

THE CALIFORNIA TECH



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APRIL 23, 2007

Page pranks Fleming cannon

Fleming repaints the cannon maroon and orange to remember Virginia Tech victims

BY NATALYA KOSTANDOVA

The student body awoke Thursday morning expecting the day to bring much change to campus, largely in form of a couple hundred prefresh who arrived throughout the day. Not many, however, expected to see the Fleming Cannon turn blue.

The colorful change, accompanied by the sounds of "Blue (Da Ba Dee)" by Eiffel 65 coming out of a boom box across the Olive Walk, was quickly attributed to be Page's doing.

"We were very, very happy about how it worked out," said former Page president Sean Mattingly who, along with a handful of other Pageboys, painted the cannon. "We were afraid the color would come out turquoise, but it turned out a perfect blue. We were all amazed at how perfectly it matched our shirts. And I think the cannon looks better in blue than red."

Not everybody, however, was amused. Almost immediately upon discovering the prank, the Flemms put on their reds, blared their own speakers at Page, and

started stripping the blue paint off the base of the cannon.

Although the initial plan was to quickly paint the cannon back into its original red, the cannon was instead painted maroon and orange, colors of Virginia Tech. Rob Hunter, Fleming President, said, "We would not have otherwise considered painting it this way, but we took advantage of this opportunity to make a gesture towards Virginia Tech."

While some people have voiced their concern about the message that having a big gun painted in VT colors conveyed, Hunter explained that the cannon was meant as a tribute. He said, "The cannon is incredibly important to our House, and it is a symbol of honor. It is the most we have to give."

According to Mattingly, the timing of the prank, the idea for which had originated in the end of second term, did not have

anything to do with the Prefresh Weekend. "It just kind of worked out at that time," said Mattingly. "We had paint and we thought we should just do it." The painting

started late Wednesday night and was finished before the wee of the hours on Thursday. The prefresh arrived to Caltech campus later that day.

The cannon will now undergo a process of restoration to its original state. According to Hunter, all of the paint on the base has to be stripped off and the base has to be repainted. In addition, some of the blue paint landed on the barrel and wheels of the cannon, which may require sanding of those parts.

"That was accidental," said Mattingly about the splashes on the wheels and barrel. "We tried to wipe off everything that we

Please see CANNON, Page 3



Photo courtesy of Jack Lin

The formerly red Fleming cannon at mid-morning on Thursday after Page pranksters painted the cannon their house color.

Rainbow flag's enemy unknown

No one has claimed responsibility for the discarded rainbow flag

BY VIBHA LALJANI

The rainbow flag that waves outside Chandler was initially mounted on a new metal bracket on Thursday, April 5 as a part of GAYpril, the month to celebrate diversity. Two days later, the flag was found on top of a cream Ford SUV parked on San Pasqual near Ruddock House.

The shocked members of PRISM, Caltech's campus social group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and straight allies, interpreted the flag vandalism as an attack on the diverse Caltech community.

"Honestly, it pissed me off so much," said junior Katherine Breeden, member of PRISM. "I thought people at Caltech would not be so exclusionary."

An email from John Hall one week after the vandalism implored the Caltech community to come forward with information, but so far no one has contacted PRISM with any leads. The only evidence is from the suspect SUV with a broken driver-side mirror and a Berkeley "Cal" decal in back window.

"It might not even have been the owner of the SUV who moved the flag," said Zack Ramadan, who discovered the vandalized flag.

"The SUV remained parked exactly where it was until the afternoon of Sunday, April 8. It could be that, if the flag was forcibly removed, the perpetrator just ditched it on the closest vehicle he could find." However, Ramadan has not encountered the SUV since that Sunday.

Jane Curtis, the Caltech health educator and an ally of the PRISM, said that Zack informed the members of PRISM of the incident.

"The bracket was bent nearly 180 degrees back," said Curtis. "The pole that held the flag had scratches on it from being forced out of the bracket. It was quite obviously pulled out rather than blown out by the wind." Curtis then worked with the Facilities Management to get a new bracket, and re-hoisted the flag.

Miriam Feldblum, Senior Director for Academic Support and Planning, who also helps run the PRISM, said, "It is very troubling to think that someone deliberately took down the flag. It seems like a violation of the trust and support that holds the Caltech community together. It is hurtful behavior especially since the rainbow flag is a symbol carefully chosen to be very inclusive. It is not meant just for gay pride. The different colors

For a student opinion on the rainbow flag incident, please see Opinion, p. 2.

are representative of the various different groups in the community."

Earlier this month, GAYpril posters in Avery House were also defaced. The Avery House RAs replaced the vandalized posters.

"As an RA, one of my jobs is to make sure each of my residents has a safe and secure place in which to learn and grow," said Avery RA Rich Wildman. "Therefore, threats presented, either directly or indirectly, to any group or individual on campus is of the utmost concern. What may seem like a joke to some can be offensive and threatening to others, and no member of the Caltech community should have to live in a threatening environment. Furthermore, if we allow one group to be threatened and a trend of intolerance to be created, then all

Please see FLAG, Page 3



The rainbow flag flies outside of Chandler after being torn down the week before. There has been no word as to who vandalized the flag.

Students speak out about abuses in Uganda

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In This Issue

Student feels Caltech not open-minded
Plasmonics a big deal
Book praises Caltech admission
Desperate Housewives not bad

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Prefresh Weekend in photos

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Point/Counterpoint: "Invisible Children" divides opinion

"Invisible Children" is both a non-profit organization and a documentary about children in Uganda who commute from villages every night to hide from a rebel military group that kidnaps children and forces them to become child soldiers. The organization that arose from the documentary now works to channel funds back to Uganda in providing schools, water, and jobs to the displaced Ugandans. Their largest campaigns have been to raise awareness of the tragedies in Uganda and ask American citizens to urge our government to pressure the Ugandan government to end the civil war that is still ravaging the country.

The documentary was shown last week as part of the Caltech Social Activism Speaker Series (SASS), in partnership with the Caltech Y ExComm.

Filmmakers' good intentions may be misdirected

BY MICHAEL FORTE

While this movie is incredibly moving and caused me to feel for the thousands of children in Uganda, we have to question the reality of the situation. Uganda is poor, but by no means the poorest country in the world. In fact its GDP per capita is three times that of countries like Malawi and Somalia. So what do you accomplish by giving money to this cause? You might save a few hundred lives, but what about the millions that can be saved for the same cost? Are Ugandans worth more?

By patting yourself on the back for giving money to this effort, you do nothing more than help turn a blind eye to the even more senseless deaths around the world in the name of donating to the current fad. In Malawi ten percent of children die at birth, with mortality beyond that being unbelievable and an HIV infection rate of nearly 15 percent. Clean water, hygiene education, and contraceptives can save millions and costs very little, but giving money to Malawi isn't the current fad because someone hasn't made a documentary about how poor it is.

If you say that it is about the enslavement of the children, let us look at the estimated fifteen thousand people brought into America each year as slaves for use in forced prostitution, including child sex, and forced labor. Where is the money for this? Why do we not donate thousands to this? There are an estimated 600-800 thousand people trafficked across international borders each year, most being women for prostitution and many under 18 and yet there are no fundraising campaigns for them.

It is as if a doctors' organization were asking me for money to dis-

cover a sustainable energy source, while leaving the scientists who can actually succeed high and dry. There are different parts of the solution, but movie directors are not international aid distribution organizers. By contrast, organizations like UNICEF and the United Nations World Food Program work all over the world in an effort to protect and feed the starving and maltreated children. They do not base their support on the current fad but rather on what is an efficient use of money.

Good for "Invisible Children" for helping educate the world about what is going on, but by no means should they be asking for money. Instead they should be

You might save a few hundred lives, but what about the millions that can be saved for the same cost?

asking us to simply know. Know the horrors of what is going on in Uganda and help force a political solution as the political path is the only one with any real results.

It comes down to this: I see this as very manipulative. It uses people's sympathy for the night walks to get money for something that does not directly help the problem. The problem is one that can only be solved politically. Although I agree that people should have the right to choose to whom and what they give their money, but when people give money to a cause following a movie, one has to question the amount of "knowledge" they have about their other options.

Should an organization like Invisible Children not ask for money? Of course they should. It is our responsibility to know what's out there - and it is our choice to give. Bonded servitude, forced prostitution (especially underage), clean water, war-torn refu-

Film small steps in bigger work

BY PETER LIU

Invisible Children has experienced surprising success in how fast their cause has spread and how much they have been able to accomplish. Four years ago, it was not a movement, but piles of tapes yet to be compiled and edited. Three college-age students saw the devastation and the tragedy in Uganda and believed they could do something to change it. Today, the filmmakers have successfully founded a non-profit and raised millions of dollars for children, schools, wells, and even providing jobs in Uganda. Their huge success is especially due to their use of media in documentaries and videos.

But by asking for donations, are they taking attention away from other pressing and devastating issues? I don't think so.

World-wide organizations like UNICEF and the World Food Program certainly have agents all over the world, but they would be the first to tell you that they need partners in their work. From corporate giants to small non-profits, there are so many other organizations out there that specialize in countries or issues that even UNICEF relies on. World Vision works worldwide against poverty and starvation; the Polaris Project and the International Justice Mission work to fight human trafficking internationally; the Blood: Water Mission installs wells to provide clean water to African communities; these organizations ask for donations too.

Should an organization like Invisible Children not ask for money? Of course they should. It is our responsibility to know what's out there - and it is our choice to give. Bonded servitude, forced prostitution (especially underage), clean water, war-torn refu-

gees, debt-relief, fair trade, human trafficking, the list goes on. If our hearts are really about the betterment of humanity, there are thousands of fundraising campaigns for exactly these issues. Accusing Invisible Children for focusing on Uganda, which isn't the poorest country or the one most infected with AIDS, as opposed to issues and countries without media attention is unfair. It is like accusing a doctor for not doing enough for sustainable energy or shouting at engineers for not yet curing AIDS or cancer. Invisible Children, like many others, is only a part of the

Should an organization like Invisible Children not ask for money? Of course they should. It is our responsibility to know what's out there - and it is our choice to give.

solution and of the greater movement that is trying to make this world a better place. They have just been particularly effective in raising awareness and gathering support and momentum and are certainly not the biggest players in the field.

By the by, last year, Invisible Children held a global night commute, which had 80,000 participants, asking the US government to intervene and pressure the Ugandan government to initiate peace talks. It was successful and peace talks came within 2 months. On April 28, they are having another event called "Displace Me" where participants are displacing themselves for 24 hours to raise awareness for the displaced in Uganda, and to gain political pressure to end the war in region,

permanently. They are expecting over 100,000 participants. So I agree: political solutions do provide results.

The Caltech Y and the Social Activism Speaker Series brought Invisible Children to campus exactly so that we the student body would "simply know." And it is not the only focus. On May 8, award-winning journalist Kevin Sites will be speaking on campus about his experiences in conflict areas like Iraq, Afghanistan, and Columbia. On May 22, Reagan Demas, director of operations in Africa for the International Justice Mission (IJM) will be speaking about human trafficking and what IJM does to fight it. The Y and SASS are bringing in speakers of a wide-range of issues believed to be relevant to the world and to our lives, fads or otherwise. The Y hopes that by being exposed to different and diverse issues, our student body not only grows in knowledge, but in passion for bringing about change for the world's many problems.

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Caltech not a haven for diversity

Student feels rainbow flag vandalism exposes bigotry on campus.

BY KATHERINE BREEDEN

When I found out that the rainbow flag hanging above Chandler had been vandalized, it was a slap in the face. Here at Caltech, we make it our business to imagine the future. We invent new treatments for diseases, come up with new energy sources, and solve the mathematical problems of our past. How could we be so backwards?

I grew angrier and angrier as I considered the event. I am angry at the person that did it, and I am angry at the world for homophobia. I am sad for what it means about our community, which is a place many people have sought acceptance after being ostracized for being different. I want to believe so badly that people here are accepting of others and open to different points of view, but it just doesn't seem to be that way anymore. I am disappointed in us. But I am also curious.

Most of all, I wonder. What does the person that did this look

like? Would I recognize them if we passed each other on campus today? Perhaps, I tell myself, they once sat behind me in lecture. It's easier, though, to picture them as a gang of homophobic knuckleheads I might have seen in high school, the type

**What does the person that did this look like?
Would I recognize them if we passed each other on campus today?**

of people who would frequently announce "that's so gay", each time the world slicing me like a knife through my ribs and into the heart. Of course, they'd always insist they didn't mean it to be offensive to gay people. "You know, it means... weak", they'd say, "when something's 'gay' that just means wrong, bad". I cringe bitterly reliving those words, and wish I'd spit in their faces.

I let myself entertain the de-

lusional fantasy that maybe, just maybe, this is all a mistake. The wind must have blown the flag down! I want to believe nothing is wrong. But inside, a thought keeps welling up: not this again. This hate, this ignorance of other people's feelings, this insult. I knew it in high school, but not here. Not at Caltech. Suddenly, my safe academic haven doesn't seem safe at all. A student's most important resource -- a sense of security -- has been taken away.

Maybe my friend Lisa Lyons was right when, trying to help me make sense of all this, she told me, "there's a lot of smart people at Caltech, but book-smart doesn't always mean people-smart." I find it hard to believe that someone could fail to recognize the symbolism of tearing down a rainbow flag in the middle of "GAYpril".

So, I try to imagine the people that did this that way instead: now, they're a bunch of laughing, naive students, thinking to themselves how hilarious it would be to

have a rainbow flag in their room, oblivious to the pain their actions will cause. Now that that night is all over, does the flag hang somewhere, or is it sheepishly hidden in a drawer? Was it deliberately trashed by a gang of angry homophobes? Or, did it simply fly off on a strong wind?

But, I don't just imagine what happened last week. I think about the future, too. I envision the future Harvey Milk saw: I see a country where all couples can get married, and where anyone who chooses can proudly serve their military. It is a place where people don't use homophobic slurs, and children are taught that sometimes people fall in love with a man, and sometimes they fall in love with a woman. I see a Caltech where all students feel welcome and safe.

I am still angry over what happened, I am still sad, and I am still disappointed. But I feel something else, too: hope. At Caltech, we make it our business to imagine the future. Do you?



BY YANG YANG

NATION**Shooting Friday at NASA leaves one dead.**

Disgruntled NASA engineer William Arthur Phillips shot and killed fellow employee David Beverly at the Johnson Space Center Friday.

Police believe the shooting was triggered by a negative performance review received by Phillips on March 16. He allegedly bought a .38-caliber along with 20 rounds of ammunition two days later.

Just earlier Phillips reportedly had lunch with Beverly and another co-worker without incident, but at around 1:30 p.m. Phillips entered Beverly's office and shot him twice. He then took Fran Crenshaw, who was talking to Beverly at the time, hostage.

The Outside World



At around 4:30 p.m. another shot was heard by police from the room where Phillips holding his co-workers hostage. The SWAT team swiftly entered, believing correctly that Phillips had killed himself.

The Johnson Space Center recently reviewed its own security due to the shooting rampage at Virginia Tech Monday. However, its security measures have now been called into question. NASA is currently considering installing metal detectors in all facilities.

WORLD**French presidential run-off**

Segolene Royal and Nicolas Sarkozy are set for a presidential run-off after France's Sunday elections.

Royal, looking to be the first female leader for this major Euro-

pian power, is the underdog going to the May 6 runoff. She garnered 25.8 percent of the vote compared to Sarkozy's 31.1. About 84.6 percent of the voter turned out for this election, just .4 percent shy of the record set in 1965.

The runoff represents a classic left-right duel between the conservative Sarkozy and the socialist Royal. Both have promised a path of change, but each take strikingly difference routes. Sarkozy promises to loosen labor laws and cut taxes while Royal seeks to raise government spending.

Both are scrambling for supporters of eliminated candidates, including third place finisher Francois Bayrou, who surprised many analysts with his success.

Either will be set to replace 74-year-old Jacques Chirac, who stepped down after 12 years as president.

OFFBEAT NEWS**SPORTS****White Sox pitcher throws a no-hitter**

Instead of a morning cup of coffee, students can now hit the showers for a kick of energy to start the day.

Inventors at thinkgeek.com have created a soap infused with caffeine to help users gain energy while maintaining proper hygiene. The stimulant is supposed to be absorbed through the skin when the soap is applied.

Shower Shock, the new product, has 2.4 grams of caffeine per four ounce bar, or approximately 200 mg per shower. The product, according to the maker's website is perfect for "programmers who don't regularly bathe and need some special motivation."

ASCIT Minutes: April 23, 2007

ASCIT minutes not received this week, falsified instead

Officers Present: Captain, Lieutenant, General, Private First Class, Sergeant

Guests: Der Kapitan, Monster Hesh, Huck Finn, Frenchman, Quetzalcoatl

***Budget Stuff**

-Last terms budget is a mess for some reason, but this year we have on the order of 100,000 dollars coming in. 6,000 of that is coming from ASCIT dues, with the rest coming from drug trafficking. Ha ha, just kidding, it's really from selling human organs.

***Social team**

-ASCIT will be sponsoring a

party Third Term on the olive walk that will celebrate how awesome the ASCIT social team is.

The party cost \$8,000 and will feature expensive gifts for the guests of honor, the ASCIT social team. Non-social team members will need to pay a \$25 to get into the party or the North or South houses during the party, but this may be subsidized by the Deans.

-The Social team will also be organizing a movie night in each of the 8 houses over the next 8 weeks. The events will consist of students gathering in their rooms on their own time to watch a movie that they supply. The social team is requesting \$4,000 to

cover the costs of these events.

-The social team also wants a car.

***DVD Library**

-The DVD library will be back by next week and in a convenient place. Rumors that it caught fire and fell into the deepest part of the ocean and was eaten by radioactive mega-eels are unsubstantiated, but it is important to note that as always, the claim that the DVDs will be back next week is a lie.

***Funding Request**

-Boozy House wants \$10,000 for their party in three weeks,

which will be "The ASCIT Social Team is Just Great" themed. The social team is giggling for some reason.

-Der Kapitan requests funding to take Professor Joobs out to lunch. Funding denied (3-1-2) because Professor Joobs isn't a real person.

-Quetzalcoatl requests "Quetzalcoatl!!" Approved (5-0-1)

***Committee Signups**

-There is still plenty of space for several committees. The Taking Abuse from Administration, Pretending to Consider Academic Issues and Committee to Re-elect

the (ASCIT) President still need members

-Additional committee sign-ups will be going up next week for some more committees that will be signed up for by the same people who always sign up for committees.

HamilTony Falk

ASCIT Funded (by way of the Tech) Liar

Flag not only vandalism

FLAG, FROM PAGE 1

groups and all people on campus are at risk as those who are intolerant of others gain confidence that their actions are acceptable. Therefore, even the smallest offense must receive a swift and definite response."

Curtis and Feldblum also said that action is being taken to prevent similar future incidents. Jane said, "There are several talks dur-

ing GAYpril. I go around and talk to the houses to create a culture where we are open to everybody and don't judge people. Said Feldblum, "It is important that people who directly witness such activities assert that this behavior is not right at Tech. We want people to come forward. It is an integral part of the Honor Code, too. Additionally, efforts are being made to train RAs and UCCs around LGBTQ issues, maybe something along the lines of the

training that took place in Spring 2005. We brought in Ronnie Sando, the director of LGBTQ Center at UCLA. We invited all student leaders to train them to be more supportive."

Cannon repainted

CANNON, FROM PAGE 1

could see, but it was a hasty job and it was dark."

The Page prank was complete with three notes that Pageboys attached to the barrel of the cannon. One of the notes read "This is definitely a note," signed "Page,"

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Photo by Dana Levine

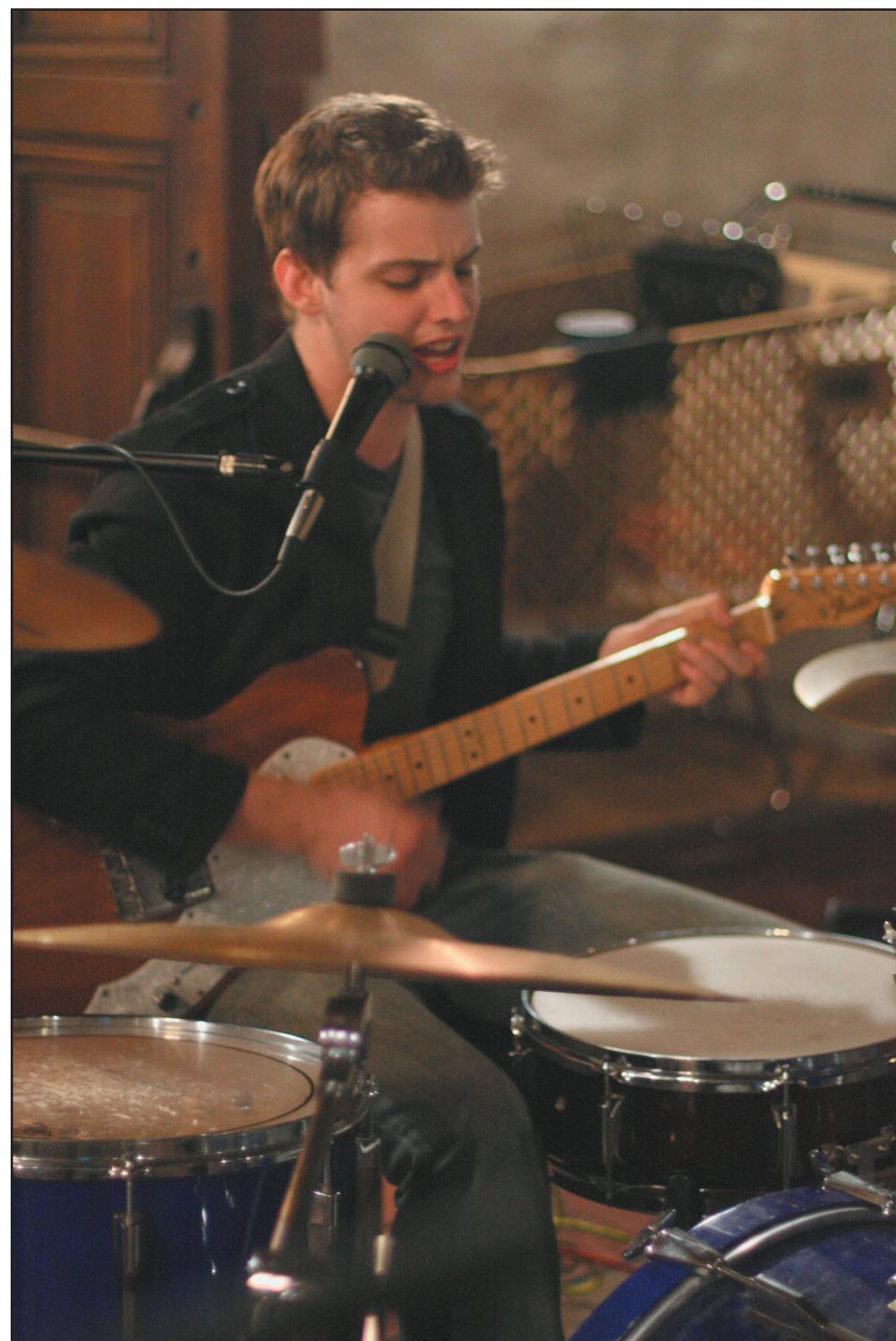
Daniel Talancón is making cotton candy during the Club Fair on Saturday.



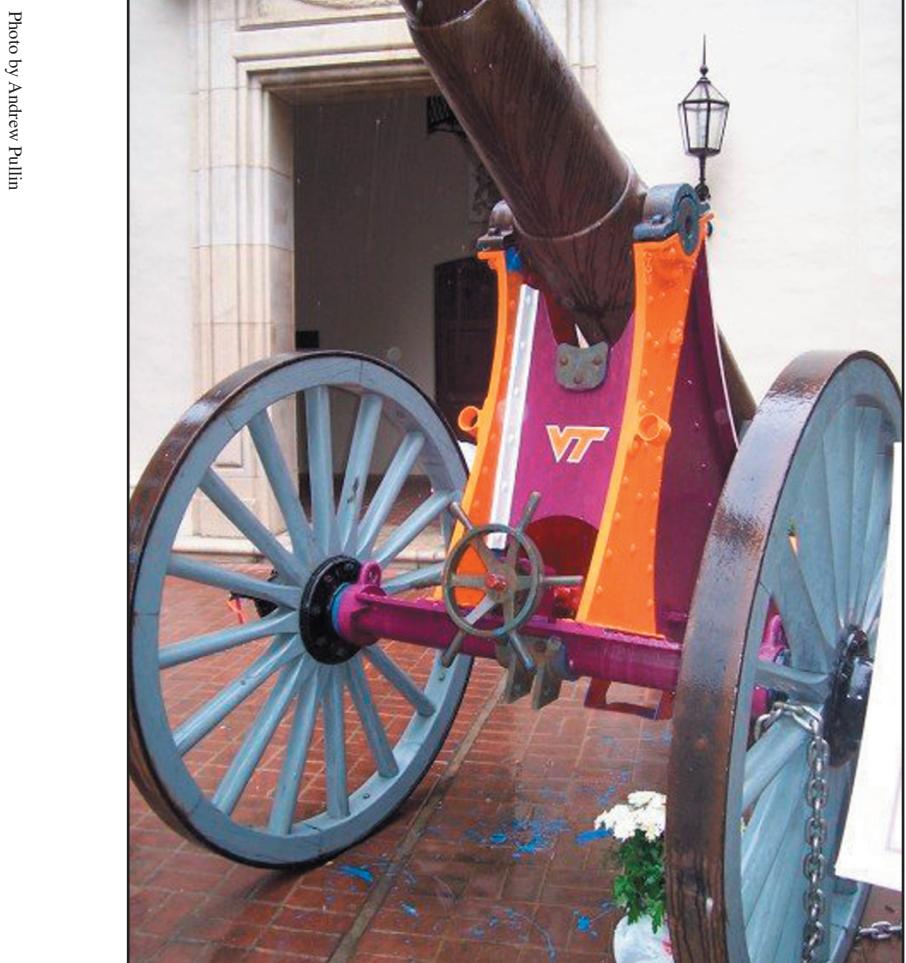
Fleming raises the stakes at its Saturday casino night.

Photo by Jonathan Tsai

Prefrosh Weekend

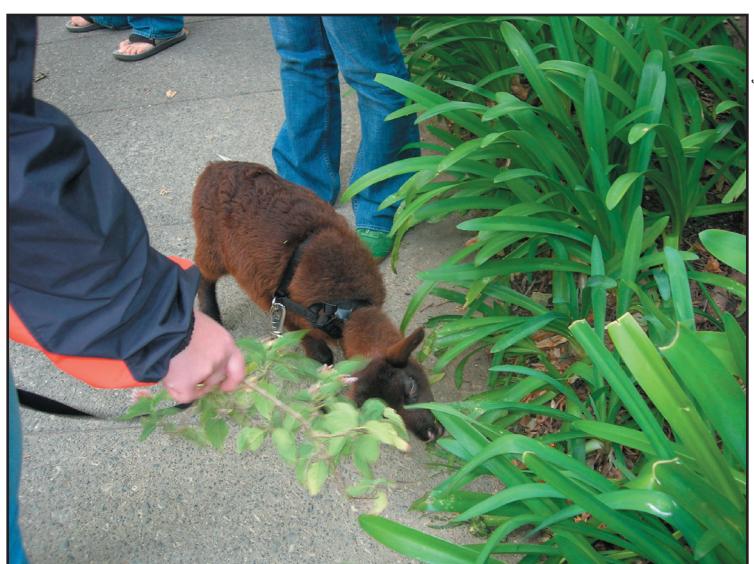


David Koenitzer plays guitar, drums, and sings—at all the same time—during Ricketts' Open Mic Night.



The Fleming cannon displays the Virginia Tech logo by Thursday afternoon, hours after Page House painted it blue.

Photo by Tatyana Shatova



Melissa the lamb was the Ricketts Hovse mascot for Prefrosh Weekend.

Photo by Dana Levine

From Microscopes to Telescopes:

Plasmonics – Invisibility & a clue to antibiotics?

BY SARA MCBRIDE

In honor of Max Delbrück's centennial celebration, The California Tech is featuring a series on cross-disciplinary studies at Caltech campus. Participating professors: Harry A. Atwater, Howard Hughes Professor of Applied Physics and Materials Science, and Sarkis Mazmanian, Assistant Professor of Biology.

If writing the April cover story on Plasmonics for Scientific American wasn't enough for the prolific laboratory of Caltech physics professor Harry Atwater, they've also just published a manuscript regarding invisibility in *Science*.

Dr. Henri Lezec, grad student Jennifer Dionne and Atwater have published Negative Refraction at Visible Frequencies in the March 22 early epub issue of *Science*. In other words, they figured out how to use plasmonics to manipulate light so there is no refraction, thus rendering an object invisible.

"We built a prism that negatively refracts light," says Atwater who then commented on the complex ideas other labs were testing. "We just bent the beam."

The idea incorporates Snell's law with two prism wedges, some plasmons in the middle, and a negative refraction on the end. Voila! – invisibility.

"We're working to make three-dimensional versions on the micron scale," said Atwater.

The quest for invisibility has been attempted by physicists for over a century and Atwater gives high admiration to H.G. Wells "who lived way before much was understood about optics, but he still wrote the Invisible Man based on the idea of materials with the same refractive index as air, which is another way to make things utterly transparent...It was way ahead of his time."

Plasmons are the light induced waves produced by electrons that reside at the barrier between a metal surface and a dielectric surface, like air or glass.

Atwater's laboratory is currently busy building nanostructures for plasmonic

waveguides and silica-based transistors that can carry information across open channels, thus theoretically creating much faster computer chips.

While Atwater works on computer circuits and invisibility at Caltech, his colleague, Naomi Halas at Rice University is building dielectric nanoshells for use in cancer treatments. Nanoshells consist of 100 nanometer-sized cores of silica coated by gold. Plasmonic waves are induced by light at the barrier between the gold and the silica. These tiny beads can be injected into the bloodstream of a cancer patient and due to a tumors hungry need for blood, the nanoshells embed themselves in the tumor's tissue.

The plasmonic structure of the beads enables them to heat up when exposed to near infrared light (NIR), which can penetrate skin. A beam of NIR light is focused on the tumors, the beads heat up to 450 C, and cause the tumor cells to apoptose while leaving the surrounding healthy tissue unharmed. Atwater says that his colleague has not had any dif-

non-pathogenic bacteria in our gut flora are also destroyed. Caltech assistant professor of Biology, Sarkis Mazmanian, researches the beneficial influences of bacteria on our immune system.

"All humans provide lifelong residence to over 100 trillion 'good' bacteria," says Mazmanian. In developed countries, like the United States, we take an enormous amount of antibiotics, which drastically alters the bacterial balance in our gut flora. Mazmanian's lab is providing evidence that in contrast to infectious microbes, the symbiotic bacteria that all humans harbor in their intestines are critical for our health.

What if plasmonics could be used as an alternative to antibiotics? Mazmanian's lab is very optimistic about the implications of the findings by Atwater and his colleague Naomi Halas at Rice. Halas is already successfully applying this exciting technology to human disease by conjugating antibodies to her nanoshells to specifically attach the plasmonic beads to breast cancer cells.

Another application Mazmanian's lab might employ is to conjugate antibodies

specific to antigens only on the surface of pathogenic bacteria, like Streptococcus pyogenes, the bacteria that causes strep throat. "If we could specifically target pathogenic bacteria during an infection, we could eliminate the infectious agent while leaving our beneficial microbial partners intact." Mazmanian said.

In the days of Max Delbrück, it was common for faculty to discuss ideas of physics with biologists and vice-versa. At Delbrück's centennial symposium, harmful trends of our rapid technological development were discussed and worries were expressed that physicists and biologists were now forced to become extremely focused in their highly specific fields. Atwater has created the field of plasmonics. Mazmanian is a leader in the field of bacterial/host symbiosis. At most Universities, these two leaders would never meet. But at Caltech, where Delbrück became the father of Biophysics, a possible alternative to antibiotics can be found within the key to invisibility; and the answers can be discovered in a short walk between Church and Watson.



ficulties passing FDA requirements for entering human clinical trials with the treatment as "it's considered a piece of lab equipment and not a drug."

Antibiotics are a standard drug administered to people of all ages to kill off any pathogenic bacteria. An aspect of antibiotics that is not fully appreciated is the effect on our immune system when

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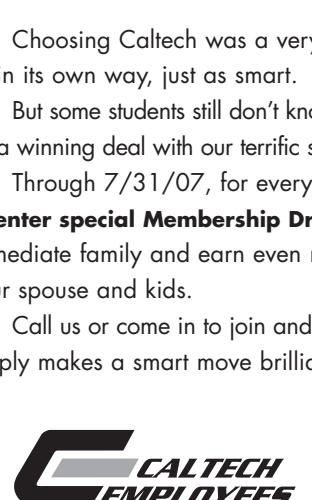


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BOOK REVIEW

The Price of Admission: Caltech comes out on top

BY CRAIG MONTUORI

In Pulitzer-winning Dan Golden's analysis of admission policies across top-tier schools *Price of Admission*, Caltech emerges as the poster child of the unbiased selector of raw talent.

The book focuses on how brilliant students are being denied the opportunity to go to elite schools as a result of the zero-sum admissions process that reserves a high percentage of seats for legacies, donor-connected applicants, athletes, and so on. Unhooked refers to students that go through the application process without any sort of specialization that gets them into a school, whether it be legacy connection, wealth, athletics, or fame.

As the dominant portion of each of these groups is upper-class and white, Golden shows the hypocrisy of many opponents of affirmative action who claim that affirmation takes spots away from 'more qualified white students.' Golden fears that this sort of affirmative action is leading America to a more calcified, class-based social structure that supports those who have power and wealth and who seek to pass on their benefits of an education from an elite college to

their family's next generation.

Golden names three schools that get admissions 'right': Caltech, Cooper Union, and Berea College. In a chapter titled "The Challenge of Wealth-Blind Admissions: How Caltech Raises Standards – and Donations," Golden opens with a 1999 embarrassment to the "aristocratic" Ivies; Caltech got the No. 1 position in the rankings, and threatened to do so repeatedly, until pressure to U.S. News & World Report resulted in them changing the criteria for future years.

As Golden is based in the Boston area, he initially expected to focus on MIT as the school exemplifying merit-based admissions that still result in fundraising and academic success. However, Golden ultimately decided to write about Caltech, as he mentions in his book that no one at Caltech has to wonder why they got in, quoting Vicki Loewer '05 referring to MIT's artificial fixing of the gender ratio to nearly 50/50.

He also ties in the Honor Code to Caltech's admissions policies,

mentioning that Caltech could sell admissions spots for donations, but "it would also be unfair to the privileged students themselves. Caltech's grueling curriculum leaves no refuge for less than brilliant minds – white or black, rich or poor." In many earlier parts of the book, discussing colleges that let under-qualified students enroll for various reasons, he explains

reading *The Price of Admission*, readers will have a greater understanding about how pervasive the problem is among elite institutions, and how some schools are finding financial and academic success without resorting to such tactics.

Golden looks at some common themes in admissions, such as his chapter titled "The New Jews: Asian Americans need not apply," referencing an earlier phase of discrimination in American universities, when the Ivies used "personal considerations" to limit the Jewish student population at their schools. He also looks at the common occurrence of schools letting in faculty members' kids, especially at places that give large discounts in tuition for children of faculty.

The other major portion of this section looks at student-athletes and their ability to 'hook' themselves into an elite college.

Mr. Golden recently spoke before the Senate Finance Committee, which was looking into higher education, as to whether we really consider colleges to be non-profit if occasionally they're selling admissions spots. After

Caltech could sell admissions spots for donations, but "it would also be unfair to the privileged students themselves. Caltech's grueling curriculum leaves no refuge for less than brilliant minds – white or black, rich or poor."

that many often end up taking the least demanding classes, which isn't an option at Caltech.

Golden examines several Ivy League schools, as well as a few other well-known institutions, such as Notre Dame, and points out their admissions biases. For example, Brown admits a surpris-

ingly heavy amount of celebrities and their associated families, while Duke seems to bend over backwards admitting people connected to large donors, especially to seal a coming donation.

Golden was prompted by his Wall Street Journal editor to look into admissions policies after the 2002 Supreme Court to consider a case involving the University of Michigan's affirmative action. The result was four front page stories, a 2004 Pulitzer Prize, and now his book, *Price of Admission*, which expands upon material used in his stories and expanding into new material.

This writer had the chance to interview Mr. Golden, who responded extremely rapidly to an inquiring email over the weekend. Unfortunately, the recording device picked up a lot of static and not a lot of discussion. The article has been constructed from what notes were available from the recording.

TV REVIEW

Hardly Trash Desperate Housewives is a delight

BY HARRISON STEIN

If you remember the original promos for *Desperate Housewives* almost three years ago, they were not a pretty sight. ABC spliced in snippets of a severely underdressed Nicolette Sheridan with scenes of Eva Longoria seducing her teenaged gardener and Teri Hatcher running around her yard sans clothing, and just like that, *Desperate Housewives* sold its soul to hook in its viewers.

By coupling these promos with a controversial appearance by Sheridan on a pre-Monday Night Football bit, ABC created a nice following for its primetime show. Unfortunately people were attracted to the show because it reeked of sensationalist filth, when in reality, there was far more beneath the surface.

The show centers around five young to middle-aged housewives in the idyllic suburban town of Fairview: Susan (Teri Hatcher) is a clumsy but lovable singly mom who continually puts herself in hairy situations; Gabrielle (Eva Longoria) is a fiery, spoiled supermodel with a tendency to overindulge; Bree (Marcia Cross) is a typical Stepford Wife who hides her deepest feelings within an icy and jaded exterior; Lynette (Felicity Huffman) is a cunning, controlling and workaholic mother of four; Mary Alice, well, is dead.

In the show's very first minute, Mary Alice puts a gun to her head and opens up a Pandora's Box of scandal and excitement that rarely wavers over the next three years. The first season is spent uncovering the mystery of Mary Alice's untimely death, and as a show's narrator, the posthumous housewife is along for the ride.

All four housewives have their own little subplots as Susan tries

to woo the new neighbor, Bree tries to overcome a cheating husband, Lynette tries to juggle four kids, and Gabrielle tries to maintain her nefarious romp with the gardener. However, the looming mystery of Mary Alice's death casts an uneasy cloud on the rest of the series and allows the show to have a nice balance of comedy, drama and intrigue.

The town has a very American Beauty-esque feeling to it, as the characters seem so perfect and happy on the outside, but have numerous skeletons in their closets. This might seem like a tired premise, but DH depicts the backwards life of middle-America better than anything released since the great 1999 Oscar Winner.

The script is beautifully written, as Mary Alice's monologues at the beginning and end of every episode perfectly tie together the action during the hour. The stories are admittedly over-the-top and the character responses are hardly realistic, but it's all in good fun. In addition, there is a new mystery every year to create additional intrigue. The show truly has something for everyone, as it's delightfully funny, hideously dark and extraordinarily well acted.

All four actresses are superb, and Nicolette Sheridan provides some additional comic relief as promiscuous neighbor and Susan-rival Edie. Each of the four housewives brings a different personality to the table, so of course, the actresses have completely different ranges. While Hatcher, Huffman and Longoria exhibit a decent amount of range, it's Cross that really steals the show. She portrays Bree as a sheltered, manipulative, ideal of the perfect wife (taking after Annette Bening in *American Beauty*) and somehow manages to play everything on a straight note. She's the type



The ladies of Desperate Housewives wade through a world of lies, deceit and perfectly arranged dinner platters Sundays on ABC.

of mom who puts together a grand party for her daughter and then freaks out when someone sneaks some icing off the cake.

Desperate Housewives is an enormously entertaining show, but it does have some unfortunate drawbacks. Every character is severely flawed, and while it's fun to see characters as deliciously evil and cunning as these, choosing a character to root for becomes an arduous task. When you get down to it, all of the characters have either a likable exterior or a good heart deep down, but none have both.

In addition, the male/children

supporting actors are a bit of a bother, as none of them really add much to the story. They are simply in place because housewives need families. Although some guys have their moments (notably Lynette's husband Tom), the writers should probably try to focus a little more on developing these characters so that the women don't steal the show. Finally, of the three seasons, the second season is by far the worst. The ongoing mystery (involving a guy locked in a basement) falls very flat, and with the exception of a few ongoing stories, the show really loses creative steam.

Luckily, *Desperate Housewives* has returned to the basics in the critical third season. The characters are better than ever, the writing is enjoyable as ever, and the third season mystery is more captivating than either of its predecessors. After getting shut out at the Emmys the past two seasons, I fully expect DH to capture all of the major comedic awards.

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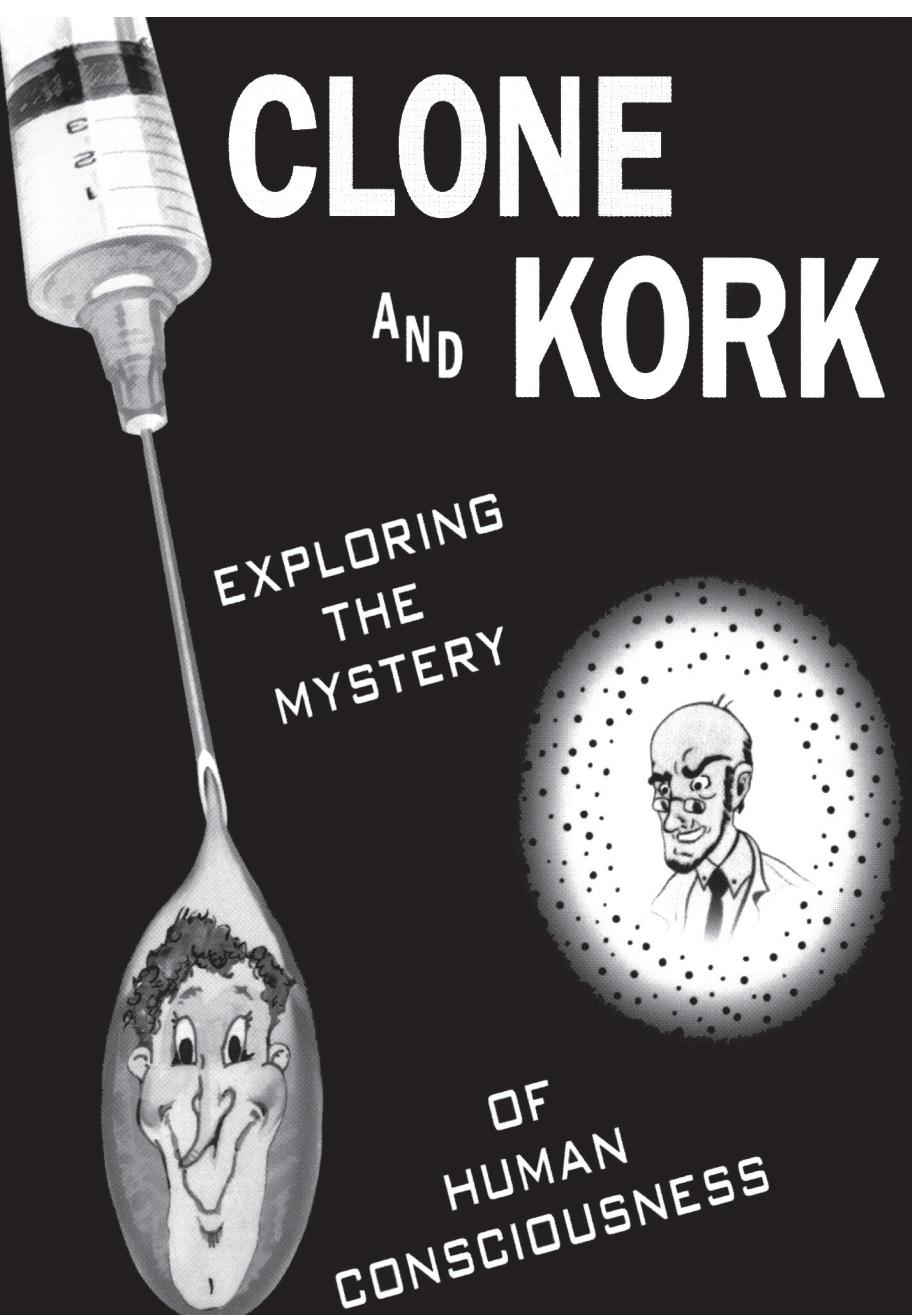


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ANOTHER URBAN LEGEND? YOU SHOULD CHECK SNOPES BEFORE SENDING ME THIS STUFF.
OOPS; YEAH.

MAN, SNOPES REALLY IS GREAT-INDEPENDENT FACT-CHECKERS TRAWLING OUR COLLECTIVE DISCOURSE, FILTERING OUT MISINFORMATION.

YEAH, BUT THEY HAVE THEIR DARK SIDE. THE COUPLE THAT RUNS SNOPES.COM ALSO RUNS A NETWORK OF SPAM SERVERS THAT START MANY OF THOSE FORWARDED STORIES IN THE FIRST PLACE, ENSURING THEY'LL ALWAYS HAVE BUSINESS.

THAT'S ABSURD. PLUS, IT'S DEFINITELY NOT TRUE - IT WAS DEBUNKED BY...
YES?
... OH MY GOD.

NOTHING IS CERTAIN EXCEPT PROCRASTINATION AND TAXES



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courtesy of xkcd.com

Depressive realism is the theory that depressed people have a more accurate view of the world than the non-depressed. It started when psychologists experimented with some regular chicks and dudes AND some depressed chicks and dudes.

That's how these things always start!!

Anyway, they put them in a room with a button and a lightbulb. The light turned on and off regardless of when the button was pressed, and the participants who were depressed were more likely to conclude that they weren't in control of the light! The non-depressed people DELUDED THEMSELVES into thinking they had more influence. The popular conclusion was that depressed people saw things more realistically!

That's a pretty strong conclusion!

sure is!

And it turns out that the effect only shows up in specific trivial situations! But it's a popular idea. I think some people just like the idea that depression might be an advantage!

ESPECIALLY depressed people.
But not TOO much, because then they wouldn't be depressed anymore!

AT THE PARK:
Excuse me, sir, you look depressed! Would you say you have a more accurate view of the world?

I'm not depressed!
I'm just eating a sandwich.
A sandwich... made out of your own tears??
HOW DID YOU KNOW

Seminar BINGO!

To play, simply print out this bingo sheet and attend a departmental seminar.

Mark over each square that occurs throughout the course of the lecture.

The first one to form a straight line (or all four corners) must yell out to win!



SEMINAR BINGO

Speaker bashes previous work	Repeated use of "um..."	Speaker sucks up to host professor	Host Professor falls asleep	Speaker wastes 5 minutes explaining outline
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Laptop malfunction	Work ties in to Cancer/HIV or War on Terror	"...et al."	You're the only one in your lab that bothered to show up	Blatant typo
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Entire slide filled with equations	"The data clearly shows..."	FREE Speaker runs out of time	Use of Powerpoint template with blue background	References Advisor (past or present)
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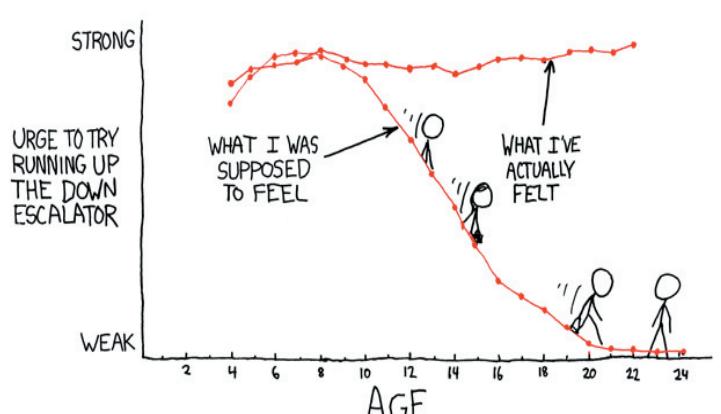
There's a Grad Student wearing same clothes as yesterday	Bitter Post-doc asks question	"That's an interesting question"	"Beyond the scope of this work"	Master's student bobs head fighting sleep
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Speaker forgets to thank collaborators	Cell phone goes off	You've no idea what's going on	"Future work will..."	Results conveniently show improvement
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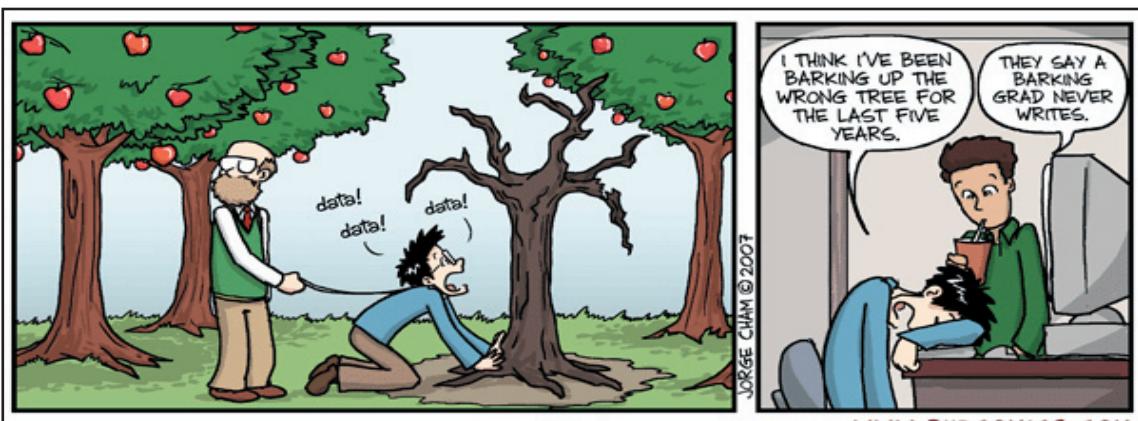
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