys have been unchanged for the last six or seven years and hold five to nine people, depending on the House. The one exception to this is Fleming—several years ago it was decided to replace two quads they controlled with housing closer to campus and the House picked 217 Holliston. However, the South Houses were temporarily given furnished faculty houses as additional space during renovations to make up for

the fact that the Mods had fewer beds than the South Houses did. These are being returned to use as faculty and post-doc housing.

For students who cannot or do not wish to live in their House, Housing guarantees a room in

ty-five spaces, in Avery will be available for the unaffiliated lottery. Avery is different from other off-campus housing in that it is a House with its own culture and in that undergrads live alongside grad students and several faculty-in-residence. As a House, Avery

Nineteen singles are available in Marks House and thirty singles are available in Braun House. These singles are somewhat larger than South House or Avery singles, but they do not have air conditioning and have tiled rather than carpeted floors. There is also no ITS wireless in Marks and Braun, and some residents have complained that the walls are very thin and they are often disturbed by lawnmowers and traffic on San Pasqual.

According to Mark Eichenlaub, who lives in Braun this year, "The rooms don't seem to block out any sound at all - it's as if there were a giant hole in the wall where the window pane is. I can clearly hear people speaking in a gentle, conversational tone in the next room or out in the hallway even with the door closed."

On the up-side, Marks and Braun are closer to the seven Houses and other locations on the south side of campus than any of the other unaffiliated housing locations. Both houses are reported to be in good condition and have similar amenities to Houses in terms of laundry, kitchen space, and bathrooms. Marks House also has its own internal lottery, allowing nine or so current residents to get first pick at rooms in Marks; something similar may be instituted in Braun in the future depending on the demand for unaffiliated housing. Residents of Marks and Braun are not required to be on the board plan.

Twenty-five one-bedroom apartments are available in 150 S. Chester for groups of two or three students and the double, triple, and quad apartments at 1170 E. Del Mar have room for as many as thirty students in total. The rooms are reported to be in good condition. One unusual thing about the apartment rents is that they are charged per apartment. Thus, if someone leaves during the middle of the year, his or her roommates are responsible for covering his or her rent. All apartments have their own kitchens and the buildings have laundry rooms. 1170 E. Del Mar has an outdoor swimming pool; the swimming pool at 150 S. Chester was removed over the summer because it was causing structural damage to the building. Residents of the apartments are not required to be on a board plan.

The house at 555 Catalina, commonly known as Batcave, was one of the most popular off-campus picks before Housing removed it from the undergraduate lottery.

the off-campus unaffiliated lottery. This year, rooms in Marks, Braun, and Avery Houses are available as well as apartments in 150 S. Chester and 1170 E. Del Mar. Each student who wishes to live off-campus is assigned a random pick number and, when his or her number is called, can pick any of the remaining rooms or apartments, pulling in as roommates as many people as needed to fill the space.

One triple, nine doubles, and four singles, for a total of twenty-

five spaces, in Avery will be available for the unaffiliated lottery. Unlike other off-campus housing locations, Avery can only be opened by ID card, not key or mechanical combination, but Tim Chang indicated that arrangements could be made for students with religious objections to key cards to get keys. Residents of Avery are required to be on the Avery board plan, which consists of \$1305 of declining balance (declining balance can be used to pay for House dinners).



Photo by Robert Karl

Students listen to a guest speaker over lunch at the Athenaeum at the 2007 Scholars Luncheon, where students meet the donors of their named scholarships.

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Administration may axe damage fund

Fund historically covers Ditch Day pranks gone awry, general mischief

BY NATALYA KOSTANDOVA

The question whether the Damage Fund should be eliminated still hovers unanswered by the Student Housing Committee.

Master of Student Houses Cathy Jurca feels removing the fund would reduce the amount of damage done by the students since the students responsible for the damage would be directly charged.

By having the Damage Fund, "the Institute pays students not to commit damage," wrote Jurca in an email. "Or alternatively, it gives Houses a pre-paid account to use to commit damage...neither of these views is in keeping with the principle of stewardship."

Kevin Watts, the chair of the Stewardship Committee, disagrees. Watts, former Superintendent of Lloyd, argues that the Damage Fund is a significant in-

citive for students to keep the damages to the minimum. Currently, the money remaining in the fund at the end of the year is given to the RAs of the houses and is used for social activities.

"If we don't reduce the damages, we won't be able to have some of the social events that we have," said Watts.

If the Damage Fund is eliminated, the students responsible for damage would be directly charged. The Student Housing Committee had already voted to eliminate the fund, yet there is lack of consensus between the members of the Students Affairs. The recent fiasco with the broken gate in the South Houses and the disagreement between the administration and the students over who should pay for the repairs has had a significant part in advancing the proposal.

Ken Libbrecht, the head of the Student Housing Committee, rec-

ognizes the need to reduce the amount of damage done by students.

"You can't not break anything, because that's just no fun," said Libbrecht, "but it'd be nice to keep it down to a dull roar." According to Libbrecht, the change in the policy

would have a very limited affect on the students. While the house dues may go up to provide the houses the money needed to compensate for the lack of Damage Fund, the difference in dues is not expected to be very significant.

Libbrecht said, "Students end up paying anyway. [Taking away the fund] is more of a behavior modification through charging

people differently. It does help to charge students directly – it would get people to notice more the damage that is done."

While the fate of the Damage Fund remains undecided, the possibility of its elimination will have direct effects on some of the end-of-the-year activities that take place at Tech.

Ditch Day, for example, may suffer the consequences.

"Seniors have the least incentive to clean up if they make a mess, and it's much more likely for the damage fund to be eliminated if they act irresponsibly," said Watts. "So we probably will have to start billing seniors more heavily this year."

Currently, there are many oc-

casions upon which the Houses choose to fix the damage without using the Damage Fund. The Student Affairs may choose to keep the Damage Fund but will require the Houses to use it to pay for all damages. In addition, the total amount charged for damages, as well as the house by house breakdown, would be closely monitored by the administration.

According to Watts, concerns are not limited to just the financial aspect of the proposal.

"Students have been entrusted with stewardship for houses, and taking the damage fund away just gives us less freedom and control of the houses," said Watts.

The fate of the Damage Fund will be made before the end of the academic year by the Student Housing Committee. The committee, largely comprised of faculty members, also includes two undergraduate representatives, who will be selected by the IHC.

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HAWKING

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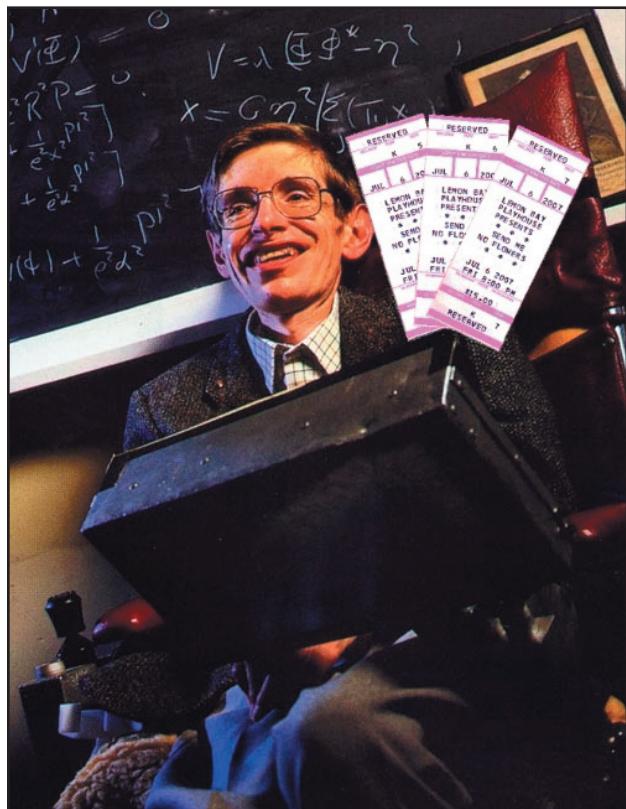
tegral over all topologically trivial metrics can be done by time slicing and so is unitary when analytically continued to the Lorentzian. On the other hand, the path integral over all topologically non-trivial metrics is asymptotically independent of the initial state. Thus the total path integral is unitary and information is not lost in the formation and evaporation of black holes," claims Hawking, smiling like a little angel.

Aww, now that is adorable. Good job to you Stephen. You're getting a gold star sticker on your chart AND and smiley face in red pen AND an extra cherry on your ice cream tonight. Yay!

Although Dr. Hawking began his meteoric rise in providing home care for young children, he soon abandoned the occupation due to being confined to small rooms. Hawking has always been staunchly anti de Sitter space.

Instead he moved into fishing, claiming his ultimate goal was to "know the mind of Cod."

In his quest for the Theory of Everyfish, Hawking has made little use of string theory, as fishing uses plastic lines instead. Instead,



Stephen hawking tickets to his annual Caltech talk, which reliably fills Beckman Auditorium fuller than a Universe in a nutshell.

he has focused his efforts on understanding quantum gravity, but subsequently found that this just doesn't matter much for fish. Hawking has summarized the fruit of his research efforts in this area with the pithy remark that "black sole have no hair."

With such a rich and varied life experience to draw on, Dr. Hawking could choose to lecture on nearly any topic. The website for

his talk, www.snipurl.com/hawking07, provides the following blurb summary:

"We think of history as a relentless progression forward in time. The universe, though, doesn't have just a single history; instead, it has every possible history. We create history by our observation, rather than history creating us."

Yeah, like that's believable.

FIRES

Continued from Page 1

were capable of emitting a sound loud enough to shatter souls, as well as flashing strobe lights and a klaxon sound audible outside of the houses, was criticized because of its tendency to go off every few hours.

There were also complaints that burnt food, blunt trauma to any of the fire alarms, and extremely spicy salsas all tended to set off the fire alarm, and the only way to turn off the system was through extensive use of prayer. In retrospect these measures were not enough, and future plans to rebuild the houses will include a sprinkler system or perhaps a method of constructing the houses entirely out of ice.

The various committees involved in the renovations, as well as Tim Chang, refused to comment because this story is completely untrue and I also didn't contact them anyway.

FAVRE

Continued from Page 1

the phenotypic effects of being half man and half god suggested that the football had exceeded the speed of light and thus had moved backward in the time dimension due to relativistic effects.

After the football was confirmed to have been thrown back in time, Favre admitted that he had experienced similar circumstances in high school while attempting to pitch for the baseball team. His pitches would routinely disappear with a popping sound, convincing him that God wanted him to play football.

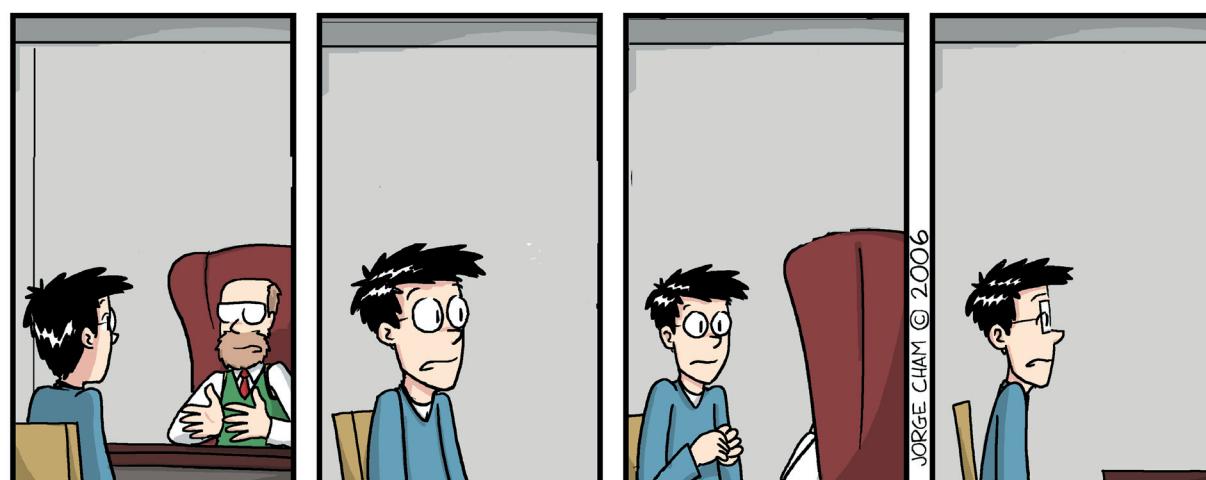
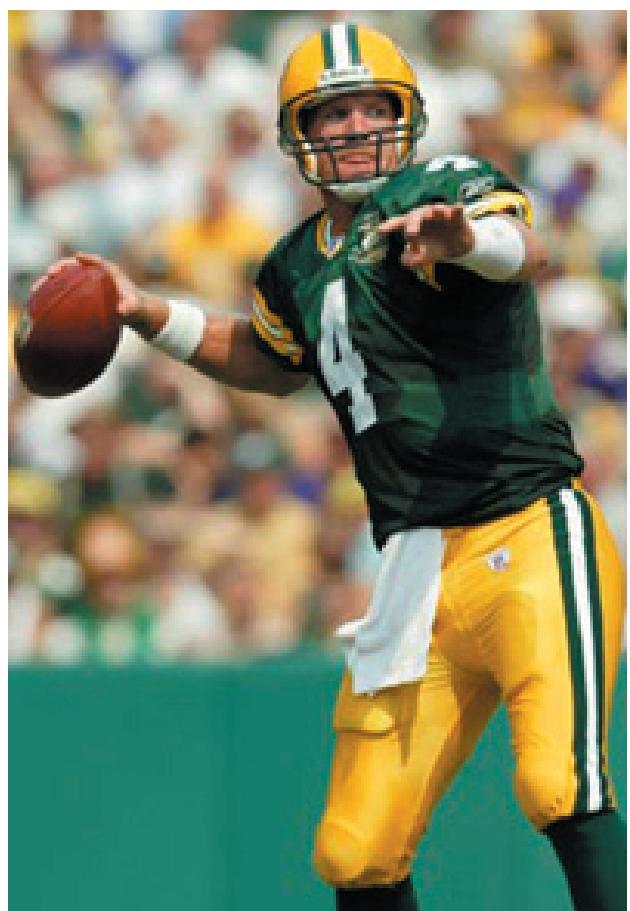
Scientists hypothesize that because Favre is such a great American he uncon-

sciously threw the football in a direction that would result in it impacting Hitler's head, although Favre says he was just throwing it out there, with no more aim than he would have during a playoff game.

Said one ESPN commentator, anonymously due to previous embarrassing statements: "I'm not surprised at this. Favre is such a gun-slinger; he's always taking risks and exceeding expectations. People said you couldn't exceed the speed of light, but people also said Favre would never win a Super Bowl, and he just kept proving them wrong."

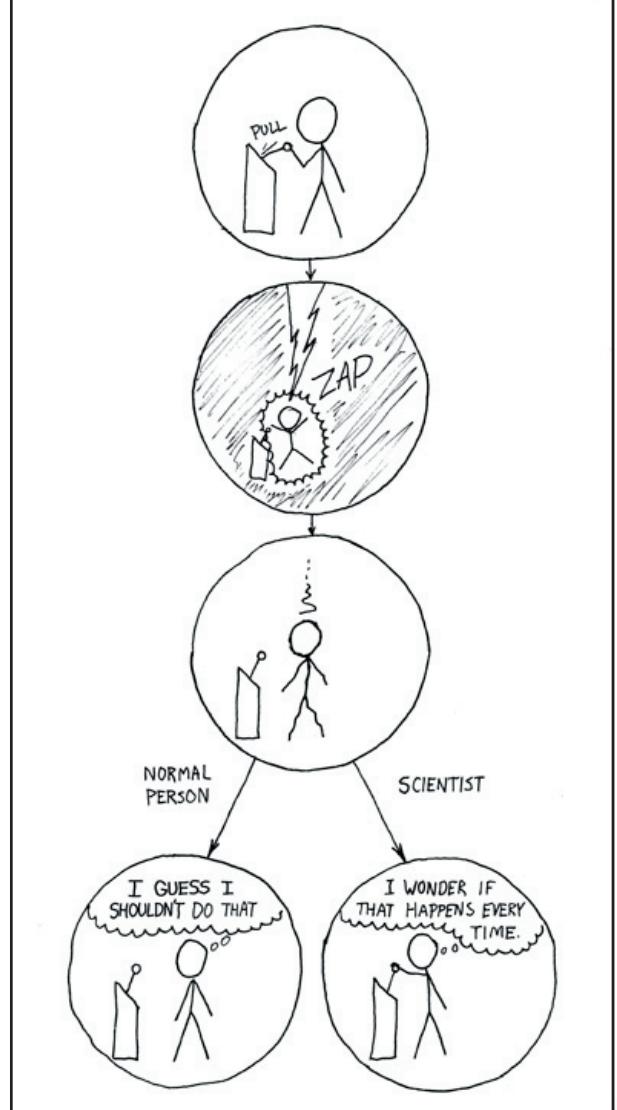
He added, "Killing Hitler has got to rate right up there with finally winning the big game; it'll be pretty much impossible to keep Favre out of the Hall of Fame now."

Physicists plan to next use Favre, below, to test long-standing questions about relativistically moving tennis balls.



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