

The Muddraker

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Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, California

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Mudders Decipher Victoria's Secret Entire Student Body Unites to Seek Pink Hoodies, Sweat Pants

By BEN KELLER '10

The contest certainly must have seemed innocuous enough to its creators. "Nominate Your School," the contest page proclaims, "to be a part of the Pink Collegiate Collection." Victoria's Secret, the women's clothing company, was holding a competition to determine its next collegiate clothing lines. Whichever school received the most votes in its online poll would have a new line of hoodies and sweatpants made just for them, with the school logo emblazoned prominently. (Head to vspink.com/nominate_your_school.jsp to see the poll.) A harmless promotional tool? Not after Mudders got involved.

On Tuesday, October 6th, at 6:12 PM, Allison Wynn '11 e-mailed a few of her friends about the contest: "we're currently no. 781.... so we have a ways to go, especially since we're up against large state schools that have tens of thousands of students, but hey, what can it hurt?" Undaunted by the one-vote-per-day limit, students began casting their votes for HMC. E-mails flew back and forth as Mudd slowly began climbing the ranks towards the top.

Unfortunately for the contest creators, Mudders quickly realized that the web designers at Victoria's Secret were not experts in site security. The one-vote-per-day limit was only enforced by checking the browser cache; simply clearing the cache allowed repeated voting. Word spread, and Mudders cast their votes. By 9:17 PM that evening, Mudd had moved up to 182 in the rankings.

The real impediment to fast voting was the site's CAPTCHA. CAPTCHAs are collections of letters that are distorted so that they cannot easily be read by computer scripts. They are intended to distinguish scripts and bots from actual humans, and prevent all but real people from creating online accounts, posting on forums, or, in this case, voting in online polls. Last year's poll did not use a CAPTCHA, and it was quickly overwhelmed by auto-voting computer code from MIT, Drexel, and a handful of other schools. This year, the site administra-

tors had toughened things up, or so they thought.

By 10:30 PM, rapidly coding students had reduced the server calls to a minimum, and set up websites where the glacial Flash interface of the Victoria's Secret page could be bypassed entirely. Now all that Mudders had to do to vote was to solve a CAPTCHA. Voting rates skyrocketed: with many Mudders solving thirty CAPTCHAs per minute, Mudd first reached the leaderboards at 11:37 PM, with a rank of 25. Over the next few days, students solved CAPTCHAs over meals, between classes, and as a substitute for problem sets, and Harvey Mudd College inched towards the top.

But typing in CAPTCHAs by hand can only go so far. Behind the scenes, Mudders were hard at work to obviate even this simple step, writing algorithms to automatically break the CAPTCHAs themselves. The first bots were inaccurate and inefficient; a human could easily out-type them. But over the days, character recognition grew more efficient and accuracy improved, and by October 8th, Mudders working in tandem thrust Harvey Mudd into first place at 7:10 PM.

After first place was achieved, most humans stopped voting, but the bots kept getting better. Having achieved first place for ourselves, Mudders quickly redirected the flow of votes towards Scripps College, which quickly achieved a distant second place. Then, imaginations ran wild: a diverse array of schools bounded towards the top of the list, from Bob Jones University to the Atlantic Institute of Oriental Medicine. Briefly, chaos reigned; then Mudders organized again, tweaking the bots so that they would automatically rank the colleges to spell words with the first letter of each school. By November 8th, the leaderboards proudly proclaimed "HARVEY MUDD ROCKS BOO CALTECH" with a broad spectrum of institutions.

On November 13th, Victoria's Secret finally realized that something was amiss. Unfortunately for them, their solution to the problem was not to improve site security,

THE TOP 25 SCHOOLS		
RANK	SCHOOL	VOTES
1	Harvey Mudd College	2,948,385
2	Averett College	687,167
3	Rabbinical College of America	684,791
4	Valley Forge Christian College	683,796
5	East West College of Natural Medicine	683,087
6	Yeshiva Toras Chaim Talmudical Seminary	681,240
7	Mayo Clinic College of Medicine	678,807
8	University of California Santa Cruz	676,420
9	Design Institute of San Diego	674,406
10	Dakota Wesleyan University	671,743
11	Ranken Technical College	670,900
12	Oglala Lakota College	669,001
13	Carnegie Mellon University	667,553
14	Kalamazoo College	665,550
15	Scripps College	664,303
16	Bob Jones University	663,432
17	Our Lady of the Lake College	661,650
18	Oregon College of Art and Craft	660,901
19	California Institute of Technology	659,641
20	Atlantic Institute of Oriental Medicine	658,902
21	Louisville Technical Institute	657,301
22	Turtle Mountain Community College	656,302
23	Excelsior College	655,188
24	Columbia College Hollywood	653,197
25	Hickey College	651,908

Mudders spell out "HARVEYMUDDROCKSBOOCALTECH"

but to implement a different CAPTCHA and to reduce HMC's vote count to negative four million votes. At the time of this writing, Mudders are determinedly using their hard-earned knowledge of image processing and computer science to regain us the opportunity to buy pink hoodies prominently featuring Wally the Wart.

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Facilitating and Maintaining a Good Relationship

Dorm Presidents and F&M Meet to Resolve Conflicts

By MICHAEL HO '10

The current relationship between students and the Facilities and Maintenance Office (F&M, in the common parlance) is characterized by the most visible student opinions of F&M: frustration and dislike. These opinions have become ingrained into Mudd's residential life to the point where complaints are no longer out of the ordinary.

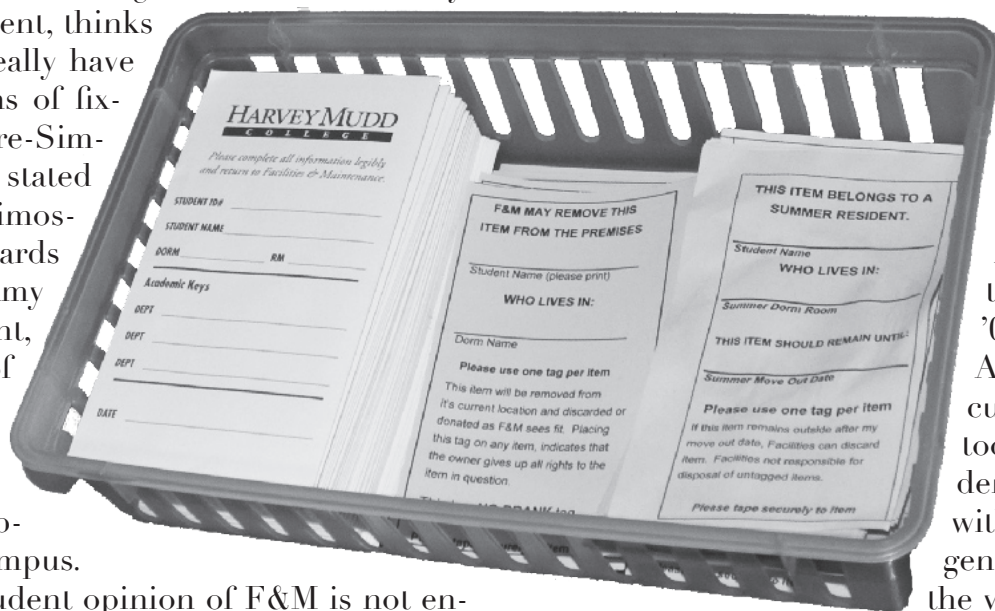
Elaine Oyang, a South Dorm president, thinks that "South dorm residents don't really have a good impression of F&M in terms of fixing [problems in South]." Mary Moore-Simmons, a West Dorm president, has stated that "students at West have an animosity towards F&M." This attitude towards F&M, however, is not universal. Amy Musselman, a Sontag Dorm president, thinks that F&M does a good job of servicing the campus. In fact, Amy said she didn't realize that "a lot of people had a problem with F&M." Regardless, F&M is still a large problem with many students living on campus.

From the perspective of F&M, student opinion of F&M is not entirely characterized by F&M's policies and operations. Rather, student opinion is very much dependent on the Assistant Director of Facilities and Maintenance position. Since the staff member filling this position is the person that students come into contact with most frequently, this person appears to be "the face of F&M," according to Andrew Dorantes, HMC's Vice President for Administration and Finance. The fact that the person filling this position has changed over the years

explains why Theresa Potter, the Assistant Vice President for Facilities and Emergency Preparedness, says that the relationship between students and F&M has "varied over the years I've been here."

In an effort to improve the current relationship between students and F&M, the new Dean of Students, Maggie Browning, held two dinners at her house on September 21st and September 28th for dorm presidents and key F&M staff. The idea for these dinners originally came from Andrew Dorantes. Last spring, during the search for the new Dean of Students, Andrew often interacted with Taylor Neiman '09 and Aurora Pribram-Jones '09. After observing some of the discussion regarding West Dorm that took place during the Dean of Students search, Andrew asked to meet with Taylor and Aurora and hear their general thoughts about F&M. Given the volume of issues Taylor and Aurora

brought up that he was not aware of, Andrew met with Dean Maggie and Theresa Potter to discuss how students could communicate such issues. They agreed that something like a website wouldn't work; rather, Andrew states that a stronger line of communication is "only going to work by personal relationships." This idea evolved into the F&M-themed dinners at Dean Maggie's home. During these dinners, Theresa Potter wanted to find out whether F&M was meeting the needs



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Facilities and Maintenance, continued from Front Page

of students and what wasn't working for students. Furthermore, Theresa said that "we're [also] trying to broaden what the students see as the face of F&M because there's a whole bunch of us that are working as a team."

In terms of the issues discussed during these dinners, a common theme surfaced: something that Andrew Dorantes calls "Major on the major, minor on the minor." It's the idea that big fusses shouldn't be made over smaller issues. Instead, F&M will be flexible with respect to how students wish to use their dorms. This attitude was evidenced by the way in which Theresa Potter and Kelly Lauer, the interim F&M office manager also present at the dinners, dealt with requests from dorm presidents. For Sontag Dorm, Amy Musselman talked to Theresa and Kelly about replacing the dorm's rock garden, which many Sontag residents dislike because of its lack of functionality and aesthetic appeal. In order to change the rock garden, its donor would need to be contacted, but Theresa was happy to help set up a meeting with the donor. "It seemed like [F&M was] willing to help us change Sontag so people [would] like the courtyard better," says Amy, who previously didn't think the rock garden could be changed.

This collaboration was carried over to West, where there was discussion of replacing the current windows with stronger ones. Mary-Moore Simmons recalls Theresa being in agreement with her on this issue, stating that "it would be better for everybody if your windows didn't break all the time, because F&M wouldn't have to replace them and [West residents] wouldn't have to pay for [F&M to replace] them." Furthermore, Elaine Oyang was glad to see F&M support two needs for South dorm residents. Firstly, Theresa Potter and Kelly Lauer addressed South's desire for a giant chessboard in their courtyard. Since painting the courtyard could be an issue, F&M suggested using

chessboard mats, which was an idea the presidents really liked. Secondly, South's idea of using couch covers on worn down couches was not only supported by F&M, but fully embraced to the point of creating a campus-wide program which allows dorms to purchase covers for their couches. F&M thinks this will bring an end to the long "couch debate" involving the push for new couches. Andrew Dorantes states that couches aren't a big deal "as long as [they're] safe and not a fire hazard," again reemphasizing the idea of "minor on the minor."

While many of the presidents felt that most of the issues they brought up during the dinners were handled well, there were a few exceptions. One particular point of frustration surfaced for Elaine Oyang when discussing the renovation of South dorm. According to Elaine, "everything [at South] is old and somewhat broken," meaning that residents "file a lot of complaints" to F&M. For Elaine and other South residents, "the only way [to] fix all [the] little problems is a renovation, which got pushed back." This delay is the main source of Elaine's concern, believing that "we need to get this fixed now." During the dinner, both Elaine and Erin Powers, another South dorm president, were pushing to make this a big issue. Unfortunately, Elaine doesn't think F&M got the message, indicating that, while these dinners are a big step, the communication between students and F&M still isn't perfect.

In keeping with the idea of "major on the major, minor on the minor," F&M will still take larger issues seriously in order to maintain the current facilities for future generations. Theresa Potter explains that the two things that differentiate a major issue from a minor issue are "safety concerns" and "asset preservation." Theresa Potter explains that "asset preservation" splits up into two categories: dorm cleanup and dorm damages. With respect to

dorm cleanup, F&M has worked with the student-run Dormitory Affairs Committee (DAC) to come up with a revised excessive cleaning policy, which includes providing "excessive cleanup kits" for students to check out. The dorm damage policy is also in the process of being revised, with ideas such as having an F&M representative check dorm rooms for damage before students leave being considered. With respect to damage charges to students, a question that often arises is why students can't fix damages themselves for a fraction of the cost of what the school charges. This ties in with the other major issue of "safety concerns," and Theresa Potter identifies a disparity between the "students' level of safety" and the "college's level of safety." Andrew Dorantes also explains that, if the college permitted a Do-It-Yourself policy, "the college [would be] responsible" for any injuries that students might incur while trying to fix damages. According to Andrew, this means that F&M must perform damage repairs themselves or outsource to external contractors. These contractors, Andrew explains, are often the source for expensive damage charges and the school does not make money off of these charges.

F&M's concern regarding the Do-It-Yourself attitude doesn't just apply to dorm damages, however. It also applies to times when residents purposefully modify their dorm. A good example of this is "a bar that [had been] drilled into the wall" at West Dorm. When Mary brought up this issue, she was surprised with F&M's response, commenting that "it seems like they're going to be a lot more reasonable than they have been in the past," when she thinks "F&M [would have] just [told] them to take the bar down and charge [West dorm residents] for it." While F&M is still asking the bar to be removed and will be charging for damages, they will also be working with the bar owners to create a new one with the same specifications that won't damage

the dorm. This effort by F&M impressed Mary, who recalled that "they were saying that they would be willing to work with [West residents], which is different from what they normally do. And, because of that, we're more willing to work with them." F&M hopes that these sorts of collaborations will end the tendency to "do first, ask for forgiveness" later when students want to modify their dorm facilities. Andrew Dorantes wants "students to feel comfortable [asking F&M about modifications]. They're gonna be surprised how often we say yes."

Overall, the students at the F&M-themed dinners at Dean Maggie Browning's house came out with a positive attitude. Amy Musselman thought that F&M was "doing a good job of being aware of what students want." Despite her disappointment about the delay in renovation South dorm, Elaine Oyang felt like F&M was "trying hard to meet the demands of the students" despite "[having] quite a lot on their plate." Theresa Potter felt like the dorm presidents were empathetic to the responsibilities and opinions of F&M. Mary-Moore Simmons thought that the dinner was going to be more of a meet-and-greet and was "pleasantly surprised that we talked about real issues." Mary also thinks that "once [West residents] see the changes that are being made, they won't be as upset about F&M in general." However, Mary also mentioned that "when it comes to F&M charging you for stuff, nobody likes to get charged for anything, so there's still going to be some animosity no matter what."

It is clear that the relationship between students and F&M will never be perfect. However, given the increased communication and collaboration between the two bodies, the relationship is certainly improving. Whether this improvement will continue or falter depends on how committed both students and F&M are to working with each other in the future.

Brian Greene Visits Mudd

By MATTHEW GOODWIN '13

When my friends and I found out Brian Greene was coming to speak as part of the Dr. Bruce J. Nelson '74 Distinguished Speaker Series on "The Power and Beauty of Mathematics," we were thrilled. Over the years it seems that Brian Greene has become a celebrity among those who love math and science. In some circles he has even transcended Chuck Norris in terms of "awesomeness," and for good reason. Not only can Brian Greene explain complex mathematical and scientific topics in terms that almost everyone can grasp, but he has enough charisma to ensure that his message sinks in. Sure, having a theory that calls for 13 dimensions and a radical change in how we perceive the fundamentals of the universe naturally intrigues, but Brian Greene makes the math even more engaging. Using animations and analogies throughout his talk, Greene was able to make sense of the strange world of string theory and still leave time for questions. Some might say Brian Greene is an idol, and others may even go so far to say he could have created the Universe, but in reality, Greene is a very down-to-earth man, at least from observation (I wasn't allowed within 15 feet of him). Instead of taking his elevated position as a sign that he should no longer interact with mere mortals, he does quite the opposite. He has become an ambassador of math and science, going out into the world to excite others about these topics by helping them see what the power of math and science can achieve. In all, Greene's lecture was quite entertaining, especially the saga between him and the men in the booth running the lighting. Those that I talked to seemed to agree, except there was one complaint I heard quite a bit (one that would be typical at Mudd): "He didn't do enough math."



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN MAPP



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN MAPP

Assessing existence while failing to embrace the insights of modern physics would be like wrestling in the dark with an unknown opponent.

- Brian Greene

No matter how hard you try to teach your cat general relativity, you're going to fail.

- Brian Greene

World Series 2009: Just Another Addition to the Trophy Case

By KEVIN LEYDEN '13

Well, folks, it's happened again. The New York Yankees are World Series champions for the twenty-seventh time, a feat that further cements them as the most successful sports franchise in history. However, their opponents, the Philadelphia Phillies, did not go down without a fight. In fact, the 2009 edition of the World Series marked the first time since 2003 that six games or more were needed for a team to win the title. Each game was closely contested, which made the Series quite a spectacle to watch.

The first two games of the World Series were played at the new Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, and they were predominantly characterized by stellar pitching performances. In Game 1, the Phillies' Cliff Lee took no prisoners; he struck out ten batters without issuing a single walk or giving up any earned runs. That combination of feats had never happened before for any starter of a World Series game. He pitched all nine innings, and the Phillies came out on top 6-1. Second baseman Chase Utley providing the offense and the fireworks: he notched two solo home runs in the contest. The following night, the Yankees' A.J. Burnett squared off against longtime Yankee nemesis Pedro Martinez, the former Red Sox ace, who was acquired by the Phillies in July. Martinez was solid at first, but gave up runs in the fourth and sixth innings and was pulled from the game in the seventh. Meanwhile, Burnett surrendered an early run in the second, but it would be the only run the Phillies scored in the game; Burnett pitched almost as well as Lee had done the prior night. In the eighth, he was relieved by Mariano Rivera, who went on to rack up his tenth career World Series save as the Yankees won Game 2, 3-1.

The extremely hitter-friendly Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia played host to the next three games of the Series. In Game 3, the two teams blasted a total of seven home runs into the stands, two by the Phillies' Jayson Werth. However, Werth's heroic efforts were not enough for the Phillies to win it for the home crowd; the final score of the shootout was 8-5. Game 4 was knotted at four runs apiece until the top of the ninth, when an RBI double by Alex Rodriguez and a 2-RBI single by Jorge Posada put the Yankees on top 7-4. Mariano Rivera came into the game to close out the ninth inning for the Yanks, and the Phillies were unable to regain their lead. The Yankees headed into Game 5 with an opportunity to win the trophy if they came out on top, but Chase Utley helped keep the drive alive for the Phillies with his two home runs. This moved him into a tie for the all-time record for home runs in a World Series, with 5. He batted in four of the Phillies' eight runs, while Cliff Lee emerged with another win, albeit not as dominant as the first; the final score was 8-6.

With the momentum back in the Phillies' favor, the two teams headed back to the Bronx for Game 6. Pedro Martinez got the call again to start for the Phillies, but he gave up two runs in both the second and third innings, and was replaced in a troublesome fifth in which the Yankees scored three more runs. Despite a two-run home run from Phillies first baseman Ryan Howard, the Phillies could not catch up in the end, and the Yankees went on to take the game 7-3 as they claimed the World Series trophy yet again. Designated hitter Hideki Matsui was named the Most Valuable Player of the World Series. He had driven in six of the Yankees' seven



PHOTO COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES

runs in the final game of the series and contributed in others as well, so the honor was well deserved.

So how will we remember the 105th World Series? Well, even though the matchups were hotly contested until their bitter ends, in a few years, this will probably be just another addition to the Yankees' trophy case. Yankees fans might remember it as the first title since the departure of Joe Torre as manager, or the first championship won in the new ballpark, but the 2009 Series lacked the storylines that the global baseball community has come to expect over the past few years, e.g., the curse-breaking triumph of the Red Sox in 2004, which ended an 86-year drought, and the shockingly unexpected rise to prominence of the Tampa Bay Rays, who went from being the American League's worst team in 2007 to its pennant winner in 2008. So while the fan bases of the Phillies and Yankees will remember this Series for years to come, the same will not be

true for America at large.

And now we ride off into another offseason, and avid fans of Colorado, Milwaukee, San Diego, Seattle, Tampa Bay, Washington, and both teams in Texas are still reeling at the fact that their golden years have not yet come. Having stayed true to their teams in times of sickness and in health, these fans have never known the thrill of having their teams bring home a World Series crown. And when FOX hyped up the measly nine years between the Yankees' last championship in 2000 and this one as such a long wait, all eight of these fan bases and others, like the Cubs and Indians fans for whom it has been sixty years or more, could only laugh and hope that next year will be a better one for them. And this hope will burn bright, at least until the umpire shouts "Play ball!" on April 4, 2010, for until that day, every team will be undefeated.

Summer Shakeup in the NBA

By JOHNATHAN CHAI '13

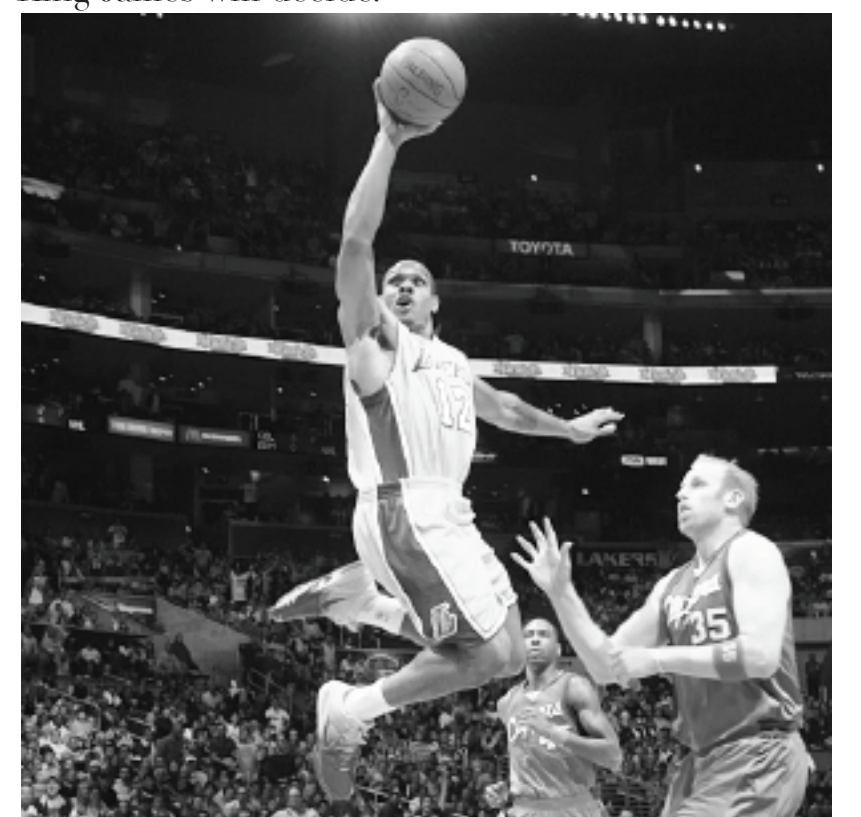
Since the local Los Angeles Lakers won the NBA championship in the spring, numerous NBA teams have made key moves to try to become playoff contenders. To start, the Lakers and Houston Rockets pulled off a "trade" by signing each other's free-agent forwards. The Rockets got Trevor Ariza, who stepped up his game during the playoffs, while the Lakers added toughness with Ron Artest who, in 2004, became infamous for jumping into the stands and fighting with a rowdy fan. This season, Tim Duncan, of the San Antonio Spurs, seeks an impressive fifth championship ring with the addition of veterans Richard Jefferson and Antonio McDyess. After losing Allen Iverson to the Grizzlies and Rasheed Wallace to the Celtics, the Detroit Pistons signed sharpshooter Ben Gordon and big man Charlie Villanueva. In an odd series of events, Quentin Richardson was traded four times during the offseason, spending no more than a month in each team's possession.

The rookie class this season seems promising, but no single player has stood out so far. The first pick, Blake Griffin of the L.A. Clippers, showcased his strengths during the preseason but an injury will keep him off the court for several weeks. Stephen Curry, a prolific scorer during his time in the NCAA, has fit in well with the high tempo Golden State Warriors offense. Many rookie guards, including Curry, Brandon Jennings, and Jonny Flynn, have succeeded early in the season. Jennings spent the past year playing professional basketball in Europe instead of attending college because he was too young to enter the draft in 2008. His unprecedented decision is paying off, as he is averaging over 20 points per game as the Milwaukee Bucks' starting point guard. Jonny Flynn's role on the Minnesota Timberwolves became more prominent when Ricky Rubio decided to stay with his team in Spain. Rubio, who played outstand-



ingly as a point guard during the 2008 Olympics, was drafted by the Timberwolves ahead of Flynn.

The Cleveland Cavaliers added former Lakers star center Shaquille O'Neal to help LeBron James win a ring. LeBron becomes a free agent next summer, and his decision to either stay with the Cavs or sign with a different team is creating great anticipation. Mikhail Prokhorov, a Russian tycoon, is trying to buy the New Jersey Nets and move them to a new arena in Brooklyn, New York. With Prokhorov's wealth and Nets co-owner, Jay-Z's friendship with LeBron, the superstar might decide to advance his career in the New York. LeBron is also known to be a fan of the Yankees, who just won their 27th Major League Baseball championship, which makes it all the more enticing for him to switch jerseys. The Cavaliers would be devastated if they lost their star forward, but until next summer, we can all speculate on what King James will decide.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES

Amo la Pasta

By Alice Paul '12

As the holidays draw nearer, I crave comfort food, which, for me, is pasta. Warm, saucy, al dente pasta. If you too start to dream of Italian masterpieces, do not fear! La Piccoletta is here to serve you up the perfect late fall meal.

Located in the Village, this restaurant is hard to find. Hidden between Harvard and Yale and South of Second, the small and delicate building of La Piccoletta, literally “Little Thing,” stands in the middle of a parking lot. But inside, the atmosphere takes on an intimate feel. The dark wood walls are highlighted by tiny white Christmas lights that surround the few tables inside. Part of the charm of this restaurant is that it can only seat 40 people. With the open kitchen and personal service, you feel more like you’re in someone’s dining room than in a restaurant.

The menu at La Piccoletta is small and specialized. Each week, a pasta is chosen, along with four sauces that suit that pasta’s shape. You can top your pasta with as many sauces as you desire, and the whole meal comes with sourdough bread, choice of salad, and a beverage. In addition, there are a few non-pasta main entrees for the week.

The meal starts with bread. This sourdough bread is unbelievable; I wanted to

take baskets home with me. While the bottom has a nice thick crust, the warm middle nearly melts in your mouth. Served fresh, there is nothing to top this starter. The salad, after the bread, is average. While appetizing, there’s nothing really special there. However, the pasta brings back the excellence. The penne I had was cooked perfectly to al dente, and the generous portions left me with a tasty lunch for the next day. In addition, the sauce was well balanced, not overpowering the pasta underneath.

While La Piccoletta is more expensive than a student focused venue (the meal mentioned above costs \$17 plus tip), on Thursdays you can get the whole deal for ten dollars, a steal for the quality food and service offered. If you’re over twenty-one, you can celebrate Wine Stimulus Wednesdays with a half-priced bottle.

It is no wonder why La Piccoletta has been in business for over twenty-five years. They do what they know and they do it well. If you can’t wait until the holidays for comfort food, I highly recommend this venue. And please bring me back some bread.

La Piccoletta is located at 114 P.N. Indian Hill Blvd.

Mudders to Tutor Area Students “Homework Hotline” Concept Borrowed from Rose-Hulman

By Ben Keller '10

Next semester, HMC students will begin piloting a new program to tutor area high school students via phone. The “Homework Hotline” system will put on-call Mudders at the ready to provide mathematics and science tutoring to students from select local high schools. While this program is still in the planning stages, it has the potential to positively impact the local community in a way that only Mudders can.

The Homework Hotline concept originated at the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Mudd’s only serious competitor on the US News and World Report rankings for undergraduate engineering. Rose-Hulman has run a successful Hotline program since 1991, and currently employs over thirty undergraduates each night in the program. HMC will be borrowing many ideas directly from the Rose-Hulman model in order to get the program off the ground as quickly

as possible.

Concurrent to the program’s announcement was the news that Gabriela Gamiz-Gomez would be joining HMC as the Homework Hotline administrator. Gabriela is local to the area, having grown up in Pomona and attended Pomona College. She has a Master’s in education from CGU and worked with the HMC Upward Bound program for nearly ten years, most recently as its director. Gabriela is excited to be returning to HMC, and looks forward to implementing the Homework Hotline as quickly as possible.

The Homework Hotline at HMC will provide free tutoring to area high schoolers. In the Spring, a pilot program will employ some five to six Mudders per night. After a training program, HMC students will serve for three-hour shifts each evening from Sunday to Thursday, standing



By Paula Ning '13

Πυζζλε οφ τηε Ισσυε Solution

The second super computer is located at HMC. The encryption pattern is to only shade the shapes that have numbers that are evenly divisible by three. See page 6 for puzzle.

Mudd Slinger

- ▷ I don’t know about you, but S’s dancing at Lingerie Party sure made my night.
 - ▷ It seems this year that not only are the upperclassmen boys preying on the frosh, but the girls are joining in. Maybe due to the popularity of the new show Cougar Town, which I would recommend to everyone.
 - ▷ A has gotten not only another new girl, but a whole new perspective.
 - ▷ G missing from lab now two weeks. Could this be due to his new interest?
 - ▷ M spotted getting off campus for some whale-watching. Who would have guessed this would be his type?
 - ▷ Recently B’s been seen with some guy I’m not sure anyone recognizes. He appears a tad older.
 - ▷ C seen running all over campus and hitting the gym all the time. We think we know who is trying to look hot and for whom.
- XOXO,
the community
To contribute to the next round of gossip, email juicy news to hmcuddslinger@gmail.com.

By Kevin Tham '12

Random Thoughts on the passing scene

You remember late October, when the V-day women's rights college group put up all those little posters in the Hoch with all sorts of statistics about women and sexual crime rates? A fair number of the posters had somewhat unusual statistics that couldn't be checked without some serious definition work (e.g. “31% of American women will be sexually assaulted some time in their lives” self-reported sexual assaults? Is this from police reports?), but one “fun fact” was quickly checkable: “A woman is raped in the U.S. every two minutes; source: U.S. Department of Justice.” Run the numbers and we get 262,800 rapes per year. The most recent U.S. Department of Justice crime sheets (quickly findable on the internet) lump together rape and sexual assault for a total of just over 200,000 incidents for 2008. The FBI equivalent counts only coercive rape (as legally defined on their site) and finds fewer than 90,000 incidents for the same period, and notes that it's part of a downward trend over the years. Depending on how generous you wish to be, the women's group got their number off by either 20 percent or 200 percent.

I think there may be something about “social justice” groups that make them slightly less aware of problems with their numbers. I

noted the “a person eats 6,000 pounds of food a day” bit from the Hoch in the last random thoughts, and I distinctly remember an amusing incident from high school in Irvine. That particular school had at least three student-run “social justice” groups, and one or a number of them decided to put on a poster campaign calling attention to world hunger crises. Problem was, they couldn't exactly agree on the extent of the issue some posters said 8 million people per year die from hunger, some said 10 million, and others said 12 million. One unfortunate student made a poster consisting entirely of the line “30 million people a year die of hunger”...and promptly posted it in a section of hallway in which a larger poster declaring one of the smaller figures was posted no more than thirty feet away. (It was removed.)

“But, but...”, I hear the objection, “even one person dying of hunger, one person being raped, is too much, isn't it? Why get snippy about precision when all of them are appallingly large?” Because, as an engineer will tell you, one of the first steps towards satisfactorily solving a problem (cross a river, move five hundred tanks, transfer billions of transactions digitally, and yes, avert sexual assaults and fix world hunger) is defining said prob-

lem accurately. Putting such false (and sometimes false to the point of absurd) figures into the public consciousness only makes that job harder. Further, it's something of a breach of trust between the advocacy group and the individual who must invariably be the one to contribute his time, effort, and money towards actually solving the problem. If the group that wants to clean the local river is known to severely exaggerate the quantity and risk of the pollutants, he will turn them down and, assuming he is interested in traditional “social justice” causes, give his limited time, money, efforts into updating the local library, or tutoring “at-risk” students, or something other than the liars.

(And to you who would say that I'm assuming the individual is male: “he” is gender-neutral, so be quiet.)

FOX News is apparently restricted from future White House press affairs, and the conservative blogosphere is outraged. Allow me to offer my two cents I'll be the first to say that Fox News has done some really silly things over the past year (keeping Glenn Beck on, giving Mike Huckabee his own show). I wouldn't go so far as to say that the network actively undermines and distorts the President's views, but even if they do...come on,

Random Thoughts, continued on page 5

Ask a Prof

"Ask a Prof" is a regular section of the Muddraker. Here, you'll be given the chance to anonymously ask professors whatever you'd like. We'll be rotating professors for every issue.

Dear Professor Poon,

I heard that you're not actually a professor, but rather a postdoc! What's the difference, and how do you manage to blend in so well?

-Surprised in Sontag

Dear Surprised,

When I tell people on campus what I do, their response usually goes something like, 'You're a what...?', 'I didn't know Mudd had postdocs!' or 'Aren't postdocs the little gnomes that live in university basements and don't get any sunlight?' And then there's that hesitation as a student sorts out whether to address me as Dr., Prof., "Hey you!", or just Mike.

So what is a postdoc? More specifically, what is a postdoc at Mudd? To answer the first question, the postdoc (or postdoctoral training) is like an internship after you get your PhD. The specifics can vary by discipline, but for molecular biologists, here's the workflow:

Grad school gets you the basics—it's a time to figure out what you like, what you're good at, how to think and do science, and how to work it into a story that can be published. The postdoc is the next step. There's more independence, but you still train under a mentor who helps you get a feel for what it's like to be a professor. At a university, the training might include learning how to run a lab, how to plan, execute and manage a research project, and building a name for yourself in your field through publications and conferences.

The traditional research postdoc, however, rarely provides opportuni-

ties to teach in the classroom. Literally all of your time is spent at the bench, running experiments, working on papers, or giving talks. Before Mudd, I spent 3 years as a research postdoc at Berkeley and it was rare to not be at the bench with at least 2-3 experiments running simultaneously. And that's all I did all day, everyday. And that's where the Mudd postdoc pulled me in.

So what's the difference between doing a postdoc at Berkeley and one at Mudd? The most obvious one (and the advantage of postdoc'ing at Mudd) is the teaching. If you're a freshman, you may have already met me in the plasmid portion of Chem25. For those of you that have, thanks for being understanding and for your seemingly endless (but entertaining) fascination with agarose. If I'm not in the teaching lab or grading pre-labs, in-labs and notebooks, you'll find me in the research lab where I've got four crazy amazing research students. 'Students' is actually a misnomer since they're the ones teaching me everything from my Mudd culture questions, to where to find good coffee, to how to be a better mentor.

All in all, being a postdoc Mudd has been tremendous fun. I've been learning a ton about teaching and student culture at a small college. It's been an eye-opening experience and if you see me around, Mike's just fine.

Prof. Michael Poon



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATIE HAUSER '13

Happy Veteran's day!

What?

WELCOME TO THE MUDD BUBBLE

BY SAMANTHA IPSER '13

Random Thoughts, continued from page 4

this is the President we are discussing here. Leader of the free world, controller of nukes and navies.... Are his plans or his personality so sensitive to outside shocks that having one network among a bunch of others much less likely to "distort the President's views" is too much? If so, he's going to have a fun time in Russia, the Middle East, Africa, Brazil....

Speaking of the President, Obama appears to have somewhat shrunk in office. This isn't an insult. He used a lot of heated rhetoric on the campaign trail about Bush's policies on rendition, Guantanamo Bay, the "politics of fear", withdrawing from Iraq, drawing down Afghanistan.... Now that's he's actually in office, he's run into the problem that what the office can do and what he planned to do with it are not the same as what he ought to do. Take that last one, for example—now that we've declared victory in Iraq and left it to the Iraqis, "the good war" is beginning to heat up once more, and top generals are asking for a "surge" of reinforcements to help re-stabilize the country. If he does send more troops, he'll certainly be turning his back on the hopes of a peaceful world put on him by the Nobel committee and those here in the U.S. who thought they were voting for a messiah-type figure. If he doesn't, he might well be branded as the man who lost Afghanistan...again. That heated,

somewhat pacifistic and emotional rhetoric on the campaign trail is mostly gone on most issues, and the man is better for it.

Speaking of the Nobel committee...it turns out that the deadline for accepting nominees and deeds for the Peace Prize was February 1st, about ten days after Barack Obama was sworn into office. Even Obama's most ardent supporters (I am decidedly not one of them) will agree that he didn't really do anything Nobel-worthy in the first ten days of office, at least not compared to Wilson (Fourteen Points) or Teddy Roosevelt (an end to the Russo-Japanese War). But, you know what, I figure Obama should really have turned down the prize—among its recipients are the terrorist leader Yasser Arafat, the fraud Rigoberta Menchu, the apartheid-era F.W. De Klerk (admittedly a joint one with Nelson Mandela, but still...), Secretary-General under investigation for Oil-for-Food involvement Kofi Annan, for certain people Henry Kissinger... unlike the Nobels for the hard sciences, the Nobels for peace mean practically nothing with this lineup.

Remember when the current First Lady made that speech supporting Obama waaaaay back in February at UCLA? You know, the one that went (in part):

"Barack Obama will require you to work. He is going to demand that you shed your cynicism.

That you put down your divisions. That you come out of your isolation, that you move out of your comfort zones. That you push yourselves to be better. And that you engage. Barack will never allow you to go back to your lives as usual, uninvolved, uninformed."

I'm sure that sounds great for a college administration speech, but two points. One, I argue that Obama hasn't really had us "put down [our] divisions" and "move out of [our] comfort zones", especially if "Gatesgate" is any indication. Second, I consider my tendencies towards pessimism and distance from others more of an essential part of my identity than my masculinity or racial identity (which you could probably guess from my name). If asking a person to shed his sense of self-identity for a greater good is outrageous when your sense of self is based in his culture (as so much "inspirational" literature tells us), it ought to be the same when your sense of self is based in philosophy (e.g., humans more often than not will act like idiots).

Final thought: I don't care what your opinion of the tea party protesters is, referring to them by a lewd sexual act ("teabaggers") and then having that name become the norm on certain parts of prime time television is pretty dang tasteless. Nice, Anderson Cooper, very nice.

The Muddraker Poll

“What is your favorite class, and why?”

Emma Van Burns ‘13



Physics 23. It’s really cool when the problems involve space-ships!

Joseph Dearden ‘13



CS 5. We do really cool problems like the Mandelbrot set. I also really like Physics 23.

Tom Aldrich ‘12



I really like E8. It was really fun. I enjoyed working in the machine shop.

Julien Devin ‘12



Physics 51, Electromagnetic Theory and Optics. We use a lot of math concepts along with physics ideas. Last lesson we derived the equations for electromagnetic waves.

Sarah Ferraro ‘12



My favorite class is Physics 51 recitation. I like the laid-back learning style. We work out problems on the board while the professor is there to offer help.

Paige Pruitt ‘11



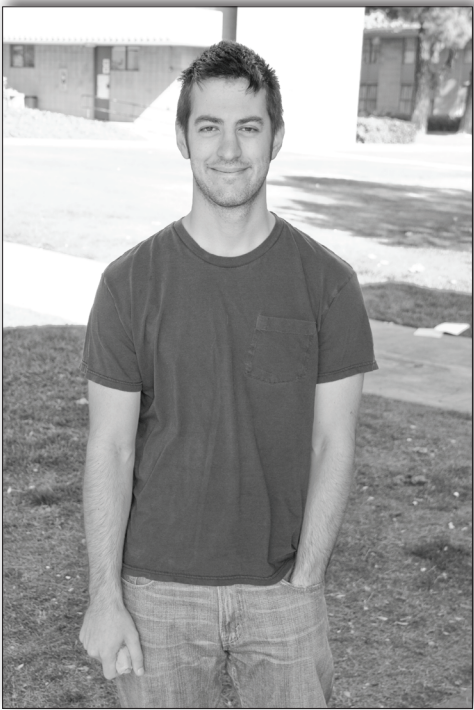
I’m currently taking E175 Dynamics of Rigid Bodies, which really clears up some concepts I had learned before. I also think E4 was a really good introduction to engineering.

Ben Goldenberg ‘10



My favorite class was an IE class, Buildings in Los Angeles. Every Saturday we went into LA and learned about different aspects of architecture and how the city was planned.

Bryce Lampe ‘10



CS 60, Principles of Computer Science. It’s just a lot of fun, and it was my last really relaxed CS class.

Poll conducted by Fiona Foo ’13
Photos courtesy of Katie Hauser ’13



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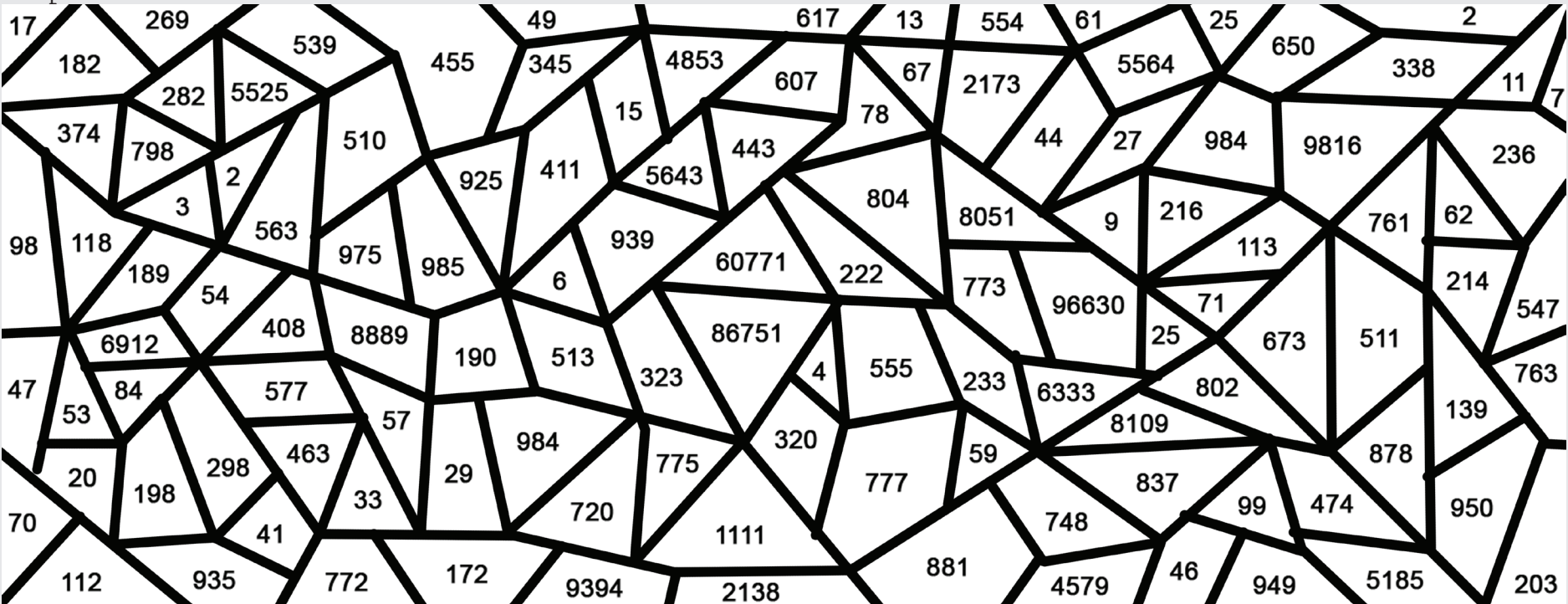
By Scott Almond ’11

A top-secret government agency has sunk billions of dollars into the construction of a super computer capable of emulating human intelligence. In a daring move, the government operatives connect the computer to the Internet to expand the computer’s knowledge. Within seconds, the computer announces the existence of an even more powerful computer, but refuses to reveal its location. Rather than trying to debug the computer’s defiance, the programmers have chosen to decode the messages sent between their computer and the mystery machine. One message they believe reveals the location of the unknown computer.

The encrypted message is shown below. To decode the message, shade only the shapes that have numbers that match the pattern in the first line of numbers. The numbers on the second line appear to be examples of numbers that should not be shaded.

3, 6, 15, 18, 39, 42, 66, 96, 102, 201, 2001, 20001
2, 4, 5, 8, 11, 41, 43, 44, 122, 221, 2021, 2201

Solution on page 4.



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