

The Year in Review 2008

The Tech — February 3, 2009
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Students Ask for More Involvement

Communication, Hacking, and Dining Top Lists of Grievances

By Ramya Sankar
STAFF REPORTER

Several important events relating to changes in housing policies and hacking incidents affected students in the past year. Student perception of being omitted in several important decisions led to the creation of a student group voicing these concerns. A newly formed Task Force attempted to tackle some of these concerns and increase student involvement in the decision-making process.

Housing

The year began with news of converting Green Hall, an all female Graduate dormitory, into housing for members of the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. The transition occurred in the fall of 2008 when members of the sorority moved into Green Hall from Sidney-Pacific, where they had resided since 2003.

Graduate residents of Green Hall were not consulted prior to the decision and only informed of it in January when they were told to vacate by June 30, 2008. Neither, then Graduate Student Council president, Leeland B. Ekstrom nor Undergraduate Association President Martin F. Holmes '08 were informed by the administration about the decision in advance.

W1 was another hot button issue when the Phoenix Group — approximately 50 undergraduates currently living in Ashdown House (NW35) who were slated to move into W1 and form its first community — was informed on Oct. 20, 2008, at a meeting with Dean for Student Life Chris Colombo and Vice Chancellor Steven R. Lerman '72 that the renovation of W1 would be delayed due to the economic crisis.

The future was uncertain as the administration didn't know when resources would be available to start and finish the renovation. While the completion date of the project is still unknown, preservation of the exterior will commence this spring after a generous anonymous donation was announced last month. The Phoenix Group was not consulted in how the money was to be used but rather was informed of the news on Jan. 26, 2009.

Hacking

Issues of hacking came into light again as felony charges were initially pressed on graduate student Michael P. Short after MIT Police found him and two other graduate students in the basement of NW16 on the night of June 7, 2008. The charges were later dropped on July 18, 2008.

The incident brought back memories of an



YUANYU CHEN

Pillars illustrating the MIT community's concerns over communication, hacking, dining, and housing appeared in Lobby 7 on Oct. 17 as part of a "tool in" organized by protesters calling themselves the "Campaign for Students."

incident at the Faculty Club in 2006 when three students were charged with breaking and entering in the Cambridge District Court. This sparked dialogue between the MIT Police and part of the hacking community. On Nov. 3, 2008, MIT Director of Facilities and Security, John DiFava and Captain Albert F. Pierce Jr. held a Q&A session with students in East Campus on the issues of hacking at the institute. The meeting was held in hopes of creating an open channel with the MIT Police. The officers acknowledged that they aren't trying to stop hacking but rather make it safer and draw a line between hacking and criminal activity.

Student Voices

Many of these issues were brought up by a group of students calling themselves the Campaign for Students who protested the administration with a "tool-in" on Oct. 17, 2008, the first day of Families Weekend. The goal was to draw attention to the lack of student input in the administration's decision making. The group has listed out all their grievances on their website including dining, hacking, and concerns about artwork around campus. Dean for Student Life Chris Colombo spoke with students at the protest as well as with UA president Noah S.

Jessop '09 to address these issues.

Changes

A new Task Force was created to increase student engagement in institute decisions. It was announced at the end of the Spring 2008 in the March/April issue of the Faculty Newsletter by administrators and student government leaders. This was a step forward toward increasing student involvement in certain institute decisions.

The committee has met five times, most recently on Nov. 19, 2008. There was an emergency meeting held the morning of Oct. 20, 2008 to inform the committee about halting W1 renovations. Graduate Student Council president Oaz Nir has said that some of the intangible results of the task force have been better efforts by the administration to communicate with students. When asked for examples of consultation on decision making, Nir pointed to the decision to appoint Colombo as housemaster of Next House. The committee was asked for input before the decision was made.

Nir has noticed an increase in the number of e-mails sent from Lerman, the Dean for Graduate Education, asking the GSC officers for input. The Task Force hopes to solicit student input in cutting MIT's budget, according to Nir.

From the Editor

As the next semester begins, *The Tech* looks back on the news stories of 2008 with this *Year in Review*. Take a moment to look back at the many news stories that affected MIT, and the handful of MIT events that impacted the nation.

Over the year, the nation read about MIT, when faculty won "genius grants" and students won prestigious fellowships, when an alumna was arrested in Afghanistan, and when the MBTA sued students presenting at a conference.

Student involvement was at the forefront of many on-campus discussions. In the next few years, a dialogue between students and administrators will become even more critical as economic difficulties force uncomfortable cutbacks across the Institute. This past year, both sides clashed on issues ranging from dining and housing to the treatment of hackers and the support of students like Star A. Simpson '10.

Hackers, in particular, face great challenges in the years to come. In 2008, more arrests of hackers combined with a tougher stance toward traditions like orange tours have pushed hacking to the brink. MIT's liability from hacks is also rising; At least two students have been seriously injured while hacking in the past ten years, and society has grown increasingly litigious and concerned about safety. As Kirk D. Kolenbrander told the *Christian Science Monitor*, "Our world has a different patience for those issues than it once did."

In the next few years, students and administrators must work together to protect the tradition. MIT needs to take a risk and reaffirm its commitment to hacks, while hackers must be particularly careful. As things stand today, a serious injury or death would end hacking as we know it.

Nicholas Semenkovich
Editor in Chief
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Construction Abounds

Many Buildings See Expansions, Renovations

By Pearle Lipinski
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

For anyone on campus over the past year, one thing that's been visibly changing is the landscape. Over 2008, buildings were constantly being renovated — Here are some of the larger construction projects of 2008.

Ashdown/W1

Although slated to open as an undergraduate residence in 2010, Building W1 instead finds its future in limbo with recent Institute budget cuts. The \$90 million set aside for the project will instead be used for "financial aid and other essentials to keep the academic mission moving forward at MIT," according to Dean for Student Life Chris Colombo. There is now no set date to open W1.

W1 would have housed 400 undergraduates, which would have resulted in an increase of the undergraduate class size. With the postponement of W1 renovations, however, this increase is also put on hold.

Renovations to the exterior of the building will continue due to a donation from an anonymous donor. It was decided that the funds would be used to repair the exterior since it is in more dire need of renovation. W1 is one of the oldest buildings on campus, opening in 1901 as the Riverbank Court Hotel. It has been a part of the MIT residence halls since the Institute purchased the building in the late 1930s.

The future of the Phoenix Group, the small group of undergraduates who would be the first to reside in W1, is uncertain. The group is currently housed in graduate dormitory NW35. W1, formerly the graduate residence hall Ashdown House, was rendered empty when NW35 opened in August 2008.

The Phoenix Group will continue to live in NW35 this year. If it appears that renovations of W1 will be put on hold for an extended period of time, the group may have to disband.

Media Lab

The Media Lab extension has been in progress for some time, originating in an initial design proposal in 1998 and an construction date of 2002. However, following a donor pullout in 2002, the extension was put on hold for five years. Now, after a decade of planning, the Media Lab extension is going full speed ahead and is set to be operating by spring 2009.

The Weisner Building, designed by architect I.M. Pei, has housed the Media Lab since its opening in 1985. The new extension is designed by architect Fumihiko Maki and his Tokyo-based firm Maki and Associates.

The extension will span over six floors for a total of 160,000 square feet. It will feature a 100-seat theater, a Charles River-overlooking café, seven research labs, and new conference and administrative rooms.

The Weisner Building and the new extension will be connected. As groups move from Weisner to the new building, several labs will be given to the Comparative Media Studies program. The new building will be shared amongst the Media Lab research groups, the Architecture and Planning program, and several other groups.

Construction on the exterior of the building is in the final stages, and internal construction, such as piping, wiring, and elevator installation, is underway.

ATO

Although it was set to reopen in October 2008, construction on the Alpha Tau Omega house still continues. The repairs were delayed due to insurance reasons, not because of structural complications, and ATO hopes to present its case for a housing license to the Cambridge Licensing Commission in March 2009.

The ATO house was closed over the summer

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Curriculum Changes Proposed

By Natasha Plotkin
NEWS EDITOR

MIT worked toward revamping its General Institute Requirements in 2008. Possible curriculum reforms would simplify the structure of the HASS requirement, add flavors to core science classes, and introduce pilot versions of broad-themed humanities classes geared towards freshman.

The changes have been under review by the faculty since the fall and await approval by a faculty vote scheduled to take place tomorrow.

Before GIR changes became the focus of education reform efforts late last year, the faculty approved the phasing in of double majors to replace double degrees. In practical terms, this change eliminated the need for students to complete an extra 90 units beyond the requirements of a second academic program.

The shift from double degrees was approved in September and applies to current undergraduates: juniors and sophomores may choose whether to pursue double degrees or double majors, and freshman may only pursue double majors.

The change was recommended by the Task Force on the Undergraduate Education Commons in an October 2006 report and came out of a feeling among task force members and other faculty that there was no clear reason for requiring an extra 90 units to complete two degrees.

The task force also found that the extra units requirement gave an unfair advantage to students who came in with more Advanced Placement,

Curriculum, Page R2

MIT News in the World

By Omar Abudayyeh
STAFF REPORTER

So many important events have happened over the course of 2008 at MIT. With pioneering research, prominent awards, and influential visitors, MIT has enjoyed a prosperous year and has continued its history of excellence in science and technology.

Institute Professor wins Millennium Technology Prize

Robert S. Langer '74, an MIT institute professor and director of the largest biomedical engineering laboratory in the world, won the 2008 Millennium technology Prize for his innovative research involving controlled drug release and tissue engineering.

The prize is known for being the world's largest technology award, only recognizing those who put forth "innovations that assist and enrich our everyday lives today as well as in the future," according to the award's website. The prize, given every other year, provides the winner with 800,000 euros or \$1.2 million.

Two Professors win MacArthur Fellowships

In September 2008, John Ochsendorf, an associate professor of Architecture, and Marin Soljagic '96, an assistant professor of Physics, were two of twenty-five people to win MacArthur "genius" grants, which award recipients with \$500,000 to be spent in any way they desire.

The award, which is administered over five years, comes with no strings attached and is given to promising scientists who show potential to contribute significantly to society in the future according to a MacArthur Foundation press release.

Ochsendorf plans to use the money to support his projects and students and for travel to project sites around the world. Soljagic, while continuing to fund his current work, hopes

to diverge to more high-risk ventures that he couldn't pursue otherwise.

Former MIT professor wins Nobel Prize in Economics

Paul Krugman PhD '77, a professor at Princeton University, won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences on October 13th, 2008.

Krugman used to be a professor at MIT and is also an Op-Ed columnist for *The New York Times*.

He was awarded for his research in economics that delineated patterns of trade amongst countries, showing why traditional trade theory was off.

Two seniors win Rhodes Scholarships

Alia Whitney-Johnson '08 and Matthew L. Gethers '09 were two of thirty-two 2008 Rhodes Scholarship winners that will study at Oxford next year.

Whitney-Johnson and Gethers were MIT's 39th and 40th winners of the Rhodes Scholarship.

President of Rwanda comes to MIT

Welcomed with a standing ovation, President of Rwanda Paul Kagame gave a speech at Kresge Auditorium on September 18, 2008, to discuss the "Imperative of Science and Technology in Accelerating African and Rwandan Development."

Kagame began his speech by elaborating on how science and technology is paramount to yielding a socioeconomic transformation in Africa. He urged the community to aid Rwanda in bringing technological innovation to Rwandan citizens.

Kagame said in the talk, "Africa is the fastest growing market for mobile phones," and continued on to mention that Rwanda had 28 million subscribers as of the first quarter of 2008.

Multiple Groundbreakings in 2008

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following a pipe break in July, causing flooding in the house. The CLC suspended the building's housing license after the burst, and the license was fully revoked in September 2008.

ATO members have since been living primarily in MacGregor House, with 24 of the 34 members housed in the dorm. ATO brothers reside in suite lounges in entries A, B, C and D. The other 10 members are housed in Baker House, Delta Kappa Epsilon, and Beta Theta Pi.

As a result of the delays, ATO will be vacating MacGregor and splintering into other living spaces for spring term.

ATO hopes to move back into its house in late March or early April, pending the housing license approval by the CLC.

Koch

Aimed for a winter 2010-2011 opening,



MARTIN SEGADO—THE TECH

On Feb. 14, W1 residents were given a tour of the almost finished NW35 dormitory that the Phoenix Group moved into in the fall.

construction on the new building for the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research continues. The groundbreaking took place on March 7, 2008.

The building is located across Main Street from the Whitehead and Broad Institutes. It sits on the same block as the Stata Center, the Koch Biology building, and the chemical and biological engineering buildings.

The new Institute will have 180,000 square feet of laboratory and work space over seven floors. Six of these will be laboratory floors, and the ground level will feature an exhibit on MIT's role in life science.

The building is funded by a generous donation from David Koch '62, who founded Koch Industries, a Wichita, KS-based corporation that owns companies with interests from chemical processing to finance. It is the nation's largest privately owned company.

The Koch Institute labs and offices are cur-

Second generation XO Laptop announced

The One Laptop per Child (OLPC) organization unveiled the plans for the second generation of their XO Laptop on May 20th, 2008.

In addition to being cheaper than the current price tag, the new computer will be smaller and will sport two touch-screens. OLPC also announced in May that they would be partnering up with Microsoft.

McCain and Obama advisors debate energy

On October 6th, 2008, representatives from the Obama and McCain campaigns faced each other in an energy debate that was organized by the MIT Energy Initiative and the MIT Energy Club.

Jason Grumet, advisor to Obama, and James Woolsey, advisor to McCain, while agreeing on reducing oil dependence, clashed heavily on how the country will transition away from oil.

The Environmental Research Council is launched

In order to expand MIT's influence in the environmental field, MIT President Susan Joan Hockfield announced in her State of the Institute speech that a council would be formed in order to network together the environmental research being performed across the campus.

Her vision for this project involves it eventually gathering community-wide collaboration on a scale similar to that of the MIT Energy Initiative.

Dara Entekhabi, the Bacardi and Stockholm Water Foundations Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and director of the Earth System Initiative will chair the new council, which will work with faculty and research from all five of MIT's schools.

A proposal from this new council outlining plans for the environmental initiative should be ready by February 15, 2009.

rently scattered around campus. It has grown out of the MIT Center for Cancer Research, founded in 1974.

Sloan

MIT's Sloan School of Management's new building on Main Street, aimed to serve as the central nexus of the Sloan campus, continued its construction in 2008. Building E56 was demolished in 2007 to make room for the new facility, as of yet unnamed but labeled as E62.

E62 will also provide 6 classrooms, 205 offices, over 30 study rooms, and other facilities such as lounges and outdoor spaces. Furthermore, over 400 parking spaces will be provided in an underground parking garage. The building aims to attain a LEED Silver rating from the U.S. Green Building Council, indicating an environmentally friendly and high-performance facility.

The garage was built back to ground level in the summer, and the topping off ceremony — where the final beam was placed on the top of the building — was held in October 2008. The extension has a projected completion date of summer 2010.

Vassar

The transformation of the west side of Vassar Street into a scenic public way, begun in 2006, neared its completion in 2008. Sidewalks, lighting, and bike paths have been completed along the street. Furthermore, a crosswalk was installed outside of Simmons Hall.

Trees have been planted between the bike path and the road. Landscaping is expected to be complete in May 2009.

The Vassar Street West project is a continuation of the Vassar Street East redevelopment, which was completed in 2004. It is a joint project between MIT and the City of Cambridge and is funded by a gift from the family of Richard P. Simmons '53.

Degree Changes Discussed

Curriculum, from Page R1

International Baccalaureate, transfer, and advanced standing exam credit.

Earlier, in the spring of 2008, the faculty voted to approve several other curriculum-related changes: the sophomore exploratory option, which allows sophomores to choose whether or not to show a grade on their transcript for one class each semester, was made permanent after the culmination of a five year trial.

The faculty also approved the start of a five year trial Pass/D/Fail option for graduate students. And, Comparative Media Studies was made a permanent course after completing a five year trial.

The proposed curriculum changes, the first of which would affect the class of 2014, address both the technical and HASS components of the GIRs.

The GIR change proposal under consideration by the faculty is based on a report by the Education Commons Subcommittee of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program, a group that studied and discussed possibilities for renovating the GIRs over the past year and a half.

Proposed changes would encourage faculty to develop alternative versions of introductory chemistry, biology, and physics subjects, in addition to those that already exist. Students could then choose one class from each of the sciences to satisfy their science requirements.

The Subcommittee also proposed developing a pilot class under the working title "Elements of Design," which would introduce students to common themes in engineering design problems. The faculty would consider making the class a requirement at the end of the pilot run.

The proposal would eliminate HASS-D subjects and instead designate all HASS classes as belonging to one of three categories: humanities, arts, and social sciences. Students would have to take at least one class in each category as part of their eight required humanities classes.

HASS concentration requirements would remain the same.

Pilot versions of "First-Year Focus" humanities classes, which would examine broad topics in humanities, would also be introduced and be evaluated for possible introduction to general requirements.

The faculty was scheduled to vote on the proposed changes at the faculty meeting in mid-December, but two amendments that were called to the floor delayed the vote until the next faculty meeting scheduled for tomorrow.

The first amendment added to the proposal that the addition or removal of GIR core subjects required a vote by the faculty, not just approval by the Committee on the Undergraduate Program, to be introduced.

The second amendment proposed that working groups be formed to define the core material in each of the major science, math, and engineering core subjects to assure that new versions of these subjects that are developed would all include some common central topics.

The second amendment will be voted on at tomorrow's faculty meeting.

The Undergraduate Association Student Committee on Education Policy conducted a survey to assess student opinion of the proposed GIR changes.

The survey revealed that students most widely approved of the simplification of the HASS requirement and the addition of flavors to GIR science subjects, while students had more mixed reactions to the introduction of "First-Year Focus" classes and an "Element of Design" requirement.

Survey results were presented to the faculty to help inform their votes on the GIR proposal.

February 2008

3rd — Matthew N. Faulkner '08 wins Audience Favorite and Fullest Moustache at the MITstache competition, which challenged students to grow facial hair during IAP.

4th — On the day before Super Tuesday, MIT students crowd onto Silver Line buses to see Barack Obama speak outside the Seaport World Trade Center.

12th — Plans to convert Green Hall from a women's graduate dormitory to the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority house are finalized. The change takes effect Fall 2008.

12th — The MIT Urban Studies and Planning program celebrates its 75th anniversary as a department by kicking off its newest exhibit, "Changing Cities."

22nd — The MIT Men's and Women's

fencing teams win the New England Championship at Boston College. Igor Kopylov '09 earns his third sabre title, a feat not accomplished since 1985.

26th — All-American wrestler Glenn J. Geesman '09 pins five of his opponents at the New England College Conference Wrestling Association heavyweight championship, becoming the first in 13 years to claim the title of New England Champion.

29th — Timothy K. Lu G wins the \$30,000 Lemelson-MIT Student Prize for Inventiveness for developing methods to kill antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

29th — Six candles representing binary digits shine atop MIT's little dome to commemorate Random Hall's 40th birthday.

March 2008

7th — Construction begins on Main Street for the new David H. Koch Institute

of Integrative Cancer Research. The project is expected to finish by December 2010.

7th — Expanding on its financial aid program, MIT announces that students whose families earn less than \$75,000 per year will not have to pay tuition.

11th — MIT's "Beauty and the Geek" premieres on the CW Television Network for the fifth season. Christopher L. Follett G stars as "The Geek."

14th — MIT reveals new online UROP proposal system which replaces the former paper submission process.

15th — MIT releases admissions decisions for the class of 2012. 1,554 students (11.6 percent) were admitted out of an applicant pool of 13,396.

15th — Considered by some to be the best diver to ever compete on the MIT swimming team, Doria M. Holbrook closes her career by earning her 8th All-American honor at the NCAA Women's

Swimming and Diving Championships.

17th — Stuart Schmill '86, previously the interim director of admissions, is named MIT's new Dean of Admissions.

19th — MIT faculty vote to make the sophomore exploratory option permanent. They also add a Pass/D/Fail option for graduate students.

21st — Bexley Hall withdraws from Dormcon after refusing to pay its annual \$1,200 tax. Starting Fall 2008, Bexley will no longer have to pay taxes to Dormcon.

21st — Coming into the National Rifle Association Intercollegiate Championship as returning champions, MIT Pistol claims fourth place and earns seven All-America Awards.

27th — The MIT math team places third place in the Putnam Mathematical Competition. MIT students Qingchun Ren '10 and Xuancheng Shao '09 finish in the top six.

28th — MIT's School of Engineering tops the national U.S. News & World Report's yearly ranking of American graduate school programs.

31st — Collaboration between the MIT Media Lab and Bank of America results in a plan to construct the Center for Future Banking.

April 2008

2nd — The Graduate Student Council elects Oaz Nir to be president for the 2007-2008 academic year.

7th — MIT professor Junot Diaz wins the Pulitzer Prize for fiction for his novel "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao," a story about a Dominican youth who copes with his emotional struggles with science-fiction books and action figures.

9th — U.S. Secretary of Energy, Sam

The Year in OPINION

A Year to Remember

Brief Thoughts on 2008

Andrew Lukmann

Soaring Fuel Prices. Subprime Mortgage Crisis. Chengdu Earthquake. Georgia. The Olympics. Phelps. Musharraf. Recession. Iraq. Bailout. Large Hadron Collider. An Obama Victory! Madoff. Plummeting Fuel Prices. Gaza. Leap Second.

* * *

There are many terms that will be used to describe the last year — both today and in the future — however, ‘unimportant’ will certainly not be one of them. The year 2008 will be one for the history books — a historically and culturally significant year filled with great highs and deep, distressing lows.

This year will be remembered as the start of what will likely be considered the most significant economic downturn in the United States since the Great Depression. It will be remembered as a time of great unease and a precipitous drop in our collective confidence. However, it will also be remembered for a remarkable thing — the year when a majority of the voters put aside their racial biases and elected Barack Obama the first black President

of the United States.

This year will be remembered for the collapse of the mortgage industry due to abuse, negligence and fraud in the subprime lending market. It will be remembered for the resulting collapse of the banking industry and the \$700 billion bailout proffered by the government to stem the tide of panic. It will be remembered for the resulting recession and job losses that have so tightly squeezed American families.

At the same time, however, people in the future will recall that in 2008, America elected a President who promulgated a vision to strengthen the ranks of the middle class, restore sensible tax policy and invest in infrastructure and renewable energy — giving the average American a glimmer of hope for a brighter future.

This was a year when American hopes and dreams played center stage. People saw their picture of the ‘American Dream’ — a house

and a couple of cars on a plot in the suburbs — dimmed by seemingly endless increases in fuel prices, by the sinking economy and more than a million foreclosures. Many universities, charitable foundations and non-profit groups (among others) saw their dreams of doing good work stopped or hampered by losses in Bernard Madoff’s long-running criminal fraud.

At the same time, however, in spite of our difficulties, this country also found opportunities to celebrate in our unity, as we always do from time to time. Few Americans will soon forget the captivating triumph of Michael

Phelps in his pursuit of a stunning 8 Olympic golds. 143 Million people — almost half of the population of the United States — joined together to watch our athletes compete with the best of the best on the world stage.

Likewise, few will forget the thrill of a well fought presidential race — from the primaries to the memorable general election. The oppor-

tunity for this nation to participate in our national political exercise, even in the depths of depression, particularly because of the strength of the two candidates was a unifying experience in itself. The memories of November 4th, 2008 will escape few that were alive on that date — truly a watershed moment in American history.

Now that we have turned the page on 2008 and are about to turn the page on the current presidential administration there are many reasons to have hope for the future. We are certainly not out of the woods on the economic front, and we still have ‘enemy combatants’ in Guantanamo and more than a hundred thousand of our young men and women stationed abroad, but at least we can rest assured that there is change ahead.

It’s now 2009, and though we should certainly put to bed many of the poor memories of 2008, we should both pause to remember the good moments and should take special care not to forget the lessons that have been learned so painfully these last twelve months — lest they too soon be repeated again.

This column first appeared in The Tech on Jan. 14, 2009.

America is Different

Obama’s Election Transcends ‘Politics as Usual’

Ethan Solomon

Last Tuesday night, for the first time in my life, I felt proud to be an American. For the first time, I felt genuine faith in my country and a genuine desire to serve it. And for the first time in my life, my voice was heard and my voice made a difference.

America is a different place today. Last week’s election was not just a decision between Barack Obama and John McCain, or a decision between Republicans and Democrats. It was a referendum on the future of this country. Hope has conquered fear. America picked herself up after stumbling for 8 long years and once again stands as a symbol of optimism and prosperity for the entire world to follow.

This was not just “any” election and tomorrow it will not just be “politics as usual.” This isn’t about Democrats taking control of Congress and the White House. What November 4, 2008 represented was a shift in the way people perceive government. Obama’s campaign made the election a more personal and intimate choice that will affect how people respond to his administration. His campaign was about giving Americans a real choice, not manipulating them one way or the other. Obama will set a precedent for future presidential campaigns, Republican and Democrat alike, of not underestimating the American people. He has demonstrated to this country that implicit trust in the electorate earns trust from the electorate.

In the end, this campaign really wasn’t about the candidates. Barack Obama is human and will make mistakes. The Democrats now control both chambers of Congress, but undoubtedly, they too will make mistakes. Wars will end, but new ones may flare up. The economy may

continue in its downward spiral, or it may recover. We might continue to lose our civil liberties to malicious forces which continue to linger in the halls of government. However, Obama’s symbolic significance is something America will never forget. Barack Obama’s story demonstrates how in the United States, anyone’s dreams can be a reality.

Today, I’m proud to be an American because America chose to no longer live in fear of the unknown. To many Americans, Barack Obama is a phenomenon they never expected to see in their lifetimes. It takes courage to make a choice that goes against everything you thought you knew.

I can’t profess to understand what kind of courage that took. I was born only 19 years ago and I didn’t, and never really will, understand why my parents thought a black man could never be elected president. “America will never elect a man named Barack Obama to the White House,” remarked my father, emphasizing the foreign nature of the Senator’s name in his pronunciation.

“There are just too many people who couldn’t push the lever for a black man.” That was less than two years ago. My family, the media, and millions of Americans across the country agreed with him. I disagreed. And two years later, I couldn’t be happier that America proved them wrong.

I couldn’t be happier that millions of American’s realized that the choice is theirs. The amazing thing about this Election Day was that the American people rejected lifetimes of deep-rooted pessimism and took a risk. They made the choice for the impossible. And on November 4th, 2008, the impossible became possible.

This column first appeared in The Tech on Nov. 14, 2008.

This Is MIT?

Lack of Transparency Undermines Community

Elaina Present

I chose MIT because of the stories: the great cannon heist, the police car, the student-run live-action role playing club, the simple trust that was placed in the intelligence and competence of the students — in letting them choose their own living groups that kept up their own cultures, often decades old, in letting them have a voice in any decisions affecting them. I guess I was imagining a sort of Utopia — 5000 of the funkiest, most brilliant minds from the entire country and around the world molding a homeland of their own in which to learn and live.

But the stories I hear now do not echo the ones that drew me in. Yes, Amy Smith seems now every bit as fantastic as she did then, the Infinite is respectably long and the people are ridiculously, scarily smart. I was mercifully allowed a decent voice in my housing assignment, and the Assassin’s Guild games run exactly the way all those stories promised. But there is another vibe that I wasn’t anticipating, of fear, maybe, or betrayal, or mistrust.

Many students feel that their preferences and opinions, though “valued,” have little effect; though many lines of communication with the administration are open, few are effective and even fewer have any strong feel for what MIT is, what sets it apart. Yes, the people here are brilliant, the best of the best. But I could have gone to a dozen other schools

if I wanted to study with brilliant people.

I came here because of the traditions, the culture of openness among everyone in the community, but have found it only in small packets, sparsely spread, while the reality seems to be that students are having to choose between getting into grad school and continuing tradition, that such tradition is often not well understood by the administration and other higher-ups.

Student leaders have expressed a feeling of helplessness, as though they’re playing a game whose rules were never posted, working for goals — from dining preferences to

“Student leaders have expressed a feeling of helplessness, as though they’re playing a game whose rules were never posted ...”

clear consequences for actions — facing dead end after dead end. Transparency in admissions is something MIT takes pride in. Perhaps it is time that we widen the scope of transparency at the Institute. We need to see how students can make it clear what is most important to them, from the ground up, in ways that will yield results, not “consideration”; in how traditions are to be maintained so that what is now a gallery does not become a sealed museum remembered only by visiting storytelling craft and tour guides reading off their printed pamphlets; how to make it so that MIT’s particular brands of students can continue to maintain their place in the world.

Last summer, I saw the Dark Mark rise above the student center in the dark of pre-dawn, and I declared I’d found my people. But this isn’t the MIT I’d heard about.

This column first appeared in The Tech on Oct. 3, 2008.

April 2008, from Page R2

April 2008, from Page R2
 uel W. Bodman ScD ’65, gives a lecture at Bartos Theater entitled, “America’s Energy Security: Challenges We Face and How You Can Be Part of the Solution.”

9th — Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick delivers a speech at MIT concerning a new plan to inject \$3.8 billion into the struggling economy.

10th — 1021 pre-frosh arrive on MIT Campus for a record-attendance-setting Campus Preview Weekend. More than 600 events are scheduled.

14th — Concourse Instructor Jim Bredt ’82 Wins APO’s “Big Screw” contest, receiving \$699.29 in monetary votes.

14th — The Graduate Student Council launches a new off-campus website called “Rent Monkey.” The goal of the site is to show where all off-campus MIT students live on an interactive map.

16th — The Information Services and Technology plans to launch its new MIT-voip service which will eventually replace current telephone services in MIT departments and labs.

17th — Pulitzer Prize-winning MIT Institute Professor John Harbison debuts his newest “Symphony No. 5” with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall.

22nd — MIT Earth Week 2008 begins with a public address made by Governor

Deval Patrick in Kresge.

24th — Another piano drops from the roof of Baker Hall, marking Drop Date.

25th — Results are in: Noah S. Jessop ’09 and Michael A. Bennie ’10 win Undergraduate Association elections for president and vice president.

26th — MIT Sport Taekwondo Club wins the National Collegiate Taekwondo Association Championships at Stanford University.

29th — The MIT Men’s Track and Field Team captures seven individual victories and its eighth consecutive New England Women’s and Men’s Conference Championship.

May 2008

11th — MIT Cycling Team wins the Division II National Championship in Colorado.

13th — Two-thirds of the 1,554 students admitted to the Class of 2012 accept admission to MIT, the third highest percentage in the Institute’s history.

20th — One Laptop Per Child unveils its second-generation XO laptop. The new design is smaller and cheaper than the previous model and opens like a book to reveal dual touch-sensitive displays.

28th — Previously Dean for Graduate

Education, Steven R. Lerman ’72 is appointed as MIT’s new vice chancellor.

28th — Coeditor of Counterpoint Kristina Costa announces that the monthly publication that chronicles Wellesley and MIT campus life will cease to be distributed on the MIT campus.

June 2008

2nd — Star A. Simpson ’10 is sentenced to one year of supervised pretrial probation as a result of her arrest at Logan International when personnel mistook a circuit board on her sweatshirt for a bomb.

6th — Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus delivers the opening address at the 142nd Commencement. 2,335 undergraduate and graduate students receive degrees.

6th — MIT buys four life science buildings in Cambridge for a reported \$90.5 million. The space combined sums to 150,000 square feet.

6th — MIT’s new biological engineering program (Course 20) graduates its first class, giving degrees to 23 students.

11th — MIT Institute professor Robert S. Langer ScD ’74 wins the Millennium Technology Prize for his research involving advanced treatments of cancer, heart disease, and other illnesses.

13th — The Task Force on Student En-

agement is established to promote student influence in administrative decisions.

July 2008

1st — SafeRide adopts the NextBus GPS Tracking System, allowing students to track shuttle routes and arrivals on www.nextbus.com

1st — Mary C. Boyce PhD ’87 becomes the first female chair of the MIT Mechanical Engineering Department

1st — Associate Provost for Faculty Equity Barbara H. Liskov is named Institute Professor, the highest faculty rank at MIT.

9th — Renovations of lecture hall 10-250 begin on schedule.

18th — Court drops charges against student Michael P. Short for breaking and entering into the basement of NW16 on June 7.

20th — MIT admissions communications manager Ben Jones, popular among MIT students and prospectives on MIT Admission’s blog site, leaves to become vice president for communications at Oberlin College.

24th — Simmons announces a plan to implement “all you can eat” buffet dining, however, the proposal is canceled in August due to unresolved issues.

28th — Clara S. Bennett ’10 becomes the

third MIT student-athlete to swim across the English Channel, a 21-mile swim.

29th — Pipe bursts in Alpha Tau Omega building, causing members of ATO to be housed in MacGregor House suite lounges.

August 2008

8th — MIT Transportation and Parking offers new commuting options including MBTA commuter rail subsidies and free transit passes for employees who park at MIT five days a week.

10th — Federal judge dissolves gag order against MIT Students Zackary Anderson ’09, Russell Ryan ’09, and Alessandro Chiesa ’09, who discovered security flaws in the MBTA’s CharlieTicket system.

15th — Building W1, known formerly as Ashdown House, closes in preparation for renovation.

18th — Former dean for student affairs at Columbia University’s Undergraduate School, Costantino “Chris” Colombo starts his new job as MIT’s new dean for student life.

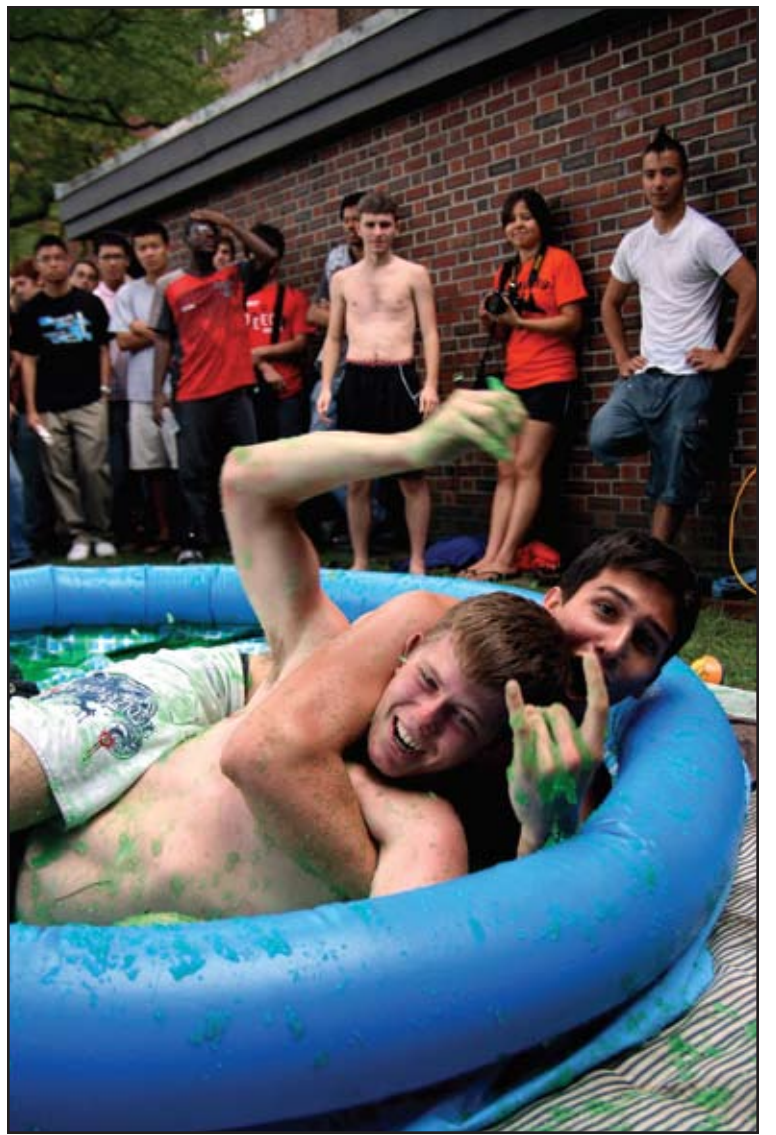
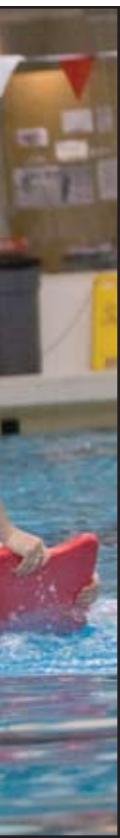
22nd — Residence Exploration kicks off as freshman explore the campus and participate in dormitory events. For the first time, Next House and NW35 are included in the residential lottery.

August 2008, Page R6



The Year in PHOTO





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11	12		13

1. Barack Obama rallies in Boston, Feb. 4. —Perry Hung
2. Cardboard Boat Competition, Oct. 10. —Maksim Imakaev
3. Construction on Mass. Ave., Mar. 21. —Omari Stephens
4. REX Jell-O wrestling, Aug. 25. —Alex H. Chan
5. Third Eye Blind, April 25. —Diane Rak
6. Celtics' Rally, Jun. 19. —Ricardo Ramirez
7. Resonance, Oct. 18. —Andrea Robles
8. CPW "Foameez Monster", April 12. —Biyeun Buczyk
9. Bharatha Natyam dancers, Feb. 18. —Kari Williams
10. Women's Volleyball, Sept. 20. —William Yee
11. Women's Soccer, Sept. 13. —William Yee
12. "Campaign for Students", Oct. 20. —Eric D. Schmiedl
13. Marathon Olympic Trials, Apr. 20. —Michael Jacokes



The Year in ARTS

Important Albums of 2008

From Coldplay to Vampire Weekend, Artists That Topped the Charts

By Maggie Liu
and S. Balaji Mani
STAFF WRITERS

Album sales might be decreasing every year, but that doesn't mean anything for 2008. Whether you bought them on special edition vinyl, downloaded them, or streamed them off of Seepod, the following albums probably made it into your playlist at some point during the course of the year. The past twelve months have given us plenty of important debut albums, career-shifting solo efforts, and also a good handful of reliable releases from well-established acts. You know it's a great year when campus geeks Vampire Weekend take the world by storm within months of the release of Coldplay's *piece-de-résistance*, "Viva la vida, or Death and All His Friends."

Pretentious album titles aside, though, 2008's diversified catalog indicates that the amorphous mass that is the music business might be headed in the right direction again. Self-produced acts are utilizing home recording techniques and pimping the social networking communities to promote themselves to unprecedented degrees. The co-evolution of music and generational movements will always exist, yet these albums may remain relevant to generations beyond our own. At the very least, we hope that they last into the next year.

The Killers — "Day and Age"

I am biased towards this band, having been a fan since the release of "Mr. Brightside" in 2004. The boys have grown, to say the least. Their fourth album, "Day and Age" is more polished, relying less on synthesizer and more bent on creating quite possibly one of the best records of 2008, if not the best. At the same time, they manage to possess the same rawness of emotion and feeling in their lyrics. Certain lyrics, like those for "Human" may lead to questions about vocalist Brando Flowers' sanity and grammar: "and I'm on my knees,

looking for the answer/are we human or are we dancer?" When questioned in an interview, Flowers merely shrugged and claimed he took the original quotation from Hunter S. Thompson and "ran with it". Truth be told, the whole album feels like just that — an epic rock journey through worlds only conceived in the minds of The Killers. It may not make sense or seem rational, but one cannot resist being swept along by Flowers' croons and the grandiosity of the music, overlaid with everything from violins to electric guitars.

Vampire Weekend — "Vampire Weekend"

When I heard of the band, I have to admit that the band name made me skeptical. With something so quirky, I almost wondered if the indie band were trying too hard. Their songs are like nothing out there. While other NYC bands like The Strokes and Interpol are lovely they can all be easily categorized as part of the garage-rock/post-punk revival. Vampire Weekend's roots lie in both Afropop and classical western music, utilizing instruments ranging from African drums to organs. Consisting of Columbia University grads, Vampire Weekend is intellectual, very collegiate and a group of anomaly—preppy, collar-popping white boys playing music that contains a fair share of congo beats. Strange, but a must to check out.

Coldplay — "Viva la Vida, or Death and All His Friends"

The problem of well-established bands that have good music is that they continuously feel the need to prove themselves to be "bigger" and "better." Coldplay is no exception, promising their fans that with their fourth album, they would reveal a "new" Coldplay. Although Coldplay has quite a number of classic songs, their downfall lies in vocalist Chris Martin's distinctive lilting tenor and the predictability of guitar chords. While I salute them in their effort to be more experimental on their latest

effort, somehow, it doesn't seem quite genuine. The melodies are grand, sweeping affairs with less of the typical pop/ballad anthems and more of an avant-garde adventure through faster tempos and more instrumentals. Yet, at the end of the day, catchiness and mainstream appeal wins over in "Violet Hill" and "Viva La Vida," their most popular songs, where the old Coldplay shines through.

Katy Perry — "One of The Boys"

While one may scoff and claim Perry's a main-stream pop-star, one can't help but be ensnared by said star's sickeningly catchy songs. Many may seem faux-ska and alternative, but the fact that Perry's lyrics do not take herself seriously makes her songs so much the better. No Avril Lavigne and any of her "Sk8ter Boi" adolescent angst here: Perry is in-your-face and unapologetically upfront with lines like "you don't eat meat/and drive electrical cars/you're so indie rock it's almost an art/you need SPF 45 just to stay alive." Perry oozes sexiness with her 1950's pinup model looks and throaty voice, but her oddball humor sets her a bit higher than all the other pop princesses out there.

MGMT — "Oracular Spectacular"

MGMT is yet another one of the alternative/indie bands that NYC seems to churn out effortlessly. You would love to hate them but can't help loving them. They're young, they're hip, they're taking over the indie scene with their psychedelic blend of electric, pop and rock. A bit of 80's and a bit of their own, MGMT proves to be

fantastically shiny and addicting.

Girl Talk — "Feed the Animals"

Girl Talk would not exist in any decade or century except the present. Many would even accuse Gregg Gillis of not really making music, not to mention the numerous copyright laws he's broken. Calling himself a 'mashup artist,' Gregg Gillis cuts snippets of songs to create completely new pieces that mesh charmingly well. In his latest album, "Feed the Animals," Gillis uses over 300 songs to create 50 minutes of entertainment and dance beats. While there have been many attempts at mashup artists, Gillis proves to be the best. Girl Talk's performances are said to be all-out raves, all beginning with a man and his computer. Girl Talk sums up his music with this quote: "Software, or computers, is the most punk rock thing that's happened ever."

Freddie Hubbard: 1938–2008

Playing trumpet with the masters of jazz (Sonny Rollins, Eric Dolphy, Quincy Jones) by twenty, Freddie Hubbard was key in the development of both free jazz and jazz fusion. A protege of Miles Davis, Hubbard brought a new fire to the instrument with chop-busting high notes and a controlled, unique tone. He participated in innovative work both as a sideman (Herbie Hancock's Maiden Voyage, Oliver Nelson's The Blues and the Abstract Truth, Ornette Coleman's Free Jazz) and soared as a frontman (Hub Cap, Ready for Freddie). In the 70's, Hubbard signed on to the new Creed Taylor label CTI, going on to produce some of his most famous albums: Red Clay, Straight Life, First Light, and others. Hubbard continued playing to general acclaim for several decades, even after suffering an upper lip injury in 1992 that would largely remove him from the scene (an injury tragically brought on by Hubbard's unrelenting lip technique). Hubbard died on the morning of December 29, 2008, at his home in California. He is survived by his wife, Briggie, and his son, Duane. —Samuel Markson

Best Films of 2008

In Case You Missed Them, Six Must-See Movies

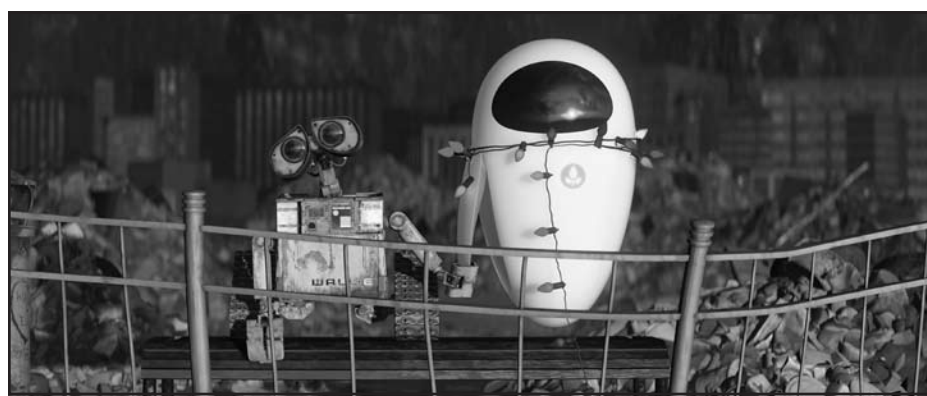
By Maggie Liu
STAFF WRITER

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

Based on the original short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald, the film revolves around a man named Benjamin who is born as a shriveled up old man deemed "on his way into the grave." As those around him grow older, Benjamin discovers himself getting younger. While the brilliant cast, including Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett, may draw an audience in themselves, the movie is deeply touching and engaging. "Life isn't measured in minutes but in moments" — the film provokes us to reconsider the concept of age and time, presenting a story about love and life in an unconventional form.

WALL-E

Pixar proves itself again with its love-child of the year, Wall-E. At face value, it's unbelievably cute. It'll make you coo, make you gasp, and even make the faint-hearted teary-eyed towards the end. Most of all, it can be likened to a funhouse mirror found in carnivals, presenting a warped, yet representative, portrait of our society. What will life for humans be like in seven hundred years if we continue to live the way we do? At first glance, another whimsical animated film about blossoming robot love, Wall-E proves to be a contemplative outlook at the world we live in.



COURTESY OF DISNEY/PIXAR

Eve and WALL-E enjoy the sunset in the film WALL-E.

The Dark Knight

The Dark Knight is not for the faint of heart: it's an action thriller with more of a philosophical spin than its prequel. Of course, that lies beneath an action film with plenty of explosions, snazzy gadgets and villains for the hardcore DC Comics fans. The late actor Heath Ledger left his legacy in the film, with his chillingly glorious portrayal of the Joker, while Christian Bale does a good impassive Batman. Complete with the growl of a lifelong chain smoker, Ledger really makes the film; gone are his prettyboy looks, replaced by a madman with a penchant for carving smiles into his victims' faces.

Slumdog Millionaire

A riveting look at the less glamorous side of India, Jamal Malik, a boy born in the slums, becomes a formidable *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* contestant. The film is split into flashbacks and the present and takes us through all the *Millionaire* questions and how Malik was able to answer them. *Slumdog* is so brilliant because it's not afraid of showcasing the squalor that exists in India and how those who grow up in the squalor are able to rise up and find their own place in society. Superb acting, witty screenplay and a soundtrack featuring M.I.A. and you've got one of the

best dramatic comedies of the year.

21

Math Club has never been very glamorous and the media has seldom made attempts at glorifying it. However, when you have British actor Jim Sturgess play an MIT-soon-to-be Harvard Med student who is plunged into the world of blackjack and 'card counting,' you have yourself a killer film. With a lot of big-shot names, including Kate Bosworth and Kevin Spacey, a lot of eye-candy and the adrenaline rush of Las Vegas, the dynamics of the film are pretty dead on. While it's been criticized for straying from the original book *Bringing Down the House* by Ben Mezrich, one should remember that this is a product of Hollywood.

Definitely, Maybe

A film for those who've always had a soft spot for *Love Actually*, the decidedly simple but sweet film follows the bittersweet memories of a middle-aged man going through a divorce. Provoked by his young 10-year-old daughter to dig through his past romances, we are led through three love stories and three women who have redefined who this man is and helped make him what he is today. It is romance-comedy fluff at its best. The fact that adorable Abigail Breslin costars in this makes it a keeper.

August 2008, from Page R3

24th — MIT's Class of 2012 arrives on campus to start orientation activities. This year's theme is "TechTube."

26th — The U.S. News and World Report ranks MIT fourth along with Stanford University in the 2008 college ranking.

27th — The Graduate Student Council launches new Dental Plan for graduate students.

30th — Freshman get their first taste of Greek Life as fraternities and sororities host Greek Griller to kick off rush week.

September 2008

1st — Economics Professor Olivier J. Blanchard PhD '77 starts his new position as chief economist of the International Monetary Fund.

3rd — The new academic year kicks off as students have their first day of classes.

4th — Eli and Edythe Broad donate \$400 Million to the Broad Institute of

MIT and Harvard to promote the discovery of genetic links to major diseases.

8th — Community Picnic celebrates the opening of new Ashdown House.

10th — MIT students and faculty alike celebrate as the Large Hadron Collider successfully directs proton beams around the main ring for the first time.

10th — President Student Hockfield testifies before a House of Representative Committee on Energy to triple federal funding for energy research.

12th — The MIT Cycling team captures Division II National Collegiate Track Title in Colorado Springs.

15th — The J. B. Carr Indoor Tennis Center reopens after undergoing a \$1 million improvement with better lighting, insulation, and an addition of a skylight.

18th — President of Rwanda Paul Kagame addresses the MIT community in Kresge with a talk about the "Imperative of Science and Technology in Accelerating African and Rwandan Development."

18th — 5,000 students and 300 companies participate in MIT's 2008 Career Fair at the Johnson Athletic Center.

23rd — MIT Faculty professors Marin Soljacic '96 and John Ochsendorf win MacArthur 'genius' grants.

29th — At the State of the Institute Forum in Kresge, Susan Hockfield announces for the creation of the Environmental Research Council.

October 2008

2nd — Ig Nobels take place at Sanders Theater, Harvard University and features the research of spermicidal cola, archeological armadillos, lap dancers, and much more.

3rd — MIT's newest sorority, Pi Beta Phi, recruits 41 women into their first MIT pledge class.

3rd — Hackers respond to Chancellor Clay's campus-wide e-mail concerning hacking by veiling the Stata Center

Hacking Exhibits under black cloth with large VIOLATION NOTICE signs.

3rd — The Campaign For Students launches publicly to help raise \$500 million by 2011.

6th — The MIT Energy Club hosts an energy debate between Obama and McCain campaigns in Kresge Auditorium.

9th — Vibin A. Kundukulam '11 appears on Jeopardy! and takes home a second place prize of \$2,000.

10th — The MIT Symphony Orchestra begins its new season with Dvorak's *Carnival Overture* in Kresge Auditorium.

13th — Former MIT Professor Paul R. Krugman PhD '77 wins the Nobel prize for economics.

17th — Campaign For Students protests in Lobby 7 due to dissatisfaction with the current student influence on administrative decisions.

18th — Crew teams from universities around the nation compete in the 44th Head of the Charles.

21st — The \$90 million project to renovate W1 into an undergraduate dormitory is postponed due to inadequate funding.

25th — Crowd gathers at Steinbrenner Stadium to celebrate the dedication of Roberts Field.

27th — Hundreds of hand-crafted glass pumpkins are sold on Kresge Lawn in the annual glass-workshop sale.

29th — The new Clover Food Truck, owned by Ayr Muir '00, starts to serve vegetarian fare behind MIT Medical.

29th — David J. Hutchings '10 and O. Russell Rodewald '10 are elected president and vice president of the Interfraternity Council.

31st — Building 66 suffers a violent steam pipe explosion. Damages are expected to cost seven figures.

31st — IS&T improves networks services at Burton-Conner, MacGregor House, and Green Hall by removing analog phones and replacing them with the

Songs With Words

2008 With the MIT Concert Choir and Chamber Chorus

By Sudeep Agarwala
STAFF WRITER

Fundamentally, choral music is difficult to listen to. Certainly, there are technical issues that are prevalent throughout all of music — unusual dissonances, uncompromising forms and lengths — but choral music, in particular, adds another significant complexity.

Take, for instance, Brahms's Op. 82 setting of Friedrich Schiller's *Nänie* that begins with an oboe solo in a surprisingly sullen D major, accompanied by occasional arpeggios from the strings. This is incidental music in any other context. The notes wash over the audience with no real comprehension or effect. But the music begins to take purpose and direction when the choir enters one voice at a time in Brahms's characteristic late-Romantic counterpoint, coalescing around the somber paean: "*Auch das Schöne muß sterben.*" (*Even the beautiful must die.*)

Or we can turn our attention to a particular moment in Benjamin Britten's *Cantata Misericordium*, Op. 69. The scene is arresting in its turbidity: a tenor soloist sings a tender lullaby, gracefully careening between F sharp major and A sharp minor in triple meter, while a vulgar chorus chants the moral of the cantata, a meditation on the power of compassion (jarringly set in the D Lydian scale, duple meter). It's tempting (and were it solely an instrumental piece, easy too) to let these harmonically and rhythmically difficult moments pass by in confusion. But here, as in most choral music, text is the sticking point. Whereas music by itself can be ignored, words draw immediacy and attention to these distressing sounds.

Perhaps that's where audience and chorister come to an inevitable impasse, why radio stations such as WCRB-FM will deliberately sub-

stitute orchestral arrangements for famous vocal or choral pieces, why, despite being one of the oldest forms of continually performed music in the western canon (prototypes of most of the instruments in the modern orchestra appear roughly three hundred years ago, while the human voice has remained relatively unchanged since its inception), the most well-attended venues are reserved for orchestral and instrumental chamber performances. Let there be no doubt: choral music is difficult to listen to.

While the virtues of studying choral music might seem unclear in this light, there is yet much to learn from the exercise and the choirs at MIT are exemplary in this pursuit. This past year being no exception to its strikingly ambitious programming, members of the MIT Concert Choir and Chamber Chorus (both ensembles under the direction of Dr. William Cutter) performed works by the leading thinkers of choral music in history, spanning most of modern choral history.

It's a curious, but important, list that exposes both performers and audience to a wide variety of music: over the past year, the MIT Chamber Chorus, a smaller ensemble optimal for performing chamber choral works, learned and performed works by the baroque composer J. S. Bach (*Cantata BWV 21, "Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis"*), early twentieth century composers Benjamin Britten (*Cantata Misericordium*, Op. 69), Irving Fine (*The Choral New Yorker*, selections from *The Hour Glass*) and recently deceased MIT professor Edward Cohen (*Invisible Cities*). A larger ensemble, the MIT Concert Choir saw almost as great a diversity in their repertoire, performing works by the baroque composer G. F. Händel (*Alexander's Feast*, HWV 75), romantic composers Hector Berlioz (*Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale*, Op. 15, in collaboration with the

MITSO) and Johannes Brahms (*Nänie*, in collaboration with the MITSO), early twentieth-century composers Maurice Duruflé (*Requiem*, Op. 9) and Ralph Vaughan Williams (*Five Mystical Songs*, in collaboration with MITSO and *Mass in G minor*) and contemporary composer Randall Thompson (*Peaceable Kingdom*).

What's surprising about this list is its omissions. Although MIT offers concentrations in music, the members in these groups run the gamut from amateur musicians with little or no musical training to formal musicians. It's surprising that the Concert Choir and Chamber Chorus programs don't offer pieces that are written specifically for choirs of mixed training — *études* meant as choral lessons — that often plague programs of choirs of this level. The works performed in both of these groups are real in the truest sense of the word: the Duruflé *Requiem* (Op. 9) or Ralph Vaughan Williams *Mass in G minor* were composed for choirs of musicians intimately familiar with their respective sonorities musical languages, Mr. Cohen's almost neurotically internalized work, *Invisible Cities*, setting portions of Italo Calvino's work of the same title (often more *parlando* than song), to music, posed equal challenges for hired professional soloist and orchestra as it did for choral members.

What is perhaps most striking is that much of this music is reserved almost exclusively for conservatory and professional choirs. Both the *Cantata Misericordium* and Irving Fine pieces were performed independently by Cantata Singers at Jordan Hall this season, while many of the other works regularly appear in the programs of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus or Emmanuel Music.

It may be surprising, but it's true: the result is that the music works. The pieces performed by the Concert Choir and Chamber Chorus

are fundamentally serious works considering and detailing serious texts that form a canon of Western music as much as the instrumental tradition. Certainly, the intrinsic technicality makes the music difficult to perform, but, in a sense, these are only the most rudimentary concerns when performing choral music. It's after the notes are learned, in consideration of how the text and the music inform and augment each other, that the choral ensembles at MIT are at their most successful: how remarkable and moving to hear Randall Thompson's setting of texts from the book of *Isaiah* in *Peaceable Kingdom* (his setting of "*The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more*" is, at its least effective, haunting), to hear Ben Jonson speaking through Irving Fine's music, John Dryden through Händel's, to listen to Benjamin Britten proselytize the power of human mercy, to witness Brahms quietly sobbing over the death of Anselm Feuerbach.

Certainly, the virtues of studying, performing, or listening to choral music aren't clear. Singing in a chorus doesn't command nearly the same respect or awe as an orchestral instrumentalist of similar abilities and, given current state of WCRB-ization of choral music, any appreciation of the complexities and challenges of this music is sure to be rendered socially irrelevant and obsolete in the foreseeable future. It's hard to remember that this music, for better or worse, isn't about that at all. To be sure, it's very different and, considering the amount of time and energy that students in these choirs spend tending to the seemingly Sisyphean task of learning and performing these works, of approaching and reconciling the gaping void between text and music, it's hard not to be proud of them.

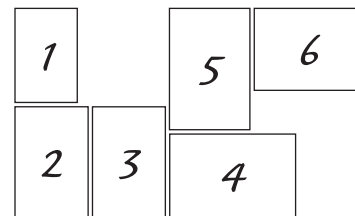


Two thousand and eight saw an explosion of student music groups and student-organized concerts on campus. Dormitories cleaned out their basements and put on shows to increasingly eager crowds. Kicking off the year with Bexxley Rxxxx Some More, an epic concert at Bexley Hall in February 2008, soon other dorms and frats followed suit in a chain of concerts to remember. The growing music scene encouraged bands like Fortran, The Pears, Space Faces, Chicken Scratch, and Pesticide Red to form. The end of 2008 saw the birth of many new bands as fresh talent from the freshman class came in. The advent of WMBR Live also brought concerts to campus, encouraging bands to write new material and put on riveting shows. Here's a look at some memorable shows from the year!

—S. Balaji Mani



The Year in Campus Concerts



- 1, 2. Senior Haus Rocks, Mar. 1. —Omari Stephens
- 3, 4, 5. Bexxley Rxxxx Some More, Feb. 23. —Omari Stephens
6. Steer Roast, May 2. —Eric D. Schmiel

October 2008, from Page R6 latest technologies.

November 2008

- 3rd — President Susan Joan Hockfield meets with the MIT Undergraduate Association, promising more student input in administrative decision-making.
- 3rd — Professor Ann M. Graybiel PhD '71 of the Brain and Cognitive Sciences Department becomes MIT's newest Institute Professor.
- 4th — MIT students watch on as Barack Obama defeats John McCain and is declared president elect.
- 4th — MIT Cable adds two stations to its channel offerings: TVJapan (16) and the Big Ten Network (20).
- 6th — Aafia Siddiqui '95, MIT alumna arrested in Afghanistan in July for allegedly carrying a bomb, is declared "not competent" to stand trial when she is diagnosed with chronic depressive type psychosis.

- 15th — Stata Center undergoes \$3 million project to improve current snow-melting system.
- 17th — In a letter released to the MIT community, President Susan Hockfield and the provost announce that MIT will undergo a 5 percent spending cut in the fiscal year effective next July.
- 17th — The Association of Student Activities de-recognizes 60 dormant groups in an effort to revise group recognition.
- 17th — Professor Henry Jenkins, who served nearly 20 years as codirector and cofounder of MIT's Comparative Media Studies program, announces that he will leave for a position at the University of Southern California.
- 18th — Former U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman gives keynote address at MIT's Diversity Leadership Congress.
- 18th — Students from Conner 2, Burton 4, and Burton 5 inflate a moonbounce structure in the middle of Lobby 7 at midnight.

- 18th — The Media Lab announces the creation of the Center for Future Storytelling, a seven year \$25 million collaboration with Plymouth Rock Studios.
 - 21st — A BMF microwave on the third floor of Random Hall wins APO's Uncleanest Manifestation on Campus award, raising \$833 for charity winner Doctors Without Borders.
 - 22nd — Alia Whitney-Johnson '08 and Matthew L. Gethers '09 become MIT's latest Rhodes Scholars.
 - 24th — President-elect appoints Lawrence H. Summers '75 to lead the National Economic Council.
- ### December 2008
- 2nd — MIT holds a candlelight vigil to honor those killed and wounded in the Mumbai terrorist attacks.
 - 8th — In response to rumors of an automatic meal charge for undergraduates, the UA Senate passes a bill requiring

- more transparency in the Blue Ribbon Committee.
- 11th — MIT releases follow-up letter concerning new budget policies including the reduction of the General Institute Budget expenses by \$100-\$150 million within 2-3 years.
- 17th — MIT enters the \$30 million Google Lunar X PRIZE competition which challenges students and faculty to send the first privately-funded robot to the moon.
- 17th — The Committee on the Undergraduate Program fails to vote on the proposed GIR and HASS-D changes. The vote is delayed until the next faculty meeting in February.
- 19th — Picower Foundation, which funded MIT's Picower Institute for Learning and Memory, falls victim to the Bernard Madoff fraud.
- 19th — President-elect Barack Obama appoints MIT professor Eric Lander to cochair the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.

- ### January 2009
- 3th — Application deadline for regular admissions closes, after a brief extension. MIT accepted 540 students early in the largest-recorded early-applicant pool of 5,019.
 - 16th — MIT's annual Mystery Hunt kicks off in Lobby 7 as the first puzzles are given out. After 63 hours of non-stop problem-solving, team Beginner's Luck wins the hunt when members find the coin under Building 13.
 - 20th — The MIT community watches as Barack Obama takes the presidential oath at his inauguration. People stuff into 10-250, 32-123, and other lecture halls to watch Obama's inaugural speech.
 - 24th — As a result of an anonymous donation, MIT students enjoy a new shuttle service to and from Trader Joe's and Whole Foods Market.
- Compiled by Robert McQueen

The Year in SPORTS

The Year in MIT Sports

By Aaron Sampson
SPORTS EDITOR

Two thousand and eight saw a number of impressive performances from MIT's student athletes, both noteworthy individual achievements and successful seasons for several varsity teams. Across all MIT athletics, the Institute set a new record for Academic All-American honors with 11 selections for the 2007-2008 seasons.

James M. "Jimmy" Bartolotta '09 has been leading the men's basketball team in a successful season, while delivering a historic personal performance. Bartolotta broke the long-standing institute record for total career points on December 6, surpassing the previous total of 1,699. Bartolotta also set a new record for points in a single game when he scored 43 points against Curry College on November 25.

DeRon M. Brown '10 was named MIT's first football All-American in 11 years after a season in which he set institute records in rushing yards and touchdowns. Brown finished the season with 1,816 rushing yards and also set a new career total record with 2,778 yards. Brown also scored a total of 22 season touchdowns. Additionally, he rushed for 251 yards on 27 carries against Massachusetts Maritime Academy, the second-highest total in MIT history.

The men's soccer team also had a record-breaking season, finishing with a 16-4-2 record and making it to the NCAA Division III Championship Tournament. It was MIT's first appearance in the tournament since 2003. The team also went undefeated for a record 13 games and received three Academic All-America awards.

Both the men's and women's Cross Country squads had great performances in 2008. The men finished eighth at the New England regional championship, while the

women secured a spot in the NCAA championship for the first time in the program's history. Competing in Hanover, Indiana on November 22, MIT earned an impressive tenth place finish.

Several of MIT's club sports had highly successful years in 2008 as well, sending competitors to national competitions and earning top honors. The MIT Sport Taekwondo Club travelled to Stanford University in April to compete in the National Collegiate Taekwondo Association Championships. With a team of 39 competitors, MIT took first place in the novice division, third place in the championship division, and first place overall.

Also competing at the national level was sMITe, the MIT women's ultimate Frisbee team. The team travelled to nationals in Boulder, Colorado after defeating Dartmouth University in the New England Women's Regionals.

MIT Cycling captured the 2008 Division II national championship after taking first at road nationals and second at track and cyclocross nationals. They have carried their momentum into the start of the 2008-2009 season, taking first at track nationals and third at cyclocross nationals. MIT also sent a team to mountain bike nationals this season for the first time in several years.



DeRon M. Brown '10 is MIT's first football All American in 11 years.

The Year in National Sports

By David Zhu
STAFF COLUMNIST

The sports world has certainly provided its share of memorable moments in the past year. From the Super Bowl last February, to the Olympics in August, to, well, the Super Bowl again last weekend, here are some of the biggest headlines from 2008. In no particular (somewhat chronological) order:

- The Patriots' perfect season — Despite the "Spygate" scandal surrounding the New England Patriots to start the season, Tom Brady and company would dominate the rest of the NFL en route to an undefeated regular season and the AFC Championship ...

- The Giants win the Super Bowl — ... but the Patriots fell short of winning it all at the hands of Eli Manning and the New York Giants, in an unforgettable (or, for Pats fans, very forgettable) Super Bowl XLII.

- Kansas wins NCAA Men's Basketball Championship — In the first Final Four to feature four number one seeded teams, Kansas overcomes a nine-point deficit with two minutes remaining and edges out Memphis in overtime. Certain sports staff members are still in denial.

- The Celtics win the NBA Championship — In one of the most anticipated and heated Finals matchups in recent memory, Boston, with its superstar trio of Ray Allen, Kevin Garnett, and Paul Pierce, defeats the League MVP Kobe Bryant and the Los Angeles Lakers in the NBA Finals.

- Nadal wins Wimbledon — In what some consider to be the greatest tennis match ever, second-ranked Rafael Nadal defeats number one seed Roger Federer in the Wimbledon final. The match lasted for nearly five hours, and marked the first Grand Slam final loss for Federer outside of the French Open.

- Spain wins Euro 2008 — Yes, I know nobody in the United States cares about soccer, but this must have been a pretty big deal since it was listed in every single 2008 sports highlights list I found.

- Lewis Hamilton wins F1 Championship — Same as above, except substitute "Formula One" for "soccer."

- Joey Chestnut Wins Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest — After downing 59 hot dogs in ten minutes, Chestnut defeats Takeru Kobayashi in a sudden death eat-off in a nationally broadcast contest on the Fourth of July. The United States regains the eating title from Japan, in what one ESPN commentator called "the greatest moment in sports history."

- The Summer Olympics — With China setting out to overawe the world in its "coming-out party," the Beijing Games began with an extravagant, spectacular opening ceremony and finished with athletes breaking records and racking up the hardware. Among them:

- Michael Phelps — Wins eight gold medals, including several exhilarating finishes, and becomes the most decorated Olympian ever. Is it any wonder they started calling Beijing's Water Cube "Phelps's House"?

- Usain Bolt — The world's fastest man from Jamaica sets three records at the Games. He's so good, he stops running before the finish line during the 100-meter finals to celebrate, and still smashes the world record.

- Tiger Woods — Not an Olympian, but ridiculous nonetheless. He proves that he's still the world's best golfer, even on one knee.

- Rays win the pennant — In the most dramatic single-single turnaround in baseball history, the Tampa Bay Rays finish ahead of the Red Sox and Yankees to win the AL East and eventually reach the World Series. In a memorable offseason moment, Yankees General Manager Brian Cashman says his team needs to spend hundreds of millions of dollars so they can play like Tampa Bay.

- Phillies Win the World Series — Behind the pitching of Cole Hamels, the Phillies finally bring a championship to their title-starved city. Wild celebration and revelry ensues; surprisingly, Philadelphians don't burn down the city.

IN MEMORIAM

Laura Capone Age 47 — July 4
Laura Capone, senior associate dean for the Division of Student Life, served MIT for 19 years in a variety of roles including assistant department head for business affairs, administrative officer for the DAPER, and project manager for the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education and Student Life. Capone's colleagues knew her as an accomplished leader, professional, teacher, mentor, coach, and friend.

Charles Chittick '22 Age 107 — July 18
Charles Yardley Chittick, who was honored this past June as the oldest MIT alumnus, graduated from MIT with an SB in engineering administration with a mechanical engineering option. He was commonly seen at the annual Tech Day Luncheon at Commencement, and celebrated his 86th reunion this past June.

Alexander V. d'Arbeloff '49 Age 80 — July 8
Alexander Vladimir d'Arbeloff, a visionary entrepreneur who co-founded Boston-based high-tech company Teradyne before becoming the eighth chairman of the MIT Corporation, provided crucial leadership for the Calculated Risks, Creative Revolutions fundraising campaign, which had a transformative effect on the Institute — from the physical campus to its research agenda.

Margaret Z. Freeman Age 100 — Oct. 23
Margaret Freeman, who came to the United States in 1931, studied and taught at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Remembering her own difficult times as a new immigrant in this country, she had opened her heart to new émigré over the many years she has been here.

Michael Hammer '68 Age 60 — Sept. 3
Michael Hammer '68, a research affiliate with MIT's Engineering Systems Division,

was by Time magazine as one of America's 25 most influential individuals. Hammer received an SB (1968), SM (1970) and PhD (1973) from MIT and was the president of Hammer and Company, a business education and research firm focused on cutting-edge issues in operations, organization and management.

Kenneth Hoffman Age 77 — Sept. 29
Former Department of Mathematics Head Kenneth Hoffman spent more than 40 years on MIT's faculty and made significant contributions to U.S. education and science policy.

Jack B. Howard Age 70 — July 7
Jack B. Howard, a professor emeritus in the Department of Chemical Engineering, was a world-renowned expert in the manufacture of nanostructured carbon materials. His research focused on high temperature chemistry, especially mechanisms and kinetics of reactions in combustion.

Joseph F. Kuchta Age 88 — June 23
Joseph F. Kuchta, who spent almost 40 years with MIT as a safety officer and later golf coach was renowned for his work with Alpha Phi Omega and other charitable organizations.

Edward N. Lorenz ScD '48 Age 90 — Apr. 16
Edward N. Lorenz ScD '48, an MIT meteorologist, meticulously attempt to predict the weather through an early computer algorithm that eventually became known as chaos theory.

Jane McNabb Age 84 — May 24
Jane McNabb, an employee at MIT's Department of Meteorology and Physical Oceanography, spent almost five decades at MIT — from 1951 until 1998 — and in 1993 was recognized with the James N. Murphy Award for her inspired and dedicated work at the Institute. Colleagues remembered her as

the voice of meteorology at MIT, calling her not only the "chief of staff, but truly the den mother."

Louis Menand III Age 85 — Jan. 30
Dr. Menand, a senior lecturer in MIT's political science department, developed a subject he called the Supreme Court and Constitutional Process. Eloquent and brilliant, Dr. Menand encouraged MIT students to be as emphatic about their opinions as he was with his, teaching his classes to forcefully argue a position.

Lucian W. Pye Age 86 — Sept. 5
Retired MIT political science professor Lucian W. Pye, one of America's leading China scholars, served as a mentor to several generations of influential political scientists and as an active public intellectual and policy adviser to presidential candidates, including John F. Kennedy.

Robert C. Seamans Jr. ScD '51 Age 89 — June 28
Robert C. Seamans Jr. ScD '51 was an MIT alumnus who was NASA administrator during the Apollo program, the ninth secretary of the U.S. Air Force and the dean of MIT's School of Engineering from 1978-81.

Oliver G. Selfridge '45 Age 82 — Dec. 3rd
Oliver G. Selfridge '45, an innovator in early computer science and artificial intelligence is credited with coining the term "intelligent agents." Selfridge theorized about devices that would not only automate certain tasks but also learn through practice how to perform them better, faster and more cheaply.

J. Mark Schuster PhD '79 Age 57 — Feb. 25
J. Mark Schuster, a professor of urban studies and planning who helped develop the field of urban cultural policy and who earned the respect of his peers, won the Gradu-

ate Student Council Award for Outstanding Teaching his department's award for Excellence in Teaching. Schuster was actively involved in the Institute's curriculum policy.

Kjell A. Tovander '09 Age 21 — Nov. 21
While he was always happy to spend time with friends and join in their outings, Tovander also maintained his own unique set of passions and interests. When he decided he wanted to learn how to program, he ordered a book about it. He read it in one night. His dedication extended to areas outside of academics including running, tennis, and motorcycles.

Lauren Tsai '04 Age 26 — Dec. 13
Lauren Tsai '04, who graduated from MIT with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, was a passionate athlete all her life, co-captaining the MIT varsity field hockey basketball teams. Lauren was a recipient of the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and had been inducted into the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society and the Pi Tau Sigma Mechanical Engineering Honor Society.

Joseph Weizenbaum Age 85 — March 5
Joseph Weizenbaum, professor emeritus of computer science at MIT, became a member of the General Electric team in 1955 that designed and built the first computer system dedicated to banking operations. Among his early technical contributions were the list processing system SLIP and the natural language understanding program ELIZA.

Robert M. Wells '08 Age 22 — March 1
Robert M. Wells '08 was sociable and perseverant, always interested in making friends and focusing his — and their — full efforts into new things. He liked working out and staying fit, and he played intramural sports with his fraternity.

—Compiled by Robert McQueen