



SFC committee meetings reviewed

SANDHYA CHANDRASEKARAN
News Editor

The biennial SFC on Wednesday, April 6 brought up a number of pertinent issues and suggested remedies about the academics at Caltech.

The conference began at 11 AM in Ramo Auditorium with the discussion on the proposed changes to the CORE curriculum. SFC Chair Karthik Sarma opened with a general welcome, followed by current ARC Chair Margaret Chiu, who stressed the role of ARC and student involvement in the improvement of academics at Caltech.

After Vice Provost Melany Hunt provided a bit of history as to the point of CORE, Sarma presented the proposed hypothetical changes to CORE, enumerating the following:

- Renormalization of requirements across the key sciences.
- Choices throughout the core.
- An intensive emphasis on critical writing skills.

4. Early exposure to more faculty in non-lecture settings.

5. A commitment to improved labs involving data collection & analysis and design & build.

6. Exposure to new intellectual frontiers.

7. A commitment to innovative courses and excellent teaching.

Sarma mentioned that the two CORE reforms on the table reflected these ideals and then went about explaining the proposed modifications.

The powerpoint presentation was followed by a student-faculty

panel Q & A session consisting of Sarma, Chiu, Hunt, Professor Scott Fraser, Professor Warren Brown, and undergraduate Neal Bansal, who are all active members on the Council for Undergraduate Education.

To watch a recording of the CORE curriculum discussion, visit <http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~arc/>.

A summary of the notable issues raised during the option-specific sessions follow:

Applied and Computational Mathematics:

- CORE math provides inadequate background for the major.

- Proposed changes include requiring ACM104 and Ma108AB.

Applied Physics:

- Revamping Aph9.

- Trying to get tenure for the optics professor.

- Reviving the option-mentoring program within the major.

Bioengineering:

- Changing the lab requirement for the upcoming catalog year by recreating Bi/BE1x

Biology:

- Revamping Bi2.
- More bioinformatics and biostatistics courses.

Chemical Engineering:

- Clarifying and publicizing the senior thesis.

- More student-faculty interactions with ChE lunches.

Computer Science:

- More money and professors to teach more software engineering classes.

Math:

- Math club meetings four times a year.

- Want summer math research opportunities, such as REU.

- Improving communication between old and incoming professors.

Mechanical Engineering:

- Improving student-faculty interaction.

- Advertising "unwritten rule" of talking to professors in person.

- Improving TA quality.
- Shifting from more graduate to undergraduate TAs.

- Better organization and advertising of the senior thesis.

Physics

- Reworking Ph3
- Ph12A will not be changed
- Ph2 will be waiting for core changes

- Socializing with professors

Students can contribute to reformation efforts by commenting on the feedback page on the CUE website: <http://www.cue.caltech.edu/Feedback>.

Minimal CORE:

Freshman seminar	1 term	NEW
Physics	3 terms	REDUCED
Math	3 terms	REDUCED
Chemistry	2 terms	SAME
Chemistry Laboratory	1 term	SAME
Biology	1 term	SAME
Breadth menu	1 term	SAME
Writing-intensive freshman humanities	2 terms	GRADED
Writing-intensive advanced HSS classes	4 terms	GRADED
HSS electives (combined with the writing intensive classes)	11 terms	REDUCED

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The above are two possibilities proposed during SFC as alternatives to the current core. They were originally introduced a few months ago, though it is yet to be decided whether either will be adopted.

Reformed CORE:

Freshman Seminar	1 term	NEW
Physics	4 terms	REDUCED
Math	4 terms	REDUCED
Chemistry	2 terms	UNCHANGED
Chemistry Laboratory	1 term	MORE CHOICES
Biology	1 term	UNCHANGED
Breadth menu	1 term	UNCHANGED
Programming	1 term	NEW
Algorithms	1 term	NEW
Design & Build Laboratory	1 term	NEW, REPLACE FROSH LAB
Writing-intensive freshman humanities	2 terms	GRADED
Writing-intensive advanced HSS classes	4 terms	GRADED
HSS electives (combined with the writing-intensive classes)	11 terms	REDUCED

News briefs from around the globe

Provided by Tech correspondent Sam Barnett

Need to know

< **100** words about the world this week – topics sorted from good to bad

by Sam Barnett – links to full stories available at barnett.caltech.edu/news

Progress against cancer	2 new drugs endorsed by FDA panel for rare pancreatic cancer	[LATIMES]
Online TV's success	\$ 1.6 billion (revenue in 2010) – \$719 million from advertisements	[CNN]
Bing challenges Google	30% of US web search market now held by Bing – Google at 64% [LATIMES]	
New federal budget	\$ 38 billion of cuts expected – government shutdown prevented [LATIMES]	
Science support reduced	1,500 fewer researchers will receive NSF funds under new budget [WPOST]	
Wildfires in Texas	916 square miles of land and 189 homes burned so far in 2011 [WEEK]	
Japan's economy suffers	\$ 295 billion to rebuild (new estimate) – lower production, exports [BBC]	

ASCIT minutes: Extended edition

ASCIT Board of Directors
Meeting – Minutes
April 5, 2011

Officers present: Chris Hallacy,
Margaret Chiu, Laura Conwill,
Diego Caporale, Mario Zubia,
Prakriti Gaba, Laura Santoso
Officers absent: None

Guests: Catherine Xie, Lucas
Carreno

Call to order: 11:03pm

**Funding Proposal – Caltech
Student Health fair (Catherine
Xie)**

- Requesting \$400 to help fund the Caltech Student Health

The California Tech

Caltech 40-58, Pasadena, CA 91125
advertising e-mail: business@caltech.edu
editorial e-mail: tech@caltech.edu

Editors-in-Chief
Jonathan Schor
Stanford Schor

News Editor
Sandhya Chandrasekaran

Sports Editor
Amol Kamat

Business Manager
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Staff
Sadaf Amouzegar
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Chris Zheng

Circulation
Arjun Ravikumar
Advisor
Tom Mannion

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Fair (to be held 11am-2pm May 13th or 20th), which aims to increase students' awareness about health topics

- Various health related student groups will be invited to represent themselves, as well as off campus professionals, and clubs for entertainment (ex. Jazz band)
 - Will be held on the San Pasqual mall to catch the flow of people going to lunch
 - Received MHF funding last year, this year asked for money the counseling center, the Caltech Y, Tom Mannion, SIF – note this year the budget is minimized because they are reusing umbrellas/bases
 - BoD believes the health fair will be beneficial and will reach out to several passing students.
 - It is apparent that a significant amount of time has gone into planning this event so we believe it will be well executed.
 - In general though, we are receiving a lot of proposals and need to be more careful – looking into partitioning the amount of money we grant per turn and giving applicants a deadline (ex. Two weeks before the event)
- Hallacy motioned to vote, LC seconded. VOTE:
Approved (5-0-0)

Student/Teacher Events (Lucas Carreno)

- The ARC is considering hosting casual student/faculty events so that they can talk in a low-key setting
 - Event would be something like a happy hour – beer sampling, chamber music, jazz band, art showing
 - Not sure how to get direct interaction b/w profs and students (don't want the two groups separating) or how to draw in the busy faculty
 - Look into the Mosh's fund for help
 - The BoD really likes the idea and would like a more formal proposal, suggest asking faculty about their opinions to gauge interest

President's Report:

- Administrators: Hallacy spent the week talking with various administrators and introducing himself, including

**Write
articles
for the
Tech**

get paid up to \$30

Annie Pseudo (alumni director), Jared Whitney (admissions), ACs, Lauren Stolper (FASA)

- Committee Appointments: the BoD and IHC need to meet to determine which group appoints which committees, will do at next IHC meeting
- PFW Weekend:
 - Midnight donuts on Thursday night (asking admissions for money)
 - ASCIT carnival is on Friday, Mannion is paying for the bouncy things
 - \$300 will be given to each house from admissions, so ASCIT can keep that money
 - Need to figure out what ASCIT chillout is supposed to be
- Area Coordinators: See corporation meeting minutes for most recent official update on AC status
- Bylaw change: Want to move the ASCIT elections after house elections – considered:
 - Moving the house presidents' election to right after rotation because presidents tend to burn out after rotation, but the freshmen don't know their house well yet
 - The IHC chair position will be in a weird place if we move ASCIT elections later
 - Do ASCIT elections in the middle of third term so that the new team will be ready to start at the beginning of the next academic year. This way the financial year will also match up.

Officer's Reports:

- VP of Academic Affairs (ARC Chair):
 - ARC Retreat: ARC had their retreat, discussed the following
 - ASCIT teaching awards: will be awarded in late May. Awards ceremony is expensive because numerous people are invited, but you can't give awards to a small audience. Want students to appreciate teachers more.
 - Prof of the month: Want to feature a professor monthly in the Tech, looking into procedures and budget
 - Frosh Advisors: looking into qualifications of frosh advisors, perhaps revamp training
 - Improving teaching: exploring ways to improve overall teaching, as there are no real requirements – perhaps bring in professionals to do training
 - Year round research program: trying to establish a program that funds research during the school year, similar to SURFs, perhaps will model after MIT's program
 - Option teas: Hoping to reestablish these - events particular to each major at the Mosh's house so that students and professors within an option can talk
 - Advanced Hum Policy: New policy passed by the faculty board – students graduating 2015 and later cannot take advanced hums on p/f, count advanced language towards advanced hum requirements
 - Shadow grades: Barry Simon wants a survey to see if students want shadow grades for first term frosh – students may not realize that getting a poor number percentage in a class translates to a poor grade
- VP of Non-Academic Affairs (IHC Chair):
 - ACs: Again, see corporation meeting notes
 - PFW: IHC will hold a "Life in the Houses" panel, need to make sure people follow PFW rules from now through rotation, Page will be completely dry during PFW
 - Trustees: There is a dinner with the Trustees 4/17, IHC will attend
 - Director of Operations:
 - Screening room: Can't fix the subwoofer, is purchasing a new one, everything is cleaned up, need to work with Mike Ravin to figure out where keys are
 - Clubs: donut was causing problems with getting clubs registered
 - Yearbook: need \$60k, get \$32.4k from students but need to get the rest of the money from advertising, will look specifically into other yearbook companies
 - Treasurer:
 - ASCIT Formal funding: applying for funding from various sources, working out getting funding from the alumni association
 - SFC: Working on reimbursing people
 - Social Director:
 - ASCIT Formal:
 - Bus leaves at 10pm, will be parking for cars and buses at docking site, 40 minutes away
 - Band concert that night, will try to get people out early
 - Total is \$18350 + \$2k refundable security deposit (quote for 300 people)
 - Free non-alcoholic drinks during the first hour (dinner time), cash bar for the rest of the night
 - No security on boat, will try to get Caltech security guards
 - Red carpet theme
 - Secretary:
 - Scheduling: Working on scheduling ASCIT overnight retreat, turnover dinner, and club funding meeting.
 - Olive Walk Board: Will post ASCIT BoD services, info about ASCIT formal once decision are finalized

Meeting adjourned: 12:21am

Double Comfort Safari Club is “comforting read”

NERISSA HOGLEN
Contributing Writer

The *Double Comfort Safari Club* is the eleventh book in Alexander McCall Smith's charming No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series. The books tell the stories of private investigator Mma Ramotswe, the first lady detective in Botswana. McCall Smith adeptly mixes storylines from her cases and from her personal life, frequently blurring their boundaries.

The mysteries Mma Ramotswe solves for her clients blend smoothly into the philosophical mysteries of daily life.

This installment upholds the image of the series. Mma Ramotswe helps a few clients: a man who accidentally gives his house away; the estate of a woman hoping to bestow a gift on a kind safari guide; and a married couple, both partners suspicious the other is unfaithful. The agency is also faced with the personal difficulties of Assistant Detective Grace Makutsi's fiance undergoing an amputation, a recalcitrant aunt, and a business trip to a safari camp.

Throughout these adventures, Mma Ramotswe imparts nuggets of wisdom from the “old Botswana morality.”

These sensible observations offer a shockingly kind and simple view of the world. Though this philosophy seems obvious in the Botswana described in *The Double Comfort Safari Club* and the rest of the series, the modern western world appears just too fast, urban, and disconnected to sustain such a mindset.

However, McCall Smith so artfully conveys the humanity of his characters that it is easy to accept their views. We are all people with similar needs and desires, so why shouldn't the old Botswana morality be applicable in our world?

Though the philosophical reflections in the book are as good as always, the ending leaves a little to be desired. It comes as a surprise that all the issues work out at the end. The conclusion is unrealistically neat; it's uncharacteristic for the typically reasonable series, where not all problems are solvable.

The Double Comfort Safari Club features unusually dark cases and

problems in Grace's life, and it seems as if McCall Smith is balancing out the atypical sadness by providing a particularly “satisfying” ending. Rather than providing a sense of closure, however, the solutions seem slightly brittle.

The book is poised to reflect that sometimes life is sad, but McCall Smith abandons his commitment at the last moment and hastily reverts to a more cheerful view.

The Double Comfort Safari Club is not a good introduction to the series. This is partly because the series story arc has already progressed so much. The unreality of the ending also contributes—it could easily create the impression of sappiness in a reader unfamiliar with the style of the series.

For people already familiar with the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency, this latest installment offers poignant moments of sadness inviting sympathy for the characters along with subtle humor and an overall life-affirming sense of the fundamental kindness of humanity. Though not quite up to the usual standard, *The Double Comfort Safari Club* is still a charming story in a lovely series.

Letter to the editors:

Response to Mackenzie Day's protest article

HENRY A. LESTER
Bren Professor of Biology

The Caltech Mental Health Task Force intended, among other goals, to raise the level of awareness about mental health issues within the Caltech community, and to suggest avenues for future discussion and development.

The recent exchanges about housing issues continue this spirit. The Task Force presented its Final Report to the Caltech community in February 2011, revised it slightly in March 2011,

and has now posted it at: https://mhtf.caltech.edu/documents/38-mhtf_recommendations_final_3-9-2011.pdf

The Report discussed topics that Mackenzie Day later mentioned in the 14 April 2011 California Tech article.

1. “During the Q&A session [Monday, April 11], many people brought up what the Mental Health Task Force seems to have overlooked . . . the Counseling Center is only open on weekends from 9am-5pm . . . ”The Report stated, “Professional counselors

should be available during ‘student hours,’ perhaps until 9 or 10 PM, rather than during standard ‘office hours’ “.

2. “Why does the Task Force not consider Upper Class Counselors in their ratio? Do these people not have similar mandates of looking after mental health?”

The Report stated, “If Caltech, like several of its peer institutions, continues the Upperclass Counselor (UCC) program, it is critical to standardize their training and responsibilities.”



Jazz up dates with redwhite+bluezz

SARAH MARZEN
Copy Editor Emeritus

twenty minutes just to bring out a platter of three cheeses and a basket of mini-toasts.

Redwhite+bluezz also has a menu of twists on more traditional food, such as fried mac n'cheese or New York strip with grit terrine and apricot butter. I ordered the appetizer of crabcakes, at our server's suggestion, and my friend ordered the Western Kobe Burger. The food was a mixed bag.

I couldn't stop eating my crabcakes. They inexplicably reminded me of delicate and incredibly creamy potato latkes, especially when paired with the mango sweet pepper relish, which was reminiscent of a chunky and complementary acidic applesauce.

The only negative component on the dish was the passion fruit riesling cream, which had an unpleasingly gritty texture.

However, my friend didn't even finish his large burger, and complained that his burger lacked flavor. He also barely touched his sweet potato fries, which he said were nothing special.

By the time we got to dessert the restaurant was out of most of its desserts. All that remained were a homemade butterscotch pudding and Fosselman's sorbet and ice cream selection.

Even though the place wasn't very busy, service was still surprisingly slow. We left the restaurant at 9:40 PM, two hours after we had arrived. However, we were both very full, very happy, and had plenty of extra food to take home.

We spent an exorbitant amount of money (\$73) on dinner, but it is very possible to spend only \$30 on a great dinner date at redwhite+bluezz.

A wine flight and cheese or charcuterie flight together are incredibly filling and only \$30. Keep redwhite+bluezz in mind if you're looking for a great date spot.

Website: http://redwhitebluezz.com/wine_bar

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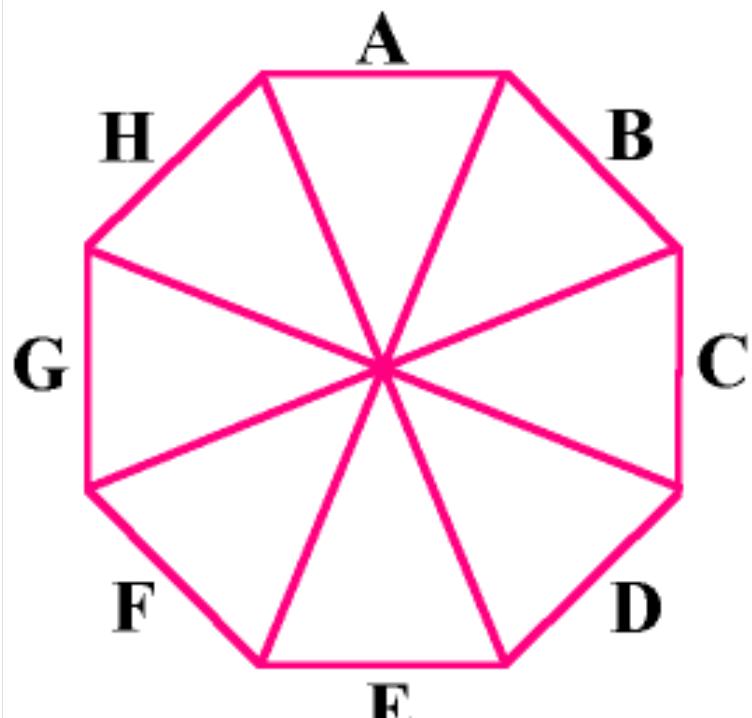


An visual essay of Open Mic Night



Clockwise from top left: Calvin Kim, Nic Woodward, and Dori Bejleri rock out while a light show plays in the background (Fred Zhao); Chris Perez gets down with his bad self playing some funky bass (Samantha Piszkiewicz); Before the show begins students wait eagerly for the music to start up (Samantha Piszkiewicz); A group of students and pre-frosh stare with rapt attention as another group begins a set of music (Fred Zhao); Jonathan Schor, Eugene Vinitsky, and Stanford Schor, members of the recently formed group "Chassidim With Rhythm," lay down some bars about being white, Jewish, and nerdy (Samantha Piszkiewicz).

Today's Puzzle: Octa-Plus



[<http://www.puzzlechoice.com/>]

Rules: Can you enter the eight correct numbers into the Octa-Plus diagram? No two numbers are the same. Each number is a whole number and no number is less than 1 or greater than 40. B minus C is either 11 or 1. G equals H minus F. B plus C equals H. D equals G divided by F. F is half the value of C. An eighth of H is a whole number. A third of B is an even number. E is either H minus G or H minus D. A equals 100 minus the sum of the other seven numbers.

Answers to last week's Sudoku *Key provided by sudokublog.typepad.com*

8	3	5	4	1	6	9	2	7
2	9	6	8	5	7	4	3	1
4	1	7	2	9	3	6	5	8
5	6	9	1	3	4	7	8	2
1	2	3	6	7	8	5	4	9
7	4	8	5	2	9	1	6	3
6	5	2	7	8	1	3	9	4
9	8	1	3	4	5	2	7	6
3	7	4	9	6	2	8	1	5

Med Cafe pleases from frosh to senior year

SAURABH PANDEY
Contributing Writer

Ahh.... with the constant stream of prefresh arriving at this time of the year, I am reminded of four years ago when I myself was exploring Caltech with open eyes.

Though Caltech can definitely be considered to be the world's greatest playground for math and science, one of my best experiences during Prefresh Weekend was



Baklava abounds at the Med Cafe.

Owner: (grabbing food and placing it on the counter) Here you go- chicken Shawarma plate and one extra pita!

Customer: (Stares dumbfounded at his food, then remembers he still needs to pay)

So, yeah, it's really fast. That's the number one comment I get from my friends about the Med Cafe whenever we go there. Definitely faster service than any fast food place I've ever been to. But onwards

to the most important part of any restaurant review: the food.

My friend got a chicken kebab plate (\$8), consisting of two chicken kebabs, a pita, seasoned rice, hummus, and a greek salad. We also got two pieces of baklava (a sweet pastry made out of filo dough and nuts) for \$3.

I myself got the vegetarian combo (which allows you to get smaller portions of four vegetarian items and comes with two pitas) and an extra pita for \$7.75.

My veggie combo (a greek salad, hummus, mujadarah, and stuffed grape leaves) was excellent. The greek salad was fresh-tasting, and the mujadarah (moist lentils and cracked wheat) was hearty and filling (I actually

ate some off my shirt after I dropped some from my pita. Don't judge me: such is the lure of the mujadarah).

The grape leaves and the hummus have been the best I've ever tasted at any restaurant (I've gotten multiple tubs of their hummus to eat back in my room as a snack- it's bursting with flavor).

Several of my non-vegetarian friends have also begun to get the veggie combo every time they go to the Med Cafe. On the carnivorous side of the table, the chicken kebab was described as somewhat dry, but very flavorful with spices.

Again, the hummus was described positively as "creamy" and "melt-in-your-mouth". Finally, the dessert (the baklava) burst with nutty, buttery, syrupy flavor to put us into a sweet, relaxed state following our meal. The portion sizes are fairly large, so for roughly \$8, you can get a plate and definitely fill your stomach (possibly with

some leftovers if you're not a big eater). However, if you're not as hungry, you can just get one of their wraps for about \$4. Wrap selections include falafel, beef, lamb, chicken shawarma, and chicken kebab (while the restaurant does have a lot of meat options, it is definitely vegan/vegetarian friendly).

The food is not greasy, so you can get back to your psets (or your copious amounts of free time) wide awake instead of being in a food coma after eating here.

While the restaurant is not fancy by any means (shiny metal chairs and tables galore), and many customers get their food to go, the Med Cafe does have both indoor and outdoor seating, and it's quite nice to sit down in sun and chat with a group of friends while enjoying a scrumptious meal.

The service is fast-food paced, but the food is gourmet-quality. Be warned that the hours are not great for Techers- 11 AM to 7 PM on weekdays, 11 AM to 3 PM on Saturdays, and closed on Sundays. Realistically, if you're on board, you only have one chance to eat here a week! And I'm definitely happy to be eating at the Med Cafe right now. Here I am, a venerable senior,



The Mediterranean Cafe in idyllic Pasadena.

- Saurabh Pandey

sitting on the very same patio of the restaurant I dined at as a wide-eyed prefresh. I feel like something profound should be said.

As I sit in the friendly Pasadena sun finishing my mujadarah, I wonder if the waves of contentment riding over me represent my satisfaction in picking an amazing school four years ago, and if the warm feeling I have signifies a bright future for the new class of Techers. Nah, I'm just happy because I've had a great lunch.

Fact Sheet

Location: 273 Shoppers Lane, Pasadena, CA 91101 (on the corner of Lake and Del Mar)

Phone Number: (626) 793-8844

Website: <http://www.kokosmediterraneancafe.com>

Price Range: \$4-10 for a meal

Restaurant Type: Mediterranean (unsurprisingly); casual dining; good for takeouts.

Customer: Chicken Shawarma plate, please, and one extra pita.

Owner: (Calls back to the kitchen in a thick accent.) Chicken Schwerma plate and one extra pita! 8.25, please.

Customer: (Gets money out of his wallet)

“Born to be Wild” is charming and cute

NEHA SAMDARIA

Staff Writer

“Born to be Wild” is not a documentary so much as a forty-minute fairytale about the incredible journey undertaken by orphaned animals in the wild. Nearly every scene is focused on maximizing the inherent cuteness of baby elephants and orangutans, transforming what could have been an utterly depressing topic into an uplifting and inspiring story.

The film revolves around the work of two “real-life fairy godmothers”, Daphne Sheldrick and Birute Galdekaas, both of

whom have dedicated their lives to rescuing and raising wild orphans. In Kenya, Daphne spends her days looking after newborn elephants whose parents have been tragically poached and killed.

Similarly in Borneo, Birute saves and nurtures baby wild orangutans that have been displaced as a result of human development.

Both women have lead efforts to foster these vulnerable orphans until they are old enough to be released back into the wild.

The animals we see are much like human children - lovable one moment and naughty the next. They need cuddle, care...and

sunscreen before going out in the open. We, as viewers, are invited to immerse ourselves in a world where elephants play soccer with their keepers, and orangutans shampoo themselves for a morning bath.

It seems strange to raise wild animals in this way, but their success upon release in the wild has reaffirmed the fact that if they are given the time and care required to develop self-confidence, they will survive no matter where they end up.

“

The animals we see are much like human children - lovable one moment and naughty the next.

”

Of course, the IMAX 3D experience only adds to the immersive nature of the film.

We see the orangutans reaching out to Birute with their lengthy arms, and we feel the dust fly into our faces as a thundering elephant herd rushes to the nearest water hole.

Close-ups capture the intricate facial expressions of the characters in the film, providing direct insight into what appears to be a tiring, unglamorous, but rewarding lifestyle.

The cinematography is just endearing, and, along with Morgan Freeman’s powerful narration, is responsible for much of the emotional pull of the film.

This movie is not only fun and adorable; it is the kind that fills you to the brim with hope.

The kind that makes you think about wildlife conservation as a worthy cause without being pretentious in its message, and the kind that makes you wonder if maybe the world isn’t such a bad place after all.



An elephant keeper gets a loving trunk hug from his friend.

- Neha Samdaria



Keepers play a little game of soccer with their lovable elephants.

- Neha Samdaria

Solar shines and delivers an enthralling read

MONICA HE

Contributing Writer

The man is a curiosity. And not in a good way. He – Dr. Michael Beard, a Nobel-prize winning physicist – is actually kind of despicable, spiritually and physically and ethically, or whatever other adverb you want to stick in. That’s why *Solar*, by Ian McEwan, works so well.

The book examines human irrelevance (intriguing, right?) through the comprehension of a man most deserving of it.

At the same time it is an almost polite mesh of macabre thrills and surprising humor, a triumphant but discreet exposition. An overarching commitment to conspicuous detail – that was the first impression I levied from these pages. I’m serious.

Read a bit and you will not only be mesmerized by the singularity of Dr. Michael Beard’s life but also by the frankness of each line. Does it surprise you, as a reader and a social human being, when someone says

It’s sincere and refreshing, and it renders the story simultaneously safely remote yet relatable to our own lives.

McEwan can write, and he knows it; there are parts where he

ironic but fully serious attempt by the author to expose delusions of grandeur and gaiety.

Yes, it’s a sad world depicted in the book. This is actually kind of expected from him (*Atonement*, anyone?) – and yet, this time, hidden in the most unlikely spots are passages of sparkling humor.

McEwan forces the incongruities, elaborates upon them, pushes the inane into the realm of the ineffable and then breaks it to you that it was all a joke.

At one point, in Antarctica, Beard converses over dinner with an elderly Majorcan ice sculptor called Jesus, and after discussing quantum mechanics Jesus notes, “What was life without the highest ambitions?”

Let me be clear. This is not the next *Da Vinci Code*, Crichton’s *Prey*, or Stieg Larsson’s *Millennium* series.

Yet, for those who find a compelling depth in reflection and

in beautifully structured phrases, *Solar* is better – much better.

Despite the fact that it is a less immediately gripping, breath-held-in-fear kind of novel, the decisive climax is most subtle in the absurdities of existence, episodes in mundanity that recall something sublimely and tragically ridiculous.

I love the ocular presumption the author makes. McEwan’s narrator jumps into the storytelling with little or no thought to the consequences, and yet you can almost hear the superior English accent reading in constant disdain. He is judging the senselessness of life, Beard’s life, your own in reflection.

To McEwan, it’s all the same at first. But life is unreasonable even in the most logical situations, and one retrospectively comes to the realization that surrendering to irrelevance is a question of living with yourself afterwards. I beg you to differ after reading this book.

“

But life is unreasonable even in the most logical situations, and one retrospectively comes to the realization that surrendering to irrelevance is a question of living with yourself afterwards.

”

something mindlessly obvious, so granted and true that it’s forgotten or ignored until spoken out loud?

The pages of *Solar* are an array of egregious observations that are, perhaps, the most provokingly honest I’ve seen in fiction in a while.

leaves simply stating uncomfortable realities and meanders intelligently into, say, the beauty of the Dirac equation and the problems of climate change. But the novel is blunt. At times, you are expected to shrink away in distaste, a half-

Caltech men's track team defeats Pomona-Pitzer, Logan sets new record



The Caltech men's and women's track teams try their best to look intimidating in their team photo, although it appears some members didn't get the memo.

AMOL KAMAT
Sports Editor

Contrary to what you may see on the Olive Walk at night, some Techers do know how to run and throw.

The Caltech men's track team defeated Pomona-Pitzer in their last SCIAC dual meet of the season. It was their first dual meet win since 2008 when they beat Whittier. I didn't actually go to the meet, because nobody goes to track meets for fun, but Brice Nzeukou and Alex Lapides filled me in.

Nzeukou performed admirably in the 100 and 200, placing fifth and sixth, respectively (not counting CMS and La Verne scores, he placed first in both). He also

competed in the 4x100 relay that defeated Pomona-Pitzer.

Lapides won the high jump competition with ease, clearing the bar at 6'6". Upset that everybody found his victory monotonous and repetitive, Lapides also ran the 100, 200, and 110 hurdles.

Lapides and Nzeukou also added discus, hammer, and javelin throw to their resumes, defeating Pomona-Pitzer in all three events. Nzeukou also competed alongside Yutong Chen and Skylar Cook in shot put, beating the sagehens, again.

"We just went out and took one throw for each event because Pomona didn't enter any throwers," Lapides said of those four field events.

The women's team did not fair as well, losing to all three teams (CMS, Pomona-Pitzer, and La Verne).

Paige Logan did break her own school record in shot put (37' 8 3/4"), placing second in the competition. She also won the discus competition and tried her hand at discus, just for fun.

Both track teams travel to Pomona-Pitzer for the SCIAC Championships on April 29th and 30th, so if you feel like watching people run in circles, you should head over. I, for one, am looking forward to it because Vishnu Manoranjan will shave his head if Alex Lapides repeats as SCIAC high jump champion, I think that's something we can all get behind.

This week in sports quotes...

"He threw that one cricket style."
-Caltech baseball fan talking about our pitching

"We won by default."
"That's the Caltech way"

**"Why is there a lightpole here?
It's daytime!!!"**
-Guy playing on the Caltech tennis court

Weekly Scoreboard

April 17, 2011

Baseball
vs. Claremont-M-S
L, 15-2 Final - 7 innings

April 16, 2011

Women's Tennis
at La Verne
L, 7-2 Final

Baseball
at Occidental
L, 16-5 Final

Women's Water Polo
at Redlands
L, 21-1 Final

Upcoming Events

April 20, 2011

Women's Water Polo
vs. Cal Lutheran
5:00 PM

April 22, 2011

Men's Tennis
at SCIAC Championships

Women's Tennis
vs. SCIAC Championships

Baseball
at Cal Lutheran
3:00 PM

April 23, 2011

Women's Water Polo
vs. Whittier
11:00 AM

Baseball
vs. Pomona-Pitzer
1:00 PM

BOOM-SHAKA-LAKA

BY PAUL SENORREX

**APPLES AND ORANGES**

BY REBECCA LAWLER

**Thanks!**

To all students, administrators and faculty members for helping to make Prefrosh Weekend such a success!

The California
Tech
Caltech 40-58
Pasadena, CA 91125