Symposium highlights mortality in Africa
Placed emphasis on infant and maternal issues

By Casey Jao and Vivian Yang
STAFF WRITERS

This past Saturday, Caltech community members packed into Remo Auditorium to attend the second annual African Health Symposium, hosted by the cooperation of the GEANCO Foundation and Caltech’s very own Global Health Association. Speakers came straight from sub-Saharan Africa and their research hospital laboratories to discuss public health education, pediatric infectious diseases, faith-based community outreach, and the opportunities that the general community can take to help the problem of maternal and infant mortality in Africa.

“As Caltech students, we tend to focus on small things, but it’s really good for us to zoom out and think about the bigger problems that are easily solved with a little elbow grease. [Malaria] is an easy problem to solve if you just add soap and water, two dollars worth of medication, and ten dollars worth of bed nets,” Chess mentioned about last year’s symposium. This year’s show was run by a small army of undergraduates, graduate students, and even JPL staff clad in white T-shirts boldly and optimistically proclaiming, “They will suffer no more on our watch.”

The day opened with remarks by E L A N C O co-founder Afam Onyema. He cited some remarkable statistics that set the stage for the rest of the symposium. Some of the more striking ones: Each year, 1.16 million African children die before their eighteenth day of life. One per every five African children will die before their fifth birthday. The list went on and on, and the need for action became clear.

The first speaker, Lisa Bohmer, is the director of global partnerships and program resources for the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS (EGPA) Foundation. She discussed the prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, particularly in African women and children. Aside from primary infection, which is most commonly transmitted blood-to-blood, vertical transmission is also a large factor in the spreading of the AIDS epidemic. Vertical transmission is the infection of HIV from mother to child during pregnancy, labor, or breastfeeding. Without intervention, an infected mother has a fifteen to forty-five percent chance of passing the virus to her fetus. Of the HIV-positive children in African, only thirty-eight percent receive any form of treatment.

Bohmer pushed for the use of antiretrovirals, also known as ARVs, which can reduce the risk of vertical transmission and hold the virus at bay if transmission has already occurred. These medications are subsidized by external sources, including the US government, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the Global Fund. “There’s a real need to keep up the commitment to funding and reducing costs because once you start someone on ARVs, it’s life-long,” stated Bohmer.

“Developing children [in Africa] have three bullets to dodge,” said Dr. Grace Aldrovandi, an energetic research physician at Children’s Hospital in Los Angeles in conjunction with the University of Southern California. Aldrovandi investigates epidemiological factors in the transmission of HIV from mother to child and also the pathogenesis of HIV in children. Vertical transmission, she explained, occurs primarily in utero, during birth, and during breastfeeding. Surprisingly, Aldrovandi emphasized and pushed the importance of breastfeeding over using formula, despite the risks of HIV vertical transmission. Breast milk contains immune factors from the mother which can protect the infant from various other infections. Moreover, according to Aldrovandi, it rarely contains enough virus particles to infect the baby so long as the HIV-positive mother follows a strict feeding regimen. Risking the scorn of multinational corporations and to the amusement of the crowd, Aldrovandi proclaimed, “Formula is like milk from a woman with advanced HIV.”

Another speaker on the program was Joan Duff, executive director of the Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty (CIFA), who discussed an interesting approach to solving global poverty. This organization utilizes faith-based community outreach programs in malaria-stricken countries, like Nigeria. “Faith leaders are...in many cases, the most important source

Please see AFRICA, Page 6

The Monday Jazz Band performs in front of Winnett during lunchtime on Friday

PHOTO BY TINA DING
The Bagels

By Aryan Safaie and Edward Chen

**UNDERGRADUATE**

We’re sorry that you were bereft of your usual bagels a few weeks ago, but however, that was not Anthony’s fault, and you blaming him in such a petty way makes it pretty clear that you need to shake out a little more sand.

If you’re wondering, the arrangement is as follows: we pick up the bagels from Noah’s along with the Tech on Monday mornings, and we’re reimbursed by ASCIT. However, lately there’s been some confusion about our reimbursements, something that is completely not Anthony’s fault at all, and we decided to skip out on the bagels for that week. It won’t happen again in the future.

By Tristan Brown

**UNDERGRADUATE**

In my previous article, I mentioned that government-imposed health care insurance violated our rights by forcing individuals to pay for the system without being given a choice. However, many people believe that our society cannot give honest, hardworking people the money to take care of their health without subsidizing through government programs.

The reason health care premiums are so high is because if people don’t take care of themselves, it’s going to cost us all in the long run. However, we’ve seen this form of reasoning several times, and it’s still a form of reasoning, right? So, this is small infringement on our freedoms a necessary evil?

The belief that government-controlled health care would be more efficient is a horrible misconception. The country could save over $200 billion every year just from cleaning out the waste and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid. Barack Obama himself admitted as much.

Additionally, government regulation of the private industry adds an additional $300 billion in costs, according to a 2009 ATO Institute study. Elimination of those costs alone could pay for health insurance for 40 million families.

On the other hand, I’ve quite often heard the argument that getting rid of those elimination of the for-profit aspect of the health care industry would save enough money for public insurance. What most people don’t seem to realize is that the annual profit margins for private health care insurers hover around 5%. The total profit of the entire health insurance industry last year was a mere $13 billion.

Take a peek at the legislation those figures sink in. Private industry 13% of its revenues every year. Additionally, the private insurance companies are responsible for providing efficient insurance services. And that means that the private industry spends 4% of the total costs to cover 51% of the people. Private industry clearly does a far better job of providing efficient health insurance services.

**PRIVATE INDUSTRY PROVIDES CHEAPER COVERAGE THAN EXISTING PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

Private Industry Provides Cheaper Coverage than Existing Public Programs

**The California Tech**

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The Cost of Health Care

**The Cost of Health Care**

Tim and Pallavi will write an article for the Tech.

Mural Policy:

Peter Daily, Tom Mannion, Geoff Blake, Student Housing Committee, Annelise Sargent go into the details of the revised policy and making it more detailed. The revised policy will probably come out in early December or early January. There will be no mural until then. Peter Daily was very clear about this.

**Damages:**

Sly: Stewardship rep said they’re going to charge students for painball cleanup charges that happened over the summer. The charge is $3000. They need to decide who to charge. Presidents should talk to their houses.

Robbie: Dubby stole Lloyd’s bannock, and it broke. They split the cost of a new bannock. Lloyd’s bannock was stolen again by Ricketts, and it broke. They’ll work out the details of paying for it later. I think that stealing is not a prank. Dubby stole Lloyd’s cement ball, and I don’t view this as a prank either.

A discussion followed about acceptable pranking. Robbie said that stealing and damaging others’ property is an honor code violation. Robbie, Daryl, Paul, Sly thought stealing without notification. Benji thought stealing without notification. Benji said that there are no absolutes; don’t steal from a house that doesn’t want to be stolen from. A conclusion was not reached.

Dan Thai: The IHC will turn over and when it does, it’s not me taking the next president. The next presidents will talk to each other the same way. Everyone: The presidents will talk to their successor and things will be understood.

Avery:

There was a discussion about updating documents to consider Avery a house. David will write a new section to the IHC and house Execom.

The Cost of Health Care

Private Industry Provides Cheaper Coverage than Existing Public Programs

**The Cost of Health Care**

People will be brought in to talk to their successor and things will be understood.

**THE COST OF HEALTH CARE**

Private Industry Provides Cheaper Coverage than Existing Public Programs

**IH C MINUTES - NOVEMBER 5, 2009**

Prent: Pallavi, Tim, Benji, Daryl, Max, Paul, Robbie, Rosy, Sly

Absent: None

Guests: Daniel Kolodrubetz, Dan Thai, Chris Hallacy, Feldy

Max: QBIP BNK RTI CRD

Presidents need to get in their Sendy tickets, and dues lists into Tom Mannion.

Rotation Committee:

Committee to review rotation has been formed. Its membership and charge is public, and published in this week’s Tech. There will be a general discussion on the rotation committee.

David: Would they consider changes to Avery? Robbie: It’s possible that they’ll say “students do not want to rotate can go to Avery.”

David is concerned. Is it necessary to single out Avery? Daryl: We’re looking at the past improvements. Avery is out because of how Avery used to be different from the other houses, not because they are considering changing Avery. David wants Avery to have input. People will be brought in to talk to the committee.

By Aryan Safaie and Edward Chen

**THE COST OF HEALTH CARE**

Private Industry Provides Cheaper Coverage than Existing Public Programs

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Mural Policy Update

By Tim Black and Pallavi Gunalan

IHC SECRETARY AND CHAIR

[Editor’s Note: This was published at the request of the IHC.]

Over the summer, the trustees had held their regular meeting at Caltech and were quite upset with the murals they saw in the houses during a house tour. Following this meeting, the IHC attempted to come up with solutions to present to the administration to remedy the situation. After lengthy discussion, the IHC agreed to have specified murals painted over, a decision which was well- received by the students and trustees. The mural policy has not been enforced, and currently, no murals are at risk to go up until the policy is altered.

According to Asst. VP of Student Affairs, Tom Mannion, “The original mural policy came out of an agreement on stewardship (several years ago) between the Trustees and the students. The Trustees had been concerned that the students needed to make a strong statement that they would take care of the South Houses if/when they were restored. The IHC of that time made the request of the administration, and the Student Housing Committee to establish a mural policy that was ment into effect by the current IHC. This policy is found on Caltech Housing’s website and states that murals approved by the IHC were not murals they described as ‘graffiti’ or ‘defacing the walls,’ and that they were related to the history of the houses with murals that were either of historic or social significance or were offensive/sexist/homophobic.”

Coleman noted, “Pointed out were many degrading factors including very used furniture, and several of the murals. Many of the students who saw the current state of the Houses were disturbed by a lot. So what was the conclusion of the meeting? ‘The Trustees realized that murals are a very deep and integral part of the House culture. As such, the committee decided to give students a broad charge to try to make the current Houses more attractive to potential donors.’”

According to Coleman and Price agreed “Despite their inclination, however, the trustees were willing to acknowledge a generation gap, the need for artistic freedom of expression, and the need to address some concern on the issue.”

Following the meeting, the IHC worked with Tom Mannion and Peter Daily to discuss possible solutions to the mural issue. In the end, the committee decided to give the Trustee and the Senior administration a broad charge to try to make the current Houses more attractive to potential donors.”

Reports on residential life and the student affairs of the IHC proposed a charge for the IHC to make recommendations and safeguards. The overarching goal is to ensure compatibility between houses and their residents and in this way, to make the incoming class as a whole as happy and comfortable as possible. The committee’s charge is public and is provided below.

**RO TATION COMMITTEE CHARGE**

Currently, incoming Caltech students are allocated accommodation based on the various student houses that are on a rotation process. At present, “Rotation” refers to a specific order in which the studenthousing is assigned. During the rotation process, the student receives their preferred houses in rank order. According to the IHC, “Prefrosh” spend time in each of the eight student houses, including a dinner and lunch at each house. At the end of the week, they submit their preferred houses in rank order. Independently, in each house, the upperclass students discuss the “prefrosh.” Final house assignments combine these two processes to create a ranking. The overarching goal is to ensure compatibility between houses and their residents and in this way, to make the incoming class as a whole as happy and comfortable as possible.

Rotation, the activities associated with Rotation, and subsequent initiation activities, have caused various concerns among the Faculty and Administration over the years. This committee is called to review all these areas and to make recommendations regarding whether the current process should be discontinued, or reformed in line with the evolution of improvements and safeguards. Specific questions include: What are the perceived disadvantages?

* Which other methods of assigning student accommodations might be adopted? Examples include random assignments, or administration assignments made to ensure, for example, diversity.

The delaying of Rotation until the end of Winter Quarter of the freshman year, as happened at some times in the past could also be considered.

Can Rotation be a welcoming introduction to Caltech and the Houses for the entering students? Concerns include: What is necessary to ensure that all feel comfortable with the process and the associated activities?

Can a responsible self-governing student body changed the practice or prevent Rotation/Initiation activities? It is necessary to consider the sensibilities of the diverse Caltech student population and understand the forms, and also violate Institute policy? Can this kind of responsible self-government be assured?
November 5, 2009

Officers Present: Anthony Chong, Andrey Poletayev, Pallavi Gunalan, Nadia Iqbal, Michael Maseda, Laura Conwill
Officers Absent: Maral Mazrooei

Call to order: 10:34 PM

President’s Report: Rescheduling meetings isn’t fun. Please do not miss meetings.

Officer Reports:

- **V.P. of Academic Affairs (ARC Chair):** Andrey and the ARC took care of course complaints. There’s a Student-Faculty Lunch next week. There is a sub-committee working on making a French minor!

- **V.P. of Nonacademic Affairs (IHC Chair):** Pallavi and Tim will write a couple of articles for the Tech on the rotation committee, Prefrosh Weekend, and murals. Rotation committee members are: Paul Aximow (chair), Marianne Bronner-Frazer, Chris Hirata, Geoff Blake, Antonio Rangel, Scott Virgil, Anna Beck, Alex Lockwood, Nick Rosa, Daryl Coleman, Tim Black, Sarah Li, and Michelle Ton. The mural ban is still on, and is estimated to be resolved by the end of this term or beginning of next term. Until then, only solid-colored murals are allowed. Talk to Peter Daily or Tom Mannion if you have any issues.

- **Operations Director:** Tom got a hold of the publisher guy for the Big T! Tom and Mike will meet with him on Friday the 13th.

- **Social Director:** Nadia met with Tom on Monday and talked to the booking agency about concert details. Everything is rolling. There will be a barbeque in the mid-afternoon! The BoD will be there bright and early on Saturday to help managing volunteers. If you want to volunteer at the concert and get a free T-shirt, touch the band’s equipment, and get lunch and dinner free, contact Nadia Iqbal at niqbal9@caltech.edu.

- **Secretary:** Laura realized that a key component of a flowchat is flow. She will re-design the ASCIT flowchart accordingly.

- **Treasurer:** Club funding checks from the fall are being distributed.

- **Scheduling:** Midnight donuts will be Wednesday, November 18. The BoD dinner at Lloyd is on Monday. Everyone should be there.

Meeting adjourned: 11:07 pm

Submitted by Laura Conwill
ASCIT Secretary
Many of you have just finished taking your midterms, and so I thought this was a perfect time to ask:

What’s the purpose of testing?

Traditionally, tests are used as assessment devices to measure what you know. But any sentence that starts with “traditionally” foreshadows some thing “new”.

Here, it foreshadows that tests can be used to do more than just assess knowledge—tests can actually enhance understanding. This phenomenon is known as the testing effect, and the basic idea is so old, it’s not the subject of the article. Rather, I’d like to discuss its extensions: “self-questioning” and the benefit of pretests.

But first, a pretest: Are pretests beneficial to learning?

When you study, do you test yourself? Why? According to Kornell and Bjork (2007), 91% of undergraduates report testing themselves, doing so “to figure out how well I have learned the information. And this includes self-questioning.” What does that mean? It means instead of reading information. And this includes self-questioning.

Effective than further study in retention of tested information. And this includes self-questioning. What does that mean? It means instead of reading Apostol for two hours (periodically nodding off), you should do the exercises at the end of the chapter. It means that if you fail a midterm and review your mistakes, then you might be learning the material as well as your higher-scoring peers.

But it also means that professors should be testing us more… in class, ungraded, and before teaching the material needed to solve the problems. While you’re expected to get more than 95% of the questions wrong, the time “wasted” taking the pretest is made up by the enhancement in understanding of tested material in a statistically significant way. (Richland, Kornell & Kao)

But I’d like to apply this further. What is the end goal of a Caltech education? It’s to learn the material and analytical thinking necessary for meaningful interdisciplinary research.

So are you failing this end goal every time you get a poor grade? No, by the information presented above, poor grades don’t necessarily imply that you haven’t learned the material.

Then what do they mean? Well, if you don’t check over your mistakes, then it probably does imply that you haven’t learned the material, especially if you have an “I no longer care about that class” attitude. But if you do take the effort to revisit that annoying midterm and work over the answers, then you might be learning the material after all, and I believe that should be reflected in your grades, not only because your grades should be a reflection of your knowledge and analytic ability, but also because it would be a great motivational tool.

Additionally, increasing the availability of optional tests would also be inferred as beneficial because students could both assess their understanding and learn from their mistakes.

As always, my ideas are far from perfect, but I’ve thought about them for a long time, so I’d love any commentary you’d be willing to give - email me anytime! (merlob@caltech.edu)

An Education Worth Its Money

by Faith Shuker-Haines

An Education” seems like a story we’ve heard before. A very smart girl comes from an uptight family, and they push her and push her to study and be perfect and play the cello and get into college. Until she meets a handsome man who sees through that shell and wants to show her all the joys of the world.

The problem: he’s twice her age.

It sounds like a cliché plot, and thus, like a relatively boring movie, but it’s not.

Mostly because “An Education” realizes that this is a complicated story. It would be easy to make a movie in which a sad lonely girl is shown the light in life by a man who calls her beautiful and brings her confidence, and then they fall in love.

And it would also be easy to make a movie in which some creeper starts hitting on this innocent child and he corrupts her and steals her life away. And the thing is, both of those are true. They’re almost equally true. And the movie doesn’t pick one. He does steal her innocence, and he does bring her joy, and the movie lets us be confused.

Peter Sarsgaard, as the man in question, is perfect in that he’s so charming and perfect and smart. He is the man of anyone’s dreams. But, watching him, you can’t not be suspicious.

Where does his money come from? Why is he taking such an interest in this girl?

Just when you think he’s sketchy, he throws you for a loop, convincing you he is just a lonely guy who really does love her.

And then you start to distrust him again. It’s so well-crafted that it never lets you get comfortable with your take on the story.

And, to me, that seems right. Because growing up is about losing innocence, and it’s about learning to live, and a movie about coming into adulthood has to be both those things.

The setting of the movie helps to accentuate this by being set in the early sixties, just as the world was starting to want to break free, but when it hadn’t quite figured out how to get rid of the fifties yet. It’s a lovely little analogy that really added to the movie, I think.

“An Education” is almost perfect.

I say “almost” because the ending was terrible. What I loved was that they never chose between a tragic fall and a glorious ascension.

And then, in the last ten minutes of the movie, they chose and it was really disappointing. So if you see this movie, wait until Sally Hawkins (she’s the girl from Happy-Go-Lucky, if anyone’s seen that) has shown up, then leave. You will have seen one of the best movies of the year.
Cuts Made to Preserve Need-Based Aid

MERIT AWARDS, FROM PAGE 1

them with competitive financial aid,” said O’Neal, “We need to protect our core of providing aid without the gap.” The gap is the difference between a family’s need and the amount that the school can provide for the family.

The scholarship serves as good incentive to engage students in extracurricular pursuits, not just academics, but being one of the top schools in providing financial aid, we need to uphold that credibility,” said Pradeep Ramesh, an undergraduate junior. The last round of upperclassmen merit scholarships was awarded last spring on a small budget due to the decrease in endowment. “We already had a much lower budget than other years,” said O’Neal, “We still award the students, but it was more for recognition than providing large sums of scholarship.”

The decision to rid the scholarship was made last winter, but was not made public because the scholarship was still available for that following year. Following the termination of the Axeliner and Presidential scholarship, the ending of the Upperclassmen Merit Scholarship marks the end of any type of Caltech merit scholarships.

Small Changes Lead to Significant Impact

AFRICA, FROM PAGE 1

of education,” remarked Duff. Her organization has united Christian and Muslim leaders in the Nigeria Interfaith Action Association (NIFAA), a faith community initiative to help distribute bed nets and to educate the populace about transmission and prevention of malaria.

Bleeding during pregnancy and childbirth accounts for a quarter of the troubles. Elizabeth Butrick, to personally bring hope for a new s

Every year there are a number of tournaments to which only the very strongest chess players in the world are invited. At the recent Nanjing Pearl Spring tournament, Magnus Carlsen (18 years old) dominated, winning six of his ten games and drawing the other four. This is one of the most impressive tournament showings ever, giving Carlsen a performance rating for the tournament of 3062 (that’s really high). When the November FIDE ratings list was released, he became the fifth player ever to be rated over 2800, joining Garry Kasparov, Viswanathan Anand and Veselin Topalov. Carlsen has recently begun studying with Kasparov (possibly the greatest player ever and famous for his matches against Deep Blue), and given his age and rate of improvement, it seems likely he may soon take over as world chess champion.

Chess in the United States has also been exciting recently. The US Chess League (established in 2005) is composed of 14 teams from around the country. This week was the last of the regular season. There are two divisions which have 4 playoff teams each. In the Eastern division, the New Jersey Knockouts, Boston Blitz, Baltimore Kingfishers, and New York Knights have qualified for the playoffs. In the Western division the four playoff teams will be the Seattle Sluggers, Arizona Scorpions, San Francisco Mechanics, and Miami Shock.

Our first “Game of the Week” is from a recent US Chess League match between the Seattle Sluggers and the New Jersey Knockouts. White is Eugene Perelshteyn (rating 2426) and Black is Bruci Lopez (rating 2387).

White to move and mate in 5

Write or take pictures when you can. We pay up to $30 for news articles.

We’re flexible.

Join us Monday or Friday at noon for free pizza on the Olive Walk, or send tech@caltech.edu an email if you’re interested in being a part of the Tech.

Contributed by Rob Rosenberg

Problem of the week

By Michael Kaye

CHESS CLUB PRESIDENT

This is the starting position for the Classical Variation of the King’s Indian Defense, an opening I play myself as black. The usual plan is to play e5, using a pawn to control some of the all important center of the board. After this black will move his king and play f5 as the beginning of an attack on the king’s side. This does not work out too well in the current game.


At this point the c-file has opened (this means there are no pawns on it), and both sides will seek to control it with their major pieces (rooks and queen). Rooks perform well on open files because without pawns in the way, they may eventually penetrate deep into the enemy’s position and attack pawns or the king.


This move allows white to trade his dark squared bishop for the black’s; this is desirable since the black bishop influences both of the white’s; this is desirable since the black bishop influences both sides of the board from its post in the center.

Bxc3 23.Rxc3 Bb7 24.Rd1 Na6 25.Qc2 Qe7 26.Ng2 Qd7 27.Nf4 Qc8 28.a3 Rc7 29.b4 Qc8 30.Rc1 Rx5 31.Qxc5 Qxc5 32.Rxc5 Rf8 33.Rg8 Kg8

At this point white controls the c-file and black’s knight on a6 is tied down to its square because it must prevent white’s rook from reaching c7 (a white rook on c7 would attack the b7 bishop and then begin devouring pawns). There is a chess maxim that “a knight on the rim is dim;” in this case the knight controls only four squares instead of the eight which would influence from the center. Black’s woes are worse by the fact that his king is vulnerable and his rook is tied down to defense of the f5 pawn.

34.Ne6! White has found a way to make a decisive advantage out of his superior position. Now black will have little choice but to capture white’s a5 pawn, which will allow white’s rook to enter the black position and begin capturing pawns, threatening pieces, and harrying the black king.

Rf6 35.Bh5 Bxd5 36.Re8+ Kh7 37.Nf4 Bf7 38.Rf8 Kg7 39.Ra8 Rx8 40.Ra7 Rx8 41.Rb8+ Rf8 42.Rc7 Rc8 43.Bb6 Rf8?

Black wishes to avoid losing the f pawn, but this allows mate in two. Black was losing at this point anyway as the rook on the seventh rank was ready to gobble more pawns and black’s f pawn was about to fall to the bishop.

44.Bh7+ Black resigns (44...Kh8 45.Ng6 would be mate) 1-0

The Caltech chess club meets on Friday nights at 8pm in Page dining hall. Players of all levels are welcome; we are happy to teach. The next tournament we hope to attend as a group is the 2009 American Open, which runs from November 26-29.

Chess, a new weekly column

THE CALIFORNIA TECH
Upcoming Games

November 13, 2009
Men’s Water Polo
vs. TBA @ Claremont
TBA SCIAC Championships

November 13, 2009
Men’s Water Polo
vs. Whittier @ Claremont, Calif.
4:15 PM

November 14, 2009
Fencing
at Stanford
9:00am NCAA West Invitational vs. Stanford, Northwestern, UCSD & Detroit-Mercy

November 14, 2009
Cross Country
at NCAA Regionals@ Pomona-Pitzer Colleges
9:00 am

November 14, 2009
Men’s Water Polo
vs. TBA @ Claremont
TBA SCIAC Championships

November 15, 2009
Men’s Water Polo
vs. TBA @ Claremont
TBA SCIAC Championships

November 16, 2009
Women’s Basketball
at La Sierra
7:30 PM

November 17, 2009
Men’s Basketball
at La Sierra
8:00 PM

November 19, 2009
Men’s Basketball
vs. West Coast Baptist
7:30 PM

November 21, 2009
Cross Country
at NCAA Championships@ Cleveland, Ohio
TBD

SPORTS

Rock Paper Scissors:
Is it a sport, or is it the only sport?

By Tim Black

Caltech graduates are some of the brightest people in the world; they work hard in their classes, do extracurricular activities, and end up with jobs they love, often making a lot of Rock, Paper, Scissors and overall having a successful life. But other than preparing students for life both academically and non-academically, how well does Caltech prepare students for the rest of their endeavors? Preliminary studies suggest that Caltech graduates are not prepared for a situation that they will have to deal with countless times in the rest of their life: Caltech students, during their time here, do not improve their skills at Rock Paper Scissors. Sporadic analyses suggest that a Caltech alumnus is not significantly better at Rock Paper Scissors than an alumnus from another university. Despite spending thousands of hours on problem sets, Caltech students seem to completely ignore this segment of their life. When it comes time to face off for a job offer or an election tie-breaker, Caltech graduates are unprepared, winning only about a third of face-offs, and tying another third. Not only are Caltech students unexceptional in their Rock Paper Scissors skills, but many students are not interested in improving their skills. The Master Of Student Houses, Prof. Geoffrey Blake had one word to describe the attitude towards Rock Paper Scissors in the houses: “Apathy.” Matthew Maurer, a Senior in Blacker House, said “I don’t have any passion for Rock Paper Scissors. I never did.” They don’t see the “point” of the sport, or they think that it’s too simple or “below” them. Some students do not consider RPS as a sport at all. Pallavi Gunalan, a junior in Ruddock and Dabney, attributes it to “Caltech Syndrome.” She said, “They [new students] come in energized and wanting to play Rock Paper Scissors, and they leave never wanting to do it again. It’s a shame.” To combat this attitude towards Rock Paper Scissors, a Caltech Rock Paper Scissors Team was formed. Their goals are two-fold: they aim to improve students’ Rock Paper Scissors skills, and they also aim to make Rock Paper Scissors a more accepted as a sport worth devoting time to. They hope that someday RPS will be treated the same as other top tier sports like basketball, football, and soccer-golf.

The Caltech Rock Paper Scissors Team holds practices once a term to improve students’ skills. The team is open to any undergraduate, whether they just want to learn more about the sport, or they want to take their play to the professional level. This term’s practice will be this Saturday, November 14, at 1 pm on the Olive Walk. The team is still accepting new players, and they hope that someday RPS will be a sport worth devoting time to. They hope that someday RPS will be treated the same as other top tier sports like basketball, football, and soccer-golf.

The team is accepting new players. Interested players are invited to come to the practice this Saturday at 1 pm on the Olive Walk. No experience is required.

The Weekly Scoreboard

November 3, 2009
Men’s Soccer vs. La Sierra W (2-0)
Women’s Volleyball vs. Cal Lutheran L (3-0)

November 4, 2009
Men’s Water Polo vs. Cal Lutheran L (12-2)

November 5, 2009
Men’s Soccer vs. SOKA University of America L (2-1)

November 8, 2009
Men’s Water Polo vs. La Verne L (17-7)

Interested in Seeing Real Sports Coverage?
Come Write for The Tech.
Dear Dr. Smart,

I want to write for The California Tech but that’s under the control of ASCIT, an organization that I do not trust. What should I do?

Yours faithfully, the majority of CIT

Dr. Smart: The Comeback Tour

I am a UCC and one of the frosh in my group keeps annoying me with questions. What should I do?

We hate to burst your bubble, but if a frosh keeps asking you questions, it probably means your words are hitting close to home. You see, our esteemed newspaper, The California Tech, our esteemed newspaper, is severely understaffed.

I want to write for The California Tech but that’s under the control of ASCIT, an organization that I do not trust. What should I do?

Good for you! A healthy amount of paranoia keeps the evil villain away! Or does it?... All joking aside, the best way to get over your distrust of ASCIT is to become ASCIT president and designate the BoS as your minions. While you’re working your way up the ASCIT ladder, you should write under a pseudonym so that editorial staff can’t find you marked with donuts at every intersection. The first thing you must do is realize that the Tech is a better paper.

Dear Dr. Smart, I want to write for The California Tech but that’s under the control of ASCIT, an organization that I do not trust. What should I do?

Yours faithfully, a confused Techer

Ask The Frosh

I’m a frosh and one of the girls in my group keeps annoying me with questions. What should I do?

We hate to burst your bubble, but if a frosh keeps asking you questions, it probably means your words are hitting close to home. You see, our esteemed newspaper, The California Tech, our esteemed newspaper, is severely understaffed.

Apparently they don’t even have reporters to go around getting news from important people like Chameaux and Geoffrey Blake. If only we had Jon Stewart, The Daily Show, or 1600 Penn, we’d have millions of people showing up for unsuspecting upperclassmen, doing their thing in the range of 164 units prevents boredom! Be careful, though; going to class is addictive, too. So there must be a better way. How should I spend my time?

I am Asian and I never get girls. Why is that?

I think I’m pregnant! I’m only 20, I can’t have a baby! And to make matters worse, I have no time to deal with this problem and I do not trust. What should I do?

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Yours faithfully, the majority of CIT

I am Asian and I never get girls. Why is that?

Frosh note: This is a dumb question. You’re probably just going about it the wrong way. Girls don’t like: nice people, personal space, and time, girls’ nights, flowers, chocolate, normal conversation, or rubber ducks. They do love it when you follow them around, but won’t tell them that you like them. They also like when you sleep in the hall outside their rooms. It probably has nothing to do with being Asian; you just need to rethink your strategy, dude.

The fact that the paper resorts to this is a reflection on you people. The moral of the story is your hatred for ASCIT does not warrant a complete lack of content in our paper. Also, if you complain about The Tech, you are obligated to write for it, or else you shall be forever labeled a rabid choo. Maybe someday, when the paper actually has a news staff contributing, we won’t have to be kept in the dark about any issues that may affect undergraduate life.

Dr. Smart, The Comeback Tour