Water main repaired
Boston may get OK to drink tap

By Liz Tsai
OPN, p. 5

Water main repaired

For three days, residents of Boston and surrounding communities have been advised to boil their water following a major water main break Saturday morning. Cambridge residents are not affected because the city receives its water from a different source.

The end may be in sight. As of early Monday morning, the pipe is repaired and the water is being tested for quality. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority hopes that everything will return to normal "within a day or two," a spokesman Ria Convery told The Tech yesterday, "though we don’t want to set expectations, that would be irresponsible."

Last night, Massachusetts Governor Deval L. Patrick told the Associated Press he expects the final results "very soon." It will take 24 hours to fully test the water to ensure it is safe to drink.

In the meantime, the MIT Emergency Operations Center is delivering three to five-gallon containers of Poland Spring water to living groups in Boston. MIT plans to continue water deliveries for the duration of the crisis.

Ari P. Miller ’11, president of Beta Theta Pi, said that his fraternity recently received the water provided by MIT. Several brothers also went to Shaw’s this morning. Cambridge residents are not been advised to boil their water following the break. MIT — was not affected.

The break was reported 10 miles west of Boston in Weston between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Saturday. It occurred in a coupling joining two sections of 10-foot-wide metal piping. At its worst, the breach resulted in water leaking into the Charles River at a rate of 8 million gallons per hour, causing water levels to rise in the Charles and forcing pumps to be activated at a nearby dam.

The contaminated water is estimated to have affected nearly 750,000 households, the New York Times reported. Residents have swept bottled water off shelves in grocery stores around Boston.

The state of Massachusetts has asked the water authority to have affected communities water as well.

Updates on the situation and the status of the boil water order can be found on the MWRA’s website, http://mwra.state.ma.us.

Jessica L. Pourian contributed to the reporting of this article.

Don’t call it a helicopter

IN SHORT

The Spring Career Fair will be held today in 50-140 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The MIT Glass Lab is hosting its Mother’s Day sale in Lobby 10 today from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This week marks the final week for homework this term. Check course syllabi to make sure there are no infractions and that no tests are assigned after May 7th. Report academic violations to the UA Student Committee on Education Policy at http://studentcommittee.mit.edu.

Brief summary minutes from the House-Dining Advisory Group have been made available at http://studylife.mit.edu/house-dining-review-updates. The extremely sparse notes list the discussion topics but do not provide any details about the course of the discussions or where the committee is heading. For instance, one of the bullet points from the April 28 meeting notes is “Discussion of second set of meal plan scenarios.” Another is “Informal poll to determine committee sentiment about the various options.”

Technique, the yearbook of MIT is on sale in the Student Sales Office for $46. Yearbooks will be sold this week and next from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Mother’s Day is this Sunday, May 9th. Remember to send her a card!

Send news information and tips to news@tech.mit.edu.

WILL THIS OIL SPILL BE THE LAST?

If the past is any guide, no. Oil is a dirty business and no policy band-aids will change that. We have to move on. OPN, p. 5

WHO’S AFRAID OF FINANCE REFORM?

At best, the GOP is blocking a vote to score points. At worst, it is engaging in pure deception. OPN, p. 4

WHAT A WEEKEND!

Photos from Steer Roast, acapella concerts and more. p. 6-7

STEAL MY COMIC

The power of suggestion. FUNCTION p. 8

ROFLcon Page 10

by Meghan Nelson

As memes go mainstream, lols Internet celebrities visit MIT for ROFLcon redux

Panelsists Jamie Wilkinson and Kenyatta Cheeke (Know Your Meme), Greg Rutter (YouShould- nut him to The Man Cheez- burger?) some love during the Mainstreaming the Web panel of ROFLcon after Ben said, with regard to ROFLcon, “I feel like I’m part of something special.” ROFLcon, a two-day conference on Internet culture, took place last Friday and Saturday on campus.

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REPORTER’S NOTEBOOK

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Gulf spill is bad, but how bad remains much in doubt

By John M. Broder and Tom Zeller Jr.

WASHINGTON — The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is bad — no one would dispute it. But just how bad?

Some experts have been quick to predict apocalypse, painting grim pictures of 1,000 miles of oil-slicked wetlands and beaches at risk, fisheries damaged for seasons, fragile species wiped out and a region and an industry economically crippled for years.

President Barack Obama has called the spill “a potentially unprecedented environmental disaster” and some scientists have suggested that the oil might hitch a ride on the loop current in the gulf, bringing havoc to the Atlantic Coast.

Yet the Deepwater Horizon blowout is not unprecedented, nor is it yet among the worst oil accidents in history. Its ultimate impact will depend on a long list of interlinked variables, including the weather, ocean currents, the properties of the oil involved and the success or failure of the frantic efforts to staunch the flow and remediate its effects.

As one expert put it, this is the first inning of a nine-inning game. No one knows the final score.

The ruptured well, currently pouring an estimated 210,000 gallons of oil a day into the gulf, could flow for years and still not begin to approach the 36 billion gallons of oil spilled by smashing Iraq’s wells when they were left, Kuwait in 1991. It is not close to the magnitude of the Ixtoc I blowout in the Bay of Campeche in Mexico in 1979, which spilled an estimated 140 million gallons of crude before the gusher could be stopped.

And it will have to get much worse before it approaches the impact of the Exxon Valdez accident of 1989, which contaminated 1,300 miles of largely untouched shoreline and killed tens of thousands of seabirds, otters and seals along with 209 eagles and 22 killer whales.

No one, not even the oil industry’s most fervent apologists, is making light of this accident. The contaminated area of the gulf continues to spread, and oil has been found in some of the fragile marshes at the tip of Louisiana. The beaches and coastal wetlands of the Florida Keys could be hit if the slick is captured by the gulf’s clockwise loop current.

But on Monday, the wind was pushing the slick in the opposite direction, away from the current. The worst effects of the spill have yet to be felt and, if efforts to contain the oil are even partly successful and the weather cooperates, the worst could be avoided.

“Right now what people are hearing is not materialized,” said Dr. Tariq D. Al-Suwaidi, professor emeritus of environmental science at Louisiana State University and an expert on oil spills. “People have the idea of an Exxon Valdez, with a gunky, smelly black tide looming over the horizon waiting to wash ashore. I do not anticipate this will happen down here, unless things get worse.”

Overton said he was hopeful that efforts by BP to place concrete caps over the damaged wellhead will succeed, although he said it was a difficult task that could actually make things worse by damaging underlying pipes.

Iran angrily defends nuclear program at conference

By Neil MacFarquhar

UNITED NATIONS — The United States and Iran used the General Assembly’s famous green horseshoe to re-examine a consensus to strengthen the 40-year-old treaty.

The treaty is viewed as successful overall in dissuading countries from developing nuclear weapons, but it has not always thwart as more nations express an interest in starting nuclear programs.

The U.N. secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, said that expanding inspections as a way to prevent possible nuclear terrorism made the treaty more important than ever. “The nuclear threat remains real,” Ban said. “It has evolved in very varied forms.”

In his speech, Ahmadinejad said that all nuclear powers agreed to intimate countries that had no nuclear weapons, but he called the United States the “main suspect” in fostering a nuclear arms race. It has engendered worldwide hatred for being the first and only state to use a nuclear bomb, he said.

As Ahmadinejad spoke, members of delegations from a number of countries, including the United States and many European Union members, walked out of the General Assembly. The hall was about three-quarters full during Ahmadinejad’s address.

The Iranian president said the United States and its allies had failed to provide a “single credible warrant” for U.S. efforts and was hiding an attempt to develop a nuclear bomb of its own. The Islamic republic had already accepted a compromise deal over enriching uranium for a research reactor, he said.

In opening the conference, Ban urged Iran to prove that its nuclear program was solely for peaceful purposes and to accept a compromise deal offered to Tehran last fall. Iran is facing a fourth round of Security Council sanctions that are being negotiated separately.
Deadly flooding forces evacuations in Nashville

By William Harless and Joseph Berger

NASHVILLE — Parts of downtown Nashville were evacuated Monday as the rising Cumberland River, swollen by two days of drenching thunderstorms, flowed into streets near the country music joints and honky-tonk bars that have made the city a tourist attraction.

At least 19 people in Tennessee, Kentucky and Mississippi have been killed as a result of some of the heaviest rains in residents’ memories — 13 inches fell in Nashville, a record for a two-day period.

Officials in Tennessee were bracing for more as the Cumberland continued to rise, reaching 50 feet, a level not seen since the 1960s, before continued to rise, reaching 50 feet, a level not seen since the 1960s, before

Nashville authorities were particularly concerned about a leak — low water that allowed floods to spill onto some streets in north Nashville. Flooding also closed First Avenue near the riverfront, and officials feared that it could reach a commuter railroad depot and LP Field, home of the NFL Tennessee Titans. Some restaurants and bars near the river were closed.

About 1,500 guests at the Gaylord Opryland Resort, which sits alongside the Cumberland, were forced to leave the hotel overnight. They were taken by bus to a high school on higher ground. Gaylord Entertainment, which owns the hotel, said on its website that it would probably be closed for several months because of damage from the floodwaters.

One of the city’s two sewage treatment plants was submerged. Mayor Karl Dean of Nashville asked residents to cut their water use in half by using it only for drinking and cooking, or risk contamination of the city’s drinking water.

Floods in Nashville were suspended because the system’s headworks were severely flooded. Electric power was cut off to some downtown buildings, including the Symphony Center. All told, about 14,000 customers were without power in Nashville, a city of 626,000 people. The city is the second-largest in Tennessee and home to Vanderbilt University and other colleges and a major regional center for health care, banking and transportation.

“There’s a lot to be done, but we’ll get it done,” Dean said Monday afternoon at a news conference.

Chief Ronal W. Serpas of the Nashville Police Department said that of the city’s six storm-related deaths, two victims were found in their homes, two were in cars and two were outdoors.

Heavy storms delayed the Atlanta area as well, dumping 4 to nearly 6 inches in rain in about six hours early Monday. Delaying flights at Hartford-Jackson International Airport and causing flash floods in several creeks.

Firefighters reported rescuing a woman clinging to a wooden dresser floating in her guest house in the Buckhead section of Atlanta, where Creek flooded in DeKalb County, part of the metro area, 45 residents were evacuated from a flooded apartment complex.

By William Harless and Nina Bernstein

ALBANY — Gov. David A. Paterson announced on Monday that the state would accelerate consideration and granting of pardons to legal immigrants for old or minor criminal convictions, in an effort to prevent them from being deported.

The move sets up a confrontation between the governor and federal immigration officials, who have taken more aggressive action to increase deportations in recent years. Immigration lawyers on both sides called the step extraordinary and said it could ultimately affect thousands of people in New York.

“Some of our immigration laws, particularly with respect to deportation, are embarrassingly and wrongly inflexible,” Paterson said in a speech on Monday at an annual gathering of the state’s top judges. “In New York we believe in renewal,” he added. “In New York, we believe in rehabilitation.”

Paterson introduced a special five-member state panel to review the cases, while few such cases are currently pending, the administration expects an influx of hundreds of new pardons and applications by the end of the year.

The move thrusts the governor into the middle of the country’s immigration debate and could give legal immigrants facing deportation a new hope to legal immigrants facing deportation.

Paterson said the new policy was in the works weeks before Arizona enacted a law late last month to enable police to question people about their immigration status. It was spurred in part by his pardon in March of 2009 of Andrew T. and Nina Bernstein

N.Y. governor’s policy may help immigrants facing deportation

U.S. farmers cope with Roundup-resistant weeds

Just as the heavy use of antibiotics contributed to the rise of drug-resistant supergerms, American farmers’ near-ubiquitous use of the weedkiller Roundup has led to the rapid growth of tenacious new superweeds.

To fight them, farmers throughout the East, Midwest and South are being forced to spray fields with more toxic herbicides, pull weeds by hand and return to more labor-intensive plowing methods.

Farm experts say that such efforts could lead to higher food prices, lower crop yields, rising farm costs, and more pollution of land and water.

“It is the single largest threat to production agriculture that we have ever seen,” said Andrew Wargo III, the president of the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts.

The superweeds could temper American agriculture’s enthusiasm for genetically modified crops. Soybeans, corn and cotton that are engineered to survive spraying with Roundup have become standard in American fields. However, if Roundup weeds, farmers have little incentive to spend the extra money for the special seeds.


Greece takes its bailout, but doubts for region persist

ATHENS — Greece announced Sunday that it had reached agreement on a long-delayed financial rescue package that would require years of painful belt-tightening, but the deal might not be enough to stop the spread of economic contagion to other European countries with mounting debts and troubled economies.

The bailout, which was worked out over weeks of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and Greece’s European partners, can, in as much as $150 billion, or 160 percent, in loans over the next three years intended to avoid a debt default.

In Greece, Prime Minister George Papandreou, the scion of a Socialist dynasty whose father helped create the sprawling Greek welfare state when he was prime minister in the 1980s, sought to prepare Greeks for what was expected to be the greatest overhaul of the state in a generation.

“I want to tell Greeks very honestly,” he said, “that we have a big trial ahead of us.”

— Nicholas Wade, The New York Times

Mammoth hemoglobin offers more clues to Arctic evolution

For the first time in 40,000 years, a woolly mammoth has breathed again on earth.

Well, not the mammoth itself but its hemoglobin, the stuff in red blood cells that takes on oxygen in the lungs and offloads it in the tissues. By reconstructing the mammoth’s hemoglobin, a team led by Kevin L. Campbell of the University of Manitoba in Canada has discovered how the once tropical species adapted to living in arctic temperatures.

“It is a very exciting result and opens a new chapter in paleontology, a subject usually constrained to examining old bones and teeth,” said Adrian Lister, an expert on mammoth evolution at the Natural History Museum in London.

Mammoths, despite their association with the frozen north, originated in the tropics where they split apart from elephants some seven million years ago. To adapt to the cold of northern latitudes they developed smaller ears, a thick fur coat and glands in their skin to keep the fur well oiled.

So much is clear from their remains. But other kinds of adaption, which have not survived, would also have been necessary. Most arcitic animals arrange their blood vessels so that the arteries going down a leg can transfer heat to the veins coming up. The blood reaching the toes is thus quite cold and the animal conserves lots of heat while it stands on frozen ground.


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GREECE TAKES ITS BAILOUT, BUT DOUBTS FOR REGION PERsist

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**In defense of Dodd**

The Republican attack on the Senate financial reform bill is unfounded

**By Keith Yost**

Though byzantine on paper, at its heart, the Senate financial reform bill of Chris Dodd’s (D-CT) is sweet and simple. We encourage people to read through the bill and see just how accessible and understandable it is. After all, it was written following the largest financial crisis since the Great Depression. If it were as unfathomable as its critics claim, we wouldn’t be discussing it today.

Under this bill, if the financial regulator decides a financial institution is insolvent, that bank would effectively be taken over by the FDIC. Not only does this bill make our national banking system more robust, this reform will expand the resolution authority of the FDIC to make sure that no more banks fail due to regulators not doing their job. The bill also makes sure that banks have enough capital to withstand any financial crisis. Without this bill, banks could fail due to unforeseen circumstances, which could collapse the entire financial system.

The Senate bill also requires banks to create more capital reserves to avoid failure. This new capital will be used to pay off any bad debts or loans that fail. This is important because banks often make loans that are too risky for their customers. If one customer defaults on their loan, the bank could lose a lot of money. This new capital will help protect taxpayers from having to bail out banks again.

The Senate bill also includes provisions to strengthen financial regulation by creating a new consumer protection bureau. This bureau will be responsible for protecting consumers from unfair or deceptive practices by banks and other financial institutions. This is important because consumers often don’t understand the terms of their contracts and can be taken advantage of by banks.

In conclusion, the Senate financial reform bill is complete with provisions that will make our financial system more robust and less likely to fail. It is important that we pass this bill in order to prevent future financial crises.
Financial reform, from Page 4

false alarms (failing banks that are not insolvent)? How should we strike the balance between achieving Type I and Type II errors? It is in the same way that society wishes to strike the balance between achieving Type I and Type II errors that regulators and credit rating agencies lack the sophistication to value them? Can we mitigate the systemic effects of counterparty risk by bringing derivatives into a clearinghouse structure, without sacrificing the value that derivative customization might provide? These are not simple questions, even for technical experts, and require the sort of tough value judgments that inevitably generate controversy.

Republicans are engaging in pure political deception. We should not for a moment give credit to the charge that the Dodd bill creates “bailouts forever.” Preparing for a rainy day is not the same as planning for a deluge. Preparing for a rainy day is not the same as socializing future losses, we have to accept that regulators do not operate with perfect information, and even with best intentions will inevitably make mistakes. The loss of constructively ambiguous that comes from not making it clear whether the government will offer bailouts is more offset by the improved resolution authority that this bill creates. If anything, the bill as it stands does not do enough to promote bailouts. If a regulator incorrectly decides a bank is insolvent, and forces them into receivership, there is no way to second-guess their assessment. We have no counterfactual with which to compare — because we never got to see the future play out, it is only the bank’s word against the regulator’s that a bailout would have ever happened.

If a regulator fails to stop an insolvent bank from failing, it is only right that we should let them join the big leagues. We must exercise it quickly. Our alternative is the pre-funded receivership, there is no way to second-guess their assessment. We have no counterfactual with which to compare — because we never got to see the future play out, it is only the bank’s word against the regulator’s that a bailout would have ever happened.

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Acapella spring concerts

Yuan Yu Chen—The Tech

Richard S. Yu ‘10 performs his Senior Singout, a dramatic rendition of Mulan’s “I’ll Make a Man Out of You,” with the MIT/Wellesley Toons at the Toons’ 20th Anniversary Concert Saturday evening in 10-250.

To complete his last performance with the MIT Chorallaries, Michael R. Blaisse ‘10 sings his first solo, “Pippataci,” with the group of this year’s annual Spring Concert Friday. He is joined by current members and alumni of the Chorallaries.

Greek Week(end)

LaHood on distracted driving

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood speaks on the dangers of distracted driving at the Media Lab on Monday. LaHood challenged MIT students to develop new technologies and media strategies to combat the increasing number of deaths and injuries attributed to talking on the phone, texting, and other distractions while driving.

LaHood on distracted driving

Students eagerly explore the insides of a MV-22 Osprey. The tilt-rotor helicopter landed on Briggs Field and visited other Boston landmarks on Monday as part of Marine Week Boston.

V-22 Osprey opens up interior for student tours

Students and visitors examine the pieces available at the MIT Glass Lab’s annual Mother’s Day sale yesterday afternoon. The sale is primarily staffed by students and staff of the Glass Lab, many of whom have pieces available for purchase. The sale will continue until 4 p.m. today.

Mother’s Day glass sale

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Steer Roast is meat, music, and mud

To celebrate the end of the year, Senior House hosted their annual Steer Roast this past weekend. The event was a weekend-long party featuring meat, music, and mud wrestling.

Left: Meat is cooked over the fire at the Steer Roast on Friday. Right: The lighting of the pit by tradition with a flaming ball of toilet paper marks the beginning of Steer Roast, Senior House’s annual weekend-long event held on Briggs Field on Friday. Tickets given out at the front could be used for food or a number of events, and the Greek Week(end) team which ran each station received credit toward their team’s total.

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Crossword Puzzle

Solution, page 11

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**ACROSS**

1 Check words
6 Bowler’s button
11 Grocery sack
14 Cancel, as a launch
15 Slip-up
16 Tankard fill
17 Date
20 Cheri of “SNL”
22 German exclamation
24 Singer O’Connor
28 Violent anger
29 Swedish auto
31 Winter Gide
33 Mai de...
34 Military forces
37 Udder ends
39 Date
43 Arab leader: var.
44 Ashe’s game
46 Matter form
49 Poker player’s declaration
51 Mach+ jets
52 Agts.
54 Steep slope
57 CIA forerunner
58 Tapestry in “Hamlet”

**DOWN**

1 Saak of “Wheel of Fortune”
2 Attorney’s org.
3 City on Tokyo Bay
4 Waste allowance
5 Nebraska Sioux
6 Membrane of the inner eye
7 Hasten sounds
8 Broadway sign
9 FEMA command
10 Chicago daily, briefly
11 Aromatic fir
12 Assert to be true
13 Yellowstone Park
18 Tell’s canton
19 Bern’s river
22 Simple center
23 Goldfish relative
26 “Zip—_oo-Dah”
27 Working copy
30 Ill humor
32 To be, in Toulon
35 Mme. Bovary
36 Engraved slab
38 Barks
40 Fam. members
41 Audaciously rude
42 Tiny birds
43 Old draft org.
46 Arranged in steps
47 Expose to oxygen
48 More agile
50 Flame-thrower fluid
53 Senator Nunn
55 Stumpy’s pal
56 San Diego pro
59 Drunkards
61 Some whiskeys
63 FDR program
64 Latvian chess master
65 Hotfoot it
66 Supped
67 Legal thing

**Kenken**

Solution, page 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11+</th>
<th>24×</th>
<th>2÷</th>
<th>15×</th>
<th>11+</th>
<th>4−</th>
<th>3÷</th>
<th>11+</th>
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<td>12×</td>
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Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1 through 9.

**Sudoku**

Solution, page 11

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<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
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Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1 through 6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.
Some professors say finance reform bill misses point

By Binyamin Appelbaum and Sewell Chan

As Democrats close in on their goal of overhauling the nation’s fi-
nancial regulations, several promi-
nent experts say that the legislation does not even address the right prob-
lems, leaving the financial system vulnerable to another major crisis.

Some point to specific issues left largely untouched, like the instability of capital markets that provide money for lenders, or the government’s role in the housing market, including the future of the housing finance compa-
nies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Others simply argue that it is pre-
mature to pass sweeping legislation while so much about the crisis re-
 mains unclear and so many investi-
gations are still in progress.

“Until we understand what the causes were, we may be implement-
ing ineffective and even counterpro-
ductive reforms,” said Andrew W. Lo, a finance professor at the Mas-
sachusetts Institute of Technology. “I understand the need for action. I un-
derstand the need for something to be done. But what I expect from po-
liticians is for them to demon-
strate leadership in telling the public that we need to proceed about this in a much more deliberate and rational and thoughtful way.”

Senate Republicans echoed some of these concerns as they delayed debate on the legislation last week. Democrats agree that significant is-
 sues remain to be addressed. But they say that the government must press forward in responding to the problems that already are clear.

The bill, which was introduced by Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., chair-
man of the Senate Banking Commit-
tee, would extend oversight to a wid-
er range of financial institutions and activities. It would create a new agen-
cy to protect borrowers from abuse by lenders, including mortgage and credit card companies. And it seeks to ensure that troubled companies, however large, can be liquidated at no cost to taxpayers.

A diverse group of critics, how-
ever, say the legislation focuses on the precipitators of the recent crisis, like abusive mortgage lending, rather than the mechanisms by which the crisis spread.

Gary B. Gorton, a finance profes-
sor at Yale, said the financial system would remain vulnerable to panics

because the legislation would not improve the reliability of the markets where lenders get money, by issuing short-term debt called commercial paper or loans called repurchase agreements or “repos.”

The recent crisis began as in-
v estors nervous about mounting subprime mortgage losses started demanding higher returns, then withholding money altogether. The government is now moving to pre-
vent abusive mortgage lending, but Gorton said investors could just as easily be spooked by something else.

The flight of investors is the mod-
ern version of a bank run, in which depositors line up to withdraw their money. The banking industry was plagued by runs until the govern-
ment introduced deposit insurance during the Great Depression. Gorton said the industry had now entered a new era of instability.

“It is unfortunate if we end up repeating history,” Gorton said. “It’s basically tragic that we can’t under-
stand the importance of this issue.”

Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner agreed in testimony be-
fore the House Financial Services Committee in April that “more work remains to be done in this area,” but he said that regulators could address the issue without legislation. The government plans to require lenders to hold larger reserves against unex-
pected losses and to require that they keep money on hand to meet short-
term needs.

David A. Skeel Jr., a corporate law profes-
sor at the University of Penn-
sylvania, said it would be a mistake for Congress to leave the drafting of these standards to the discretion of regulators.

“Regulators working right now will be tough,” Skeel said. “But we know from history that as soon as this legislative moment passes, the ball is going to shift back into Wall Street’s court. As soon as the crisis passes, what inevitably happens is that the people that are paying the most attention are the banks.”

A second group of critics say the government helped to seed the crisis through its efforts to increase home ownership, including the role of Fan-
nie Mae and Freddie Mac in buying mortgage loans to make more money available for lending. The companies are now owned by the government after incurring enormous losses on loans that borrowers could not afford to repay.

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The Internet pays a visit to campus
Meme-fest ROFLcon FTW!

ROFLcon, from Page 1

searchers highlighted the changes brewing on the net: The fragmentation and commercialization of Internet memes — because for better or for worse, Internet subculture is biting the mainstream.

Legitimating the internets

While the battle cry of ROFLcon appeared to be “for the lulz,” it had a surprising academic presence.

“Unusually we don’t rol at Chinese locations and they don’t rol at ours, which is problematic!” said co-keynote speaker Ethan Zuckerman from Harvard, discussing the unifying and fracturing potential of international memes.

Keynote speeches were given by Zuckerman, member of The Berkman Center for Internet and Society and danah boyd MS ’02 from Microsoft Research. (boyd prefers to render her name completely lowercase, “she said.”)

They discussed the problem that memes are an individual cultural phenomenon, and by not learning about memes from other countries we risk creating Internet and international communities that cannot communicate with each other.

China is just one place our cultures are diverging, Zuckerman discussed. For instance, in China which heavily censors YouTube, the only source of user-generated video is Youku. If you search for “fanny cats” in Youku, it displays thousands of videos, just like its American counterpart. “This is of tremendous geopolitical importance… We did not know China had cute cat technology” Zuckerman said.

The real problem isn’t potentially losing the lolcat race, but that the cultures’ memes are diverging because they are using different websites. “Some day we may actually end up with Internets that can’t talk to each other. We need to meme at each other!” said Zuckerman.

He displayed a map of the world with numbers of memes that came from each country. He was happy to report though that while historically Africa had produced no memes, Kenya had recently created its first. Makmende Amerudi, a pseudo-Chuck Norris, has quickly gone viral in Kenya. Web sites have been established listing Makmende and others throughout the conference.

The real problem isn’t potentially losing the lolcat race, but that the cultures’ memes are diverging, Zuckerman said. “The easiest way to cross cultural barriers is to laugh,” Zuckerman said.

“My internet fame means…do I get to come up with new names for my fans?” FELLOW, BERKMAN CENTER

“You don’t know meme

Not all panels were meant to be so serious; some were just meme-creators sitting down and discussing their craft. Along with moderators leading the discussion, the audience asked questions to the panelists online using their laptops or phones.

Neil Toccienga, creator of the Animatechon, and series like Potter Puppets Pals, reminisced about one of his fans: “I was reading about this guy who had killed this girl and he was planning on hanging her. I was looking at his Geocities page, and he linked to me as ‘some of the funniest videos I’ve ever seen.’ He just got life.”

Joel Veitch of rathergood.com is the creator of the deranged-squirrel musical video “We Like the Moon,” the inspiration of a Quiznos commercial, and the recent “The Internet is Made of Cats” video. He was asked why comedies inherently funnier than dogs. “Cute animals are an easy… I started doing stuff with little furry animals (because) you can love them, but only in the way you’d love a terrible diseased child.” Later on he added, “With a dog, a dog loves you, and if you die the dog will pine. But with a cat, it pretends to love you, and if you were to die it would just use your corpse.”

As identified by danah boyd and others throughout the conference, Internet culture is undergoing a profound transition, becoming increasingly commercialized and marketed. much to the dismay of those who remember its roots.

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As identified by danah boyd and others throughout the conference, Internet culture is undergoing a profound transition, becoming increasingly commercialized and marketed. much to the dismay of those who remember its roots.
Making money on the Internet inevitably means advertising and merchandising, the coming of the marketer. We’re going through a “national weirdness crisis,” boyd said, where “memes immediately become a commercial.” Most panelists were asked what their day jobs were. Very few had any outside of their web sites or blogs. Hur of the cheezburger network has forty employees and contractually cannot discuss his income; David DeVore, the half-bred from the video David At the Dentist admitted he’s made somewhere around $125,000 from it. While most people create memes for the hub, if the meme becomes viral their creators then keep them going for the profits.

The underlying motivations behind memes may be changing from humor to money...

The underlying motivations behind memes may be changing from humor to money, but at least in 2010 ROFLcon was a celebration of hilarious memes. The existence and ultimately successful run of an event like ROFLcon suggests that memes have socially important and redeeming value and proves that the Internet, family enough, is serious business.
SPORTS SHORTS

Track and field finish 2nd at New England DIII Championships

Both the men’s and women’s track and field teams finished in second place at the NCAA Division III New England Championships last weekend.

The women's team, ranked No. 9 in the country, finished behind Williams College but set four MIT records and 11 NCAA qualifying marks. Portia M. Jones ’12 set NCAA qualifying standards in four events, and won two events, the 200m and 4x100 relay. Jacqueline M. Wenz ’10 had a pair of NCAA qualifying times in the 800 and the 3000-meter Steeplechase, and won both events. Hazel L. Briner ’11 set a new MIT record in the heptathlon with 4,262 points, good for second place. The junior had second place finishes in the 100m hurdles, 200m dash, 800m and shot put, in addition to a third in the high jump.

The men’s team held the tournament lead throughout the weekend, but was edged by Williams College in the last event and finished five points short. Stephen Morton led the Engineers, scoring almost a fifth of MIT’s total points. Morton won the long jump, one of four first-place finishes for the team.

MIT will participate in the NEICAA Championships next weekend at Northeastern University. The Engineers will compete against the top teams in the region from across Divisions I, II and III, as the meet gets underway on Friday, May 7 at 3:00 p.m.

— Greg McKeever, DAPER staff

Women’s lacrosse falls in NEWMAC semifinals

The women’s lacrosse team fell to top-seeded Babson College, 16-7, in the NEWMAC Tournament semifinals Saturday.

Erica W. Little ’11 led the Engineers with three goals, and Casey M. Flynn ’10 provided three assists.

Babson controlled the entire game, jumping out to a 4-0 lead. After an MIT goal, Babson scored four more unanswered points and extended their lead to 9-2 at halftime. They eventually extended their lead to 12-2; MIT made a comeback attempt with a 5-2 run in the second half, but could not overcome the deficit.

The Engineers close out their season with an overall record of 9-7; finishing over .500 for the second straight season.

— David Zhou, Sports editor

UPCOMING HOME EVENT

Wednesday, May 5
Baseball vs. Newbury College 4 p.m., Briggs Field

SCOREBOARD

Baseball
Saturday, May 1
vs. Trinity College L 6-3
vs. Trinity College W 7-2
Sunday, May 2
vs. Worcester St. College W 7-3

Men’s Lacrosse
Saturday, May 1
vs. Clark University W 10-7

Women’s Lacrosse
Saturday, May 1
at Babson College L 16-7

Men’s Track and Field
Saturday, May 1
New England Division III Championship 2nd of 25

Women’s Track and Field
Saturday, May 1
New England Division III Championship 2nd of 25

Eating Disorder Treatment

Treatment of Adults Suffering from Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa

Informed clinicians refer their clients to Laurel Hill Inn. LHI provides the most effective treatment and deploys the highest staff-to-client ratio in New England. We provide extensive programming in a highly structured and supervised non-institutional therapeutic setting. Evening, day, and residential treatment as well as weekly support groups in West Medford and West Somerville. Call Linda at 781 396-1116 or visit www.laurelhillinn.com.

The Sloan (Course 15) Course Bidding System (Sloanbid)

Bidding Dates for Fall, 2010 Courses

https://sloanbid.mit.edu

First time logging in? Use your MIT ID as both your log in and password. Follow instructions on the site to change your password or retrieve lost passwords. Once logged in, make sure and check that your information (i.e. program of study and graduation date) is correct.

Institute-wide bidding for Sloan (Course 15) subjects:
Opens 9:00 a.m., Thursday, May 13
Closes 5:00 p.m., Thursday, May 20

Waitlist Round for closed Sloan (Course 15) subjects:
Opens 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, July 13
Closes 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 27

Section Swap Round for changing sections of pre-enrolled Sloan (Course 15) subjects:
Opens 9:00 a.m., Friday, July 30
Closes 5:00 p.m., Friday, August 6

Please contact Scott Alessandro, salessan@mit.edu, if you have questions regarding Sloan (Course 15) Course Bidding.

Successful bids will appear on your Registration Form on September 7 and will be posted on the bidding website as of July 13. Write down your password to check results!

*For 15.011, 15.075, 15.279, 15.301, 15.305, 15.310, 15.501, 15.516, and 15.668, you can sign up directly through WebSIS starting May 3rd. It is not necessary to bid for these courses.