Fleming House Flag and Page House Portrait Stolen

By Michael Lauria

Contributing Writer

Last week, sometime during the Fleming House ski trip, the outsized flag that hangs across the wall of the Fleming dining hall was stolen.

Only a small post-it-note with an upercase “F” remained. In a matter of days, then-president Alex Lapides issued an ultimatum to the thieves: return the flag by midnight of the 24th or...well, or else.

However, the whereabouts of the flag remain a mystery, and the bare wall of the Fleming dining hall serves as a constant reminder of its loss.

Then, late on Wednesday the 27th, a portrait of the venerable James Ruthwell Page was stolen from Page President Jenny Xiong’s dorm room.

Speculation has risen that J.R. was the victim of Flem retaliation, but strong Flem notions is that it was not the work of a member. “People would be bragging about it,” said Mentha Dilip, a freshman in Fleming. The portrait, which was about to be sent out for restoration, is extremely important to members of Page House.

James Ruthwell’s wide stance is sorely missed throughout Page Houses. He was a lanky Treasurer Andy Zucker.

In the last issue of The Tech, former president Alex Lapides decreed the prank against the flag and pled for its swift return. Yet the flag — or assailants — remain unknown. As Fleming House Social Chair Brice Nzeu- kou put it, “they must have been really sneaky.” Indeed there is little evidence as to the identity of the hooligan or hooligans who have misappropriated the portrait of the late James Ruthwell Page, a former president of the Caltech Board of Trust and prominent member of the community.

No organization has yet taken responsibility for either prank, yet rumors are beginning to filter through the hallways of Page and Fleming House. “We’ve heard it might have been Harvey Mudd or FCC,” said Nzeu-kou, “They’ve been trying to get into the prank-stalking game.”

Trisha Guhail echoed this sentiment, saying of the flag, “There’s a rumor going around that someone from Harvey Mudd took it.”

Freshmen of Fleming House have been made accountable for finding the flag. “I was doing my laundry, and Alex Lapides asked me if I had found the flag yet,” said Dilip. However, this task may be more difficult than most people think. “I am convinced that al-Qaida is involved,” pronounced Genesis Lung, a freshman in Page.

Questioning members of other houses has elicited mixed responses.

Some were entirely clueless: “I had no idea these things happen,” said Lloydie and social Pageboy Sei Masuoka.

Some were entirely clued-in: “I heard about these things happen,” said Joseph Torres, a freshman member of Lloyd.

“It’s a quasi-prank,” said Skurrle Nic Woodward referring to elaborate. On the other hand, members of both Page and Fleming are less amused.

“This series of despicable crimes affects poorly on Caltech as a community,” said Junior Pageboy Geoff Beck.

“There’s a lot more potential for pranking than just theft,” said newely elected Fleming president Dan Sexton.

“This is bush-league. The flag was nice...big and red instead of just having a wall,” said newely elected Fleming president Dan Sexton.

He also mentioned the possibilility that MIT removed it from its rightful place.

Some members of Page accept this view. “MIT loves picking on Fleming, man, they took their cannon, now their flag,” said Troy Stenberg.

Jenny Xiong, Page House president, declined to comment.

ASCIT president Adam Khan says he “has confidence that the emblems will be returned if a Techer is responsible.”

Yet obviously there is no consensus as to who is culpable, and planned recongnizance expeditions to Harvey Mudd have not yet been mounted.

Business has gone on as usual in the two victimized houses, though, in spite of the past weeks’ disturbing occurrences. Members of both houses have some worry that their own house items may be next.

“IT all seems like something coming out of Harry Potter,” said Averte Sar- ah Marzian. “I’m pretty sure that this isn’t where the string of thefts is going to end.”

Stanford Schor, a member of Ricketts, had this to add: “If the thefts weren’t committed by someone within Caltech, then I think that the culprits will wait until they’ve finished collecting whatever else they’re planning for before revealing themselves.”

Additional questions remain: Who took these “valuable” items? Will they be returned? And will other Houses be next?"
**Mother Sent to Jail for Fraudulently Sending Children to Elite School System**

By Sandhya Chandrasekaran

The United States of America is a capitalist society where you get what you pay for. Supposedly I want to buy an energy drink (which I desperately need at the moment); I walk into the store, take what I want and assume I will get money in return. If I am currently in the library, too tired to move, I may simply take someone else’s because they are closer and happen to be sleeping. That would be considered stealing, and I would no doubt be in the wrong.

Treating education as a similar commodity would blur this black and white distinction. Literacy and knowledge is what our country prides itself on. However, when it comes down to it, education never gets the attention and recognition it deserves. Money is often cut from the public systems first and redistributed to other public projects, when the school systems first and foremost need money. With all of these cuts from what matters most, only people with sufficient income can afford to send their children to good schools, while the rest are expected to live part facilities with underqualified teachers.

Kelley Williams-Bolar saw herself and children in this situation, living in an unsafe neighborhood that obviously could not provide her daughters with the quality education she knew they needed and deserved. She had to make a choice: would she accept the notion that her daughters would miss out on golden opportunities for success because she lacked the monetary means to support it, or would she undertake risky, extraordinary measures to provide them with what they rightfully deserved?

A concerned and caring mom, Kelley took the (illegal) road less traveled, and falsified documents to send her children to an elite school system, Copley Fairlawn School District, in her father’s neighborhood. Four years later, just this past week, Kelley was convicted in court for her decision.

Kelley’s choice is wrong. The end result is wrong and it is bad to steal. By falsifying her own children’s education, Kelley tried to evade the law, and was ultimately caught. Despite her innocent intentions, Kelley did merit a suitable and appropriate punishment.

But the one she received was completely uncalled for. In addition to ten days in jail, Kelley was sentenced to eighty days of community service and three years of probation. Judge Patricia Cosgrove openly claimed that she was using Kelley as an example to minimize the number of such fraudulent individuals in the future.

And when the district demanded that she pay the $30,500 she owed and refused, resulting in two felonies on her record. Not only does this mean that her daughters will lack the opportunities and resources they need for a better life, but now Kelley, an aspiring teaching assistant, will never be able to enter a classroom and fulfill her life goals.

Quite understandably, this whole incident has stirred a lot of racial and social controversy. Kelley is an African American woman sending her children to a good school predominantly attended by Caucasian children.

While this situation did occur against a racially controversial backdrop, the cross of the issue is independent of color and concerns the nature of education in our country. Have we really regressed so much so as to put such a high price on education? There was a time, not long ago, when the issue of knowledge was encouraged and appropriated. While we would like to think that the door for a better life is always open, it looks like, only a few members of society are wealthy enough to buy the key to unlock it. People who are unable to live successful lives are forced to live that way. The poor stay poor, and the rich grow richer. The government giving education a cold shoulder leaves upward mobility simply out of the question. Though she is now sentenced to one, Kelley was already trapped inside a jail cell. She knew exactly where the laid, taunting her, but was bereft of the means by which to obtain it.

Letters to the Editor

**Tech Should Probably Learn a Thing or Two About Journalism**

Last week, I apparently wrote two letters to the editor. One, about the Fleming Flag. I meant to see published and gain information on the whereabouts of my house’s item. The second, about the title of athletic articles in the Tech, was an off-the-record response to a poll posed in the Tech in which I purposely exaggerated by own feelings on several points to help support a friend write his type of articles. Therefore, I would like to apologize to anyone offended by my not-so-off-the-record remarks, and reassure anyone that, while I have my personal view, it is not a polar and one-dimensional as my private letter of support made it seem. I would like to conclude by expressing my disappointment in the lack of judgment displayed by the Tech in writing what I think will not occur in the again in the future.

—Alex Lapiides

**Tech Should Probably Learn a Thing or Two About Journalism**

The sacrilegious or misguided conclusion of “Cultural castration...” was that if the media were more sexually explicit, consumers will be likely to imitate what they see, resulting in a solution to: obesity, the right to basic human expression, and the sexual tension which is “killing our society.”

I have many contentions with the opinion that “[c]ultural castration promotes prudery.” Not with the title—castration does seem to be correlated with a lack of interest in sex—but I disagree with many of your arguments, and think you omitted some important ones.

You begin your article with the premise that, “[f]or some reason, [you] hear “g-spot” edited out on the radio, along with almost any direct or indirect reference to sexual pleasure.” I agree with the premise, but I think you omitted such direct or indirect references on the radio.

I hear this is “I wanna see your peacock, cock—your peacock. Peacock,” “cock—your peacock” crap, and I wish they would play the real stuff so I could get my game on better.

You well defined what was legally obscene, but didn’t describe what that actually means, in terms of censorship. Here is the pertinent legal bit: the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) is being sued by the parents of children exposed to sexual themes.

This time limitation is a complete sham in that it appears to be a compromise, but it really implies that there is a danger worth restricting, but people awake between 10pm and 6am can handle it. Both premises are dumb. I also agree with your implication (with the irrelevant references to Eric Cantor spitting on an artist’s grave) that it is constitutionally debatable whether obscenity should have been the basis for the government to consider dismantling a Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery with various unorthodox religious and sensual themes.

So should we legalize mentioning sex? It’s already legal, you must realize, or we are both in big trouble for our respective editors.

Your argument would have worked better had you analyzed these restrictions instead of repeatedly decrying society’s general tendency to castrate itself. Have we really regressed so much so as to put such a high price on education? There was a time, not long ago, when the issue of knowledge was encouraged and appropriated. While we would like to think that the door for a better life is always open, it looks like, only a few members of society are wealthy enough to buy the key to unlock it. People who are unable to live successful lives are forced to live that way. The poor stay poor, and the rich grow richer. The government giving education a cold shoulder leaves upward mobility simply out of the question. Though she is now sentenced to one, Kelley was already trapped inside a jail cell. She knew exactly where the laid, taunting her, but was bereft of the means by which to obtain it.
America going bankrupt

By Dan Alvarez
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The fact that we’re here today to debate raising America’s debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. Leadership means “The buck stops here.” Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and grandchildren.

America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership. Americans deserve better. I therefore intend to oppose the effort to increase America’s debt limit.” –Sen. Barack Obama, 2006

When then Senator Obama made these statements, the Republican-dominated congress was voting to increase the debt ceiling above the $9T mark. Now, as of January 2011, the national debt is just over $14T and one of the first issues that the new 112th congress has to vote on is whether to once again increase the legal limit of our debt above $14.3T. It will be the 7th time that congress votes to increase the legal limit of our debt in just four years. More troubling, however, is that the most recent increase of our debt, passed barely a year ago, was nearly double the second largest increase ever. Since the Democrats took power in 2007, congress has spent $5.3T and increased the national debt by 60%. It took the United States 200 years to accumulate the first trillion dollars of debt. Today, it barely takes us 7 months.

PAY-GO is a law most recently signed by President Obama in February 2010 that dictates new spending in the budget must be offset by cuts elsewhere. President Obama hailed the law to “get our deficit under control” at numerous town hall meetings. Yet before the ink had dried, the president and his democratic majorities in congress passed another $150B stimulus bill under the “emergency action” provision of the bill. Nearly every major spending bill that followed has also been passed under the “emergency” provision. What a joke.

On the other side of the aisle, Republicans have long purported to be the party of limited government and fiscal responsibility. However, history shows that, when elected, they too have failed to cut spending or combat the mounting debt. With the massive Republican victories in the 2010 election it seems that the American people have once again given the Republicans a chance to walk the walk. The first step in determining if they can once again earn our trust is to see how they will handle the vote to increase the legal limit of our debt.

I strongly promote using the vote as a bargaining chip to pass a balanced budget amendment; an amendment to force our government to pass balanced budgets and replace the charade that PAY-GO has become. Republicans have a chance to stick to their brand. If they do not, they will be replaced by true conservative candidates like those endorsed by the tea party. Democrats have a chance to compromise. If they do not, I believe they will lose the presidency in 2012.

Nations can go bankrupt. It has happened in the quasi-socialist state of Greece and is teetering on the brink in Ireland, Iceland, and Portugal. In the greatest of all nations, we must find the fortitude to return to fiscal responsibility and state with true conviction: the buck stops here.
Musings on Angry Birds

Background: Angry Birds is the most-downloaded paid smartphone game, with over 12 million downloads. The game is awesome, definitely worth the dollar it costs, but their recent attempts to grow the franchise are upsetting (to me at least).

They made birds and pigs into plush
So adorable they make me gush
They should have stopped there
As if they would care
To make sweet cash, they’re in a rush

A game so good it’s almost holy
But a movie would be so lowly
What to do with a bird
The creators should be cured
Game movies are duds without Jolie

They added the all-Mighty Eagle
Such a scam, it shouldn’t be legal
They take all your cash
But there’s some backlash
The game is no longer so regal

Kristen Holtz greatly enjoys making up limericks, despite the fact that she’s not that good at them.

Russia to Adopt Colorless Terrorist Alerts

By Mary Nguyen

MOSCOW – Last Friday, Russian officials had announced that Russia would adopt a primary-colored terrorist alert scale after last Monday’s suicide bombing at Domodedovo airport.

This was after the U.S. government had announced that it would fade out its own five-colored scale in favor of the labels “imminent” or “elevated” after Homeland Security realized that the colors conveyed little information. The United Kingdom also had a colored system but also removed its scale.

Because of the actions of the United States and the United Kingdom, Russia announced during a press conference Sunday that the country had modified its initial idea of implementing a blue, yellow and red color scheme.

“It has come to our attention that the colored scale may not be the most effective means to tell our citizens the correct level of fear they should feel. In light of this, we will adopt a colorless system,” said Alexander Bortnikov, Director of the FSB of Russia, which is a successor of the KGB. “Under the new system, white will represent absolute panic and black absolute calm. We chose this scheme because if black were set to mean danger, the government would likely spend more money on the ink used to print warning signs than the chosen alternative.”

When asked why Russia adopted a discrete scale at all, Director Bortnikov said, “We considered actively announcing steps the people should take on a case-by-case basis without the use of sweeping categories. However, we eventually came to the realization that countries which adopted blanket labels were relatively successful at preventing further terrorist bombings. In the United States, for instance, it has been on orange alert since soon after 9/11, and from then on, there has not been a single successful attack on them. There is no label more generalized than one that has remained in effect for years.”

Director Bortnikov added, “Ultimately, it was not the act of individuals that prevented those attacks in the United States, but the government that implemented the scale, which put all of those people on completely unyielding, constant and relentless alert for almost the past 10 years.”

Source: The New York Times
Want free tickets to the new movie, *The Roommate*, starring Leighton Meester? Then send us feedback, letters to the editor, or even just insightful opinions on how to improve the Tech. Let us know what you like, what you want changed, and what you want to see in the future! Email your response to tech@caltech.edu and get free tickets to see this movie at the Grove.
Protests in Egypt

On Tuesday, Jan 25, thousands in Cairo hit the streets to demand that the 30-year authoritarian re-
gime of President Hosni Mubarak come to an end. They protested many aspects of their oppres-
sion, including political corruption, a poor economy, and suppression of free speech.

These anti-government rallies erupted all around Africa after similar protests successfully top-
pled the President of Tunisia. Tunisia had seemed like a sta-
bile police state until the police took away a fruit seller’s cart in December 2010. The seller, 
Mohamed Bouazizi, protested by lighting himself on fire and becoming a martyr for the protes-
tors who rallied for weeks until President Mubarak fled the country on January 14.

Back in Egypt, President Mubarak is trying to counter the protestors. He has implemented a curfew from 7pm-7am, but this is widely ignored in the growing disorder. By Sunday, tens of thousands of 
Egyptian security forces seemed to disappear from many areas on Friday night, requiring citizens to band together to defend their communities and properties from looters.

In some areas, protestors are regularly killed or shot with rubber pellets by the police, but in other places general lawlessness prev-
ails, with some looters “sporting swords[,] riding motorcycles[,] and burning down police stations. It is uncertain whether Egypt will follow the footsteps of Tunisia in successfully toppling its own government, as Egypt is a much larger country (80 million vs. 10 million).

Simon Tisdail, world briefer for The UK’s Guardian, writes, “[i]f Egypt explodes, the explosion will be much bigger” in terms of its impact on the world.

Egypt is currently one of few Middle East countries that public-
ly supports Israel. If the Egyptian government topples, Israel might find itself uncomfortably alone.

- Perrin Considine

News Briefs: Snippets from Caltech and the globe

President Obama acknowledges Caltech’s solar energy effort in State of Union address

Head of State congratulates institution’s advances with gov funding

On Tuesday, Jan 25, thousands in Cairo hit the streets to demand that the 30-year authoritarian regime of President Hosni Mubarak come to an end. They protested many aspects of their oppres-
sion, including political corruption, a poor economy, and suppression of free speech.
Caltech men’s tennis team loses opener
Hope International University stuns the unsuspecting beavers

By Amol Kamat
SPORTS EDITOR

On Saturday, the Caltech men’s tennis team, energized by a long offseason and the addition of several promising freshmen took on the Hope International Royals in a non-conference match at home. Last year, the Beavers soundly defeated Hope, 8-1, no doubt embarrassing the Royals into training especially hard for this rematch (insert corny montage here). It would appear their preparation paid off, as they squeaked out a 7-2 win.

The doubles team of Ben Lieber (freshman) and Karthik Narasimhan (senior) decisively defeated Christian Booher and Michael Lipert 8-1. It would be Caltech’s only doubles win. Lieber would go on to defeat Booher again during singles play (6-2, 6-1), thereby accounting for all of Caltech’s wins for the day. In other words, Lieber led the lineup in lambasting losers. Cool.

Freshman Devashish Joshi lost a tough match at one singles to Tyrone La Reservee (3-6, 4-6), but showed great promise, fighting through leg cramps to keep the match close. La Reservee, a rather portly fellow, also defeated the Caltech one doubles team of Joshi and Mernik along with his partner Dash Kramer (8-6). I think we can all agree that Dash is a pretty cool name.

Hope’s victory was certainly a shock for the Beavers, who were expecting a repeat blowout victory. I suspect the defeat could be due to the loss of sophomore sensation Amol Kamat to injury. It’s either that, or Hope greatly improved during the offseason. I’m sticking with the injury thing.

Devashish Joshi serves during the first set of his singles match while others look on in amazement.

By Amol Kamat
SPORTS EDITOR

The Caltech women’s tennis team defeated Master’s College on Saturday, 8-1. The Beavers only lost one doubles match, and then cruised to victory without dropping a single set during singles play.

Freshman Rebekah Kitto won her first match at one singles, 6-0, 6-1. Freshman Jessica Yu won a hard fought battle at three singles, defeating Katie Thaxton 6-4, 7-6 (7-2). Yu graduated from Northville High School, which, quite frankly, has a reputation for producing the finest Caltech tennis players. That’s a fact.

The Beavers return to action next Saturday as they take on Biola University.

Baseball Downs UCSC, Extends Win Streak to Three
And promptly ends win streak

By Blaine Matulevich
BASEBALL GUY, COOL CAT

Beaver baseball continued their hot streak this past weekend, soundly defeating the visiting UC-Santa Cruz Banana Slugs 6-1 in a 7-inning exhibition game. Although not an NCAA sanctioned team, the Slugs are UCSC’s only baseball program, drawing from a student body of close to 16,000.

Caltech’s bats stayed hot all game, and senior pitcher Rob Rosenberg dominated the Slugs from the mound, picking up his first intercollegiate victory. An impressive relief appearance from Albie Lavin sealed the game for Tech.

In the second game of the doubleheader, despite a strong pitching effort by Brian Penserini, the Beavers couldn’t quite overcome the Slugs. UCSC stopped a late Caltech surge with the bases loaded in the final inning, winning the game 5-3.

Caltech looks to start their next win streak with the opening of NCAA play on Friday, February 4 at La Sierra, and at home the following day against Pacifica College.

“This Week in Sports Quotes

“Did we win?”
“No.”
“Was it close?”
“We lost by two.”
“Yaaaaaaaaaaah!!!”
-Two Techers discussing the men’s basketball game

“C’mon cleats, get off mah feet.
C’mon shoes, you know what to do.”
-Techer singing after an interhouse ultimate game

“He’s like Sharapova out there…”
-Techer describing a Caltech tennis player’s grunts
When Mario comes home, he does not expect Luigi to be in a bee costume. Mario is very surprised, and calls it unbelievable, as it is such an odd scenario. The humor comes from both the wacky situation as well as the clever wordplay in "un-bee-lievable" because that includes the word bee.

Let me know if you have any questions. I am certain there is enough room on the humor page to print more than one comic, and all my friends tell me that this one is pretty funny!

-- David Ginola