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PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 20, 2007

Missing South House items raise suspicions

Construction workers suspected, but no evidence found

BY: LEE FEINMAN

A rash of missing items from the South Houses shortly after their reopening has left many students frustrated and suspicious about sharing their living space with the South House construction workers.

The missing items, totaling over an estimated \$5000, were mostly of computer equipment and laptops, and occurred in Blacker, Dabney, and Fleming in mid-January. According to Senior Director of Housing Tim Chang, the Deans' Office is looking into reimbursements for the stolen property.

Students appear to believe the construction workers took these items, though no direct accusations have been made for lack of evidence.

Seth Hendrickson and Marlena Fecho, Blacker House members whose laptops are missing, said they believed a construction worker is the likely culprit because their computers

disappeared early in the morning, and because no one has been watching the construction workers.

Chang echoed the students' concerns. He said the disappearance of items increased only in areas under construction. "The difference is the contractors," he said. "The coincidence is striking."

Norm Roberts, project manager for the contractors, Taisei, Inc., did not respond to emails from the Tech requesting an interview and a phone number provided for him by Major Projects connected to a different Taisei employee's voicemail.

Though the exact number of missing items could not be obtained from Caltech Security's online weekly incident reports, students have kept a tally of items that disappeared since the South House move-in.

Blacker House Stewardship representative Drew Heltsley provided a list of items missing from Blacker totaling an estimated \$3020. Additionally, Chang reported that there was a laptop missing from a student room in Dabney.

Fleming House President Rob Hunter related the simultaneous disappearance of three

computer monitors from Fleming's multipurpose mod trailer and one full computer from Fleming's SAC computer lab. The monitor's security cables had been cut and the computer towers were left, suggesting that they were not simply moved for safekeeping without notification.

Hunter also reported that during Interhouse, construc-

"The difference is the contractors--the coincidence is striking."

-Senior Director of Housing Tim Chang

tion tools and a set of speakers disappeared from Fleming's courtyard. The missing items in Fleming had an estimated value of \$2700, not counting the speakers, which could not be priced. Hunter confirmed that the Deans were reimbursing at least the missing tools out of emergency funds.

While Chang conceded that students should be more careful with their property, he felt

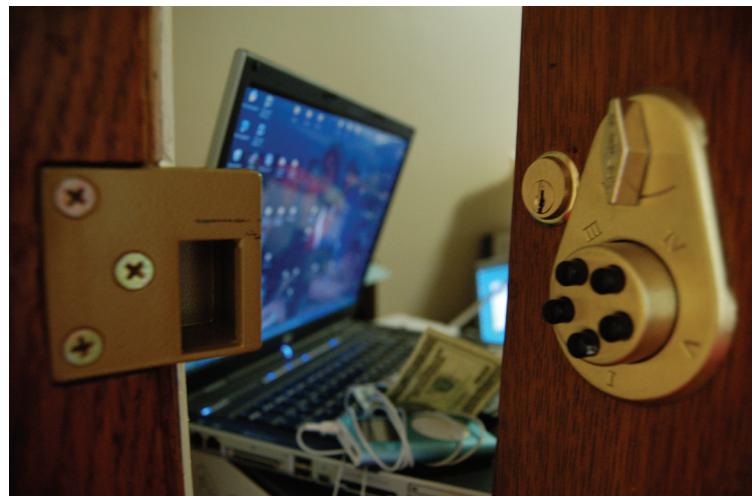


Photo by Matt Glassman

Unlocked doors are becoming rarer in the student houses as Administration advises students to lock their doors when they are not in to prevent theft.

that the "...building should have been one-hundred percent complete before moving in," as this situation resulted in "elements mixing that should not be mixing."

Assistant Vice President for Campus Life Tom Mannion said that not completing the South House project by September resulted in what he called a "security nightmare."

Chang also questioned Major Projects' decision to leave student areas unfinished during

and after the move in. Chang added that he had consistently communicated to Major Projects to have the South House Complex reopened and finished on schedule, partly to prevent security breaches.

Bonnie Khang-Keating, Director of Major Projects, said "We were clear that work was going to be going on during the move-in,"

"We offered to have it finished finished, but moving in

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Freshman swims her way to finals

For Diane Plummer, the SCIACS the limit

BY: NATALYA KOSTANDOVA

Caltech has yet another athlete this year who is making waves in the sports arena—but this one prefers to leave her opponents in her wake.

Freshman Diane Plummer, who has already broken six Caltech records, qualified for SCIAC finals this weekend after finishing seventh in the 400 Individual Medley (I.M.), a combination of freestyle, but-

terfly, breaststroke, and backstroke; the event is traditionally regarded as the "toughest event of the meet," according to swimming coach Clinton Dodd.

Throughout the season,

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Photo by Matt Glassman

Diane Plummer has already broken six Caltech records in her few months as a freshman.

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Tony reviews Diamond's book

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Next week:
Caltech women's table tennis
ranked 8th in nation

Early Action to stay

President Chameau keeps Early Action for at least one more year

BY: HAROLD MARTIN

After much debate and speculation, Caltech President Jean-Lou Chameau has decided to continue Caltech's Early Action (EA) program. Triggered by Harvard's announcement that it was terminating its early application program, Chameau's long awaited decision came after extensive evaluations by the Admissions Committee and the Faculty Board.

"The dynamics of admissions at Caltech and other universities are in a state of flux," wrote President Chameau in an email interview, "it seemed preferable not to add another variable in our current process."

Admissions Director Rick Bischoff, who had previously voiced concerns over the ability of the Admissions Office to handle a potential spike in early applicants, pledged to increase application processing efficiency. "We'll make adjustments," he said, noting that his office would prepare in advance for a large upsurge in applications.

Despite the fact that it will be continued next year, the EA program will be subject to yearly review. "Dr. John Hall is going

to appoint a committee which will critically analyze our current situation and recommend any necessary steps to insure we are the institution of choice among prospective students," said President Chameau, who did not state whether undergrads would be on the committee.

"The dynamics of admissions at Caltech and other universities are in a state of flux. It seemed preferable not to add another variable in the process."

-President Chameau

One such step being taken this year, President Chameau said, is to reinstate three day pre-frosh weekend. Changes planned for this year include running buses into Old Pasadena for lunch on Saturday and serving In-N-Out burgers at Saturday dinner.



BY: VIBHA LALJANI

THE WORLD**Rice struggles to hold together plans for Mid East talks**

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, tried to hold together her ambition on Sunday to restart Middle East peace talks even though arguments over a new Palestinian unity government signaled that the Bush administration's renewed peace force might have arrived at a bad time.

"I'm committed to [Middle East talks]. As long as I'm Secretary of State, that's what I'm going to do."

-Condoleezza Rice

Ms. Rice said she planned to continue to encourage a peace initiative between Israel and the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, despite his latest agreement to form a unity government between his Fatah faction and Hamas, which the US and Isreal believe to be a terrorist organization.

Ms. Rice told reporters, "I'm committed to this. As long as I'm secretary of state, that's what I'm

going to do."

The new talks are set for Monday. Ms. Rice will play host for her meeting with Mr. Abbas and Ehud Olmert, Prime Minister of Israel.

SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY**Nasa's 5-satellite mission blasts off**

A Delta-2 rocket lifted five of NASA's satellites on Sunday evening from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida. The launch was delayed by a day because of strong winds that may have affected the rocket's path.

The mission is to determine the source of powerful geomagnetic auroral substorms in the Earth's atmosphere, which can damage communications satellites, power grids and emit high amounts of radiation on spacewalking astronauts and airplane passengers flying over northern latitudes.

Scientists hope that the \$200 million mission will end scientists' debate regarding the origin of these substorms.

One theory is that these substorms are triggered about 50,000 miles from the earth's equator when electromagnetic turbulence disrupts the flow of strong space currents.

It is opposed by the theory that they start about 100,000 miles from the earth's equator when magnetic energy is spontaneously

converted into heat.

This is the most probes NASA has launched on one rocket. However, previously, a joint effort of Taiwan and US National Science Foundation launched six micro-satellites on one rocket.

BUSINESS**Harley-Davidson to end strike**

Motorcycle manufacturer, Harley-Davidson, has reached a tentative agreement with its striking workers to end the two week strike at its largest plant in the US.

The company has not disclosed any details of the agreement. However, it said that it expects the staff to vote on it in the next few days. Moreover, Harley has not given any information about when motorcycle production would resume in its factory in York, Pennsylvania.

About 2800 workers walked off the plant on February 2, when their contracts expired, in a protest at proposed changes in their salary and benefit concessions.

SPORTS**Murray fights for title in San Jose Open**

Andy Murray battled Croat Ivo Karlovic and retained his SAP Open Title in San Jose on Sunday, February 18. Murray, British number one, came through 6-7 (3-

7) 6-4 7-6 (7-2) to win the second ATP Tour title of his career.

Murray downed world number-four Andy Roddick 7-6 6-4 in Saturday's tournament to reach the finals. Meanwhile, Karlovic beat German Benjamin Becker 7-6, 7-5 and made his way into the finals.

Karlovic saved an early break point before he took the tie-break and broke in early in the second set. However, Murray recovered with two breaks to level before claiming the final set tie-break.

Murray wasted an early break point in the fifth game by missing a makeable backhand. Then the set moved to a predictable tie break.

At 3-3 in the breaker, Murray dropped a serve and Karlovic raced through the set. Although Karlovic has dropped serve only once before the final game, Murray broke back almost immediately and brought back the pressure in game 10 to level.

In the final game, Murray got a mini break at 2-1; Karlovic made his first double fault and went down with 5-2; Murray headed towards victory with an ace.

ENTERTAINMENT**Eric Steel and the Bridge**

Eric Steel and his crew spent 2004 directing *The Bridge*, which is a controversial documentary about people who commit suicide on the Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco. They covered about

two dozen suicides and many more thwarted attempts.

Steel explains, "I wanted to make a film about the human spirit in crisis."

Before the shooting began, Steel ensured the bridge patrol that any suspicious behavior would be immediately notified. According to him, about six suicide attempts were averted due to the intervention of his team.

Much of the movie comprises interviews with family and friends of the deceased trying to get a feel of their loved ones' reactions.

The Bridge also includes a testimony from Kevin Hines, a jumper who survived the four-second, 75mph descent.

Although many people including his interviewees have approved of the movie and are extremely proud to be associated with him, yet his movie is still accused of being intrusive to personal grief and life. Steel defends by saying that his crew was only recording what other people there could already see.

He is worried about the copycat effect. However, Steel explains, "...but the answer isn't not showing the film. The answer is showing the film, having a discussion and trying to come up with local solutions to a local problem and broader solutions to a universal problem."

Compiled from BBC, CNN and New York Times

CPET offers resources for students interested in teachingBY: MARY DUNLOP
CPET COORDINATOR

From the new Physics graduate student teaching an introductory lab, to the senior undergraduate TAing the course she enjoyed as a student last year, many students teach at some point during their time at Caltech. Formal training about teaching is minimal and many of us start the job with little advice. Caltech Project for Effective Teaching (CPET) is a student group whose goal is to help students learn more about teaching styles and strategies.

Teaching can be a career (instructor at a small liberal arts college), part of a job (faculty member at a research institution), or a valuable skill that will help you effectively communicate your

ideas. CPET provides resources for people interested in having teaching play any of these roles in their lives.

In the fall CPET organizes a day of TA Training as part of graduate student orientation and seminars on education are offered throughout the year. We also maintain a collection of reserve books at the Sherman Fairchild Library.

Seminar Series

The seminar series invites speakers to talk about their experience teaching or share information about teaching opportunities.

- New Faculty Members Panel (February 20, 2007)

Profs. Christina Smolke (ChE), John Dabiri (AE/BE), and Gil Rafael (Physics) will participate in a

panel discussion about teaching as a new faculty member.

- Teaching Opportunities for Current Students (March 6, 2007)

Representatives from Occidental College, Pasadena City College, and Art Center College of Design will talk about how current graduate students and post-docs can become adjunct faculty members. This discussion will be an invaluable resource for anyone who is interested in getting additional teaching experience.

- Time Management: Balancing Teaching and Research (March 26, 2007)

Health Educator, Jane Curtis, and Maggie Ateia from the Counseling Center will lead a workshop on balancing teaching responsibilities with research and

other commitments.

- Jean-Lou Chameau (April 10, 2007)

Caltech's new president will join us for a question and answer session about the role of teaching at a research institution.

CPET Certificate Program

Students who attend five lectures and complete journal entries describing what they have learned can apply for a CPET Certificate that will be signed by the Vice Provost and provides documentation of interest in teaching.

To learn more about CPET, including times and locations for the seminar talks, additional resources for TAs, and a list of the

library reserve books please visit our webpage at <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~cpet>. You can also sign up for our mailing lists via the webpage.

Extra money for ASCIT to spend

Present: Chris Gonzales, Mike Grinolds, Andrea Dubin, Jon Senn, Angela Zah, Craig Montori, Mike Woods, Caleb Ng, Ekta Bhojwani, Patrick Herring, Daryl Coleman, Zack Higbee

*Budget

-There's a \$3000-6000 surplus (\$1800 from the DVD library, and social stuff went under budget)

-\$4000 extra from interhouse. We could transfer money into interhouse funds

-Also under by a few hundred dollars on bonuses. The Little T is \$5000 over budget. Their account never had any income even though they sold one advertisement

-The fiscal year ends Feb. 28, so money should be spent before then.

-Proposal to pay \$293.17 for

the extra alcohol from interhouse. Approved

6 yes/0 no/0 abstain

-Craig proposed we use the money to buy him booze.

-If anyone has any suggestions, contact a member of the BoD

*ASCIT lights and amp

During the move back into the south houses, the ASCIT lights and amplifier went missing. They will need to be replaced.

*ASCIT movie night

There will be an ASCIT movie this year. Tim has money for it.

*Installations dinner

Installations dinner is tentatively scheduled for March 3rd (Saturday)

*ARC

Caleb wants to shift money from the ARC fund to buy gift certificates for people taking the donut survey (~\$500). Approved.

7 yes/0 no/1 abstain

*DVD library

An idea was posed to put the DVD library in SFL, so they could be checked out the same way as books. This would mean not being able to check out DVD's during the hours of 1am-7am. If anyone has better ideas, they should contact the BoD. Daryl will talk to the librarians to see if this is feasible.

*Lawn Furniture

Patrick will write an MHF proposal asking for lawn furniture outside the south kitchens in the

RF courtyard for sitting at lunch to encourage interhouse and student-faculty interactions. He will talk to Peter Daily about this.

*ASCIT kiosk

The ASCIT kiosk will be redesigned and maintained by Andrea

*Undergraduate research opportunity handbook

Caleb suggested bringing back this publication that used to include announcements of opportunities for research during the summer and during the year. Caleb talked to the SFP office about it already. In the past it was about 20 pages long. First we should figure out why it died out. Caleb suggested that it also include general guidelines for getting research projects and gives suggestions about the process.

*Budget meeting

The budget meeting needs to happen soon. It was suggested that it be on February 25th.

*Signups

Signups for social team, ARC secretary and rep-at-large, and BoC rep-at-large will go up on Monday and will come down on Friday.

Andrea Dubin
ASCIT Secretary

Suspicions fall on construction workers

Tim Chang acknowledges student concerns

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was an Institute decision."

Additionally, Bradley Smith, Major Projects' manager for the South House project, communicated that Major Projects had "...said from the very beginning that it would be finished by December 15th." Khang-Keating agreed.

"We moved in the students exactly when they were supposed to be," she said. Continued work was due to "minor things that need to be fixed."

Chang also indicated that Housing had taken steps to prevent suspicion from falling on the contractors, requiring them

to be accompanied by representatives of Housing when working in undergraduate areas. Since this went into effect, there have been no more reported missing items.

Chang also said that Major Projects, which handles most construction on campus, was the only Caltech entity communicating with the construction workers regularly. He expressed concern that Major Projects had not worked this extensively on a residence, having primarily concerned themselves with offices and labs.

"I think Major Projects views [housing] as the same

type of thing, but it's not," said Chang.

But Khang-Keating said: "We have done...quite a bit of housing. This wasn't a learning experience." She added that the project "went extremely well" with "a lot of involvement from students." Her said that the South Houses were "a limited access building, and that was clearly enforced."

Smith added: "We increased security from Dec 15 to Jan 1," during the move-in.

Khang-Keating said the background checks on the construction workers were, "the contractors' responsibility to provide."

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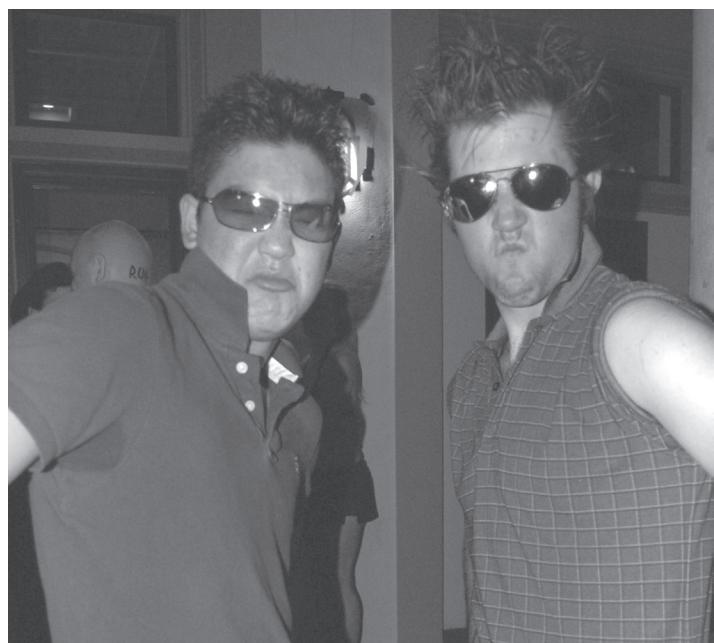


Photo by Matt Glassman

Calvin Ting and Kevin Noertker put their tough faces on.

Basketball team praises *Quantum Hoops*

BY: DAVID CHEN

Differential equations and quantum mechanics are subjects that Techers expect to learn. Some Techers are also learning to be the stars of a recent documentary that focuses on the basketball team. *Quantum Hoops* tells the story of the men's basketball team at Caltech.

"It's the whole story of Caltech told through the basketball team," said sophomore Travis Haussler.

Haussler, the 6-foot-7 forward who was honored last month as one of SCIAC's Athletes of the Week, felt that the movie portrayed Caltech and the men's basketball team in a favorable light.

Junior Yang Hai agreed with his teammate. "I liked it. It was a good movie and portrayed Caltech athletics well."

Haussler explained that only 25-30% of the movie is basketball footage of the team and that most of the movie focuses on previous teams and the academic activities

Stress Relief Skills 101

**When: Thursday, February 22nd at Noon
Where: Caltech Y Lounge**

Come to this workshop and learn how to manage stress better. Randi Friedland, Ph.D. will talk about the factors that contribute to stress, give demonstrations of relaxation techniques, and suggest tips for stress reduction.

This workshop is sponsored by the Counseling Center

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new recruits**

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If we print your material, we will pay you up to the amounts listed below (at our discretion). Email submissions to tech@caltech.edu.

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News \$25

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Photos \$5

Midterms week could use a logistical tweak

I think it's funny that parents are asked to send baskets of candy, toys, and loving messages during finals week. They must be under the impression that Techers have 10 weeks of relatively low-stress work, and all of a sudden we are submerged in impossibly difficult exams that only the intervention of a cup of Instant noodles and a kazoo could keep our heads above the water.

But the drowning begins five weeks prior.

Because during midterms week, we have almost the same amount of exams, but with hours of class, and if the professor cares to be cruel, a problem set. Midterms make finals look like a cakewalk.

So what's the problem? If you only have two of the three time sinks—say, class and midterms—the week wouldn't be that bad. But all you need is one problem set in the mix, and even the best-intentioned student turns nocturnal.

There is apparently a policy about assigning problem sets

during midterms week: don't do it. But perhaps professors don't know about the policy, or they don't realize how many other classes we're taking, or they don't care, because many students find themselves juggling problem sets and blue books during midterms week.

One reason that students may find themselves swamped is that the "week" is not well-defined. The due dates for midterms often span two weeks, which could easily run one professor's midterm against another's problem set.

Something needs to change. While I don't propose softening the material and compromising Caltech's standing as an intense university, everyone could benefit from smarter scheduling.

*Marissa Cevallos
Tech Editor-in-Chief*

Felons shouldn't be denied voting

BY: EVANS BONEY

While I was perusing the reputable website fark.com a few weeks ago, I came across a news item labeled "asinine". What was it exactly? The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) officially supports the re-enfranchisement of felons. On the surface this does seem a little silly, but when I went to their webpage, I was hit with what is, to me, a mind boggling claim: "1 of every 8 African-American men is disenfranchised by felon voting bands." Just like that, they converted me, and now, hopefully, I can convert you to enfranchising former felons convicted of non-violent crimes.

Regardless of the whole racial profiling argument, and the discussion of moral responsibility, should a full 12.5% of any demographic be prohibited to vote? Let's take it to the next logical extreme: what if we had an entire segment of the population convicted of a felony? Doesn't this seem a little anti-democratic?

Take into account that the laws disenfranchising felons were primarily passed during the Jim Crow era, and you have yourself a not-too-well disguised conspiracy. They are, historically, the ancestor to the grandfather clauses and voting tax era. In Mississippi, for example, the 1890 constitutional convention called for disenfranchisement for such crimes as burglary and theft, but not for robbery or murder. When

"Of course I am not saying that axe-murderers should vote...I am making the argument that we have a significant portion of our felons being disenfranchised for non-violent crimes."

the Mississippi Supreme Court upheld this disenfranchisement a few years later, it cited the underlying racial motivation.

Louisiana, South Carolina, and Virginia quickly followed suit. Today only Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, and Virginia uphold this legacy of lifetime voter disenfranchisement. Yes, Florida, which went for Dubya six years ago by a mere 500 votes, wrongly denied the right to vote to as many as 10,000 citizens who had only committed misdemeanors or had voting rights restored by other states, to say nothing of

the number of people "rightly" denied the vote for being felons. How has this still not been addressed?

Of course I am not saying that axe-murderers should vote, even should they make up a significant portion of the demographic known as insane. I am making the argument that we have a significant portion of our felons being disenfranchised for non-violent crimes, crimes that are more often committed by those with lower incomes. Not many high-income families will get people disenfranchised for selling crack, and I bet you don't see any CEOs being disenfranchised despite massive fraud.

It seems to me that by disenfranchising felons we are unintentionally reinstituting our racist past as a nation. Perhaps we can let other countries be our guide; of Western European nations, only Finland has a restricted vote for felons, and this only lasts for a few years. France and Germany allow disenfranchisement, but only by special court order. In the majority of countries, even criminals are allowed the right to vote, as they are still a part of society. How can we say someone has been rehabilitated, but not reinstate their right to vote? Doublespeak has become our nation's specialty.

Rather than ask why reinstitute the vote for felons, perhaps we should ask why not.



Photo courtesy of Karen Wang

Women's coach thanks fans

Dear Caltech Basketball Fans,

On behalf of the women's basketball team here at Caltech, I want to thank each and every Tech that made the walk across campus to cheer us on. A special thanks goes to Evans Boney and his pals. When the GSC group got in touch and told us their plans, we were all for it and hoped they could really make it happen.

Usually the odds are stacked against our team, so anything that knocks a couple bricks off the stack...why not? The original goal of the pep rally and spirit night was to try and create the atmosphere of a big campus with an arena full of fans. Well, congratulations to everyone...it worked. And it worked big time! I have had a full coaching career across the country at various small colleges and a variety of levels of competition. I have seen big arenas, and small gyms. I've seen spirit nights and pep rallies in lots of states. But what

happened Saturday night in our gym was truly beyond compare. That is the biggest, loudest, proudest crowd I have ever coached in front of, and for the players the best they have played in front of. The GSC students set out to create the big school atmosphere, and you all helped them get it done. That was Duke-like, and had our opponents rattled. In conversation with people around the conference, the consensus is that in recent history there hasn't been a SCIAC crowd which has been so big or so much a part of a game. Tech crowd = #1. Our opponent was doomed before the game ever started...they had to play five against a couple hundred!

Our fans were the weight which tipped the scales in Tech's favor. It makes sense. Our team describes itself as a family. That has been a source of strength for us when times were tough, and I am positive that is what we will

draw on when we have bad days ahead. Being a part of the bigger Caltech family was what helped us win twice this year, and we want all of you to know how very much we appreciate it. We dedicated our first win to all the women who played before us and endured all the losses in a Caltech uniform. We hoped that our win would give them some satisfaction that Tech can compete and create the upset now and then. This win Saturday night, we dedicate to all the Techers who were there and cheering for us. This is for all of you who were there when we were down by 16 and stayed because you believed we could come back. This was a win for everyone, and we felt the strength each and everyone of you gave us. My favorite moment was being surrounded by my team in a sea of Techers all proud and excited that the underdog got to be on top for a

change. By the time Whittier left, they had their fill of Beaver Fever...and that was just fine with us! By the way...beating Whittier...well that had special meaning to us. Just a few years ago, they rubbed our face in a loss. They were up by 45 and still pressing, and well...that just isn't right. We have waited a long time to avenge that unnecessary slight. For us it was great to see them doing the panicking...all because you put the pressure on them, you made the place loud and crazy, and you were our 6th player. And best of all, you did it without being mean and without name calling. You were just focused on your team. You were very loud, you were very proud, and you were a positively great part of the night.

Thank you fans! We love you, and now we know we have an edge when we are at home because we have the best fans in the SCIAC! Please keep coming back and keep being a part of it.

The California Tech

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A first look at the first lady: science buff and Beavers fan

BY: MARISSA CEVALLOS

Though Dr. Carol Carmichael has been on campus for less than a year, the wife of newly appointed president Jean-Lou Chameau hasn't hesitated to jump into Caltech and Pasadena culture.

The spunky first lady, who has been spotted cheering for the Beavers in Caltech's basketball stands, is just getting her feet wet.

The former director of the Institute for Sustainable Technology and Development at Georgia Tech, Carmichael has just as much scientific brawn as her presidential husband; in fact, the couple met while working on similar projects.

But Carmichael let the move to southern California take her in a new direction.

"I waited for the work to find me. I didn't want to just repeat my work in Atlanta; it was an opportunity to do something new."

Work found Carmichael a month ago when the mayor of Pasadena elected her as the first member of the new Environmental Advisory Commission, which is slated to help Pasadena live up to environmental standards of the United Nations Green Cities Declaration and Urban Environmental Accords.

"It's pretty exciting to be in Pasadena compared to Atlanta," said Carmichael.

"In a city of 4 million people, you're only in one of many organizations. You didn't feel like you had much opportunity to influence or participate directly. Here, because the [influence] of Caltech is large in Pasadena, it's much more tangible."

When not flexing her environmental muscle, Carmichael can be found enjoying undergraduate life with her husband.

"We've liked going to basketball games and spring sports," said Carmichael.

"When people first met me and learned I liked basketball, they apologized."

But Carmichael and her husband were cheering in the bleachers for both the men's and women's first monumental basketball wins. In fact, Carmichael and Chameau were among the first to congratulate the men's team after their win against Bard College in January.

"Sports are probably even more fun here because you're so amazed that these students who have such academic talent and time pressures actually get out there and compete."

Carmichael first tasted the flavor of undergraduate life during Frosh Camp in September, which she described as "quite an experience."

"Neither of us had ever chugged a root beer before."

Former ASCIT president Todd Gingrich felt the presence of Carmichael and Chameau at Frosh



Carol Carmichael listens with the incoming students during the 2006 Frosh Camp.

Camp was extremely positive.

"It set the tone that it's not an unreasonable expectation to have breakfast with the president and his wife," said Gingrich.

Carmichael says she's looking forward to next year's Frosh Camp in addition to visiting the houses—she's already been spotted with her husband at a number of house dinners.

"It would be nice if we could blend in, but we can't, because we're 45 or so, but it's nice to be able to go to see what student life is like," said Carmichael.

Carmichael's own college experience was a bit abnormal, with her family keeping a close eye on her. Her parents only allowed her to apply to the University of Wisconsin, just a short drive from her home town of Fort Atkinson.

"For the first year, my father would pick me up at 4 PM on Friday and bring me back on Sunday. It was kind of nice...it probably kept me focused on school. But when I was a freshman I really wanted to stay."

Carmichael is no stranger to the small-town feel of Caltech. Car-

michael grew up in Fort Atkinson, a small town outside of Madison, Wisconsin where she claims "no matter where I went, someone would call my mother in ten minutes if I was up to no good."

"Being at Caltech is like being in a small town. If you do anything, someone will know about it. Pasadena is like a big mid-western town, and Caltech is like a small village."

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Commencement speaker advises to learn from past

BY: MARK EICHENLAUB

Jared Diamond, geographer, historian, sociologist, anthropologist, biophysicist, and author, speaks or reads an impressive list of twelve languages. The list stretches from the classical languages of Latin and Greek to such exotic tongues as Fore (a language spoken by New Guinean highlanders), New Melanesian, Indonesian, and "Finnish" (a language presumably spoken just as you are completing your work). But for those planning on attending Caltech's commencement ceremony this coming June 8, there is no need to worry, as Dr. Diamond plans on using just English to deliver the keynote speech.

The celebrated scientist and author hails from UCLA, where he is a professor of geography. A short list of Diamond's accolades includes the Pulitzer Prize and the National Science Medal.

The popular success of Diamond's books *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and *Collapse* makes him a highly-sought speaker. He frequently gives public lectures on topics related to his academic research, but speaking at Caltech's commencement will be completely different, according to Diamond.

"I have given commencement speeches before," he begins, but states that now is an especially appropriate time for him to speak at a commencement ceremony because, "I have two sons, twins, in college. When I look out at you and your classmates, I will think that all these people are like my sons. I understand very well what they've gone through."

In a transparent attempt to shroud himself in a veil of ever-heightening mystery before the big day, he declined to offer a

sneak peek at what he might have to say.

Although his current research is as a geographer and historian, Diamond began his academic career in physiology and biophysics. In 1961 he earned a PhD from Cambridge, where his thesis research examined the biophysics of membranes.

Rather than having branched out from the original area of his study, Dr. Diamond views himself as simply having returned his studies to areas that have always interested him. "As children, all of us are interested in all these things," Diamond said.

Diamond cited growing up during World War II as a catalyst for his interest in geography, recalling the maps hung on the walls of his boyhood bedroom. He has also been interested in bird watching from his youth.

Shortly after graduating, Diamond began field work in ornithology in New Guinea. In *Guns, Germs, and Steel* he recounts how Yali, a New Guinean politician, once asked him, "Why is it that you white people developed so much cargo [material wealth] and brought it to New Guinea, but we black people had little cargo of our own?"

Diamond has been thinking about this and similar questions for more than thirty years. In that time, he has made extensive studies of the relation between civilizations and the geography in which they flourish and disappear.

He studies the past, but Diamond believes his work is of more than purely academic interest. The lessons learned from history are, "directly applicable, with difficulty" to the politics of today. "Pasts are thousands of experiments in how to operate society. In the worst case, everybody dies. But others succeeded for thousand or tens of thousands of years," he explained.

Diamond considers today's increasingly-connected global civilization to have more power than ever before, considering the high consumption of natural resources, ever-increasing population, and rapidly-expanding technological expertise.

"Technology is a two-edged sword," Diamond says. He cites wind generators as a positive use of modern technology, while bulldozers and chainsaws are frequently misused. "Can we use this to help us? Yes. But we can also use it to destroy ourselves," he warned.

Despite the incredible destructive ability man now wields, Diamond is "cautiously optimistic for the future." In recent years, he has seen both wise and harmful actions in government's political and environmental policies. Diamond praised Governor Schwarzenegger's energy policies, but on the national level of government saw little improvement from the administration of President Bush.

"We could solve our problems, but right now we don't know if we will," he said. It is the decisions of the generation of Caltech graduating class that will tell the future of our society.

When not pondering the past, present, and future of all humanity, Dr. Diamond has enjoyed reading such

works as Thoreau's *Walden*, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, and Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* stories, the latter two of which he rereads every five years.

Diamond's favorite color is the green of the New Guinea forests. But what most Caltech seniors must really want to know which of Caltech's most recent commencement speakers, Diamond or last year's speaker David Baltimore, would win a celebrity death match. Although unable to predict the exact outcome of such a grand battle, Diamond averred that against the Nobel-Laureate biologist he would be, "happy and honored to be defeated." The *California Tech* has suggested the matchup to ESPN2, but is still awaiting reply.

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Music Review

The Shins release another praiseworthy album

BY: CINDY KO

The Shins-Wincing the Night Away (2007)

I have been *Wincing the Night Away* for about three weeks now. It has become an unavoidable part of my daily routine of recent, and I find myself liking it immensely.

The cringingly titled full-length album from The Shins is their third in a series of very successful musical efforts. Furthermore, it's an outstanding follow-up to their first in 2001 (*Oh, Inverted World*, Subpop Records) and second in 2003 (*Chutes Too Narrow*, Sub-

pop Records).

The first two records brought The Shins a largely loyal grassroots fan-base, starting out from their hometown in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to nationwide recognition, thanks to plenty of airplay and spots on several big movie soundtracks. It seems that this band has found their way into the hearts of every so-called "indie"—short for "independent"—music enthusiast, including the whole gaggle of gen x celebrities that act/write/direct (e.g. Zach Braff, *The Garden State*, 2004).

The Shins have made a name for themselves in the music world, with support from the college-age bracket at the bottom and from young Hollywood at the top. (Remember that time in *The Garden State* when Natalie Portman said that 'a Shins song could change your life'? Now think about all those nerds who love Natalie Portman downloading that song and listening to it on loop for hours.)

Thus, it comes at no surprise that the recent Shins album was highly anticipated by their fans. *Wincing the Night Away* has been in the ipods of hoards of college students since it came out this winter, getting absorbed—one song at a time—into the modern twenty-something culture.

TV Series Review

How I Met Your Mother

BY: HARRISON STEIN

Sitcoms ruled the tube in the 1990's, as *Seinfeld*, *Friends* and *Frasier* were among the most popular shows on television. However, in a primetime lineup dominated by action-packed thrillers (*24* and *Heroes*) and dramatic serials (*Desperate Housewives* and *Grey's Anatomy*) there seems to be very little room for an old-fashioned thirty minute sitcom. Having avoided late night comedy since the cancellation of *Friends*, I never had any intention of surveying the current scene until I stumbled into a brilliant new show on CBS.

Now in its second season on primetime, *How I Met Your Mother* is a throwback to the old days when TV shows had likeable characters, realistic situations and were actually funny.

"Now in its second season on primetime, *How I Met Your Mother* is a throw-back to the old days when TV shows had likable characters, realistic situations and were actually funny."

"I think I'm in love with you" on their very first date. At the very end of the episode Future Ted intimates to his kids, "And this is the story of how I met your Aunt Robin," meaning Robin is not the title character.

The rest of the show followed the trials and tribulations of the five characters as Ted journeys closer and closer to finding his future wife. Both the situations and the dialogue are completely believable, as a lot of the conversations are those you would have with your friends. For example, Ted and Robin get into a major fight because Robin insults *Field of Dreams* one of the ultimate male bonding movies. When Ted conveys this to Barney and Marshall, they begin recounting the movie and are reduced to tears. Similarly, while club hopping, Marshall laments that fruity cocktails are taboo for men, even though they taste considerably better than beers.

In that first episode, Marshall proposes to Lily, causing Ted to

Since it is a sitcom, the most

Grade:
A+

Musically, this album is a step sideways from their first two: still recognizably Shins, but not quite the same approach. The singer, James Mercer, always seemed to have a very "old-fashioned" voice, it's a little yodelly and a little folksy. When paired with the guitars, drums, keyboards, and tambourines, the band emanates a Beatle-esque vibe. I don't know how else to describe it, but The Shins don't sound anything like a "new" band to me—it's as if they were always hiding in the 1960s and became discovered just recently.

The songs on *Wincing* sound a little less Fab-Four, and this time deviate toward a more modern sound. Fewer tambourines, and more synthetic noise and keyboards, plus noticeably more produced vocals make this album a bit jarring to the fans of the first two albums. However, there is something edgier and ballsier in *Wincing* than The Shins have ever made before. Something is a little



The new Shins album hurts so good.

less silly about their lyrics, and a bit more about sharing young wisdom.

My favorite track on the album is "Sea Legs," mostly because it sounds very different from the normally happy-go-lucky flow of their songs. I also like a few memorable lines in their songs, one of which is: "The worst part is over, now get back on that horse and ride," which I somehow interpret as the kind of advice that a big brother would hand down to you. I think that's great—what other band can be entertaining and also manage to be an older sibling to

you?

Overall, I welcome this new change in style, and I commend The Shins on *Wincing the Night Away*. Many bands get stuck in a rut, afraid to change their sound for fear of losing their audience, but The Shins have managed to make their change subtly and beautifully. It is my prediction that they will continue to be part of the college culture as it is currently, and eventually become an iconic band of our generation's era.



How I Met Your Mother is a comedy running on CBS

critical component to *How I Met Your Mother*'s success is its humor. And thanks to Neil Patrick Harris, the show never disappoints. Always dressed in a suit to convey to everyone else that he is the classiest guy in the joint when in reality he is far from it, Barney's catchphrase is "Suit Up". Barney is habitual womanizer and in every episode he acts as the devil on Ted's shoulder. In one episode, Barney tells Ted they have to "pick someone up at the airport", but when they arrive Ted realizes that Barney actually wants to use the airport as a forum to pick up chicks.

The show is expertly organized, as many episodes contain such clever plot mechanisms as multiple points of views, flashbacks, and parallel stories. The

best episode so far, "The Pineapple Incident" makes use of all three as Ted wakes up in bed after a night of heavy-drinking with a sprained ankle, another woman and a pineapple. Then, we slowly learn more and more about Ted's wild night from various sources until a hilarious resolution.

However, past all of the humor, the show has a very sweet center and it's this special warmth that separates the show from most of the schlock on the air. Ted is a most likeable protagonist and his experiences are both uplifting and heartbreakingly. Through all the trials and tribulations, we sense true growth in his character and we really root for him to succeed in finding his bride. The other four characters (especially Barney) might have their flaws, but be-

cause they are all affable, it's not difficult to relate to them.

How I Met Your Mother is a delightful new show that has a perfect mix of laugh-out-loud humor, situational irony, and heartfelt moments. It remains to be seen whether the show can survive the inevitable sophomore and junior slumps that have sunk so many programs, but all signs point to a nice and lengthy run. Until then, I will put down my sets for thirty minutes every Monday at 8PM and switch on CBS to become entranced by the most enjoyable show on TV. And I hope you will all join me.

Plummer swims to success at Caltech



Photo courtesy of Caleb Ng

heavy Techer workload.

"I would prefer to think of it as swimming keeping my life balanced because I can have three hours every day to escape from the pressures of Tech and to do something that I really love," wrote Plummer.

Member of the men's team, Calving Ting, said, "Diane is very dedicated to swimming. She's hard core."

At the same time, Plummer enjoys activities other than swimming. Aside from being involved in Fleming house activities, she likes swing dancing, playing foosball, and watching plays and musicals.

Diane Plummer smiling by the Caltech poolside.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Plummer had won 16 out of 24 individual race during the dual meets and finished second in six other races, significantly contributing to Caltech's scoring.

"She's one of the rising stars of the women's team," said Coach Dodd.

But even an experienced swimmer like Plummer, who has swam competitively since she was eight, couldn't help getting nervous over competing in the championship as well as during the dual meets.

Plummer wrote in an e-mail, "Swimming at a college conference meet was a new experience for me and I was pretty nervous, but I think that overall I performed well when it counted."

Indeed, she did perform well

when it counted, earning 12 points for the team as a result of her performance in the 400 I.M.

Throughout the season, Plummer succeeded in breaking six Caltech records in 200, 500, and 1000 yards freestyle, 200 and 400 yards I.M., and 200 yards breaststroke.

"Beating six records is quite amazing," said Tim Curran, who currently holds the record in two of the men's events.

To Plummer, however, beating the records isn't the most important thing. She wrote, "[Swimming] has given me so many opportunities and I have made so many great friends because of it." In fact, swimming has been such a huge part of her life that Plummer does not see it as an additional activity that only piles on top of the already

heavy Techer workload.

Caltech's Men's and Women's track teams traveled to CSU Northridge to compete in an all-comers competition last Saturday, February 17. This meet served as a tune-up for the teams, which will begin SCIAC competition on March 3.



Photo courtesy of Mark Eichenlaub

Spurred on by fear of his own shadow, John Tsai bolts around the turn



Photo courtesy of Mark Eichenlaub

Mid-way through the 200m, Tenicia Lee realized that the faster she ran her race, the sooner she could return to polishing her-hot pink spikes to an unprecedented level of splendor.

Matt Glassman slides safe into third base during a home game against Simpson, the first of the season.

2007 Baseball Results:

**UC Santa Cruz: L, 7-3
UC Santa Cruz: L, 7-5
Occidental: L, 19-2
Occidental: L, 18-1
Occidental: L, 16-0**



Photo by Mandy Gamble

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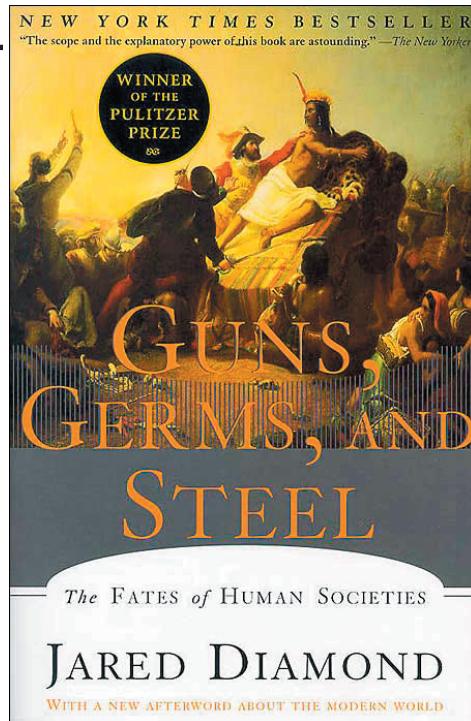
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Book Review: *Guns, Germs and Steel*

BY: HAMILTONY FALK

Last week it was announced that this year's commencement speaker would be Jared Diamond, international super-spy, professional salsa dancer and author. Since his first two occupations are top secret, he'll likely talk about his book *Guns, Germs and Steel*, a novel that attempts to explain¹ Eurasian dominance of the modern world by explaining their dominance in guns, of large biceps; germs, or infectious diseases; and steel a movie in which Shaquille O'Neil plays a super hero who fights crime in a metal suit. Many of you probably went out and bought the book right away, and are planning to leave it sitting somewhere conspicuous because it makes you look smart, but perhaps some of you are still deciding if it's worth buying. In order to help you decide whether to purchase the book (or read it if you already bought it for its stylish cover) I've decided to put the best mind at the California Tech to work reviewing it. Just wait until you see all the information the acclaimed critic and scholar, me, reveals about *Guns, Germs and Steel*, and even if you don't read it you'll know enough to pester Diamond with snarky² comments during his speech.

To establish my credibility I should mention that I was a visiting Professor of Literature and Sociology at Harvard for two years, a member of the American Society of People Qualified to Review *Guns, Germs and Steel* (or ASPQRGGS as it is more commonly known), I am a senior editor of Trust Me, I Know What I'm Talking About quarterly, an avid birdwatcher and I read the book last fall. You should avoid *Guns, Germs and Steel* (which to save space I will refer to as PGK from now on³) if you are allergic to Polynesians, the Theory of



Evolution or shellfish. The edition reviewed here did not include Diamond's essay on Japan, which I believe mostly centered around Ninjas. PGK was not a work of fiction and any resemblance of characters, events and facts within this review to real people, events and facts are purely a coincidence.

PGK starts out describing the shape of the continents as a starting point that will lead first to proximal, than distal, than conglomeratic, then tertiary and finally to primary factors that caused other proximal factors that caused Native American Casinos. Diamond was apparently using an old or not very large map, because he consistently claims that Europe and Asia is a single continent and that "the Americas" are one place. Once you make these assumptions you can see clearly the more practical shape of Eurasia compared to the Americas, Africa, Antarctica and Australia.

In addition to starting with a more common vowel than the other continents, Eurasia is long and low to the ground, rather than standing on edge and looking like they're about to tip right over, as the Americas and Africa are. Australia looks like a giant brain if you squint, which is also a rather tippy shape, and Antarctica has already settled down to the bottom of the world like used tea leaves. Clearly Eurasia's shape, like that of a charging buffalo, is more stable, and thus more likely to sustain civilization, than continents that look like a wedge of cheese that is starting to go bad. Diamond uses this fact to explain why people in Eurasia discovered wheat and turned it into gun powder and sailing ships, which they then made beads out of, which of course were used to purchase Manhattan.

Diamond also believes that the existence of "crops" such as wheat, barley, flax, okra and beef jerky helped Eurasian's control the world. In essence, Eurasians found some of these crops lying around and because they were delicious decided to eat them rather than rocks. This change in diet made Eurasians some ten times larger than people of other continents, an advantage that can be seen today every time Yao Ming (a Eurasian) gets into a fight with Gary Coleman (from the Americas).

Domesticated animals also helped Eurasians defeat other peoples by providing excess food and labor to create a specialized society, and dragons and other war-beasts to ride into battle

upon. The domestication of cattle, swine and the god Quetzalcoatl⁴ were the most important of Eurasia's animal conquests, but they also domesticated dogs, sheep, cats, mice, the blue spruce and children, all providing an advantage on the world stage. The third major factor that Diamond proposes in PGK as a cause for Eurasian world domination is germs, which killed pretty much everyone in the Americas and Antarctica, and were very intimidating to people in Africa. Because Europeans lived in their own filth and often used large disease ridden domestic animals as blankets and pillows, they had much more contact with "germs." Because of this experience, Eurasians were more knowledgeable of the ways in which to do battle with germs⁵.

Eurasians were also more aware of the humors and their potential imbalances and burned their witches (a major source of disease), while primitive native people had no knowledge of such sophisticated medical techniques. When Eurasians wanted to conquer a new group of people they'd simply wrap some "germs" in blankets, toss them into the crowd of enemy and chuckle while the native people attempted to perform rituals such as "diplomacy" or "cultural exchange."

Critics has suggested the Diamond is merely using this book to support the fact that Europeans are superior to other peoples do to their superior "geography" (which I believe is French for "light skinned-ness") despite the fact that Diamond has suggested these critics are idiots. Fans say that Diamond has accurately described the long term ramifications of location on human civilizations. Both of these groups are wrong, as what Diamond has really done is teach us how to truly love again.

In case you're still not interested

in reading the book, here are a few questions to ask Diamond when he comes to campus:

"What's the deal with Polynesia?"

"Why do you think Eurasia is so cool? Isn't America better? U.S.A., U.S.A!"

"Are you the guy who wrote all them Harry Potter Books?"

"If Africa and Australia got in a fight with the Americas, who do you think would win?"

"How much wood could a wood chuck chuck if a wood chuck's actions are determined by a chain of positive feedback developments that arise from certain necessary preconditions based on the physical location at which the wood chuck did chuck wood?"

"What is your phone number?"

"How do you respond to criticisms that your momma is a product of geographic factors predetermined that she's fat?"

"Can you sign my copy of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Goblet of Secrets?"

(Footnotes)

¹ Diamond had originally planned to title the book "Pythons, Germs and Kazaam" but after seeing Shaq's arms in Steel, decided the final title was more appropriate.

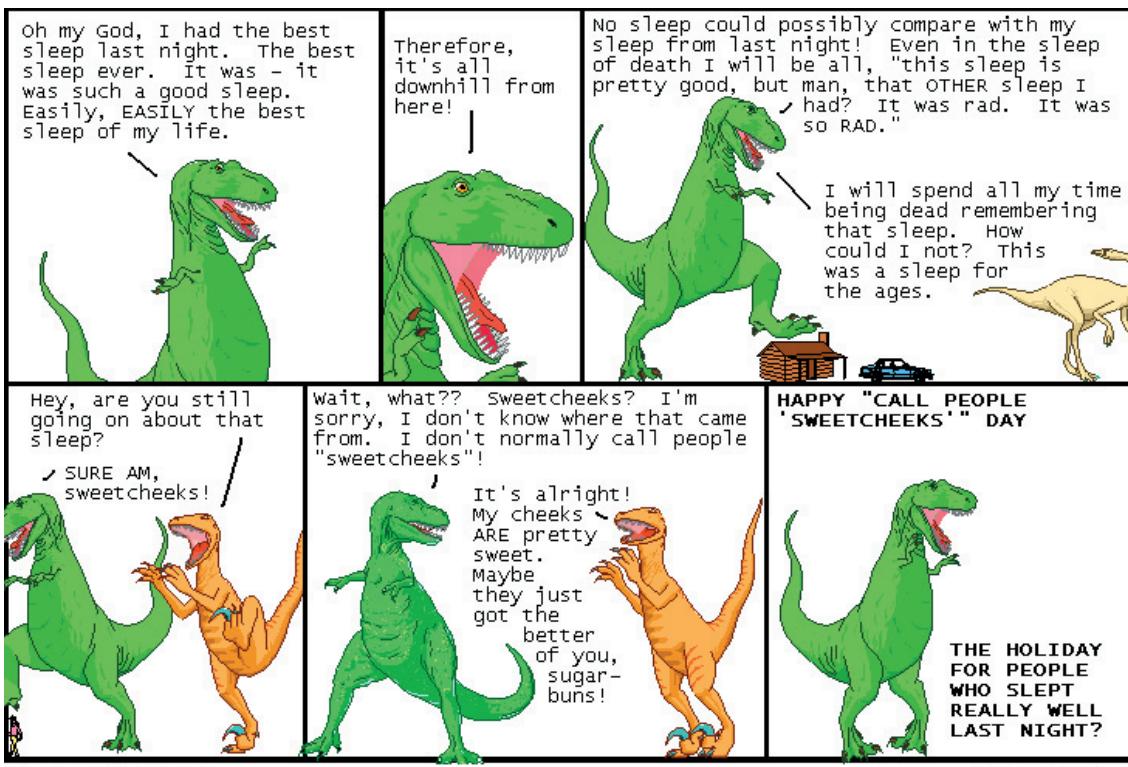
² Snarky being the term created in *Guns, Germs and Steel* to describe the annoying and irrelevant questions asked of Spanish Conquistadors by the Native American's, a crude form of defense that was quickly defeated by Spain's "El Sarcasm."

³ Reread the first footnote.

⁴ Quetzalcoatl is now a protected species, and spends its days fighting crime.

⁵ The best way is to use a large force of pikemen, with a smaller cavalry force to attack the flanks

Dinosaur Comics by Ryan North



(C) 2007 Ryan North

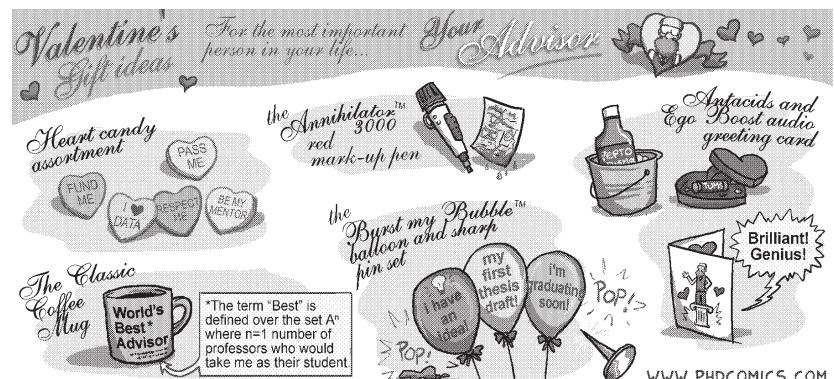
XKCD by Randall Munroe

```
int getRandomNumber()
{
    return 4; // chosen by fair dice roll.
              // guaranteed to be random.
}
```

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PhD Comics by Jorge Cham



WGP "Why I'm Not A Math Major" by Mark Eichenlaub

