SURF Seminar Day

BY ANDREA MCCOLL

During the summer, over 200 students worked on a wide range of research projects, through the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship program (SURF). On Saturday, October 18, these students presented the results of their work during projects, through the guidance of seasoned research sponsors. "It's different from regular research," said Reuben W. Ogbohm IV. Projects spanned many fields of science, and included such topics as: "The Evolution of Gamymede and Callisto" [Amy Arry], "Surface Characterization of Quartz Microphyres Used for Quantum Optics" [Erik Stred], "Quantum Computation with Nonabelians" [Ogborn], and "Building a Robotic Cat" [Charles Atkin].

Additionally, not all SURFs occur on campus or the immediate vicinity; some students perform their research at other areas, colleges, and some travel abroad. Some students even come from other institutions, including Cambridge to research at Caltech.

"You don't have to do SURFs here; you can do them wherever you want," said Atkin, who spent his summer studying robotics in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The SURF Seminar Day provided the students with an opportunity to explain their research to interested members of the Caltech community.

Additionally, students identified as the best speakers on Seminar Day will advance to the semi-final round of the Doris S. Perlpal Speaking Awards.

Caltech buys abandoned USDA building

BY MOHANA KUMAR

Caltech recently acquired a building at 263 South Chester St., previously used for over a half-century by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a fruit and vegetable chemistry research station.

The property, which was originally part of Caltech's "master plan" for local land acquisition, was abandoned three years ago after 50 years of use when the USDA decided to consolidate its activities to Riverside. Caltech acquired the land in early September by applying for surplus federal property.

Though officially owned by Caltech, the land has not been zoned for educational, administrative or research purposes. The conditional use permit hearing for this is scheduled for November 5th. At this time, neighbors will be able to voice their opinions regarding this issue. However, the city's decision is expected to be in Caltech's favor.

Initially, both Caltech and the City of Pasadena wanted the site. In 1989, the city planned to use the land to build a permanent fire station, replacing the temporary fire station established on the south side of Del Mar Blvd. in between Wilson St. and Michigan St. The city's previous station had been declared seismically unstable. Although the city's application for the site was submitted a year after Caltech's, Caltech agreed to lease out other institute land for city infrastructure use, to avoid the city's competition for the property. Negotiations are under way to allow Pasadena a 50 year lease on the Caltech land on the southeast corner of Del Mar Blvd. and Holliston Ave.

This "gentleman's agreement" is beneficial to both parties. The city needs to ensure a fire station in South Pasadena, and would rather build a new station than convert a laboratory building into a fire station. Caltech also gains from having a long-term fire station on campus.

The vacated building was a shelter for transients before its acquisition by Caltech.

"There certainly were indications that homeless people used the building," said Perpall.

Destination: Saturn

BY DAVE DEBAKESY

On October 15, mankind took its first step towards its newest exploration of the ringed planet, Saturn, with the launching of the Cassini spacecraft at 1:43 a.m. PDT. This marks the first time that an expedition has been launched to Saturn since the Voyager probes were sent to examine the planet twenty years ago.

Cassini is scheduled to reach Saturn on July 1, 2004, when it will begin its first orbit of the planet. Following orbits (of which there will be approximately seventy-two) are to be spread out amongst the observational flights of Saturn's moons which Cassini is to undertake in the course of its four year task.

Cassini will also convey the European Space Agency's Huygens probe to Titan, a moon of Saturn, where it is to be released on November 6, 2004, in order to carry out tests upon the Titanian atmosphere.

In order to boost Cassini's speed, it will, over the course of its mission, make several gravity-assist flybys. The first two, both around Venus, will take place on April 21, 1998, and the third on September 1, 1999.
Message from the Editors

Recently several parties (ASCIT, parents, etc.) have expressed concern over the amount of advertising in the Tech proportional to the number of articles. With the exception of our bookkeeper Pattie Crooke, the Tech is entirely student run. Unlike most schools which have either journalism majors or journalism departments, Tech has neither. Considering that Caltech is a small, technically oriented school, this is not surprising. However, one of the results is a student newspaper edited by folks majoring in Physics (Erik) and Computer Science (Autumn), with support by math, geology, physics, chemistry majors and freshmen.

We drew our articles from the staff, students, and occasionally faculty of the institute. With these sources we can normally fill an eight to twelve page paper. However, since our size is small, the relative variation in articles is high. During Rotation week, midterms, and various other times of the year the students who run and write the Tech have other things they need to be doing. Like Physics 98 and Math 108 sets. This does not mean we are making fun of the students or the Tech. It's just that we have to fill up the space with something like this: There will be no paper this week, no one has written any articles. It could be worse. Sometimes it has been.

The Editors

Erik Streed
Autumn Lawson

The California Tech

VOLUME XXII, NUMBER 6
OCTOBER 24, 1997

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Consider for a moment the appeal of the Georgia Tech. The poor paper of this institute was so starved for articles that its poor edition plastered the front page with an announcement: Something is wrong with something. Why? More or less something like this: There will be no paper this week, no one has written any articles. It could be worse. Sometimes it has been.

The Editors

Erik Streed
Autumn Lawson

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Sunday, September 21, 1997

QUICK TIPS FOR YOUR TECH SURVEY

To fill out your Tech survey, please do the following:

1. Fill out the Tech survey for the current issue.
2. Make sure you fill out the survey for the previous issue.
3. Your survey for the previous issue should be returned by October 15th.
4. Your survey for the current issue should be returned by October 25th.
5. Your survey should include your name, major, and other relevant information.

Thank you for your cooperation.

The editors of THE CALIFORNIA TECH
After two-day delay, Cassini takes first step toward Saturn

The California Tech

take place on April 21, 1998, and June 22, 1999 — so mark your calendars. The third will occur on August 17, 1999, using the Earth’s gravity for propulsion. Finally, on December 30, 2000, this wayward voyager will pass around Jupiter, hence on to its final objective.

These flybys were a major concern of those protesting Cassini’s launch. Protesters claimed that the craft’s plutonium fuel could kill millions if a miscalculation caused Cassini to collide with Earth. They attempted to get a court injunction to stop the launch, but were turned down by a federal judge in Hawaii. NASA maintains that the craft is safe. The performance of both the Cassini craft and Titan IV/B Centaur rocket during the launch far exceeded all expectations of its project chiefs at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The energy transferred from the rockets to the craft was accurate within one part in five thousand, and the post-launch trajectory alteration, expected to be on the order of 26 meters per second, will only need to be of one meter per second. All systems aboard the craft are operating normally.

USA: Greenhouse to be renovated for biology research

vents were taken off the crawl space; remnants of old clothing and food wrappers were scattered across the area; parts of the building were used as a bedroom,” explains William Irwin, Deputy Director of the Physical Plant Department, the division in charge of Caltech’s property maintenance.

Irwin is quick to point out that the building was cleaned and sanitized once Caltech gained title to the property. Security personnel are also patrolling the area.

The site still contains laboratory facilities used by the USDA for chemical research, though they are outdated. Jerry Burke, Special Assistance to the Provost for Facilities, says, “We have not made up our mind as to whether the building will be used for office space or lab space.”

However, it has already been decided that, of the 16 thousand square feet available, approximately two thousand will be allocated for the renovation of an existing greenhouse on the property. This greenhouse will be used by Professor Meyerowitz of the biology department.

The use of the remaining area will be determined by the Provost’s Office according to institute needs. Specific departments are able to apply for use of the property, but, as Burke says, “We must decide what is best for the Institute.”

Regardless of what the building’s future use will be, it is in need of basic renovation. “The electricity, heating and ventilation are obsolete and outdated,” claims Irwin. “If we indeed do have to convert it into a modern lab, it won’t be inexpensive.” However, this cost would be far less than the cost of building an entirely new facility.

Irwin remains undaunted by the work ahead. “Caltech is rapidly outgrowing its boundaries. We need new facilities and opportunities for new research. Any potential like this is exciting!”

Beverly Sills to give Michelin Lecture

The sixth annual James Michelin Distinguished Lecture will be Tuesday, November 4, at 8 p.m. Beverly Sills, one of the greatest coloratura sopranos of the twentieth century, will share a conversation with her presence in Beckman Auditorium.

Currently Chairman of the Board of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Sills was born and grew up in Brooklyn. She began her career in radio commercials and soap operas, playing Elaine Raleigh on Our Girl, Sunday, from which she retired at the precocious age of twelve. She went on to fame on the stages of the world’s leading opera houses.

The Michelin Lecture series was established by a New York designer in memory of her uncle, James Michelin, a geologist, who always hoped to attend Caltech. It was designed to “foster a creative interaction between the arts and sciences.”

Beverly Sills, one of the greatest coloratura sopranos of the twentieth century.

Beverly Sills, one of the greatest coloratura sopranos of the twentieth century.

The California Tech

Beverly Sills, one of the greatest coloratura sopranos of the twentieth century.

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FEATURES

Caltech students, staff participate in the Stroll to end Child Abuse

This Sunday, October 19, a group of eleven students and staff participated as a team in the second annual Stroll to End Child Abuse, a mile walk around the Rose Bowl organized by the Foothill Family Service, a non-profit organization. The Caltech stroll team, sponsored by the Caltech Y, helped the cause by paying the $10 registration fee for each member of the team. Total Stroll participants numbered 850 and raised $75,000. Corporate sponsors of the walk were diverse and included Huntington Hospital, the Pasadena Jaycees, and the main sponsor of the event, Bristol Farms.

The walk was preceded by short speeches given by several people associated with the Foothill Family Service. They described how as little as $25 in collected pledges and registration fees helps prevent child abuse by paying for an educational workshop for parents of pre-schoolers at risk for child abuse. $50 pays for five weeks of tutoring for an abused child who is failing the third grade. $200 pays for one month of intensive therapy for a child abuse victim. The money collected helps the 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 7 boys who are victims of child abuse in America. The Foothill Family Service has been helping families and children in the Pasadena community for over 71 years.

Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse were on hand during the introductory speeches. The Men’s National Fitness Champion and the runner up in the National Aerobics Champion Mixed Pairs competitions led the warm up and stretching before the walk. Strollers, wearing bright green Stroll T-shirts and prompted by the two aerobics champions, marched in place and stretched with partners. The children present enjoyed the bustle and activity. Mickey and Minnie then led the strollers to the start of the mile long Stroll Course, which wrapped around area H of the Rose Bowl. The leisurely walk lasted about 20 minutes. After the walk, strollers were treated to music by K-Earth 101 and food from refreshment sponsor, Heather Dean, who organized the Caltech stroll team. Her hope was to attract Caltech participants because of the proximity of the Rose Bowl, and the small time commitment that the event required. The beautiful sunny day and the curving atmosphere of the various tents set up in the middle of the Stroll course made participation fun and took the edge off a very serious subject. Nevertheless, although it was fun, participants felt that they had helped make a difference in a child’s life by raising both money and awareness.

BY KARIN BLETZER

Sunday, October 24, 1997

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Associate Second Round Interviews: February 17, 1998
Associate Final Round Interviews: March 1998

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by Ron Dollete

"Chumbawm that?"
You’ve probably already heard the hit single by Chumbawamba called “Tub Thumping.” The song really is catchy, and it’s the first track off Chumbawamba’s new CD, “Tubthumper.” Incidentally, tubthumping refers to yelling out on a soapbox and ranting and so on. The name aptly fits this eclectic band. On the CD, there’s a quirky mix of all sorts of media, like Beck meets Art of Noise. And political.

There are many social overtones in songs like “Goodship Lifestyle” (a song about the loneliness of being homosexual in an intolerant world. Maybe I’m just digging too deep...). So what is the next single off the album? It’s going to be “Amnesia.” This song is alright and is probably the next best song on the album. We definitely need a new single since Y107 manages to play “Tubthumping” a ridiculous three times in the span of an hour and a half. I recommend just getting the “Tubthumping” single if you’re in that market. It comes with two other songs as well as two mixes. The EP will be more worth your money than this CD.

Awards

** Award Winner **

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THE CALIFORNIA TECH
In the more than 100 years since Darwin propounded his views, it has become customary to regard the "survival of the fittest" as a paradigm which explains many behavioral traits and personality characteristics.

It is fascinating to what extremes this idea can lead. It can be used to explain paradoxical behavior, which obviously gives no advantage to the individual, such as the case of the male spider or mantis for whom the sex act is the supreme sacrifice, it is the mutuall advantageous that he gives to his mate, and thus the headstart for his offspring, which may be key.

The behavior, in effect, of the individual is the gene pool to which the individual belongs.

It is amusing and sobering at the same time to see how such a paradigm applies to ourselves. Obviously, being here marks you as one of the fittest in at least some characteristics, such as intellectual achievement. As a result, you have the opportunity to further develop your native abilities, presumably increasing your fitness, as long as we live in a society where brains and ability to do things, count.

We are one of the special places where intellectuals of the world congregate; homework may stand by spending several days in the laboratory, or Everest, driving a supersonic car, exposing oneself to dangerous diseases — taking risks along those lines is OK, acceptable, honorable, useful.

Below the greater or lesser value to society there is also the personal importance of risk taking, the self-testing, followed by a feeling of self-assurance, the satisfaction of conquering one's own fears, and so on.

That's great. But in all these cases there are careful calculations about how dangerous it really is. Experience, training, concentration all work in favor of success. Somehow along the line there is a determination that this is something worth taking risks for, whatever the result from the point of view of survival of the fittest.

But I am truly disappointed when, in spite of our vaunted brains, we take wanton risks, risks that are taken casually, or under conditions that negate any forethought.

Oh, say that other things interfere, and the collective judgment of the Caltech Climbing and Chwoder Club (CCCC) (sorry if there is such a thing, the names and events are purely fictitious) becomes clouded by spending several days in the local opium den in Kaimundo before trudging up the Western Cwm. Under such circumstances they can't act as Techers: cool cucumbers who have it all figured out, truly have taken everything into account, and therefore know that it'll work out.

Acting this way means that the risks are not worth taking, the thrills not worth experiencing. The balance between gain promised and accomplishment fulfilled has become so tilted, that there can never be a positive outcome, at most a neutral one.

We should never place ourselves under potentially dangerous conditions, when unable to judge the dangers. Accidents happen, that's part of the risk. But to try things that are dangerous because one cannot judge the dangers, or for whatever other reason — that's dumb, not worthy of Caltechers. Risk is worth taking only when the achievement is worth writing home about.

We Techers, eggheads that we are, must really and truly avoid situations where thoughtlessness, or induced thoughtlessness, jeopardizes the survival of the fittest.

**Features**

### Dean's Corner

**Darwin and the CCC**

by Jean-Paul Revel

**features**

ience not positively correlated with the benefit that would accrue if everything should turn out well.

So there are many sports heroes, boxers, but many others as well, who endanger their lives for the thrill of pushing beyond existing limits. This is also true of many researchers, epidemiologists researching things like Ebola virus, pioneers who test drugs on themselves or place themselves under very extreme conditions, explorers of the world and of space — all of whom took grave risks. As Dr. Haldane said, such people become their own rabbit.

Similar altruistic risk taking is found in the behavior of soldiers in battle. The risk taken in many of these instances can be seen as species-preserving more so.

Of course it is to be hoped that the person who do such unselfish acts, is not the one who has the germ of solving the world's problems. And even then, from a global stance, I guess it makes no real difference, because if it can be done by a single individual, most likely someone else will do it sooner or later.

On the other hand, from the point of view of the individual it makes a lot of difference.

So I'll aver that, yes, climbing K2 or Everest, driving a supersonic car, exposing oneself to dangerous diseases — taking risks along those lines is OK, acceptable, honorable, useful.

Beside the greater or lesser value to society there is also the personal importance of risk taking, the self-testing, followed by a feeling of self-assurance, the satisfaction of conquering one's own fears, and so on.

That's great. But in all these cases there are careful calculations about how dangerous it really is. Experience, training, concentration all work in favor of success. Somewhere along the line there is a determination that this is something worth taking risks for, whatever the result from the point of view of survival of the fittest.

But I am truly disappointed when, in spite of our vaunted brains, we take wanton risks, risks that are taken casually, or under conditions that negate any forethought.

Oh, say that other things interfere, and the collective judgment of the Caltech Climbing and Chwoder Club (CCCC) (sorry if there is such a thing, the names and events are purely fictitious) becomes clouded by spending several days in the local opium den in Kaimundo before trudging up the Western Cwm. Under such circumstances they can't act as Techers: cool cucumbers who have it all figured out, truly have taken everything into account, and therefore know that it'll work out.

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We Techers, eggheads that we are, must really and truly avoid situations where thoughtlessness, or induced thoughtlessness, jeopardizes the survival of the fittest.

A bitlont... meaning that you have been using your marbles and will have survived yet another week.

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**Presentation**

**Date:** Thursday, October 30, 1997

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**Place:** 101 Watson Lab Building

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**Undergraduate Interview Dates**

- Fixed Income Sales and Trading Thursday, January 22, 1998

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Oct. 6, 1997
Theft — Bike
A dark blue, Performance bike, valued at $450, was taken from the area between Lloyd and Page house. Victim left his bike unsecured between Lloyd and Page House at approx. 3:00 p.m. Upon returning to his bike at 3:30 p.m., discovered his bike missing.

Oct. 9, 1997
Theft — Bike
A white, Maroon bicycle, valued at $600 was taken from Beckman Institute, near the courtyard. Victim last seen his bike at 12:00 midnight in the Beckman Inst. Courtyard. Upon returning to the location at 9:00, discovered the bike missing.

Theft — Bike
A dark green, Huffy bicycle valued at $100, was taken from 1170 Del Mar. At approx. 6:00 PM, on 10/02/97, victim secured his bike at 1170 Del Mar. Upon returning he noticed the bike missing.

Vandalism
At approximately 9:25 a.m., victim parked her vehicle, a Honda Accord, in the Wilson Parking Structure. Upon returning at 12:15 p.m., she noticed that her radio’s antenna was bent over the top of her vehicle.

Oct. 11, 1997
Chemical Spill
While on patrol, security noticed that her radio’s antenna was damaged. Victim last seen his bike at approx. 11:00 a.m., discovered his bike missing.

Theft-Bike
While on patrol, security noticed that her radio’s antenna was damaged. Victim last seen his bike at approx. 11:00 a.m., discovered his bike missing.

Theft
A green Free-Spirit bicycle, valued at $160, was taken from the north side of 1028 Catalina. At 1:00 p.m., victim noticed that his bike, which he had secured with a chain lock, was not in the area where he had left it parked.

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ASCIT Movies presents...
Monty Python's
The Meaning of Life
by Joe Carroll

Just about everybody at Tech has heard of Monty Python, the British comedy troupe that has quite a following years after disturbing its members, Terry Gilliam, Graham Chapman, Eric Idle, John Cleese, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin, have produced some hilarious stuff, like The Search for the Holy Grail and The Life of Brian. In fact, I’ll bet you know somebody who really loves a certain sketch or song, and you’ll have to be restrained from killing someone the next time you hear “The Lumberjack Song” or the difference between a European or African swallow. Well, you’re pretty safe with this movie. The Meaning of Life was their third movie, and never became as well known as the first two.

That being said, The Meaning of Life has some advantages over the earlier Python films. The Pythons seemed to have noticed a strong smell of chlorine by the track area. Campus Maintenance, the Fire Department, and Safety were notified. Nearby buildings were evacuated until the fumes dissipated.

Unauthorized entry
Security responded to a report of an unauthorized entry to the Braun Athletic Center. Staff discovered the south door of Brown Gym had been broken and forced open. Nothing appeared to be missing from the Gym.

Oct. 12, 1997
False Fire Alarm
Security responded to a fire alarm in the Blacker House Lounge. After investigating the alarm, it was determined that the smoke detector was set off by students burning newspaper in the fireplace.

Oct. 13, 1997
Theft — Bike
A green Free-Spirit bicycle, valued at $160, was taken from the north side of 1028 Catalina. At 1:00 p.m., victim noticed that his bike, which he had secured with a chain lock, was not in the area where he had left it parked.

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