The California Tech

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Caltech campus welcomes eager beavers

ELLORA SARKAR
Contributing Writer

As the sun streamed onto the lawn of Admissions House this Thursday, hundreds of families flowed into Caltech, excited to learn about the school, the people, the academics, and the culture. As they mingled with admissions officers and current students, they started to make up their minds about the place where they would spend the next four years. Prefrosh Weekend had arrived.

The prefrosh were eager to learn about the characteristics that make Caltech unique—its academics, the houses, the honor code, or some other conglomeration of factors? To help them answer these questions, the Admissions officers, along with a team of current students, planned two days full of informative panels and tours for interested prefrosh (and their families). The day started off with a tour of JPL, which excited many attendees. Current students also ran tours even more frequently than usual, in order to accommodate the growing demand.

Prefrosh were welcomed with kick-off activities, a new feature of PFW. Current students planned and executed different games for the prefrosh as a way to break the ice, including Molecule Building, a fashion show, COPE, and Live Action Che. Dominic Yurk, who ran Che, said the experience was valuable for both him and the prefrosh.

Prefrosh agreed that the house dinners were a valuable experience something competitive that got them moving. As the day wore on, the events shifted gears from academic to house-focused. Prefrosh attended house dinners, taking in the different traditions of each House. Aadith Moorthy, a Floridian prefrosh, particularly enjoyed the tradition of throwing bread. Prefrosh agreed that the house dinners were a valuable experience.

Dean Dabiri shares his views on issues

CONNOR ROSEN
IHC Chair

Newly instated Dean John Dabiri collaborated with IHC Chair Connor Rosen to introduce to the student body his thoughts on various issues. Below is the complete Q&A.

What are your thoughts on the Honor Code as it applies to academics? What are you hoping to get out of the Ad Hoc Honor Code Committee?

What are your thoughts on student self-governance? What are you hoping to get out of the Ad Hoc Self-Governance Committee?

(I know both those questions might be hard because you don’t want to upset / precipitate the committees, but maybe just why you thought they were important to form)

One thing that makes Caltech’s Honor Code special is that it governs all of us in this community, whether student, faculty, staff, or administration. For students in particular, the Honor Code is effectively a social contract. Students agree not to take unfair advantage of one another, the faculty, staff or administration; in return, they’re afforded a level of autonomy that is much higher than at other schools. However, in recent years there has been a sense among students, faculty, and administration that perhaps the social contract isn’t being honored as faithfully as it should be by all parties involved. For example, the discussion of academic violations of the Honor Code at the 2013 Student-Faculty Conference illustrated a potential disconnect between student satisfaction with the system (at greater than 90%) and the perspectives of several of our faculty, who have become skeptical of the effectiveness of the Honor Code. In the context of the House system, there were concerns from some in the administration that the Honor Code wasn’t being adhered with the same seriousness as for academics. At the same time, students felt their autonomy was being eroded. The end result has been reduced trust in a community for which trust is essential in order for our unique system to function properly. In my capacity as Chair of the Faculty, I worked with the Faculty Board and the administration to form the two ad hoc committees that are evaluating the state of affairs, with the ultimate goal of identifying ways to strengthen the social contract.

What do you think of the House system? What are the best and worst aspects of the House system?

I think the House system is an essential feature of the educational experience at Caltech. It enables a unique sense of community that transcends the typical boundaries of class year that exist at other schools. It also has tremendous potential to provide our students with opportunities to develop leadership and interpersonal skills through management of the Houses. However, I think the system can only work if students perceive the Honor Code as governing daily life in the Houses in the same way they view the Honor Code for academics. For issues like harassment and hazing, the connection to the Honor Code is probably clearer, though education is still important. But it may not be immediately obvious how violations of Institute Policy necessarily infringe upon the Honor Code. The way I see it, if a student climbs up on the roof (against Institute Policy) and then falls and is injured, it’s the administration that is potentially liable, not the student. So I would argue that the student is taking unfair advantage of the administration who trusted him/her not to go up there. Having said that, I think we also need to be careful not to overstate liability concerns either; that same student could be injured playing Interhouse soccer, and we wouldn’t formulate an Institute Policy to ban that activity. So there needs to be a balance. But ultimately, the best way for students to preserve Caltech’s tradition of self-governance in the Houses is to take ownership of implementation of the Honor Code on a day-to-day basis. It’s not something that can or should be micromanaged by the administration.

A potential concern I have about the House system is that it’s perhaps too easy for Houses to become homogenized by race, gender, or simply people who think alike. Of course, it’s human nature to want to spend time with people who think like you.

Read about Caltech’s first Take Back the Night on page 3

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In This Issue
ASCIT Minutes

ASCIT Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes for April 15, 2014 Taken by Catherine Jamshidi

Officers Present: Zach Rirkin, Connor Rosen, Malvika Verma, Catherine Jamshidi, Monica Enlow, Michelle Tang, Connie Huseh

Guests: Kayne Dinglihan, Margaret Lee, Nima Badizadegan, Adam Jermyn, Connor Coley, Chris Dosen, Patrick Nikong, Elliot Simon

Call to Order: 10:00 pm

President’s Report (Zach):

- Make sure you vote in ASCIT Elections before 11:59 pm on 4/21.
- Thank you to all involved for a successful prefrshweekend.
- The Faculty Board voted to change undergraduate ineligibility requirements. Major changes include a 1.9 term minimum GPA as well as stricter reinstatement conditions.

Officer’s Reports:

- V.P. of Academic Affairs (ARC Chair: Malvika):
  - Nominate an awesome professor and/or for an ARC Teaching Award! You get a delicious 4th dinner if your nomination is chosen as a winner. Nominations close on Friday at midnight.
  - If you have any course concerns or compliments, please let your ombuds know. Or tell the ARC1 hear ACM 95c has a new due da time.
  - CS 38 and Ph 12c are being recorded this term. Check out the vid here: http://classes.caltech.edu
  - Fill out the CS 5 survey!
  - The ARC will be gathering input from students on what they want from a core biology class.
  - If you haven’t met with your Option mentor, it’s not too late!

- V.P. of Non-Academic Affairs (HIC Chair: Connor):
  - PFW was this past weekend – almost 300 prefrsh visited Caltech.
  - Chandler will be undergoing renovations and improvements (likely over the summer) that will increase efficiency and food quality.
  - We are looking into expanding gym hours for undergraduates or possibly repurposing a room in the SAC to serve as a 24-hour workout room.

- Director of Operations (Connie):
  - Toroidal-themed midnight food and the PFW club fair both went well. Thank you to all who helped and participated!
  - Now that you’ve met them, if you’re interested in helping the prefrsh get adjusted to Caltech in the fall, join the Little tea! Positions include writing, editing, and soliciting advertisements, or whatever suits your interests. Email: operations@donut.caltech.edu for details.

- Treasurer (Monica):
  - Nothing to report this week.

- Social Director (Michele):
  - ASCIT Formal will be held at the Ambassador Mansion and Gard on Friday, May 9th from 7pm to 11pm. Details regarding ticket sales will go out shortly.
  - There will likely be an ASCIT Movie Nights this term:
    - Sunday, 5/11 – Spiderman
    - Saturday, 5/31 - X-Men

- Secretary (Cat):
  - There won’t be a BnD meeting next Tuesday (4/22). We’ll schedule the next meeting after election results are released.

[If anyone has any questions or concerns about a section of the minutes please email the appropriate officer. We are happy to answer any questions.]

Meeting Adjourned: 10:51 pm

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News briefs from around the globe

Helping readers burst out of the Caltech bubble

Need to know <100 words about the world this week

- French journalists freed
  - 4 men freed from tough conditions as hostages in Syria for 10 months [CNN]

- MN to increase min. wage
  - $9.50, up from $6.15, to be new hourly wage by 2016 [TIME]

- Pope stresses peace
  - 500k at Mass led by Pope Francis, who stressed international peace [TIME]

- Peru issues evacuation
  - 45 residents near Ubinas volcano evacuated due to increased activity [BBC]

- Avalanche turns deadly
  - 13 killed, 3 missing in deadliest Mt Everest avalanche on Friday [NYT]

Are you interested in feeling more successful during third term? 

This weekly group sponsored by the Counseling Center will offer practical, actionable tips for developing new skills to manage emotions, improving focus, and integrate mindfulness into your everyday life. Students may join any time in the series, and new content will be provided each week. Attending each skill session (4 weeks) is recommended but not required.

Tuesday evenings, 8-9:30pm in the common area of the Center for Diversity (CSS 2nd floor).

April 22 Interpersonal Effectiveness - setting boundaries and asking for what you want
April 29 Emotional Regulation
May 6 Distress Tolerance
May 13 Interpersonal Effectiveness
May 27 Mindfulness
June 3 Emotional Regulation
June 10 Series Wrap Up/Review

More information is available at the Caltech Counseling Center website: www.counseling.caltech.edu.

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Editors’ Note

Hello Caltech!

In case you haven’t noticed, we have made some changes to The Tech.

We will be sending out a survey soon to gauge your opinion on the new changes, and to figure out what you want to see in The Tech.

Thanks for reading!

Yours truly, The Tech

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The California Tech

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PHOEBE ANN
Contributing Writers

Upcoming events
1. Caltech Community takes back the night on April 21st - Friday, April 25th, 2014
2. World Fest: International Games on April 21st | 12:00 - 1:00 PM | San Pasqual Walk
3. Enjoy festive music and games from around the world.

www.festivalscaltech.com

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Hey guys and girls. It's week 4 in case you haven't been counting down. Just six weeks more! Well the prefrsoh are gone so this is a bit of a relief. Now we can resume our lives of regularly scheduled sets and stop pretending that Caltech is the greatest place on earth... but it was certainly fun pretending we were somewhere else for a while. As promised, here are the remaining look-who's-about dressing like me. Also, a big shout out to Kate Lewis from Lloyd for calling me on the "it ain't right it ain't right" rule recently. She's a cool kid. Anyways... onto this week's article!

Number 3: You're going full neutral... never go full neutral. That was very poorly paraphrased but the take away is that I try to always wear a noticeable piece in every outfit. Mostly what that translates into is a brightly colored button down paired with neutral blue or dark gray jeans and neutral shoes. The specifics of this rule vary a bit according to the season. During the fall/winter neutrals are the go-to so I limit my bold item to one piece. During spring/summer I usually wear two pieces especially if one of them is really bold. Examples of how I work within this rule are as follows. If I'm rocking a pair of colored chinos, I'll choose a neutral top and a neutral pair with a neutral shirt such as a white button down with a blue windowpane pattern.

Number 4: Accessories and Misc. Loosely follow the tenant that the only piece of jewelry a student might actually get more out of a research experience or extracurricular activity (assuming sleep!), rather than simply adding another course. As for underloads and other unusual academic paths, I would again emphasize that we have the luxury of treating students on a case-by-case basis. And there's a palpable sense that Caltech supports that course, however unconventional it may be, as long as it is rigorous. The freedom enjoyed by our students is also unique to Caltech. That freedom, combined with what is probably the most creative and academically talented student body in the world, leads to a special environment where students and faculty, we're afforded tremendous freedom to talk about whatever is on their mind. I'd like the Deans and other leaders, come to the Houses, hold “Dean’s office hours”, etc.

What is your ideal forum for interacting with students and keeping in touch with our concerns? Do you want to be “hands-off” and rely on your peers, or do you want to be in touch with your peers, deal primarily with student leaders, come to the Houses, hold “Dean’s office hours”, etc.

My main priority at present is to get to know as many students as possible, so that every undergrad feels comfortable stopping me on the Olive Walk or coming to my office to talk about whatever is on their mind. I'd like the Deans office to be what is to establish personal relationships with the students, so that when difficult issues arise we can work from a position of trust. That takes time, of course, but Caltech is small enough that I'm confident we can make it happen. I've found that having dinner in the lounge and playing intramouse sports has been a great way to meet students. I also plan to hold weekly open office hours, and I'll encourage those interested to do the same as standard in the Dean's office. We'll also establish regular interactions, both formal and informal, among the Deans, MOSH, IRGs, RAs, and various student organizations, so that we can identify potential issues early on.
The next day heralded even more panels for the prefrosh, including the prank panel. In light of the recent mug prank at MIT, this was one of the more attended panels. Prefrosh also flocked to the bookstore to obtain the much-coveted mugs, which were sold only to admitted students.

That afternoon, the whole school attended the club fair, hosted by ASCIT. Prefrosh, current students, and parents strolled through the Olive Walk to learn about the 60 clubs that showed up. As they enjoyed the churros, ice cream, cookies, popcorn, and fruit cups provided by admissions, they partook in the opportunity to play bridge with Bridge Club, race in hamster balls, and race up a ladder climb. Anand Poozhikunnel appreciated the clubs and activities, saying, "It always is great to see all the different talents and varied interests we all have here at Caltech."

As prefrosh left on Saturday morning, a present was left on the Admissions railing. Prefrosh had created an MIT admissions tube full of balloons and streamers, complete with the message, "Congratulations! You’ve been hacked!"

Overall, PFW allowed current students and the Caltech community to welcome the potential class of 2018 to the school. Prefrosh left with a fuller understanding of the qualities that make Caltech unique, and will consider their information as they plan to commit next week.

Know your prefrosh: Fast Facts about the admitted students for ’18

- record-breaking 6,524 applications (nearly 1,000 more than previous record)
- 529 students offered admission, giving the lowest acceptance rate on record (about 8%)
- Goal of 235 freshmen enrolling each year
- 651 admitted, 264 enrolled in 2012–2013
- 584 admitted, 245 enrolled in 2013–2014
- 47% of admitted students are female
- 281 students registered for PFW, and about 300 family members came to visit as well
- 35 states and 5 foreign countries represented at PFW

Star gazer captures “Blood Moon” lunar eclipse

Referred to as the “Blood Moon,” the lunar eclipse on April 15 provides a beautiful spectacle for the night. The moon will glow red three more times in the next 18 months as part of a lunar eclipse “tetrad” (a series of four consecutive total lunar eclipses that happen at about six-month intervals). Future blood moons can be seen on Oct. 8, 2014; April 4, 2015; and Sept. 28, 2015.

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Photos courtesy of Ellora Sarkar (top) and Alex Hsu

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Photos courtesy of Calli Meyer

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FEATURE

THE CALIFORNIA TECH

APRIL 21, 2014

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OFF!’s Wasted Years proves to be uninnovative album

NAILEN MATSCHKE
Contributing Writer

OFF! is a super-group that quickly gained a following within the hardcore community thanks to its high profile members, whose prior work in hardcore punk includes legendary bands such as Black Flag and Circle Jerks. Their first LP, 2010’s First Four EPs, was praised by critics for its energy and unrelenting anger, with many calling it a refreshing break from the usual musical landscape. While the album wasn’t particularly innovative or impressive in itself, there’s no denying that it was raw and well-produced, making it an enjoyable listen. Their self-titled second EP once again captured the hardcore spirit almost perfectly, but didn’t expand much upon the sounds and ideas introduced in the group’s first album. Sonically, the album’s production was noticeably changed, with crunchier, louder guitars and punchier drums, but ultimately it lacked the fresh passion of the first album.

Wasted Years, released April 8, we find OFF! once again altering the aesthetic of their mix, but not doing much in the way of expanding the band’s repertoire. Something that is immediately apparent from the start of the album is that the band opted for a lo-fi, almost garage rock-like sound, with ragged and blaring guitar tones fighting yelled vocals and loud, cymbal-heavy drum work. That’s not to say that the record is poorly mixed, though; every instrument is distinguishable and zone is overpowering, and it’s clear that OFF!’s guitarists are no amateurs, pioneering through energetic riffs with surprising precision. The melodies are easy to digest and do their job of providing an entertaining vehicle to move the incredibly short songs forward, the vocals sound genuine and invigorating, and overall it sounds exactly like how a hardcore punk album should. There are small but enjoyable deviations here and there, such as the almost Black Sabbath-esque passages in “Legion of Evil” or some guitar work in “You Must Be Damned” that wouldn’t sound out of place in your typical post-rock album. It’s clear that after decades in the scene, the members of OFF! have a thorough understanding of how to write a good hardcore punk album, and on this album they exercise this ability in full.

However, the fact that Wasted Years is so good at being a hardcore punk album ends up being its downfall as well. While listening to the record, there was never a time when I wasn’t enjoying it. After running through it a few times, though, I realized that I could barely remember more than one or two moments that I found particularly memorable or unique.

The individual members of OFF! clearly have a great deal of talent, each having a good amount of influence on the emergence and history of their genre itself. Despite this, the band as a whole doesn’t seem to be able to evolve their sound away from that of their first album, and I feel that another album like this from OFF! would make them almost completely irrelevant to the advancement of their genre. They certainly seem like competent musicians invested in their music, but a band can only use the same idea so many times before it becomes boring.

Despite the album’s shortcomings, I do still see myself listening to this album on occasion in the future. It scratches an itch for authentic, exciting punk music, it’s not too abrasive, and there’s nothing that is not enjoyable about listening to it. In the end, though, I can’t help but feel let down by OFF! with respect to this album. There’s little to distinguish it from any of their previous work, and it’s starting to reach the point where the band has a discography of 48 nearly indistinguishable songs. I think that fans who already follow OFF! and have been looking forward to this record will probably enjoy it, and it certainly could make the band some new fans from listeners who hadn’t heard their work before.

Ultimately though, besides times when you’re in the mood for hardcore punk, it’s safe to say that Wasted Years is pretty unremarkable.

People who haven’t listened to OFF! before may want to consider giving it a listen to see what they think of it, but otherwise I don’t feel as though the album is anything significant, and I think it’s safe to skip it.
Sports

April 21, 2014

THE CALIFORNIA TECH

Women’s water polo seniors take a moment to look super cute with Coach Beemer’s dog before their final home game.

Monisha Dilip puts her hand up, they’re playing her song, the butterflies fly away.

Connie Hsueh nods her head like yeah.

Kelsey Spaur gazes into the eyes of her defender.

Katie Knister acknowledges her fans.

Caltech Chinese Association hosts annual ping pong tournament

ALEX HSU
Photography Editor

Last weekend, the Caltech Chinese Association held their first ping pong tournament since ten years ago. To make a total of 65 contestants, there were 31 in Men’s Division A, 25 in Men’s B, and 9 in the women’s division. The tournament was elimination style first to 11 best out of 3 for the initial two rounds, then first to 11 best out of 5 for subsequent rounds. Participants clearly enjoyed the event, having a good time whether practicing or intensely dueling it out, matching skill to skill. After so much ping pong for a day, instead of tiring them out, the general consensus was that people’s interest in ping pong had increased, and they looked forward to playing more in the future. Not only so, but they also were able to dramatically improve their skill levels, challenging each other and learning new techniques.

The winners in each division were Omer Subasi in Division A, Changlin Pang in B, and Ker Lee Yap in the women’s division. Notable mention goes to 76-year old planetary science professor Andy Ingersoll, who placed second in the B division. Another event that was ongoing was blowing a ping-pong ball from one bowl into an adjacent bowl, and finally into another. The first success took 1 minute and 8 seconds, finally being whittled down to a mere 5 seconds by positioning the ball at a certain location in the first bowl and blowing once to bring it to the last one.

All in all, it was a great experience, for vetted or for novice players. Players also got to get to know each other by playing in the tournament, and decided to get together to play when they got the chance.

For those interested, ping pong practices happen from 5:30 to 7:30 on Saturdays in Braun Gym. Anyone is welcome!

Women’s tennis takes home a win against Cal Lutheran, if only all senior athletes were so lucky.

Women’s tennis players Devashish Joshi and Luka Mernik are celebrated on Senior Night because they are men who play tennis.

True love is having your friends walk all the way to the gym to sit in the sun in order to support you.

-Photo courtesy of Michelle Tang

Weekly Scoreboard

Men’s Baseball
at Claremont-M-S
L, 13-0 Final

Women’s Tennis
vs. Occidental
L, 16-2 Final

Men’s Baseball
at Claremont-M-S
L, 7-3 Final

Men’s Tennis
vs. Chapman
L, 7-2 Final

Men’s Baseball
at Cal Lutheran
L, 9-0 Final

Women’s Water Polo
vs. Occidental
L, 12-3 Final

Men’s Tennis
vs. Cal Lutheran
W, 7-2 Final

Women’s Water Polo
at Redlands
L, 21-2 Final

Senior’s celebrated at last home game of the season

MONICA ENLOW
Editor-in-Chief

The 2014 women’s water polo season is coming to a close, and I couldn’t be sadder. This year I had the honor of playing with four brilliant women, Monisha Dilip, Kelsey Spaur, Katie Knister, and Iris Liu, who are on their way to becoming grown-ups. Although we came close to winning a few games, but never actually won any, these ladies still pulled through concussions, sickness, injuries, grad school applications, and interviews to be on deck every day. While I am excited to soon be a senior, it means that the team is losing a valuable space cadet, Monisha, our resident BA center, and #noconcussions2014. I know the whole team will miss you next year during our spring break boba runs, warm up jam time, and bus rides with sleepy Beems.

Monisha Dilip puts her hand up, they’re playing her song, the butterflies fly away.

Connie Hsueh nods her head like yeah.

Omer Subasi and Chris Gardner practice before the tournament.

Photo courtesy of Michelle Tang

Men’s tennis players Devashish Joshi and Luka Mernik are celebrated on Senior Night because they are men who play tennis.

-Photos courtesy of gocaltech.com
It’s no coincidence

Monica Enlow

Bad Jokes

Liz Lawler

Guest Artist

Sudoku: Over-compensating for something

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- www.frenums.tumblr.com/comic