

MIT GSU-UE heralds Sept. 19 bargaining meeting with rally

Organizers and invited speakers discuss bargaining goals, boost morale, and state student grievances

By **Wenbo Wu**
EDITOR IN CHIEF

The MIT Graduate Student Union (MIT GSU-UE) held a rally on Hockfield Court Sept. 12 ahead of its Sept. 19 bargaining meeting for its first contract with the MIT administration.

Sophie Coppiters 't Wallant G, an MIT GSU-UE organizer, Bargaining Committee (BC) member, and graduate student in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering, kickstarted the rally.

"We grad workers all came to MIT to do world-class research and to solve some of the world's most pressing issues," Coppiters 't Wallant began. "We all realized that in order to be able to do this work, we

need decent working and living conditions."

MIT facilities staff members under the Service Employees International Union, Local 32BJ branch were also present at the rally. Coppiters 't Wallant commented on their recent attempts at arriving at a contract with MIT: "In this year of 9% inflation, and with MIT's endowment growing by 55%," MIT is "refusing to offer our essential custodial staff more than a 1.5% pay increase. We all realize this is just a pay cut."

She also cited MIT's attempts to implement a "discriminatory drug testing policy" for facilities staff. "Shame on MIT, and we want MIT to know that we stand in firm solidarity with our custodians and their union in their contract fight."

Ruth Hanna G, a third-year graduate student in Biology and MIT GSU-UE organizer, commented on the work-life balance concerns that graduate students face, saying that "MIT's own data show that over half of grad workers often feel overwhelmed by what we have to do, and 38% of grad workers have felt so depressed that it was difficult to function."

"We deserve to not just survive at MIT, but thrive here," Hanna continued. "But we see the MIT administration consistently makes decisions that sacrifice our health and well-being," citing MIT's discontinuation of asymptomatic COVID-19 testing, the closing of

Union Rally, Page 2



FRANKIE SCHULTE—THE TECH

MIT Students from all over campus celebrate the reopening of one of the student dorms, Burton Conner, Sat.

133 first years enter First-Year Residence Exchange process

New House, New Vassar, and Burton Conner receive most requests to FYRE into residence this fall semester

By **Srinidhi Narayanan**
NEWS EDITOR

133 first-year students entered the First-Year Residence Exchange (FYRE) process that facilitates residence hall switches this year. The FYRE process concluded after four days of Residence Exploration (REX) on Aug. 31. 74 first-year students successfully switched residence halls.

The number of first years opting to FYRE rose sharply from last year when 89 students attempted to FYRE and is comparable to 2019 when 121 students attempted to FYRE. First years had a 55% FYRE success rate this year, a decrease

from last year's 70% success rate but an increase from 2019 when 47% successfully FYRED.

Housing and Residential Services (HRS) Senior Communications Manager Zachary Tsetsos wrote in an email to The Tech that first-year residents "were most interested in moving to New House, New Vassar, and Burton Conner through the FYRE process." Among the 74 successful moves, the most popular destinations were Burton-Conner (13), Next House (12), and East Campus (11), while most students moved out of Next House (15), East Campus (12), and Maseeh Hall (10).

Due to the reopening of Burton-Conner, there was "a slight decline in the typical number of first-year residents assigned to each building" since the incoming class was spread across eleven, instead of ten, residence halls, according to Tsetsos.

The planned renovations of East Campus — scheduled to begin in Summer 2023 — also affected HRS's approach to building assignments: Tsetsos wrote that "in consultation with the East Campus house leadership and DormCon, only first-year students who selected East campus as one of their top-three building preferences were assigned to the community."



KAI JIA—THE TECH

The Graduate Student Union (GSU) rallies together outside of the Stata Center, Mon.

IN SHORT

MIT Dance Party marking the end of Reif's presidency will be Sept. 17.

Career week begins Sept. 19 and ends Sept. 23.

Career fair will take place in per-

son Sept. 23, which is also a student holiday.

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

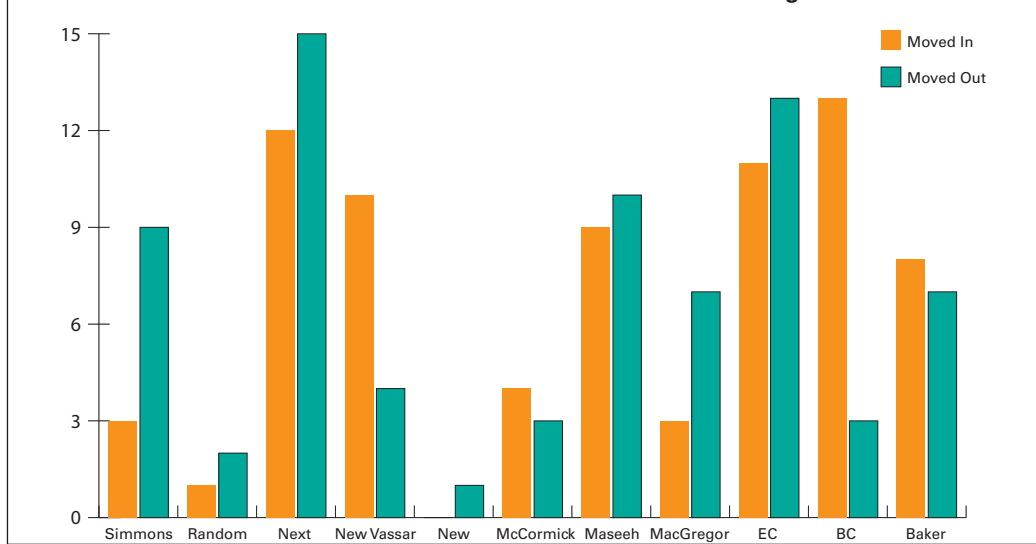
Send news and tips to news@tech.mit.edu.



FRANKIE SCHULTE—THE TECH

Tea Do opens up as one of the Student Center's newest food options, Mon.

Number of students who moved in and out during FYRE 2022



ARUN WONGPROMMOON—THE TECH

Next had the most number of students move out during FYRE 2022, while BC had the most move in.

OPEN BARGAINING COMMITTEES

The GSU-UE must allow for active participation from all members.

OPINION, p. 4

SUPPORTING FACILITIES WORKERS

Graduate student workers stand behind MIT's facilities staff who are fighting for their rights. **OPINION, p. 4**

WORKING AS A UNION

Stop this one-side-versus-the-other mentality and work together toward an MIT-quality collective bargaining agreement. **OPINION, p. 5**

FEAR OF UNCERTAINTY

My cynicism towards love serves as a defense mechanism. **CAMPUS LIFE, p. 6**

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WEATHER

Sweater weather to make things better

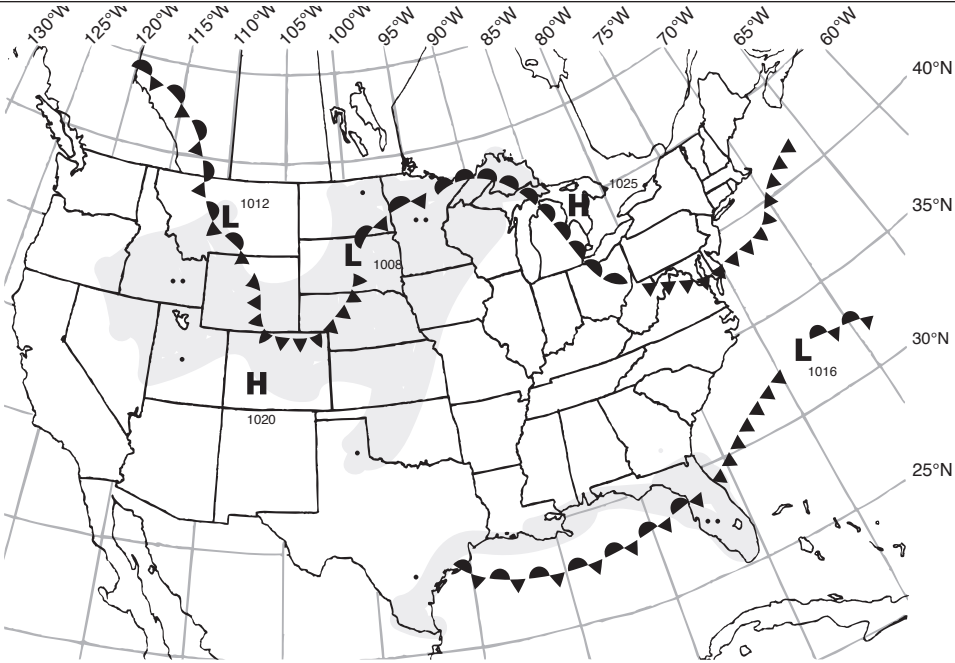
By Phoebe Lin
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

A high pressure system will move eastwards over New England to bring some cold, dry weather to Cambridge this week-end. As the dewpoint drops, we can expect some clearer days and nights. If you're spending time outside, be prepared for chillier

days with a jacket or sweater. Don't get caught off guard if a shower or two comes your way! This past September has brought calmer weather than August, but active weather is continuing elsewhere in the world with Tropical Depression Seven developing in the Atlantic and heatwaves scorching the American West.

Extended Forecast

Today: Today: Sunny. High around 70°F (21°C). Northwest winds 12-17 mph.
Tonight: Clear. Low around 53°F (12°C). Northwest winds 12-15 mph.
Tomorrow: Sunny. High around 71°F (22°C) and low around 52°F (11°C). North winds 10-12 mph.
Saturday: Mostly sunny. High around 73°F (23°C) and low around 62°F (17°C). Southwest winds 7-10 mph.
Sunday: Mostly sunny. High around 80°F (27°C) and low around 63°F (17°C). Southwest winds 10-12 mph.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, September 15, 2022

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols	Other Symbols
H High Pressure	--- Trough	Snow: * Rain: ∇	Fog: ☁
L Low Pressure	— Warm Front	Light: * Moderate: ** Heavy: ***	Thunderstorm: ⚡
S Hurricane	▲ Cold Front		Haze: ☁
	◐ Stationary Front		

Li: ‘MIT is the biggest landowner in Cambridge,’ can control housing market

Union Rally, from Page 1

specialty divisions at MIT Medical and the MIT Pharmacy, the lack of dental insurance, and MIT's "cruel" policy of discontinuing health insurance coverage when graduate students go on medical leave. "MIT admin need to know that when they are sitting down at the bargaining table next week, they are not just bargaining with the 24 members" of the BC, but with "thousands" of graduate students, Hanna said. Hanna added that two ways graduate students can "join [the MIT GSU-UE] in this fight" include signing a union card and joining the Contract Action Team. Coppieters 't Wallant then invited Vice President of the Boston Teachers Union Erik Berg to speak. Berg said that he was present to "bring solidarity from the Boston Teachers Union," commenting on how graduate students and education workers have "a lot in common." Sihan Chen G, a third-year graduate student in Brain and Cognitive Sciences, member of the BC, and international student from China, spoke next. As an international student, Chen said that he faces "obstacles and challenges in order to do research, teach, and to develop our career" in the U.S. In particular, these issues stem from having one's "visa status hanging over their heads." Chen applauded MIT and Harvard's 2020 efforts in suing the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement due to the Trump

Administration's "racist and xenophobic [international] student ban." However, "just a few months later" MIT issued a notice "that they will essentially cancel all remote appointments while the pandemic was still raging in the U.S.," forcing "over 600 grad workers to come back to the country within a month, or lose their job and likely their visa." Regarding the process of being able to stay and work in the country, Chen said that it was unfair that "to be an international grad worker," one had to be "rich, or lucky, or both." Chen added that the "nationality and economic background" of graduate students "should not be an obstacle standing in the way" of "mak[ing] contributions to human knowledge." While Chen acknowledged that certain policies are out of MIT's control, he said the students want to work with the Institute "to mitigate the disparity between domestic and international grad workers as much as possible." Coppieters 't Wallant then invited Evan MacKay, a rank-and-file organizer and member of the Harvard Graduate Student Union (HGSU) bargaining committee, to the stage. "Our membership supports [the MIT GSU-UE] from the bottom up and we're eager to continue" this support, MacKay said, adding that MIT and Harvard graduate students have a "shared struggle." In addition to issues cited by the previous speakers, MacKay also acknowledged the struggles faced by those affected by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and those seeking

childcare. MacKay highlighted that "the power inside the bargaining room" does not arise from "getting the right, smart people" on the bargaining committee but rather comes from "outside the bargaining room" through an "engaged membership." "Organizing is something all of us do together," not "something that just happens from people with titles or special positions within the union," MacKay said. Organizing and working together helps individuals petition for a list of demands and "react to intimidation alongside one another," MacKay said. MacKay also shared insights based on the HGSU's past, saying "I wish that [the HGSU] had done a better job" in the beginning "openly disagreeing and asking questions about" what "these disagreements meant." Belinda Li G, a second-year graduate student in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) and representative for the BC, spoke after MacKay. As a resident of Site 4 with a monthly rent of "60% of your stipend," Li said that "the only reason" she "managed to scrape by" was because she had "savings from previous jobs," something that "the vast majority of grad students do not." Even with these savings, Li said that she was "still under significant financial stress to the point where [she] felt the need to ration food." Li cited how in a 2019 MIT survey on graduate student life, "over 75% of grad workers are stressed about rent." The "average MIT grad worker pays over 50% of their stipend" in rent, which Li stated that under

"federal standards," MIT graduate students are "severely rent burdened." In addition to rent, Li noted poor housing conditions, delayed repairs, and having "no real" COVID-19 protocol "two years into a pandemic." Li added that the MIT administration "can argue that... housing is not a mandatory subject of bargaining," but this is because "employers are usually not landlords for their employees." In cases where "employment is so intimately tied with housing, it is completely reasonable to negotiate on housing." Li said that the MIT administration "will also argue that they are simply accounting for the housing market." However, given that "MIT is the biggest landowner in Cambridge," the Institute has "significant control over the housing market." "When MIT built Site 4, they tore down the older, more affordable Eastgate dorm and replaced it with a bunch of commercial offices and labs," which she said did not "sound like an act of simple survival in the face of rising housing costs." The next speaker was Carl Rosen, the General President of United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (of which the MIT GSU-UE is to become a local chapter). Rosen said that he has worked with the BC "all summer," to put together a "great set of contract demands" based on MIT GSU-UE member input and "surveying the best of what's elsewhere in the country." "I have not seen such a well-organized group — again, a self-organizing group of workers — in recent

memory, and that is tremendously exciting," Rosen said. The work of "thousands of graduate workers" over the "last couple of years" ensures that "go[ing] into the [bargaining] table,... the administration has to hear you." "What I've seen here today" and "over the last period convinces me that you've got what it takes to win that fight," Rosen concluded. Coppieters 't Wallant then introduced Jonathan Tagoe G, a Masters student in Mechanical Engineering and BC member. As an MIT undergraduate of the Class of 2021, Tagoe said that "MIT admin kinda does what it wants. Either they blindside us with policy that affects us" or "they may ask us for feedback" but not take it into account. "If MIT wants to negotiate fairly in good faith, let's do it," Tagoe said. "But we gotta be real with ourselves here.... This is going to be a contract fight, and it's not going to be easy.... But we gotta stick together." "Each of us" must "put in the work" to "do what we can," Tagoe said. Tagoe added that "it's going to take clear, consistent communication about what's happening at the bargaining table and quickly building up pressure to make MIT budge when we need them to." "We need folks engaged, ready to participate, and most importantly, just being good members of the MIT community and sticking by each other," Tagoe said. While the MIT GSU-UE has "support" "no one else can fight this fight for us." Joshua Talbot G, a graduate student in EECS and MIT GSU-UE organizer, closed out the rally with live music.

"I know that the English intelligentsia have plenty of reason for their timidity and dishonesty, indeed I know by heart the arguments by which they justify themselves. But at least let us have no more nonsense about defending liberty against Fascism. If liberty means anything at all it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.

- George Orwell



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ALEXA SIMAO—THE TECH

A new MIT logo sign being set up in front of the Student Center, Mon.

the

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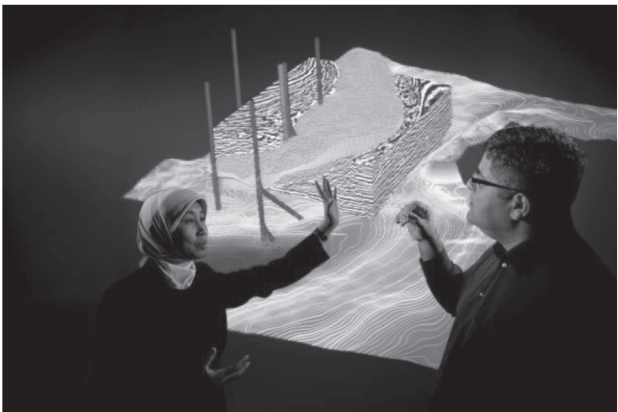
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Our facilities workers deserve a fair contract now, not a pay cut

Many of us know our facilities workers as the friendly faces who brighten our day whenever we see them in our halls, labs, offices, and residences. Our 600 facilities workers — who won their union with SEIU 32BJ 75 years ago — keep MIT safe, open, and running, working tirelessly at all hours of the day to clean, maintain, and repair our labs, offices, homes, and campus. This university, and all of its groundbreaking research and teaching, would grind to a halt without their efforts and contributions. They also kept MIT safe and open throughout the pandemic as essential workers who put their lives and those of their families on the line to allow COVID-19 research to continue on campus.

MIT's administration seems to think that our facilities workers deserve what amounts to a pay cut. During the same pandemic year that facilities workers put their and their families' health at risk, MIT's endowment skyrocketed by 49% to over \$27 billion. With inflation exceeding 9% earlier this summer, facilities workers came to the negotiating table proposing what they have always won from MIT: a fair raise that justly accounts for the rising cost of living, as well as facilities workers' critically important contributions to the growing university. MIT has responded with a pittance, initially

And that's not all. The MIT administration is insisting on a drug and alcohol testing policy, which would basically enable MIT to test any worker at any time. Not only is this policy an arbitrary and demeaning invasion of privacy, but it would also open the door for MIT to abuse this testing to discriminate against workers. For example, a supervisor would be able to abuse their position of power to punish a worker who stands up for themselves by forcing them to take a drug test, bullying the worker by threatening their job and livelihood. Where is the respect for our essential workers now?

At a time of historic endowment growth, the MIT administration is doubling down on cutting costs at every turn to the detriment of our university and community. For example, MIT is shifting to contracting out graduate housing. The new West Campus Graduate Residence under construction has been leased to and will be fully operated by American Campus Communities, a Texas-based, for-profit real-estate developer. This change will not only exacerbate MIT's pattern of luxury apartment prices, but could also exclude our unionized facilities workers from working in the new MIT residence, in favor of subcontracted labor. Subcontracting with non-union labor cuts costs by driv-

But the workers who make this campus run — including our facilities workers, dining workers, librarians, and graduate workers — are fighting back by organizing together through our unions. This fight is not just to improve our working and living conditions, but to build an MIT that truly invests in its people and lives up to its mission. On Wednesday, Sept. 7, our facilities workers held a speakout and march, where undergrads, graduate workers, post-docs, and staff came out in solidarity. The MIT community stands firmly in solidarity with our facilities workers, and we will continue to stand with them until they win the contract they deserve — and beyond.

Sign onto the MIT Student Worker Alliance — We Support Our Facilities Workers! petition here (tinyurl.com/MIT-Supports-32BJ).

Thejas Wesley is a sixth-year Ph.D. candidate in chemical engineering, a member and bargaining committee representative of the MIT Graduate Student Union, and a member of the MIT Student Worker Alliance.

Do members run this union?

In an infographic circulated by the MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU) in Fall 2021, the union contrasts its “grassroots union organizing” approach with “admin-dictated advocacy” to demonstrate why the former is superior for empowering graduate student-workers. While admin-dictated advocacy is private and unaccountable, grassroots union organizing is transparent, public and democratic. In order to drive home the point, the graphic states that “[o]ur union, as part of UE [United Electrical Workers], *will be committed to open bargaining* to keep the admin accountable to grad workers and to keep the broader grad worker population informed and engaged” (emphasis added). Open negotiations are contract negotiations where all workers covered by the collective bargaining agreement can attend.

union's own central decision-making body, the Department Organizing Committee, let alone among the grad student population at-large. The BC's stated reasons for rejecting open bargaining were roughly threefold: 1) low attendance would signal weakness to the administration; 2) a vocal minority of grad students could sabotage negotiations; and 3) the bargaining guidelines discourage impromptu comments, and therefore grad students would not get much out of it.

The second point — that a vocal minority could sabotage bargaining — could also be

As to the BC's final point — that grad students won't get much out of attending open

Editorials are the official opinion of *The Tech*. They are written by the Editorial Board, which consists of Publisher Kristina Chen, Editor in Chief Wenbo Wu, Managing Editor William Xu, Executive Editor Chloe McCreery, and the opinion editor, a position that is currently vacant.

Letters to the editor, columns, and editorial cartoons are written by individuals and represent the opinion of the author, not necessarily that of the newspaper. Electronic submissions are encouraged and should be sent to letters@tech.mit.edu. Hard copy submissions should be addressed to *The Tech*, P.O. Box 397029, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-7029, or sent by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. All submissions are due by noon four (4) calendar days before the date of publication.

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I don't want to hurt again

By Vivian Hir
STAFF WRITER

I don't know how to stop finding faults in myself as a way to suggest that I am not compatible with anyone. When thinking about romantic relationships, I consider any possible sources of conflict that may arise because of me, such as the fact that I like exploring places alone or how my lifestyle doesn't align with theirs. I then think of how I will annoy the other person because I am not a touchy-feely type. In other

There's a movie I watched that taught me the value of a relationship that ends, but I feel like this lesson won't apply to my life. In the movie, the couple part ways due to their diverging goals and interests, but they still cherish the memories of moments and experiences they shared. At first, the movie reassured me that breakups weren't as horrible as I thought they would be, but then I reminded myself that what I saw was a movie. Unlike reality, movies have elaborate plots and perfect scripts with touching quotes. As nice as it is to picture a breakup that ends smoothly, I imagine mine to be a disaster. I feel so much shame and embarrassment when I think of people I've liked in the past that I can imagine cut-

So far, I have mentioned my fear of love's unpredictability and my inner conflict with how I perceive my romantic thoughts, but I haven't quite explained why I am cynical

I am still fearful of being rejected again, even if that rejection is indirect and subtle. But I am gradually realizing that unrequited love is bound to happen again, and I have no way to avoid it. All I can do is reframe my perspective of the past year as a learning experience, as cliché as that may sound. Yes, I will make mistakes when navigating the complexities found in love and relationships for the rest of my life, but under the right circumstances, I can mature emotionally and develop in other ways. I am a bit more optimistic that there's hope for me, at least for now.



Or join us for dinner, Sundays 6 p.m. (W20-483)

3C

Solution, page 5

3	2		7	4		8		
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		3					7	4
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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.

11

Solution, page 5

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7	5	2			4	6		
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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.

Work Stoppages by Winston Emmons

Solution, page 5

ACROSS

- 1 Crunchy sandwich, for short
- 4 Animals that oink
- 8 Confront boldly
- 14 Uncooked
- 15 Cowboy's suffix for buck
- 16 Locales for jury trials
- 17 Wrath
- 18 Midmorning time-out for a hot drink
- 20 Days before holidays
- 22 After dark, in ads
- 23 High-tech car keys
- 24 Handsome lad of myth
- 26 Hourly charge
- 29 Outdoor exercise at midday
- 34 British singer of "Skyfall"
- 36 __ mater
- 37 Director Spike or Ang
- 38 Lawn installed in rolls
- 39 Japanese electronics brand
- 41 Time delay
- 42 College URL ender
- 43 Group of outlaws
- 44 Levels of stadium seats
- 46 Day-off trip for the staff

DOWN

- 50 Off-the-neck hairstyle
- 51 Loch monster, familiarly
- 53 Slightly open, as a gate
- 56 Front of a plane
- 58 Grains in Cheerios
- 60 Saturday-to-Monday time off
- 64 Informal turndown
- 65 Inability with musical notes
- 66 Uttered
- 67 Espionage org.
- 68 Jittery
- 69 Mexican cheers
- 70 Shade tree
- 1 Creamy French cheese
- 2 Insect's wormlike stage
- 3 One of the Wonderland twins
- 4 DC lobbying group
- 5 Amusingly unexpected
- 6 Kids' "Got any deuces?" card game
- 7 Squishy
- 8 __ in the hole (secret

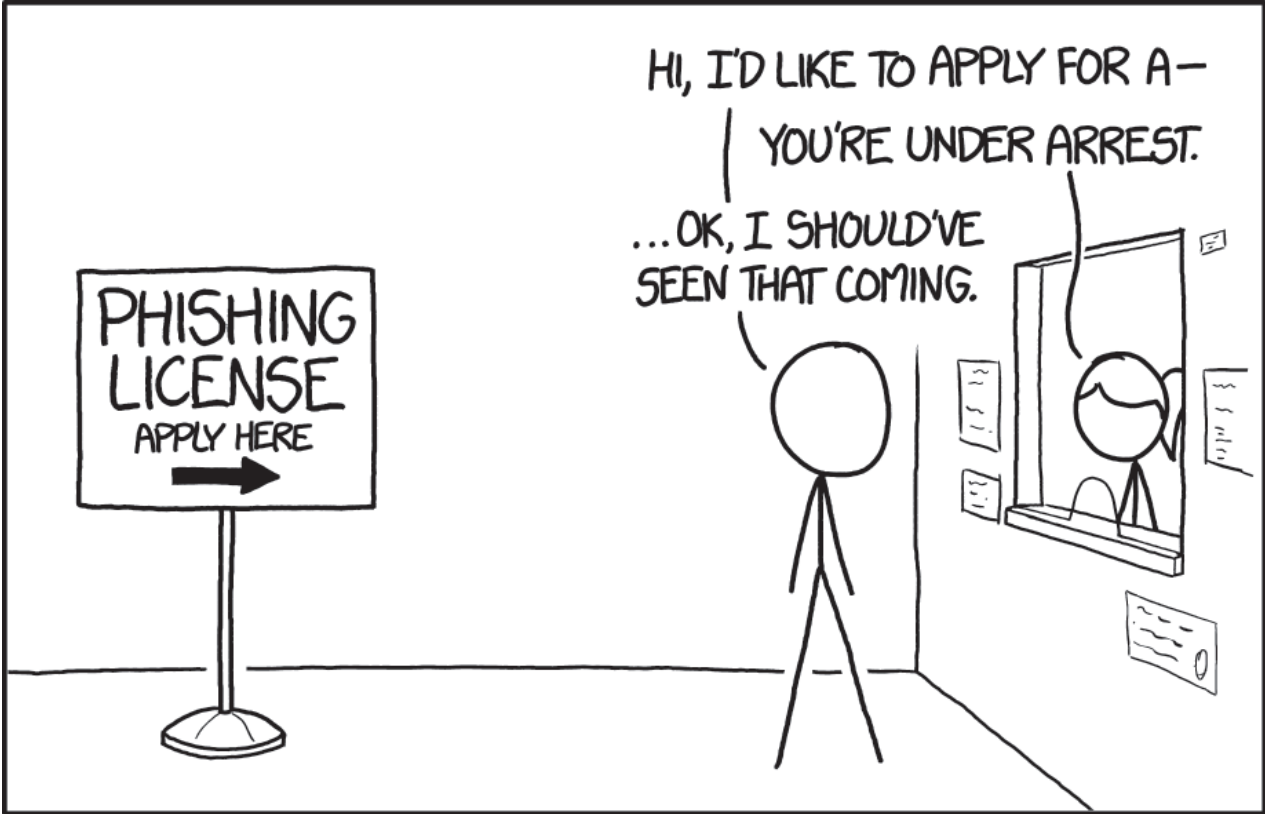
- 9 Corn-kernel holder
- 10 Teen's time to return home by
- 11 Three-layer sweet
- 12 Take a __ at (try)
- 13 Sounds of disapproval
- 19 In a spooky way
- 21 Nary a __ (no one)
- 25 SSW's opposite
- 27 Peas, for a pea shooter
- 28 Beverage brewed from bags
- 30 Dance from Argentina
- 31 What's pledged "to the flag"
- 32 Shakespearean king with three daughters
- 33 Barrels for beer
- 34 "Hold on __!"
- 35 Long-gone flightless bird
- 39 Hourglass contents
- 40 "May I have a volunteer?"
- 43 Empty space
- 44 "__ the season to be jolly ..."
- 45 Not __ many words

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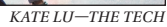
- 47 Completely removed
- 48 Open, as an envelope
- 49 Itty-bitty
- 52 Web commerce
- 53 Soprano colleague
- 54 Enroll
- 55 Boleyn of British history
- 57 "And your point is ..."
- 59 Deceptive activity
- 61 Shake, as a tail
- 62 Poetic "before"
- 63 Tooth specialist's deg.



[1694] Phishing License



Later, walking out of jail after posting \$10,000 bail: "Wait, this isn't the street the county jail is on."



Participants of all skills levels learn the fun and vibrant partner dance, the Lindy Hop, during Hop to the Top, Fri.



MIT faces against Salve Regina in a non-conference football game at Roberts Field, Sat.



SEIE MIT Union Workers march past Walker Memorial, 9/7.



Art exhibitions, studio visits, tours, food, and a dance party filled the night at Arts on the Radar, Fri.

Are you a tetris ninja?

Use your
powers
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Thank You, MIT ...
Let's
Dance!

—Rafael Reif

Saturday
September 10
2022



**Saturday,
September 17,
2022**

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Venues

Boardwalk Arcade | Rockwell Cage

Retro fun and games from 6:30 pm-midnight

Community Café | JAC Ice Rink and on Kresge Oval

Buffet supper from 6:30-8 pm

A Cappella Showcase | JAC Ice Rink | 7-8 pm

Featuring MIT student performance groups



World of Music Pavilion | Kresge Oval

Live music 8-11 pm; DJ 11 pm-midnight

Swing into Salsa Club | JAC Ice Rink

Live music 8 pm-midnight

Campus Night Club and Lounge | Killian Court

Mega DJ show from 9 pm-midnight

Admission

- Current faculty, staff, or student MIT/Lincoln ID admits you + 1 adult guest. Your accompanied children are welcome.
- Wristband (general or 21+) required to enter all venues.
- Guests must be escorted by MIT/Lincoln ID holders to acquire wristbands.
- Wristband stations at Killian and Kresge open at 4:30 pm.



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