thetech.com

Volume 142, Number 3

Thursday, March 3, 2022

WEATHER, p. 2

FRI: 33°F | 19°F Sunnv SAT: 41°F | 32°F



Ukrainian students organize the MIT community Rally for Ukraine protesting Russia's attack, Monday.

#### Ukrainian students speak out about Russian invasion effects, degree of response from MIT

Horokh: I want the world to see the power of a united people, willing to do anything' to protect loved ones

By Kylee Carden

The Tech spoke with Ukrainian students Sasha Horokh '25, Ether Bezugla '22, Artem Laptiev '25, Mariia Smyk '23, Anita Dey Barsukova '22, and supporter Nikita Romanov '23 about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, its effects, and their lives since. The following are excerpts from the interview, edited for length and clarity.

Since the interviews were conducted, the MIT administration has sent an email to Ukrainian students. The email stated that all Ukrainian students should have been contacted by a dean from Student Support Services (S3). Ukrainian undergraduate students will have their spring term work contributions

waived, and graduate students will be provided similar financial support. Ukrainian students can request more meal swipes and work with S3 or GradSupport to lighten their academic loads. The MIT International Students Office will also assist with legal questions, and a candlelight rally is being planned in collabora-

Ukraine, Page 2

#### MIT Divest sit-in protests against MIT's investments in fossil fuels

Institute yet to give a formal statement addressing sit-in

**By Caroline Powers** 

A group of MIT community members participated in a three-day sit-in starting Feb. 16 outside of President L. Rafael Reif's office to protest MIT's continued financial investments in the fossil fuels industry.

The demonstration was organized by MIT Divest, a student group seeking to achieve complete divestment from the fossil fuels industry at MIT.

MIT Divest's publications coordinator Mitali Chowdhury '24 said in an interview with The Tech that they "had people there continuously throughout the day, some people even sleeping there overnight. A lot of students stopped by to sit with us and show support for the cause."

Chowdhury was especially pleased with the strong staff and faculty turnout. "We had faculty members stay with us, provide food.... A lot of the staff who actually worked in Reif's office came out to say that they supported us."

The sit-in began on the same day that MIT Divest filed a legal complaint with the Massachusetts state attorney general.

Elizabeth Rabenold '23, an outreach lead of MIT Divest, also spoke with The Tech. "We think it's irresponsible and hypocritical for MIT to continue holding these endowments. We also believe it's

When asked about the content of the legal complaint, Rabenold said that it "states that MIT's investment holdings in fossil fuel companies are in violation of the Institute's obligation as a nonprofit under Massachusetts law. The legal complaint itself is basically a request for the attorney general's office to open an investigation into these violations." Rabenold added that "it's a new approach to fighting for divestment at

The complaint was filed simultaneously with four other student

Divest Sit-In, Page 3



ALEXA-RAE SIMAO—THE TECH

A member of MIT Divest paints a sign during a sit-in outside President Reif's office on Wednesday



worked on during the ents present personal fall semester at ProjXpo, Feb. 21.

#### **IN SHORT**

Add date is March 4.

Last day for February 2023 degree candidates to apply for a double major is March 4.

March 14 marks the beginning of half-term subjects final exam period

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#### MIT relaxes COVID-19 testing and dining policies due to reduced cases

Visitors will continue to be welcomed on campus when either being escorted by a COVID Pass holder or using a Tim Ticket

By Maria Aguiar

per of positive COVID-19 cases. MIT announced a series of changes to its COVID-19 policy in an email to the MIT community Feb. 9. The email included changes in testing requirements, indoor eating, and masking policies.

The changes come as MIT Medical reported a consistent decrease in positive cases per week since the beginning of IAP, Jan. 3. The rate decreased from a 5.07% positivity rate to a 0.66% rate by the first week of the spring semester.

Massachusetts has also seen a decrease in weekly positivity rates, from 20.44% at the beginning of January to 4.08% at the beginning of February.

Students, residents, and unvaccinated COVID Pass users are now Tickets and COVID Pass users can In response to a decrease in the required to test only once per week now attend indoor athletic events. starting Feb. 21 in lieu of the previous twice-a-week testing policy. For all other community members, testing will become optional. COVID-19 testing operations on campus remain open.

> Since Feb. 10, food and drinks have been permitted at MIT-sponsored gatherings and meetings, and a face-covering exemption from last year has returned. Fully vaccinated instructors and presenters are now permitted to remove their masks when speaking at events or classes.

> On Feb. 14, seating at MIT residential dining halls returned to full capacity, and both Bosworth's Cafe and Steam Cafe in Lobby 7 reopened.

Additionally, visitors with Tim

Several important MIT COVID-19 policies will still remain in place.

MIT will continue to comply with Cambridge's indoor mask policies, and daily health attestations will still be a requirement for COVID Pass users. Those who have tested positive for COVID-19 will have a threemonth long testing exemption.

Visitors remain welcome on campus when either being escorted by a COVID Pass holder or using a Tim Ticket. They are not required to have a negative COVID-19 test before visiting campus.

MIT continues to recommend the use of higher-quality masks, which will still be provided at testing drop-off sites and residence halls.

#### **UKRAINE**

A heinous crime by Russian leadership. OPINION, p. 5

#### **LEVAIN BAKERY**

The perfect cookies. ARTS, p. 6

#### **VAN GOGH**

An immersive and otherwordly experience. ARTS, p. 6



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Not so normal after all. CAMPUS LIFE, p. 8

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What do they have to do with love? CAM-PUS LIFE, p. 9

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2 THE TECH THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022

**WEATHER** 

#### March on through midterms and precipitation By Adrienne Lai

Though March has started. a season which you might associate with spring if your hometown gave you a reasonable framework of winter, we will continue to be in the grips of the cold. Snow is still on the ground and more might come this morning, so be sure to wear appropriate footwear and wake up with sufficient time to get to class. Please don't slip (speaking from experience, it's not fun)!

After Thursday, there will be sunny skies to brighten your day as you take or prep for midterms; you got this!!! You might view Sunday's rain as a real damper to the weekend, setting up a gloomy week of midterms for your weary soul. However, note that with the precipitation comes warmer weather, a high of 58°F and a low of 45°F. Take this as a note that rain (and other water projectiles like say tears) are not bad — dance in the

#### **Extended Forecast**

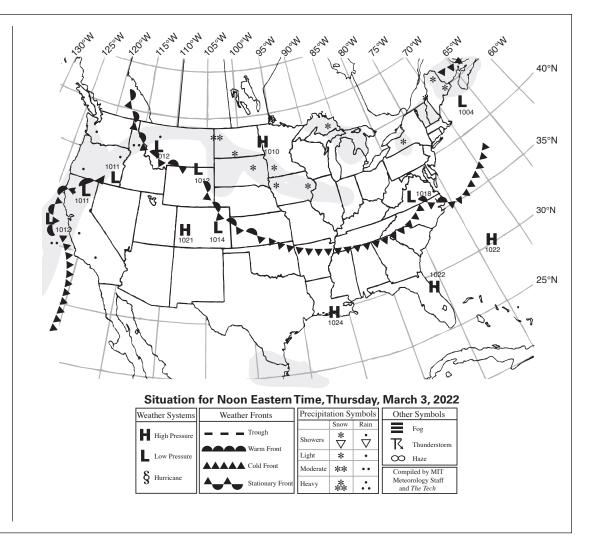
Today: Chance of 0.5 in. of snow and cloudy skies in the morning but becoming sunny by afternoon. The high is near 37°F (2.7°C). 8 to 15 mph Northwest winds with max wind speeds

Tonight: Mostly clear skies with a low of 12°F (-11°C). Northwest

Tomorrow: Sunny with clear skies and west winds from 3 to 7 mph. High of 33°F (0.5°C) and a low of 19°F (-7.2°C)

Saturday: Partly sunny with a chance of snow at night. High temperature near 41°F (5°C) with west winds 3 to 6 mph.

**Sunday**: Rain with a high near 58°F (14 °C). South to southwest winds of 8 to 13 mph.



#### Smyk: 'I love MIT students; they've shown us great support and have been very nice'; community is 'good at coming together and helping each other'

Ukraine, from Page 1

tion with MIT's Chaplain to the Institute, Thea Keith-Lucas.

The Tech: How has the invasion of Ukraine affected you and those you care about?

Sasha Horokh: The invasion has stopped all of our lives. Nothing before this matters anymore. Seeing Ukraine free and safe again is all that matters. When I heard about the Russian invasion, I contacted my parents in Ukraine but could not reach them. My older sister who studies in Germany was able to get to my parents. Our parents got up, could hear bombs. My mom grabbed my younger sister, and they started driving West. They tried to enter Poland, then Slovakia, and then finally got into Hungary. My dad is staying in Kyiv and preparing for when Russians try to enter the city. My grandparents live in Sumy, in eastern Ukraine where there are lots of Russian troops and fighting. My granddad is a surgeon in a hospital and has had to shelter in a basement because Russians are shooting kindergartens, orphanages, hospitals, and shelters. I wait everyday for messages from friends and family to know they're still alive.

Ether Bezugla: Ukrainian students at MIT have come together in one place. We sleep together, constantly check the news sure everyone is eating, and ensure everyone and their families are doing okay. It's eerie to see people walking around MIT talking about clubs and psets. That does not exist for us. Our world is shaken. My extended family is in Ukraine. Half of my grandparents are in Kharkiv, where there is heavy shelling. My other grandparents are in Oleksandriya, where it's more rural.

Artem Laptiev: The kindergarten my sister goes to was bombed. I lived in Kharkiv, very close to the border. In the news, I see my streets being bombed and bombared. I'm always checking in with my family and doing what I can. My parents and sister were outside Ukraine

when the invasion started. My grandparents live in a village that's been occupied since the start. It feels like anything can happen at any moment. My friends are hiding in subways, fleeing to the West, and fighting back.

Mariia Smyk: My mom and grandma had to relocate, and it was very hard to convince them to. My grandma was scared of leaving, but an explosion right next to her house changed her mind. My mom and grandma moved from Kyiv to Lviv, in Western Ukraine, which is now packed with refugees. They are now trying to cross the border out of Ukraine into Poland.

Anita Dey Barsukova: The father's side of my family is Ukrainian and living in Kyiv. My family lived in apartments in the city but fled to their summer home on the outskirts of the city once the bombing started. My grandpa was flown out a week before the invasion from an airport that has now been bombed.

Nikita Romanov: Most of my family is in Russia, and many Russians have friends and family in Ukraine. It's heartbreaking to hear stories of what's going on. My girlfriend is from Kharkiv, one of the main cities under siege. It's hard to focus. I'm always opening and following the news, but it's no comparison to what my Ukrainian friends feel.

TT: Have you been involved in any activism or taken action since the invasion?

Horokh: We will have rallies everyday until Ukraine is free. I've been interviewed several times to talk about Russian crimes and how to support Ukraine. I've been part of reaching out to MIT to demand a letter of support, public statement, and further actions.

Bezugla: All of the Ukrainian students have banded together to organize rallies around Boston, organize students, talk to administration, and pressure MIT to sever connections to Russian oligarchs and industry. We want actions from MIT such as paid leave for Ukrainian graduate students and financial

support for Ukrainian undergraduates. We created a template for contacting government representatives, dorms, and clubs. We've all been doing so much all the time.

Laptiev: I was finishing a pset when I heard the news. Ukrainian students immediately gathered, got no sleep, and strategized about what we can do. We started connecting with organizations and rallying everyday. We are trying to get universities around the U.S. and the world to coordinate their

Smyk: I've been going to a lot of protests, organizing, and coordinating different efforts. I've been connecting with and trying to support people back home. I'm very worried about my financial situation because I might have to buy tickets for my relatives out of Ukraine on a

Barsukova: I'm part of MIT Ukrainian Folk Dance, a recognized student group. We are working on setting up a giving page through MIT and working with Student Organizations, Leadership, and Engagement to do MIT-vetted fundraising. I've been helping with setting up rallies and working on setting up a fundraising event involving MIT dance groups.

Romanov: I try to spread information about this war in Russia and show support for my Ukrainian friends A lot of Russians did not choose Putin or the war and are trying to help. During a protest, I had a message saying, "Russians, listen to your Ukrainian family and friends, not Putin."

TT: How do you feel about stances or actions taken by MIT administration, MIT departments, and/or MIT students?

Horokh: MIT has not done enough. MIT must break collaborations with and stop funding Russian projects. MIT needs to support Ukrainian students, no questions asked. MIT students have and should continue to sign petitions, join rallies, speak up, and contact professors, advisors, and anyone else in positions of power.

Bezugla: I'm extremely grateful for all the emails and messages of support. There is still so much MIT can do to support its students. We need to pressure MIT to talk more publicly. I'm also very grateful to MIT students who have attended rallies and supported us in other ways.

Laptiev: The MIT administration did more than other universities but not nearly enough. This is not a war between Russia and Ukraine; it's a war between Russia and basic human rights, freedom, and world peace. MIT's response has not adequately understood the scope. We have a list of demands; we want a public stance, divestment from Russia, and support for Ukrainian students.

Smyk: I love MIT students; they've shown us great support and have been very nice. The MIT community is very good at coming together and helping each other. Several departments, including Physics, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, and Urban Studies and Planning have sent out messages of support.

Barsukova: I appreciate MIT being as supportive as they have been and canceling the MIT Skoltech Program. I understand that non-international Ukrainian students are hard to identify, but I don't think there's been any attempt to reach

Romanov: I know that some Ukrainian students following MIT administration's actions closely aren't satisfied. My Ukrainian friends at MIT are having sleepless nights and trying to do as much as possible to aid their country. MIT could definitely take steps to alleviate academic stress, possibly with PE/NE grading.

TT: What do you hope the MIT community does or takes away from this situation?

Horokh: What's happening in Ukraine is everybody's responsibility. There is a nuclear threat due to fighting near nuclear reactors and spent fuel, and radiation levels are already elevated. Putin's cruelty

cannot go unpunished; the world has known about this for eight years. Russian aggression is not just a Ukrainian problem. I want the world to see the power of a united people, willing to do anything to protect our home and loved ones.

Bezugla: I have a lot of hope that everyone bands together and realizes that these issues are impacting their friends and people they know.

Laptiev: The MIT administration must realize how unprecedented this situation is and treat it accordingly. It touches all of us and will only become a greater presence in our lives. Ukraine is an incredible example of bravery and commitment to ideals, and I hope the world and the MIT community realize

Smyk: We want MIT administration to take a public stance on the invasion in MIT News and newspapers and to collaborate with other universities on taking action. We want the MIT Institution and Corporation to share their connections to and investments in Russian projects and companies. We want MIT to divest from its connections to Russian oligarchs and military. We also want MIT to support students

Barsukova: I've been really encouraged by the support and seeing how many people come out. It's easy to feel like Ukraine is a small country that people don't about. I hope people keep fundraising, raising awareness, and mobilizing to provide real and immediate help to people in Ukraine.

Romanov: War is terrifying and horrible, but I think most people here should know that already. It's been great to see the support and magnitude of the rallies both at MIT and in Boston.

The following is a series of links to support Ukraine: https://linktr. ee/ukrainiansboston

The following document contains resources the MIT community can use to support Ukraine: https:// docs.google.com/document/d/1ZKl Q6nz7ZZXuec6VYkXjpqukXAoM5p-Dgys9tFZlKJxA/edit#

#### **DID YOUR MIT ESSAYS GET YOU IN?**

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#### Rabenold stated that MIT is 'obviously continuing to invest in fossil fuels, so we're just going to keep doing what we've been doing, ... pushing ahead'

Divest Sit-In, from Page 1

groups at Vanderbilt, Princeton, Yale, and Stanford universities as part of a coordinated effort.

"We're calling ourselves the fossil-free five," Rabenold said.

MIT Divest hopes that these legal complaints could have implications nationwide. Chowdhury stated that it could set a "very important precedent for nonprofit investment."

Rabenold admitted that filing the legal complaint was a "daunting task" for MIT Divest, but the organization was lucky to have a strong support network.

"We partnered with climate lawyers at a nonprofit organization called Climate Defense Project, and they guided us through the legal complaint from start to finish. We also had a lot of support from organizers at Fossil Fuel Divest Harvard because they had a very similar complaint in March of 2021."

"being able to do this action in conjunction with seeing all the publications starting to roll out about the complaint and hearing about it in the news and on social media, it was just empowering to sit there and say, 'Hey, we care about this."

When asked about MIT Divest's next steps, Rabenold said that MIT Divest will be "meeting with the state attorney general at some point. If the attorney general does decide to launch an investigation,

About the sit-in, Chowdhury said I think that would be a huge moment" because MIT would then "be legally required to divest."

Chowhurdy added that, in the immediate future, MIT Divest will be following up on contacts from other universities, hoping that the group can file their own legal complaints and attend the upcoming sustainability midway.

MIT has not yet published a formal statement addressing either the sit-in or the legal complaint. When asked about the Institute's response, Rabenold said that "anything we have heard is recycled rhetoric, the same talking points over and over again."

Despite this, MIT Divest is not discouraged. Rabenold stated that MIT is "obviously continuing to invest in fossil fuels, so we're just going to keep doing what we've been doing, which means pushing ahead with different actions, different publications, and trying to make them see that divestment is the right course of action."

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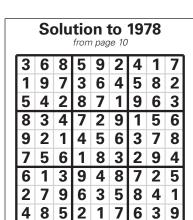
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#### **Solution to February**



#### Solution to MetaFunFun

Each is the year of creation of Women's History Day, Week, and Month, in order

Solution to 1980 from page 10							
6	4	3	5	2	1		
2	6	5	1	4	3		
3	1	6	2	5	4		
1	5	4	6	3	2		
5	3	2	4	1	6		
4	2	1	3	6	5		

#### Solution to 1987 from page 11

6	3	7	8	1	4	5	9	2
7	4	8	9	2	5	6	1	3
3	9	4	5	7	1	2	6	8
1	7	2	3	5	8	9	4	6
4	1	5	6	8	2	3	7	9
9	6	1	2	4	7	8	3	5
5	2	6	7	9	3	4	8	1
2	8	3	4	6	9	1	5	7
8	5	9	1	3	6	7	2	4



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**GUEST COLUMN** 

## MIT's administration seeks to exclude over 1,000 graduate workers on fellowship from unionization vote

Graduate fellows perform the same essential research and teaching work as other graduate workers and deserve a vote on unionization

By Leah Wallach, Ruth Hanna, Kai Jia, and Owen Leddy

This January, after MIT's administration refused to voluntarily recognize the clear majority of graduate workers who signed union cards in support of unionization, they reached out to the MIT Graduate Student Union (MIT-GSU) seeking an agreement on fair terms for a vote on graduate worker unionization. We were hopeful that this meant they were genuinely interested in working with graduate workers to make MIT a more equitable community that represents and responds to the needs of all of its members. Graduate workers representing the MIT-GSU met with MIT's administrators and lawyers multiple times, and we were able to find common ground on several points about the logistics of an election and the need to hold one this semester, reflecting the urgent need for graduate workers to have a say in our working conditions. However, to our shock, the administration insisted that graduate workers funded by fellowships are not workers and sought to use this artificial distinction to deny over 1,000 graduate workers — approximately 20% of all graduate workers — the right to vote on unionization. Because the administration refused to compromise on this point, we could not reach an agreement, leaving the terms of the election to be set by the National Labor Relations Board in the coming weeks.

The administration's position ignores the fact that **graduate workers funded by fellowships do the same vital work as every other MIT graduate worker**. It is difficult to imagine that MIT's administration is unaware that departments and faculty require graduate workers on fellowship to operate and that, in fact, this is a clear expectation and basic premise of the graduate programs they run. Throughout the Institute, fellows teach and do research with the understanding that this is the work they are paid to do. To say otherwise is to deny the value that graduate workers on fellowship create for MIT through their work.

Two of the authors of this piece, Leah and Ruth, are second-year graduate student-workers in the biology department. Both work full-time on research projects,

The administration's position ignores the fact that graduate workers funded by fellowships do the same vital work as every other MIT graduate worker.

and this academic year, both were required to serve as teaching assistants (TAs) in addition to their research duties (although neither was officially designated a TA in their appointment letters). Leah and Ruth are paid the same stipend, work in the same department, and are at the same stage in their PhD programs. Both received appointment letters that specify identical terms of employment. However, according to MIT's administration, Leah is an MIT employee and eligible to vote in the union election while Ruth is not - simply because Ruth is funded by an internal fellowship, whereas Leah is funded by a research assistantship (RA-ship). This is clearly an arbitrary and unjust distinction.

Decisions about whether to fund graduate workers by RA-ship, TA-ship, or fellowship are often made arbitrarily for reasons of administrative convenience, without any difference in work duties. Neither Ruth nor Leah had any say in how they were funded. Moreover, many graduate workers switch back and forth between funding types during their time at MIT. The distinction is so arbitrary that graduate workers may not even know how they are technically funded.

The administration argued that first-year graduate students in some departments who are funded by fellowships during rotations or while solely taking classes are not providing work or services for MIT and

therefore should not be eligible for union membership or to vote in a union election. However, rotating students perform work for labs during their rotations, and MIT claims ownership of intellectual property produced by rotating students as it does for all other graduate workers. Moreover, at any other job, an employee who was undergoing required training at the beginning of their employment would not be excluded from classification as an employee.

MIT's administration claims to believe that all graduate workers have the right to decide whether or not to form a union. However, this attempt to deny over 1,000  $graduate\,workers\,the\,right\,to\,vote\,in\,a\,union$ election reveals that either this claim is blatantly disingenuous or that the administration lacks a fundamental understanding of the work we do. In either case, the administration's position highlights the need for graduate workers to have a seat at the decision-making table, to democratically shape our own working conditions and negotiate a legally-binding contract with MIT that reflects the value we produce for the Institute and the conditions we need to do our best work. All graduate workers - regardless of their source of funding — need affordable housing; independent grievance procedures; adequate medical and dental insurance; support and protections for international students; and stronger diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. Support the right of all graduate workers to a fair vote on unionization and a voice in shaping our working conditions by signing your union card at https://mitgsu.org/

Leah Wallach is a second-year graduate student-worker in Biology.

Ruth Hanna is a second-year graduate student-worker in Biology.

Kai Jia is a third-year graduate studentworker in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

Owen Leddy is a third-year graduate student-worker in Biological Engineering.

All of the authors are organizers with the MIT-GSII.

### We are international students and we are voting yes on the GSU

#### International student voices should matter

By Kai Jia and Timothy Loh

International students are a vital part of the MIT graduate student community. We are also among the thousands of members and hundreds of organizers of the MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU). The reason we are involved is quite simple — like all of our colleagues, international or not, our voices should matter. As international students, we face many roadblocks to advancing our graduate program that we seek

to address through unionization. We are voting yes on the GSU because we deserve:

- adequate resources and support;protections when we are confronted with
- visa issues or travel restrictions; and
- equal opportunity and fair policies for example, around Curricular Practical Training (CPT) to advance our research, professional development during our program, and Optional Practical Training for post-graduate jobs and a stable future.

MIT has imposed significant burdens on international students in obtaining CPT approval. CPT is a federal policy that allows international students on F-1 visas to participate in professional development activities, including internships. Many departments have additional restrictions on CPT approval beyond federal requirements, while some departments approve no CPT at all. Formal policy or not, this is the reality we face. Com-

**International,** Page 5

#### OPINION POLICY

**Editorials** are the official opinion of *The Tech*. They are written by the editorial board, which consists of the Chairman, Editor in Chief, Managing Editor, Executive Editor, and Opinion Editor.

**Dissents** are the opinions of signed members of the editorial board choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial.

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**Guest columns** are opinion articles submitted by members of the MIT or local community and are tagged with "guest column." Columns with "staff columnist" below the byline are written by Tech staff.

#### **TO REACH US**

The Tech's telephone number is (617) 253-1541. Email is the easiest way to reach any member of our staff. If you are unsure whom to contact, send mail to <code>general@tech.mit.edu</code>, and it will be directed to the appropriate person. You can reach the editor in chief by emailing <code>eic@tech.mit.edu</code>. Please send press releases, requests for coverage, and information about errors that call for correction to <code>news@tech.mit.edu</code>. Letters to the editor should be sent to <code>letters@tech.mit.edu</code>. The Tech can be found on the World Wide Web at <code>http://thetech.com</code>.

#### International, from Page 4

pared to our domestic coworkers, international students are denied equal opportunities for career advancement and are disadvantaged in our future job markets. We deserve equality and fairness regardless of our nationality. With a union, we will fight for a more inclusive MIT that enables everyone to thrive.

Our campaign is one based in unity, hope, empowerment, and urgency. It is based on an undeniable belief that we are stronger when we are acting together rather than alone. We are voting yes because we want MIT to realize its full potential as a cutting-edge research institution where all graduate students can thrive.

In one of MIT's recent, bizarre emails about our campaign, the administration struck a different tone — one of negativity, futility, and fear. Among the statements they made, they implied that international students with spouses and families face additional financial burdens in their graduate

#### **OPEN LETTER**

#### An open letter on the war in Ukraine

As someone who still retains a Russian passport and, more importantly, has a strong bond to Russian culture and the Russian people, I'm overwhelmed with grief, shame, and guilt. Reports from Ukraine — "Kyiv under siege," "Konotop taken" — bring back thoughts of Hitler's 1941 invasion, a not-so-distant past for my generation, whose parents and grandparents lived through that war. A song from that era keeps playing in my head:

On the 22nd of June exactly at four in the morning Kyiv was bombed, and we were told that the war has begun.

programs at MIT. We agree. However, MIT oddly used this as part of their argument against unionization in a recent email. They imply that international students on fellowship will be restricted by unionization and as a result would not be able to take on second jobs to support themselves. While the statement itself is highly misleading, it also raises a deeper question: why do international fellows need to take on second jobs? Surely, MIT can take concrete steps to address these issues we face as international students. Unfortunately, many of their recent policies have done the opposite.

It was just three years ago when MIT displaced hundreds of international students and their families from the Eastgate Apartments into Site 4, with skyrocketing rents. Many of our international colleagues with families now spend upwards of 70% of their stipend on rent.

It was just two years ago, in the middle of a global pandemic, when MIT announced that international students abroad must

The war started at dawn in order to kill more people. Asleep were parents, asleep were kids in the morning when Kyiv was bombed.

This war also started at dawn and is killing parents and kids in Kyiv and all over Ukraine. It is striking how closely Putin's rhetoric parallels that of Hitler — just replace "nationalist gangs" (from which Putin wants to "free" Ukraine) with "Judeo-Bolshevik gangs." Regardless of how complex the situation in the Donbass region and the history of the NATO-Russia relationship might be,

one thing is clear: what is happening now

is a heinous crime on the part of Russia's

leadership.
It may be tempting to say that I have never supported Putin and that this is his war, not that of the Russian people. Yet the sad reality is that Putin's policies have been supported by large sectors of the Russian public, includ-

return to the U.S. by January 2020 or they would risk losing their appointment. Many of us were directly affected by this policy as our entire futures suddenly went into flux.

This is not the way it has to be. We have joined the GSU and will be voting yes on unionization in the upcoming election because we want to make MIT the world-class research institution we know it can be. But in order to do that, we have to make meaningful changes to remove the obstacles that prevent us from being the best researchers we can be. As international students, we are fighting for equal opportunity and adequate support. We can start to make these changes if we come together with our coworkers and win our union. Not every graduate student at MIT is international. But whether it comes in the form of dental coverage, affordable housing, financial security, or meaningful Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies, all graduate students know that positive change can and must be made to improve MIT and improve the quality of our lives.

ing some of my friends and extended family. Whether Putin's supporters are in the majority is hard to judge in a country where dissent is increasingly persecuted; many are still in denial about the war (the very word "war" is censored out of the Russian media by the government).

Yes, there is resistance — in Moscow alone, over 3,000 people have been detained in the past few days for protesting against the war. The scientific community is resisting as well: thousands of Russian scientists signed an open letter condemning the invasion, as did thousands of students and alums of my alma mater, the Moscow Institute of Science and Technology. However, active or passive support for the war from a large part of the public is undeniable, and it is likely that without it, this invasion would have not happened. This is a catastrophe for Russia and for the Russian people: a dark night is descending, and those least responsible for this war

As international students, regardless of our national origin or visa status, we have the same rights as U.S. citizens to participate in union activities, including voting yes for our union in the upcoming election. Retaliation against protected union activity, including threats toward our visa status, is illegal. It is also illegal for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to even ask someone about their union participation. In the 50 years that graduate student unions have existed in the U.S., there have been no documented cases of international students facing visa issues due to union support.

We are international students and we are voting yes on the GSU because our voices should matter. Join us by signing the vote yes petition today!

Kai Jia is a third-year graduate studentworker in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

Timothy Loh is a graduate student-worker in Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

will suffer the most.

I'm writing this from the safety of my Boston apartment, while people in Ukraine are dying and protesters in my hometown of Moscow face police brutality while attempting to salvage whatever may remain of our honor. Still I would appeal to my Russian friends at MIT and beyond: let us try to do what we can to support the Ukrainian people and stop the war. And to my beloved Ukrainians: I can only beg for forgiveness and pray that in a distant future — if humankind survives the current crisis — reconciliation will be possible.

A final note: 12 years ago, a group of climbers from the MIT Outing Club did a new ice climbing route in the Solu Khumbu region of Nepal and named it Ukrainian Strength.

Alexei Maznev Research Scientist, Department of Chemistry

#### **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

### Response to "I'm voting yes for the Graduate Student Union because MIT continues to fail its student veterans"

To the editor,

I write in response to the opinion piece that appeared Feb. 10 in The Tech, "I'm voting yes for the Graduate Student Union because MIT continues to fail its student veterans." My office (the Office of the Vice Chancellor) serves as the primary educational point of contact for a number of key organizations at the Institute that support

The truth is that we have been collaborating with the MIT Student Veterans Association (SVA) on matters our veteran students care about.

In the opinion piece, MIT is characterized as being unwelcoming to veterans and not responding to certain critical financial issues that impact them. The truth is that we have been collaborating with the MIT Student Veterans Association (SVA) on matters our veteran students care about, specifically those issues covered in the op-ed. And, throughout the challenges we have encountered at the state and federal levels of government, MIT has directly paid our student veterans the benefits which they are due from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), with no requirement that the benefits be paid back, even when the VA has retroactively addressed the issues. MIT continues to take these steps to this day. I want to take this opportunity to correct the record about both the recent history and current actions being taken to support our student veterans.

Before I do, I will note that the recent challenges we have faced with the VA during the pandemic have made MIT's leadership acutely aware of the intricacies of all the supporting systems, processes, and organizations involved in ensuring our student veterans get the benefits and support they are due. This was not apparent to us previously. It is now. We thank the SVA, including the author of the op-ed, for advocating for this. As a result, we have collaborated with the SVA to hire a program administrator for a new Office of Student

Veteran Success. The SVA helped develop the job description and interview the candidates. This new team member, Liam Gale, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, brings social services and program management experience, most recently in the area of health care within the VA in Bedford, MA. He will be the single point of contact for supporting MIT student veterans and interfacing with the VA and related government agencies.

Liam will also be responsible for partnering with colleagues in Student Financial Services (SFS), the Office of Graduate Education, and the Office of the First Year who currently interact with our student veteran community. He will streamline and enhance MIT's communication with, and support for, student veterans. He will also continue the monthly meetings we have been holding with the SVA to discuss student veteran support issues and will enable us to more effectively navigate the federal and state veterans affairs agencies to ensure compliance with all relevant requirements.

Now moving to the facts which were inaccurate or not fully described in the oped. MIT has been working closely with the relevant departments and VA offices to resolve two issues:

1) our PhD program approval for GI Bill benefits and

2) an audit and pause of the approval for the Sloan and School of Engineering joint masters degree program — Leaders in Global Operations (LGO) — last summer.

# We hope to resolve any outstanding issues to ensure they approve our doctoral programs for benefits as quickly as possible.

The first issue revolves around our course catalog descriptions for PhD programs and changing VA expectations for approval. Up until January 2020, student veterans in our PhD programs were able to receive their GI bill benefits based on the information in the course catalog at the time. Then, two unrelated events occurred: a change in personnel at the VA and an audit of the LGO masters degree program.

In the past, under a previous Education

Liaison Representative (ELR) at the VA, MIT's doctoral programs were approved and student veterans in PhD programs were certified for GI Bill benefits without any problems. When we learned from a new ELR in early 2020 that our programs were no longer approved due to different expectations for the way we list requirements in our course catalog, we initiated the process to get them all reapproved in February 2020. All of our PhD programs were submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) for approval or reapproval in February 2020. We did not hear back for a year, which we assumed was due to the DHE being overwhelmed during the pandemic. Therefore, we resubmitted the information again in January 2021 but learned shortly after that our courses could not be processed with varying degree credit totals. Our previously approved programs were revoked and a variety of SB and SM degrees were simply not processed despite meeting VA criteria and being properly cited and submitted.

## If any veteran or community member on campus has a question, concern, or problem, they can always contact me

We have learned through this process that the ELR requires greater detail before approving MIT's doctoral programs and have since been iterating with them. Given our concerns over the delay in program approval, we have focused on gaining approval for the five doctoral programs in which we have had six students seeking to use their VA benefits (hoping that these will then provide a template for all of our programs to be approved). That paperwork has been submitted to the VA for approval. We hope to resolve any outstanding issues to ensure they approve our doctoral programs for benefits as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, MIT continues to make any impacted student veteran financially whole while we wait for approval.

The audit of the LGO program (for a separate issue on which we were found to be fully compliant) uncovered that even

though LGO combined two previously approved masters programs (an SM in engineering and an MBA), the program needed to be separately authorized. The VA paused the program's approval until we submitted the requisite information, which we did promptly. This impacted 15 veterans beginning Aug. 19, 2021. We submitted the information requested by the VA and were able to obtain authorization for the LGO program Oct. 28, 2021 (retroactive to October 2020). MIT also offered financial support for the 15 LGO students who were affected while we were awaiting approval of that program.

Just as we have ensured that any doctoral student veteran seeking benefits is provided with the equivalent financial support that they would have received from the VA during this interim period, we notified the 15 LGO students mentioned in The Tech that MIT would provide them with the equivalent of their monthly housing allowance from the VA until the issue with their program approval was resolved. MIT provided the students with this funding. Working with SFS, Sloan also arranged to shield students from late penalties and notified them that the funds they received would not need to be repaid to MIT.

Additionally, all PhD student veterans were informed by the SVA about this situation, and we encouraged them to reach out for assistance. To date, we are aware of six impacted students across five doctoral programs, but if you are reading this and wondering if you could benefit from this support, please reach out to the VA at va@ mit.edu or to me personally.

We work hard to ensure that all students feel valued, involved, and informed about issues impacting their life and work at the Institute. This is particularly true for our student veterans, who we know deal with unique challenges related to the intricacies of all the supporting systems, processes, and organizations involved in facilitating their government benefits.

If any veteran or community member on campus has a question, concern, or problem, they can always contact me. My door has been, and will continue to be, open.

Ian A. Waitz Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate and Graduate Education

#### **ART EXHIBITION REVIEW**

## Imagine Van Gogh takes us beyond our imaginations and allows us to live out the paintings

An hour feels like a few minutes in this immersive experience

By Vyshnavi Vennelakanti

STAFF WRITER

This immersive exhibition aims to create a dialogue between the paintings of Van Gogh and the audience. This is made possible through *Image Totale*® which, unlike television screens, does not let the

audience remain passive. Instead, they are transformed into an active spectator in a wonderland of images they are free to explore.

Van Gogh painted for ten years; however, the creators of the exhibition, Annabelle Mauger and Julien Baron, curated a collection consisting of works from only the last two years of his career, the time when Van Gogh's paintings opened the path to modernity and marked the beginnings of contemporary abstraction. The collection marks Van Gogh's journey from Provence to Auvers-sur-Oise, at the edge of Paris. Mauger and Baron believe "this journey is in parallel with the path of each visitor, who finds their apotheosis in this exhibition.

The background music sets the tone of the exhibit as soon as the audience enters. Featuring the works of some of the greatest composers, including Prokofiev, Saint-Saëns, Schubert, Mozart, Bach, and Satie, the music amplifies the emotions of the paintings and acts as a language used by the paintings to speak to the audience.

In SoWa Power Station where the exhibits are displayed, the very ideas of a center or a periphery; a beginning or an end cease to exist, enabling visitors to imagine their own Vincent Van Gogh. Visitors are allowed to walk around and look at moving images on multiple walls simultaneously. Some of the works that stand out in the immersive experience are Starry Night, Van Gogh Self-Portrait, Bedroom in Arles, Seascape at Saintes-Maries, Café Terrace at Night, Japonaiserie: Flowering Plum Tree, and Sunflowers.

While Starry Night is undoubtedly the most iconic painting and Van Gogh's magnum opus, Image Totale© elevates the experience of the painting by making visitors feel as if they are traveling in the vast skies, surrounded by, gazing at, and looking down upon the stars. In a sharp contrast to the blue hues of Starry Night and Seascape at Saintes-Maries, the white flowers of the plum trees painted on a red background in Japonaiserie: Flowering Plum Tree express how Japanese art has influenced Van Gogh's works, bringing him joy. His euphoric emotions are indeed evident in Japonaiserie: Flowering Plum Tree, where he made the colors more intense and introduced borders to produce a decorative and exotic effect, all the while reproducing Utagawa Hiroshige's Plum Garden in Kameido.

Van Gogh wrote about nature in one of his letters to his brother, stating, "It's too beauti-

\*\*\*\*

Imagine Van Gogh, the Original Immersive Exhibition in Image Totale©

**Created by Annabelle Mauger and Julien Baron** 

SoWa Power Station 550 Harrison Ave Boston, MA 02118

Hours: Sunday-Thursday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday-Saturday 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

On display until March 19, 2022

ful for me to dare paint it or form an idea about it." Despite this, he brought nature to life in his artwork in the form of starry night skies, blue oceans, bright yellow sunflowers, and exotic plum trees. Meanwhile, his paintings *Bedroom in Arles* and *Café Terrace at Night* portray everyday events in the lives of common people.

Overall, I would highly recommend visiting *Imagine Van Gogh* at SoWa Power Station. The 45-minute exhibition offers a completely unique perspective into art, successfully transporting visitor into painting and enabling a dialogue between the two. While the regular tickets are \$39.99, you can visit in groups of four and get discounted tickets at \$34.99 per person. Trust me when I say it is worth every penny!



Production still of Starry Night.



Production still of Flowering Plum Orchard.

#### **RESTAURANT REVIEW**

#### Levain Bakery comes to Boston

Levain brings its classic lineup of cookies as well as a selection of breads, cakes, and scones to Boston's Newbury Street.

★★★★ Levain Bakery Bakery, \$ 180 Newbury St Boston, MA 02116 Hours: 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Daily

#### By Jamie Fu and Mindy Long

Levain, a New York-based bakery established in 1995 by Pam Weekes and Connie McDonald, opened its first Boston location on Newbury Street on Feb. 19. Levain's first cookie and most popular item, the walnut chocolate chip, has enamored millions around the globe. Levain currently fields eight locations, with five in New York and two in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area.

We had a chance to speak with Victor de Paz Calvo, Vice President of Operations at Levain Bakery, on opening weekend. When asked about their choice of location on Newbury Street, he chuckled. "Look around," he said. "[There's an] insane amount of people." Sure enough, right behind us was a line stretched around the block. We overheard quite a few customers justifying their decision to stand for nearly two hours in the Boston cold to try the world-famous

Beyond having great-tasting cookies, Calvo stressed the importance of incorporating parts of their local community into each of their bakeries. Their classic New York oatmeal raisin scones, for example, are oatmeal *cranberry* scones here, with craisins sourced directly from Boston-area farms.

"We look for more local ingredients and local charities," Calvo shared. In fact, Levain donated all of its opening day proceeds to Women's Lunch Place just down the street

"As busy as we are, it's a fun place to be," he notes at the end of our interview. "It's a place that [welcomes you]. You have fun, [and] you get that fresh-baked cookie."

We did, in fact, get that fresh-baked cookie. After our interview, we sampled a number of Levain's signature cookies and bakery items, delivered to us straight from the oven. Of the cookies, we tasted the chocolate chip walnut, oatmeal raisin, and dark chocolate peanut butter chip. According to my co-writer Mindy, the perfect chocolate chip cookie melts in your mouth, and Levain's chocolate chip walnut did just that. The dough and walnuts were not very sugary, and they offset the subtle sweetness of the chocolate. Levain's cookies are also notorious for being quite thick and dense, which became evident as soon as we opened our box of goodies. As we sank our teeth into our first bite, we found five or six lavers of melting chocolate on our tongues. Despite its size, the cookie was not overdone and, in my (Jamie's) words, "perfectly moist."

The dark chocolate peanut butter chip and oatmeal raisin were on par with the classic as well, although Mindy seemed to prefer the peanut butter cookie. "The first thing that hits me is the smoothness, the creaminess of



JAMIE FU—THE TECH

**Levain's classic chocolate chip walnut cookie** at their new Boston storefront.

the peanut butter. I've never had peanut butter chips that melt like this," she marveled. I, however, must stick with the original.

Next, we tried the banana chocolate chip loaf cake. The banana *overwhelmed* our taste buds. I don't know how they did it, but it was as if Levain managed to squeeze at least five bananas into a normal-sized loaf of bread. By then, we were absolutely stuffed but still managed to share a loaf of pumpkin ginger spice cake and an oatmeal cranberry scone with some friends. This may go without saying, but we recommend eating Levain's bakery items while they are warm. Although still

delicious, they have a tendency to become a little dry and heavy after being left out. If, however, you simply cannot finish your Levain haul in one sitting, one way to recreate the fresh-baked taste is by reheating the items in the oven.

Don't be deterred by the lines. Levain's bakery items are more than worth it. If you haven't tried this New York classic yet, here's your sign to try it now. A transformative culinary experience lies just across the Harvard Bridge. Whether you're a cookie lover or looking for more refined baked goods such as scones and buns, Levain offers them all.

#### SPORTS BLITZ

#### Thursday, February 24

Men's Basketball lost against Worcester Polytechnic Institute 52-68.

#### Friday, February 25

- Women's Track and Field tied for third in the New England Division III Championship
- Men's Track and Field won first in the New England Division III Championship

#### Saturday, February 26

- **Rifle** won second out of five in the MAC Championship with 2137 points.
- **Men's Fencing** won second out of 12 in the New England Championship.
- Women's Fencing won sixth out of 15 in the New England Championship.
- Men's Track and Field won first with 152 points in the New England Division III Championship
- Women's Track and Field won fifth with 74.5 points in the New England Division III Championship.
- Baseball lost against North Carolina Wesleyan 0-7.
- Women's Tennis won against Franklin Pierce University 9-0.
- Baseball lost against John Hopkins University 2-12.

#### Sunday, February 27

- Rifle won second out of six in the MAC Championship with 4346 points.
- Baseball lost against SUNY Cortland 1-7.
- Women's Lacrosse against Emmanuel College got postponed.
- Men's Lacrosse won against Curry College 18-4.

#### Wednesday, March 2

Men's Lacrosse won against Wentworth Institute of Technology 20-4.

Swimming and Diving results and recap can be found on mitathletics.com



#### **Upcoming Sports Events**

#### FRIDAY 4

#### Squash

Individual National CSAChampionship

#### Women's Tennis

University of Chicago  $9:00 \ a.m.$ 

vs. Transylvania University 3:30 p.m.

#### Men's Volleyball

vs. Elmira College 7:00 p.m.

#### **SATURDAY 5**

#### Women's Track and Field Tufts Final Qualifier

#### Men's Track and Field

Tufts Final Qualifier

#### Women's Tennis

ITA Indoor Nationals

#### Squash

National Individual Championship

vs. Harvard University

#### Sailing

Sharp Trophy

#### Softball

vs. Emory University  $10:00 \ a.m.$ 

#### Softball

Belhaven University 12:00 p.m.

#### Men's Lacrosse

University of New England 12:00 p.m.

#### Women's Lacrosse

Johnson & Wales University 1:00 p.m.

#### Men's Tennis

vs. Bryant University 3:00 p.m.

#### **SUNDAY 6**

#### Sailing

Harvard University

#### Sailing

Sharp Trophy

#### Women's Tennis

ITA Indoor Nationals

#### Squash

Individual National CSAChampionship

#### Softball

vs. Randolph-Macon College 1:30 p.m.

#### Softball

vs. Virginia Wesleyan University 3:30 p.m.

#### **TUESDAY 8**

#### Baseball

vs. Suffolk University 3:00 p.m.

#### Women's Lacrosse vs. Endicott College

4:00 p.m.

#### **WEDNESDAY** 9

#### Men's Tennis

vs. Colby-Sawyer College 4:00 p.m.

#### Men's Lacrosse

vs. Roger Williams University

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**Know before you vote** 

Some student union members will likely pay dues of \$500+ per year, yet membership does not guarantee better compensation or benefits.

14117

grad-union.mit.edu



#### WENBO'S WALKS

#### Wind, rewind

All I want is a normal week

By Wenbo Wu

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Driving slowly through the hills feels like being told to calm down and breathe: the temporary high, the hiccup, and the everlasting descent. I wake in the mornings, a ray of sun dancing through the windows onto my sheets, forming a weighted blanket of air. Sitting up, the iridescent covers shed from my chest, but the weight remains.

I've been silent for a semester now. "How are you?" It's amazing how much you hear when you have nothing to say. "I'm well." "That's great!" "Maybe we should hang out?" I'm wound up, programmed to say these few phrases for an eternity. Maybe I'll actually hang out, but more likely than not I'm glued to my bed, unable to find the activation energy to even get up. Why don't I have more

After all, I TA'd my first class; I got my driver's license; I ate all-you-can-eat sushi for the first time. But I also had my first midexam tunnel vision; I started speaking to the ghost in the passenger seat; I ate a tub of ice cream Tuesday night and refused to eat more than 800 calories per day the following

But you see, static is everywhere. Some days, I can't even look at people without the fog creeping in. There's shame in making eye contact. Everyone is disappointed in me. Once I'm far enough south, even FM 98.7 playing softly on the radio fades to silence. People laugh, crack a few jokes, open a cold

Diet Coke, and show teeth when I greet them over the fire.

The sun sinks below the rooftops, cloaking us in a fluorescent golden hour. I look at you. I feel the physical fabric of space between us, but I'm not really there. I'm a thousand feet in the air, piloting a pale reflection of myself, going through the motions during the week, and rewinding on the weekends.

Today is a roller coaster, and nothing will get in my way. Two minutes to get dressed, another five to get ready, and a ten-minute timer ticking down to class. Todos, to-dos, and more to-dos. From now on, I resolve to make one such list every day. I promise to be doing something every waking minute, checking things off: one, two, three, pset, class, pset, lab, class, club, socialize, Chinese, and maybe, just maybe, sleep. Breathe.

A hundred reminders go off on my phone. Wow, the Stud food tastes incredible today. I tend to each notification in succession. "We should ride the commuter rail to Cohasset and just run around in the parking lot." "Has sparkling water ever tasted this good to anyone before? Okay, me neither."

My vision is 20/20 behind these glasses. I notice every blade of grass. I finally use that BlueBikes subscription for the first time in months. The garlic sizzling on the pan smells like home. I eat some spinach, snack on carrots and hummus. And as the old saying goes, "fitness isn't just a hobby, it's a lifestyle."



I'm wound up, programmed to say the same old phrases over and over again

When I step outside, I can hear the birds harmonize. This mountain is silent: the echo of our voices is impeccable. I'm going to make sure everyone sees what I'm made of. The air is thin up on that hill, but my will to ascend is stronger than the weight of the atmosphere above me. I make a joke. My friends laugh, smile, and, just maybe, crack open a Diet Coke over the kindling.

The sunset shows its opalescent colors, and like magic, silence falls. Time slows as I gaze at you. I'm firmly rooted to the ground, but my spirits are a thousand feet high. I laugh, jot down a few more notes to finish the pset due a week from now, and breathe a sigh of relief as I rewind through the highlights of the week.

And sometimes, it's just a week. A normal, uneventful week. No abysmal lows or insurmountable highs. That's all I've ever wanted, and that's all I'll ever need. This simple desire for monotony still feels like a gift when it dawns.

#### **VIVIAN'S REFLECTIONS**

#### The words that stuck with me

The last thing I expected

By Vivian Hir STAFF WRITER

One of the most memorable parts of visiting the Rubin Museum of Art a month ago wasn't the Himalayan and Buddhist art, but rather a few lines I read in a book I found at the gift shop. Unlike other art museum gift shops, this shop sold books that discussed various topics in Buddhism ranging from yoga to mindfulness. There were also a couple of surprising and amusing titles that I encountered, like Chinese Erotic Poems. But the three books that stood out to me had pretty ordinary titles and covers: How to Love, How to Relax, and How to Cook.

They were all part of a self-help book collection called Mindfulness Essentials, written by the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh. The pocket-sized nature of the books made me think that I could carry them with me whenever I wanted some sort of guidance. I didn't plan to purchase them, but I still wanted to flip through the pages in the hopes of gaining wisdom and inspiration. I decided to randomly open How to Love and landed on a page titled "Distractions."

When I first read the title, I was puzzled. What did distractions have to do with love? I was expecting a title with words like "heart," "love" or "compassion" I don't believe in destiny or a higher being, but I think there's a good reason fate made me land on that page considering on my circumstances at the time. The author wrote the following:

Often, we get crushes on others not because we truly love and understand them, but to distract ourselves from our suffering. When we learn to love and understand ourselves and have true compassion for ourselves, then we can truly love and understand another person.

Reading this short paragraph took my breath away. Nhat Hanh didn't need complicated metaphors to describe the underlying reasons we get crushes. He used everyday language and still got his point across effectively. I found some beauty in the way this compassionate sage viewed love as if he had an outsider's perspective from years of experience. These eloquent sentences were unlike the rosy and optimistic ones I encountered in romance nov-

Despite this appreciation, the voice I imagined reading these words to me was blunt. What I read felt like a slap to the cheek and a warm hug at the same time. My initial reactions also felt inconsistent and conflicting. The passage motivated me to prioritize loving myself first, yet I was also angry. If I couldn't even be kind and compassionate to myself, then how could I love anyone unconditionally? Wasn't this obvious?

I wondered what took me so long to come across these words of wisdom. I knew that ruminating about this was pointless, but my train of thought didn't stop there. I imagined an alternate universe where I knew about this quote in middle school. I wouldn't have to feel so disillusioned after my infatuation ended, and I would have saved myself from a lot of embarrassment. I would probably still develop a crush, but at least I would have a greater awareness of the insecurities that made me have a crush. Why couldn't I figure this out myself? Why did I need a random page in a book found in a random museum to tell me something so simple yet so obvious?

The first sentence of the quote was nothng new, yet reading it made that fact even more explicit. I felt embarrassed. Of course I didn't truly love and understand him. I barely talked to him. I went for months without texting him. Yet I somehow still obsessed over him for more than a year.

The part that followed regarding distraction and suffering, however, was not so straightforward. What was this suffering that I didn't want to face? What caused me to develop this crush as a distraction? At that moment, the best answer I could come up with was that my suffering involved not enjoying the present moment and wanting to escape from the constant anxieties of the pandemic and college application season back in my senior year of high school. Having this crush was a way to imagine a brighter future that included me being with him, even though the chance of such a thing happening was nil.

But this hypothesis was unsatisfying and still left me hanging. The unanswered question was still in my brain days after visiting the museum, floating around in the sea of many thoughts I had about love, a concept I barely understood. It wasn't until a few weeks later when I searched this quote and related ones that all the puzzle pieces started to come together.

Finding a lengthier passage from Thict Nhat Hanh about the constant feeling of emptiness as the cause of developing crushes not only provided greater clarity about my emotional state, but also about the universal struggle of wanting to be loved. I was amazed that Nhat Hanh had all the words to explain the fundamental causes of finding an object of love, which was something that I overlooked in the past and had trouble pinpointing. While I still believe that my initial idea as to why I developed a crush was not wrong, I think a more direct and better reason is that deep down, I feel empty. Having never really loved myself, I want someone else to love me as some form of approval. As proof that I am good enough and worthy of love. I have a family who loves me and friends who support me, but why isn't that enough? Each question only seems to raise more questions.

Weeks have passed and I still think about these words. Given that the majority of people have crushes, does that mean most of us are distracting ourselves from our suffering? Although the meaning of "suffering" in the Buddhist context has to do with dissatisfaction, the thought is still quite depressing. If I continue to follow this logic, then that means most of us don't even know ourselves that well.

As I write and consider the assumption I just made, I develop a newfound sympathy for my classmates around me. If we look beyond the surface of everything, we will notice that most, if not all, of us, are fighting the same inner battle of trying to love and understand ourselves. It sounds easy to live by these principles of self love, but in reality it is hard. We may appear to have everything (amazing awards, coveted internship positions, stellar resumes), but deep down we still have vulnerabilities that we try so hard

I find it difficult to embrace Nhat Hanh's quote together with passages about love from my favorite book, Call Me By Your Name. In the past year, I enjoyed rereading the monologue from the book about the importance of letting ourselves feel, even though these feelings of heartbreak and loss are unpleasant. Although I didn't experience a breakup or rejection, I clung to the author's philosophy of embracing one's emotions so tightly, justifying letting this crush occupy most of my headspace.

The problem is that having this new knowledge of crushes as a source of distraction makes me not know how to reconcile the two beliefs. If I analyze the monologue from the perspective of Nhat Hanh, wouldn't embracing emotion only exacerbate the situation and make me even more distracted? Maybe the crux of the matter isn't that the monologue is wrong, but rather that my situation of having a crush was different from the situation that the monologue described, which had to do with the end of a relationship. At the same time, couldn't I make the argument that my crush was different from what Nhat Hanh described?

At the end of the day, maybe it doesn't atter which belief is right or wrong Bot are different and valid in their particular ways. That is not to say I wrote an entire article only to end up refuting what I said earlier about the necessity of truly loving ourselves to truly love another person. Maybe I shouldn't expect myself to know the answer at the age of 18. As much as I like empirical formulas and theories that govern life, there is no instruction manual on how to love.

I am unsatisfied with the fact that reflecting upon crushes and love did not make me more confident about how I should approach this topic. But I am glad that I had a new and unexpected realization that despite being surrounded by classmates of different personalities and backgrounds, one thing that we have in common is the constant ache of emptiness. Ironically, it is acknowledging this fact that makes me feel less lonely.



Do you think YOU can fit the page better than we did?



# CAMPUS LIFE CAMPUS LIFE CA

#### **BEAVER FEVER**

#### **THURSDAY 3**

MIT Undergraduate Economics Association — Spring Lecture: Bringing Big Data to the NFL

4-5 p.m. @ 32-124 (RSVP needed)

MIT Innovation Headquarters — HOT Wings and HOT Pitchez 5–7 p.m. @ E38 7th Floor (RSVP needed)

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**Lindy Hop Society — Dance Lesson** 5–7 p.m. @ 36-153

MIT TechX and Tau Beta Pi — Sage Analysis Tech Talk

6 p.m. @ virtual

MIT TechX and Tau Beta Pi  $\,-\,$  C3 Al Tech Talk

7 p.m. @ virtual

Fenway House — Rush Week: Paint Night

7–9 p.m. @ Fenway House

MIT Office of Religious, Spiritual, and Ethical Life — Stand Together for Ukraine Candlelight Rally

7:30 p.m. @ Student Center Plaza

MIT Office of Religious, Spiritual, and Ethical Life — Stand Together for Ukraine Gathering with Opportunities to Learn and Offer Support 8–9 p.m. @ Lobdell

MIT Chinese Students Committee — Meet and Greet

9 p.m. @ Baker House TV Lounge

#### FRIDAY 4

MIT TechX and Tau Beta Pi — XFair 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. @ virtual

Office of Multicultural Programs and UA Sustain — Winter Clothing Swap 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. @ W31-110

MIT Quest for Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence at MIT — Al@MIT Panel Discussion and Social

4 p.m. @ 3-370 (registration needed)

MIT Lecture Series Committee — Sing Street

8 p.m. @ 26-100

SaveTFP — Rock Night!

9-11 p.m. @ Coffeehouse Lounge

#### **SATURDAY 5**

MIT Poker Club — Targeted Training Event

4:30–6 p.m. @ virtural

MIT Arab Students' Organization — Annual Spring Dinner

7–10 p.m. @ Lobdell (ticket needed)

MIT Lecture Series Committee — Sing Street

8 p.m. @ 26-100

Cell Ag @ MIT and SaveTFP — Vegan Dairy Night

9–11 p.m. @ Coffeehouse Lounge

#### **SUNDAY 6**

MIT Mongolian Students Association
— Chill with Ardiin Duu (Mongolian traditional songs)

2–3 p.m. @ 4-253 (free boba)

#### MONDAY 7

MIT Undergraduate Association — UA One Power Hour + Free iHop 4–6 p.m. @ W20-400 SPS — Physics Student Mixer 6–7 p.m. @ 8-329

MIT Poker Club — General Body

**Meeting** 9–10 p.m. @ 5-134

#### **TUESDAY 8**

MIT Pre-medical Society — Boston Pre-health Student Mixer

#### **WEDNESDAY** 9

**MedLinks** — Thyme to Garden! 5–7 p.m. @ W20-307

6-8 p.m. @ virtual (RSVP needed)



To have your student group's event featured in *The Tech*, email cl@tech. mit.edu.

Interested in joining *The Tech*? Email *join@tech.mit.edu*!



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Solution, page 3

		8	5	9				
		7			4			
5	4		8				6	
<b>5</b>		4		2	9	1		
	2						7	
		6	1	8		2		4
	1				8		2	5
			6			8		
				1	7	6		

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Solution, page 3

144×			2-		1
	150×			20×	12×
3		3÷			
1		144×			2
9+	1-		1–	6×	11+
		1			

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

#### End of February by Billie Truitt

Solution, page 3

#### **ACROSS**

- 1 People with diplomas, for short
- 6 Mix with a spoon
- 10 Unmannerly men 14 Trim again
- 15 Despise
- 16 Shaped like a 0
- 17 "... happily ever \_
- 18 Much-admired celebrity
- 19 Lion's hair
- 20 Person abroad for a religion
- 22 Rats' smaller cousins
- 23 Bank officers' titles: Abbr. 24 Egg-and-cheese breakfast
- 26 Shake from the cold
- 30 Fancy napkin fabric
- 32 Bull, in Spain
- 33 Corrosive liquid
- 35 Lines on a checklist
- 39 Heroic tale
- 40 Dwelling places
- 42 Square footage
- 43 Flat-topped hills

- 45 Document in a passport
- 46 Fixes dishonestly
- 47 French flat hat 49 Hesitant agreement
- 51 Mentally sharp
- 54 Needless fuss
- 55 Young woman
- 56 Book of definitions
- 63 Creative thought
- 64 And others: Abbr.
- 65 River's flood barrier
- 66 Shakespearean king
- 67 Sicilian volcano
- 68 Indoor sports site
- 69 Small whirlpool
- 70 Rolling stone's lack, supposedly
- 71 Party givers

- **DOWN** 1 Measure of carbs or protein
- 2 Mortgage adjustment, briefly
- 3 Performs in a film
- 4 Membership fees

- 5 Try hard
- 6 Fronts of the lower legs
- 7 "Look what I did!"
- 8 "Believe \_\_ not . . .'
- 9 Put one's trust in
- 12 Waltz or tango
- 21 Media mogul Winfrey
- 25 "Don't tell \_\_ can't do it!"
- 26 Flower stalk
- 28 Colorful eye part
- 30 Maximum speed
- 36 Cleveland's lake
- 37 "Big" prefix for bucks
- 38 Wide belt
- 41 \_\_ Arabia (Mideast nation)
- 44 Sink, as the sun
- 48 Cash in, as coupons

- 10 Explanatory essay
- 11 To no \_\_ (useless)
- 13 lcy precipitation

- 27 Optimistic emotion
- 29 All the words you know
- 31 "Beware the \_\_ of March"
- 34 Small sheltered bay

- 50 Cash, slangily
- 16 18 19 22 24 25 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 43 46 49 50 51 | 52 | 53 59 60 61 62 66 67 68 70
- 51 Physically nimble
- 52 One-\_\_ (biased)
- 53 Tire surface
- 54 Book of maps 57 "Just leave \_\_ me"
- 58 Tuna containers
- 59 Infamous Roman emperor 60 Wide city streets: Abbr.
- 61 Landlord's income 62 Votes like "ayes"

#### [1513] Code Quality





...WOW. THIS IS LIKE BEING IN A HOUSE BUILT BY A CHILD USING NOTHING BUT A HATCHET AND A PICTURE OF A HOUSE.

IT'S LIKE A SALAD RECIPE WRITTEN BY A CORPORATE LAWYER USING A PHONE AUTOCORRECT THAT ONLY KNEW EXCEL FORMULAS.

IT'S LIKE SOMEONE TOOK A TRANSCRIPT OF A COUPLE ARGUING AT IKEA AND MADE RANDOM EDITS UNTIL IT COMPILED WITHOUT ERRORS OKAY I'LL READ A STYLE GUIDE.

Thursday, March 3, 2022

# THE TECH

# A WEBCOMIC OF ROMANCE, SARCASM. MATH. AND LANGUAGE by Randall Munroe

#### [1437] Higgs Boson



ALREADY FIND IT A
YEAR OR TWO AGO?
YES, WELL, UM.

... WAIT. DIDN'T YOU

EMBARRASSING.

SEE, THE
THING IS-

... OK, THIS 15

DON'T TELL US YOU
LOST IT ALREADY.
LOOK.
IN OUR DEFENSE,
IT'S REALLY SMALL.

'Can't you just use the LHC you already built to find it again?' 'We MAY have disassembled it to build a death ray.' 'Just one, though.' 'Mothing you should worry about.' 'The death isn't even very serious.'

**1987**Solution, page 3

**27**+ 42× 25+ 2 288× 3× 80× 175× 3 2÷ 48× 48× 28× 36× 6-30× 16× 16+ 9 31+ 15× 28+ 224× 12× 162× 35× 23+ 6 8×

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–9. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

#### MetaFunFun!

Thursday, March 3, 2022

The Tech 12



# APPLY TO THE COMMUNITY INNOVATION FUND SPONSORED BY CHANCELLOR MELISSA NOBLES

APPLICATIONS DUE 3/18!

GRANTS OF UP TO \$10,000 AVAILABLE!



Info Sessions will be held on:

Feb 16th at

12:30pm in 10-110

Feb 24th at

12:30pm in 10-110

#### Application at:

mindhandheart.mit.edu/innovation-fund



Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Week is dedicated to connecting members of the MIT community through spontaneous acts of generosity called "RAK Hacks" and loosely planned events.

We invite you to join us and spread the MIT!

mindhandheart.mit.edu/rakweek2022