Faculty calls for the return of the bookstore
Barnes and Nobles to potentially assist this effort

By Jonathan Schor
STAFF WRITER

A quick glance around the Caltech bookstore might yield the expected results: college apparel, notebooks, pencils, office supplies. But upon closer inspection, the missing element becomes fairly obvious: textbooks.

For the past two years, the Caltech bookstore has been almost completely bookless, maintaining only a small collection of books by distinguished faculty such as Feynman. Students have had to either purchase textbooks online or buy them from upperclassmen that had previously taken the course, leading to complaints from faculty that students are buying textbooks late or not at all, said Vice President of Student Affairs Annella Sargent.

However, the administration aims to restore the bookstore to its former condition, perhaps through the assistance of Barnes and Noble, according to Sargent. In the spring term of 2009-2010, Caltech’s Bookstore Committee learned that Barnes and Noble was interested in managing Caltech’s bookstore. A three-person subcommittee is now evaluating Barnes and Noble’s proposal.

About 15 years earlier, Barnes and Noble (B&N) had expressed interest in managing Caltech’s bookstore. A three-person subcommittee is now evaluating Barnes and Noble’s proposal.

Search for undergraduate Dean continues

By Casey Jao
STAFF WRITER

Since John Hall resigned Dean of Students last spring, the undergraduate student body has been without a dean. A search committee, comprised of both faculty and undergraduates, has been working since May to find suitable candidates. According to chair Joseph Shepherd, the graduate dean and a professor of aeronautics, the committee has compiled a shortlist of less than ten candidates and hopes to soon make recommendations to the senior administration, who will either make a formal offer or ask for alternatives.

The shortlisted candidates were culled from a larger pool that the committee assembled by canvassing its members as well as external faculty, students, and staff. Shepherd consulted with former deans as well as Associate Dean Barbara Green. According to Shepherd, the committee members were looking not for any particular agenda, but rather a suitable “personality” and the ability to “define needs, set priorities, and take initiatives.”

“We’ve all talked to other students about the deanship,” said Kartik Sarma, one of the student committee members. “I think what’s important to most students is that we find someone who understands Caltech students and who likes them for who they are.”

The 2010-2011 Catalog lists the Dean of Students as “TBA.” Periods without a dean are not unheard of. According to Dean Green, there were a few “deanless” months during the transition from Dean Kiewiet to Dean Revel, although the move from Revel to Hall occurred without such a gap.

With Hall no longer as dean, despite his former office still bearing his nameplate, Dean Green has been doing double duty. “It’s so sad,” lamented the Dean’s Office manager Beth Larg, while Green was busy in a meeting. “We miss him. We’re keeping his nametag up for now.”

“While I am getting excellent support from Dean Shepherd, day to day I am on my own. My workload has increased a great deal but I am still enjoying my position as Associate Dean,” wrote Green in an email.

“She is the rock…a great resource for the students,” said Shepherd, “but we do really need to get somebody to help her out.”

“I would like to bring this to a conclusion soon,” he said. Traditionally a faculty member, the Dean of Students oversees the academic affairs and student life of the undergraduates. Besides matters like granting overload petitions and extensions, the dean monitors academic initiatives like freshman advising and student taught courses, participates in curriculum discussions, and renders final decisions in B&O and C&C cases. The dean’s office also runs the MHF fund, publishes scholarship information, nominates students for internships, and generally looks after students. Deans typically hold their office for at least five years, Prof. Hall served from 2005 to 2010. His predecessor, Prof. Jean-Paul Revel, served from 1996 to 2005.

No support will come from Disney for Tron Big Interhouse

By Joel Nikolaus
STAFF WRITER

With just one week before Big Interhouse, the possibility of official props and other Tron-themed support from Disney seems increasingly unlikely, even though three of Caltech’s four parties were reworked to focus on the Tron sequel.

“As of now we are working under the assumption we are not getting anything from Disney,” wrote Rickets House President Will Steinhardt, who helped initiate contact with Disney and is one of the few undergraduates who remained involved in the negotiations. “There is a very slim chance they may come through with something this week,” he said, “but it won’t be money, and whatever it is I am sure lots of people will not think it was all worth it.”

He attributes the failure of the negotiations this year to poor communication, in particular through Disney’s Public Relations Department, and does not hold Disney personally to blame. Moreover, while the talks might have failed to garner support for the party this year, Steinhardt does not see the experience as a failure.

“I think the mere fact that Disney and Caltech had some contact was good for us, and somewhere down the road I strongly believe it will pay off,” wrote Steinhardt in an email.

Disney support or not, students can still expect to see the dominant Tron theme at the party this year. Steinhardt does not see the experience as a failure.

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Combating obesity, one toy at a time?

By Sandhya Chandrasekaran

"(Ba-dun-dun-dun-dun) I’m lovin’ it!"

Ahh, the thrill of McDonald’s commercials! When you turn around to see the clown aside, humming the catchy jingle and watching kids open up their happy meals, it’s hard not to smile when you hear, “I can promise you no child is going to what figurine wound up in the burger with a side of fries and a low-fat cheese.”

Not surprisingly, none of McDonald’s happy meals currently qualify. So, if all goes as planned, starting in 2012, kids will not be lured to eat these sickeningly fatty foods with free toys, and will never eat them ever again. Soon, there will be no more overweight people in the US, and the obesity crisis will be solved. Just like that.

And the logic makes sense. Whatever thought people are food just because it tasted good? (Sane people, that’s who).

As Danya Proud, a McDonald’s spokesperson, said in a statement: "We are extremely disappointed with today’s decision. It’s not what our customers want, nor is it something they asked for. Getting a toy with a meal is a tradition for parents and kids, a part of a fun, family experience at McDonald’s."

A happy meal without the toy is just sad. It’s basically an ordinary burger with a side of fries and a drink. No surprise at the end as to what figurine wound up in the box. Only food. Boring fast food. I can promise you no child is going to smile for that.

Supervisor Eric Mar, from San Francisco said: "We’re part of a movement that is moving forward an agenda of food justice. From San Francisco to New York City, the epidemic of childhood obesity in this country is making our kids sick, particularly kids from low income neighborhoods, at an alarming rate."

He, borrowing a page out of Lewis' Mondays, explains that he does not want to teach students to think deconstructing with dinners students and cooking? If not, what does stripping happy meals of their toys contribute towards the goal of healthy eating?

While San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom soon vetoed this radical decision made by the SF Board of Supervisors, his word is not the final one on the matter. Because the law passed on a vote of 8-3, the board could possibly decide to override the mayor’s stance on the matter.

Obesity is not the real problem here. These supervisors are suffering from a far more deadly disease – stupidity. They need to leave the dietary restrictions to the parents and fix their own problems first, before stepping in and trying to alleviate a complex life-style issue with some impulsive, ill-conceived ideas. Seriously, no one’s loving this.

Fat: Less than 35 percent of calories from fat: Less than 10 percent from saturated fat (with exception for nuts, seeds, eggs or low-fat cheese).

San Francisco’s website. McGill University is trying to partner with student government and cooking? If not, what does stripping happy meals of their toys contribute towards the goal of healthy eating?

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November 12, 2010

Officers Present: Adam Khan, Addie Rice, Prakriti Gaba, Chris Hallacy, Tim Blinn

Officers Absent: Kanthik Sarma, Brian Merlob

Guests Present: Paul

Call to order: 12:09 pm

Funding Requests:

- Bike Shop requests more funding to purchase complete selection of tools and small parts commonly needed. They hold office hours every office where students can come and have bikes with small damages repaired.

President’s report:

- Big Interhouse: is November 20th. The guest policy for the event now includes two guests per person. Tom Männion is inciting diners to volunteer for event.

- Endowments: Adam met with Peter Harris to discuss other venues of increasing house endowments.

Jobbook: Adam and Hallacy talked to representatives from McGill University about Jobbook, a new online social networking website. McGill University is trying to partner with student government and cooking? If not, what does stripping happy meals of their toys contribute towards the goal of healthy eating?

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Leaders of a global organ-trafficking ring are arrested and charged

Pristina, Kosovo: According to a Serbian war crimes prosecutor, a carved up human body is worth around $2.4 M while kidneys are sold for at least 15,000 Euros on the black market. Today, seven people were charged with five counts, ranging from participating in an illegal organ trafficking operation that spanned the E.U., the Middle-east, and North-America to an unlawful exercise of medical authority and abuse of power. The ringleader of the network, Dr. Lutfi Dervishi, was a reputed surgeon at the Pristina University Hospital, who, together with his cronies, lured destitute slum dwellers in Istanbul, Moscow, Moldova, and Kazakhstan with promises of $20,000 in exchange for their organs. In most cases, according to a local news organization, donors were not paid and were often left to die as both kidneys were removed. Recipients, mostly wealthy Israelis, were required to pay between $10,000 to $137,000 for the organs. Local police organizations were tipped off when a Turkish man, who had sold his kidney to an Israeli recipient, collapsed at the airport while trying to board a flight to Istanbul. Investigators from the European Union are currently combing through phone records, hard drives, and bank transfers to identify other culprits.

Yangon, Myanmar: The Nobel peace prize winner and daughter of Myanmar’s founding father was released last Saturday afternoon after serving a seven year sentence for spreading dissent. Her sentence was communted from an eleven year term for “good-behavior,” although many Western diplomats believe that the move was intended as a show of the ruling military junta’s confidence. Flush with wealth from increased foreign investment in the country’s vast natural deposits, the military junta has tightened its hold on the country over the course of the last decade; recently held parliamentary elections were marred by accusations of fraud and are widely regarded as a sham by the international community. Moments after being released, Suu Kyi delivered an impassioned plea for a peaceful revolution in front of a crowd of her supporters. She plans to pursue an aggressive reform agenda but prospects are limited given that the country is tightly rule by the junta under a new constitution that was explicitly designed to keep such reformers at bay.

You can still join the Tech
email tech@caltech.edu
Big Interhouse: 3.5 sides of Tron
What to expect, besides twenty bartenders

By Sarah Marzen

Dabney/Lloyd: Tron arcade

Avery/Fleming: Tron arena

Ricketts/Ruddock: Tron retriever

Blacker/Page: Action movie climax

Originally, Dabney/Lloyd had planned on doing “Interfaust”, so that their party would be planned around the perpetually unsatisfied scholar from Greek mythology. However, when Disney was rumored to require funding, they completely switched their theme to something that would mimic the arcade component of the Tron movie. “It’s something that looks good without too much effort,” said Alex Rasmussen, Dabney House Social Vice President. “The dome gives us walls and a roof without having to build anything.”

Avery and Fleming switched their theme from Inception to Tron when the organizers heard that Disney would provide support. The two dance platforms on the side are meant to mimic a disc battle arena scene from the new Tron trailer, and the pyramid for the DJ is meant to mimic the pyramid that Daft Punk (musicians for the new Tron movie) DJ in.

Ricketts and Ruddock chose the Tron theme originally. According to Ruddock sophomore Matthew Fu, the “Tron recognizer” is the main point of their construction, and is a major component of the original Tron movie and trailer.

Blacker and Page never switched from their original theme of “action movie climax”. They bought a car-- free-- off of Craigslist and ran it into the tree in the courtyard, and they are in the process of constructing a Godzilla, nuclear reactor, Golden Gate Bridge, and much more.

Look out for the traditional flooding of Blacker’s courtyard. As usual, the safety inspectors have been reassured that the water will not be colored green-- a few years ago, the green water that drained into Pasadena’s streets from Blacker’s party alarmed Caltech’s bioterrorism-conscious neighbors.
**HeLa cells: Medical ethics are gray, not black and white**

By Gloria Tran

The HeLa cell line is one of the oldest and most commonly used immortal cell lines in research derived from cervical cancer cells taken from the African American patient Henrietta Lacks.

At face value, the tagline says it all: the story of the omnipresent HeLa cells is one of ethical controversy. Tumor cells were taken from Henrietta Lacks without any informed consent and spread across the world in a burgeoning industry, while her family was left in the dark.

The story Rebecca Skloot has told is not as simple as that. We gain an understanding of Henrietta's legacy in pieces, everything from the family's discovery of HeLa cells decades later to how HeLa cells were successfully used to determine the specifics of a segregated free clinic offered to "colored" people, doctors who took Henrietta's cells violated medical ethics – is shattered by the tagline – that the doctors withheld treatment from the unknowing patients. It is for this reason that African Americans at the time, including Henrietta and her children, generally mistrusted doctors.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks surprises readers by going above and beyond the idea of ethical violations. Beyond considering mere right and wrong, Skloot does an immaculate job of providing this history in all its contexts. Thanks to her reporting, researchers around the world can more fully understand the woman behind the cells and the aftermath of her legacy.

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**Tron(1982) is outdated, but a must watch nonetheless**

By Caroline Yu

By today’s standards, Tron is cheesy and overdone. The movie is a lights-and-show affair, with monochromatic designs and overkill of Dolby stereo. But Tron was a movie unlike any other, the seed of the sci-fi trend. Tron’s innovative plot and computer imaging helped inspire movies like Star Wars and The Matrix. In and of itself is not a fantastic movie, but its legacy is undeniable.

Tron is the classic good guy defeats bad guy plot, but with an important twist. Flynn, played by Jeff Bridges, is a brilliant video game programmer who works for Encom. However, his rival Dillinger (David Warner) steals the games and hides the evidence in the Encom computer. With the help of two friends, Flynn breaks into Encom to retrieve the evidence. The twist: instead of engaging in physical fights to find the evidence, Flynn and his friends are “de-rezzed” and transported into the computer networks. They must outsmart the “Master Control Program”, a big red cylinder with a face reminiscent of the Kool-Aid man. Tron’s plot is groundbreaking in that it delves into scientific fantasy. The good guy wins in the end like we expect, but this is done in the world of computers, a twist of imagination that no one foresaw.

Tron was also ground breaking in terms of computer animation. The effects are relatively simple, especially when compared to modern day blockbusters like Avatar, but the large scale use of computer animation was unprecedented. Considering that every second of the film involved nearly 150 images, most of which had to be rotoscoped, Tron was an impressive feat.

The fabricated world of Tron comes alive with its imaginative plot and CGI effects. Although not nearly as impressive today, it is unmistakably the forefather of the entire sci-fi film movement. For any sci-fi fan, Tron is a must watch.
Barnes and Noble’s management and the Bookstore Committee dis-
covered that Barnes and Noble was still interested; the Bookstore
Committee, Professor Sargent, and Dean Currie, the Vice Presi-
dent for Business and Finance, met with Barnes and Noble rep-
resentatives. The subcommittee evaluating the proposal consists of
Chief Business Administrator of Student Affairs Dimitrios Sakellariou,
who represents the students’ interest; Professor Brown, the faculty
representative; and Sharon Patterson, the Associate Vice Presi-
dent for Finance and Treasurer. Together, the three have observed
Barnes and Noble’s management of other collegiate bookstores,
including the large bookstore at Cal State Los Angeles (CSLA) and the
small bookstore at Loyola Law School. According to Sakellariou,
Barnes and Noble seemed responsive towards their customers,
and the bookstores have so far remained flexible.

Barnes and Noble is hopeful that they can at least break even at
Caltech, due to economies of scale, but nothing is set in stone,
said Sakellariou. The subcommittee hopes to near an endpoint
within a year or two, although they are taking measured steps to ensure that Caltech’s new
bookstore is cost-effective as possible.

Budget Issues
As Professor Sargent explains, the Caltech bookstore stopped
carrying textbooks two years ago when the economic downturn
first hit Caltech. When Caltech’s endowment first tanked, President
Chameau instructed his vice presidents to “tighten their belts in
hopes of loosening them later.”

For Professor Sargent, this meant making a change in the bookstore,
which was hemorrhaging money. As Sakellariou explained, some of this was due to a combination of
bookstore policy and students’ actions. Only a small fraction of students in a typical Caltech class would buy
textbooks, and many would buy the books as cheaply as possible using the bookstore’s price-matching policy.
Furthermore, the bookstore allowed full refunds for books returned before Drop Day. If students were clever
enough about saving money, they could buy the book only to read most of it and return it before Drop Day, noted Sakellariou.

The combination of Caltech’s generous bookstore policies and student actions was a net loss for
the bookstore. When Caltech’s bookstore shipped all of the un-
sold or returned textbooks back to the seller for a refund, it had already lost money on the shipping fees it paid to get the books to and from Caltech.

An online book purchasing system was established as a tempo-
rary alternative to a physical bookstore. However, according to Professor Sargent, faculty re-
quested that the textbooks be re-
stored to the bookstore as soon as possible when they noticed that students were buying textbooks late or failing to buy textbooks at all.

The direct result of this was the establishment of the Bookstore Committee, headed by Professor
Warren Brown and attended by graduate students, undergraduates, bookstore staff, faculty, and oth-
ers. According to Professor Brown, the bookstore was not just a vehicle for buying textbooks, but also a first point of contact for many Caltech visitors and for like-minded people within the Caltech. In this way, the bookstore delivered “both intellectual and social payback,” and its loss might have also affected Caltech’s outward image, said Brown.

The initial obstacle for the Bookstore Committee, was coming
g up with new, better ideas for the bookstore that were fiscally
sound. Their first thought was to find a way to somehow blend the virtual and the real, utilizing the low costs that come with online access while maintaining the in-
stant accessibility of real books. Barnes and Noble might have the technology to do so.

As for whether this possible change in management is a sign of things to come, Professor Brown is doubtful. He explains that the bookstore is a special case, and that he “doesn’t sense a strong wind…[towards finding] ways to source” Caltech’s manage-
ment.

TRON

Continued from Page 1

throwing out the entire theme,” said Dabney Social Vice Presi-
dent Alex Rasmussen. “We sold out to Disney without getting any-
thing in return.” The leadership in Avery and Fleming had not yet
started building their party when their leadership decided to switch to a Tron-based party.

Now Dabney Courtyard will feature a rendition of the Arcade
and an assortment of light wire using the dome that Dabney usu-
ally uses for its Drop Day. Rick-
etts and Ruddock, which always intended to pursue a Tron-themed
party, will feature one the Tron
recognizers suspended over the dance floor, which is one of the
large gate-like contraptions fea-
tured in the original Tron movie.

There always has to be one non-
conformist in the group. Blacker
and Page’s party is not remotely
Tron related, instead centered on
the theme “Action Movie Cli-
max.” “If we need to, we can make it Tron-themed,” said Caleb
Ziegler, a member of Blacker, but he failed to clarify just how the
Golden Gate Bridge, Godzilla,
and mecha would be mesh with the
video game reality of Tron.
“Disney didn’t give us anything we wanted,” said Daniel Kitchaev,
another Blacker member.
Women’s basketball loses season opener
La Sierra dominates, Beavers show promise

By Amol Kamat
SPORTS EDITOR

On a blistery Monday night at Braun Gymnasium, the Caltech Beavers took on the La Sierra Golden Eagles in their first game of the season. No doubt feeding off the energy of Midnight Madness, the Beavers fought to keep the game fairly close in the first few minutes of the game, but the Platinum Falcons dominated from beyond the arc and quickly ran away with the game. Despite a distinct height advantage, the Beavers ended the first half down 25-43.

Caltech started out slow in the second half and faced a relative drought to the monsoon that was the Brass Vulture offense (in layman’s terms, they made it rain). Despite a lack of offensive presence and a balding referee who was all too eager to blow his whistle for every minor infraction, the Beavers were able to muster up fourteen second half points. Unfortunately, the Aluminum Hawks added 38 to their total, for a final score of 81-39.

Despite the crushing defeat, the Beavers showed promise. Krissy Dahl had some very impressive blocks, and freshman Marlyn Moore brought refreshing intensity to an otherwise low energy game. Once the Beavers work out a few early season kinks and gain a little more confidence, they will surely be a threat in the SCIAC. They take on the Silver Birds of Prey once more on November 20th.

This Week in Sports Quotes

“The girls, they won both matches. I believe in the second one they were down 2 towards the end, then won like 6 of the next 7 points to get the W. More importantly, we invented fantasy ultimate and played it, and it was so exciting, you probably wouldn’t believe it.”
-Brian Ventura, referencing the girls ultimate team win

“Water Polo’s done.”
-Dan Sexton

“And now you have baseball…”
-Blaine Matulevich

“These guys come to the games expecting to win. Bahahahahahaha.”
-La Sierra fans directed at my friends and me

“Caltech Athletics is like fake Indian food night: no matter how hard you try, you always end up with diarrhea.”
-Anonymous

Weekly Scoreboard

November 14, 2010
Men’s Water Polo
SCIAC Championships
vs Cal Lutheran
L, 18-6 Final

November 13, 2010
Men’s Water Polo
SCIAC Championships
vs Occidental
L, 22-9 Final

Men’s Cross Country
NCAA Regionals
at Willamette, Ore.
17th Place

Women’s Cross Country
NCAA Regionals
at Willamette, Ore.
16th Place

November 12, 2010
Men’s Water Polo
SCIAC Championships
vs Redlands
L, 24-4 Final
Lies My Parents Told Me

by James Wu

I once received books for Christmas instead of the video games and toys I asked for. My parents told me Santa didn’t get me what I wanted for Christmas because my Dear Santa letter had too many grammatical errors, and Santa felt I needed the books more than the video games.

Ever since I was little, my parents had been suggesting overtly and subliminally that I should become a doctor when I grew up. They told me that since I wasn’t born in the US, if I didn’t end up becoming a doctor, I would get deported by the US government.

I once watched a movie where a man transformed into a wolf. My dad had a lot of body hair, so my parents started telling me that my dad was a wolfman, and would transform into a wolf every full moon. If I didn’t want to get eaten, I had to make sure to be extra good during the month.

My parents would oftentimes tell me that I wasn’t their first child. The first child didn’t perform to their expectations, so they gave it away. If I didn’t do well in school, my parents threatened to trade me to a rock farm and get another child from the orphanage.