Ig Nobel Winner Shows Knuckle Cracking Won’t Cause Arthritis

By Byrda Seinu vlan

"Mother, I know you can hear me. Mother, you were wrong! And now that I have your attention, can I stop eating my broccoli, please?" Donald L. Unger raised his hands in mock rebellion. He had defied his mother’s words for three quarters of his life systematically cracking the knuckles on his left hand and leaving his right knuckles free for 60 years, demonstrating (if only anecdotaly) that knuckle cracking does not cause arthritis. For this achievement, he won himself the Ig Nobel Award in Medicine at the 19th First Annual Ig Nobel Prize ceremoney yesterday evening. The event, which was held at the Sanders Theater on Harvard Campus, awarded Unger and nine other scientists in various fields for their scientific creativity. In the words of Mary Abraham, Ig Nobel Prize committee, "The Ig Nobel Prizes are awarded to scientists for ‘achieve-ments that first make people laugh, then think.’" Ig Nobel Prizes are awarded in all the same categories as the higher-profile Nobels — physics, chemistry, medicine, economics, peace and literature — as well as four additional categories: public health, biology, mathematics, and veterinary medicine.

Unlike the Nobel Prizes, Ig Nobels allow prizewinners to show the audience their inventions and discoveries. Elena N. Bodnar, recipient of the Ig Nobel Prize for Public Health, demonstrated her brainchild: a brassiere that can be converted into a pair of gas masks. Using Nobel Laureates Wolfgang Pauli, médicine, economics, peace and li-tature — as well as four additional categories: public health, biology, mathematics, and veterinary medi-cine.

While wearing a brassiere over his mouth, Professor of Physics Wolf-gang Ketterle, recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2001, gives two thumbs up to the winner of this year’s Ig Nobel Public Health Prize. The work of Dr. Elena N. Bodnar, created a bra that can be taken off and used as a "gas mask" in the event of an emergency.

Class Council, Senate Elections End Today

By Meghan Nelson

Elections for the UA Senate and the 2013 Freshman Class Council have been ongoing this week and end today.

Online voting, which began on September 26, ended last night, but students who have not yet had a chance to vote can do so with paper ballots today from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Lobby 10. Election results will be announced tomorrow via e-mail.

This year the number of senate seats allocated to fraternities rose to six from five and the number of seats given to sororities rose to two from one, due to increased membership in both types of organizations, said Harrison L. Bradlower ’11, UA Election Commission vice chair.

Four candidates are running for freshman class president: Danielle A. Class, Bryan H. Lee, Dalitso Nk-homa, Ignazii ‘Iggy’ Chen. Ryan T. Normandin (also a Tech staffer), whose name is listed as a candidate for president, is running instead for Mac-Gregor Senator.

While about the same number of freshmen are running this year compared with previous years, Bral-ower said that this year is unusual in that all the presidential and vice presidential candidates are running as individuals as opposed to paired tickets, which has been common in past years.

All presidential candidates have expressed a desire to unite their class. Daniel Class wants to organize trips for the class and event with all class members together: “I don’t want people to get this year say-ing they just met someone awesome they didn’t know before.”

Nk-homa said that as class council president she would “try to make

Media Lab Construction Is Scheduled To Finish in Nov., MIT Facilities Says

By Byrda Seinu vlan

Construction of the new Media Lab is on track to finish in Novem-ber, according to Arne Abramson, who is managing the project.

Meanwhile, steam pipes are being replaced on Amherst Alley, a project that did not finish some-what over the next week, according to the MIT Facilities website. Normal hours for construction have been from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., but in the finishing touches are put on the new facility, Abramson said people should expect more weekend construction to take place.

Media Lab construction began in June 2007. When complete, the new facility will connect to E15, the lab’s current home, will add 163,000 square feet of space, and will be shared by several programs, including Visual Arts and Comparative Studies.

The building includes lab space, meeting rooms, and office space arranged in an open layout designed to allow different groups to interact freely, according to the MIT Facilities website. Exhibit space is also planned.

Construction noise has disturbed some residents of East Campus’s east parallel. Anthony J. Tortorello ’10 said, “I used to live street-side when they had pilere going. It kind of affected my studies. Like when the vibration shook the table so much that my monitor fell off.”

Some residents, especially those whose rooms face east, toward the construction site, have been woken up in the morning by construction.

Construction has been less disruptive to students whose rooms are directly above the construction site, said Jessica C. Agat-stem ’12 said. “I’m fairly indifferent, but I know that it has bothered some people in the dorm.”

Complaints related to construction on Amherst Alley mostly concern the lack of a sidewalk for a portion of the street, where biker and pedestrians must share a narrow space. Jeremias J. Noordhoek ’11, who rides a bike to class says, “In the morning, when I’m trying to get to class on time, I have to stop and wait for people to walk by. There’s just no room.”

The same answers at the State of Institute

MIT President Susan J. Hockfield delivered a 20-minute overview of the Institute’s financial climate in front of several hundred staff and a few students at the State of the Institute forum. Hockfield closed an intent to finish MIT’s $130 million in budget cuts in two years, rather than the three years initially proposed by the administration in 2008. Following this speech, administrators addressed both pre-submitted and impromptu questions from the audience (select questions, p. 13).

Hockfield’s remarks, though targeted at staff rather than students or faculty, were similar to those provided to the Faculty at the Sept. 16 Faculty meeting, as well as the opening remarks at the two
Poll Suggests Decline in Support For a Right to Abortion

By Laurie Goodstein

For most of the last two decades, a clear majority of Americans has supported the right to abortion. A new poll, though, suggests that support for abortion may have declined, with the public almost evenly divided over the issue.

The apparent shift, which contradicts some other recent polls, appears in a poll by the Pew Research Center released on Thursday. A 2008 poll by the same organization found that in favor of keeping abortion legal outnumbered opponents, 54 percent to 40 percent. In the new Pew poll, the gap between 47 percent of those surveyed said abortion should be legal in all or most cases, and 45 percent said it should be illegal in all or most cases — a difference within the poll’s margin of sampling error.

The survey’s findings also reflect the debate over the issue in Congress. In a letter released on Thursday, for example, 135 women’s groups urged the Senate Judiciary Committee to reject nominations for positions on the federal courts, including the Supreme Court, in the absence of a commitment to protect abortion rights.

It’s Raining Pumpkins!

By Allison A. Wing

There’s been a flurry over the last few weeks, it seems. The first and, perhaps, most likely reason is that we’re coming into the Thanksgiving season. This is a time when people start to think about their holiday plans and what they’re going to give their loved ones. It’s also the time when pumpkin sales start to pick up. As a result, we might see a surge in pumpkin-related activities, such as pumpkin-carving parties or pumpkin festivals. The second reason is that pumpkin is a popular fall treat. It’s often used in desserts, such as pumpkin pie or pumpkin cookies, and in drinks, such as pumpkin spice lattes. This, in turn, might lead to a spike in pumpkin-related sales or sales of pumpkin-flavored products.

Extended Forecast

Today: Mostly cloudy with a high of 71°F (21°C). Winds 10 to 15 mph.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy with a low of 59°F (15°C). Winds 5 to 10 mph.

Wednesday: Partly cloudy with a high of 62°F (17°C). Winds 5 to 10 mph.

Thursday: Partly cloudy with a low of 56°F (13°C). Winds 5 to 10 mph.

Friday: Mostly cloudy with a high of 68°F (20°C). Winds 10 to 15 mph.

Saturday: Mostly cloudy with a low of 57°F (14°C).

The weather outlook is for generally pleasant conditions with temperatures in the low 70s. The main uncertainty is the wind direction, which could be variable. The National Weather Service is predicting a high of 71°F and a low of 59°F.

New Fossil Skeleton from Africa Predates Lucy

By John Noble Wilford

Lucy, meet Ard. And, Ard, meet Lucy. Ardipithecus ramidus, the newest fossil skeleton out of Africa to take its place in the gallery of human origins. At an age of 4.4 million years, it lived well before Lucy, the famous 3.2-million-year-old Lucy of the species Australopithecus afarensis. Since finding fragments of the older hominin in 1992, an international team of scientists has been sequencing its genome. So when they presented on Thursday at a partially complete skeleton and its first full analysis. By replacing the earliest known skeleton from the human branch of the primate family tree, the scientists said, Ard has opened a window to “the early evolutionary steps that our ancestors took out of Africa.”

China Celebrates Worldless On Traumas in Their Past

By Andrew Jacobs

In China, where the People’s Liberation Army opened “the early evolutionary stage of primates,” the scientists said, Ardi opened a window to “the early evolutionary stage of primates.”

Unusual in other cities taken by the People’s Liberation Army during China’s civil war, there were no crowds to greet the victors as they made their triumphant march through the streets of this industrial city in the heart of Manchuria.

Even before they learned that hostilities with Chiang Kai-sheh’s Nationalists had come to an end, most residents — the ones who had not died during the five-month siege — were simply too weak to go outdoors. “We were just lying in bed starving to death,” said Zhang Yinghua, now 86, as she recalled the famine that claimed the lives of her brother, her sister and most of her neighbors. “We couldn’t even care for the children.”

In what China’s history books hail as one of the war’s decisive victories, Mao’s troops moved out the formidable Nationalist garrison that occupied Changchun with nary a shot fired. What the story line does not reveal is that about 160,000 civilians also died during the siege of the northeastern city, which lasted from June to October of 1948.

The People’s Republic of China basked in its 60th anniversary on Thursday with jaw-dropping pageantry, but there were no solemn parades for the lives lost during the Communist Party’s rise to power — not for the estimated tens of millions of people who died during the civil war, nor for the millions of landlords, Nationalist sympathizers and other perceived enemies who were eradicated during Mao’s fight to consolidate power.

“Changchun was like Hiroshima,” wrote Zhang Zhenglu, a lieutenant colonel in the People’s Liberation Army who documented the siege in “White Snow, Red Blood,” a book that was immediately banned after publication in 1989. “The casualties were about the same. Hiroshima took nine seconds, Changchun took five months.”

The 49,000 who survived did so by eating insects, leather bellies and, in some cases, the bodies that lit the streets. By the time Communist troops liberated the city, every leaf and blade of grass had been consumed during the final desperate months.

There are no monuments ormarkers commemorating the events that deci-

ners recalling the events that deci-

served!”

The New York Times

Situation for Noon Eastern Daylight Time, Friday, October 2, 2009

Ardi, short for Ardipithecus ramidus, is the newest fossil skeleton out of Africa to take its place in the gallery of human origins. At an age of 4.4 million years, it lived well before Lucy, the famous 3.2-million-year-old Lucy of the species Australopithecus afarensis. Since finding fragments of the older hominin in 1992, an international team of scientists has been sequencing its genome. So when they presented on Thursday at a partially complete skeleton and its first full analysis. By replacing the earliest known skeleton from the human branch of the primate family tree, the scientists said, Ard has opened a window to “the early evolutionary steps that our ancestors took out of Africa.”

The older hominin was already so different from the famous 3.2-million-year-old Lucy that the scientists have yet to determine the name of this new species. They had first termed it “Ardi,” from the French for “the initial stage of evolutionary advancement,” they wrote. The Ardipithecus specimen, an adult male, probably stood about 5 feet tall and weighed about 120 pounds, almost a foot taller and twice the weight of Lucy. Its brain was not as large as the brain of a modern chimp. It seemed more like the brain of a modern human, the scientists said, with a capacity to think, to solve problems, and to communicate more effectively.

The new species is named for the Ardipithecus ramidus, which lived from about 4.4 million years ago. The ancestral relationship of the new species to the humans that followed is not yet determined, but Lucy’s authors speculated “no modern ape is a realistic ancestor for early humans.”

Ardi’s feet had yet to develop the arch-like structure that came later with Lucy and on to humans. The Ardipithecus specimen, an adult male, probably stood about 5 feet tall and weighed about 120 pounds, almost a foot taller and twice the weight of Lucy. Its brain was not as large as the brain of a modern chimp. It seemed more like the brain of a modern human, the scientists said, with a capacity to think, to solve problems, and to communicate more effectively.

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Senator Ensign Helped Husband of Ex-Misstress Find Work

By Steven Erlanger and Jane Perlez

WASHINGTON

Iraq has agreed to trade secret nuclear material for civilian enrichment equipment in a deal that is considered a major step toward averting an Iraqi nuclear program after more than a decade of international frustration. The agreement comes on the heels of Iran's agreement in principle — to be worked out by experts later this month in Vienna — to ship what U.S. officials call its declared stockpile of浓缩 enrichen ont for nuclear energy. The Atomic Energy Agency. U.S. officials say that timeline is "about right," but it continues to insist it has the right to enrich for uranium for what it considers to be peaceful purposes.

Obama said Tehran must allow international inspectors to visit the site near Qum without delay. The atomic energy director's office on Thursday said that Iran had signed a new agreement to cooperate with the inspectors and make Iran's declared uranium-enrichment sites available. The foreign minister, the official in charge of dealing with him, said the agreement was at pains to strike a cautious tone, given Iran's history of duplicity, and the tone set by Obama in his speech to the United Nations on Tuesday. Iran continues to insist it has the right to enrich uranium for what it considers to be peaceful purposes.

Obama also arranged for Hampton to join a White House meeting with Russian and French representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency. U.S. officials say that is a "most" of its declared stockpile of浓缩 enrichen ont for nuclear energy. The Atomic Energy Agency. U.S. officials say that timeline is "about right," but it continues to insist it has the right to enrich for uranium for what it considers to be peaceful purposes.

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Doug Hampton left my office," Obama said of the building when he felt the first quakes. "I don't know if the building was going to fall, but I did get a little worried." Obama said he had been making photocopies in the building before Wednesday's mighty tremor. "I'm sure that's what's going on here," he said. "It was almost like a building on a pickup truck."

There is a run out as fast I could," said Yudi, who, like many Indonesians, uses only one name. "Everyone was panicking. Some people were looking for water. And but some of us didn't make it out." The earthquake struck Padang, Indonesia's third-largest city, at 9:03 a.m. local time on Thursday, with many hundreds of buildings and homes collapsed. Rescuers said the death toll rose to 1,100 people. Soldiers and rescuers have identified 3,000 bodies from under the debris. But some of those bodies were only partially recovered.

A large number of people were trapped in the debris. "The building before Wednesday's mighty tremor. "I'm sure that's what's going on here," he said. "It was almost like a building on a pickup truck."

But some of those bodies were only partially recovered. "The building before Wednesday's mighty tremor. "I'm sure that's what's going on here," he said. "It was almost like a building on a pickup truck."

Three people were trapped in the debris. "The building before Wednesday's mighty tremor. "I'm sure that's what's going on here," he said. "It was almost like a building on a pickup truck."

Iran will be required to be transparent about its activities and to make concessions to inspectors. But some of those bodies were only partially recovered. "The building before Wednesday's mighty tremor. "I'm sure that's what's going on here," he said. "It was almost like a building on a pickup truck."

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Letters To The Editor

Energy Studies Minor Addresses Sustainability

The article “Proposed Minor Asks: How Does Technology Alter the Environment?" (September 29, 2009 of The Tech) leaves readers with the impression that the new undergraduate Energy Studies Minor emphasizes traditional forms of energy supply and treats renewable energy, climate change, pollution, and associated poverty issues as peripheral. This is inaccurate. The minor directly addresses, for example, energy-related climate change, pollution, and associated poverty issues. They also include subjects on energy efficiency and sustainable sources of energy. In a recent review of energy education at universities across the United States, MIT’s Energy Studies Minor stands out as the most robust program for integrating the domains of science, social science, and engineering in the service of multi-disciplinary education. Required subjects in these domains are designed to provide students with the capacity to access energy supply, distribution, storage and demand in the context of societal, environmental, economic, and infrastructure complexity.

All energy issues raise environmental concerns, but not all environmental issues are energy-related. The Energy Studies Minor, in its breadth, structure and scope, clearly recognizes this distinction.

Vladimir Budovic, ECEUS

MIT Should Engage Union

A crisis can pull people together or it can split us. Whether this crisis will unite or divide us depends on how we view ourselves — primarily as a corporation or as a community. MIT’s need to invest gainfully does not determine this question. It can and will engage MIT’s overriding mission to produce world-class scholars and research, that it has done this well over many decades, and that to continue to do so it must have sufficient funds.

A corporation, however, subordinates every profit to maximizing profit. Paced with shrinking income, a corporation will cut corners in order to meet its financial obligations. The Energy Studies Minor, this institution’s official opinion of signed members of the editorial board, which consists of Chairman Austin Chu, Editor-in-Chief Nick Bushak, Managing Editor Steve Howland, and Co-chairs, MIT Energy Task Force

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Corrections

Energy Studies Minor Addresses Sustainability

The article “Proposed Minor Asks: How Does Technology Alter the Environment?" (September 29, 2009 of The Tech) leaves readers with the impression that the new undergraduate Energy Studies Minor emphasizes traditional forms of energy supply and treats renewable energy, climate change, pollution, and associated poverty issues as peripheral. This is inaccurate. The minor directly addresses, for example, energy-related climate change, pollution, and associated poverty issues. They also include subjects on energy efficiency and sustainable sources of energy. In a recent review of energy education at universities across the United States, MIT’s Energy Studies Minor stands out as the most robust program for integrating the domains of science, social science, and engineering in the service of multi-disciplinary education. Required subjects in these domains are designed to provide students with the capacity to access energy supply, distribution, storage and demand in the context of societal, environmental, economic, and infrastructure complexity.

All energy issues raise environmental concerns, but not all environmental issues are energy-related. The Energy Studies Minor, in its breadth, structure and scope, clearly recognizes this distinction.

Vladimir Budovic, ECEUS

MIT Should Engage Union

A crisis can pull people together or it can split us. Whether this crisis will unite or divide us depends on how we view ourselves — primarily as a corporation or as a community. MIT’s need to invest gainfully does not determine this question. It can and will engage MIT’s overriding mission to produce world-class scholars and research, that it has done this well over many decades, and that to continue to do so it must have sufficient funds.

A corporation, however, subordinates every profit to maximizing profit. Paced with shrinking income, a corporation will cut corners in order to meet its financial obligations. The Energy Studies Minor, this institution’s official opinion of signed members of the editorial board, which consists of Chairman Austin Chu, Editor-in-Chief Nick Bushak, Managing Editor Steve Howland, Executive Editor Michael McGraw-Herdg, Opinion Editors Joseph Muss- ter and Ethan Solomon, and Senior Editor Andrew T. Lumnath.

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The United States, which requires steady and reliable growth. Thus we return to the key question: Will we face this crisis as an open, education- al community or as a corporation? If the former, then we all have a right to sit at the table. No educational or other cuts should be made until we all have received an equal hearing. If sacrifices will be needed to preserve MIT’s mission, we must be careful not to sacrifice the most of value. If sacrifices will be needed to preserve MIT’s mission, we must be careful not to sacrifice the most of value. We urge MIT to act as the educational community we know it is. As a unified community with a common purpose, we can emerge far stronger than any corporation can in facing our common challenges — now and throughout the twenty-first century.

To submit on behalf of the members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 615 at MIT.
The last chance to vote in Senate and Class Council elections is today! Paper ballots are available today in Lobby 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The results of the elections will be posted tomorrow. If you have any questions, please contact ac@mit.edu.

The introductory Senate meeting this year will be on October 5 at 6:00 p.m. in W20-400. All Senate meetings are open to the public. The meeting will begin with a discussion with Dean of Student Affairs Chris Colombo, Dean for Undergraduate Education Danielle Pollack-Linaro and Dean for Graduate Education Steven R. Lerman ’72 about the Institute-wide Planning Task Force recommendations. At this discussion, the Senate will hold its special budget hearing. Finally, the Senate will be updated on the fall term. Students are especially encouraged to attend the discussion with the Deans, either in person or by video conference.

The Institutes are encouraged to provide feedback about Institute-wide Planning Task Force recommendations through http:// webov.mit.edu/taskforce/. These pages highlight and detail the twenty-two recommendations which could have particularly large effects on undergraduates.

Every ten years, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges evaluates MIT to perform an accreditation evaluation. One component of this process is a student-only session, and interested students should provide their perspectives to the evaluation team on Monday, October 5 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in 12-410. Each faculty or staff will be present at this session, and students may come and go as they please. More information about MIT’s accreditation can be found at http://web.mit.edu/accreditation/.

UA Exe meetings will be held every Wednesday this term from 7:00 to 8:00 pm in W20-401. At this time, the UA’s goals for the upcoming year are as follows:

1. Publish a formal response to recommendations proposed by the Institute-wide Planning Task Force based on undergraduate student feedback.
2. Gather student opinion and provide feedback to the Student Life Visibility Committee.
3. Present motion to the faculty to make the September student holiday coincide with the Cambridge, Massachusetts, Labor Day.

Obtain and provide clear information regarding the allocation of the Student Life Fee.

Improve communication with students, alumni, faculty, and the Corporation.

Close the Association of Schools and Colleges through the accrediting process.

Publish a report on the current state of athletics at MIT.

Hold a series of “Community Conversations” meetings between students and administrators in a casual setting.

Hold office hours to encourage communication between the UA and undergraduates at large.

Promote MIT athletic spirit through “So-perl” events.

Work with the Department of Student Life on the future of the Dining Commons. Emphasize the role of the Dining Commons in the student experience.

Publicize the work of Institute and Presidential Committees.

Coordinate student-faculty dinners.

Musing from the Institute-wide Planning Task Force: Cuts to the Administration

Alvar Suarez-Otero

On Sept. 21, I attended the second forum for the Planning Task Force. While I am not against everything in the Task Force Report, it is important to understand the possible consequences of cutting down the very nature and purpose of the university. With 15,900 students — without any clear and specific attempt at cutting down the costs of having a workforce largely comprised of students and administrators — I have no doubt that the Task Force report did not include a specific plan for reducing the administrative and its overhead. However, it does have a section on reducing academic costs and another on Schools and Colleges. In the report on the research section, it even goes so far as to suggest the entire research mission (in other words, the main researchers) by up to 1,000 students. I received no answer to my comments from any Task Force member or any other administrator at the Forum; only repeated information or attempts to “correct” my statement.

First, I’d like to remind everyone of MIT’s mission:

The mission of MIT is to advance knowledge and educate students in science, technology, and other areas of scholarship that will best serve the nation and the world in the 21st century.

I have no doubt that the Task Force Report concentrates on how to deal with revenue issues mostly by changing things that directly affect MIT’s mission, instead of trying to cut costs on things that do not directly affect MIT goals.

According to numbers from the Provost’s Office of Institutional Research (IR), in 2009 MIT had 10,099 faculty and 13,113 students total. Of those, 8,398 were administrative personnel, 1,157 support staff, and 864 service staff. Of those, 8,398 are Lincoln Laboratory and LLC (2009 Annual Report), but it’s not clear how they’re distributed for “other academic staff.” I learned from the IR Office that the number includes adjunct faculty, professors of the practice, senior research instructors, lecturers, visiting faculty and research affiliates, coaches, postdoctoral appointments, etc. A large number of these folks are not paid by MIT.

Therefore, I can say, based on numbers, that those 8,398 administrative staff spend 2,400 “support service,” a lot of people not paid by MIT, and less than 17,300 researchers! These numbers simply do not seem efficient: there are about 4,000 support, service and administrative staff, 10,090 students and 2750 researchers. The inefficiency is especially high considering MIT is primarily a research and teaching institution.

The second comment to my remarks came from a member of the faculty, who mentioned that the student population has grown from about 4,000 to 6,000 in the past 20 years. No question here. However, questions remain. How much has the administration grown in the past 20 years? (According to the IR Office, total staff grew from 8,398 to 11,512 between 2000 and 2009 and administrative staff from 1,427 to 2,196. That’s 25 percent administrative growth.) How much has the increased graduate population added in terms of new research funds? How much of the added research contributed to MIT, to Cambridge, to the United States, and to the world? This last one is very hard to calculate, but the fact that MIT has added multiple research centers, without losing the majority of the revenue a research scientist in the ’80s and ’90s experienced, clearly reflects student interests.

I have a very hard time looking at one at MIT and telling them that their work is less important than mine or anyone else’s. I think everyone does — nobody wants to rank whose job is more important. But, in that case, can the administration then rank which research is more important, so that we can stop doing the less important research? Is that fair? Why can’t the administration tell their staff job is less important, but in can tell students and faculty their research is less important? That is completely against the spirit and purpose of MIT.

I do “rank” who is most important at MIT: students. The last thing you want to do is reduce the student population in any way. MIT should be trying to grow, because its growth is a benefit to the United States and the world. I strongly believe that any person at MIT who thinks their job is more important than mine or anyone else’s. I think everyone does — nobody wants to rank whose job is more important. But, in that case, can the administration then rank which research is more important, so that we can stop doing the less important research? Is that fair? Why can’t the administration tell their staff job is less important, but in can tell students and faculty their research is less important? That is completely against the spirit and purpose of MIT.

Based on the Task Force report, MIT students will let go of many things. I see a future with more than a handful of Athena “clusters.” I see a future where there will be fewer choices in dining and the norm the next year for summer classes if students want to do more during the regular term. But the administration has to also see itself paying something, for example, the administration and its management team must do sacrifices for that. I know I do, and therefore I expect others to. I am willing to let go of benefits, in the name of teaching and research I already pay plenty of expenses out of my pocket. Others should too — especially the administration and its management team.

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Public Education Reforms: What America Needs to Do

Ryan Normandin

Summer vacation. Lectures Math, Science, English, and History as discrete subjects. All things of the past. Today, more and more schools are shifting into the realm of project-based learning, interdisciplinary instruction, and to the sound of millions of children waiting, longer school days and years. Let's look at the facts. According to the OECD's (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) Program for International Student Assessment in 2003, American 15 year olds ranked 24th of 38 in mathematics, 19th of 38 in science, 12th of 38 in reading, and 26th of 38 in problem solving. In the 2006 assessment, the U.S. ranked 35th out of 57 in mathematics and 29th out of 57 in science.

These are not impressive statistics, as the U.S. falls into the bottom 50th percentile in all but one category. In addition, the U.S. has a lower high school graduation rate than most developed countries.

How do we change this? Notice that I said “us.” As members of society, it is our obligation to ensure that each child is given the best possible education that the government is capable of providing. Equality of opportunity is imperative to the success of a capitalist society like the United States. Certain reforms are necessary if America is once again to become a leader in education.

And becoming a leader in education should be a top priority to America’s leaders. Every educated society leads to a poorly elected government which produces poorly thought-out laws. A lack of education means a lack of research in science, which inhibits improvements in everything from national security to medicine.

The only thing students learn from this technique is that anytime an obstacle arises, society will kindly remove it for them. This is wrong! The only way for people to grow is to learn from their mistakes. Teachers who don’t allow students to fail are not allowing those students to grow. The importance of holding students accountable for their own learning is only rivaled by the importance of holding teachers accountable for theirs.

In a similar manner, state standardized tests must be abolished in favor of national standardized tests. When students scoring in the top 5 percent of one state’s test fail in the bottom 50 percent of another, something is clearly wrong. Curriculums in high schools today are the source of a perpetual battle. Why is math given more emphasis than history? If reading is required, then why isn’t an arts class? Or a foreign language? The issue here is that different subjects are important to different people. While I would envision a class on Shakespeare that others would love, I would rejoice in a theoretical mathematics course that others would despise. Currently, there is no perfect curriculum that fits every student, but I believe there can be. This is the solution that magnet schools provide.

Today, most students move from a middle or junior high school to a high school or vocational school, where they struggle through classes they don’t want to take and will never use. At the same time, they may find a class they are interested in, but are unable to explore the topic further due to restrictions in scheduling, graduation requirements, or the school’s inability to offer more advanced courses. It is my belief that magnet schools would correct this problem.

Instead of each town funding its own high school, towns and cities in regions created by the state to minimize costs would together fund a regional magnet school. When a student reaches the end of 8th grade, they would be able to choose, with the help of teachers, parents, and guidance counselors, which school would be best for furthering their education. For example, a student would be able to choose between a school of math and science, a school of arts, a school of vocations, or even a general school tailored to the students who wanted to be in it.

The magnet school system resolves many of the problems facing our current education system. It clarifies the important sections of different curriculums, gives students more choice in the classes they take, and would likely result in lower dropout rates because every class could be tailored to the students who wanted to be in it.

The changes our schools require will be politically difficult, financially costly, and often tumultuous. Yet in the long-run, it will return America to the right track. President Obama has recently suggested moving to a year-round school year and increasing the length of the school day, which is a step in the right direction. Such a change must be done carefully, as business that prosper during the summer months would suffer, but if the government can pull it off, so many would benefit.

Free public education is the foundation of all the other American rights. Without an educated populace, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness become just distant, fantastic concepts, never attainable by the average American. This is why the American government must do everything in its power to repair our education system.

And since in a democracy we are the government, I suggest you stop reading this article and write to your representative. Now.
Steal My Comic
by Michael Ciuffo

Help Desk
by Michael Benitez

Crossword Puzzle

Across
1 Used a spade
4 "Look what I did!"
8 Accident
14 Fertility lab eggs
15 Baghdad's country
16 Francisca neighborhood
17 *Evil Asian doctor in Sax Rohmer novels
19 Contaminates
20 Blow, as one line's
21 "There oughta be ___"
23 South American mountain chain
24 Second largest planet
26 Scalawag
28 Seek damages
29 Category
30 Polish Nobelist Walesa
33 Workout after effects
36 "We'll always have ___": Rick to Lisa,
in "Casablanca"
38 "Get off the stage!"
39 Satisfied laugh
41 Transfers to a central computer
43 Whisperer's target
44 Smoothes, as wood
47 Compact
49 Sheet on the road, perhaps
50 Cartoonist's frame
52 First stage
54 Pawns
55 Cold sufferer's outburst
56 Incessantly
57 Setup punches
58 Prefix with culture
59 Truth stretcher
61 Darby
64 Each answer to a starred clue is a type of this
65 Wall Street worker
67 Yemen coastal city
68 ___-Tiki
69 Tuscani snooze
70 Lean to one side, at sea
71 Lay down the lawn
77 Loud as a gunshot
79 Main element in pewter
80 Mysterious
81 Wonka's creator
82 Sea-life displays
83 Queens ballplayer
84 Violinist Stern
85 ___ cord: chiropractor's concern
86 ___-Tiki
87 Hard rain?
88 Café lightener
89 Dakota Native American
90 Point in math class?
91 Froggy chorus
92 Poised villain's shout
93 First stage
94 Pawns
95 Cold sufferer's outburst
96 Incidentally
97 Setup punches
98 Prefix with culture
99 Bavaria-based automaker
100 Musical syllable
101 "The Closer" TV station

Down
1 Tips in a gentlemanly manner
2 Soft palate dangler
3 Full range
4 Main element in pewter
5 Mysterious
6 Wonka's creator
7 Sea-life displays
8 Queens ballplayer
9 Violinist Stern
10 ___ cord: chiropractor's concern
11 *Scooter feature
12 Pot starter
13 Student's permission slip
14 Fertility lab eggs
15 Baghdad's country
16 Francisca neighborhood
17 *Evil Asian doctor in Sax Rohmer novels
18 Maligning sort
22 *Tusked mammal
25 Deteriorates, as iron
27 Hop along happily
31 Programmer's output
32 Enidos
33 Served perfectly
34 Indian spiced tea
35 "Trojan's footware item
36 *Eyebrow cosmetic applicator
37 Haid rain?
38 "Heyboy cosmetic applicator
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CONCERT REVIEW

The Inevitable String Tribute…
…And How Trey Avoided It

By S. Balaji Mani

Trey Anastasio with the New York Philharmonic
Carnegie Hall, New York, NY
September 12, 2009

T

here are a lot of ways to change a song. Obsessive fans tend to covet rare gems like acoustic strip-downs, jazz renditions, or the occasional remix. For the real collector, though, there’s always another avenue: the string tribute. Often unadorned, and painfully obvious in its recapitulation of a melody, the string tribute does no more for a song than a fancy carrying case does for an iPod — you may think you’re stepping up in class, but you’re right where you began.

When Phish guitarist Trey Anastasio appeared at Carnegie Hall earlier in September, he could have channeled out direct trans-

lations from the Phish song book. Instead, the orchestra, con-
ducted by Ascher Fisch (no pun intended), took the opportunity to showcase the finer points of some of Anastasio’s more diverse compositions. The venue and the players gave insight into char-
acteristics and emotions in the song that didn’t translate in the

context of a live Phish show. As the opening bass line for “First Tube,” echoed through the hall, a smiling Anastasio walked out, wielding a guitar, to load applause. The song, a typical rock vehicle on the Phish stage, was given a far more serious treatment with trumpets leaping through their own emphasized melodies. In between Anastasio’s solos, the orchestra created swells of tension, rising and falling to move through adjacent sections.

Anastasio’s unmistakable tone molded nicely into the grander world yet again…Yippee-ki-yay.

The movie is tied together disjointedly with pointless chases, and imminent apocalypse doom. Now imagine the oppo-

time, Anastasio repeats, “In and out of focus/Time turns elastic.”

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Chanel is seen as a likeable and soft person. How could she be Chanel’s ticket into high-society, Capel is English businessman Arthur Capel. While Bal-sany’s estate, and even the elaborate décor of Chanel’s transformation from a poor orphaned singer at a sendy saloon to the mistresses of French play-boy extraordinary Etienne Balsan to the lover of horse races, the antique-filled library rooms of pola’s tea table provided a cohesive imagery of opu-lence and the slackers lifestyle of the French at the late nineteenth century. This lifestyle was the fuel to Chanel’s own simplicity and disdain for the decedence favored by the aristocrats. She found the limitations of both fashion and society restrict-ing her mind upon what she finds right. Outspoken, and commonfolk, were discouraged from work-ing and having ambitions of their own. The aris-tocratic women parted ways so the horse races just so they could display all their family heirlooms. Otherwise, they just lounged about, squandering time in senseless debauchery.

Tautou is able to break her trademark elfish cuteness. With her glinting dark eyes, she’s able to combine both sensuality and innocence in her attitude. In the scene of Chanel and Capel that Tautou films into the room in overgrown men’s pajamas, her beauty of hair streaming about her like a raven halo. Although far from her later neat structured jacket and pencil skirt combina-tion, Capel voiced it best: “You are so elegant.” Moving on to the cinematography of the film, much of it was akin to that in Sophia Coppola’s Marie Antoinette. The spiny and frills of the dresses the aristocratic women wore to the horse races, the antique-lined library rooms of Bal-sany’s estate; and even the elaborate décor of Chanel’s transformation from a poor orphaned singer at a sendy saloon to the mistresses of French play-boy extraordinary Etienne Balsan to the lover of horse races, the antique-filled library rooms of pola’s tea table provided a cohesive imagery of opu-lence and the slackers lifestyle of the French at the late nineteenth century. This lifestyle was the fuel to Chanel’s own simplicity and disdain for the decedence favored by the aristocrats. She found the limitations of both fashion and society restrict-ing her mind upon what she finds right. Outspoken, and commonfolk, were discouraged from work-ing and having ambitions of their own. The aris-tocratic women parted ways so the horse races just so they could display all their family heirlooms. Otherwise, they just lounged about, squandering time in senseless debauchery.

While Chanel’s stay with Balsan as his live-mistress unveiled the true life of French so-ciety, it was in Capel that she found both her freedom and herself. Although their love story is something difficult to convey properly in words, the thoughts and decisions Capel pushed Chanel were crucial to who she became. After Capel agrees to sponsor Chanel’s hat store, he finds her business a success and exclaims, “I gave you freedom.” Indeed, it was not only escape from her previous笼罩 but also the social dependence women had to their family and their lovers.

While I enjoyed the film as a whole, without the name Chanel and, of course, Audrey Tautou as part of the main cast, Coco Before Chanel could have easily been a well-shot wry French film about the lives of the nineteenth century’s socie-ties and a messy love triangle in the midst of everything. Granted, both the actors Benoît Poelvoorde (Balsan) and Alessandro Nivola (Capel) held their own against Tautou’s exquisite performance. But even the least fashion-aware among Chanel, the film would be a completely dif-ferent affair.

I was still mildly frustrated that the film only gave the briefest nod to Chanel’s climb and tri-umph in the fashion world, but I suppose that would be told in another story. As for Coco Be-fore Chanel, it’s really about Gabrielle Chanel’s matura-tion and how the people and circumstance-s around her helped her become the great icon she was.

Tautou is able to break her trademark elfish cuteness.
By Michael Lin
The Tech

Ryunanah Heats Up, Melts Chocolate Bar

Guitar-Driven Rock from Two Classy Musicians

By Biyeun Buczyk
The Tech

It Is a U2 Concert, After All

Traffic Jams and Mechanical Claws

By Greig Hulko
The Tech

Highway-Side Food at Highway-Side Prices

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CONCERT REVIEW

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Ketterle, Paul Krugman, and Frank Wilczek as her volunteers, Bodnar drew two brassieres and converted them into one pair of hot pink gas masks and another pair of more subdued, black gas masks.

To those skeptics who believe alcohol to be a useless substance, Javier Morales, Miguel Apatiga, and Victor M. Castano of Mexico proved that diamond films could be grown from Tequila, for which they received this year’s Ig Nobel Prize for Chemistry. In their acceptance speech, the team explained one exciting aspect of their research: “Do you need a scanning electron microscope to see nanoparticles of diamonds? Of course not! Does Tequila have special properties that lend themselves to the creation of diamonds? Definitely no. Why? When you drink tequila you start seeing all sorts of things anyway.”

While the Ig Nobel Ceremony drew a full house and most of the awardees attended, some winners of the honor were conspicuously absent. Of them, the winners of the Economics, Literature, and Mathematics Prizes were “unavailable for the occasion,” and perhaps understandably so: The winners of the Ig Nobel prize for Economics were authority figures of four Icelandic banks who demonstrated that “tiny banks can be rapidly transformed into huge banks, and vice versa” and “similar things can be done to an entire national economy.”

In keeping with this year’s theme of “risk,” Dan Meyer, a 2007 Ig Nobel Laureate for his study entitled “Sword Swallowing and Its Side Effects,” asked ten Nobel Laureates to extricate swords from his throat using a whip without injuring him. Meyer finished the demonstration unhurt to uproarious applause from the audience.

There were breaks throughout the night, during which the audience could practice recycling by throwing hundreds of paper airplanes at a person on stage for a minute. On four occasions, the Big Bank Opera, a duet who musically parodied the timeline of the recent economic downturn, regaled the audience.

And in keeping with the “academic” tone of the ceremony, Nobel and Ig Nobel laureates alike educated the audience about their projects with 24-second explanations of their work and seven word generalized summaries of their topic. Paul Krugman, the 2008 Nobel Prize winner in economics, concisely described his research as, “greedy people competing make the world go round.”
Five Candidates Run for 2013 Class President; All Want to Unite the Class

Elections, from Page 1

sure everyone gets heard, not just one certain group," and try to organize events so that the class could learn about all the resources available on campus.

Lee said, "I want the whole class to have an awesome year, have fun, and get accustomed to MIT," and that "we are lucky to have a campus like ours, with differences in outlook."

Chen said, "MIT is composed of such a big group of such unique people -- it's hard to find a common ground," but wants to connect "people who wouldn't normally be with each other."

All candidates’ platforms are publicly viewable on the UA election web site.

No freshman class council candidates live on the east side of campus, a fact Bralower found unsurprising. "East campus doesn't really care about class council," said Bralower, who, himself an East Campus resident, said he thought residents of the east side were more active in the UA.

Due to a council member resigning, the Class of 2011 is also having an election for their treasurer. Only one candidate, Sojung C. Lee '11, is running.

Most senate races are uncontested, even though some residences have more than one seat to fill. The only dormitory without a candidate running is Bentley, which traditionally ignores such elections. Write-in candidates are also accepted and often win positions in races where there are fewer official candidates than senate positions available, said Bralower. If seats still remain vacant at the end of an election, the presidents of the residences with empty seats will appoint representatives.

The UA elections -- which in the past have been plagued by confusion, technical glitches, and even thefts of ballot boxes -- have run fairly smoothly this year. Fewer than 20 students have reported problems, Bralower said, since some "didn't have correct registrar data ... [T]he registrar data said people lived off campus when they didn't."

Elections are run by the UA Election Commission, headed by Sun K. Kim '11.

In the spring, the UA will hold elections for the UA Executive Board, as well as the 2011, 2012, and 2013 class councils.

Jennifer L. Wong—THe TecH

Layoffs Will Be Determined By Individual Units

Institute Q&A, from Page 1

open forums last month on budget cuts.

A webcast of the forum is available at http://web.mit.edu/events/stateoftheinstitute.

No central layoff planning

Asked publicly how many layoffs were planned for fiscal year 2011, which begins next summer, Executive Vice President Theresa M. Stone SM '76 said she could not cite a specific number because there is no central plan for layoffs at MIT, and that those decisions were going to be left up to individual units. "The answer is we don't know," she said.

Another audience member asked whether those parts of MIT that reduced their budget by 15 percent in one year rather than three would see some sort of benefit for doing so, since the timeline for cuts has been accelerated from three years to two. Provost L. Rafael Reif took the question, but again indicated that it was up to individual units, and declined to articulate a policy for MIT centrally.

Support staff on task force?

Another questioner asked why there were no support staff on the planning task force. The administrators did not have a ready answer, however the Institute Planning Task Force website lists 90 staff members on the task force, as well as 87 faculty and 23 students.

— John A. Hawkins

Erik believes that inside each of us is a light, which feeds on adversity. Erik identifies the "alchemists" in society, those able to turn the lead of their lives into gold. Alchemists, rather than avoid adversity, are able to harness its energy and use it to propel themselves into greatness.
Zombieland opens today. Raucously hilarious. Our favorite quote, Jesse Eisenberg to Woody Harrelson: “You are like a giant cock-blocking robot, like, developed in a secret fucking government lab.”

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Documentary “Fragile Hopes”

Klong Ung (author and survivor from the Khmer rouge)

Jean-Michel Tijerina - CEO and Founder

Jean-Michel Tijerina: CEO and Founder of The Cambodia Project. Taking action for improved access to basic infrastructure and education.

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College Blogs Used To Unite & Promote

By Tamar Lewin
THE NEW YORK TIMES

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.

Cristen Chinea, a senior at MIT, made a confession in her blog on the college Web site. “There’ve been several times when I felt like I didn’t really fit in at MIT,” she wrote. “I nearly fell asleep during a Star Wars marathon. It wasn’t a result of sleep deprivation. I was bored out of my mind.”

Still, in other ways, Chinea feels closest you can get to living in the Internet, and Chinea reported, “IT IS SO TRUE. Love. It. so. Much.”

Dozens of colleges — including Amherst, Bates, Carleton, Colby, Vassar, Wellesley and Yale — are embracing student blogs on their Web sites, seeing them as a powerful marketing tool for high school students, who these days are less interested in official messages and statistics than in first-hand narratives and direct interaction with current students.

But so far, none of the blogs match the interactivity and creativity of those of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where they are posted prominently on the admissions homepage, along with hundreds of responses from prospective applicants — all unedited.

Not every admissions office has been so ready to welcome uncurated student writing.

“A lot of people in admissions have not been eager for bloggers, mostly based on fears that we can’t control what people are saying,” said Jess Lord, dean of admissions at Haverford College, which posted student bloggers’ accounts of their summer activities this year, and plans to add bloggers this spring to help admitted students hear about campus life. “We’re learning, slowly, that this is how the world works, especially for high school students.”

MIT’s bloggers, who are paid $10 an hour for up to four hours a week, offer thoughts on anything that might interest a prospective student. Some offer advice on the application process and the institute’s intense workload, others write about quirkiest topics, like warm apple pie topped with bacon and hot caramel sauce, falling down the stairs or trying to set a world record in the game of Mattress Dominos.

Posting unscripted student writing — and comments reacting to that writing — does carry some risks. Boring, sloppily written posts do nothing to burnish an institutional image, college admissions officials say, and there is always the possibility of an inflammatory or wildly negative posting.

But Lord of Haverford said prospective students’ interest in the summer bloggers calmed his worries.

“High school students read the blogs, and they come in and say ‘I can’t believe Haverford student get to do such interesting things with their summers,’” he said. “There’s no better way for students to learn about a college than from other students.”

Ben Jones, the former director of communications at MIT’s admissions office, began with a single blog by a student five years ago, at the dawn of the Facebook era, and noticed high school students responding right away. “We saw very quickly that prospective students were engaging with each other and building their own community,” said Jones, who now works at Oberlin College, where he has added blogs to the Web site.

The MIT student blogs have different majors, ethnicities, residence halls and, particularly, writing styles. Some post weekly or more; others disappear for months. The bloggers are sought out as celebrities during the annual “Meet the Bloggers” session at Campus Preview Weekend.

MIT chooses its bloggers through a contest, in which applicants submit samples of their writing. “The annual blogger selection is like the admissions office’s own running of the bulls,” said Dave McOwen, Jones’ successor in the admissions office, in his message inviting applications.

This year, 25 freshmen applied for four new spots, and, McOwen said, it was hard to choose. “You want people who can come across well, who are going to be involved in different parts of campus life,” he said. “You want them to be positive, but it’s not mandatory.”

And not all posts are positive. Kim once wrote about how the resident advising system was making it impossible for her to move out of her housing — expressing enough irritation that the housing office requested that the admissions office take her post down. Officials refused, instead having the housing office post a rebuttal of her accusations; eventually, the system was changed.

But most of the blogs are exuberant, lyrical expressions of the joys of MIT life, like last month’s post on returning as a sophomore: “You want people who can communicate and who are going to be involved in different parts of campus life,” he said. “You want them to be positive, but it’s not mandatory.”

“The system was changed,” wrote Chris Mills. “Now you know what you’re in for, you know the sleepless nights and frustrations are never far away, but this knowledge can’t seem to remove the exhilarating smile on your face. And it’s in that masochistic moment that you realize who you are.”

That this is what you’re made for.”

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The Ig Informal Lectures

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