Another Drop Date, Another Piano Drop

By Nick Bushak

It’s hard to fire pianos. That’s what the organizers of Baker House’s annual Piano Drop learned this year, as the victim, a grand piano, fell six stories off the Baker roofdeck and just missed a target on the ground.

Piano Drop has been held irregularly since the initial drop in 1972. The tradition, which commemorates Drop Date, returned in 2006 after a seven year hiatus, and it has been held annually since then. This year’s Piano Drop had a festive air. The weather was sunny and warm, and students began to congregate on the Memorial Dr. side of Baker to watch the piano drop. Barker Dining.

After the piano was prepared, and the roofdeck crowd chanted a countdown. At the shout of “one,” the grand piano was launched off the top of Baker’s roof. A smaller vertical piano was positioned on the ground, but the grand piano dropped from the roof barely clipped its target. As such, some students found the event to be less satisfying compared with previous Piano Drops.

When an exhibition of art projects opened on Tuesday, one was missing that of Allen Stavitsky, whose performance-art project reportedly involved artificially inseminating herself repeatedly and then self-aborting.

A description of the work last week in The Yale Daily News — which said it included videos of her broth and a “cube wrapped in plastic smeared with Vaseline and what Ms. Stavitsky had described as her own blood” — was misreported.

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Tim Zheng ’11 brought a prospective student he was hosting to Piano Drop. “We walked all the way from campus to see the piano drop,” he said. “But we missed it.” He said because they arrived late.

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In Short

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The top American envoy to Africa declared Thursday that Zimbabwe’s new opposition leader, Mr. Tsvangirai, was the “clear victor” over President Robert Mugabe in the nation’s disputed election and that he expected that country’s negotiations — including the United States — to help solve the deepening political and humanitarian crisis there.

The diplomat, Jon Fonse, the assistant secretary of state for African affairs, said the elections,laus said by independent observers, removed any rationale for any negotiated settlement that Mugabe might have imagined, as was proposed Wednesday in an editorial in The Herald, the state-run newspaper.

“This is a government rejecting the will of the people,” Fonse said, referring to Mugabe’s Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front, which won the March 29 presidential election. “If they had voted for Mugabe, the results would have already been announced. Everyone knows what time it is.”

U.S. Releases Images to Bolster Claims About Syrian Reactor

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON

The Bush administration released detailed photographs on Thursday to support its assertion that the building in Syria that Israel destroyed last month was a nuclear reactor.

The photographs taken inside the reactor before it was destroyed in an air raid on Sept. 6 clearly show the rods that control the heat in a nuclear reactor, one of the major concerning similarities to a reactor halfway around the world where North Korea produced the fuel for its nuclear arsenal.

Wilson said the photographs were not dated, it seemed that some of the photos taken on the ground go back to before 2002.

Connecticut’s Wealthy Not Immune From Foreclosure

By Christine Haughney

THE NEW YORK TIMES

GREENWICH, CONN.

This wooded town of roughly 60,000 on Long Island Sound — home to dozens of hedge funds, many millionaires and more than a few billionaires — is one of the wealthiest enclaves in the country. But Greenwich is not immune to the wave of home foreclosures sweeping the nation.

On Hettiefred Road, for example, the owner of a 2,726-square-foot, four-bedroom colonial featuring a luxury kitchen, swimming pool and tennis court, has been threatened with foreclosure for months. On Stanwich Road, another house worth $2.6 million is close to going on the block. Several dozen others have received foreclosure notices this year.

But there is a difference from most other communities. Auctioning off such homes is a far greater challenge here than elsewhere, as affluent but cash-squeezed owners often find ways to delay losing their homes, sometimes by coming up with just enough to make last-minute payments, avoiding a final sale — for a while, anyway.

Just ask John Thygerson, who parked his Jeep sport utility vehicle in front of the empty house on Hettiefred Road on the flawless spring day — May 12 — that marked the start of a 15-point draft of the accord, which was shown to The New York Times, called for an end to militant activity and an exchange of prisoners in return for the gradual withdrawal of the Pakistani military from part of the tribal region of South Waziristan.

As long as the accord, a far-reaching draft that essentially forbids the Taliban from engaging in nearly all illegal activities, was being negotiated by the government through tribal elders, the militant leader, Baitullah Mehsud, ordered his fighters to cease their activities in the tribal areas as well as the adjoining North-West Frontier province, warning of stricter punish- ment of any violators.

American and Afghan officials were immediately skeptical of a deal that they called for an end to militant activities and encouraged them to do is to continue to fight against the terrorists and to not disrupt any security or military operations that are ongoing in order to help prevent a safe haven for ter- rorists.

The approach to Mehsud followed pledges by the new government to make a break with the policies Presi- dent Pervez Musharraf has embraced in recent years, to pursue dialogue with the militants and to restore calm to Pakistan, which has been rocked by suicide attacks. Diplomats and Afghan officials suggested that the government was trying to show good will, while playing for time to bring stability.

Though Musharraf, too, negoti- ated with the Taliban militants, he used the mil- itary in the tribal areas in a way that Pakistan’s militants have criticized as heavy handed, losing hundreds of Pakistani troops in the fighting. The military operations and his alliance with the United States in combating terrorism have grown deeply unpopular.

The United States has consistently discouraged negotiations with mili- tants — what Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte described as an “irreconcilable element” during a visit to Pakistan in March. “I don’t see how you can talk with those kinds of people,” he said.

Mehsud, perhaps Pakistan’s most notorious militant, leads an umbrella group of the militants in the border areas, known as the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan or the Taliban Movement of Pakistan.

Pakistan Approaching Peace Deal With Militant Tribes

By Ismail Khan and Carlotta Gall

THE NEW YORK TIMES

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN

The Pakistani government is close to an agreement to end hostilities with the most militant tribes in its turbulent border area, whose main leader is ac- cused of orchestrating most of the sui- cide bombings of recent months and the assassination of the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

The 15-point draft of the accord, which was shown to The New York Times, called for an end to militant activity and an exchange of prisoners in return for the gradual withdrawal of the Pakistani military from part of the tribal region of South Waziristan.

With a weather pattern change due next week, be sure to enjoy the seasonable weather until late this week. So Friday looks like the warmest and sunniest day this weekend. This is the longest stretch of dry weather conditions.

Red Flagged and Chapped Lips

By Matthew L. Wald

WASHINGTON

The recent groundings of thou- sands of flights have raised flags about skipped airplane inspections and botched repairs to wiring.

But what really worries aviation officials is the explosion of an airplane "where we are most vulnerable at this moment is on the ground," the chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, Mark V. Rosenker, said: “To me, this is the most dangerous aspect of flying.”

For Airlines, Runways Growing Increasingly Dangerous

By Cegon Chan

NEW YORK TIMES

Not only a dry-tipped freshman in danger of failing a class—instead, it is in reference to yesterday’s dangerous fire weather conditions.

Red flag warnings are issued by the National Weather Service (the so-called "red zone") when conditions result in a majority of the following conditions occur: dry, strong winds, and approximately 10 or more days without precipitation. We certainly had that yesterday. The first two can be attributed to yesterday’s strong vertical mixing. This "homogenizing" process "drags" the air from 1 mile above towards the surface. Since the air above is almost always windier and dryer, this causes a divergence of humidity (with relative humidity declining near 10 percent) and wind gusts of 35 mph.

Of course, 11 straight days without any rain contributes to the dry soil moisture, which in turn could help fires spread. This is the longest stretch without even a trace of precipitation for over 7 months (since mid-September). We will likely extend the streak to lucky 13, with dry days expected for the next 5 days.


Tomorrow: Rain likely after midnight. Low around 40°F (5°C).

- - -

Some of the more sophisticated electronic systems are commercially available, but are not required by the FAA. They are merely improvements by the agency about a new genera- tion of equipment for navigation and surveillance appears to delay the widespread adoption of in-cockpit warning systems.

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The Credit Suisse Group, the Swiss banking giant, on Thursday reported a first-quarter loss nearly three times worse than analysts had expected as it wrote down $5.3 billion in assured investments.

The bank, based in Zurich, reported a net loss of $2.1 billion, or $2.10 per share, in the first quarter, compared with net income of $2.8 billion a year earlier.

"On balance, I was quite pleased" with the results, said Peter Thorne, an analyst with Helvea in London. "In this market, if an investment bank doesn’t report $20 billion of write-downs, you tend to be quite relieved."

Credit Suisse shares, which have fallen about 39 percent over the last 12 months, rose 2.2 francs, or 4.2 percent, to 54.75 francs in Zurich.

Analysts surveyed by Reuters had expected a loss of about 857 million francs in the first quarter as the bank set aside funds to address credit problems and write-off the deterioration in the value of assets. Credit Suisse said that it had not made any provisions for the loss of its large real estate holdings.

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You are invited to attend USP’s Seminar “A Vision for Sustainable Mailing Practices”

The impacts we each have on the environment are affected by our choice of vehicles, our life styles and even the mailing services we patronize. The USP Postal Service is the world’s largest provider of delivery services and has developed innovative programs to reduce its carbon footprint. Charles Vidich, Environmental Manager, Northeast Area, U. S. Postal Service will speak on these issues and answer your questions. April 25, Friday Noon to 1:00 PM, Room 56-114
http://www.usps.com/events/ Your ideas/suggestions encouraged. Charles.Vidich@usps.gov

The New York Times
By Elisabeth Bumiller

WASHINGTON

Shortly before 1 a.m. Thursday, there was a disparate wail at the back gate of B Company’s compound in Sadr City. A woman had been badly burned and her relatives were begging for help.

With little in the way of emergency services and travel hampered by blocked streets, nightly curfews and sporadic firesights, a steady trickle of Iraqis has been turning to the American soldiers here for medical care.

Medics who have turned away 500 combatants were attending to a seizure victim, an infant brought in by an anxious father and a woman wounded by gunfire. On Thursday, they cared for Samera Tula, who had been stung by so much of her body when a propane tank accidentally exploded.

Providing care to Iraqi civilians and soldiers “has been the excitement of being here so far,” said Spc. Joshua Besley, one of the medics here.

Wednesday had been a relatively quiet day at the base for the company, which is part of the 1st Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment. The American military, which moved into Sadr City to stop to the rocket attacks on the Green Zone and help the Iraqi government establish order, had organized a several-hour-long clinic that was staffed by several Iraqi doctors.

The medics were available to help in case of an emergency but did not participate. The calculation was that using an all-Iraqi medical staff would build the confidence of Sadr City residents in the Iraqi government.

More than 100 Iraqis showed up for treatment. In many cases, the care consisted of little more than a two-minute consultation and the dispensing of a packet of pills. But the residents in this impoverished warren of the Thameer district were grateful to have received that much.

By mid-afternoon, the clinic was over, the Iraqi doctors were gone and the American medics once again were the only health providers in the neighborhood.

The medics have been working out of a Styker armored vehicle that is specially configured as an ambulance.

Sadr City residents in the Iraqi government have been moving to corral restive elements of the Republican Party — be- hind his candidacy.

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Rent here and avoid an upfront broker fee and a security deposit. We’ll even give you $500 off your first month’s rent to help you settle in.

Using New Math, Clinton Contends She’s Ahead
By John M. Broder

Seizing on her Pennsylvania primary victory, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and her surrogates are renewing their efforts to have the dis-puted Michigan and Florida convention delegates seated and pushing the argument that she now leads in the total number of votes cast when the tallies in those two states are included.

The Democratic Party leadership does not recognize the results of those contests because the states broke party rules by holding early pri- mates. But on Thursday, a Michigan superdelegate supporting Clinton filed a complaint with the national Democratic Party demanding that at least half the state’s delegates be seated at the convention.

The complaint by Joel J. Ferguson, a developer in Lansing and a member of the Democratic National Committee, is similar to a plea from supporters of Clinton in Florida.

The DNC officials said they were reviewing the complaints, which will be considered by the party’s Rules and Bylaws Committee, which punished the states for their early primaries by denying their delega- tions seats at the national convention in August.

The effect is the latest by Clinton to capitalize on her victory in Pennsylvania and convince the 300 uncommitted party leaders that she has a right claim to the nomination. Pushing those efforts, she also met privately Wednesday and Thursday with uncommitted superdele- gates at Democratic Party headquarters in Washington, during a rare evening and morning off the campaign trail.

Credit Suisse Posts $2.1 Billion Loss
By David Jolly

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"The higher politicianscline the pole of ambition, the worse their areas we can see..."
Power From Space: Its Time Has Come

Rajit Patel

Last week, we saw a significant policy shift on greenhouse gas emissions when President Bush called for a halt in the growth of U.S. emissions by 2025 and urged other major polluting nations to develop national goals to address climate change. On the same day, South Korea’s president visited the U.S. to make a pitch to companies and investors to assist the country’s desire to become an energy producer. Following the discovery of deposits of gas hydrates — crystalline solids of methane and water molecules — off its coast last year, the country’s aspirations are understandable. They would, however, add to emissions from methane released during extraction. Gas hydrates have also been found in large quantities off the coasts of China, India, and Taiwan, all of which have increasing energy demands.

Against this backdrop, it is time we gave serious consideration to energy from space. It is an old idea and most of the information below is widely available from NASA research. It was initiated after the oil embargo of the mid-1970s when NASA, working with the DOE, began to study alternative energy sources to lessen dependence on foreign oil. Proposed space solar power (SSP) systems consist of photovoltaic (PV) arrays and mirrors, placed in a geostationary orbit. The energy could be converted and beamed to Earth as they would on Earth’s surface. The energy dependence on foreign oil. Proposed space solar power (SSP) systems can generate energy at a cost including cost of construction of 60 to 80 cents per kilowatt-hour at the outset. He believes that “15 to 25 years we can lower that cost to 7 to 10 cents per kWh.” The average cost of residential electricity was 9.66 cents per kWh in the U.S. in 2006. Admittedly, there are formidable challenges in making this work. However, historically, we have a great record in making technological advances even though our social and political advances have not been so stellar. We should examine SSP at the highest levels, nationally and internationally, because space solar power offers an energy from an unending source with no emissions and very little environmental impact. Furthermore, our current “solution” of switching to biofuels is increasing hunger around the world. First, there is the question of how to get the technology to the developing countries, and, the international carbon-credit market, created as part of the Kyoto Protocol, seems to be doing more for padding middlemen such as EcoSecurities whose founder is quoted as calling the market “skin to sub-prime,” thus combating global warming. It is indeed time to revisit a space-based solution for the world’s energy needs, both at the national and international levels.

The headline for an April 15 article discussing the Media Lab’s Center for Future Banking incorrectly identified Sloan Professor Dan Ariely as the lead of the new group. Ariely is a member of the group, which is directed by Deb K. Roy, associate professor of Media Arts and Sciences.

Opinion

Editorials

The editors are the official opinion of The Tech. They are written by the editorial board, which consists of Chairman Benjamin P. Gleitzman, Editor in Chief Nick Semenkovich, Managing Editor Jessica Witchley, and Opinion Editor Aditya Kohli, and Contributing Editor Rosa Cao.

The Tech makes no commitment to publish all the letters received.

Guest columns are opinion articles submitted by members of the MIT or local community and have the author’s name in italics. Columns without italics are written by Tech staff.

To Reach Us

The Tech’s telephone number is (617) 253-1541. E-mail is the easiest way to reach any member of our staff. If you are unsure whom to contact, send mail to general@the-tech.mit.edu, and it will be directed to the appropriate person. You can reach the editor in chief by e-mailing eic@tech.mit.edu. Please send press releases, requests for coverage, and information about errors that call for correction to news@the-tech.mit.edu. Letters to the editor should be sent to letters@the-tech.mit.edu. The Tech can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.the-tech.mit.edu.

Corrections

The entirety of this issue’s Opinion page was posted Tuesday and has been retracted due to an error in our page numbering.

Chairman
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THE TECH  April 25, 2008  Page 4
Letters To The Editor

Tech Should Not Protect Kras

Thomas Amet suggests that The Tech should have not published Artem Kras’ name to avoid a “witch hunt.” The term “witch hunt” distinctly implies an absence of “witches,” which is not the case here — there was a severe incident with an identifiable perpetrator, and the Committee on Discipline proved too impotent to effectively punish him. The Tech is acting as an important public servant by ensuring that Kras is roundly ridiculed for his actions, and is doing the COD’s job by ensuring that this kind of action does not go unpunished in our community.

Justin Wong’s ludicrous idea that we should “accommodate” other cultures’ intolerance is a total perversion of the concept of inclusivity. Inclusivity does not mean importune hate and bigotry which may be tolerated elsewhere; it means creating a welcoming environment for all students that allows us to draw the best and brightest from everywhere. If you’re going to threaten to send your classmate to the “resuscitation ward,” MIT does not want or need you.

Amal Dorai G

Olympics Frame Rights Debate

Recent Letters to the Editor concerning the Beijing Olympics have focused on the unfair treatment China has received in The Tech’s political cartoons. While I am generally unsympathetic to most of the claims advanced in these letters, I was struck by one sincerely flattering parallel between China and the current politics of the United States: namely, the subordination of human rights to the expedient resolution of the government’s political agenda.

If we are to believe the group letter printed last Friday, there exists a tension in China between the effort to modernize China economically and the political techniques used to ensure that the transition is orderly. In this analysis, human dignity is simply a cost item to be weighed against the seemingly limitless growth of the Chinese economy.

In America, the years since 9/11 have been marked by a sub-jugation of basic human rights to help secure the country against terrorists. In our prosecution of the War on Terror, we have demonstrated almost no restraint in our treatment of foreigners with anything of value to our security aims. We have also shown an ominous willingness to turn our security apparatus against U.S. citizens.

Indeed, there are two different situations — yet, sadly, they are symptomatic of the same illness that seeks to limit, measure, and compare a person’s dignity to and against other goals. As Americans, we should be particularly ashamed because we began our country with a declaration of the correct framework for human rights — that all men are created equal and are “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights.”

The Olympics provide a fitting backdrop to examine not only the human rights record of the host nation but the state of our own human rights. As Americans, we are sacrificing our liberty for the illusion of security. Ben Franklin tells us we will lose both and deserve neither. Similarly, for China, the words of RFK seem particularly poignant: “GDP does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our courage nor our wisdom, nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile, and it can tell us everything about America, except why we are proud to be Americans.”

So I hope the cartoons continue — and I applaud the directness of past cartoons. I hope the cartoons do offend because the situation being portrayed is offensive to all decent people. I hope students offended by the cartoons can learn to decouple criticism of the Chinese government from criticism of its people. I hope the Beijing Games give us a chance to change the repressive tactics being used against people everywhere, and I am very much looking forward to this summer’s Games.

Dwight Chambers G

Editor’s Note: Chambers also submitted the opinion comic above.

China’s Human Rights Improving

China has dramatically improved its basic human rights during the last thirty years, according to UN’s Human Development Index (HDI) report. Now China ranks 86 on the HDI report, while its GDP per capita ranks 124 in the world, which indicates (at least to me) that China is doing lots better on improving human rights than on developing its economy. China is willing to change and China is changing. Everyone in the world is witnessing the changes that China has been making.

Because China is such a huge country and there are 56 ethnic groups and 1.4 billion people, we cannot expect China change overnight. It is very difficult for the Chinese government to develop its economy and human rights while maintaining a stable social environment. As a Chinese student, I am very proud of Beijing holding the 2008 Olympic Games and I am happy to see any constructive suggestions and friendly criticism about China. I just do not understand the intention of some people who want to boycott the 2008 Olympic Games just because of China’s human rights problem. It is unfair.

Fei Chen G

Editor’s Note: Chen also submitted the opinion comic at left.

Give a damn? Let us know what’s on your mind!

letters@the-tech.mit.edu
Ever since Briton John Oliver appeared as a correspondent on The Daily Show, I’ve wanted to see more of his work, and have hoped to some day be able to talk to him. Thanks to a Comedy Central special, I got to do both this past week. On Sunday, Mr. Oliver happily agreed to be interviewed on his own stand-up special, “Terrifying Times,” in which he discussed the sadness that is world politics. Instead of crude humor, Mr. Oliver made intelligent observations about serious situations put in a comedic light. A few days before “Terrifying Times” aired, I was able to talk to Mr. Oliver over phone about his transition into comedy, his work on The Daily Show, and his new comedy special. Below is an excerpt.

The Tech. You went to Cambridge University. What was your major there and how did you go from Cambridge to comedy? John Oliver: I did English there, which was easy because I’m already English. So I was bound to be good at it. And there’s quite a famous comedy troupe there called the Footlights, which gave birth to Peter Cook and Monty Python and many, many other people. I was involved in that, so I started doing comedy there at Cambridge writing.

TT: You mentioned in the special that comedians don’t choose comedy until all the career dreams of their parents are in the gutter. Did you choose comedy before your parents’ dreams for you died? JO: What, were smashed? No, I think my dad probably real- ized that his dream for me was dying early. He desperately wanted me to become a football player. But I think it became pretty clear that I didn’t have the physical attributes for that … I guess by the time I got to university they had probably pretty much given up. I was putting all my eggs in one very shaky bas- ket. And I think they knew I was going to do something stupid, like try a career in comedy.

TT: And how did you transition from comedy to The Daily Show? JO: Well, I was writing and doing stand-up in London. And I’m not entirely sure how they heard of what I was doing over there … It’s the kind of thing you don’t want to ask too many questions about. I was flown over to meet them and I was of- fered a job on the show before I came here — I’d never been to America before I came here to work here. It happened fast. I can’t really explain it now.

TT: When you were doing comedy in England, did you al- ways do political humor? JO: Maybe not, I guess, when I started off. But as I got better at writing, I started writing about what I cared about, and I’ve always been interested in politics.

TT: How do you think your work has taken a more political humor, or was it more focused on English politics? JO: People in Europe and I guess around the world know more about American politics than Americans think they do. We have to because what happens here impacts our lives very directly. Especially in Britain with our special, special relation- ship. And don’t think we’re not grateful for that every morning as well. So, yeah, it’s very much touched on American policies because America runs the world in the way that we used to.

TT: Do you have any vices? JO: Vices! Not really. I don’t really drink. I don’t smoke. I’m emotionally repressed as any good British person is. So, I don’t do any of those things. I really like sport, and I could watch sport all day, everyday, and in fact, can get pretty close to that … I’m sort of as far from [John] Belushi that you can be without becoming a Mormon.

TT: What is it like being a Daily Show correspondent? JO: It’s great. It’s kind of my dream job, really. I guess my experience is slightly different because I’m a writer on the show as well. I come in at 9:00 every morning and we start the writ- ing meetings. So then, if I’m on the show, I’ll be writing some- thing for that. If I’m not, I’ll be writing something for somebody else.

TT: How are the correspondents chosen for each piece? Is there competition? JO: No, not competition. Usually we kind of decide as we’re coming up with the bit. Usually it’s pretty obvious who would be the best for it, then we’ll write for that person.

TT: Have you been surprised by your success on the show, and now having your own special? JO: Yeah, of course. I mean, when I first moved over here, my manager in England advised me not to sign a lease or rent lon- ger than a month because he reckoned I’d be fired within three weeks. So to be honest, anything from there became a surprise because my expectations were so low … I’ve been absolutely amazed by how it’s all gone, and I couldn’t be happier. I was fully expecting to be fired due to lack of talent and be back in England by now, by a long stretch.

TT: What are the biggest things that have surprised you about America and working on The Daily Show? JO: The food in America has different flavors than I’m used to. I’m used to one flavor in food, and that flavor is nothing. So having anything more than that has been a great surprise. And in terms of working on The Daily Show, it’s just quite strange the kind of guests you end up meeting. I met [Pervez] Musharraf, the current prime minister of Pakistan. It’s very strange on days like that. None of us can understand why he’s here. That’s true of all the candidates when they come on. You feel it’s just a cable comedy show. We work in a small office above a small studio and we just try to make each other laugh all day. And then all of a sudden someone running for leader of the free world will show up to do a five minute bit. It’s very strange. We tend to be quite an enclosed community on this show, so it’s hard to — we tend not to think about the wider implications of what we’re doing at all.

TT: I have to go back to the less political part of your answer, but what’s your favorite food? JO: I like Indian food a lot because I come from England and the food we eat more than anything else is Indian food. TT: Do you feel like Indian food is one of the better results of English imperialism? JO: Definitely. We got some great triumphs from our empire. Indian food, that was good. We also got carpets, and pretty much everything inside the British Museum was stolen. It’s basically like a warehouse for gangsters, the British Museum … There’s nothing in there that we genuinely legally own, other than per- haps the Magna Carta.

TT: In the special, you talk about being fascinated by an in- flatable barbeque in a mall. Do you like to visit malls? JO: No. Very much do not like visiting malls because they sap my will to live.

TT: Finally, where do you see yourself in five years? JO: I’d like to still be here. I got asked that a lot by jour- nalisits, I guess because what other people have gone on to do — like [Steve] Carell or [Stephen] Colbert, and I guess [Jack] Helms now. If I was doing anything else in America, I would be trying to get on a show. So now I’m just trying not to get fired. I just don’t want to leave, so I’ll very happily be here in five years.
MOVIE REVIEW ★★½
‘Baby Mama’ Delivers Laughs, But Gags Are Far From Newborn
Fey, Poehler and SNL Alums Fail to Make Film Edgy

By Alice Macdonald

Baby Mama
Written and Directed by Michael McCullers
Starring: Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, Sigourney Weaver and Greg Kinnear
Opened in New York April 11, 2008

My new favorite thing when looking up a movie is to read the plot keypads on IMDb. They are usually hilarious and often surprisingly able to sum up a movie. For example, the scene of Paul Rudd’s character, the new comedy starring Tina Fey, are “pregnancy,” “twist,” and “surrogate mother.” These three words are absolutely accurate; the movie is indeed about pregnancy and surrogacy, but it’s also about that one twist that pulls it out of place.

Single businesswoman Kate Holbrook (Tina Fey) explains the rules to her surrogate, working girl Angie Ostrowski (Amy Poehler), in “Baby Mama.”

Both Fey and Poehler are extremely likable — not only because almost everyone in the film is or has been on the show, but also because of the outright ridiculousness of some of the characters and scenarios. SNP bravely continues to do a less subtle style of comedy that lacks self-awareness and that has perhaps lost its edge in the last decade. Sometimes they still get it right, but that is typically with the digital shorts or political satire while the rest of the sketches fall short. I wonder if Baby Mama’s SNL-esque brand of comedy can hold up versus edgier fodder like the latest Judd Apatow flick, Forgetting Sarah Marshall.

In the end, Baby Mama isn’t half bad, but it’s nothing special either. It is hard to not recommend this film as it does succeed in making you laugh, but the idea is a little tiring and so are many of the gags.

MOVIE REVIEW ★★★
‘Sarah Marshall’ Formulaic, But Not Forgettable
Apatow’s Latest Heartwarming And Hilarious

By Samuel J. Cole

Forgetting Sarah Marshall
Directed by Nicholas Stoller
Written by Jason Segel
Starring: Jason Segel, Kristen Bell, Mila Kunis, and Russell Brand
Released by Universal Pictures
Rating: ★★★
Now Playing

Comedy movies of the past few years have progressively gravitated towards in-your-face outrageous laughs. Movies like Knocked Up, Superbad, and Walk Hard: the Dewey Cox Story have led the way to this new form of rated comedy. These films are a direct result of the success of these movies of this vein like 40 Year Old Virgin. People still get it right, but that is typically with the digital shorts or political satire while the rest of the sketches fall short. I wonder if Baby Mama’s SNL-esque brand of comedy can hold up versus edgier fodder like the latest Judd Apatow flick, Forgetting Sarah Marshall.

In the end, Baby Mama isn’t half bad, but it’s nothing special either. It is hard to not recommend this film as it does succeed in making you laugh, but the idea is a little tiring and so are many of the gags.

This movie is so far the funniest of 2008. You will likely not find another movie guaranteed to give you this many laughs until August when Judd Apatow’s next offering, The Pineapple Express, arrives. Even as Apatow’s formularia starts to show age and drag some scenes down, you’ll be totally happy with this movie by the time the hilarious extras start playing during the credits.

Matthew (Jonah Hill), Rachel (Mila Kunis), Peter (Jason Segel), Aldous (Russell Brand), and Sarah (Kristen Bell) share an awkward moment in a romantic disaster comedy that explores one guy’s quest to grow up and get over the heartbreak of being dumped in “Forgetting Sarah Marshall.”
Crossword Puzzle Solution, page 13

ACROSS
1 Indonesian island
5 Breakfast fast food
10 High cards
14 Lena of "Alias"
15 14th-cen. Russian ruler
16 Volcanic flow
17 Start of Evan Esar quip
19 Pre-owned
20 Soundtrack
21 Symbolic cross
22 Insignificant
23 Test for srs.
25 Pitcher Nolan
27 Part 2 of quip
35 Ex-QB Starr
36 Subj. for Billy Graham
37 Pop vocalist Bryson
38 Needle feature
39 Part 3 of quip
42 "The Bridge of San Luis __"
43 Goose genus
45 Common Market abbr.
46 Town near Caen
47 Part 4 of quip
51 Backside
52 __ de plume
53 Gemstone from Down Under
56 Bonkers
59 Audience divider
63 Long skirt
64 End of quip
66 Sweeping story
67 Actor Werner
68 Bread choices
69 Writer Ogden
70 Socialite Perle
71 Maneuverable, at sea

DOWN
1 __ Raton, FL
2 Slugger Moises
3 The Swedish Nightingale
4 Keen understanding
5 Half of MIV
6 Above
7 One-billionth: pref.
8 Open, as wine
9 Color fabric, '60s-style
10 Female graduates
11 Court proceeding
12 Of all time
13 Marquis de __
18 Mrs. Dithers of "Blondie"
24 To be in Toulon
26 Small snakes
27 Construction girder
28 Decline
29 Take by force
30 Actor Gibson
31 Paris passage
32 "The Sot-Weed Factor" author
33 Ancient manuscript markings
34 Spinning toys
39 Elder or alder
40 Playboy's founder, fondly
41 P.C. image
44 German bacteriologist
46 Somewhat arid
48 Kidnapper's demand
49 Dust-up memento
50 Crowd noise
53 Sign
54 Mama's mate
55 WWII losers
57 Clicking sounds
58 Box-score brief
60 Forage crop
61 Wolfish look
62 Latin being
65 Hurler's stat

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Solution on page 16.
Think you've solved it?

If you're an MIT student and your answer is correct, you could win a new iPod Nano! Go to libraries.mit.edu/puzzle to get a copy or submit your answer by May 5th, 2008 to be eligible for the drawing.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNER OF PUZZLE #5, JENN YOUNG!

1. 1850439753
2. 0231084129
3. 0292706928
4. 0132932261
5. 0813115299
6. 0863278604
7. 9050060412
8. 0853347948

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Dilbert® by Scott Adams

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SUMMER 2008

PROOF OF FALSE

by Andrew Spann

Doonesbury Flashbacks

by Garry Trudeau
MIT hosted the first ever Millennium Campus Conference with the Global Poverty Initiative this past weekend. For more information, visit http://gpi.mit.edu/.

(left) Senator John Edwards shares the news that Maria Sharapova, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Goodwill Ambassador, has invited NBA star LeBron James to “Team Up Against Poverty” on a new UNDP advertisement supporting eight Millennium Development Goals. Senator Edwards told the conference participants to follow the lead of these stars and help make poverty an issue of public concern.

(bottom) Paul Romer, one of the nation’s leading economists and developer of New Growth Theory, addressed the conference participants as the economics keynote speaker.

Sugarhill Ensemble Rocks Senior House

Don Byron’s Sugarhill Ensemble performed in the Senior House basement on Sunday, April 20.

(far left) Matthew M. Stevenson ’05 plays the trumpet.

(left) Raphael R. Peterson ’10 concentrates as he plays a guitar solo.

Photography by Omari Stephens
Piano, Like So Many Subjects, Is Dropped

pointed, most still enjoyed the experience. Vanessa Oler, a junior at Brigham Young University visiting her friend Lihua Bai ’09 said “it was awesome.” Asked whether they did anything like Piano Drop at BYU, Oler said “no, you get fined an exorbitant amount of money if you even touch the roof!”

In 1978, the Committee on Academic Performance proposed to move the eleventh week drop date back to the fifth week of the term, with one drop allowed afterward. The proposal was defeated by two votes at a faculty meeting.

Most students at Piano Drop voiced their appreciation for MIT’s comparatively late Drop Date. Said Huang, “it gives people options and flexibility, which I both like.”

So what sound does a grand piano make when it drops 6 storeys from the roof of a dorm, anyway?

“Thump.”

Shreys Sehanshi contributed reporting to this article.

Dance Till You Drop

The Campaign for Real Time performed at the MIT Burton Third Bombers’ annual DTYD party on April 20th, 2008.

MIT hackers hung a large bomber silhouette with the letters ‘DTYD’ in the middle of Lobby 7 on the morning of April 18. The letters refer to the large annual party of the same name.

“True loss is for him whose days have been spent in utter ignorance of his self.” — Baha’u’llah (b. 1817)

Provided by the MIT Baha’i Association
Full scholarships for science and technology students

The King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), a 21st century graduate-level, research university, is offering scholarships for future leaders in science, engineering, and technology. The benefits of the KAUST Discovery Scholarship include:

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KAUST Scholarships
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Phone: 713.621.6300 x23

Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick and Secretary Ian Bowles respond to questions after a major environmental policy address in Kresge Audiorium on Tuesday commemorating Earth Day.
Jessop Will Try To Overhaul UA Senate, Committee Structure

Elections, from Page 1

should report more frequently to the UA, Jessop said.

Current president emphasizes reform, collaboration

Jessop will inherit a UA which needs reform, collaboration with other organizations, and a relationship with the MIT administration, said the current president, Martin F. Holmes '08.

Holmes said his biggest mistake when he first became UA president about a year ago was immediately attacking a laundry list of policy goals — “micromanaging” — instead of delegating most of that work.

The UA also needs to collaborate with the Dormitory Council, the Interfraternity Council, and the Panhellenic Council, Holmes said. Administrators sometimes claim that the UA does not represent undergraduates because it does not include opinions from DormCon, the IFC, or Panhel, he said. By working closely with those groups, Holmes said he hopes to eliminate what he calls “the micromanaging” — instead of delegating a laundry list of policy goals about a year ago was immediately attacking a laundry list of policy goals.

To help understand how student opinions are used, Holmes said he wanted to hold a meeting to see if students first?

Noah S. Jessop ‘09, Undergraduate Association President-Elect.

One historical example that Holmes mentioned was the fall 1994 Strategic Housing Planning Committee, which considered a plan to turn East Campus and Senior House into graduate dormitories. The plan drew student opposition from the MIT community. A similar proposal met equally strong objections in spring 1980 and was withdrawn within two months.

UA approachability important

More people should use the UA’s office on the fourth floor of the Student Center, Jessop said. The office’s mission is to be a “microphone” for popular tech, and Student Information Processing Board offices, he said.

“The UA office needs to be a place that people go to think about these things,” he said.

Jessop said he wanted to hold “office hours” to encourage people to talk to him about student government. “I represent every single undergraduate,” he said.

In the meantime, he will start to implement some campaign promises. These short-term goals include staggering Saferide shuttles so that one leaves across the Harvard Bridge every fifteen minutes, and hiring people from SISP to redesign the UA’s oft-maligned Web site.

“There’s so much stuff just waiting for someone to push the button,” Jessop said.

UA Election Results

The UA elections are based on preferential voting, where voters rank one or more candidates and votes are tallied in rounds. The first round counts every vote for candidates ranked first and the candidate with the least votes is removed from the running. In the second round, second-place votes are tallied from ballots that ranked the losing candidates first. This process is repeated until a winner is determined.

Numbers added to the values below reflect the few people who voted by paper ballot.

Incumbents

Also Tech staff

SOURCE: UNDERGRADUATE ASSOCIATION ELECTION COMMISSION

Legalese Counsel

MIT students, employees and contractors may use the Legal Counsel for consultation. Call

James Dennis Leary, Esq.

Richard C. Macaulay Lodge

Solution to Crossword

January 5, 2009

The Tech

“Open House”

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N52-118
Bandit Runs 7 Miles In Wrestling Mask

male runner ran as a bandit in 1966, incite anger in some of the officially-registered competitors. One need only Google “marathon bandit” to read page after page of vitriolic, elitist screeds on various message boards. The basic argument (minus abundant grammar and spelling mistakes) boils down to this: “You loser, why can’t you qualify and pay up? Stop stealing our water and Guatorade!” If I knew you were running bandit, I’d trip you and kick you into the woods.”

So, before you all fire up your computers and begin crafting indig- nant letters to the editor, I will clarify the following points: We did not steal. We did not trip or block anyone. We started late enough in the day so the top 15,000 runners had already gone by. We did not gorge ourselves on free cups of water and electrolyte drinks, the street is wet and slippery. We crunch carefully through a carpet of discarded green Poland Springs cups. Everywhere, runners have slowed, watching their footing.

Two miles in, our legs are still fresh. I’ve been offered a can of Bud Light, two Twizzlers, and an orange slice. I’ve slapped countless hands and endured repeated shouts of “Na- cho Libre!” and “Viva Mexico!” from inebriated fans. There is laughter and pointing on every block. Our mission partially accomplished, the amuse- ment is palpable. Only a few recog- nize the owners of the masks we wear and call us by our rightful names.

Exchanges with runners are terse and direct. Some pass us, perhaps feeling the pull of the finish line. Others are walking on the sidelines. “Keep it up, almost there,” is the run- ner’s mantra. Numbers and registra- tions are now irrelevant. Placing one foot in front of the other and escaping from beneath the blanket of fatigue is the only thing on anyone’s mind. And then suddenly, inexplicably, we round a corner and the Boston skyline swings into view. We’re only a mile or two out, but the pain is be- ginning to set in. Another lesson: heat does not escape from one’s head when one’s head is wrapped in a mask.

We passed past Lansdowne Street and Fenway Park without even no- ticing, climbing the overpass above I-90. The spectators crowd the course, leaning over the guardrails, encouraging everyone to take every step. The cheering and screaming is deafening, more powerful than any drug; nobody is walking anymore.

The last mile passes as a blur, my vision narrowing to a dark tunnel. The air is full of tension and excite- ment. We climb a short hill and swing around to Boylston Street. The finish line is right there. Everyone is reaching for the energy they no longer have, and yet the distance closes glacially. The sidewalks are packed, leaving room only, and heads lean from every win- dow on every story.

And then we’re through. The staff at the finish line is smiling, congratu- lating, aware that we didn’t run the whole course but welcoming none- theless. After all, where would the marathon be without the occasional strangely-dressed bandit? I have no doubt that Bostonians would still watch until the end, but the marathon would lose its character.

Wrapped in shiny foil blankets, we painfully part-company for our apart- ments. I am sure that we will all run the Boston Marathon again, but per- haps from the starting line next time.

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Tuesday, May 6, 2008
12:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.
MIT
Bartos Theater, Wiesner Building, E15
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Refreshments will be served.

For more information, please call: 617-324-0094, email: btcrmn@mit.edu, or visit: http://www.masdar.ac.ae

Karl Taylor Compton Lecture

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources

Friday, April 25, 2008
3:30 pm
Steven and Michèle Kirsch Auditorium
Room 32-123
The Ray and Maria Stata Center at MIT

Bandit, from Page 1

stations, where armies of volunteers

their front lawns. Near the watering

street; residents are grilling on

street have been cheering for hours.

to breathe through a wrestling mask.

than they are. Second, it’s really hard

ered some 20 miles, we are no faster

runner in our vicinity had already cov-

21 wearing a wrestling mask of Mil Mascaras, a Mexican Wrestler.

Goodwin Chen ’04 runs bandit in the Boston Marathon on Monday, April 25 wearing a wrestling mask of Mil Mascaras, a Mexican Wrestler.
MADMEC 2008
Making and Designing Materials Engineering Contest
Materials Solutions for Alternative Energy
Proposal submissions are due April 25, in room 6-107.
Prizes: 1st place $10,000
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Yale Student Abortion Project Gets National Attention, Controversy

I never expected or thought anyone would pick up on that.

He said he vetoed the idea and talked to the student about problems such a project would create.

"Twenty years ago, you could still do experiments on yourself," said Dr. Silver, who has collaborated on a play about the episode with the playwright Jeremy Karken.

"But by the time I saw this student in 1994, science professors all knew that even an experiment on oneself had to be approved by our institutional review board. And it was very clear they would never approve."

Helaine Klasky, Yale's director of public affairs, said on Tuesday that the institutional review board looked at experiments, not art projects, and had found that Ms. Shvarts' project did not "fall into their category."

Dean Becker of Columbia recalled one student exhibition from her tenure at the Art Institute school that included a painting portraying the recently deceased Chicago mayor, Harold Washington, dressed in women's lingerie.

She said that some city aldermen came to the show to physically remove the painting, but then had to turn it over to the police, and later had to work out a settlement with the student for damaging his painting.

Another student work at the Chicago school that set off alarms, she said, was an American flag spread out on the floor. Thousands of people protested.

Exactly what Ms. Shvarts' actions were remains a mystery. In an opinion column on her project in the Yale newspaper on Friday, she spoke of the importance of "narrative as much out of curiosity about the art itself than about the art here is worth looking at."

In an earlier article in the paper, she said she had cleared her project with her instructor and another person. Peter Salovey, the dean of Yale College, issued a statement on Monday that said there had been "serious errors of judgment on the part of two individuals," and that "appropriate action has been taken."

But he did not say who the individuals were or what sanctions had been imposed.

Jeffrey Zuckerman, a Yale sophomore who was one of the few students at the senior art exhibition on Tuesday morning, said he had come as much out of curiosity about the controversy as about the art.

I did want to see if there would be a lot of media crowded here," he said. "But I do think that the other art here is worth looking at."

Yale officials still held out the possibility on Tuesday that Ms. Shvarts might sign a statement, and that she would come to the exhibition before it closed on May 1. But Ms. Reinstein, the spokeswoman, said she had contradicted the denial. "I was flabbergasted," he said in an interview on Tuesday. "It was a chimpanzee."

But her professor initially approved the idea, and she found two willing actors. When he pulled out, she said, "appropriately, they squealed the idea, prompting cries of censorship."

Ms. Shvarts might sign a statement, and the possibility on Tuesday that Ms. Shvarts had not signed a statement. "But I do think that the other art is worth looking at."

...
By Tamar Lewin

As e-mail messages, text messages and social network postings become nearly ubiquitous in the lives of teenagers, the informality of electronic communications is seeping into their schoolwork, a new study says.

Nearly two-thirds of 700 students surveyed said their e-communication style sometimes bled into school assignments, according to the study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, in partnership with the College Board’s National Commission on Writing. About half said they sometimes omitted proper punctuation and capitalization in schoolwork. A quarter said they had used emoticons like smiley faces. About a third said they had used text shortcuts like “LOL” for “laugh out loud.”

“I think this is not a worrisome issue at all,” said Richard Sterling, emeritus executive director of the National Writing Project, which aims to improve the teaching of writing. When e-mail shorthand — or for that matter, slang — appears in academic assignments, Professor Sterling said, it is an opportunity for teachers to explain that while such usages are acceptable in some contexts, they do not belong in schoolwork. And as the English language evolves, like starting sentences without a capital letter, may well become accepted practice.

“I think in the future, capitalization will disappear,” said Professor Sterling, who teaches at the University of California, Berkeley. In fact, he said, when his teenage son asked what the presence of the capital letter added to what the period at the end of the sentence signified, he had no answer.

The study is based on eight focus groups and the survey of 700 nationally representative children, ages 12 to 17, and their parents, conducted in 2007. The survey has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus five percentage points.

Schools are grappling with the language of electronic communication. At the Bank Street School for Children in Manhattan, Stanlee Brimberg has set up an electronic message board for his class. On it he posts nightly questions, assigning students to respond to one of the questions and then to respond to another student’s response.

“After the first night, we had to talk about whether they had to write the way they do in class, or whether it could be the way they do online,” said Mr. Brimberg, who is Bank Street’s upper school coordinator. “We decided that their response to the question should be in standard English, proofread, with capital letters, but their response to the other kid could be informal. And that worked.”

Most teenagers do not think of their e-mail messages, text messages and social network postings as “real writing,” the study found.

More than half of the teenagers surveyed had a profile on a social networking site like Facebook or MySpace, 27 percent had an online journal or blog and 11 percent had a personal Web site. Generally, girls dominated the teenage blogsphere and social networks.

Most teenagers write for school nearly every day, the study found, but most assignments are short. And as e-mail messages, text messages and social network postings as “real writing,” the study found.

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Andrew T. Lukman—The Tech

Dire Tune of Ethiopia (right), winner of the 2008 Boston Marathon, and runner-up Alevtina Biktimirova of Russia run neck-and-neck down Commonwealth Avenue on Monday morning. Tune finished in 2:25:27, two seconds ahead of Biktimirova in the closest women’s final in the race’s history.

Ken Van Tilburg ’11 serves his way to a 6-3, 6-2 victory over his opponent from Wheaton College on Saturday. Van Tilburg was named NEWMAC Singles Player of the Week, as he helped the Engineers win the match 9-0 to claim their tenth consecutive NEWMAC conference title.

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MIT

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### Efficient Offense, Man-to-Man Defense Help Propel sMITe to Wins

Efficient offense, man-to-man defense helped propel sMITe to wins in both softball and baseball over Springfield College.

#### Baseball

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, April 23, 2008</td>
<td>5-1</td>
<td>Springfield College (14-18, 5-7 NEWMAC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, April 20, 2008</td>
<td>7-5</td>
<td>Springfield College (14-19)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, April 20, 2008</td>
<td>7-0</td>
<td>2nd Varsity 8 (14-19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, April 20, 2008</td>
<td>7-0</td>
<td>2nd Varsity 8 (14-19)</td>
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<td>Springfiel d College (23-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Springfiel d College (22-13)</td>
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#### Track & Field

- Mattias S. Flander '11 competes in the men's triple jump at last Saturday's annual Spring Invitational, held at Steinbrenner Stadium. Flander placed second with a distance of 45'5.75".

#### Women's Lacrosse

- Mia Hull '11 scores two goals to help propel sMITe to a win over Springfield College (6-22, 2-12, NEWMAC) on Friday, April 18, 2008. Hull had a strong performance with two goals and an assist.

#### Women's Tennis

- Adreonna A. Bolger '09 wins the singles match against Trumbull College, 6-0, 6-0, on Saturday, April 20, 2008. Bolger's victory was crucial in securing the overall win for sMITe.
Game of the Week

Baseball Captures Win in First Game of NEWMAC Tournament

By James Kramer

Jay M. Turner '08 delivered his best start of the spring as MIT’s defense complemented his effort with a strong performance in the first round of the New England Women’s and Men’s Conference Baseball Tournament on Wednesday. The Engineers cruised past Springfield College 11-2. The third-seeded MIT remained in the winner’s bracket of the double-elimination tournament after the win, and traveled to face No. 2 Wheaton College yesterday afternoon.

MIT scored one run in each of the first two innings as Brian P. Doyle ’11 worked the basepaths for the Engineers’ initial score. Doyle advanced to third base on a balk, and then scored on a wild pitch. David M. Nole ’09 also displayed tremendous base-running skill in the second inning, stealing second base on route to scoring the game’s second run.

Springfield leveled the score with a pair of runs in the top of the third. Tim Romero ignited the spark with a single to center before scoring on John Schmaltz’s single to left. Two batters later, Luke Gabordi doubled down the right-field line to drive in another run. MIT worked out of the jam as Gabordi was caught stealing trying to take third base on a wild pitch.

MIT took back control in the bottom of the third with two runs of its own. Kevin Wheeler doubled to left center to drive home Benjamin T. Bersanti ’10 for the first run of the frame, and Thomas M. Phillips ’09 followed with a single to left field to leave the bases loaded. MIT scored one run in each of the next three frames, going on to win 11-2.

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