Hundreds Take Advantage of MIT’s New Commuter Subsidies

By Ramya Sankar

About 700 Institute employees have signed up for free transit passes through the Institute for the month of September. The free passes are part of a series of new commuting options being offered this year by MIT. Environmental impact and the growing MIT community are cited as reasons for the changes in commuting options, which include an increase in MBTA commuter rail subsidies and free transit passes for September for employees who park at MIT five days a week.

By offering free passes for a month, maybe more people will take this option,” said John DiFava, director of facilities and security. A total of 663 employees who would otherwise have signed up this year for the free September pass, 12 of which have been offered to get monthly transit passes, according to Larry Brutti, operations manager of the Parking and Transportation Office.

Last year, there were around 3,200 MIT employees who were full-time drivers, Brutti said.

The new initiative also includes a discount of 50 percent on monthly T passes for all zones. Previously, monthly T passes were offered on a sliding scale subsidy according to the zones travel time.

The changes will cost the Institute $70,000, all of which is coming out of the employee benefits fund. However, for each commuter that switches over to public transit, the Institute could save $3,000. The Institute leases 900 parking spaces off campus for $3,000 a year. If approximately 23 daily commuters switched over to taking public transportation, the program would pay for itself, Brutti said.

The new program is also looking at allowing commuters to park at the Lincoln Lab site and Wellesley campus, and then take the shuttle to the main campus. The Parking and Transportation Office has secured 20 parking spaces at the Lincoln Laboratory site and hopes to get 10 satellite parking spots at Wellesley by September, Brutti said.

The Parking and Transportation Web site, the number of parking spaces available is regulated by the City of Cambridge and the Clean Air Act of 1973, which allows for parking spaces for 9 percent of the commuting population.

These new incentives are being provided in order to cut down the carbon footprint of the MIT community as well as to accommodate the growth of the institute. “We want to be sensitive to the needs of the community and our carbon footprint,” DiFava said.

Nir Discusses GSC Goals, Challenges Facing First-Year Graduate Students

By Austin Chu

This is the fourth interview in a five-part series introducing incoming students to some of MIT’s faculty, staff, and student leaders. Today, The Tech features an interview with Oaz Nir, the president of the Graduate Student Council, who describes the GSC’s advocacy and offers advice to incoming graduate students.

Oaz Nir: Well, I’m in the Health Sciences and Technology program, which is a joint program between MIT and Harvard Med. School. I’ve been here for three years... For my undergraduate (education), I went to Duke University, where I majored in math and English.

TT: How have you found grad school, specifically grad school here at MIT, a different experience than your undergraduate years?

ON: I think the major difference between undergrad and a PhD program is that undergraduate life is a lot more structured. You’ve got classes to go to. You’ve got some flexibility in terms of choosing those classes, but your schedule day-to-day is in many ways set, to some extent.

In graduate school, things are way more free-form. It’s kind of up to you and your advisor to set research goals and to meet those. At the same time, though, I think there are a lot of similarities in terms of the ability to go out and do extra-curricular activities and do a lot more outside of the classroom and outside of academia.

Nir is the current Graduate Student Council President. Page 10

An Increase in Female Applicants Seen for Class of 2012 Admissions

By Arjvik Dey

In a college admissions cycle that saw many changes in financial aid packages and financial aid applications, the final admissions statistics and profile for the Class of 2012 remained comparable to previous years with the only sizable effect being an increase in female applicants to MIT.

The college admissions landscape saw two major changes: an increase in financial aid packages by MIT and other schools, and the removal of early application programs, the college said.

Nearly two-fifths of the class of 2012, 46% of the class, were female applicants.

“Female applicants pool remains more self-selecting,” Schmill said. “We admit the best students regardless of gender, and we are pleased that this turns out to be as balanced as it is.”

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For more information, see http://web.mit.edu/facilities/transportation/
Durable Goods Orders Defy Pessimists
By Catherine Rampel
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Orders for durable goods, a report that is considered an indicator of future manufacturing activity, defied analysts’ predictions in July and recorded its third consecutive monthly increase.

The increase was led by a sharp rise in transportation equipment, the U.S. Commerce Department said Wednesday.

“It was just one of those nice, unexpected summer surprises,” said Joseph Brusuelas, chief economist at Merk Mutual Funds. “It’s been a bad year for the economy, and any good news is welcome.”

The deltaount of the durable goods orders — products like cars, computers and aircraft, items that have a life expectancy of at least three years — increased 1.3 percent in July, matching a revised increase for June. Analysts had predicted that orders would remain flat in July, citing a recent Institute for Supply Management survey that showed overall manufacturing to be stagnating, as well as concerns that a slowdown in consumer spending would begin to hit the sector.

Rules Rolled Back Penalizing Companies for Legal Help
By Eric Lichtblau
THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Justice Department on Thursday will roll back a controversial set of rules that penalized companies if they insisted on paying employees’ legal fees or protecting their confidential communications with corporate lawyers. The new guidelines, officials said, will no longer allow federal prosecutors to indict a company that takes such measures with its employees.

Defense attorneys General Mark Filip is scheduled to announce the new policy on Thursday at the New York Stock Exchange, a site of strong symbolic importance because Wall Street firms and their lawyers have fought the old rules as onerous and unconstitutional.

“Penalizing a company for paying the legal fees of its employees is simply outrageous,” said Mercer Bullard, a securities law professor at the University of Mississippi Law School. “In cases where they say ‘we are going to bring down your company unless you waive attorney-client privilege,’ that has to stop.”

Seven Are Killed, Family Held Hostage in Kashmir
By Somil Senogpta
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Violence in Indian-controlled Kashmir flared anew on Wednesday as gunmen attacked an Indian army post near the city of Jammu and then barricaded themselves in a private home, waging a daylong battle and holding a family hostage.

According to the Indian army, at least seven people were killed, including two gunmen suspected of being militants. Four children were believed to be among those being held.

Indian security officials said that the attackers were militants who had entered from Pakistan and carried out a deadly rampage.

Some reports from Jammu indicated that shooting continued, throughout the day in a densely populated residential neighborhood, with soldiers firing on the gunmen holed up in a two-story house. By evening, security forces were negotiating with the gunmen on the rear of the house.

India and Pakistan have bitterly contested control of Kashmir since the partition of colonial India in 1947. Relations between them have strengthened in recent months, and the hostage-taking followed on the heels of violent protests by Hindu and Muslim groups in Jammu and Kashmir state, the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir.

More than 20;000 U.S. soldiers fighting the gunmen holed up in a two-story house. By evening, security forces were negotiating with the gunmen on the rear of the house.

Situation for Noon Eastern Daylight Time, Thursday, August 28, 2008

It was unclear how seriously McCain was considering his good friend, Lieberman, who favors abortion rights and whose selection could set off a revolt among deleg- ees at the Republican National Convention next week in Minne- apolis-St. Paul. As well as a furorous battle among Christian conserva- tives, a crucial voting bloc of the Republican Party. But as recently as Tuesday, McCain was said to still be entertaining the idea of Lieberman, who was Al Gore’s running mate on the Democratic presidential ticket in 2000.

Under this scenario, McCain’s choice of Lieberman would help him appeal to both Catholic and conservative Democrats in a tough year for Republican candidates. “It’s really alive in McCain’s mind,” said one Republican consultant familiar with some of the campaign’s deliberations.

Other Republicans said they sus- pected that whatever McCain’s per- sonal views, his aides could be push- ing Lieberman with reporters as part of a disinformation campaign to stir interest in the selection and to make it appear as if McCain, a longtime friend of Lieberman’s, could set off a revolt among deleg- ees at the Republican National Convention next week in Minne- apolis-St. Paul. As well as a furorous battle among Christian conserva- tives, a crucial voting bloc of the Republican Party. But as recently as Tuesday, McCain was said to still be entertaining the idea of Lieberman, who was Al Gore’s running mate on the Democratic presidential ticket in 2000.

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Defiant Envoy to NATO Gives Voice to New Russian Answer

By Clifford J. Levy
The New York Times

Here is one measure of the ag- gressive shift in Russian foreign policy in recent days. Dimitry O. Rogozin, Russia’s representative to NATO, is an aggressive nationalist who hung a poster of Stalin in his new ambassadorial office, is not someone to be taken lightly.

“There are two dates that have changed the strategic balance,” said Mr. Rogozin on Sept. 11, 2001, and Aug. 8, 2008; Rogozin said in an interview, explaining in detail how the Georgian conflict height- ened his commitment to arms control.-nated by NATO. “They are basically identical in terms of significance.”

Rogozin said he had told the United States to behave really differently in the world. “That is to say, Americans realized that even in their homes, they could not feel safe. They had to protect their interests, outside the boundaries of the U.S. For Rus- sia, it is the same thing.”

Only a few months ago, the blu- aly Rogozin, 44, was regarded even in the Kremlin as more performance artist than diplomat. Established of- ficials sometimes rolled their eyes when he was mentioned, so as to aknowledge that Vladimir V. Putin, Russia’s president at the time, had sent him to NATO to do a damage-control job. Later, talking to the West. 

After the Georgia conflict broke out, Rogozin said he would be “in business” as usual in relations with Russia, and in turn suspend- ed all talks on arms control and cooperation. The Kremlin refused from canceling all ties, but it has put Rogozin in a passive role to provide assistance in Afghanistan. Still, in comments this week, Medvedev has vowed to increase defense spending by 2013.

“We do not need illusions of retreat,” Rogozin said Monday. “We have nationally televised appearance of Rogozin. “When we are being sur- rounded by NATO, we have to protect ourselves on all sides, and a growing number of states are being drawn into the North Atlantic bloc, and we are being told, ‘Don’t worry, everything is all right,’ naturally we do not like it.”

“Thus they will have to take joint control of the province’s borders,” Rogozin said. “This would be stemming from a bitter dispute be- tween the Iraqi Islamists, which have been long-term dominant in Anbar, and the increasingly powerful Shiites who control forces backed by Americans. The Awakening Councils were drawn into the conflict from some of Sunni Arab insurgents who had fallen out with leaders of al-Qaeda in Mosopotamia, a homogenous Sunni Arab extremist group that American intelligence has concluded is foreign-led. The Awakening forces took up arms with the other group’s vio- lent tactics and religious extremism, and were paid by the American mili- tary to protect them in Anbar.

The councils are credited with helping turn the tide in the last round of fighting, and as a result, council leaders are being rewarded. The council’s chair has been specifically pronounced lately in the area west of Baghdad, where the Iraqi government scored scores of Awakening members.

As Raw Materials Costs Increase, Iraq’s Site That’s Rise Nationwide

By Kate Murphy
The New York Times

Sue Wester and her husband, Eu- gene, saved for five years, living in a low-income neighborhood of Houston, before they bought a house in January on a 4,300-square-foot house on 12 acres in Magnolia, Texas, a woody suburb about 40 miles northwest of the city. 

“The house was a mile- stone for American officials, who have said that reduced violence in the region shows that the partnership there with the local forces has been successful. The transfer will also be the first of the large American military bases in Baghdad, where there has been intense sectar- ian conflict. The other provincial councils have been shifted to Iraqi control but have not fully control the region. Instead, the councils are credited with helping security for at least a year, saying that Iraqi forces were not prepared to keep tight control of the province’s borders. The appeal was made even more urgent by the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the breakaway en- terrances, limiting access to a single security door with two deadbolts and no handle. “Now we lock it up ev- ery night, and when the contractors give the next one, they call it the key lock and tell us where we had the key.”

According to professional home- builders, law enforcement officials and security insurers, the Westers’ home is not unique. Lacreality at residential security systems across the country has increased significantly in the last two years because of soaring prices of fuel, which has increased the cost of lumber and cement, they said. The trend now has meant higher material and insur- ance costs for builders, who are often required to place them along to buyers, sometimes to the tune of tens of thousands of dol- lars. In the end, that can add as much as 10 percent to the cost of a home, builders and developers said. 

A cottage industry of guard ser- vices, surveillance devices and pri- vate investigators has emerged to find idle and unsupervised projects. "We do not need illusions of retreat," Rogozin said Monday. "We have nationally televised appearance of Rogozin. "When we are being sur- rounded by NATO, we have to protect ourselves on all sides, and a growing number of states are being drawn into the North Atlantic bloc, and we are being told, ‘Don’t worry, everything is all right,’ naturally we do not like it."

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**OPINION**

**Sororities at MIT Come as You Are**

By Alice Naval

Come as you are. Sororities at MIT are about finding a place where you feel comfortable—about finding a place where you feel as part of the community. Every sorority on campus has a distinct personality, yet all were founded with the same principles and a purpose. The reason for existing is the same: to provide a sense of community for women at MIT. Many have found a strong sisterhood with their sorority, and that experience has made all the difference in their lives at MIT. Below are a few of the reasons to consider joining a sorority.

**The Struggle for Peace in Lebanon**

By Alice Naval

Ever imagine how college life would be different in a university other than MIT — say, a school miles away in a Middle Eastern country? For a year, I visited a school right after student government elections. It was the same for an entire year of my life. I was never at home. I spent a lot of time getting anyone to come with me and see what MIT was like. I traveled around with my family and met to volunteer for the summer. I ran for Student Government and became a part of the student government community.

Sororities at MIT are not easy to understand while missing only my family. As a freshman, I organized a national- at-Burner 2K in DC. I was the first time since I walked in as a little freshman, I was part of the sorority of community and sisters.

I never felt so strongly that as when my sisters and friends were the most important friendship of my life. As a freshman, I organized a national- at-Burner 2K in DC. I was the first time since I walked in as a little freshman, I was part of the sorority of community and sisters.

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Fondling Follies

The angle is important for both guys and girls, and you should let your partner know when theta is just right. Embarrassing when someone turns on a light just to figure out the clasps. Usually, a simple inward push should work — especially if the girl is less busty. If she’s bustier, there are more hooks — so, work each hook one at a time if it seems too complicated to do it in one swoop. If she’s wearing a sports bra, that should be easy — just slip it over her head. Come on, guys, it’s simple, classical mechanics. Girls, if it’s taking too long, just help the guy out, unhook the bra yourself; I mean, come on, you do it every night.

After the bra comes off, here’s where a lot of guys mess up. There’s a difference between fondling and squeezing. Applying too much pressure doesn’t feel good — I’d even liken it to getting your ‘family jewels’ squeezed. So, follow the golden rule here, don’t grab or squeeze. Also, girls, guys don’t care much for anything done to their chest.

Now we’re getting to the bottom of this — the ‘private’ parts. First of all, for both genders, keep your nails well-groomed: no one wants to get scratched. Well-moisturized hands are also a luxury. Make sure the girl is well-lubed — otherwise, it just hurts. Start off slowly, don’t just jab a fist in there — that’s just proof porn lies. Also, that can be dangerous. Gynecological emergencies are unnecessarily embarrassing — getting injured while hooking up, while possibly funny, is not fun to explain to your parents if they’re footing the medical bill. Guys run the risk of less injury here — I’ve never heard of a handjob hospitalization. All guys masturbate — most give themselves a handjob on a regular basis. Because they masturbate, they know what they like. I encourage good communication here — each person’s anatomy is slightly different, and if something feels good, why not tell them? The angle is important for both guys and girls, and you should let your partner know when theta is just right. (If you’re worried that line is way too nerdy and proof of MIT’s effect on me.)

The prelude to sex doesn’t need to be awkward — it can actually be the best part. So, note where you threw your clothes, and just enjoy yourself.

WMBR’s Top Five Songs About Smack

5 — Iggy and the Stooges — “Lust for Life”
You probably know this as the song from those Royal Caribbean ads. But its about smack. And its not one of those deals where after the song becomes big, people on the internet talk about how it COULD be about smack — I’m looking at you “Hotel California.” The man sings “Yeah, I’ve had it in the ear before.” Just makes you wanna go cruisin’, doesn’t it?

4 — Spiritualized — “Lay Back in the Sun”
Maybe the most triumphant song about heroin ever written. J. Spaceman coos about the “fire” and “fever” inside him and seems downright giddy as he sings “gonna’ have me some good times girl / good dope, good fun.” When they came through Boston this summer, they played this song with backup vocals from a small gospel choir. It was AWESOME.

3 — Sonic Youth — “Junkie’s Promise”
Your music-nerd friend always talks about how awesome Sonic Youth is for the prelude to sex doesn’t need to be awkward — it can actually be the best part. So, note where you threw your clothes, and just enjoy yourself.

2 — Elliott Smith — “Needle in the Hay”
Best known from the suicide scene in “The Royal Tenenbaums,” this is a seriously haunting song about the life of a junkie. Strangely enough, it loses none of its gravitas when Kermit the Frog parody Sad Kermit covers it. Plus, in the parody music video, Kermit gives Rowlf head. Seriously. YouTube it.

1 — Velvet Underground — “Heroin”
Coming out of late 60s NYC, the VU attempted to bring dark subject matter prevalent in literature to the musical medium, which was comprised mostly of schlock. “Heroin” plays testament to their success, one of the innumerable ways they influenced all rock music to come. Even if THEY don’t know it, your favorite band owes its sound, in part, to the VU.

Disclaimer: Songs by grunge artists were disqualified for inclusion, not only because they overused the topic, but because now that Dugan graduated, no one can prevent me from refusing to acknowledge its existence as a musical genre. Songs by punk/shrill/hardXcore artists similarly excluded, because everyone already knows G.G. Allin was one scary mofo.

WMBR is the campus radio station — any student can join, be it to do a show or just check out our ridiculously large music library. E-mail gm@wmbr.org if you’re interested. And if that’s not your thing, you can listen to us at 88.1 FM or streaming at wmbr.org.
Steal My Comic

by Michael Ciuffo

The Daily Blunderbuss

Ad from Skymall

by Ben Peters

Theory of Pete

by Cai GoGwilt

Don’t let the cat get your tongue.

letters@tech.mit.edu
Figure 35. The graph shows the number of new friends per week made by an average incoming MIT student after orientation begins. The data shows a quasi-first order decay in the number of friends as a function of time (t_e is nearly -0.6 week^{-1}). The effect is both related to the exponential decrease in social activities after classes start and a similarly-shaped increase in workload (results not shown). Exceptions to the trend given by this figure can be found in the works by T. Earp and M. Charles (MIT Press, 2008).

Pseudoscience by Daniel Klein-Marcuschamer

ACROSS
1. Stay clear of (3,7)
7. Slightly cracked (6)
11. '70s rock duo, __ & Eddie (4,2)
14. Leon lady (4)
15. Diner's card (4)
16. Head feature (6)
17. Venus and Serena head-to-head (3,6)
19. Dr. of rap (4)
20. Cave feedback (4)
21. Prime cut (5)
23. Bloody (5)
26. '80s rock duo, __ & Patti (5)
28. Tax-sheltered $$ (4)
29. Onassis, to pals (4)
30. Gore to Clinton, and vice-versa (4)
31. Venus and Serena head-to-head (3,6)
32. Capital of Croatia (4)
34. Dish in a lab (4)
35. With (3)
36. Over the hill (3)
37. Sky's the limit (10)
39. Verdi heroine (4)
41. Tropical fruit (3)
42. Improbable victories (3)
44. Publishing preview (7)
48. Wager (4)
49. Prime cut (5)
50. Arduous journeys (8)
51. Baby's call (4)
52. Last (3)
53. Barn bird (4)
54. “Eyeless in __” author (10)
55. “Poison” singers Bell __ DeVoe (4)
56. Barn bird (4)
57. Preakness picks, perhaps (4)
60. Onassis, to pals (4)
61. Artillery burst (7)
62. School of the future? (4)
63. Rhine tributary (4)
64. Adverb (4)
66. Artillery burst (7)
67. The world is made of one-dimensional objects called “strings.” (10)

DOWN
1. Ballpark fig. (4)
2. Comprehend (3)
3. MSNBC rival (4)
4. Hive mind (4)
5. Cartman of “South Park” (4)
6. Old-time laundry device (4)
7. MD’s goos (3)
8. Sported on the waves, perhaps (10)
9. Very old (6)
10. Rhine tributary (4)
11. Felt hat with a brim (4)
12. Coffee catcher (4)
13. Spanish hot sulfur springs (4)
14. Head feature (6)
15. Head feature (6)
16. Head feature (6)
17. Head feature (6)
18. Forenoon (7)
19. Dr. of rap (4)
20. Cave feedback (4)
21. Prime cut (5)
22. Bloody (5)
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67. Bloody (5)
THE PROBLEM, Mike, is not that you’re overqualified for most of the jobs out there.
THE PROBLEM is that the only job you are qualified for is already taken... by your advisor.
He’s much better at it than you are...
and he’s never going to retire.

BASICALLY, you were out of a job before you started.

GREAT, I have a paid in obscurity.

GOODBYE SUMMER
GOODBYE SUMMER, no more sweltering heat...
FAREWELL SHORT LINES TO GET STUFF TO EAT.
SO LONG, NOISY SUMMER CAMP KIDS...
NO MORE UNDERGRAD FLYING TO RUN YOUR EXPERIMENTAL GRIPS.

GOODBYE SUMMER!

I WANT THIS PROJECT FINISHED BY NEXT WEEK.
NEXT WEEK? UGH!

IF I TELL UM HOW IMPOSSIBLE IT IS TO FINISH BY NEXT WEEK, WELL, THEN I’M INCOMPETENT.

BUT IF I COMPLAIN OF ALL THE ALL-NIGHTERS I’LL HAVE TO PULL TO ACTUALLY DO IT, HE’LL THINK I’M NOT COMMITTED TO THE PROJECT.

SURE, NO PROBLEM.

UHH, SOUNDS LIKE YOU DON’T HAVE ENOUGH TO DO. CAN YOU ALSO...

OTHER FORMS OF JETLAG:
DEADLINE-LAG: didn’t sleep well? sleep? Beer-lag: whizzzz! whizzzz! long-distance-relationship-lag: I love you! wanna go to sleep?

Advisor-lag: Your thesis progress is three years behind my expectations.

Mike, I’ve been trying for hours to get that machine you built to work.
Did you toggle the blue switch while juggling the power cord?

Nick Fick again juggle DING! perrrr...

Anythings else you forgot to tell me?

NO, DONT SO FOR YOUR PHD!
GSC President Talks About Council's Committees, Goals, Recent Successes

Oaz Nir G
Field: Health Sciences and Technology
Hometown: Saratoga, California
Year: 0
Past Experience: Editor of Graduate Student News, Secretary of the Graduate Student Council, Current Graduate Resident Tutor in Nextus
E-mail: oaz@mit.edu

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Closed
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Oaz Nir G, from Page 1 graduate students, that all we’re sup- posed to do is work in the lab. And in fact, I think it’s actually true that people’s work in the lab is improved if they have side interests and side hob- bies and get out and let their minds take a break, or at least use their minds in different ways. TT: What kind of side interests and hobbies have you gotten involved in? OW: I’ve been involved in the Graduate Student Council. I started out as the editor of the Graduate Student News magazine. … My reasons for getting involved in the GSN were really based on my interests in writing and journalism. At that point, I didn’t actually know that about much the Graduate Student Council, which publishes the GSN. Over the course of the year, I learned more about the stu- dent council and saw the really great things that it does and really important things for graduate students, and so I wanted to get more involved in that. I was secretary the subsequent year in 2007-2008, and this year I’m president. Besides the Graduate Student Council, which is a pretty time-con- suming endeavor, I’m also a GRT in Next House. There’s a really important thing that you’ve found at MIT that you wish you had known earlier in your time here? OW: Yeah, there are plenty, actu- ally. One, like I already mentioned, I wasn’t really aware of what the Graduate Student Council did during my first year here. I think that’s actu- ally something that falls on us to do a better job of making ourselves and making clear to students what we’re about and what we do. Furthermore, there are resources that I didn’t take advan- tage of at the beginning of my time here. One is the Careers Office. They have resources over here, but I think they have useful panels and workshops that can give you an idea of what you might want to do once you get out of school, and those are things that I wasn’t really aware of and didn’t take advantage of during my first year-and-a-half here. There are some more esoteric things that a lot of people aren’t aware of, like the Furniture Ex- change, which is over by MIT Mail Services (in Building W25), which provides pretty decent furniture for a pretty reasonable price — something that has been a lot of graduate stu- dents, especially ones moving into unfurnished apartments. TT: Is there any advice that you have for the graduate students who are serving this week? OW: Looking back to my experi- ence during my first year, I think it’s important to try to cast a wide net in terms of who you meet and who you’re able to learn from. I think it’s a common tendency for graduate stu- dents to stay within their lab group or within their department, in terms of the individuals they interact with. … There are many people here doing so many interesting things, and you can learn a lot from an area that may- be you think is different from yours. Cast a wide net in terms of who you try to meet [and] who you try to talk to, especially during the first couple months. TT: What do you think are the biggest challenges that graduate stu- dents face? OW: I’d say the primary thing is this misconception that gradu- ate students here are here just to do their research and just to work in the lab. There’s a lot more to do besides just research. … Living a more balanced life in terms of how you spend your time and where you devote your mental energies — simple things like get- ting some physical activity — really makes all of your different pieces work better together. You do better at ev- erything if you’re a little bit more diverse. I think that’s probably the single most important challenge fac- ing graduate students. It’s honestly true that the experi- ence of graduate students at MIT is tremendously varied. There are peo- ple coming in right out of undergrad- uate programs, people that have worked a couple of years, and there are people that have worked a couple of decades. … There are students that are married, students that are single, and students with families. TT: What are some of the major goals the GSC has for this upcoming year? OW: One of our primary goals is strengthening our interactions and our partnerships with different adminis- trators at MIT. At the top of that list is forming a strong relation- ship with the new dean for student life … and helping him understand what life is like for graduate students here and the diversity of experiences that graduate students have. There’s a new committee on stu- dent engagement that was formed at the end of last year. The GSC is committed to working within that committee and with the different ad- ministrators, undergraduate students, and faculty on that committee, to try to improve the level of input into dec- isions that are made. Beyond that, we have a lot of spec- ific goals. We’ve set up a task force on graduate housing and residential life. The motivation behind that is the new graduate dorm NW3 is opening up. … I’m happy how it turned out in the end, but along the way, there were some major hiccups in the communication process with the administration and with the specifi- cations for the rooms, the cost of the rooms. What we’re trying to do here is get on the ball early and figure out what graduate students want in the next graduate housing project. TT: We’ve also put together a second task force on alumni relations. We’re working with the Alumni Association, which does great work. The need that we’ve identified is that we need too many programs that the Alumni Asso- ciation has set up for graduate stu- dents with graduate student alumni. There could be a lot of value in seeing what alumni have done, and putting that career path they take, and what sort of advice can we glean from that. The concrete project for that task force is going to be a graduate stu- dent gift campaign, which is along the same lines as the senior class gift. We’re going to work in the fall to de- termine what the campaign should be for. A couple of ideas on the table are fellowships for graduate students, a fund for graduate student life, or the emergency general care fund that the GSC, the [Office of the Dean for Graduate Education], and MIT Den- tal Plan have sponsored. In terms of the core programs, we have four major standing committees. The Orientation committee, the Activities committee, the Academics, Research, and Center’s committee, and finally the Housing and Commu- nity Affairs committee. The titles of those committees are on the table, which do great work. The need that they’re responsible for … TT: What do graduate students care about what the GSC does? OW: The GSC really does some fundamentally important work on behalf of graduate students here. In addi- tion to aiding in the growth of graduate community through orientation and the activities we put on throughout the year, the GSC also performs a really fundamental advocacy role. The GSC is the group that gathers information on increases in the cost of living and argues for an appropri- ate increase in stipends to students. It’s hard to stress how important that is for the life and the quality of life for graduate students. Also, we’ve been involved — and one of our great successes of last year — is getting this dental plan for graduate students. That’s been a gap in terms of medical cov- erage for graduate students here. The establishment of that dental plan was in large part the work of the Hous- ing and Community Affairs commit- tee of the GSC, along with the support and very significant efforts of the Office of the Dean for Graduate Educa- tion and from Steve Lerman. TT: If students have concerns, where should they go? If students are interested in getting involved with the GSC, how do they start to get involved? OW: We have a pretty well de- signed Web site, gsc.mit.edu. If you go to there, it’s pretty clear how to submit feedback. In terms of getting involved in the GSC, there are many ways. The start- ing points for most people would be to either join as a representative, which means to choose someone who body … or to join one of our committees and do work within those boards. The latter options is as simple as looking up on the MIT Events Calen- dar when, say, the Student government of the Academics, Research, and Ca- reers committee is and just showing up to it. In terms of the former option, we have representatives in the communica- tions and from dorms, as well as several representatives that are either at large, or representing some interest groups. The process varies from de- partment to department, from dorm to dorm, but it basically involves gathering a petition of signatures and submitting that to the vice president.
By John A. Hawkinson

Over the summer, we at The Tech heard an article on the top 10 places in Russia and the country of Georgia. Curi- ous, I turned to the Times and Yahoo for some facts.

Stunningly, Google Maps has no data for Georgia. Several roads, no bodies of — oh wait, it does seem to have twenty or so small bodies of water. No rivers, though.

Compare this to Microsoft’s maps (see, say, Georgia’s capital). There are over a hundred locations marked in the in- tuitive view, and more as you zoom in.

(Incidentally, though, the Spy Di- vision over at Google seems to be working fine. If you click “Satellite,” you can see down to the 100-feet-1-inch scale, enough to distinguish individual automobiles. That’s the scale of the 900-feet-1-inch you can get for Dick Cheney’s house — no less “89.82-77.67.” Not quite as good as the 20-feet-1-inch you get in Cambridge, the Pentagon, or the White House.

With some prompting, we went and asked Google; this was back on August 28, 2008. Their initial response, via e-mail, was to affirm they’d made no changes and simply “do not have location data for Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Apparently some people thought Google might’ve deleted Georgia.” This at 9:50 a.m., Pacific.

As Google’s maps tend not to seem to believe in telephones over there, they declined to indicate when they might have this data, or why it hasn’t been a priority. Geo- graphic data, by the way, is home to 5 million people, and is slightly smaller than South Carolina.

It seems Google felt they could do a bit better, since that later day, at 5:49 p.m., they put up a blog post, googleblogging.blogspot. com/2008/08/is-google-on-google-maps.html.

Apparently the people at Google “simply weren’t satisfied with the map data we had available,” so they decided to get some more.

And of course, they hurried to assure us all that they had not ac- tually deleted the data — “they were simply not aware of it.”

They close by saying they’ve “started preparing... a country that is still a black hole. Doesn’t seem to be much progress in the past few years.”

Oh, well, there’s always Microsoft.

Legal Counsel

MIT students, faculty, employees and others wishing to use the MIT computer or campus office orkeley. Call (617) 253-3027.

Where Are the Cities Of Georgia? Google Maps Doesn’t Know

John Markoff

A legal dispute involving model railroad hobbyists has resulted in a settlement and promises the free software movement also known as open source. In a ruling Aug. 13, the federal appeals court in Washington said that because software programmer Mr. Katzer gave his work away did not mean it could not be patented.

The decision legitimizes the use of commercial contracts for the distribu- tion of software and the use of open-source digital artistic works for the public good.

The court believes the open-source movement by easing the concerns of large organizations about relying on open software from hobby- lists and hackers who have freely contrib- uted time and energy to software.

It also has implications for the Commons license, a frame- work for modifying and sharing cre- ative works that was developed in 2000 by Larry Lessig, a law profes- sor at Stanford.

That license is now used widely by open-source software distrib- uting courseware, and Wikipedia, the Web-based encyclopedia. In March, the European Union’s parliament re- leased a collection of musical tracks under the Commons license.

The ambiguity facing open- source licensing has been one of the hurdles facing the movement, said Joichi Ito, the chief executive of Cre- ative Commons. “From a practical business perspective, it’s a bug company, and their legal teams look at Creative Commons there are a number of questions,” he said. “It’s been one of the biggest hurdles the company is still trying to get over.”

The appeals court decision re- verses a San Francisco federal court ruling over the misappropriation of a software program by a company that publishes model train hobby software.

The free software, or open source, community has quarreled for sev- eral years with Matthew A. Katzer, a Portland, Ore., businessman who owns Kame Industries. Previously, Mr. Katzer has sued free software developers for patent infringement and the free software community has argued that he had failed to disclose earlier technology, known as prior art, in his patent filings.

A lawyer for Mr. Katzer did not return calls asking for comment.

In March 2006, Robert G. Jacob- sen, a physicist at the Univer- sity of California, Berkeley, filed a lawsuit against Mr. Katzer claim- ing that his company was distribut- ing a commercial software program that had taken software code from the Java Model Railroad Interface re- project and was redistributing the program without the required as part of the open-source license it was distributed under.

The decision to appeal the lower court ruling, which said that the terms of the open-source contract were overly broad, was intensely de- bated within the free software move- ment. Some open-source advocates had worried that a loss on the appeals court would have been a disas- ter for the community, which has grown as an economic force during the last quarter century.

“I was terrified that we would lose,” Mr. Jacobson said. “But I thought it was the right thing to do.”

There has long been a link be- tween model train hobbyists and the free software movement. During the 1950s, for example, hobbyists who worked on the wiring of the Mas- sachusetts Institute of Technology model railroad club project were in- formally known as “hackers,” accord- ing to “Hackers: Heroes of the Com- puter Revolution” by Steven Levy. The term evolved to include people who developed and programmed computers and who passionately be- lieved that software codes should be freely shared.

Mr. Jacobson said he believed that the court’s ruling was significant for the free software movement because it had thrived not on monetary gain but on individual credit for con- tributions.

“We don’t charge for this and so all we really get is credit,” he said, adding that anyone is free to use and modify the programming instructions created by his group as long as they return the credit and distribute them with the programmer’s instructions.

Solution to Crossword

Solution to Sudoku

MIT STUDENTS! Do you want FREE theater, music & dance tickets?...
Women’s novice openweight rowing coach Aaron Benson talks about the crew program with Allison C. Hinckley ’12 and Monica C. Oliver ’12 during the Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation Gateway on Wednesday at Rockwell Cage.

Sara R. Segal ’09, Eli A. Cohen ’10, and Matthew L. Fisher ’10 welcome Sarah R. Geller ’12 (right to left) to MIT with warm smiles and bagels at the Boston T Party Event in the Student Center on Wednesday.

Maria Brennan (first from left), Assistant Director of the International Students Office tells jokes at International Students Office Welcome Reception. The reception was attended by over two hundred international students.

Dr. Elizabeth Vogel Taylor talks about the chemistry program at MIT with freshman Rachel G. Chasin during the Academic Expo in Johnson Ice Rink on Wednesday.

French instructor Sabine Levet talks about the options for French studies at MIT with freshman Emavieve R. Coles during the Academic Expo in Johnson Ice Rink on Wednesday.

Freshmen Continue To Have Fun At Orientation Events