

Cost of housing is rising steadily

MIT tries to keep costs down in the long-term with energy efficiency, Humphreys says

By Bruno B. F. Faviero
STAFF REPORTER

How expensive is it to live on campus? For the past few years, the cost of housing at MIT has been steadily rising. In the 2007-2008 school year, the average costs for living in a single or double room in a dormitory was \$2,921, which rose in the following years by eight, seven, four, and five percent, respectively. The average cost today is \$3,652. Senior Associate Dean for Residential Life and Dining Henry J. Humphreys said that the main factors affecting rate hikes are the cost of operations, debt service of the buildings, and costs associated with upkeep, repairs, and renovations.

"We're always doing improvements," said Humphreys, "but the general principle is we try to keep rate increases as low as reasonably possible."

To keep operating costs down, most buildings undergoing repairs are being made more energy-efficient. In New House, the air conditioning system was replaced this past summer to use less electricity. Campuswide, MIT is also installing energy-saving lights, motion sensors, and efficient heating systems in buildings as they are being renovated. These, along with the attention to using of high-quality replacement materials, are factors that might slightly increase costs every year, but could potentially decrease rate hikes in the long run.

"It's a series of small things that all add up to making sure

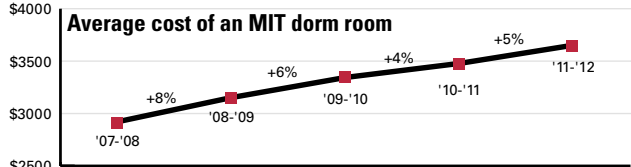
that the costs stay down," said Humphreys. He added that the rate increases have remained constant in recent years. "The rate increases have stayed level for the last several years, and I anticipate — as the Institute becomes more energy efficient — that we will maintain that; I don't see large jumps needing to come along at this point," he said, adding that MIT manages its money well.

Other measures used to keep housing costs down include distributing the debt service among all the dormitories, so that there are not drastic differences between the costs of buildings. "In some schools ... one building might cost \$15,000 to live in and one might cost \$8,000 to live in, and you create economic disparities amongst people," said Humphreys. "Generally, when surveys are done of students — why they pick a building — it's [mostly] not based upon cost, it's based upon culture ... and where their friends live," he said.

MIT, unlike other schools, charges "room and board" separately, said Humphrey, because MIT has both dining and cook-for-yourself communities. Though dining halls do not directly affect the official cost of housing itself, students in dining dorms are required to enroll in dining plans. This requirement drives up the price of living in a dining dorm.

Besides dining, the differ-

Housing, Page 7



	Single	Double
Baker	\$4,111	\$3,632
Maseeh	\$4,111	\$3,632
McCormick	\$4,111	\$3,632
Simmons	\$4,111	\$3,632
Burton Conner	\$3,837	\$3,389
Green Hall	\$3,837	\$3,389
MacGregor	\$3,837	\$3,389
New House	\$3,837	\$3,389
Senior House	\$3,837	\$3,389
Next House	\$3,837	\$3,389
Bexley	\$3,425	\$3,026
East Campus	\$3,425	\$3,026
Random Hall	\$3,425	\$3,026

The average cost to live in a dorm at MIT this year is

\$3652

That's 25% higher than it was in 2007-2008

But most of that increase happened between 2008 and 2010 (+15%). The last two years saw only +9%.



BRUNO B. F. FAVIERO—THE TECH

The Kentucky Fried Duck sinks shortly after casting off on its maiden voyage at the Head of the Zesiger cardboard-boat regatta. The ship was piloted by Timothy K. Wilczynski '14, Brian D. McCarthy '12, and Alexander P. McCarthy '14.

MIT research in The Big Bang Theory

Neutrino research experiments featured on television

By Leo Zhou
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

The Big Bang Theory is the flagship show of television nerdiness — being featured on the show means that, in some way, you reach over 15 million viewers. Physics professor Janet Conrad and many in her research group have been studying neutrinos with the Double Chooz experiment in France for a few years. Little did they expect to see their work on mainstream television last December.

On Dec. 8, 2011, an episode of The Big Bang Theory — the popular CBS sitcom about the daily life of brilliant yet socially awkward Caltech physicists — entitled "The Speckerman Recurrence" featured in its background some of the most recent results from the Double

Chooz experiment.

Neutrinos, first hypothesized as unreactive particles in 1930s and experimentally detected in 1950s, can have three "flavors" — electron, muon, and tau. They were recently made famous when the OPERA experiment detected neutrinos traveling faster than the speed of light, which was a major violation of the commonly accepted Einstein theory of relativity.

Neutrinos were proven in 2001 to "oscillate" between flavors when they travel through space. Conrad and her colleagues are studying the details of this quantum mechanical effect termed "neutrino oscillation." They are using the Double Chooz experiment to find a particular parameter called theta13 (θ13) of neutrino oscillation, which can provide more insights into how neutri-

nos behave.

The Double Chooz experiment — a collaboration of over 160 scientists from eight different countries — takes advantage of electron anti-neutrinos generated as byproducts from the Chooz nuclear reactors in northern France. Lindley Winslow, a postdoc in Conrad's group, said that they chose the site because it had two of the most powerful fission reactor cores in the world.

According to Winslow, their most recent experimental results showed a nonzero value of theta13 at about 1.6 sigmas (standard deviations). That means, even though the results are promising, the probability of the results being purely a statistical fluctuation is not negligible. The experiment will continue to run

Big Bang Theory, Page 7

18,088 applicants for Class of 2016

MIT received 18,088 total applications for the Class of 2016 — 12,080 in the Regular Action cycle and an additional 6,008 applications for the Early Action cycle that finished in December. This marks a 1 percent increase from last year's 17,090 applications, which is significantly lower than the increases in recent years. The number of applications for the Class of 2015 increased 8 percent from that of the Class of 2014, which was a 6.2 percent increase from the year before.

The admissions office is aiming to admit enough people to result in a class of about 1,130 students. This

would be about the same size as the Class of 2015.

In an email to The Tech, Dean of Admissions Stuart Schmill '86 says that the admissions office is predicting a slightly higher yield — the percent of people who accept their offer of admission — than last year. They predict this because the reinstatement of early admissions programs at Princeton and Harvard means that the number of cross-admits will likely decrease. The yield for the Class of 2015 was 65 percent, which is around where MIT's yield historically hovers.

—Jaya Narain

IN SHORT

Online Registration is now open! Registration submitted after Friday, Feb. 10 is subject to a \$50 late fee. Go to <http://registration.mit.edu>.

Add forms for IAP classes, including UROPs for credit, are due by Friday, Feb. 3.

Spring Meal Plan begins on Saturday, Feb. 4.

Quarter 3 PE Registration opens online today at 8 a.m. Go to <http://mitpe.com>.

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

WHO WILL WIN THE SUPERBOWL?

Our staffers predict the outcome. SPORTS, p. 16

YOUR CURRENTLY GROANING

Why I stopped nitpicking about grammar. CAMPUS LIFE, p. 6

ROAD SAFETY AT MIT

The Vassar/Mass Ave. intersection needs revamping. OPINION, p. 4



HOW IS THE NEWSPAPER MADE?

The Tech traveled to our printer to see it happen. PHOTO, p. 9

STRAVINSKY, INTERRUPTED

The BSO shone before a fire alarm abruptly ended the concert. ARTS, p. 7

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Alex Lu SM '03 is a transit analyst and planner.

Letters, from Page 4

Meghan Iron's article points out the seriousness of this intersection and the 55 accidents that have occurred to date: 55! However the assertion that "accidents will happen" and that "efforts have been made" is simply unacceptable, written by someone who does not find "death" or "accident" to be unacceptable outcomes: "unavoidable". The immediate solution is to restrict commercial traffic from Vassar Street until a permanent solution can be implemented.

We owe responsible action in Kyaw's memory. The university and the student government should demand action by local authority.

Hopefully, students and pedestrians reading these two articles will be strongly encouraged to avoid these major intersections lest they become the 56th contributor to traffic hazard statistics. I would also encourage *The Tech* to invest a bit more time toward investigative journalism. Phyo Kyaw should always be remembered and motivating to us all. Having been at this intersection at the time of his passing, I am always sad to see the touching memorial in his honor. My office is nearby and I pass it daily! We owe responsible action in his memory. The university and the student government should demand action by local authority.

A few years ago, I worked at USDOT/Federal Highway Administration (Mass Division) at the Volpe Center. Given the frequency of

accidents at this intersection, I would expect that there is basis for a prompt determination. In this case, no such determination was made and the investigation has dragged on longer than normal necessity would indicate given the frequency of incidents. This leads me to conclude that the facts are uncertain and/or may have already been determined. Having been at the scene at the time of the accident, the circumstances could be easily established. It's one of those elements that a responsible journalist might ask local authorities: "how long does this process take; and, why is this one taking such a long time?"

While I appreciate [The Tech's] observation that Phyto was in the leftmost lane of traffic, there is an underlying question of right-of-way. Phyto's bicycle appeared to be on the side of Vassar St. adjacent to Bldg. 35. Since this was after the accident it was a bit difficult for me to know the exact details. However, the truck was blocking both lanes of traffic, and the rear of the vehicle had nearly impacted the signal light at the corner adjacent to Bldg. 35. This is indicative that the intersection is not designed to accommodate long vehicle turning. Thus, all parties at the intersection were at risk.

However, if this was the case, Phyo could have been riding his Bike correctly at the time of impact — a detail that responsible journalists could establish. In any case, trucks trying to make this turn continue to encounter the same problem, daily. Indeed, most tanker rear wheels over-ride the curb, placing anyone at serious risk. Traffic rules should have been explored and would likely indicate that if a driver makes a turn, blocking oncoming traffic lanes creates a serious safety hazard – a reason why so many accidents have happened at this intersection.

Given that this intersection is often used by heavy equipment, buses, etc. there are a number of obvious solutions:

1) Redesign of the curb cuts on either side of the road. An increased curb cut would permit a turning vehicle more room to make the turn. There is enough room on all but one corner to make an alteration.

2) Truck routes c/should not include this corner if possible. Thus, extended length tankers should be restricted from this intersection until a solution is designed/implemented. As you probably know, buses — about the length of the tanker truck — do not make this turn because of the narrowness of the road.

3) Traffic signals need to be modified. Pedestrians and bike users are at considerable risk on a daily basis. Right turn on Red should be prohibited at this intersection for large commercial vehicles. We have often seen right turning vehicles impact bicycle riders at all corners. An alternative would be signage to require bicycle riders to walk through the intersection and prohibit right-turn-on red at all corners. Special bicycle turning signals could/should be installed.

4) Police Coordination. Heavy equipment moves through this intersection daily and all hours in the evening. Given the nature of the pedestrian traffic, heavy equipment should be banned from turning at this intersection and a separate truck route established. In the alternative, when access to this Vassar corridor is needed, the police could be summoned – MIT and/or Cambridge.

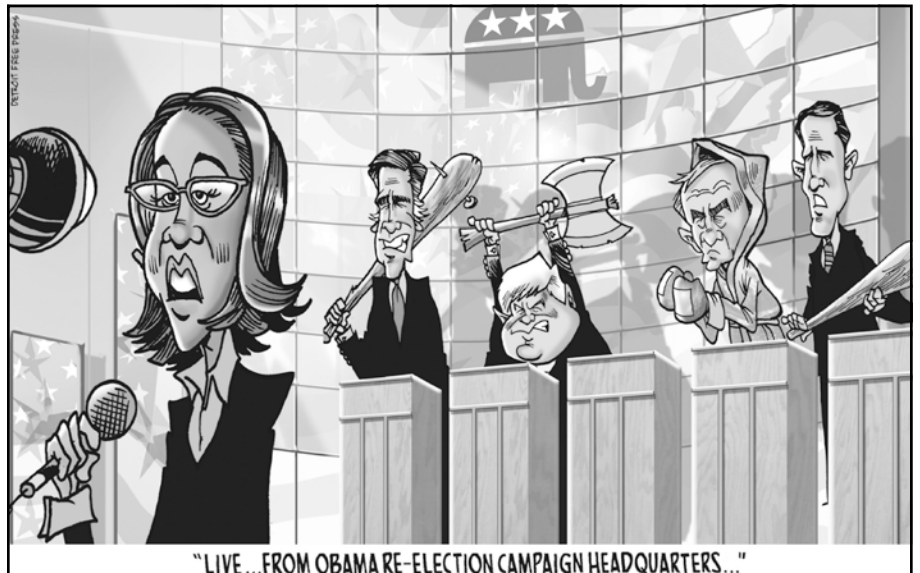
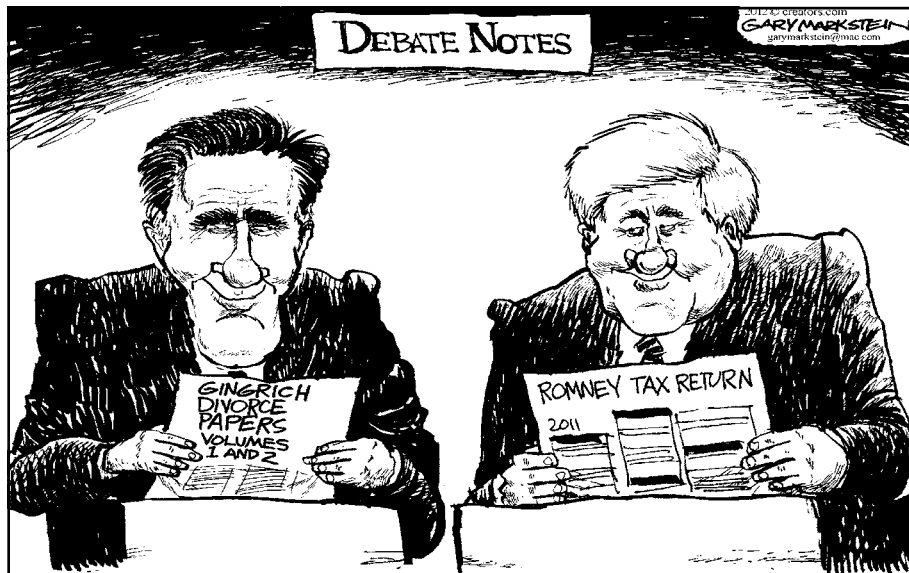
Note that there are few circumstances that would require heavy equipment through this corridor to reach MIT facilities. MIT Facilities Dept. who are expecting delivery by heavy equipment should be required to at least notify the MIT police and schedule deliveries at low traffic periods. Heavy vehicles should not permitted to use Vassar as a pass through to other routes. Currently, commercial vendors make extensive use of this Vassar Street corridor, endangering pedestrian

and bicycle traffic. There is little or no MIT/Cambridge police enforcement in this area.

Traffic management is the responsibility of the local authority: City of Cambridge. However, given that this is a major roadway, near Memorial Drive, it is possible that Federal Highway Administration and MassDOT assistance could be used – given the road classification. Because of the large number of accidents that have taken place here, the City of Cambridge DOT could/should be examined. As a Federal funds recipient, it is expected to use those funds to provide for public safety. Unquestionably, this has not happened. Thus, the City of Cambridge is probably in violation of their obligations under State and Federal guidelines to ensure public safety. Certainly MIT is in a position to ask for and expect an examination of the City of Cambridge DOT so that this does not happen again and demand an immediate solution. The immediate solution is a 24 hr. traffic director (person) stationed at this intersection until a solution is implemented given the very serious hazard to public safety.

Under Federal and State requirements, there is nothing more important than safety. Absolutely nothing. This has simply not happened. I was astonished to learn that there have been +50 accidents. Clearly, the City of Cambridge has decided that commercial traffic is more important than the safety and lives of pedestrians and MIT students. I also strongly recommend that you consider revising editorial guidelines for such future stories. Simple interviews and some library research could go a long way to identifying that the City of Cambridge is ultimately at fault and may have placed both the truck driver and Phyo Kyaw on a fatal collision course. Reasonable solutions are available. Why none have been implemented is unconscionable.

David Palés G



TAKE ON A COLUMNIST

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FEB. 6 (REG DAY)

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Events

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Feb. 4 - 5, 8 PM - 5 PM 26-152

Code all night at our Facebook-sponsored hackathon! Free swag, food, and caffeine for all. Winners get a trip to Facebook HQ. Sponsored by Facebook. Sign up at techfair.mit.edu/hack

techfair

Feb. 6, 9 AM - 3 PM Rockwell Cage

60+ companies and 30+ MIT projects. Cool tech from companies ranging from hot startups to famed multinationals. Demos, raffles, free stuff, and more! Open to the entire MIT community.

Afterparty

Feb. 6, 9 - 11 PM Media Lab, 6th floor

Last party of IAP! Eat, drink, and dance against the Boston skyline. Xbox, Windows Phone, and Kinect raffles. Sponsored by Microsoft. Open to all MIT students.

Résumé Drop

Feb. 5, 11:59 PM deadline

Drop it like it's hot - get noticed by our 60+ exhibiting companies! Upload your résumé at techfair.mit.edu/drop

Banquet

Feb. 6, 6 - 8:30 PM Cambridge Hyatt

An exclusive opportunity to connect with company representatives. By invitation only - get yours by dropping your résumé and attending the fair.

Techtalks

Feb. 11, 11-5 PM (on the hour) 10-250

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THE TECH GETS PRINTED

Tech staff members visited our printer, Mass Web Printing Company, on Wednesday, Jan. 25. Below, pressmen explain the printing process as 8100 copies of *The Tech* roll through. Photos by Christopher A. Maynor.



Many factors determine different housing costs

Differences in price explained by 'three tier' system of classification for dormitories

Housing, from Page 1

ences between residence costs is based on the quality of the facilities and operating costs. MIT places its dorms into "three tiers," according to Humphreys. Tier one consists of newer dorms with better facilities — and also higher costs of operation — like Maseeh Hall, McCormick Hall, Baker House, and Sim-

mons Hall, while older dorms like East Campus, Bexley, and Random Hall fall into the third tier. The rest of the dorms are considered second tier.

One aspect of determining housing costs — a long process that includes everyone from the Division of Student Life to the MIT Corporation — is student representation on the Housing Strategy

Group, which contains representatives from the UA and the GSC in addition to members of the administration.

"[The students] are very good about challenging and saying 'why this, why that,' and ... they are very good about making sure that we give enough advanced notice to students," said Humphreys. The student representatives have input

on aspects of renovations, costs, and summer housing. While the Housing Strategy Group makes recommendations, the Corporation ultimately approves the policy decisions.

MIT is always working to build its capital reserves that go towards housing, Humphreys said. Summer housing is one of the sources of income that offsets semester

costs. Humphreys mentioned that MIT is trying to systematize the process that determines which buildings get renovated and how. Though costs might rise as dorms and other buildings are "maintained at the standard that they should be or brought up to the standard that they should be," costs increases should remain constant in the years to come.

MIT and UCLA researchers see their research on TV

Physics professors surprised by Double Chooz experiment appearing on The Big Bang Theory

Big Bang Theory, from Page 1

until 2017, and they hope to obtain a result with at least 3 sigmas.

David Saltzberg, a Professor of Physics and Astronomy at UCLA, works as the science consultant for *The Big Bang Theory* in his free time. He said in an email to *The Tech* that he was impressed when the Double Chooz experiment released their first results on Nov. 9 last year, and decided to include it in the show.

Winslow, who actively follows *The Big Bang Theory*, was surprised when she found drawings related to

the Double Chooz experiment in the show's background last December. She had just given a talk about the experiment using those particular drawings at UCLA on Nov. 30. Unfortunately, Saltzberg said he was away when Winslow's talk occurred, and used similar drawings from the results released on Nov. 9 instead.

The Big Bang Theory also seemed to reference work done by Professor Alexander van Oudenaarden before he became a professor of physics and biology at MIT in an earlier episode aired in December 2009.

In this episode (Season 3 Episode

10), the main female character Penny was jealous that she couldn't relate to her boyfriend Leonard about his work as a physicist. She then asked for help from another physicist character, Sheldon, who taught her to recite the following speech to Leonard later:

“Recently I’ve been thinking that given the parameters of your experiment, the transport of electrons through the apertures of the nano-fabricated metal rings is qualitatively no different from the experiment already conducted in the Netherlands. Their observed phase

shift in the diffusing electrons inside the metal ring already conclusively demonstrated the electric analog of the Aharonov-Bohm quantum interference effect."

In his year at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, Oudenaarden had done an experiment with a very similar description. His work was published in a 1998 issue of *Nature*, titled "Magneto-electric Aharonov-Bohm effect in metal rings."

Oudenaarden, who doesn't watch *The Big Bang Theory*, found out about the episode when a for-

mer MIT student emailed him last spring. He felt “honored” that the show featured something related to his paper, but said “they probably selected it because the title is so nice, that it’s got so many complicated words in it”

Oudenaarden said that their experiment not only reaffirmed theory, but since the electrons in the experiment are quantum mechanically coherent over the distance of 1 micron — which is very big for quantum mechanical effects — it also inspired ideas for devices to make quantum computers.

Sudoku

Solution, page 10

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

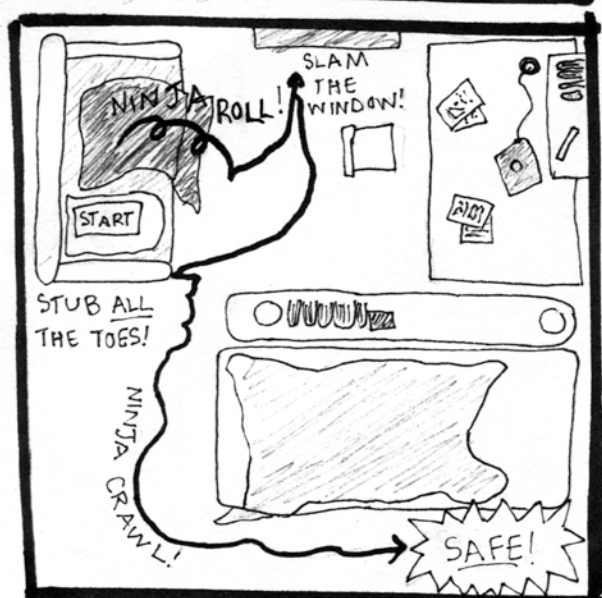
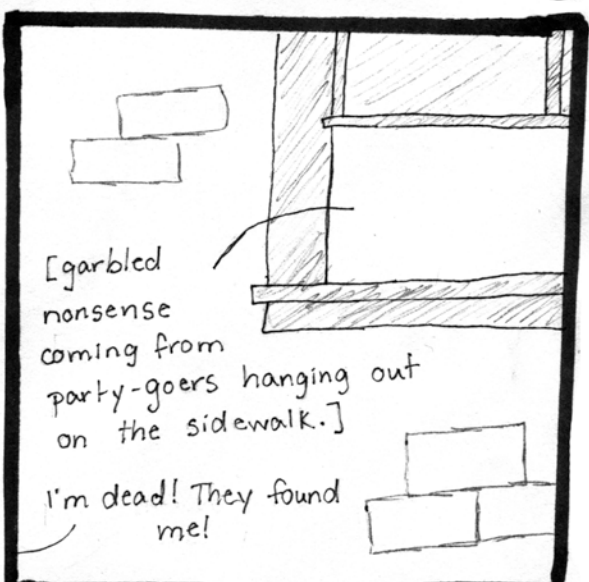
Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Techdoku

Solution, page 10

360x			8x		6
10x			15x		1
	12x		12+		
6		180x			5
2÷				36x	
3		20x			

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

- [illegible]

- [illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

WHAT THE HELL?!

I'M A DOCTOR! YOU'VE GOT REJECTION BACTERIA! WHY DID YOU ASK HER OUT?!

PEOPLE
SAID I
WOULD
FINE.

PEOPLE
LIED.

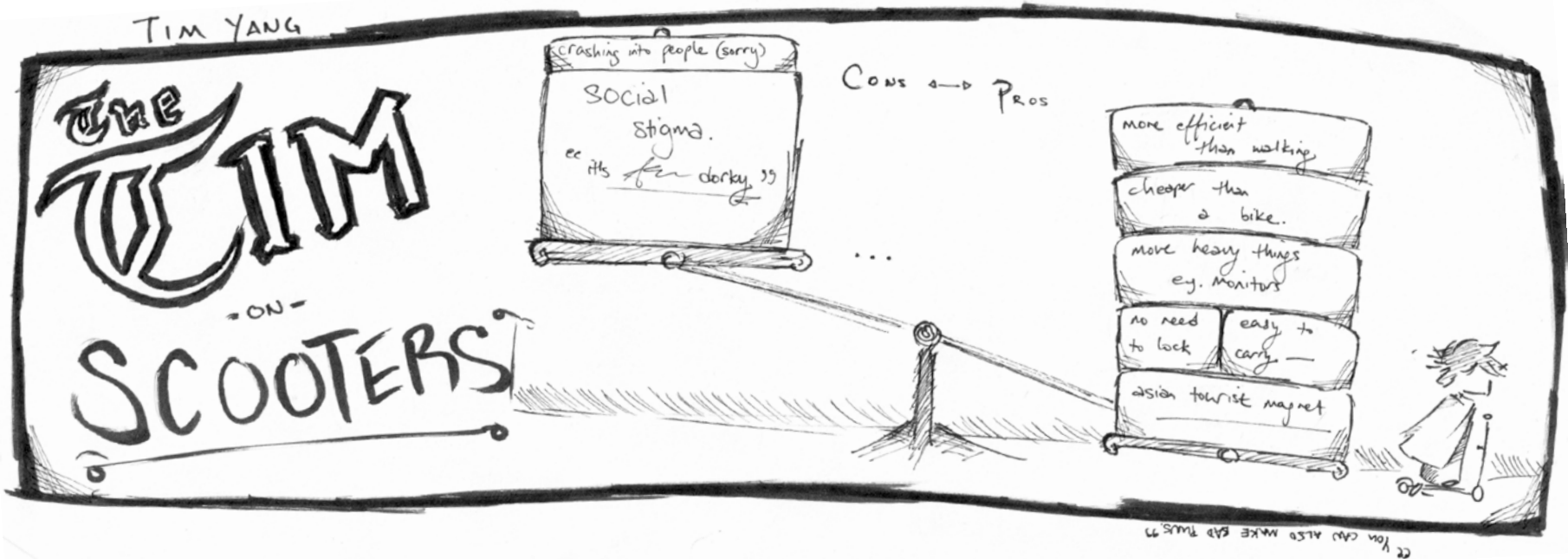
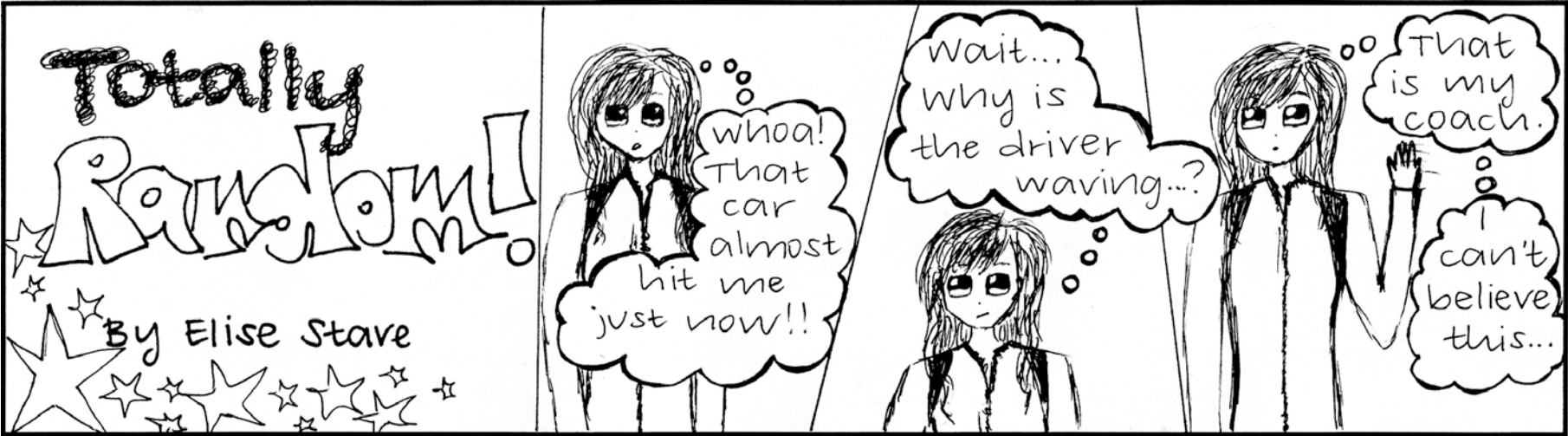
WHY DIDN'T YOU FOCUS ON YOUR MANGA COLLECTION AND YOUR VIDEO GAME SKILLS?!

I WAS A FOOL!
I SOLD MY PERFECT
LIFE FOR THE HOPE
OF CARNAL PLEASURE!

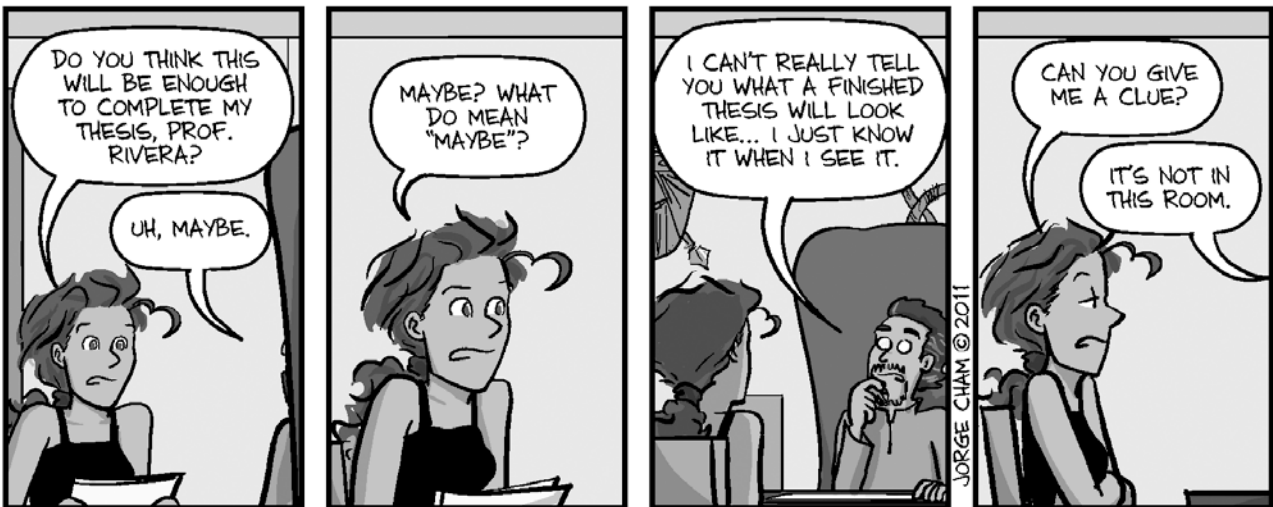
АААА!
АААА!
АААА!

WHY DON'T YOU
ASK HER OUT?

SHE'S NOT MY TYPE.

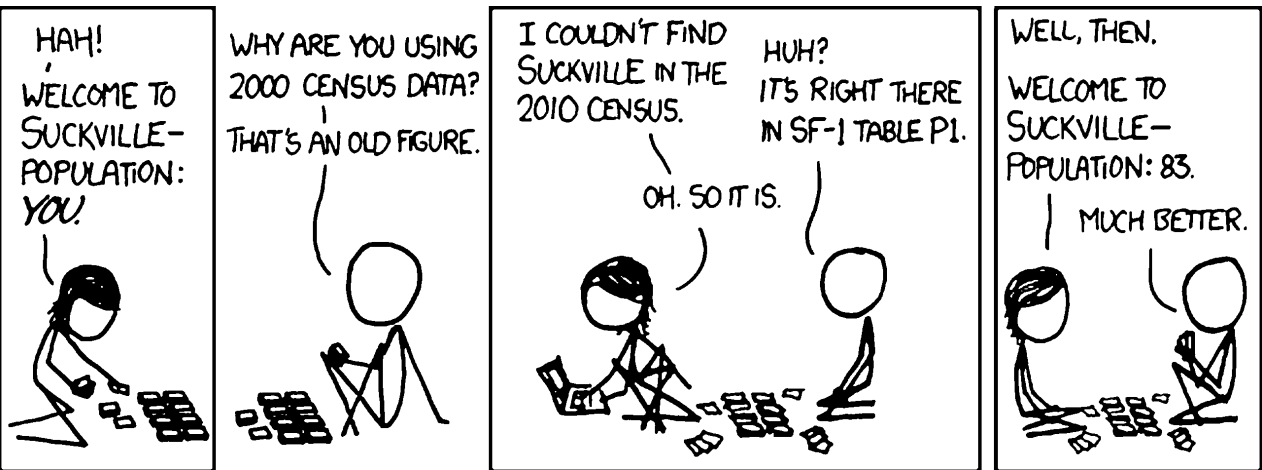


by Jorge Cham



WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

[1008] Suckville



Suckville is considered by the Census Bureau to be part of the Detroit metropolitan statistical area, despite not being located anywhere near Detroit.

STRANGER THAN FICTION

Dr. Grammarphile

Or: How I learned to stop worrying and love linguistic drift

By Deena Wang
CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR

“You’re dog was tracking mud all through there house. I was literally so embarrassed that I thought I’d die!”

If that sentence sent you into frothing paroxysms of rage, you’re not alone. I was once a self-declared grammar stickler, a nit-picky lit freak. There was a time when I’d deface my Dungeons and Dragons source manual with red ink, zeroing in on a missing comma and dashing a blood-colored smatter on the page. My particularity with punctuation led me to write the word “e-mail” with a hyphen and type in full grammatical sentences even when I had a number-pad cell phone. Since I was reading at a “12th grade” level in elementary school, I sprinkled words like “redolent” and “indemnity” into my standardized test essays. I even made sure my god-awful Sephiroth/Cloud fan fiction had proper spelling and punctuation. Even if the content was stereotypical and disturbing, at least it had better grammar than 99 percent of the other dreck on <http://fanfiction.net>.

My fastidiously proper way with words served me well in the SATs and AP English,

yet also led to endless amounts of seething rage, especially on that wretched hive of chat-speak and idiocy that is the Internet. Whenever I exhausted the canon of a work of media, be it a TV show, a webcomic, or a movie, I naturally turned to the world of

I realized that for all my haughty attitude, I had nothing to contribute; I didn’t post my abominable slash stories, role-play, or fill anonymous story requests.

online fandom to appease my hunger for content. That means I had to slog through the slurry of abortive ideas, run-on sentences, and just plain bad writing to find the diamond buried in the lump of crap. I hoarded my +1’s and reviews and favorites like squirrels hoard nuts.

Despite being so selective with my approval, I rarely contributed to the fandoms I perused. I was simply “God Unto High,” passing judgment upon the mere mortals and their human folly. I realized that for all my haughty attitude, I had nothing to contribute; I didn’t post my abominable slash stories, role-play, or fill anonymous story requests. Writing properly doesn’t help you write interestingly at all.

In addition, I became aware of my own errors in my use of English. For years, I thought that “nonplussed” meant “not bothered” when it really means the opposite. Due to a misremembered vocabulary book, I believed “moot” meant “not worthy of debate” when it really means “highly debatable.” For practical usage, there are rules in English that aren’t worth keeping track of. “A painting is hung, a man is hanged,” or so it is said, but hardly anyone is hanged at all nowadays. In punctuation, styles often conflict, so there is a grand conflict of whether to use the Oxford comma (the comma that goes before the “and” in a list of items) and Chicago style versus Associated Press style versus British style versus American style.

Eventually, I became inured to the soph-

omorphism of Youtube comments and people TYPING IN ALL CAPS; enough exposure can acclimate you to anything. And since English is a descriptive language and not a prescriptive one, if enough people write in an “incorrect” way, the dictionaries will pick it up, and it will become correct.

I was once a self-declared grammar stickler, a nit-picky lit freak.

That doesn’t mean I can completely ignore grammar. I’m the goddamn Campus Life Editor after all. But it means I can ignore the little things, like using “Steve Jobs” as a verb, if the phrasing serves a greater purpose. I want to focus more on content and clarity of communication rather than splitting hairs on infinitives.

These days, when I see a post on Reddit with an obvious error, I make a note of it and move on. It’s not my job to edit the world. But if you insist you’re dying literally, I might have to make that statement true.



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If you have questions about this program, or experience difficulty using any features on website, please contact Marlisha McDaniels- mmcd@mit.edu or the ISN Headquarters, NE47-4thFl. 617.324.4700.

***The Army Lab provides the intern's salary, which typically ranges from \$2280/month to \$2864/month depending on class year. Under certain circumstances the ISN can provide the intern with a supplement of up to \$1500 to defray costs of local accommodations and travel.**

The ISN: The mission of the MIT Institute for Soldier Nanotechnologies is to dramatically enhance Soldier protection and survivability through basic research on nanotechnology and collaboration with Army and industry partners to transition promising research into practical capabilities.

EVENTS FEB. 01 – FEB. 04

WEDNESDAY

(12:30 – 1:30 p.m.) Class of 2015: Get to Know Your Faculty — 4-145

(1:30 – 2:30 p.m.) Gravitational Lensing is Fantastic!: A lecture about gravitational lensing and its applications in astrophysics — 6-120

THURSDAY

(12:00 – 1:30 p.m.) Class of 2014 and 2015 Alumni Class Connections Luncheon: Meet MIT alumni for a talk about careers and how MIT shaped their lives — Mezzanine Lounge (W-20)

FRIDAY

(5:00 – 8:00 p.m.) Maslab Final Competition: come see robots smash walls, hurl balls, and compete for glory! — 26-100

(8:00 – 9:00 p.m.) Roadkill Buffet Improv Comedy Show — 6-120

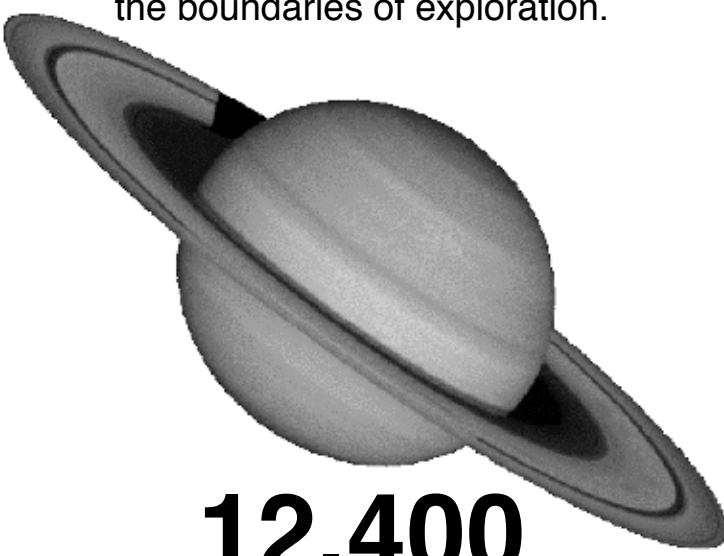
MONDAY

(9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) MIT Techfair 2012: MIT’s biggest student-run tech expo — Rockwell Cage

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Solution to Sudoku

from page 7

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

Solution to Techdoku

from page 7

1	5	3	2	4	6
2	6	4	3	5	1
5	3	1	6	2	4
6	4	2	1	3	5
4	2	6	5	1	3
3	1	5	4	6	2

Solution to Crossword

from page 8

G	I	L	T	E	D	G	E	D	N	A	A	C	P
O	N	I	M	P	U	L	S	E	E	X	T	O	L
T	A	K	E	A	B	A	T	H	A	E	T	N	A
W	R	E	N	I	D	E	A	L	D	A	F	T	
E	O	S	P	O	E	V	I	N	G	R	E		
T	W	O	G	U	Y	E	Z	E	K	I	E	L	
			B	A	S	E	N	A	V	A	R	R	E
S	H	E	A	T	H	M	A	L	L	E	T		
T	A	P	R	O	O	M	R	I	D	E			
T	R	I	B	U	N	E	A	N	A	T	V	S	
H	D	L	R	O	D	C	N	N	H	U	H		
O	B	O	E	R	I	C	H	E	M	O	L	E	
M	A	G	I	C		C	O	A	L	B	A	R	G
A	C	U	R	A		O	M	E	L	E	T	P	A
S	K	E	E	T		S	P	L	I	T	T	E	R

CONCERT REVIEW

Copland conductorless, and Stravinsky interrupted

BSO features individual sections in a conductorless first half of program; stunning performance of *The Rite of Spring* cut short on its final night

By Shelley Ackerman
STAFF WRITER

With all of the drama and lack of a permanent conductor at the BSO, the orchestra found an opportunity to do something completely out of the ordinary for their concert series from January 21–24. The entire first half of the program consisted of different sections of the orchestra performing pieces for chamber-size groups — without a conductor. A conductor was eventually contracted for the second half of the concert and worked with the orchestra for the week leading up to the first performance. The second half of the concert featured Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*, one of the most controversial yet brilliant pieces of repertoire in classical music.

The decision to feature individual sections in the first half of the concert proved to be amazing. The program began with Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man*. The hall immediately filled with the pure tones of the brass section, leading to an overwhelming feeling of triumph and power. In many ways, it reminded me of that moment in a film when the winners take their victory lap (I later realized that this composition has been used and rearranged for a variety of purposes, from films and television to the NHL Blackhawks’ entrance song to Obama’s inauguration).

The first half of the concert concluded with a performance of Tchaikovsky’s *Serenade in C for Strings*. A common piece played by chamber groups of all levels, the string sections of the BSO showed the audience how the piece should actually be performed. After seeing this piece on the program, I figured that the musicians would find a conductor, or perhaps have a fellow musician sit in as conductor for the piece, as this piece is most commonly performed with one. However, as they started setting the stage for the performance I realized that not only would the group perform it in its entirety without a conductor, but they would be standing. The effects of this curious arrangement were immediately apparent: The musicians, with more freedom to add physical expression, moved in unity from start to finish.

As a flute player myself, I often think that strings get too much show-off time in orchestral pieces and performances. Concertgoers often swoon over the concertmaster, or how beautiful the cellos sounded. The first half of the program for this concert successfully featured each section of the orchestra individually. Each group allowed all instruments to shine. Particularly in the first two pieces for the brass and percussion sections, the audience was able to see how much work goes into playing those instruments. Between the bright red faces and clear lack of breathing time, it was apparent that the brass and percussion sections do much more than hide in the back of the stage on a more traditional concert night.

After intermission, the audience quickly shuffled to their seats in anticipation of Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*. The performance began with the famous bassoon solo, pure in sound and full of melancholy and sorrow. Symphony Hall quickly filled with the

piece’s characteristic asymmetrical rhythms and dissonant chords. The conductor was perhaps the biggest indication of the hard work and emotion thrown into the performance. Maestro Giancarlo Guerrero gave one of the most sensual performances I have ever seen — absolutely full of movement. At certain points, it was as if he was listening to a rock band, shaking his head back and forth. He transitioned from flowing continuous movements to strict beats, communicating with the entire stage and spreading his energy throughout the entire audience. Maestro Guerrero not only led the orchestra through the extremely difficult piece (both mentally and physically), but also took the audience on a roller coaster ride through the vast and diverse emotions of the

composition. About 10 minutes into the performance, a chime — out of character, even for *The Rite of Spring* — interrupted the performance. I looked around to quickly realize that the fire alarm lights were flashing, and soon the entire hall, including the orchestra, sat and listened to the announcement instructing us to evacuate. Maestro Guerrero gracefully stopped the orchestra, although the perplexity was clear from the faces of him and all orchestra members. Within the crowd of concertgoers, I could feel a sense of urgency and nervousness, and in many ways, it was complete chaos before we were told that the concert would not resume. It was a frustrating end to the BSO’s final performance of *The Rite of Spring* for the season. The

abrupt disruption by the fire alarm, however, was strangely ironic: The premiere of Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* in 1913 is often remembered for the utter chaos and rioting both inside and outside of the Paris Opera House. While the fire alarm was a more modern and tame version of this, it reminded me of what it must have been like to have such a masterpiece so abruptly arrested. Just as the orchestra had no power over the situation at the premiere, the musicians at this performance were forced to follow instructions and leave the stage, with no chance of winning the fight. As the musicians began to file out one by one, I couldn’t help but think: What was it really like at the inauspicious premiere of *The Rite of Spring* almost a century ago? In any case, Stravinsky’s

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Giancarlo Guerrero

January 24, 2012

masterpiece is certainly more understood and respected, and looked at as something that transformed the raw meaning of classical music. The Boston Symphony Orchestra made a brilliant effort at bringing the piece to life, and despite the rude interruption — or perhaps because of it — the performance strengthened my appreciation for it.

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—Elizabeth Phillips, Team Representative

Men's Volleyball vs. Harvard University 7 p.m., Rockwell Cage

MIT will take on Harvard University this Saturday night at 7 p.m. in Rockwell Cage.