Random Hall Celebrates Its 40th Birthday With an Eclectic Party

By Jeff Guo

When it comes to repairs and maintenance, there is the feeling among residents that Random has always been passed over for its glamorous brethren on dorm row. So far, the pipes made vulgar noises, and the water was either freezing or scalding. The plumbing was so bad that once, it spilled sewage all over the first floor and basement. That same week, a chimney blockage forced a mass evacuation as bitter fumes flooded the dorm. In the ’90s, there were ramblings that Random would close for good.

“Random Hall is of official over-the-hill. If the candles on the dome didn’t make it obvious: Random Hall is officially over-the-hill,” Dave Pietro, a famous Massachusetts jazz player, stars in the Delta Upsilon Room.

Robert M. Wells ’08 Dies After Fall From Delta Upsilon Room

By Nick Semenkovich

Robert M. Wells ’08 died Saturday morning after a five-story fall from the Delta Upsilon fraternity house. His death, which has been characterized as accidental by friends and family, is under investigation. Wells was 22.

A call to 911 was placed from the DU house at 5:44 a.m. on Saturday, March 1, said Officer Eddy Chrispin, a spokesperson for the Boston Police Department. Chrispin said he did not know who placed the call. He said that “EMS responded … followed by police,” and that Wells was pronounced dead at the scene.

An autopsy is currently scheduled and results are expected in the next few days, said Chrispin. The police “don’t suspect foul play,” he said, but investigators have not made a final ruling. Chrispin said that alcohol was not suspected as a factor in Wells’ death.

In the fall 2004 subject Writing and Experience (21W.751), Wells wrote a piece titled “What Is Depression?” that outlined his personal struggles with bipolar disorder and atypical clinical depression. In the piece, which is posted online, Wells stressed that his death was accidental, not just language and custom, but how people experience the world at stunningly basic levels — what they see, how they hear, how they smell, for example, or even how they perceive a simple line in a square.

By Carey Goldberg

Differences Between East and West

East is East and West is West, and the difference between them is starting to turn up even on brain scans.

New brain research is adding high-tech evidence to what lower-tech psychology experiments have found for years: Culture can affect not just language and custom, but how people experience the world at

Robert M. Wells, editor in chief

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Brain

J. Mark Schuster PhD ’79

J. Mark Schuster PhD ’79, a professor of urban studies and planning who helped develop the field of urban cultural policy and who earned the respect of his peers, died on Feb. 25 as a result of complications from melanoma, according to the MIT News Office. He was 57.

According to Lawrence J. Vale SM ’88, professor and department head of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, “Mark had a special love for cities in times of festival.” He also studied the public policy behind urban cultural events.

In 1976, Schuster was a member of the committee that planned Boston’s bicentennial celebration. The committee founded First Night, an annual family-friendly Boston-wide cultural festival which takes place on New Year’s Eve. First Night has since expanded, with over 111 cities and towns participating, according to the First Night International Web site.

Samuel J. Keyser, professor emeritus of Linguistics and Philosophy and Special Assistant to the Chancellor, was a close friend of Schuster’s.

In an e-mail, he described his experience playing in a dixieland band that performs for the First Day Parade every year. “It is a marvelous experience riding up Boylston Street on a fire engine playing Dixieland to a crowd of sometimes as many as a million spectators, cheering,

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U.S. Forces Fire Missiles Into Somalia at a Kenyan Port
By Jeffrey Gettleman and Eric Schmitt
THE NEW YORK TIMES

American naval forces fired missiles into southern Somalia on Monday, aiming at what the Defense Department called terrorist targets.

Residents reached by telephone said six civilians were wounded, and that the only other casualties were three dead cows, one dead donkey and a partly destroyed house.

Bryan Whitman, a Pentagon spokesman in Washington, said the target was a “known al-Qaeda terrorist.”

The strike, which happened on Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, a Kenyan born in 1979 who is wanted by the FBI for questioning in the nearly simultaneous attacks in 2002 on a hotel in Mogadishu, Kenya, and on an Israeli Embassy in Nairobi, took off from three American Naval ships, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the strike.

An American military official said the naval attack Monday was carried out with at least two Tomahawk cruise missiles fired from a submarine. The official said the missiles were believed to have hit their targets.

Witnesses on the ground, though, described the attack differently.

Iran’s President, in Iraq, Calls for a U.S. Exit
By Solomon Moore and Mahdi Sekariya
THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, on the second day of his visit here, on Monday for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and said their presence was the root of Iraq’s instability and violence.

Ahmadinejad, the first Iranian president to come to Iraq since the two countries fought a brutal war in the 1980s, contended that Iraq is ready to assume full control of its affairs and that the presence of the U.S. military served its own national interests, and not Iraq’s goals.

“The people of this area get nothing from the occupation here except damage, sabotage, destruction, insults, and degradation for the people of this area,” said Ahmadinejad during a news conference in Baghdad on Monday. “All of the people here want those forces to go back home.”

Memo Gives Canada’s Account Of Meeting on Nafta
By Michael Luo
THE NEW YORK TIMES

The demands were full-throttle and overweening when Sen. Barack Obama’s campaign mobilized last week to refute a report that a senior campaign official had provided back-channel reassurances to the Canadian government soft-pedaling the candidate’s tough talk on the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Obama has raised NAFTA while campaigning in Ohio, where many blame the accord for an exodus of jobs, even agreeing at last week’s Democratic debate with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton that the United States should consider opting out of the accord if it could not be renegotiated.

But the memo surfaced Monday, obtained by the Associated Press, revealing Austan Goolsbee, a University of Chicago economics professor and Obama’s senior economic policy adviser, met with officials at the Canadian Embassy in Washington last month. According to the memo’s author, Joseph De Mora, a political and economic affairs ofﬁcer at the Canadian consulate in Chicago last month. According to the memo’s author, Joseph De Mora, a political and economic affairs ofﬁcer at the Canadian consulate in Chicago last month. According to the memo’s author, Joseph De Mora, a political and economic affairs ofﬁcer at the Canadian consulate in Chicago last month.

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Monumental Israel’s campaign was “throwing the kitchen sink at him.”

Clinton faces her own internal problems as reports of dysfunction and finger-pointing rumbled through her operation.

In an e-mail message sent over the weekend to The Los Angeles Times, Mark Penn, Clinton’s chief strategist and pollster, appeared to be distancing himself from the campaign’s operations when he said he had “no direct authority in the campaign.”

Penn described himself as merely “an outside message adviser with no campaign staff reporting to me.”

Penn is a long-time friend of Bill and Hillary Clinton and serves — as he invariably describes himself — as the campaign’s chief strategist. This means he is involved in directing the message presented by Clinton in her speeches and campaign advertisements, and the overall strategic thrust of the campaign. He has also often served as the voice of the campaign — appearing on television and giving interviews pressing Clinton’s cause.

Obama faced continuing questions on Monday about his relationship with the developer Arif Rizk, who is on trial in Chicago, accused of exploiting political relationships with the Illinois governor, Rod R. Blagojevich, to obtain millions of dollars in kickbacks on state contracts.

Obama is not implicated in any aspect of the case, but Rizk has contributed $150,000 over the years to Obama’s campaigns and helped him purchase a home at the same time. Rizk bought an adjoining strip of land he later sold to Obama.

Hamas Celebrates as Israeli Ground Forces Leave Gaza
By Taghreed El-Kholardy and Isabel Kershner
THE NEW YORK TIMES

As Israel withdrew its forces from the northern Gaza Strip on Monday after a two-day assault on Hamas militants, and as Palestinians emerged from days of barrages on Israel, the Israeli government said it had no claim to Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader, when his organization would hand over bodies of the Israeli soldiers that had been killed in the fighting.

Monday’s assault was “the source of reconstruction as well as resistance is precisely the message that local and regional officials claim to Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader, when his organization faced down Israeli attacks in the summer of 2006 through rocket barrages on Israel.

The latest surge in hostilities between Israel and militants in the Gaza Strip left 116 Palestinians dead, according to Dr. Moawiya Hassan Issam of the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza, making it the deadliest fighting in Gaza in a year. Two Israeli soldiers were killed in the fighting in northern Gaza on Saturday, and one Israeli civilian was killed last Wednesday by rocket fire in the border town of Sderot.

But more than 200 rockets have been fired at Israel since Wednesday, according to Israeli military officials, including at least 21 longer-range Katyusha-style rockets, which are manufactured outside Gaza and brought into the strip. Palestinians and Israelis see the use of those rockets as another illustration of the growing similarity between Hezbollah and Hamas, the militant Islamic organization that controls Gaza.

“We are very concerned that the role model for Hamas in Gaza is the Lebanese Hezbollah,” said Mark Regen, a spokesman for Israel’s prime minister Ehud Olmert, when asked about parallels between this conflict and the one with Hezbollah.

Rain Tuesday and Wednesday
By Angela Zalouha

Heavy showers during a cold front coming through the region will bring heavy rainfall Tuesday and Wednesday.

Visible satellite images show a cold front moving through the region on Monday, bringing a chance of rain Tuesday and Wednesday, with a high risk of thunderstorms.

The National Weather Service in New York City has issued a flood watch for the region, warning that areas that are prone to flooding could see significant flooding due to the heavy rainfall.

The service advises residents to be prepared for the possibility of flooding and to stay informed about the latest weather conditions.

The National Weather Service recommends that residents monitor local news and weather forecasts for updates and to take precautions such as avoiding low-lying areas and staying away from potential water hazards.

The service also advises that areas with low drainage systems or near bodies of water should be especially cautious and prepared for the potential for flooding.

The National Weather Service urges residents to be aware of the risks and to take appropriate measures to protect themselves and their property.

The service encourages residents to stay informed and to follow their local authorities’ recommendations for their safety.

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Investors’ Flight to Oil Pushes Price to a Record

By Ira Joedassow

NEW YORK TIMES

Massachusetts House Speaker Salvatore F. DiMasi stepped up his attacks Monday on Governor Deval Patrick’s proposal to license three new casinos in the state, saying that failing to do so would make his legislation “absurd.”

The Massachusetts House Speaker, who until now has said only that he was skeptical of Patrick’s plan, signaled that the speaker would likely veto any legislation that fell short of his proposed three-casino bill as the House plans hearings on the governor’s proposal.

“Governor’s arguments for casinos are clearly lacking credibility,” DiMasi said. “We are going to have to look at what the evidence is.”

DiMasi was reacting to a report published in Sunday’s Globe that detailed how such a casino project could create 10,000 jobs, from $3 billion in casino, restaurants, bars, and hotels, and buy $130.7 billion in the state, which adds up to a $160 billion economic impact.

The studies were described last Monday, in a briefing by Olli Heinonen, the agency’s senior Jesper confident. (The New York Times)

At the heart of “the atomic energy

Security Council Votes
for New Sanctions Against Iran


The Security Council on Monday adopted its third resolution imposing sanctions on Iran for its refusal to cease enriching uranium, an activity that the West suspects may be used to develop nuclear weapons.

The previous two measures gained unanimous support of the 15-member panel, but in Monday’s ballot, Russian abstained, saying it remained “to be convinced of the necessity” for its travel restrictions on the nuclear program.

Fourteen countries voted in favor.

In a thinly veiled criticism of Iran, the resolution described last Monday, in a briefing by Olli Heinonen, the agency’s senior Jesper confident. (The New York Times)

Good News or Not, Companies in U.S. Are Saving Piles of Cash

By Diana B. Henriques

The Federal Reserve, the central bank, tends to look at hard assets,” said Philip K. Verne, a principal at the consulting firm in Washington. “That’s going to be the main mover in the next few years, and the word is fields-barred flight as the House plans hearings on the governor’s proposal.

Europe’s Journey to the Center of the Space Station

By Warren L. Leary

Europe is set to significantly increase its involvement in the International Space Station with the launching of a large new spacecraft that is regularly supplying the station with fuel and other cargo.

The first of the new Automatic Transfer Vehicles, dubbed Jules Verne after the famous French author, is to lift off Sunday from a launch site in French Guiana on a week’s long flight to dock with the station in early April.

The almost 21-ton robot vessel, also known as the ATV, will be the first of several suppliers of life support and supplies for the station.

A Chinese executive has signed on for the same service with the European astronaut project.

Europe’s largest rocket, a beefed-up version of the Ariane 5 built by the commercial launch company ArianeSpace. Along with carrying more than 10 tons of experimental equipment, fuel, water, food and other supplies, Jules Verne represents a major new role and more responsibilities for Europe in the space station project.

Jean-Jacques Dordain, director general of the European Space Agency, said the inauguration of ATV flights — along with last month’s delivery of the science module and activation of a European control center — cements Europe’s major new role in space.

“Europe makes a fundamental contribution to the space station and space in general,” Dordain said of his organization, which represents 17 European nations. The supply vehicle, Columbus laboratory and other investments from Europe’s investment of more than $7 billion in the station project.

Antibiotics Questioned in Care at Life’s End

By Nicholas Bakalar

A year-long study is raising questions about the widespread use of antibiotics in nursing homes to treat patients with serious dementia.

The study found that two-thirds of the patients received antibiotics and that 40 percent of those patients received them in the last two weeks of life.

Antibiotics are often prescribed for illnesses against which they are ineffective, the authors say, but even when they are properly used, the elderly and frail can be particularly sensitive to antibiotics.

Intravenous administration of the drugs, common in the people in this study, can be extremely uncomfortable.

And there is the risk that widespread antibiotic use can lead to the emergence of drug-resistant germs, a significant and growing public health problem. Previous studies have found that as many as 40 percent of patients in nursing homes harbor drug-resistant bacteria.

For the study, The New England Journal of Medicine, researchers tracked antibiotic use among 214 patients in 21 nursing homes near Boston. Seventy percent had advanced Alzheimer’s disease, the rest had other kinds of severe dementia.

“T’ll rather spend my money on my genotype than a Bentley or an airplane,” said Stoicescu, 56, a biotechnology entrepreneur who retired two years ago after selling his company. He says he will check dis-
Opinion Policy

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

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.

Letters to the editor, columns, and editorial cartoons are written by individuals and represent the opinion of the author, not necessarily that of the newspaper. Electronic submissions are encouraged and should be sent to letters@the-tech.mit.edu. Hand copy submissions should be addressed to The Tech, P.O. Box 397029, Cambridge, Mass. 02319-7029, or sent by interdepartmental mail to Room W26-483. All submissions are due by 4:30 p.m. two days before the date of publication.

Letters, columns, and cartoons may also be posted on the Tech web site, and will not be returned. Letters, columns, and cartoons will be given higher priority. Once submitted, all letters become property of The Tech, and will not be returned. Letters, columns, and cartoons may also be posted on The Tech’s Web site and/or printed or published in any other format or medium now known or later that becomes known. The Tech makes no commitment to publish all the letters received.

To Reach Us

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Let’s be honest, February sucked. Here at MIT, we were subjected to absolutely miserable weather and the resumption of hell, which the administration innocently refers to as “classes.” In the real world, or at least the world outside MIT, we witnessed nightmares such as the Patriots losing the Super Bowl, Britney and Jamie Lynn spiraling downward faster than anyone thought possible, and, oh yeah — numerous foreign and domestic government issues. We can’t remember a time when the collective student body sported more frowns or played more emo music, and included in this sad state of affairs is *The Tech’s* staff.

So, in the spirit of healthy habits, we’ve decided to get a few things off our chests in the hopes that we’ll move on. At the very least, our psychotherapists will be pleased that we’ve transitioned from passive-aggressive to just aggressive.

**Never Say That Again**

By Caroline Huang

even heard a phrase that made you absolutely cringe inside? The most obvious offender this year was “Project Eagles,” but there are far more. Think of anything that Howard Stern says, particularly his F-word — feelings. In fact, I’m growing more kinder in the way I use this phrase, though I’m still not quite sure how it got started. It’s not that I’m kinder in the way I use other phrases, but this, I believe, is a trend in how we use this phrase. I believe that this phrase has become more popular because we use it more often and it is easier to use than other phrases. This is because it is a general phrase that can be used in a variety of situations, and it is easy to say. It is also a phrase that is commonly used by people of all ages, so it is easy to use in conversations with others.

**Woes of a Premed**

By S. Campbell Proehl

This past December, on a lonely afternoon in the building 12 Athena Cluster, I finally decided when I was interested.

I filled out my Prehealth Advisor Request Form, arrived at the Career Center, and sat down on the couch. “What are you interested in doing?” the career advisor asked.

I was interested in the world outside MIT, our witnessing nightmares such as the Patriots losing the Super Bowl, Britney and Jamie Lynn spiraling downward faster than anyone thought possible, and, oh yeah — numerous foreign and domestic government issues. We can’t remember a time when the collective student body sported more frowns or played more emo music, and included in this sad state of affairs is *The Tech’s* staff.

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**By Kevin Wang**

Food is a lot like Michael Bolton’s music — it’s kind of funny how bad it is at first, but after an extremely short while it gets old and absolutely kills you. I think that this is a large part of this is due to the unavoidable nature of college food. MIT is notoriously lacking in living accommodations, meaning that you end up eating out a lot. My advice is to really enjoy the meals.

**March 4, 2008**
By Charles Lin

My glove is lonely. I put him and his brother in my coat pocket when I threw my coat into the room with all the other coats. When I came back, I no longer had a pair of gloves. I had a glove. Uno. One. Singular. Sensation. This is not OK. I am devastated and I blame you for my catastrophic loss. Why? I saw the way you and your ilk were acting at that party. All cavorting around with your beer and cocktails as if you were the coolest thing in the world. Well I got news for you. There’s more to life than making six figures, having a bitching condo, summering at the Cape, and that thing you call “upward social mobility.” Course you probably knew this, and that’s why you stole my glove. That’s right, I know the truth about you. Deep down inside, underneath that svelte two-button chalk striped Burberry suit, lives a core of anguish. Beneath that fashionably angular lapel is a heart that yearns for something more than spinning circles in the wheel ruts of conformity. I can tell you want more out of life than speed dating young professionals in the Back Bay. You wake up every morning and say to yourself, “I feel so hollow inside. All I ever do is downsize companies and move money from column A to column B.”

This existential crisis has lead you into a world of petty thievery. Mergers and Acquisitions has made you numb to the twists and turns of the world, desensitized from everyday human emotion — you feel as if the walls are closing in on you, trapping you in the glass jar of 9 to 5 days and country club weekends. You had to lash out, it was only natural for you. You turned to stealing accessories from guests at cocktail parties. But it will never be enough. What’s next? Burglarizing bags? Picking pearls? Like an addict, you’ll only spiral deeper and deeper. Soon you’ll descend into securities fraud. You’ll get a rush of out of deserving the elderly.

Yes, I know the truth. Stealing my glove was a secret cry for help. You’re begging for someone to give your life direction, for someone to tell you “no” again. You’re sick of enablers. I understand you, I really do. Now can I have my glove back please? I’m a poor grad student. Steal from some one in your own tax bracket. I know why you came after me, you saw me as a threat. You saw someone living the carefree life of a grad student, no responsibilities, no money, no wants or desires. You saw it and you envied it, you desired it, and when you couldn’t have it, you sought to destroy it by slightly inconveniencing me.

Well, I got news for you buddy, your plan won’t work. You aren’t the first I-banker to crack like an egg and you won’t be the last. But there’s hope. Join the Peace Corps, go back to school, take up alternative medicine, I don’t care, just give me my glove back. I need it. My left hand is freezing.
The Daily Blunderbuss by Ben Peters

Famous Quote Explained

"An education from MIT is like drinking from a fire hose."

"But don't that suck?"

"Yea, I really dug why?

"Nevermind"

Steal My Comic by Michael Ciuffo

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FRANK ALWAYS TOOK THE "HEY MAN, I'M JUST PUNCHING"
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Blobbles by Jason Chan

Remember, this is how Blobbles works: send me a caption, and I make a drawing out of it. blobbles@mit.edu

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.

Su do ku

Solution, tips, and computer program at http://www.sudoku.com
### PLAN ON BEING SPONTANEOUS THIS SATURDAY.

One-way weekend fares as low as

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There are no blackout dates. We never add taxes or fees, so these are actual prices. Fares listed are one-way based on a roundtrip purchase. Don’t wait. Limited availability.

1-800-USA-RAIL • AMTRAK.COM
Senior House hosted the “Sr Haus Rocks” concert this past Saturday, March 1 in the Senior House basement.

(left) Matthew A. Robertson ’08, vocalist for Limited Slip, sings during the opening song in their set.

(counter-clockwise from above) Limited Slip guitarist Alexander A. Sanchez ’08 plays in the red glow of the set lighting.

Jonathan S. Krones ’07 and Balaji Mani ’10, bassist and drummer for The Pears, hit a note in sync.

Michael S. Fleder ’08 plays drums as Dugan K. Hayes ’08 (left) sings and Colin Hill ’08 (right) plays rhythm guitar during the Isothermals’ set.

The Pears are silhouetted as they change clothes and stretch just prior to the beginning of their set.

The Isothermals’ Dugan Hayes gives guitarist Colin Hill a turn on vocals.

Photography by Omari Stephens
Schuster Was a Devoted Thesis Advisor, Respected By Students

laughing, being together without the slightest hint of man’s inhumanity to man.” “Life offers those few such occasions,” he said. “I would guess that none of them know that the giver of that gift included Mark Schuster.”

Schuster was first diagnosed with metastatic melanoma four and a half years ago, but he confronted his illness “very bravely,” according to Bishwagriya Sanjay, a professor in Schuster’s department who became an associate professor with him in 1994. Schuster continued to regularly attend faculty meetings and allowed himself to be photographed even as his condition continued to deteriorate. John de Monchaux, also a DUSP professor, said that “he scarcely dropped any work here.”

He was “the most demanding critic of any idea,” said de Monchaux, who taught classes with Schuster. “He taught me an enormous amount in terms of rigor and logic, in terms of how you challenge conventional wisdom.” Although he could be very critical of others’ work, he challenged ideas so that “those who were supporting them would be able to hone them,” said de Monchaux. Offering his “laser-like capacity to detect flaws,” Schuster taught a Masters defense class for graduate students.

Schuster was also known for his excellence in teaching. In 1983, he won the Graduate Student Council Award for Outstanding Teaching, and in 2006 he won his department’s award for Excellence in Teaching, according to the News Office. Benjamin P. Solomon-Schwartz G, took two classes with Schuster and was his advisee until January. He said that “[Schuster] cared deeply about students in a way that took their work and interests seriously.” Solomon-Schwartz also added that, “Underneath his serious demeanor, he had a great sense of fun.”

Ben J. Stone G had Schuster as his master’s thesis advisor. Schuster “had very high expectations for his students,” according to Stone. He said that occasionally students were frustrated with Schuster’s high bar, but those students eventually found Schuster’s rigor to be well worth it — their theses were much stronger. According to Stone, students other than Schuster’s advisees often talked with him to discuss their theses; Schuster was known for being very accessible.

Schuster was actively involved in the Institute’s curriculum policy. He served as a member of the Task Force on the Educational Commons since 2004. He was also Chair of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program from 2003 to 2005.

Schuster enjoyed seeing plays with Keyser — they went out less than two days before he died. Keyser said that, “it was evident to everyone, Mark especially, that time was running out.” “But he spent that Saturday afternoon the way he would have had cancer not eaten away at his life.” “He lived until the light went out.”

J Mark Schuster is survived by his wife, Charlotte Harrison; his son, Luc; his daughter, Leigh; his stepdaughter, Alison Watkins; his broth-

er, Neil; and his former wife, Devon Davidson.

Memorial services have not yet been announced.

Thank you to Students, Faculty, Staff and Employees of M.I.T.

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Kaya Miller, the assistant dean of Fraternities, Sororities, and Independent Living Groups and Residential Life Programs, said that FSILGs have multiple safety inspections each year. Each FSILG in Boston is inspected by the fire department and the Boston Inspectional Services Department, said Miller. “Boston Fire does have to approve all loft[s] and ... sleeping area[s],” said Miller.

DU was “current in their inspection,” she said.

Miller also said that MIT likely would not issue additional restrictions on FSILGs. “[MIT] doesn’t get into the nuances of what exactly the building needs to be,” she said.

MIT has, however, altered on-campus housing for safety reasons before. In February 2004, MIT banned all flags and banners from the outsides of dormitory windows, allegedly because they posed a fire hazard. MIT also added window restraints — which allowed windows to open only 15 degrees — in the lounges of MacGregor House following the 1990 suicide of Youses Borki ’92. The restraints were strengthened in the summer of 1996 after the suicide of Melissa N. Ronge ’98. In January of 2000, MIT replaced the restraints with strong metal screens after the Feb. 1999 suicide of Michael P. Manley ’02.

Solution to Sudoku
from page 7

7 4 3 2 1 8 6 9
6 2 7 4 5 1 3 8
5 1 9 3 6 2 4 7
8 5 3 6 1 2 9 4
4 8 7 1 6 2 3 9
1 3 5 4 8 9 7 2
2 9 6 5 7 3 8 1
3 2 8 6 5 4 9 7
6 7 4 3 9 1 5 8
5 1 9 8 2 7 4 6

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Daily Meditation
"If we say religion is opposed to science, we lack knowledge of either true science or true religion, for both are founded upon the premises and conclusions of reason, and both must bear its test." - Abu’l-Baha

MIT Bahá’í Association

March 4, 2008
THE TECH
Page 11
Culture Shapes The Way Brains Interpret Shapes and Puzzles

Brain, from Page 1

for Brain Health at the University of Texas in Dallas. “The Westerner probably sees more, and the West- erner probably sees less, but in more detail.”

In January, researchers led by Troy Hudgens and John D. Gabrieli ’87 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology showed that such deeply ingrained habits of thought affect the brains of East Asians and Americans even as they perform simple tasks that involve estimating the length of a line. Hudgens’s experiment involved two tasks. In one, subjects eyeballed a line simply to estimate its length — a task that played to American strengths. In another, they estimated the line’s length relative to the size of a square — an easier task for the Asians.

Brain scanners measure levels of neural activity by tracking blood flow. The experiment found that though there was no difference in performance — the tasks were very easy — the level of activity in the subjects’ brains differed, suggesting different levels of effort.

Areas linked to attention lit up more in the Americans’ brains when they worked on the task they tend to find harder, estimating the line’s size relative to the square. In Asians, too, the attention areas lit up more during the harder task — estimating the line’s length without comparing it to the square.

Those findings, published in the journal Psychological Science, echo more than a decade of previous experimental research into East-West differences that are so fundamental that people tend not to be consciously aware of them. University of Michigan professor Richard E. Nisbett even wrote a 2003 book about it, “The Geography of Thought.”

But brain scan data add new light to such findings, said Hazel Rose Markus, a psychology professor at Stanford University who collaborat- ed on the Gabrieli paper. Brain find- ings may help people become aware of deep cultural differences that are normally “so much part of the water that we don’t see them,” she said.

Such differences have turned up in experiment after experiment. For example:

In one study, researchers offered people a choice among five pens: four red and one green. Easterners are likelier to choose a red pen, four red and one green. Eastern- ers are likelier to choose a red pen, while Westerners more often choose the green.

In an experiment measuring how well 8-year-olds could solve puzzles, American children performed best when solving puzzles they had chosen themselves, while Asian children performed best when solving puzzles they were told their mothers had cho- sen for them, Markus said. American children brought up in an independence-minded culture felt best when they were exercising free choice, she said; while the Asian children assumed that their mothers had their best interests at heart.

When they are tested on details of an underwater scene they recently viewed, Westerners tend to remember more about the biggest fish, while Easterners remember more about the scene’s background.

“Literally, our data suggest that people see different elements of pictures,” Park said. “If you’re look- ing at an elephant in the jungle, the Westerner will focus on the elephant and the Easterner is going to be more thinking about the jungle scene that has the elephant in it.”

Researchers use the terms East and West very roughly. West tends to mean American-raised people and others from independence-oriented European countries or Australia. East means East Asians — mainly Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese in research so far — as well as much of the rest of the world.

Researchers point out that the dif- ferences detected by psychological experiments and brain scans are not glaring; they are subtle but detectable trends. Also, individuals within cultures vary greatly, and gender dif- ferences can arise as well.

The brain research promises to add new precision to the earlier work. In January’s study, Gabrieli said, the scanning not only showed brain dif- ferences on the line-and-square task, it allowed researchers to begin to ask how deep those differences go.

Did Easterners actually see dif- ferently, at the level of perception, or just think differently? Based on what parts of the brain were activated dur- ing the task, Gabrieli believes every- one sees the same thing, but may filter it differently.

“Culture is not changing how you see the world, but rather how you think and interpret.”

And that could be good news: “If it changed how you saw the world, it would make the barrier higher for people to agree on what they are see- ing and talk with each other,” he said.

“If it’s in the thinking stage, even though our work suggests it’s harder work to see things from a different perspective, it’s much more within your reach.”

The older people get, it seems, the more pronounced those cultural dif- ferences become, as if the older you are, “the more you’re steeped in your own cultural mode of processing,” Park said. But that does not mean such habits are immutable. Some initial psychological studies suggest that when an Easterner goes West or vice versa, habits of thought and per- ception quickly begin to change.

So beyond perhaps helping de- fuse tensions a bit between cross- cultural roommates or spouses, does East-West brain research have real-world applications?

It could have implications for, say, Western mental healthcare workers trying to help Easterners. On a broader scale, researchers say, it might be useful in business schools for students preparing to work in East-West trade, to help clarify cul- ture gaps.

“Understanding cultural differ- ences in the mind is really important as the world globalizes,” Park said. “There can be a lot of breakdowns in communication.”

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Univ. of Kentucky Is Struggling to Squelch Net Rumors

By Samuel G. Freedman

Prof. Jeremy D. Popkin returned to his office at the University of Kentucky on Feb. 19 after teaching a lesson about Vichy France in his course on the Holocaust. During its 30 years on the curriculum, the class has grown perennially popular, with 60 applicants vying for half as many seats. The university has even created a Judaic Studies program.

Yet, when Professor Popkin opened his e-mail that day, he was informed that his class did not exist. “This week, the University of Kentucky removed the Holocaust from its school curriculum,” the message stated, “because it offended the Muslim population, which claims it never occurred.” All faculty members’ e-mail addresses from the history department were listed among the message’s recipients.

Over the past year, faculty members and administrators at the university’s main campus in Lexington have collectively received thousands of e-mail messages like this one, repeating the same baseless accusation — that pressure from Muslims had led the university to drop its Holocaust course. Like many who have sent these messages, the writer added her own preface to the one that appeared in Professor Popkin’s mailbox, writing in part: “I cannot see how you faculty can go to work each day and face a generation of young adults that will be lied to even more than my generation. What next? Are we going to rewrite the facts of 9/11 so that they fit the Middle Eastern belief?” This is simply shameful, and I am disgusted by it.”

Any university trades on its reputation, and in recent years, Kentucky has been trying to improve its own. It has vigorously deepened its academic programs and added to its faculty, in hopes of raising its national standing and proving itself to be more than just a perennial basketball powerhouse. The last thing it needs, university officials say, is this smear on its good name.

“Initially, you get a couple of e-mails that on the face of it are ludicrous,” said Jay Blanton, executive director of public relations and marketing for the university. “We thought, surely people aren’t going to take this preposterous rumor seriously. And then you see it doesn’t die, it persists.”

The university’s president, Lee T. Todd Jr., expressed similar consternation. “I understand quite well the power of the Internet,” he wrote in an e-mail message. “Information flows instantaneously without respect to somewhat arbitrary borders of geography or nation state. That’s a positive. In this instance, though, the University of Kentucky is experiencing the flip side of that power — the negative impact of an unfounded rumor that flows across a world seemingly without check. It’s disconcerting, although perhaps understandable in that context, that so many people would be the victim of a rumor so patently and obviously without merit.”

The false e-mail messages began in late April last year. A few weeks earlier, The Daily Telegraph in London had published an article online about a national commission in Britain recommending the best ways to teach difficult subject matter like the Holocaust. A subsequent article, also in The Telegraph, mentioned a school in Birmingham, England, that had dropped the Holocaust course for fear that it would incite anti-Semitic comments from Muslim students.

As those news reports made the e-mail rounds, one or several or many readers apparently mistook the suffix for British e-mail addresses, “.uk,” not to mean “United Kingdom,” but the “University of Kentucky.” The first version of the diatribe against the university began coursing through cyberspace, urging recipients to keep forwarding it until it reached “80 million people worldwide.” And the message began pouring into various other Listserv.

A rumor like this, said Kumble R. Subbaswamy, a physicist who is proud of the university, “can cause great problems.” “You can’t put the genie back in the bottle,” he continued. “It’s Kafkasque. Just when you think you’ve tamped it down, it shows up on another Listserv.”

The initial deluge of e-mail messages subsided by early last summer. By November, however, a slightly different incarnation began arriving in ever greater numbers. At that point, Mr. Blanton drafted a press release refuting the rumor and sent it throughout the educational and general media, as well as to individuals who had sent in complaints.

A few significant media outlets did their own coverage of the rumor. Yet despite articles in The Jerusalem Post and The Minneapolis Star-Tribune and an especially thorough investigation by the Web site snopes.com — and even despite a statement of Kentucky’s innocence from the Anti-Defamation League — people kept on forwarding the message. One can only speculate why. Mr. Blanton said he wondered if “people buy into stereotypes,” that Kentuckians are a bunch of ignorant hicks who would believe any rumor.

Professor Popkin suggested that the international visibility of Iran’s president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has called the Holocaust a “myth” and sponsored a conference of people who denied the mass extermination of Jews by the Nazi regime — may have somehow given undeserved authenticity to the idea that the university would stop teaching the course. And among some advocates of Jewish American causes, mostly but not entirely on the political right, there is a common view of universities as being inherently hostile to Israel and Jews, again making it seem possible that Kentucky would have dropped the class.

Meanwhile, the e-mail message now blame for something that never happened on people like Yahya Ahmed, a senior at Kentucky and president of the school’s chapter of the Muslim Student Association. “Something of this nature is not in our nature,” he said. “We’ve tried to promote unity on this campus, and this is detrimental.”

Mr. Ahmed has not taken Professor Popkin’s course. Then again, he has found other ways to educate himself. Last month, he went on a study trip to Israel. While in Jerusalem, he visited Yad Vashem, the memorial museum of the Holocaust.
over the rest of the field on day two of competition, as MIT climbed into second place.

The evening’s finals session was underway with the 200-yard medley relay, which saw a trio of teams touch the wall in NCAA “B” cut qualifying times. MIT’s quartet of Zhou, Racz, Charpentier and Cummings earned the Engineers maximum points with a winning mark of 1:33.02, giving all four athletes First Team All-Conference honors.

Coast Guard’s final had emerged his own men’s New England Open and Championship record with a blistering NCAA “B” cut finish of 4:04.13 in the 400-yard individual medley. Runner-up Jeffrey Meyer touched the wall in 4:09.76, earning Worcester Polytechnic Institute its first All-Conference honors of the weekend.

The 100-yard butterfly was won by Coast Guard’s Nick Finn in a time of 51.31 seconds, but the event was as dominated by MIT. At the time, the second-place finishers skimped their deficit behind leaders Coast Guard from 56 points all the way down to 28 points courtesy of placing five of the race’s top five finishers. Sophomore Zhou grabbed second place with a time of 51.52 seconds, while Engineers’ teammates George J. Rosick ’11, Deke Hu ’09, Sepp and Brendan M. Sullivan ’11 finished 4th, 6th, 8th and 9th, respectively.

However, Coast Guard’s lead was extended back to 40 in the next event, the 200-yard freestyle. Bears’ Senior Bobby Brown won the race in spectacular fashion, reaching an NCAA “A” cut and setting New England Open, Championship and pool records with a finish of 1:39.34. Run-ner-up Charlie and third-place finisher Dobson of MIT both met the NCAA “B” cut qualifying standard in the event.

Not to be outdone, MIT’s sophomore sensation Racz equaled Brown’s feat in the next event, the 100-yard breaststroke. He touched the wall in an NCAA “A” cut time of 56.40 seconds, setting New England Championship and pool standards in the process, while missing out on breaking his own New England Open record by just 0.04 seconds.

To finish Saturday’s finals session, MIT earned its second relay victory of the evening in the 800-yard freestyle relay. Dobson, Kelvin D. Kao ’08, Wellings and Charpentier again garnered First Team All-Conference plaudits with an NCAA “A” cut finishing time of 6:53.31.

Day 3

Coast Guard’s Brown got Sunday evening’s finals session underway in spectacular fashion for Coast Guard, finishing the 1,500-yard freestyle in a blistering 15:41.81. The time reached the NCAA “A” cut and also broke Brown’s own New England Open, Championship and pool records. He was pushed the entire way to the bell-lap by MIT’s Dobson, who finished closely behind in 15:46.70, also reaching the NCAA “A” cut and securing Second Team All-Conference accolades.

Springfield senior Burch then notched his fourth First Team All-Conference honor in the 100-yard freestyle, clocking in at 45:55 seconds to reach an NCAA “B” cut. Also reaching the “B” cut was MIT’s Charpentier, who secured Second Team accolades with a finish of 46.11 seconds.

The host Engineers made a splash in the next race, the 200-yard breaststroke, in which they took three of the top five spots. Sophomore Racz won the event with an NCAA “B” cut finish of 2:05.22, besting all of his competition by over four seconds and missing out on breaking his own New England Championship record by just 0.16 seconds. MIT’s duo of John R. Walk ’10 and Kao finished in fourth and fifth, respectively.

The three-meter diving competition belonged to Springfield, which placed first of the top five finishers. Ben Cashavant, who also won the one-meter event on Friday, scored highest with a mark of 543.60 points, while Brian Sobol earned Second Team All-Conference honors for a second time with a score of 519.85 points. Both divers’ tallies surpassed the previous New England Open record of 506.75 points.

With the result of the meet already decided heading into the weekend’s final race, the 400-yard freestyle relay, it would’ve been no surprise to see times trail off a bit. However, the desire of the competitors to give their all until the very end showed through, as Springfield’s quartet of Matt Manoni, Greg Pearsall, Anthony Bruno and Burch ended the Championships with a record-setting time of 3:04.62. The mark reached the NCAA “B” cut and established new Championship, Open and pool records. MIT’s relay team of Cum- mings, Wellings, Zhou and Pearsall nabbed Second Team accolades with a “B” cut time of 3:05.40.

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**Sports**

**Records Fall as Men’s Swimming and Diving Team Places Second**

By DAPER Staff

The men's swimming and diving team placed second at this year’s New England Women’s and Men’s Athletic Conference Swimming and Diving Championships this weekend held at MIT's Zeiger Pool. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy pulled away from the pack to win their third consecutive title, finishing the meet with a staggering 991 points, outdistancing second-place MIT (868) and third-place finisher Springfield College (741).

Day 1

The Coast Guard Academy led the pack after a record-setting first day on Friday. With NEWMAC Open, Championship and pool records, the Bear’s established an opening day lead with 304 total points, followed closely by Springfield College (276) and MIT (239). Springfield’s “A” 200-yard freestyle relay team of Matt Manoni, Roy Burch, Andrew Wlodek and Greg Pearsall set the pace for the evening session by opening the finals with a blistering NCAA “A” cut time of 1:22.63, setting NEWMAC Open, Championship and pool records. MIT’s top squad of Jeffrey Y. Zhou ’10, Luke R. Cummings ’10, Peter J. Wellings ’09 and Lauren Charpentier ’10 grabbed Second Team All-Conference accolades, touching the wall at 1:23.46, meeting the NCAA “B” cut standard.

Next up was the meet’s first individual event, with MIT freshman Michael J. Dobson ’11 winning the 500-yard freestyle in an NCAA “B” cut time of 4:32.91. Entering the race as the second-seeded, Dobson improved upon his preliminary time by nearly 10 seconds to beat out top-seeded Bobby Brown of Coast Guard, who finished as the runner-up. Brown’s preliminary split of 4:32.15 met the NCAA “A” cut as well as established new Championship and pool records.

More records fell in the 200-yard individual medley when Coast Guard senior Doug Fallon touched the wall first at 1:54.67, setting NEWMAC Open and Championship marks. In the 50-yard freestyle, Springfield’s Burch led the way with a new NEWMAC Championship record time of 26.71 seconds.

The story was the same as the divers took center stage, with Springfield grabbing both first-place and runner-up on the one-meter board. Senior Ben Causant took the honors as the winner, earning a score of 500.30, while his freshman teammate Brian Sobol finished second with a tally of 492.80.

Rounding out the first day of action was the 400-yard medley relay, which Coast Guard won with an NCAA “B” cut time of 3:26.43. MIT’s team of Zhou, Rantisich ‘10, Toomas J. Tuhkja ’11 and Cummings placed third, also making the “B” cut time.

Day 2

Coast Guard increased its lead over the Engineers, grabbing both first-place and runner-up finishes in the 50-yard butterfly.

**Women’s Tennis Team Sweeps Bates College**

By Jennifer A. Rees

The women’s tennis team swept Bates College 9-0 in their first match of the spring season last Saturday, bringing their overall record to 9-3. The team came into the match ranked 23rd in the nation.

The doubles teams started off the competition by winning all three of their matches, giving MIT the early lead. Leslie A. Hansen ’10 and Maria N. Hoover ’08 won 8-2, in the top doubles match against Alexander Pascuad and Caryn Benisch of Bates. Anisa A. McCree ’10 and Yi Wang ’09 won in a close match 8-6 at doubles, and Karenia N. Pihkariard ’09 and Melissa A. Diskin ’11 finished their match with a decisive 8-3 win.

The singles matches were more competitive. Four of the six singles matches went to the distance at three sets, all featured comebacks by MIT.

Hoover won a tough, four-hour match with a 7(4)-6(3), 6(7)-5, 2-6 victory over Pascuad. After falling behind 2-5 early in the first set, she made an amazing come back to win the set in a tie breaker.

Wang also won in a grueling match at three singles, 6-4, 1-6, 6-4. McCree pulled out an amazing come-from-behind victory with a 5-7, 6-2, 6-3 win, and Pihkariard rounded out the three set spree with a 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 victory.

While their teammates were in these long matches, Hansen (one singles) and Diskin (four singles) cruised through their matches in straight sets, 6-0, 6-1 and 6-3, 6-1 respectively.

In addition to the official nine matches, the teams played in exhibition matches. Jenny C. Dohilman ’11 and Kenny R. Weinberg ’10 lost a hard fought match doubles match 5-8, but Dohilman redeemed herself with an 8-4 victory in singles. Jennifer A. Rees ‘11 won her singles match 8-2.

**Upcoming Home Events**

**Wednesday, Mar. 5, 2008**

Men’s Tennis vs. Salem State College
4 p.m., duPont Tennis Courts

**Thursday, Mar. 6, 2008**

Men’s Volleyball vs. Southern Vermont College
7 p.m., Rockwell Cage

**The Tech's Athlete of the Week: Jimmy Bartolotta ’09**

MIT guard James M. “Jimmy” Bartolotta ’09 has been named Academic All-America First Team in men’s basketball in the 2008 ESPN The Magazine, as selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). Bartolotta was the only junior selected to the college division first team. The announcement came after Bartolotta was selected as a finalist for the Jostens Trophy.

Bartolotta averaged an Institute-record 23.9 points per game this season while moving into fourth place on the MIT all-time scoring list with 1,479 points. He finished the year as the New England Men’s and Women’s Athletic Conference scoring champion for the second consecutive season and was ranked among the conference leaders in every category.

Bartolotta’s nod marks MIT’s fifth selection this year. Since the program’s inception in 1952, MIT has totaled the fourth-highest membership across all NCAA divisions and is the all-time Division III leader with 139 Academic All-America honors.

He was also named one of ten finalists for the prestigious Jostens Trophy. A national award created by the Rotary Club of Salem, Va., the Jostens Trophy honors the most outstanding men’s and women’s Division III basketball players of the year, taking into account basketball ability, academic prowess and community service.

Bartolotta’s season ended last Wednesday when the men’s basketball team lost to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in the first round of the NEWMAC tournament.

—James Kramer, DAPER Staff