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Decompression rocks the roof of Winnett



Photo by: Robert Karl

The Sixth Chamber, with Caltech junior Mike Ferrara on drums, performs at Saturday night's Decompression on the roof of Winnett.

Prefrosh party divides houses

Fleming and Page are pro-party; other houses doubt it can be done in time

BY: VALERIE SYVERSON

Prefrosh weekend might be boasting an Interhouse-style party to compete with MIT's party-packed weekend, if Fleming and Page can convince the other houses to help with construction. Fleming proposed that the houses cooperate in putting on a second Interhouse-style party in the RF courtyard on the last night of the

"We spend all weekend as separate houses. It would be awesome if prefrosh could see all the entire student body come together for an event on Saturday night."

**-Tommy Morphet,
Fleming Prefrosh Rep**

weekend, citing concerns that Caltech's Prefrosh Weekend compares unfavourably with MIT's.

"I think it's a big mistake to ignore something that could potentially be bringing more students to our school," said Tommy Morphet, a prefrosh representative for Fleming. "Hopefully this party would help to eliminate the stereotype that Techers are just nerds

who study all the time and help us bring a few more students here."

Several themes have been tossed around, including "Eight Wonders of the World," "California," and "Caltech: The Party," featuring milestones in Caltech's pranking history like the 1961 Rose Bowl.

The reaction of the other houses was mixed, however; some representatives raised questions regarding time and money, as well as concerns that circumstances might make the party more detrimental than helpful to the prefroshe's image of Caltech.

"A lot of houses have very strong feelings about it," says Ricketts prefrosh rep Katie Shadman. The plan is currently supported by Fleming and Page and opposed by Blacker, Dabney, Ricketts, and Ruddock, with Avery and Lloyd ambivalent.

Like Caltech's Prefrosh Weekend, MIT's prefrosh event, Campus Preview Weekend (CPW), is often cited as one of the deciding factors in students' choice of university. However, Caltech's weekend has recently been reported to pale in comparison to CPW, during which many of MIT's dorms have parties and other major social events. Last year, Caltech

PLEASE SEE PARTY, PAGE 7

Super seniors might walk with class

BY: ANDREA DUBIN

Caltech students are overwhelmingly in favor of allowing seniors with one more term of work to walk with their class on commencement, according to an Open House last Tuesday in which the administration discussed the proposed change, which could be implemented as early as this spring.

The change would allow seniors who have not quite completed their graduation requirements to participate in graduation ceremonies after an approval from the Dean or UASH, provided they can finish up within one quarter.

Most of the 30 students who came to the Open House in the Blacker courtyard supported the change. Mike Woods, IHC chairman, said, "A number of seniors never get to walk because they can't get a day off to come back for commencement." This is especially an issue for international students. Mary Morley from the Registrar's office added, "Many students elect not to come back because they don't feel like they are a part of that class or ceremony."

While most of the students supported the change, a few concerns were brought up by the faculty. The MOSH, Cathy Jurca, said, "One objection faculty members brought up is what happens if the student doesn't finish. Would it

cheapen the ceremony?"

Senior Emily Russell responded, "I don't feel like it's cheapening the ceremony to march with my friends. It enhances it, it doesn't cheapen it."

Students argued that commencement for them is a social activity, where they can celebrate having spent four years with their class. Leaving out students who had a good reason to take an extra term was not ideal to them.

"I am a part of the class of 2007.

tra time.

Other arguments that were discussed included the possibility that letting students march would decrease their incentive to finish up on time. Most of the students agreed with Maria Riolo, sophomore, that "the deciding factor is I want to graduate rather than I want to march." Since the students walking in the ceremony without fulfilling their graduation requirements would not receive a diploma, the consensus among



Administrators and students mingle at the Open House in Blacker discussing proposed commencement policies.

Class unity is strong at Caltech," Emily added.

People suggested having a plan approved by the Registrar on what classes they will take to finish up, and ensure that the student has a good reason to take the ex-

students was that getting their diploma would be incentive enough to push students to finish on time. Students also agreed that tuition

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Prefrosh party**From the Editor** —

Caltech isn't MIT. We can't possibly throw dozens of parties every night like they can in Boston. We couldn't pretend to be a large school if we tried. But that leaves us to attract prefrosh on our own merits: we're small, close-knit, and can put together an engineering feat of a party when we want to.

So why don't we? Because prefrosh weekend is circumscribed by Rotation Rules, on the premise that all of the prefrosh will matriculate and then be biased toward a house that threw an awesome party. But that's not true. The very rules that are trying to protect the Caltech community are driving away potential members.

Fleming's proposed party is an excellent first step to move away from house-based activities to multi-house events that liven the otherwise silent Olive Walk. We don't need to look smaller than we already are.

However, though Techers are used to throwing last-minute parties, this one might be a bit of a stretch. Ruddock just built OPI, and Blacker will still be taking down their Interhouse, and that's after the time sink of Real Interhouse. And let's be frank: who will steer the multi-house construction if the Moles and Rudds are busy catching up with their work?

If we start a prefrosh party tradition, which would be ideal, it ought to be scheduled so as not to overly tax one or two houses. With enough planning, the prefrosh party could be feasible and enjoyable—next year.

Marissa Cevallos, Editor-in-Chief

Honor Code only works with understanding**CRAIG MONTUORI****THIS WEEK:****Insights from Dr. Lorden on Honor System history****Undergrads, grads, profs, admins: is the Honor Code the same for everyone?**

This week I'll be discussing differences in Honor Code interpretation between different groups on campus. First, though, I have a correspondent to address. My article from two weeks ago regarding the history of the Honor Code received a very kind, interesting letter from Professor Gary Lorden, who served as the Dean of Students from 1984-88 and the VP of Student Affairs from 1989-98, in which he disputes several of my conclusions. Professor Lorden opens with:

"...It's hard to do justice to honor system history (no pun intended) in a brief summary. And I think you've unfortunately mischaracterized some important things-- before and after the line 'It was only during the 90's that things started to change.'"

The sentence he refers to was where I brought up the Ricketts Firepot incident, where according to the Tech archives, former Dean Revel declared the Honor Code not to apply to the situation and then led disciplinary actions against the students involved. My implied assertion was that there was a time before the CRC was formed when students did address these issues. Professor Lorden replied with an anecdote from the '80s, where he approached the BoC about a case and was told that it was better to let the Deans and MOSH handle it.

I would argue that from the

Ensure our insurance**BY: PO KU**

I do not understand the general apathy that pervades this campus in many administrative and financial matters. The only recent mass student protest has been against the seven-day board program, because its implementation would have directly affected the majority of students. I contend that a change in health insurance plans would affect a large number of students directly, but should concern the entire student body.

For those of you who may argue that health insurance doesn't concern you, I offer the following anecdotal argument. You never know what is going to happen to you. The point of insurance is so that if something did happen to you, you wouldn't have to pay an arm and a leg for seeking treatment for your arm and leg. Accidental injuries happen all the time where you just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. My particular story could have happened to anyone attending dinner in a house that throws things at dinner.

About a month ago, I stood in the wrong place at exactly the wrong height and got hit directly in the eye with a dinner roll thrown from less than 6 feet away. I couldn't see clearly out of that eye and went to Urgent Care fearing at worst a corneal abrasion. During the hours I waited, my vision gradually cleared from its trauma-induced pink haze and I thought *hmm, maybe I shouldn't have come here.*

However, it turned out that I did in fact have a corneal abrasion and received treatment. I was not referred to an ophthalmologist, but was instead instructed to come back in two days or follow-up with another doctor.

The Health Center didn't have proper eye examination equipment and Urgent Care required a ride, so I decided to look up an eye doctor on the Chickering website and found one within walking distance. I was seen almost immediately after calling, which should have clued me into the possible severity of my injury. It turned out that I had a deformed pupil with blood both in the anterior chamber and at the bottom of my eye. Bleeding in the anterior chamber of the eye is a hyphema, which greatly increases my risk for developing both glaucoma and cataracts. The blood at the bottom of my eye and the fact that I'm severely myopic meant I needed to see a retinal specialist ASAP. There I discovered that I had a tear at the bottom of my eye, which if left untreated could lead to a detached retina and permanent blindness.

If I had not gone to an ophthalmologist for my own convenience, I might have lost an eye. The original corneal abrasion likely resulted from my frequent contact use since I had one in the other eye as well, something the doctor at Urgent Care did not bother to check (evidence that some professionals do not understand the practical importance of the scientific method). The cur-

rent student health insurance plan not only helped save my eye, but saved me from paying a ridiculous amount for each doctor visit I've had to make this term (I've averaged more than once a week).

The deductible is not the limit of what students have to pay. It is the bare minimum since co-pays and things not covered under insurance do not count toward this \$150 limit. Ambulance rides are not, for example, 100% covered and typically the co-pay for one trip to Huntington Hospital runs between \$200 and \$300. Also, depending on the information sent to the insurance company,

"The current student health insurance plan ... helped save my eye."

-Po Ku

they may deny coverage for a variety of reasons.

If the plan were changed to the proposed alternative plan, the deductible would increase to \$250, plus a \$15 co-pay for each doctor visit, on top of a minimum prescription charge of \$10 for generic brands and \$25 for brand name (2-5 times higher than most co-pays under the current plan), and in addition to 10% charges for x-rays, labs, and hospitalizations. If one becomes seriously or chronically hurt or ill, these charges can add up to a frightening amount for a student whose budget is much more restricted than the Institute's.

Even if you somehow manage to avoid using health insurance the entire time you are here, the

high probability that you know someone here who could seriously benefit from the plan should give you pause. A dramatic change in health insurance plan would only add more stress to overburdened students or prevent some from seeking the treatment they need.

Of particular concern to both undergraduates and graduate students at a meeting I attended last Friday were proposed changes to the mental health portion of the plan. The current plan covers 56 visits for free, which may seem like an obscenely high amount, but some students with severely debilitating disorders need to be seen more than once a week. All modified plans discussed reduced this number by at least twenty, but this issue was clearly a priority given the recent tragedies last term as well as the rates charged by most mental health professionals.

We currently have one of the best student health insurance plans in the country and should support the plan against a change that would only save \$600,000 (~\$300 a student), but force some students to pay up to \$1000 out-of-pocket. For now, the crisis is over, thanks to open communications between undergrads, graduate students, and administrators, but with annually rising insurance premiums this problem may well present itself again. Things are not finalized, but the Institute is willing to keep the current health plan with perhaps a few very minor changes. Despite popular apathy, insurance matters, especially in the close-knit environment that Caltech wishes to foster.

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calls us to follow it?

I'll try a religious analogy to lay out my thoughts on this matter. As students, we are the Orthodox believers of the Honor Code. No one holds it as strongly or to as many aspects of life as undergrads or those who were once undergrads here. Other groups on campus sometimes seem to think us a bit odd for some of the intricacies of the Honor Code. After all, what student at any other school would ask a professor to take points off of their own paper because of fairness concerns? Other groups fall in various locations between the orthodoxy and atheism towards the Honor Code.

"What should we as students, both grads and undergrads, do if someone who publicly claims to not be bound by the Honor Code calls us to follow it?"

On the one hand, who are we to insist they show the Honor Code the same amount of respect that we do? But on the other, we can insist that they acknowledge and respect where we stand on the issue. We require some sort of comprehension and understanding that undergrads will act a certain way because of the Honor Code. Without it, I would argue that there is little chance conflict can be avoided between undergrads and individual administrators.

Moving on to the second topic, as promised in last week's article, why do views of the Honor Code sometimes differ so much between faculty, students, and administrators? What should we as students, both grads and undergrads, do if someone who publicly claims to not be bound by the Honor Code gains some measure of grudging respect for

the undergrads only after years of interactions. Can anything be done to more quickly impress upon new members of the community that the Honor Code is more than just words spoken? After all, freshmen seem to pick these things up quickly.

The outgoing BoC Chair, Jean Sun, just spent months processing data from the recent BoC survey answered by around 85% of the undergraduate body. These results mirror those in an older survey, from the '03-'04 school year, which only had around 35% of the undergraduate body. Moreover, the most recent GSC Honor Code survey showed similar results. To many undergrads, I think this would be unexpected, as the older BoC survey showed there is a lot of mistrust between undergrads and grads regarding the Honor Code. However, I feel they are at most a decade behind the undergrads, as presented by Ted's chart, in what they feel the Honor Code covers. Perhaps there is more common ground than realized between undergrads and grads, especially when it comes to the Honor Code.

So with this force of data behind us, can we now work on making sure that when new professors and grad students are welcomed into the Caltech community, they reciprocate with a fuller understanding of the Honor Code? After all, it is one of the main facets that sets Caltech apart from other academic communities.

That's it until after Spring Break. We'll have the SFC approaching, and so I'll be discussing some of the specific proposed changes to the undergraduate student government that will hopefully result in a more cohesive community with regards to the Honor Code.



BY: RADHIKA MARATHE

THE WORLD**EU sets energy targets**

Leaders of the European Union agreed to establish binding targets for renewable energy sources but put off the actual decision as to how these targets would be achieved to the European Commission. Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt also stated that the EU agreed to reduce carbon emission levels to 20 percent below what they were in 1990.

Germany proposed an ambitious plan to cut carbon emissions and use more renewable energy resources. Poland, the Czech Republic, France and all voiced strong opinions in favor of nuclear fuel as an alternative source of energy.

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mix, which will ultimately deliver results for our grandchildren," German Chancellor, Merkel who headed the summit said in the beginning.

An East-West split emerged at the talk with poorer European nations such as Poland opposing the push by the Western nations stating that they lacked the resources to invest in costly energy alternatives such as wind, solar and hydroelectric.

Business and labor leaders warned against slowing down of European economic growth in the scenario of imposing extremely drastic measures. Leaders were themselves at odds over certain issues such as replacing ten percent of transport fuels by biofuels.

Europe produces only 15 percent of the global carbon dioxide. If this deal is signed by the EU, it will push other global polluters such as U.S., Canada, Russia and Japan.

Source: www.time.com

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ASCIT Minutes (03/07/2007)**ASCIT discusses bylaw changes**

Officers Present: Chris Gonzales, Mike Grinolds, Andrea Dubin, Angela Zah, Mike Woods, Caleb Ng, Ekta Bhajwani, Patrick Herring, Daryl Coleman, Zack Higbee

Guests: John Leichty, Ben Steele, Jean Sun, Iain Cranston

***Funding Requests**

-Mike Woods requested \$100 for the women's table tennis team to travel to nationals in Ohio. Approved.

-John Leichty requested funds to take Professor Lange to lunch with Peter Liu and Max Merfeld. Students wishing to take advantage of the MOSH funding to take professors out to lunch are supposed to write up a report about what was discussed to submit to the MOSH. Approved.

-Ben Steele requested \$500 for Blacker's interhouse party on April 14. This will come out of the new budget.

***BoC**

-Jean has been looking into ways to change the leadership of the BoC and CRC to make things more efficient.

-These changes came from the BoC survey from last year, as well as the Student-Faculty Conference committee on honor code.

-Right now the ASCIT vice-president is the same as the BoC chair. Since the CRC was created 10 years ago, it doesn't make sense to have the BoC chair represent the honor code for the entire campus, so the work load is overwhelming. The proposed idea is to create a new position for the vice-president - the honor chair. They would be in charge of education,

Riots also occurred in the Southern City of Porto Alegre, Bogota's National University in Colombia, and Mexico City and involved slogans as well as effigy burning.

Bush plans to visit Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico as part of his tour. He will not be visiting countries under Chavez's sphere of influence such as Nicaragua, Ecuador, Argentina and Bolivia.

Engineering graduate creates beer-launching refrigerator

John Cornwell, an engineering graduate from the Duke University has designed a contraption that reminds him of his college lifestyle. After graduating a year ago and joining a software firm in Atlanta, Georgia, Cornwell missed his college life enough to design a refrigerator that tosses beer cans about twenty feet away at the click of a remote.

"I missed the college scene. It embodies the college spirit that I didn't want to let go of," he said. It took about 150 hours and \$400 to convert a mini-fridge into one that can launch up to ten cans before it needs a reload.

The remote Cornwell has used for this unique machine is a car's keyless entry device. On pressing the button, a small elevator inside the fridge lifts a can to the catapulting arm from where it is aimed straight onto the couch in front of the TV. Cornwell speaks of denting a few walls and almost breaking his television monitor before the catapulting was fine-tuned.

"I did launch a lot watching the Super Bowl," he quoted. "My friends are the reason I built it. I told them about the idea and hyped it so much and I had to go through with it."

Source: www.cnn.com

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March Madness unpredictable as ever

BY: HARRISON STEIN

The NCAA Tournament is back in full force, and this year figures to be wilder than ever. There are no dominant college basketball teams, as even the top seeds Florida, North Carolina, Ohio State and Kansas have glaring weaknesses that cancel out their many strengths.

It is (nearly) statistically impossible to predict all 64 games of the NCAA Tournament correctly, as there is such a high variance in the results for each game. Sure, a 12 seed will probably beat a 5 seed during the first round, but there are four of these games so you have a 25% chance of predicting the upset...if it even happens. That being said, there are a number of pointers you should follow before filling out a bracket. Some of these theories are well-known and have been well-dissected while others are my brain-child. If you read this same column three years ago, some of the points have been repeated and updated while others are new—and this year, I have included some historical statistics compiled by tournament guru Peter Tiernan.

1. You can count on a #12 seed beating a #5 and eventually making the Sweet Sixteen. Last year, Texas A&M upset the horribly overrated Syracuse Orangeman and Montana surprised the upstarts from Nevada, although neither 12 seed reached the Sweet Sixteen (Texas A&M was seconds away from defeating eventual Final Four team LSU). This year, watch out for Illinois vs. Virginia Tech, but especially keep an eye on my upset pick of Old Dominion over Butler. Interestingly enough, 5 seeds have historically won 68% of their first round games while the lesser 6 seeds have won 70% of the time.

2. At least one #2 seed will lose in Round 2, usually to a 10 seed. While the Final Four very often has

a #2 seed, these same seeds often have early exits in round 2 (Tennessee and Ohio State last year). Statistically, when #10 seeds have reached the second round they have won a surprising 48% of the games against the more powerful #2 seeds. Look out Georgetown, Bobby Knight's #10 Texas Tech Red Raiders are gunning for you.

3. Pick at least one #1 seed to make the Final Four, but don't pick any more than two or three. Also, one or two of the #1 seeds will lose before the Elite Eight round. All four #1 seeds have never made the same Final Four as about 15% lose in the second round and 20% lose in the Sweet 16. Usually, it's easy to predict the weak links: this year it's clearly Ohio State.

4. Overrated defending champions lose early in the tournament. In the last two years, defending champion North Carolina and Connecticut were badly miscast as top three seeds. Both predictably met their demise in the second round. Of the last 17 NCAA champions, a whopping 13 have lost to a lower seeded opponent the following year. Expect Florida to make an early exit.

5. Two teams from the same conference are going to make the Final Four...but one will be a surprise. In each of the last 8 Final Fours, two of the teams have belonged to the same conference. Typically, one of these teams is a conference champion and the other is an underrated team seeded between #3 and #5. In 6 of those years, the better of the teams reached the final while the lesser team bowed out in the Final Four. UCLA should make the Final Four as a #2 seed in the loaded West region, but expect underrated Pac-10 rival Oregon to join them.

6. Never underestimate teams that underachieved during the season after immense pre-season expectations. Both Connecticut from 2004 and Arizona from 2001 seemed grossly overrated in the face of his-

toric expectations. However, armed with superior talent, both teams impressively muscled their way to the Final Four. This year's analog is the immensely gifted, but hopelessly immature bunch from Chapel Hill. UNC has been inconsistent all year long but with the best talent in the nation, expect them to cruise to the Final Four—and knock off Texas's freshman sensation Kevin Durant along the way.

7. George Mason is the exception, not the rule. The 11th seeded Patriots stormed through the tournament last season beating heavyweights Michigan State, North Carolina and Connecticut before succumbing to eventual champion Florida in the Final Four. However, only three teams seeded below 6 have ever reached the last weekend of the tournament. The average seed of a Final Four participant is 2.61. Pick a few upsets, but don't go overboard as teams like George Mason comes around once a decade.

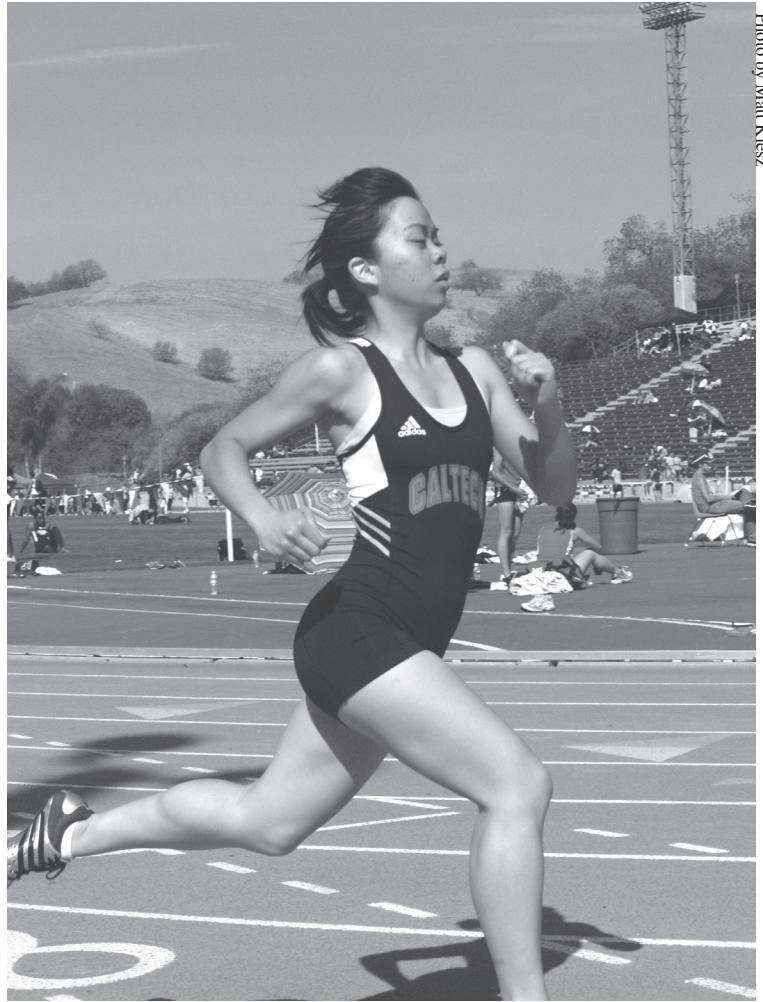
8. Duke will lose in the Sweet Sixteen. The country's least likable team is also its most predictable. Duke has reached the second weekend of the tournament every year since 1998. However, in 5 of the last 7 years, the aptly named Devils have lost in the Sweet Sixteen. Since Duke is a #6 seed this year, it's a little trickier than usual, but history doesn't lie. Expect them to upset #3 Pittsburgh before getting demolished by UCLA.

9. Don't let your judgment cloud your ability to fill out a proper bracket. As much as I would love to see Illinois return to the Final Four, it's not happening this year—I don't think they'll even get out of the first round. Unless you're from Chapel Hill, Los Angeles or a select few college towns, don't have any unreasonable expectations about your hometown team.

10. Have fun—this only happens once a year.

Track and Field shines at Ben Brown Invitational

Photo by Matt Kiesz



Bettina Chen running the 200m at the Ben Brown Invitational at Mt. San Antonio College Saturday, March 11. Chen has already earned spots on two of the school's all-time top ten lists this year. Other outstanding performances came from Katherine Breeden (5000m) and Matt Kiesz (1500m).

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Going for the glory: Harrison's picks for March Madness 2007



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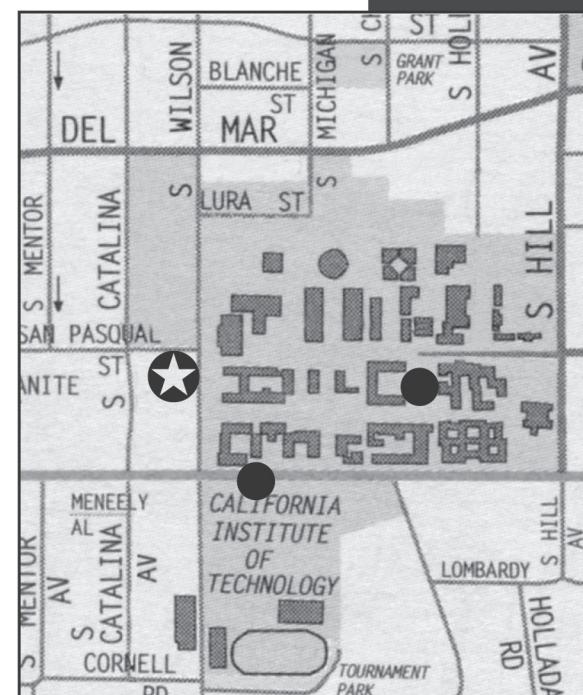
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South House Kitchens: Restaurant Review

BY: HARRISON STEIN

As a senior, I have lived through one of the most turbulent and unpredictable eras in Caltech Dining Services history. Chandler was completely rebuilt two years ago in order to accommodate the South House reconstruction. I survived the simultaneously brilliant and ridiculous period of the all-you-can-eat South Kitchen lunches. Then the South Kitchens closed permanently and Chandler re-opened with hiked prices. The old CDS regime left and was only recently replaced. With regard to dining, the Caltech community has been through a lot in the last few years. But now, the brand new South Kitchen has opened and finally, everything has come full circle.

Back in the day, the South Kitchen was essentially a Chandler replacement for lazy South House students who would roll out of bed at noon, scamper to the kitchen, and eat lunch in their respective courtyards. The new kitchens are more of the same, but the food options are unique and inspired.

Like Chandler and the old South Kitchen, the new kitchen has a wood-fired oven used expressly for pizzas. I wasn't expecting anything new since the oven looks like the one in Chandler and the ingredients are identical. Nonetheless, I was pleasantly surprised. Needing to get something quick before golf class, I picked out a mushroom, pepper and pepperoni pizza sitting on the counter. The crust was nice and pillowy on the top but crispy and not-burnt on the bottom. The

cheese seemed to have more zest than usual and thankfully didn't collapse after one bite. Perhaps I'm excited to finally eat my pizza close to my house but I honestly think there's something special about this new pizza. Even if you don't like the pizza station in Chandler, I highly recommend you try this new variety.

One of the more controversial dishes at Chandler is the Kobe Beef burger. Costing seven or eight dollars, the burger is made of high quality meat, but for various reasons Kobe isn't conducive to being eaten as a large burger. In the South Kitchen, they have remedied the situation by introducing Kobe Beef mini-burgers, modeled on White Castle sliders. While you only get two (very) small burgers, the smaller size is more appropriate for a fine steak like Kobe. Because you can savor the beef in small doses, it's easier to enjoy each bite without the meat becoming too overpowering. I added a dollop of steak sauce to mine and it significantly helped. The dish is pricey and it's hardly filling, but it's truly exquisite to feel the Kobe Beef melt in your mouth.

While the pizza and burgers are both tasty, the thing that really sets the South Kitchen apart is its sandwich line. Unlike past kitchens that served sliced or processed sandwich meat, the South Kitchen has carved roast beef, turkey, ham and corned beef. In addition, they have a diverse selection of La Brea breads highlighted by sourdough, French roll and my favorite, ciabatta. Each of the sandwiches has a suggested list of condiments but you can mix and match as you wish.

Miller's graphic novel style rings false in 300

BY: KYLE LITTLER

A few days ago I had the misfortune of getting into an argument on an Internet forum about the upcoming Robert Rodriguez/Quentin Tarantino double feature Grindhouse. One cantankerous user posted, "I wish Tarantino would stop associating with that no-talent Rodriguez... an unfortunate hack who has parlayed a slightly audacious visual style into a lucrative career and some token critical admiration." He wasn't exactly wrong about the disparity between the two directors. But Rodriguez's "slightly audacious visual style" helped his adaptation of Frank Miller's Sin City do something unprecedented in the history of cinema: it actually captured the feel of a real comic book, which is more than enough to make its director's shortcomings understandable, even forgivable. Countless people, including myself, were hoping that 300, based on another one of Miller's graphic novels, would be the second movie to pull off this amazing feat. Unfortunately, in the process of adapting this story about the battle between the Spartans and the Persians at Thermopylae, director Zack Snyder created more of a typical ancient history action movie with an unusual look than a comic book movie.

Regardless of how the film works as a whole, most people will be interested in watching it for the action itself, which is for the most part quite decent. The fights don't outstay their wel-



come or disintegrate into a cluttered mess (remember that endless machine gun vs. sentinels fight in the last Matrix flick?) Snyder knows when to turn down the shock factor, but I must say (and I wouldn't call this a spoiler because you know they'll happen sometime) the third decapitation doesn't have the same impact as the first. Most of the focus is on King Leonidas' close-quarters combat, and he's more concerned with fighting well than with seeing how many different ways he can maim the Persians. In fact, aside from the occasional dismemberment, the gore consists of blood only, without an inch of gut to be found. The film's best strength is that the scope of the action is exhibited not by showing everything all of the time,

but by emphasizing how small the vastly outnumbered Spartan force is compared to everything around them. Rather than providing every possible camera angle to depict the size of the Persian army and its volleys of arrows, elephants, and abominable humanoid creatures, Snyder knows that it's enough just to show how they could crush us at any moment. The characters repeatedly remind us that the conflict is about the struggle of free men, so Snyder makes the right choice in sticking close to their perspective.

Since the only real effort put into this film went into the action scenes, it's a good thing that the plot isn't overly involved. The last big Hollywood movie about this part of the ancient world, Troy, zipped through all of its formative



Photo by Hamilton Falk

I personally tried three sandwiches and thoroughly enjoyed two. Because I have always been corned-beef-aphobic I was initially reluctant to try the Santa Anita which also includes mustard and rye bread. Nevertheless, I took a risk and ordered the sandwich with lettuce and tomato on sourdough. To my surprise, the carved corned beef was very tasty and the mustard did a decent job bringing out the flavor of the meat. Given my aversion for the meat, I think the sandwich was about as good as I could have expected. On the other hand, I'm curious what a true corned beef fan thinks of the Santa Anita.

I had a considerably less enjoyable experience when I ordered the Chandler sandwich of carved turkey, pesto, tomato and swiss on ciabatta. Of all the carved meats,

turkey is the least suitable for sandwiches because white meat is typically dry without gravy. The meat of the Chandler was no exception. While the pesto sauce is tasty, it is not powerful enough to disguise the dry feeling of the turkey. I was very excited about the sandwich because eating pesto with meat is one of my favorite pastimes but I was soundly disappointed. Perhaps I caught the turkey on a bad day, but of all the meals I ate at the South Kitchen, the Chandler is the one I would least recommend.

On the other hand, there is one sandwich I would recommend without hesitation: the Reyes consists of roast beef, sautéed mushrooms and onions, provolone and horseradish. I tested the sandwich on ciabatta bread and the results were delectable. The carved roast

beef is mouth-watering and really adds a new dimension of flavor absent from store-bought roast beef. The mushrooms and onions added an interesting twinge of flavor and the ciabatta bread favorably contributed to the texture of the sandwich. The Reyes is probably one of the best sandwiches I've had at my time at Caltech.

All in all, the South Kitchen is a nice little outfit that provides relief to the monotony that has become Chandler lunches. The new entrees definitely add something to the Caltech dining experience and I hope they don't get tired (at least until after I graduate next term). However, to those worrying that the menu is too small, help is on the way. Says Food Chair Erin White, "We are going to try some new things—I definitely believe it."

visuals was that Snyder felt compelled to match Sin City in terms of stylization, but visual intensity doesn't make a great film on its own. Rodriguez made Sin City work by bringing comic book elements to life. Snyder looks for where those elements already exist in standard Hollywood fare and mimics the graphic novel look by liberally applying a tinted veneer to the celluloid. Sin City's voiceovers enhanced what was happening onscreen rather than merely restating it. Its wildest shots evoked the pacing of tilted and jagged-edged comic frames; in 300, the alternating speed-up, slow-down timing as King Leonidas acrobatically charges into a group of Persian soldiers feels like it was pulled right out of Troy or Alexander. Just about the only moments reminiscent of a real graphic novel are when Gerard Butler shows us how wide he can open his mouth while yelling. Rodriguez flawlessly captured a sense of noirish despair and introspection in his film, and while you could fault the difference in source material for forcing a sense of epic grandiosity on 300, the real problem lies in the fact that Snyder chose the kind of perfunctory, aloof grandiosity that we have come to expect from movies about warfare in the ancient world. But Frank Miller is not a perfunctory graphic novelist. Even when his characters take stoicism and coldness to extremes, his stories are told truly emphatically, and adaptations of his work should not be done any other way.

Polar bears are taboo topic for gov't scientists

BY: VALERIE SYVERSON

Newly publicized restrictions on unauthorized talk about polar bears have inflamed the suspicions of environmental watchdog groups regarding government censorship of science.

In e-mails from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released by the National Resources Defense Council last week, government-employed biologists and wildlife officials were advised that foreign travel requests "involving or potentially involving climate change, sea ice and/or polar bears" would henceforth require a memorandum regarding "who'll be the official spokesman on the trip and the one responding to questions on these issues, particularly polar bears." Two example memoranda were attached, both specifying that the traveler "understands the administration's position on climate change, polar bears, and sea ice and will not be speaking on or responding to these issues."

In an interview with CNN, the director of the Fish and Wildlife Service claimed that the new requirement was part of a long-standing policy meant to keep government scientists from digressing in public at overseas meetings with

set agendas. However, environmental activists have called it "a Soviet-style directive," pointing out previous concerns regarding the Bush administration's history of censoring scientific speech on issues related to global warming.

In particular, last year the New York Times reported that political appointees at NASA had discouraged news releases on global warming and canceled press interviews with climatologists.

Polar bears have been politically prominent since early in 2005, when the Center for Biological Diversity petitioned the FWS to list them as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act due to habitat loss from Northern Hemisphere icecap melting. The FWS was legally obligated to respond to the petition within 90 days but did not do so. The Center for Biological Diversity and NRDC finally filed a lawsuit against them in California last December, at which point the U.S. Department of the Interior decided to also propose the "threatened" designation. If implemented, the designation could force debate on tougher standards for greenhouse gas emissions. A decision on the listing is expected in January 2008.

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Fleming suggests prefrosh Interhouse party to help Caltech compete with MIT's weekend

PARTY, FROM PAGE 1

reduced the number of days for Prefrosh Weekend from three to two, leaving less time for scheduling house social events. This year, though, the prefrosh will once again have three days in which to acquaint themselves with Tech student life.

The budget for the proposed event would come at least partially from the houses, although it was suggested that the Admissions Office might also contribute.

"Admissions has expressed great interest, and could conceivably fund portions of it," said Kelly Littlepage, a prefrosh rep-

resentative for Fleming.

A larger concern, however, was who could build the party. Since Blacker's Interhouse will occur, as usual, the weekend before PFW, the Moles would have to simultaneously dismantle their own party and work on building the proposed "mini-Interhouse".

"Blacker has said they don't want to build another party..but it was suggested that maybe they can move their dance floor from their Interhouse party for use with the multihouse party," said Morphet.

Ruddock also expressed unwillingness to build yet another party, as it would be the fourth party they would have built this

year.

Apart from difficulties in building, concerns were expressed by Dabney and Ricketts that the end result might not even be a particularly good party. PFW is the fourth week of third term, leaving very little time for all the planning necessary to make such a major social event enjoyable; in addition, the PFW rotation rules would demand that the party be "dry", making it even more of a challenge.

"If we want to do this, we should plan it in advance for next year," says Salomon. "For this year, we don't have enough time."

Students support commencement change

SENIORS, FROM PAGE 1

is enough incentive to spend another term finishing.

Another problem with the change is that since the commencement program is a historical document, it cannot list the names of the students who have not fulfilled all their requirements with the students who have. Cathy Jurca said, "It would be nice for your parents to have a program with your name on it."

One solution would be having an insert with those students' names in it. Paul Bellan, chair of the Academics Policies Committee, had some concerns about commencement being a legal statement of graduation. While

students at the Open House saw commencement as more of a social event rather than a legal one, there would have to be some changes made to the statement made by the Dean of students when he presents the candidates for their degrees.

Another concern brought up by Bellan was that there might be a slippery slope on requirements needed to be fulfilled in order to march.

"We are just changing the dividing line between who gets to march and who doesn't to a new line," said Bellan. "There's always going to be a sharp edge so the problem is just going to be shifted."

There was also concern over having the Deans make the decisions, since Deans could vary in their leniency. Proposed solutions to this problem included having the decision to accept a students petition to march go before UASH or before a faculty vote. It was also suggested that there be specific cut offs on how much you have left to do, such as no student may march if they have more than one term left.

While there are still issues being discussed and problems to be worked out, student support for these proposed changes is high. Mike Woods stated, "I don't know a single student who is actually opposed to this proposal."

Feldblum leaves fourth vacant office

FELDBLUM, FROM PAGE 1

collaborative efforts of bringing students, staff, and faculty together," said Dr. Feldblum, who also cited the improvements in diversity and minority support as one of her primary contributions to Caltech. "I've learned how important it is to understand complex needs," she added.

"The things that stand out most about her are that she's really smart, she's a very hard worker, and she's also a personal and effective manager," said Dean Hall.

Dr. Feldblum's departure creates another vacant office in Student Affairs, whose empty positions already include Vice-President of Student Affairs, Wom-

en's Center Director, and Director of Performing and Creative Arts. "It's been hectic," said Dean Hall, "(but) people are really dedicated and enjoy what they're doing here."

There are no immediate plans to hire a replacement for Dr. Feldblum, since, according to Dean Hall, hiring a new Vice-President is a more pressing concern. In addition, the recently convened Committee on Student Affairs is set to review the structure and positions of Student Affairs, which will directly impact future hiring.

Although she admitted she was looking forward to being active in a liberal arts college, Dr. Feldblum said that she had enjoyed her time at Caltech. "I'm going to miss the people - I love my work at Caltech," she said.

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How not to fail finals week: the guide

BY: HAMILTONY FALK

For many students one of the most difficult times of the year is coming up, and I'm not referring to pretending to know what's going on in this year's NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament. Rather it is finals week, the time of the term when people stop paying attention to gnashing of teeth and wailing because it truly is the most magical time of the term; finals week. Some people avoid finals by underloading as seniors and only taking 15 units on pass fail, and some others avoid finals by failing out or transferring. Unfortunately these are not viable options for everyone, so as a benevolent senior I've decided to impart some of my wisdom in order that there can be a little bit more happiness in this cruel hard world.

One easy way to avoid a soul-crushing finals week is to be careful in course selection. Remember, every credit over the

graduation requirement of 486 is like a sliver of bamboo under your fingernails that you didn't have to experience, so plan ahead and make sure you don't take more classes than you have to. In addition there are some courses that don't have finals, such as PE 1 though PE (whatever the last number for a PE is)¹ as well as many Hums and even some courses in your very major. Take these whenever you can and try to fail them so that you can take them again and again, thereby eliminating one final at least for every term. With proper planning you can be taking fewer finals than all of your friends every year of your five or six at Tech.

When finals week arrives, you'll want to budget your time wisely. Too many students end up rushing some finals or compromising other aspects of their life because they didn't plan ahead. If we assume each day is about 30 hours, minus 8 to 10 for sleeping, 1.7 for eating, an hour or two for checking your e-mail

and reading the newspaper and 8 hours every 6 and a half days for hygiene, that leaves plenty of time to work, assuming you don't waste all your time planning out your work schedule². Ideally you should take one final every day at the same time, and make sure not to eat or exercise for two hours before each final, and avoid using your finals desk to read or watch TV, as this will interfere with your body's natural final taking (or "circadian") rhythms. Finally, you can get more time on your finals (without violating the honor code) by randomly making up answers before looking at your final, and simply remembering and then writing these down for the longest questions.

Another strategy to make finals week more pleasant³ is to maintain a healthy lifestyle during the week. This means you should eat right, avoiding unhealthful things such as fatty foods, excessive caffeine or alcohol, whatever CDS serves and your own tears⁴. You should sleep well, for at least 8

hours but no more than 11, not including falling asleep while studying and waking up 5 minutes later in a blind panic. Exercise is important as well, ideally running or biking or pounding your head on a wall in frustration in order to tire your body as well as your mind and to reduce stress level and release endorphins. Perhaps the most important thing to avoid during finals week is smoking, which is known to cause lung cancer and also to drop hot ash on your final, lighting it on fire and leaving you with the smoldering remains of hours of work, sitting on your desk like a pile of failed dreams of orphans.

A final piece of advice is to remember that finals weeks is only a week and afterwards you'll have the blessed relief of winter break or spring break or summer break, depending on the term. Unless you don't finish on time and you have to take an extension, but then at least you'll be done a few days afterwards. Unless you take an E and have to keep working

until the add day the following term, but you'll be done at that point. Unless you fail the class and have to take it again, but then at least you'll be done the next time you take it. So remember, you're almost done, unless things go wrong.

Footnotes

¹ PE (whatever the last number for a PE is) is of course mountain unicycling.

² If you spend more or less time than I have suggested on any of these activities you will almost certainly run out of time and fail all your finals.

³ In the sense that being beaten about the face with a sack of quarters is more pleasant than being beaten about the face with two sacks of quarters.

⁴ Five minutes of swallowing your own tears as you sob after finishing a physics final will provide more than 80 percent of your daily value of sodium based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

You call that heckling?

Mark Eichenlaub lays down how to get kicked in the face.

BY: MARK EICHENLAUB

My dead grandmother could heckle better than that. Where'd you learn to heckle? The School for the Blind and Dumb? Oh, right. California Institute of Technology. Never mind.

Look, you wanna heckle, you better do it right. Stand up and shout it out loud, you aren't scared are you? Aww, poor little heckler-babies. You guys look so cute with your little "I Hear Heckling" baseball caps and "GO HOME LOSERS" spelled out on your stomachs. That's about as creative as XXX.

Your heckling's so jaded, they're selling it as earrings in Chinatown!

Your heckling's so flat it makes the Midwest look like the skyline at Six Flags!

Your heckling's so stupid it's got its own show on FOX!

Your heckling's so lame, it's quack doesn't echo!

Your heckling's so unoriginal, it has "Stephen E. Ambrose" written on the cover!

Your heckling's so stale, you left it out over night, and in the morning the kitchen counter had gone bad.

Your heckling's so platitudinous, now go get a dictionary!

Your heckling's so boring, it's next stop is taking ice cores samples in Antarctica.

Your heckling's so repetitive, it's repetitive. Your heckling repeats itself. It says the same thing over and over again. Many times. Repeating. Repetitive. Over and over again.

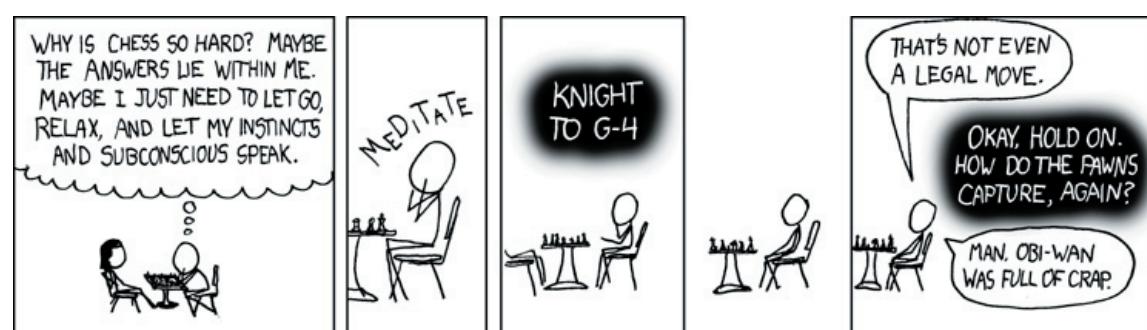
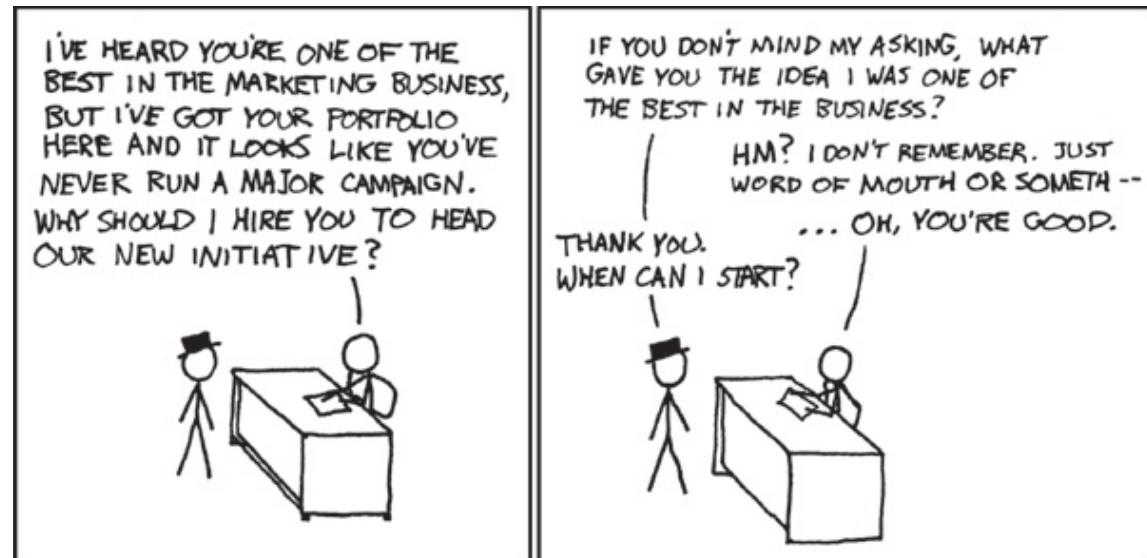
Your heckling's so offensive, it made Howard Stern blush in embarrassment!

Your heckling's so dull, it's

WGP "Bumper Sticker"
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