CSPAN makes pit stop at Caltech last week

BY GLORIA TRAN

The Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN) stopped by the Caltech campus Tuesday afternoon on its two-year long “Road to the White House” tour. The 48-continent-state tour, launched in 2007 and lasting until January 2009, serves two major purposes: programming and coverage of major events, and “mobile” education about the network.

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According to Stuart, C-SPAN is different from other networks in that its main priority is bringing the House and Senate into homes. The tour fol-

Caltech thinks big about going small

BY MOLLY DAVIS

Nanotechnology took a big step forward last week at Caltech: the Alliance for Nanosystems VLSI (very-large-scale integration) was formed when Caltech’s Kavli Nanoscience Institute (KNI) and LETI-MI-NATECH – the Laboratoire d’Electronique et de Technologie de l’Information-Micro- and Nano-Technologies in Grenoble, France – got together to transform the current state of nanotechnology into the vision that Richard Feynman had for it 50 years ago: self-replicating nanomachines, microscopes so powerful that they could see atoms, and the entire 24 volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica printed on the head of a pin.

Caltech has been working on making things smaller for the past decade. They’ve produced many advances, such as the nanoelectromechanical system (NEMS) “nose,” an olfactory system based on silicon chips. The tiny chemical sensor array – only a few tens of nanometers, or small enough to fit 50,000 on the period at the end of this sentence – detects molecules that are passed over it and reads a chemical fingerprint, identifying the molecules, and thus the “scent.”

LETI has been in the business of micro- and nanotechnologies for more than 30 years. They operate a production and research plant that has turned out many successes in microtechnologies that are used around the world today, such as products from STMicroelectronics, Tronics Microsystems, and many others. Further, they are in the business of innovating systems such as medical devices that can be implanted and left working in the body, flat screens made of carbon nanotubes that may some-

Students win big in social experiments

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Climate deniers fall for hot air hoax

OPINION

2

jy is the non-rectilineal harmonic regressivity of the (P-series), F is trans-dimensional flow structure and ductivity, Ψ is the vertical (neo-Falkian) benthic rush limbaugh and a dozen rather high-profile on journal, but instead prominent professional blowhard faces weren't the editors of an obscure social theory interview as having said they thought it was “the ear quantum gravity and the pseudoscientific concept of developments in his field”. Those who disapprove of “liest quotations about math and physics he could find” here is this: if you want more scientific credibility behind a headline that fits your preconcep science behind a headline that fits your preconcep.
‘Curious’ good for the public, but uninformative for undergrads

SARAH MARZEN

It’s curious how little I learned about Caltech research after watching two hours of November 12, 2007, the first public screening of Curious, the 2-hr Caltech documentary, was shown at Ramo Auditorium. I’ll talk about that tour and the project that the documentary as do the producers. A 1-hr version was released for public viewing. It’s curious how little I learned about the producers. The documentary also includes interviews with researchers, students, and faculty members, as well as footage of the Caltech campus and students in action. There is also footage of students and faculty members participating in research projects and talking about their experiences. The documentary also highlights the importance of research and its impact on the world. The documentary is a good introduction to the world of research and offers a glimpse into the lives of those who work in the field. It is a beautiful and inspiring film that I would recommend to anyone interested in learning more about research and its impact on the world.
Programmers move on to nationals

By Natalya Kostandova

Caltech’s tradition of winning the regional level of the ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest is back. On Saturday, Caltech team consisting of Eui Woong Lee, Seong Woo Shan, and Ben Zas placed first above 62 other competitors, earning a spot in the world finals of the competition.

The team will travel to Alberta, Canada, to compete against teams from all parts of the world on April 6-10, 2008.

The road to victory was quite as cool as Japan [where the finals were held last year], but it should be very interesting, because there will be a lot of really neat people there who will kick our ass.7

At the regionals, held in River- side Community College, each of participating teams was allocated a computer and had five hours to solve seven problems. Yeo, Lee, and Zas solved six of the seven problems in the shortest time, which allowed them to move on to the international level.

Although the team left Caltech for a day, some parts of its experience did not change much with change in location. “At one point I noticed that I had left Caltech- gone to RCC, and somehow end- up as a group of 200 people with a worse ratio than my class,” said Zas.

The Southern California region- al competition is open to collegians. It is one of the qualifiers for the world Out of 9720 teams registered for the competition, only 90 are selected to move on to compete in Canada. This is the sixth year in a row that Caltech made it to the finals.

BY EVELYN CHOU

Heels will pound the runway at Geek to Chic, a profession- al event presence that will be held on Tuesday, Nov 13, in Dunbye Lounge and Gardens. Hosted by the Caltech Career Development Center, Caltech Alumni Asso- ciation, and IC Penney, the event will last from 11am to 1:30pm and feature a professional attire runway show, as well as hair and makeup stations and suit measurements for men and women.

The event is expected to at- tract both the fashion-savvy and done in dire need of revamping, although the primary purpose of the event is to leave all par- ticipants with a fresh outlook on style and introduce ways to look professional in various situa- tions.

Coordinators Yvonne Banzali and Jonie Watanabe Tsuji from the Caltech Career Development Center say that the event will provide a much-needed service to many Caltech students.

“Recruiters take all of thirty seconds to size you up,” says Watanabe Tsuji. “So it’s im- portant to have a really good handshake, to be confident, have a nice smile when you shake their hand and that’s why the dress is so important, because of that thirty second first impres- sion.”

Despite not winning the PBS competition, which would have given them publicity through PBS’ NOW broadcast, the team says they’re moving forward. The team has just developed a new prototype that includes brakes and foot rests. Furthermore, they are about to test their wheelchair proto- types on humans and are await- ing approval by the Caltech ethics committee. IMI is aiming to king wheelchairs ready for Guatamala by February of next year.

Wheelchair designers second in PBS show

By Jonathan Yeung

The road bike to wheelchair branchoff of five Caltech students placed second in the PBS Project Enterprise Contest.

The team, comprised of alumni Rudy Roy and Ben Sexton, and seniors Nathan Chan, Tom Oli- ver, and Charlotte Grinolds, was one of four finalists in the competition from a field of over a hundred.

The winner, determined last week by internet voting, was a group from Corona, California that dis- played how they wanted a key, that they would actually get it, and how they would distribute it.

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ASCIT minutes: 11/06/07

Midnight donuts are next week

Present: Chris Gonzales, Mike Geordie, Andrea Dubin, Mike Fort, Patrick Herring, Zack Hig- beey, Deryl Coleman, Ekta Bho- jwani, Dan Lo

Absent: Mike Woods (late)

*Interhouse

*People should start building!!

Only 10 days left!

*Social team

*Eka says that they are trying to plan a concert. They need $5000 to fund it, but the MEB turned them down since nothing (such as the date, who’s coming, etc.) is finalized. We could try to apply again. We’ll also talk to Tom Mannion about it.

*Publications

*Marissa will be talking to us next week about the Tech.

*The Big T is having a meeting on Monday

*Little T is working on it.

*Aaron is incompetent. Again.

*Donut

*Midnight donuts will be some- time next week. Friday night social? Doing something for the houses for building inter- house, so it will probably be on Thursday.

*Towel day

*We have to figure out who decides who gets them and if we want them to be gold plated or gold filled. People from every class will be eligible to get a key. $15 a key is about the maximum we want to spend.

*Gonzoe suggests that FDL and UD will give us a list of who gets points. Getting Daryl a sand-
Meet Anneila Sargent
New VP for student affairs

INTERVIEW BY MARISSA CEVALLOS

Professor Anneila Sargent, astronomy researcher at Caltech, was named the new vice president for student affairs last week. The former president of the American Astronomical Society says she’s excited to delve back into student culture at Caltech—after all, the Scottish astronaut became a member of the Caltech community 40 years ago as a graduate student.

MC: Here’s the big question: will you still get to work on your research?

AS: I hope I will! I do a lot vicariously through students and post-docs. I just finished CARMA. There’s a lot I’d like to see get done. Jean-Lou Chameau said I’d still have 50% of my time for research, which means I’ll get to do research in my spare time.

For me, the biggest challenge is that I have to teach next quarter. I want to teach one quarter per year, at least. I’m going to try. Everything is going to be an experiment.

MC: How did you find out you were being considered for the position of Student Affairs VP?

AS: I didn’t even know I got interviewed. It was hilarious. My friend Melanie Hunt asked if I could talk to a committee that wanted my advice on teaching. I thought I was just giving my opinion, and the whole thing was very relaxed. Then it was over, and I didn’t think about it again. I met with a friend later who asked me if I had been interviewed for the job. I said ‘Of course not,’ but he said ‘Are you sure? Could it have been 5% an interview?’

Then Jean-Lou called me. I was startled. I thought about it for a while, about what my other options would be. But I felt most energized by this. You know how sometimes you think ‘Oh no, I have to do this, and I have to get this done?’ But this was something I got really excited about. It didn’t take me long to become sure.

MC: What are some of your ideas about improving the student life for Caltech undergrads?

AS: The fact that a faculty committee has considered redoing core is fundamental. I’d also like to understand the culture of taking too many courses. But doing research is better for the real world in general, even if you don’t stay in academia.

MC: What can you do to make student life easier?

AS: We just have to be more creative. There’s always something falling asleep in class, more than in any other school. It’s really hard on the students. Is it because the problem sets are unreasonable? I just get the feeling that I was offered the job because I can do something about it.

MC: What was it like being an undergrad in Scotland?

AS: I worked really hard in junior high and high school. What else could we do with our time? We were all expected to be working. I didn’t have time for teenage angst. My life would not be worth living if I didn’t do my homework.

Of course, I’m this good girl going off to college, so I just had a great time. I didn’t work very hard. But in my third year, my adviser said to me ‘In principle, you can get into the physics honors program, but in practice, you better be in the top of your class or you’re not getting in.’ It was really hard to buckle down. Remember, this is when everyone’s grades were posted, numbers and all, on the professor’s door. Well, I just remember everyone crowding around the door at the end of the year, and I’d finished in the class. One guy gave me a mean look and said ‘We’ll see if ever help you in lab again.’

MC: Anything else?

AS: I’m hoping this will be an adventure.

COURTESY OF CALTECH TODAY

I feel like I have a lot to learn. I’ll have to read stacks of papers. I feel like I really need to do a good job.

I’ve found students at other school are happier, and I want to know why. I spoke at frosh camp a few years ago, just after September 11, and I thought ‘God, they’re asking better questions than grad students!’ But then something happens as they go through Caltech, and they lose something, and I think that’s terrible. When I left [The University of] Edinburgh, I thought the best part of my life was over. When students leave Caltech, I want them to think it was tough but it was worth it.

Honestly, I really worry about it. Students here take too many courses. I think there’s a culture of seeing how hard you can push yourself. When I was young, undergrads did research here. I had someone tell me that he wouldn’t have liked Caltech if he hadn’t been doing research.

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Students cash in on social science experiments

When Caltech students find themselves a little short on cash, some may turn to part-time jobs around the area, tutoring or even playing online poker. However, a fast-rising trend is getting paid—and paid well—for playing guinea pig in social experiments on campus, from bargaining in faxes auctions to making moral decisions under intense magnetic fields.

The Social Science Experimental Laboratory (SSEL) conducts experiments for research in areas ranging from psychology to political science by analyzing how students react individually in certain social situations. SSEL experiments analyze brain activity while subjects perform various tasks. Experiments at SSEL are conducted at the Caltech Brain Imaging Center (CBIC). Both SSELs and IRMs last from 1 to 2 hours and pay from $15 to $50 per hour. Subjects must be 18 or older to participate in SSEL experiments. While IRMs are conducted at the Broad Center, while SSELFs are conducted remotely via computer terminals at the lab or from outside the lab through an interactive online session. Usually, for the first 15 minutes, students are provided instructions about the experiments.

Some students are motivated by money, while others are motivated by the opportunity to earn some money, others have been regularly participating in experiments each week. “[I volunteer] as often as possible, usually 2 or 3 times a week,” says sophomore Robert Kaspar, a “regular” who has made $1300 since spring of this year. “I usually make between $50 and $100 per experiment.”

“Don’t ever withdraw cash. I live off of SSEL earnings. I deposit any excess, since I’m going to have a lot of debt when I graduate,” says Kaspar.

“Usually, the experiments are overbooked, so if you don’t arrive on time you possibly won’t get a spot. The upshot is that you still receive a nominal show-up fee,” says Kaspar.

Junior Seth Hendrickson earned almost $2000 during freshman year alone, participating in a couple of experiments per week. “It’s a good way to make a little cash whenever you have free time. Experiments are usually at very convenient times as well,” says Hendrickson.

Perhaps the most lucrative experiments were the simulation spectrum auctions conducted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) known as “FCC auctions” on campus. Congress granted the FCC authority to auction radio licenses [when?]. Caltech researcher John O. Ledyard and his colleagues analyzed various auction designs by simulating these auctions with Caltech participants representing the interests of citizens, companies (i.e., Google and other telecom companies) and the US government.

“Students bid on package A and package B, sometimes winning both. They earn money based on how well they did during the auction or experiment,” says junior Matt Grau, who earned $700 last year participating in these FCC auctions. “I did work study for a while but the jobs are boring. [SSELFs] are kind of fun because they’re like games and you can do it as frequently or infrequently as you want,” adds Grau.

Sophomore Victor Li earned about $400 last year participating in SSELF experiments such as the FCC auctions. “If you’re really good at auction experiments, you can make up to $100 in an hour,” says Li.

People may begin participating in experiments through social science classes or by word of mouth. Volunteers can obtain more information online at the centers’ webpages.

Victor Li
$400 in one year

“Perpetrator”

Robert Kaspar
$1300 since spring

“I make between

$50 and $100 per week”

Seth Hendrickson
$2000 fresh year

“It’s a good way to make a little cash”

How not to be seen in Japan

NATALYA KOSTANDOVA

If you prefer to protect yourself from robbers, rapists, or bullies in non-standard ways, you have much to look forward to. Thanks to Ayako Tsukinka, Japanese experimental fashion designer, you can ward off attackers by quickly disguising yourself as a vending machine. The four-side cover, with all elements of a real machine printed on its fabric, folds out from the flap on a skirt or kimono, and is Tsukinka’s response to Japan’s growing anxiety about safety.

In addition to the vending machine, you can also purchase a purse that unfolds to resemble a leafy twig, and army people have their own sort of camouflage to hide them from the enemy. A human vending machine (from now on referred to as HVM due to my personal laziness and desire to save space) with tennis shoes sticking out from fabric does not, however, have the benefits of the aforementioned examples.

For one, although vending machines appear to be more common in Japan than McDonald’s in America, here in the States using this particular disguise to blend in with environment would be slightly difficult. Seeing a random machine in a middle of the road would appear to be rather sketchy, to say the least. Especially one with tennis shoes, or sandals. Or even barefoot. It doesn’t really matter.

In case of being discovered, the human soda dispenser does not have adequate defense mechanisms, like the natural users of camouflage. The praying mantis pinch, bite, and slash their opponents, and honestly, they look like aliens, which should automatically provoke respect. While pinching and biting is available to the person hiding behind the fabric, they are unlikely to be effective. If the person happens to look like an alien, that’s just unfortunate.

As for the swallowtail caterpillar, their disguise is the best defense. After all, anybody willing to eat their dropings will be unlikely to stop at any other thing, too. It’s true that not many people would be willing to eat a full size vending machine, but that still doesn’t seem to be a very effective defense.

Army people, while usually less successful at blending in with the surroundings, and mantis, have a slightly stronger defense, usually in shape of feathers. If the HVM happens to have a buzzsaw hidden under the four-sided screen, then he/she shouldn’t be hiding in the first place.

Even if the HMV succeeds in tricking the perpetrator to believe that it is, in fact, a vending machine, the outcome of the situation still does not seem very promising. Not to mention the fact that anybody who fails to notice the shoes, the fabric, and breathing coming from the machine is probably going to be too sleep-deprived, Stoned, or was so harmful in a first place.

The point is, vending machines don’t have very nice lives in the States. Even the real ones. From personal experience, unless the poor things work perfectly, disappointing a wonderfully cool, refreshing can of soda and a correct amount of change, they are quite likely to have only a significant amount of sweating, but a few kicks as well. Seeing that the vending machine skits do not come with actual cans of soda stored in them, in the event that the possible perpetrator decides to have himself a can of Coke, the outlook for the victim doesn’t look so good.

As for the backpack transforming into a fire extinguisher, let’s just hope that its owner is never used for the object he or she is pretending to be.
There was a time when Caltech was good at sports. It was last night. In my dreams. But it’s real, too, because I was dreaming of 1954, the year the Caltech Men’s Basketball team won the conference championship. I learned about the long and surprisingly-rich history of Caltech Athletics, and basketball especially, watching Quantum Hoops, a documentary about the team’s 2006 season, playing this week at Laemmle One Colorado Theatre.

Caltech athletics, I learned, have been Olympians, including a silver-medalist pole vaulter in 1924, and world record holders. They have been champions, All-Americans, and award winners. Just not so much, recently.

The last time the Caltech Men’s basketball team had won against a Division III opponent came during the time of all-conference center 6’10” Ben Turk, a talented player who accomplished the feat ten years ago. Since then (or at least until the time of the movie), nothing. That fated year, however, senior Jordan Carlson came one vote short of making the all-conference first team, seemingly a sign of better things to come.

Quantum Hoops, though, doesn’t highlight Caltech just because they almost always ended up on the bottom side of the scoring. Instead, it portrays the interplay of intellectual and physical pursuits, and shows the deepest connection: that they are both driven by passion.

No one displays passion more ardently than Roy Dow, Caltech’s head basketball coach for six years. Why would Roy Dow continue to work at a program like Caltech, where he rarely gets a player who can dunk anything more than an Oreo? He simply doesn’t see a win-loss record as the bottom line. And neither do his players.

Jordan Carlson, leading scorer and star of the 2006 team, had never played on a basketball team before coming to Caltech. Neither had most of his team-mates. The team had more valedictorians than players with high school varsity experience. Despite everything working against them -- limited practice time, the near-impossibility of recruiting, and the weight of years of losses stacked up behind them -- the Caltech men nearly pulled off a miracle that year. In their final home game, they lost to Whitman by just two points, in overtime.

But if that miracle was a near miss, consider another minor miracle – all the team’s seniors that year graduated with honors. From Caltech.

A theme emerges over the course of the history traced out by Quantum Hoops. Players at Caltech, both talented and less so, took sporting as a supplement to their other endeavors, not a replacement. Stars passed on scholarships to top schools to study in the academic environment of Caltech. Our history is full of players who excelled on the court, and then went on to distinguished careers as scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs. On and off the court, they drive forward.

And despite their losing record, Caltech is a team on the rise. The next hurdle for the Dribbling Beavers is to win a SCIAC conference game. I calculate they have a 24% chance to do it in 2008, based on their 14-game caltech conference schedule, and assuming their point spread (50+/22 points) from last season holds steady and is normally distributed. If Caltech can take that spread down a mere 5 points, their odds of achieving at least a single conference victory shoot to 45%. 10 points better than last year and it’s three in four they will snatch a win.

There’s appeal in going to a movie (a real one, in theaters) and being able to point up at the screen saying “I know that guy! He’s good at math!” And there must be appeal for the general public, too. Last week Quantum Hoops outsold “Bee Movie” and other major Hollywood productions at One Colorado. Beyond the surface enthusiasm you might feel for seeing your friends on the big screen, Quantum Hoops is great because it is about us. The men featured in the film epitomize the ideal of the scholar-athlete. They play not for the reward of it, or for recognition and honors. They play because play is itself worth pursuing. And they play better than you think.

I Believe I Can Fly

Junior Herschel Mukherjee goes up for the frisbee during Sunday’s disco trophy challenge between Page and Fleming. Page won the trophy with a 15-4 victory in Ultimate Frisbee.

Men’s Soccer
Caltech’s Nathan Chan was named to the 2007 All-SCIAC, 2nd Team. Chan, a senior team captain and midfielder is from Westwood High School in Austin, Texas. He is a double major at Caltech. In addition to soccer, Nathan is a member of Engineers for a Sustainable World and the Caltech Sustainability Council.

Men’s Water Polo
The Caltech men’s waterpolo team ended its season this weekend at the SCIAC tournament with three losses to Redlands, Occidental and Whitman with scores of 19-5, 17-2 and 15-6, respectively.

Despite the 14-point differential, the team’s best performance came against Redlands, which was ranked 19th nationally.

Cross Country
Five members of the men’s and women’s teams ran in the Division III west regionals in Oregon on Saturday. Senior Matt Kiesz led the men’s team with a time of 27:46 in the eight-kilometer course. He finished 71st. Freshman Anton Karrman followed closely in 73rd with a time of 27:48. Fellow freshman Danatunga Sachith finished 83rd (28:42), while seniors David Rosen (28:44) and Steve Horkoshi (31:09) garnered 87th and 96th place, respectively.

Freshman Justine Chia led the women with a time of 24:56 in the six-kilometer course, good for 86th place. She was followed by senior Katherine Breeden (25:07), freshman Stephanie Wuertel (25:29), Perrin Considine (27:25) and sophomore Masha Belyi (27:40).

Quantum Hoops
Extended through November 15th
Laemmle “One Colorado”
Theater
Daily Showtimes:
1:10, 3:15, 5:20, 7:40, 9:55
Caltech student discount: $4
Dear Dr. Quark,

I have been strucken with an unfortunate ailment. Despite best efforts of mine to love my work as hard as possible, I find I’ve become distracted, by a frosh girl. She’s perfect because...she’s a girl. I don’t think she knows I exist, and if she did, I am afraid she will hate me because I am an orphan. What should I do?

Pining Upperclassman

It is my expert opinion, as a doctor, and more importantly, as a scientist, that you should by all means not talk to this individual. This will scare her to death, not only because you are probably very intimidating and frightening in your own right, but also because it will probably scare her to look at you. The problem is you are not a Phi-1a phan. What should I do?

Talking to her will just let her know how socially inept you are, and even worse, how much you probably love science. I recommend the more polite and proven method of keeping your distance and conveying your affection with long glances. Remember, it is important to walk the fine line between a kitschy wink and creepy stare. Don’t worry, she’ll understand the intent. You might think it is a good idea to be subtle or mysterious and do something like send this girl flowers or gifts anonymously. We can do better than this. Why not go a step further and be so mysterious and so subtle as to send her nothing, but she’ll also wonder what wasn’t sent to her. This is not just good advice. I know this because it is scientifically proven. Pierre Curie, who was a great scientist, married Marie Curie, who was a fox in addition to being an even greater scientist. As a young buck he often tried to woo her by anonymous leaving flowers and radioactive isotopes at her door, but the somewhat thick skulled Marie assumed the samples were from a scientifically interested benefactor, rather than the skinny beantalk with wireframes that lived next door, and she performed scientific experiments on them. In the midst of one of her experiments she found that Pierre had tampered with one of her samples and left the note “Will you marry me?” embedded in her lab notebook. She was so furious with the tampering of her carefully taken data that she was so furious with the tampering of her carefully taken data that she beat him within an inch of his life with an Erlenmeyer flask. It was only later that the two got hitched, and Pierre won the Nobel prize, not only for his and his wife’s outstanding contributions to science, but as a nod to his incredibly hot and scientifically minded life partner. Later Marie died from radiation poisoning from the flowers he gave her, and Pierre was so heartbroken that he got absolutely hammered and took a ride in his carriage and was crushed to death in a horrible traffic accident. Their three young children were orphaned.

The children were sent to Max Planck’s house to live. Max, being a notorious rechuse, left the children to entertain themselves. The found a magical wardrobe and hid inside it during a game of hide and seek. Unfortunately the latch of the wardrobe closed, locking the children in, and they suffocated. I am wary of the fact that you’re an orphan. Being an orphan is a terrible thing, but that last thing you want is to have children who are also orphans due to your genetic disease. If eventual procreation is your goal, I would make sure the fros you are interested in is not also an orphan, or your biologically disgusting offspring will likely be born as orphans too. The would have to life in an orphanage, which means you would not be able to spend as much time with them. This will make them very, very sad.

Dr. Quark taught himself integral calculus at the age of six by building it up for himself from axioms and first principles. He currently enjoys playing with blocks and throwing food. An energetic and precarious child, Quark never knew his parents, and instead was raised by the careful guardianship of Murray Gell-Mann.

You too can ask your own questions of Dr. Quark - EMAIL DRQUARK@GMAIL.COM and he will answer them.

Comics

Proof by Induction that Science is better than you!

Dr. Quark

If you don't get it, read the comic below.

WGP "Recursion" by Mark Eichenlaub

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