



COURTESY OF COLIN CLARK

Snow blankets campus as students enjoy their well-rested IAP, Monday.

# MIT Medical Director Cecilia Stuopis urges MIT Community to take COVID-19 precautions

*Stuopis strongly recommends COVID-19 boosters and influenza immunizations, suggests masking*

By Alex Tang  
STAFF WRITER

MIT Medical Director Cecilia Stuopis urged the MIT community to continue taking precautions against COVID-19 amidst a rise in rates of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses in the Boston area earlier this winter.

Stuopis discussed factors contributing to the uptick in COVID-19 cases, MIT's response to the increase, and guidelines for community members to reduce transmission in an interview with MIT News Jan. 13.

Stuopis said that in early November, "we [MIT Medical] predicted that the combination of an early start to the flu season, reduced Covid-19 restrictions, immune-dodging Omicron variants, and the nationwide surge in respiratory syncytial

virus (RSV) could very well combine forces to make a lot of people sick."

There was a surge in levels of COVID-19 present in Boston-area wastewater up until the end of 2022, coinciding with the holiday season, according to recent data collected by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. Since then, there has been a steady decrease in the presence of COVID-19 in wastewater samples.

Additionally, there has been a decrease in the percentage of hospitalizations due to influenza (down to 1.16% as of Jan. 8, 2023 from a high of 6.28% December 18, 2022), according to weekly flu updates reported by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Stuopis said that "MIT is continuing to monitor the situation closely," and that MIT Medical maintains "close communication with both lo-

cal and state health officials."

With respect to preventative measures, Stuopis stated that vaccinations, which include COVID-19 boosters and flu immunizations, are "strongly recommend[ed]," and added that "masking remains a powerful method for preventing the spread of illness." Furthermore, Stuopis emphasized that free KF-94 masks "are readily available in vending machines across campus," and that hand sanitizers are still present "throughout MIT."

COVID-19 PCR tests "remain free for MIT Atlas (Covid Pass) participants who have symptoms," Stuopis said, in accordance with MIT's COVID-19 testing policy effective July 1, 2022.

Stuopis reaffirmed that "MIT remains committed to providing students with a fully in-person education experience for 2023."

# East Campus holds Bad Ideas Weekend featuring 27 events

*The Bad Ideas committee aims to 'provide resources and enthusiasm'*

By Eunice Zhang  
STAFF WRITER

Bad Ideas Weekend took place Friday, Jan. 20–Monday, Jan. 23, and included events ranging from a Chipotle marathon to Human Mattress Dominoes and the Green Building Challenge (GBC). Bad Ideas Weekend happens annually during Independent Activities Period (IAP), and encourages students to run and participate in unusual and humorous ideas.

According to the initiative's website, Bad Ideas is an opportunity for students to "build ridiculous projects and compete in absurd events," with the organizing committee providing the "resources and enthusiasm to make them happen."

Historically, Bad Ideas is centered around and organized by East Campus (EC), though events may take place anywhere on campus; this year, the weekend was organized by Tre Webb '26, Tyra Espedal '26, and Olivia Tang '26.

## A Variety of Creative Events: 2<sup>nd</sup> Baguettes to the Green Building Challenge

Some events at Bad Ideas Weekend included the following, with descriptions taken from the website.

Python Bee: *Imagine coding blind,*

*under time pressure, in front of a large audience. Is this a nightmare? No! It's a python bee.*

Taco Bell Event: *The time has come for the Taco Bell Eating Competition: \$7654.10 Mexican pesos worth of bowel-boggling, Mexican-ish cuisine.*

2<sup>nd</sup> Cookies: *2048 but with cookies. Many cookies.*

Other events included Cursed Kimbap, playing Asteroids on the Green Building, and BeachReal (going to the beach to take a BeReal). David Choi '25, an organizer for the Cursed Kimbap event, recalled that their inspiration stemmed from a discussion with a friend that "eventually spiraled into degenerate combinations of food wrapped in seaweed and rice."

Eileen Zu '26 and Maya Ayoub '26 organized 2<sup>nd</sup> Baguettes. Ayoub heard about Bad Ideas weekend while applying to MIT, sharing that it "seemed like a super fun event to get involved in." According to Tang, "dumplings and cookies hit n=11 and baguettes hit n=8," giving credit to East Campus halls Putz (2W) and Florey (5E) for "absolutely [outdoing] themselves this year."

Tang's favorite event was the Python Bee, as they teamed up with other hall members from Tetazoo

Bad Ideas, Page 2

## IN SHORT

Spring registration week begins on Jan. 30 and ends Feb. 3.

MIT Festival of Learning is on Feb. 1.

MLK celebration begins on Feb. 6 and ends Feb. 10.

Inauguration of President Sally Kornbluth is on May 1.

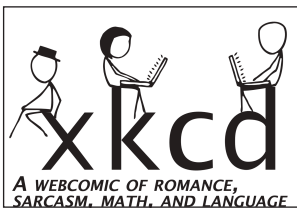
Interested in joining *The Tech*? Email [join@tech.mit.edu](mailto:join@tech.mit.edu).

Send news and tips to [news@tech.mit.edu](mailto:news@tech.mit.edu).

## FUN!

Play The Tech's Sudoku and Crossword puzzles and get into a new hobby over IAP.

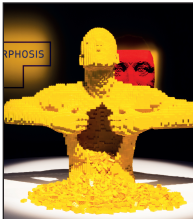
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## CIVIL RIGHTS FOR ALL

Read about a thought-provoking guest column on workplace unions.

OPINION, p. 4



## PHOTO GALLERY

See vivid photos from our latest articles.

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WEATHER

Grayscale weather is gathering, in general

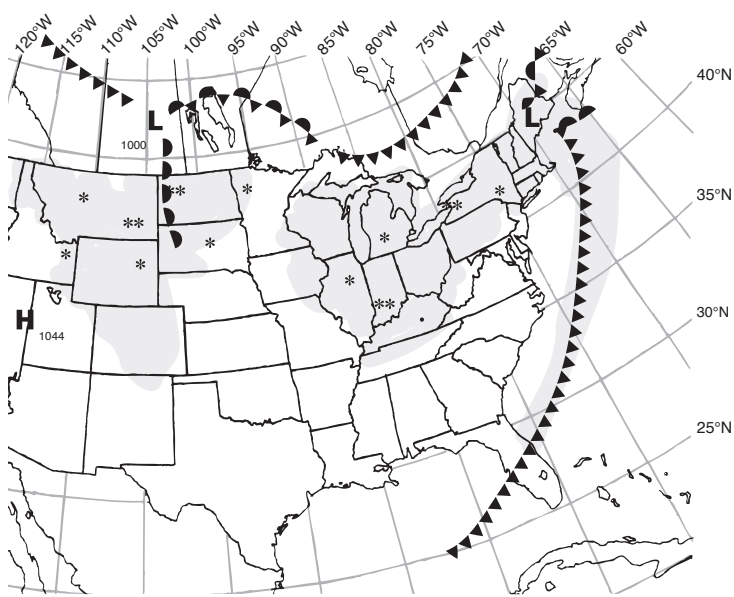
By Phoebe Lin  
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

On the tail end of the latest flood warning, we can expect some calm weather through the end of the weekend before more winter weather makes its way through Cambridge. The weather over the US have become more active over the course of this

month, with storm systems now developing every few days and falling snow becoming a common sight on campus. Campus has been covered in white, with snow totals accumulating as more storms pass through. It's nice to walk outside to a new snowman built on the Kresge lawn each day!

Extended Forecast

**Today:** Rain likely. High around 47°F (8°C). Southwest winds 20-25 mph.  
**Tonight:** Partly cloudy. Low around 31°F (-1°C). West winds 15-20 mph.  
**Friday:** Partly cloudy. High around 37°F (3°C) and low around 32°F (0°C). Southwest winds 10-12 mph. A  
**Saturday:** Cloudy. High around 41°F (5°C) and low around 33°F (1°C). Southwest winds 10-15 mph.  
**Sunday:** Cloudy. High around 43°F (6°C) and low around 37°F (3°C). South winds 7-12 mph.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, January 26, 2023

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols	Other Symbols
<b>H</b> High Pressure	<b>- - -</b> Trough	Snow: * Rain: •	<b>☁</b> Fog
<b>L</b> Low Pressure	<b>— — —</b> Warm Front	Showers: ▽ Light: * Moderate: ** Heavy: ***	<b>⚡</b> Thunderstorm
<b>§</b> Hurricane	<b>▲▲▲▲</b> Cold Front		<b>∞</b> Haze
	<b>▲ — —</b> Stationary Front		Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and <i>The Tech</i>

Students shared positive feedback for events, particularly food-related ones

Bad Ideas, from Page 1

[East Campus 3E], and “ended up clowning [themselves] and forming a five-person team where [they] had to alternate letters” while reciting lines of code. Daniel Reyes '26 enjoyed the Taco Bell challenge, explaining that they found “the events wonderfully relaxing and fun,” and that little beats free food. Teresa Gao '23 highlighted the GBC as their favorite Bad Ideas Weekend. Gao heard of Bad Ideas Weekend through a freshman year dormspam and word-of-mouth as an EC resident; they expressed that it was “the deciding factor for me to return to campus before the spring semester,” being one of their favorite IAP activities. There’s “nothing quite like spending four hours in a sweaty stairwell climbing the 18+ stories of the Green Building with your friends, solely for bragging rights,” Gao observed. Marco Rodriguez '26 echoed the sentiment, stating that they felt “like a true Next House patriot” by helping “to represent against the other EC floors.” According to the official results, Next House scored 5th place with 106 runs. Gao and Rodriguez were not alone in their sweaty efforts, as 127 MIT students participated in the Green Building challenge according to Espedal.

Student Feedback and Reflections

MIT students shared positive feedback regarding Bad Ideas Weekend, particularly with respect to food-related events. Reyes underscored their desire to continue participating in Bad Ideas Weekend, “especially the food events. Food is the great unifier in this world.”

Choi felt it to be a great way to take a break from academics and have fun with friends. Without Bad Ideas Weekend, “I would never get to see MIT students chowing down on a kimbap filled with lasagna, mango jelly, wasabi peas, and a taquito,” they reflected. Ayoub felt that the energy in East Campus was high, making it “a really fun way to feel included as part of a bigger goal/whole.” Ayoub also stated that many of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baguette attendees “stayed friends even after the event even though we had never met prior to the weekend.” Following the event, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baguettes donated their bready creations to a local food bank, a great way “to make the bad idea into a not so bad” one according to Zu. Gao expressed confusion regarding the rules of the GBC, specifically how final scores were calculated. While “the team for Beast [2E] ran the most (287) ascents,” they placed third due to the counting of negative ascents run by other participants after “a rule change that was made after the challenge had concluded.” In the future, Gao requested GBC rules be “finalized and publicized beforehand.” Rodriguez shared that they would “have appreciated a bit more non-traditional ideas,” but overall “loved the events.”

Organizing Bad Ideas Weekend

Planning for Bad Ideas Weekend began in November, starting with the election of chairs and an onboarding process from previous chairs. According to Espedal, the dormspam requesting event ideas received 80+ submissions. Though there were “many great (or Bad, if you will) ideas,” the final 27 events

were selected based on safety, fun, accessibility, and budget criteria. The Bad Ideas Weekend chairs reported that getting events approved by MIT administration was “quite a journey”—with Webb noting that “on multiple occasions, we were suddenly informed that various events were being canceled or restricted.” However, following meetings involving concerned parties and the assistance of Environment, Health, and Safety coordinator Alice Ursella, Bad Ideas weekend ran successfully with “everyone satisfied and excited.” Event planners also felt the organizing committee did well providing necessary resources and funds. “The committee was great in providing us with all the things we needed,” stated Zu. Ayoub echoed this sentiment, remarking that “they answered all our questions” and “were always there to support us!” When asked about whether Bad Ideas Weekend would continue in the following years given the upcoming renovation of East Campus, Webb declared that “there are absolutely plans to continue Bad Ideas Weekend into renovations.” In particular, they noted that one of their goals was to incorporate other dorms into Bad Ideas Weekend (2<sup>nd</sup> Baguettes was held in McCormick, Cursed Kimbap was held in Next House). Furthermore, Webb expressed their “hope [that] the events next year are larger and even more terrible than those we hosted this year.” Bad Ideas Weekend was sponsored by the MIT Dormitory Council, Large Event Fund, and DeFlorez Fund for Humour. Students can send feedback regarding the event to the organizers at [chad-ideas-couch@mit.edu](mailto:chad-ideas-couch@mit.edu).

Don’t be stationery!  
Pick up a pen and write for The Tech  
*join@tech.mit.edu*



sludgy

Solution, page 4

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

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.

sunny

Solution, page 4

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

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.

PRESIDENT’S DAY

by Sally R. Stein

Solution, page 4

ACROSS

- 1 Invite to enter
- 6 Something untidy
- 10 Novel or autobiography
- 14 Speckled bean
- 15 Major dog food brand
- 16 Deserve to receive
- 17 Grand-scale stories
- 18 Chowder tidbit
- 19 “My country, ‘tis of \_\_\_”
- 20 President’s home
- 23 Company heads: Abbr.
- 24 Light brown color
- 25 Drag-race vehicle
- 29 Help out
- 30 Tool for cutting lumber
- 33 Pungent slice on a burger
- 34 Ray of sun
- 36 Cajun veggie
- 37 President’s annual address to Congress
- 40 Ripped (up)
- 41 Army sergeant’s subordinates: Abbr.
- 42 Medical professional
- 43 Healthful resort

- 44 \_\_\_ Miz (musical play)
- 45 Took a break
- 46 Coupe or convertible
- 47 \_\_\_ the line (behaved)
- 49 President’s workroom
- 55 Room-size floor coverings
- 56 Small fruit pie
- 57 Stories that may be “tall”
- 60 Frequently
- 61 “Small” suffix for kitchen
- 62 Tennis great Chris
- 63 Football throw
- 64 Gotten a look at
- 65 Tooth \_\_\_ (dentist’s concern)

DOWN

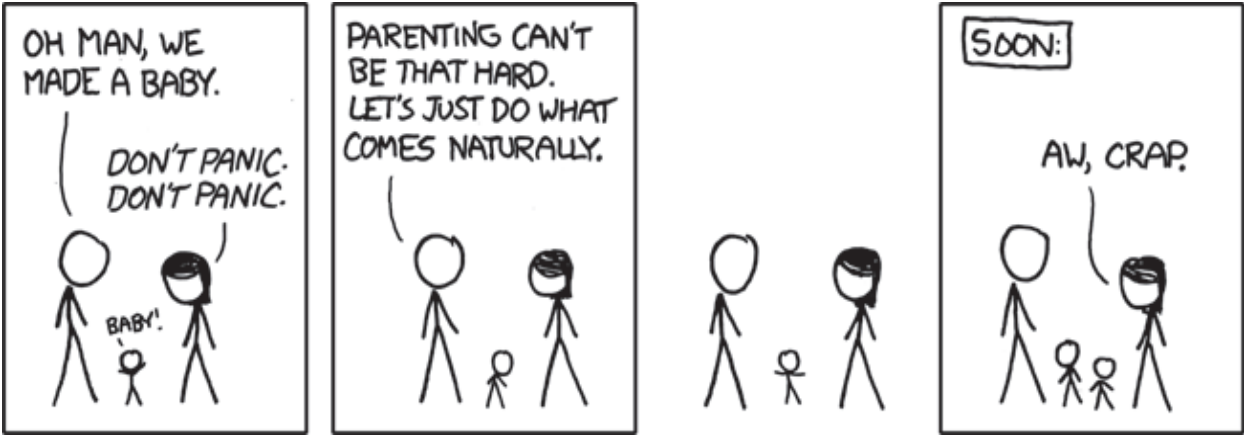
- 1 Gorilla or chimp
- 2 Small sample of soup
- 3 Make a sweater
- 4 Urge to scratch
- 5 Top of a rocket ship
- 6 Very manly
- 7 Historic immigration island
- 8 Minor argument
- 9 One of these days
- 10 Support with a wager

- 11 Island near Maui
- 12 Rocks obtained from mines
- 13 Leg joint
- 21 Get married
- 22 Possessed
- 25 Throws a party
- 26 In first place
- 27 Crown for a princess
- 28 Repetitive learning method
- 29 Oohs and \_\_\_
- 30 Garment worn with a blouse
- 31 Got out of bed
- 32 Subsided
- 34 Texter’s closest pals
- 35 And so on: Abbr.
- 36 Major burden
- 38 Runs machinery
- 39 Not yet revised, as a first draft
- 44 Washroom, for short
- 45 Football official, for short
- 46 Expenses
- 47 Rich layer cake
- 48 Frequently
- 49 Sandy golf hazard

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17						18					19			
		20			21					22				
				23				24						
25	26	27	28				29				30	31	32	
33					34	35				36				
37					38					39				
40					41					42				
43				44					45					
			46				47	48						
49	50	51				52					53	54		
55						56				57			58	59
60						61				62				
63						64				65				

- 50 Luau dance
- 51 Self-images
- 52 Past the deadline
- 53 Bat’s underground home
- 54 What a power company supplies: Abbr.
- 58 Historical period
- 59 Pigen

[674] Natural Parenting



On one hand, every single one of my ancestors going back billions of years has managed to figure it out. On the other hand, that's the mother of all sampling biases.



GUEST COLUMN

# Strong unions are a force for economic and racial justice

*Union security and the unity of all workers has been key to improving wages, working conditions, and civil rights for all*

By Nishad Gothoskar

Nearly 60 years ago, a quarter-million people rallied together for the historic “March on Washington,” where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech. What’s sometimes forgotten about the march, though, is that it was actually called the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.” The demands of the march included an end to segregation and the protection of voting rights, alongside an increase to the federal minimum wage and a federal jobs program to train and employ all unemployed workers. It was understood that ending poverty — with decent wages and full employment — was essential to achieving racial equality in practice.

**It was understood that ending poverty — with decent wages and full employment — was essential to achieving racial equality in practice.**

It’s for this reason that Dr. King was a strong and unwavering proponent of the labor movement and unions as the principal means for workers of all races to fight for improved wages, employment, and working conditions. In fact, he was in Memphis, Tennessee, standing alongside public sanitation workers on strike for equal pay just a day before he was assassinated. And it wasn’t just Dr. King who viewed unions as an integral part of the civil rights movement. Workers did too, organizing in their unions for months to attend the March. And one of the key architects and leaders of the March, A. Philip Randolph, was a longtime labor leader who organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, a union of primarily Black workers in the railroad industry. Dr. King’s legacy, alongside those of countless other civil rights leaders, exemplifies how the civil rights movement and the labor movement are so deeply intertwined.

Dr. King understood the need to unite working class people across racial lines in order to fight back against discrimination and harassment in the workplace and beyond it. In this regard, unions have always played an important role. In 1866, newly emancipated Black women working as laundresses in Jackson, Mississippi, organized the first union in the state, demanding standard pay rates that afforded

**Dr. King understood the need to unite working class people across racial lines to fight back against discrimination and harassment in the workplace and beyond it.**

greater economic independence to assert their freedom against a continuing system of white supremacy. In the 1940s, in Louisville, Kentucky, workers in the Farm Equipment Workers union made interracial solidarity a priority, fighting racism in the factory as well as in the streets, shops, and parks of Louisville. In the 1950s, meat-packing workers unionized with United Packinghouse Workers of America fought to desegregate the workplace and end discriminatory hiring practices that excluded Black women in particular. In 1957, Dr. King wrote a letter supporting workers unionized with United Electrical Workers (our union) in their fight to end racial discrimination by the Westinghouse Electric Corporation. The history of the labor movement has shown that workers win the most when we are all united. And this unity is the foundation that has enabled strong unions to fight for both economic rights and racial justice.

In this spirit, our union at MIT is a ve-

hicle for economic security, to relieve the financial stress that each of us face, but also for fighting discrimination and harassment and guaranteeing protections for immigrant workers. Our union gives us the mechanism to begin addressing these issues, but we know they won’t disappear overnight. So while our immediate goal is to secure a strong contract, we ultimately cannot lose sight of the importance of building a strong and lasting union in which all workers are united. This maximizes our negotiating power to collectively improve our working and living conditions and our ability to hold the employer accountable to all graduate workers.

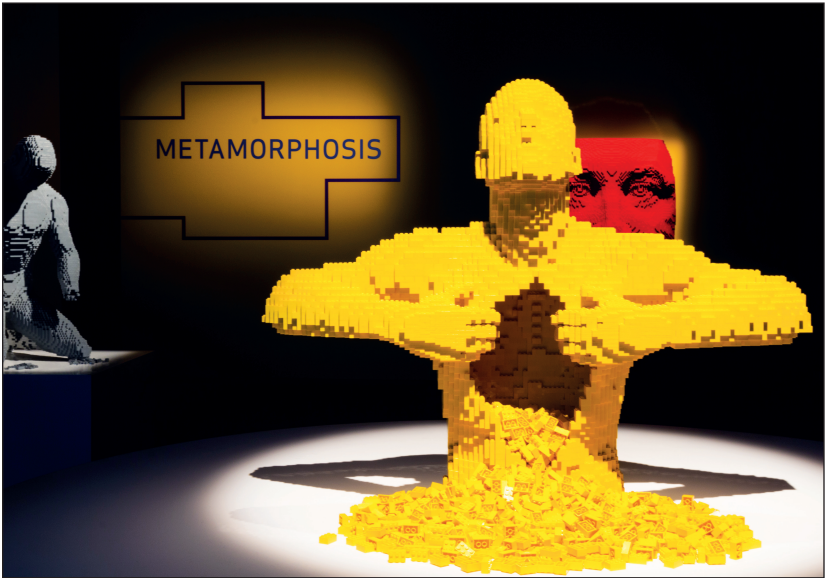
An important element of this unity is all workers contributing financially to ensure that our union has the resources to organize, enforce, and improve upon the gains we all win together. This concept is known as union security, and is a cornerstone of strong, long-lasting unions capable of continually improving wages, benefits, and respect and fair treatment on the job for years and decades to come. The arguments against union security are often framed as a “freedom of choice,” that each worker should have the freedom to choose whether they are members of the union. But the reality is that unions without union security consistently win lower wages and fewer benefits than those that have a strong union security clause in their contract.

**But the reality is that unions without union security consistently win lower wages and fewer benefits than those that have a strong union security clause in their contract.**

Employers know this very well and, in an attempt to weaken unions, have pushed so-called “right-to-work” legislation that denies union security in some states (though not in Massachusetts) and all public-sector workplaces. These laws have racist roots, conceived in the 1940s as a means to reinforce Jim Crow segregation, divide workers, and reduce wages, particularly for Black workers. Dr. King put it best: “In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as ‘right to work.’ It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights ... Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining by which unions have improved wages and working conditions of everyone ... Wherever these laws have been passed, wages are lower, job opportunities are fewer and there are no civil rights.”

Each and every one of us benefits personally from a strong union. Any one of us can face harassment, discrimination, or bullying; delays by the International Student Office; dangerous working conditions; or late pay. But having a strong union with the resources to enforce our contract will empower us to force MIT to address these issues. Union security also strengthens our ability to continue winning improvements in all future contracts. Fortunately, we, as MIT grad workers, have the right to union security in our contract. But MIT is dragging its feet. So as we fight for an empowering grievance procedure for harassment, discrimination, and bullying as well as international worker rights, health and safety, and wage increases, it is just as essential that we fight for union security in our contract. We fought to win our union because we know it’s the most effective vehicle to address our needs. Now we need to ensure that our union remains strong for years and decades to come.

*Nishad Gothoskar is a third-year PhD student in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and a Bargaining Committee Representative and member of the MIT Graduate Student Union.*



COURTESY OF DARREN DELUCA

**Yellow**, a life-size sculpture of a person tearing their chest apart to reveal hundreds of LEGOs falling out. Yellow symbolizes the “metamorphosis Nathan has been on his journeys.”



KELLY KIM—THE TECH

**The sticky buns at State Street Provisions** are served piping hot, bringing out the toasty flavors of the pecans, vanilla and toffee while being perfectly gooey and indulgent.



KELLY KIM—THE TECH

**State Street Provisions’** blueberry pancakes are filled with countless fresh blueberries and topped with their whipped honey butter and pitcher of maple syrup.

## Solution to sludgy

from page 3

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

## Solution to sunny

from page 3

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

## Solution to Crossword

from page 3

P	I	N	T	O	A	L	P	O	E	A	R	N
E	P	I	C	S	C	L	A	M	T	H	E	E
T	H	E	W	H	I	T	E	H	O	U	S	E
C	E	O	S	T	A	N						
H	O	T	R	O	D	A	I	D	S	A	W	
O	N	I	O	N	B	E	A	M	O	K	R	A
S	T	A	T	E	O	F	T	H	E	U	N	I
T	O	R	E	P	F	C	S	N	U	R	S	E
S	P	A	L	E	S	R	E	S	T	E	D	
C	A	R	T	O	E	D						
T	H	E	O	V	A	L	O	F	F	I	C	E
R	U	G	S	T	A	R	T	A	T	A	L	E
A	L	O	T	E	T	T	E	E	V	E	R	T
P	A	S	S	E	E	N	D	E	C	A	I	

Email us at  
join@tech.mit.edu

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You’d be a great  
CATCH!

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

**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](mailto: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.

Letters, columns, and cartoons must bear the authors’ signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. *The Tech* reserves the right to edit or condense letters; shorter letters will

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**Guest columns** are opinion articles submitted by members of the MIT or local community.

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