thetech.com

Volume 143, Number 20



WEATHER, p. 2 FRI: 50°F | 38°F Sunny. SAT: 50°F | 35°F

Thursday, December 14, 2023

GOOD LUCK WITH FINALS WEEK AND HAVE A GOOD WINTER BREAK!



MIT President Dr. Sally Kornbluth testifies at a House Education and Workforce Committee Hearing on confronting antisemitism, at the U.S. Capitol, Tuesday, December 5.

President Kornbluth testifies MIT holds annual before U.S. house committee Winterfest festival in hearing on antisemitism

Kornbluth on protest chants: "There's a difference between what we can say to each other - that is, what we have a right to say - and what we should say as members of one community."

By Alex Tang, Alor Sahoo, Russel Ismael, Josh Nix, Tina Zhang, Jayashabari Shankar STAFF WRITERS

A Summon To Testify

MIT President Sally Kornbluth testified before the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce on Dec. 5. The committee titled the hearing "Holding Campus Leaders Accountable and Confronting Antisemitism" in a press release dated Nov. 28. Harvard President Claudine Gay and former University of Pennsylvania President Elizabeth Magill, and Pamela Nadell, professor of history and Jewish studies at American University, were present alongside Kornbluth.

The Testimony

In her opening statement, Kornbluth stated that she "abhor[s] administration "is combatting it actively." She added that since Oct. 7, her campus communications have been "crystal clear efforts to combat antisemitism." about the dangers of antisemi- She noted that she is "deeply contism and about the atrocity of the Hamas terror attack."

With regards to the chants in recent demonstrations, Kornbluth believes that "there's a difference between what we can say to each other - that is, what we have a right to say - and what we should say, as members of one community."

Kornbluth said that "the right to free speech certainly does not extend to harassment, discrimination or incitement to violence in our community." She added that policies have been established to "regulate the time, place, and manner of demonstrations" and that "reports of student conduct that may violate our policies are

antisemitism" and said that her handled through our faculty-led Committee on Discipline."

Kornbluth said the administration "is intensifying our central cerned about the rise in prejudice and hatred against Arabs, Muslims, and Palestinians, nationally and in our community, and we are determined to combat that as

noted Kornbluth efforts amongst members of the MIT community to "counter hate." She said, "thanks to an inspiring group of faculty members, we are seeing more discussion among students with conflicting views."

Kornbluth concluded, "We know there is further work to do. But we are seeing progress. And MIT's vital mission continues."

House Committee, Page 2

Kornbluth: "Winterfest is more than a holiday celebration."

By Tina Zhang and Russel Ismael

Members of the MIT community gathered at the Stata Center and Koch Institute on Dec. 12 to celebrate the annual Winterfest. Hundreds attended, with many sampling various treats and enjoying the holiday ambience.

Josh Marchant, a graduate student in Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology program, said in an interview with The Tech that he enjoyed the event.

"It's been a great event. The food's been enjoyable, and I was able to remind my wife to come, so we've been able to enjoy it," Marchant stated. "Overall, it's been a fun way to destress over

the semester."

Marchant further said that the Winterfest helped "kick off a transition to the holidays" and believed that the MIT community congregating at Stata was a "really big plus." He added that it would be great if these events continued.

"It's nice to sort of be on campus without feeling the stress of being on campus over a test or an assignment, and do something a little more fun and relaxing [instead]." Marchant said.

In an email to The Tech, MIT resident Kornhluth said "this was my first Winterfest, and I was delighted to be part of it."

For Kornbluth, the Winterfest provides an "an opportunity to

Winterfest, Page 2

IN SHORT

Final exams will begin next week, beginning from Dec. 18 to Dec. 22.

Final grade deadline for subjects without final exams will be Dec. 19.

Pre-registration for the spring term and IAP begins Dec. 1.

The first day of IAP will begin Jan. 8.

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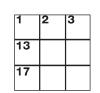
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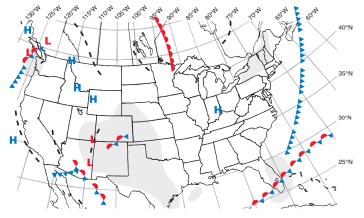
WEATHER

Sparkling days for the start of finals

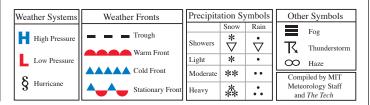
By Rine Pan METEOROLOGIST

As we head into the end of the semester, we're luckily seeing some days filled with bright sunlight to recharge your morale before the exam season begins. The end of the week brings about both unusually warm weather as well as the final crunch time for most students on campus, so be sure to take breaks from cramming in the library to enjoy the rejuvenating weather over the weekend.

Cloudy weather on Sunday brings this brief respite to a close, with nighttime showers acting as a precursor for more precipitation further along the week. Keep in mind that we might be seeing some snowy scenes at the start of next week, as flurry systems move from western Massachusetts and upstate New York into the harbor as many students prepare to head out for break. Make sure to bundle up to stay warm and healthy for the last stretch before freedom!



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, November 30, 2023



Extended Forecast

Today: Sunny. High around 38°F (3°C). Northwest winds 10-13 mph.

Tonight: Clear skies. Low around 32°C (0°C). Southwest winds around 10-15 mph.

Friday: Sunny. High around 50°F (10°C) and low around 38°F (3°C). West winds around 11-13 mph. Saturday: Sunny. High around 50°F (10°C) and low around 35°F (2°C). Northwest winds around 9-12 mph.

Sunday: Cloudy with a chance of rain. High around 50°F (10°C) and low around 42°F (6°C). Southeast winds around 7-10 mph.

Kornbluth to speak on accusations | Winterfest of antisemitism on MIT campus

House Committee, from Page 1

A contentious hearing followed. Representatives questioned the presidents, including President Kornbluth.

Kornbluth stated, "college campuses are a crucible of ideas where students are side by side." She highlighted that "speech can be a form of harassment and our policies make absolutely clear that harassment is punishable."

Kornbluth added, "Coming from a majority STEM institution, I cannot even think of a place where it's even more important for our students to also learn the humanities...we all have to live and work together as people and in order for us to be successful."

The Aftermath

Later on the afternoon of Dec. 5, Kornbluth wrote in an email to the MIT community saying that in the weeks following Oct. 7, students, faculty, and staff "have shared with me a wide range of views on the tragic situation in the Middle East and on its repercussions on our campus." She stated that every conversation has taught me something important."

Kornbluth highlighted the Institute's new effort, "Standing Together against Hate." She also noted a faculty letter that

states "we must maintain and strengthen the bonds of friendship and collegiality that cut across political, ethnic, and religious differences, especially in the face of the rising tides of violence and hatred abroad and on university campuses."

In concluding her email, Kornbluth said, "We cannot and must not let events in the world drive us apart, or erode our respect for each other's humanity, or thwart the great mission we're here to pursue together."

On Dec. 7, the MIT Corporation released a statement affirming its support for President Kornbluth. Mark P. Gorenberg '76, Chair of the MIT corporation, wrote that "I and the Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation entirely support President Kornbluth."

The full statement from the Corporation is as follows: "The MIT Corporation chose Sally to be our president for her excellent academic leadership, her judgment, her integrity, her moral compass, and her ability to unite our community around MIT's

She has done excellent work in leading our community, including in addressing antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of hate, all of which we reject utterly at MIT. She has our full and unreserved

held at Stata, Koch



The MIT community enjoys the Fall 2023 Winterfest celebrations in Stata, Tuesday, December 12.

Winterfest, from Page 1

come together in the spirit of this season of light and goodwill, and a reminder to cherish our colleagues and friends.'

She added, "It's a wonderful MIT tradition to mark the end of the fall semester and kick off the winter season by gathering with colleagues and friends for a well-deserved break.'

Furthermore, Kornbluth said that "I've been working with my leadership team on larger issues about strengthening the fabric of our community, and Winterfest is a continuation of that effort." Kornbluth also highlighted the collective efforts of the Institute's events team that planned the Winterfest event.

"I'm grateful to the Institute Events team for all the work and planning they put into creating it," She wrote. "Events like this, where we can be together as a community, are always important, but they are especially meaningful in difficult times."

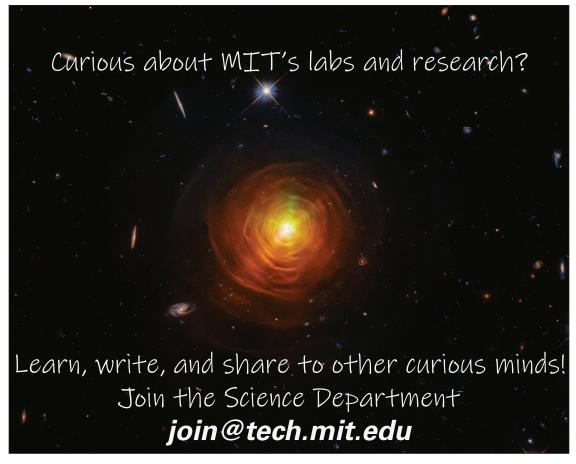
Prior to assuming the presidency of MIT, Kornbluth served as Provost of Duke Uniersity. In comparison to MIT. Kornbluth wrote, "We had lovely winter celebrations at Duke, too, but it was less chilly and didn't get dark as early as it does here." Nevertheless, she said, "Winterfest is a great way to help create some more warmth and light."



MIT community members participate in a rally organized by MIT Coalition for Palestine in protest of the Palestinian-Israel conflict, Wednesday, December 13.



Thursday, December 14, 2023





YOUR SPORT IN THE TECH?

Upcoming Sports Events

NO UPCOMING SPORTS EVENTS

FUTURE EVENTS TO BE ANNOUNCED AFTER WINTER BREAK

SPORTS BLITZ

Friday, December 1st:

• Men's Squash lost to University of Virginia 0-11

Saturday, December 2nd:

- Men's Water Polo lost to the Redlands 6-15 in the DIII Championships
- Men's Squash lost 3-6 at Dartmouth College
- Men's Basketball lost to Fitchburg State University 75–78
- Women's Basketball defeated Brandeis University 77-60

Sunday, December 3rd:

- Men's Fencing defeated Lawrence University 18–9
- Women's Fencing defeated Lawrence University 24–3
- Men's Fencing lost to St. John's University 11–16
- Women's Fencing lost to St. John's University 13–14
- Men's Squash defeated Navy 5-4
- Men's Water Polo defeated Augustana College 11–9 in the DIII Championships
- Women's Swimming and Diving placed 1st of 7 at the MIT Winter Invite
- Men's Swimming and Diving placed 2nd of 5 at the MIT Winter

 Lucido

 Tendro

 Tend
- Invite
- Women's Fencing defeated Tufts University 16–11
- Men's Fencing lost to Yale University 5–22
- Men's Fencing lost to Cornell University 11–16
- Women's Fencing lost to Cornell University 9-18
- Men's Fencing defeated Yeshiva University 27-0
 Men's Fencing defeated Yeshiva University 25-2
- Men's Fencing lost to Drew University 9–18
- Women's Fencing defeated Drew University 23-4

Tuesday, December 5th:

 Women's Basketball defeated Bridgewater State University 89-82

Wednesday, December 6th:

• Men's Basketball defeated Springfield College 72-71

Saturday, December 9th:

- Men's Basketball lost to Wheaton College 56-76
- Women's Basketball defeated Trinity College 79-68

Monday, December 11th:

- Women's Basketball played against Westfield State University

 Man's Basketball played against Hysson University
- Men's Basketball played against Husson University

WARTED



/'spôrts_rrīdərs/

noun

noun: sports writers

journalists who write about sports.

No prior experience needed! Just an interest in sports. And probably writing.

For more information, please contact ${\bf sports@the-tech.mit.edu}$

SEASON UPDATES

Fall Sports Season Summary

By Hannah Friedman

The Engineers had an electric fall season. Here are some highlights! Women's Volleyball debuted strong and ended the season with a 9th NEWMAC championship. They won the MIT Quad Tournament Title (their 11th title in the 15 year history of the event), captured the New England Challenge title for the second year in a row, and collected NEWMAC and AVCA honors. Emily Cheng and Consecrata Rozario were named to the AVCA All-America Team.

Sailing won the Toni Deutsch '58 Regatta and the Smith Trophy.

In Field Hockey, Paige Forester broke the program record for goals with a stunning total of 70 against Smith College on September 15th. The team made it all the way to the NEWMAC championships, and received NFHCA Postseason Accolades.

Women's Tennis won many awards at the MIT Invitational and Katya Shepherd Johnson led the Engineers to the Singles Semi-Finals at the ITA New England Championship (where MIT tied its program record with 12 players selected to play in the tournament).

Women's and Men's Cross Country took first place and second place respectively at the Purple Valley Classic, second place and first place respectively at the Pre-National Classic, and both the Women's and Men's team claimed the NEW-MAC championship title. Men's Cross Country also won the NCAA regional crown. Sam Acquavia and Riley Macon receive the USTFCCCA Regional Accolades.

Women's Indoor Track and Field had

Alexis Boykin set a program record in the weight throw.

Men's Lightweight Crew emerged victorious at the Quinsigamond Regatta. Women's Openweight Crew emerge victorious at the Head of the Fish.

Men's Water Polo won the Division III East Championship title. Women's Soccer claimed the NEWMAC championship title and earned the All-Region, All-American, and Regional Coaching Staff of the Year honors

Men's Fencing collected 6 top 10 finishes at The Big One and Andy Zhang was named NFC Rookie of the Year and Fencer of the year. Women's Fencing had Kristen Palmer named NCAA Woman of the Year finalist and Hannah Tao was named NFC Rookie of the Year. Both Men's Fencing and Women's Fencing held undefeated

records in the NFC Competition.

MIT Football earned NEWMAC honors.

Women's Swimming and Diving had multiple record breaking performances that earned them the win at the MIT Invite.

Overall, MIT had 138 student athletes qualify for the NEWMAC Fall Academic All-Conference Honors and 7 Engineers were named to the NEWMAC All-Sportsmanship Team.

These are some of the big wins and awards the Engineers accomplished over the Fall season.

I recommend attending some games and showing support to our stellar student-athletes. It's time that these athletes start getting the recognition from the student body that they deserve.

A growing COVID-19 variant has taken off this holiday season

Scientists are narrowing in on the fastest-growing CO-VID-19 variant, learning more about the strain that has coincided with a rise in cases as Americans head into the holidays

The JN.1 variant now accounts for more than one-fifth of all cases, based on estimates Friday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In the CDC's latest Nowcast reporting period, cases involving this mutation make up between 15% and 29% of COVID infections. The variant previously accounted for an estimated 8% of cases.

This uptick suggests that JN.1 could be more transmissible and better at slipping past people's immune systems, the CDC said. Hospitalizations and deaths, indicators for COVID-19 spread, also remain elevated, with cases rising in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic. This follows a pattern of respiratory illnesses increasing in winter months with people indoors and visiting friends and family for the holidays.

"The narrative here is that JN.1 may be somewhat more contagious," Dr. Rebecca Wurtz, a professor at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, told USA TODAY. "Thanksgiving happened, winter is starting to happen, and that's probably what caused it to jump like it did."

The COVID-19 virus is constantly mutating, like any virus, and is bound to create more variants to survive. JN.1 was first detected in the U.S. in September. It had previously been classified with BA.2.86, or Pirola, a descendant of the omicron family, which some researchers early on worried could pose risks, but cases have recently declined in CDC estimates. In contrast, the original omicron variant overwhelmed hospital systems in 2022.

Dr. William Schaffner, a professor of infectious diseases at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, in Nashville, Tennessee, likened JN.1 and other subvariants to children and grandchildren of omicron.

"It's likely to continue to dominate," Schaffner said. "We anticipate it will be succeeded by other grandchildren, variants, down the road."

-Eduardo Cuevas, USA Today

5 takeaways from Ukrainian President Zelensky's critical trip to Washington

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was in Washington on Tuesday to make an in-person plea for the military and economic aid he said is necessary to continue Ukraine's defense against Russia's invasion.

Zelensky, visiting Washington for the third time since the war in Ukraine began in February 2022, met with members of Congress Tuesday morning and President Joe Biden later in the afternoon. Zelensky's meetings came on the same day the US declassified new intelligence on Russia's losses so far in the war. The intelligence shows US officials believe the Russian military has continued to suffer heavy losses in the war – but is also determined to continue pushing forward.

The visit comes as a deal for a supplemental funding package that includes crucial aid for the war-torn country remains logjammed by congressional Republicans who want the Biden administration to make concessions on border security and immigration policy in exchange for the aid package. A deal remains unlikely with a holiday recess looming.

While Biden has said he is open to compromise, a bloc of Republicans remains wary at the idea of adding to the more than \$100 billion in Ukraine aid already approved by Congress. Biden officials have said nobody is better at making the case for his country than Zelensky himself.

—Michael Williams, CNN

Judge pauses Trump election interference case

The federal judge overseeing Donald Trump's 2020 election interference case has temporarily paused all procedural deadlines while appeals over a major issue play out – which could lead to his March 2024 trial date being pushed back.

The order from Judge Tanya Chutkan acknowledged that she no longer has jurisdiction over aspects of the criminal case while the DC Circuit Court of Appeals considers whether Trump is immune and can be tried. In a bid to speed that appeals process, special counsel Jack Smith has asked the Supreme Court to step in.

Chutkan said in her order that the trial date of March 4, 2024, could be affected, and that she would reconsider that date when the appeals process has concluded.

Chutkan, however, said that the pause does not bar her from enforcing measures she has already imposed to "safeguard the integrity of these proceedings," including the limited gag order against Trump and his conditions of release.

"(I)f a criminal defendant could bypass those critical safeguards merely by asserting immunity and then appealing its denial, then during the appeal's pendency, the defendant could irreparably harm any future proceedings and their participants," she wrote.

Earlier this week, Smith asked the US Supreme Court to take the rare step of skipping over the federal appeals court to quickly decide fundamental issues to the Trump case – whether the former president has immunity from criminal prosecution for alleged crimes he committed while in office, and whether Trump is protected by double jeopardy because he was acquitted by the Senate during his impeachment trial.

Prosecutors simultaneously asked the DC Circuit to expedite its review of the immunity matter, so that the case can be quickly appealed to the high court under the regular appeals process if the justices don't agree to immediately hear the case.

—Hannah Rabinowitz and Katelyn Polantz, CNN

House Reps vote to authorize impeachment inquiry into Biden

Scott Wong, Kyle Stewart, Rebecca Kaplan

NBC NEWS

Washington — The GOP-controlled House on Wednesday voted to authorize its impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden — a formal step Republicans believe will grant them the ability to better enforce their subpoenas in the courts.

The 221-212 vote was along party lines, with all Republicans voting yes and all Democrats voting no.

"The impeachment power resides solely with the House of Representatives. If a majority of the House now says we're in an official impeachment inquiry as part of our constitutional duty to do oversight, that carries weight. That's going to help us get these witnesses in," Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, one of the leaders of the impeachment push, told reporters.

Earlier Wednesday, Republicans had hoped to depose the president's son, Hunter Biden, arguing that the inquiry vote would give them better legal standing to hold him in contempt of Congress should he fail to show.

In a dramatic moment, the Biden son did appear — not behind closed doors as Republicans had demanded but at a news conference outside of the Capitol, where he again offered to testify in a public hearing.

"I'm here today to make sure that the House committee's illegitimate investigations of my family did not proceed on distortions, manipulated evidence, and lies. And I'm here today to acknowledge that I've made mistakes in my life, and wasted opportunities and privileges I was afforded," Hunter Biden said, reading a prepared statement. "For that, I'm responsible, for that I'm accountable and for that, I'm making amends."

He rejected GOP claims that his father was involved in his business dealings — "it did not happen," he declared — and slammed the investigation as completely politically motivated.

Earlier this year, a handful of moderate Republicans had voiced skepticism about whether there was enough evidence to kick off an impeachment investigation into the Biden family's business dealings. So then-Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., under pressure from Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., and others on the right, decided to unilaterally launch the investigation in September without forcing Republicans in more purple districts to take the tough vote.

Some conservative and centerright Republicans said they would not vote to impeach Biden now.

"It's too early. The impeachment inquiry allows us to do our due diligence," said Rep. Stephanie Bice, R-Okla.

Addressing reporters Tuesday, Johnson wouldn't engage on whether there could be a situation in which the House doesn't eventually pursue articles of impeachment.

"We have no choice but to fulfill our constitutional responsibility; we have to take the next step. We're not making a political decision — it's not. It's a legal decision," Johnson said, flanked by members of his leadership team.

"We're not going to prejudge the outcome of this," he said. "We can't, because, again, it's not a political calculation. We're following the law."

Supreme Court agrees to hear dispute over abortion pill

Melissa Quinn

CBS NEWS

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court said Wednesday it will take up the Biden administration's bid to maintain access to a widely used abortion pill, marking the first dispute involving abortion that the high court will hear since members of its conservative majority overturned Roe v. Wade last year.

The high court intervened in the case during an earlier stage, leaving the availability of mifepristone unchanged until the justices render a final decision, which is expected by the end of June and would have a nationwide impact, even in states where abortion is legal.

In response to the Supreme Court's decision to take up the case, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said the Biden administration will continue to stand behind the FDA's approval of mifepristone as safe and effective. She warned that a lower court ruling limiting the drug's

availability, if upheld, "threatens to undermine the FDA's scientific, independent judgment and would reimpose outdated restrictions on access to safe and effective medication abortion."

The legal fight involves steps the FDA has taken in recent years to expand access to mifepristone, which is taken together with a second drug, misoprostol, to terminate an early pregnancy.

The FDA approved the abortion pill in 2000, and relaxed the rules surrounding its use through a series of actions in recent years. In 2016, the agency extended how late into a pregnancy mifepristone could be taken from seven weeks to 10 weeks; reduced the number of inperson visits required from three to one; and expanded the health care providers who can prescribe and dispense the drugs. In 2021, the FDA $\,$ removed the in-person dispensing requirement entirely, meaning patients could receive mifepristone through the mail.

The challenge to mifepristone's approval and the FDA's relaxing of rules for its use marked the latest effort from abortion-rights opponents to restrict access to abortion through the courts, even after their watershed victory 18 months ago with Roe's reversal.

More than a dozen states have enacted near-total bans on abortion following the Supreme Court's decision, and 15 states restrict access to medication abortion, such as by requiring that the drugs are provided by a physician or prohibiting the use of telemedicine for mediation abortion.

The Biden administration, meanwhile, has sought to make abortion pills more readily available. The FDA in January allowed retail pharmacies to dispense mifepristone, and numerous Democratic-led states have enacted shield laws that protect health care providers who prescribe mifepristone to patients in states with stringent abortion laws.

Federal Reserve leaves interest rate unchanged, hints at 2024 cuts

Aimee Picchi

CBS NEWS

The Federal Reserve on Wednesday said it is holding its benchmark interest rate steady, extending a reprieve for borrowers after the fastest series of hikes in four decades. The central bank also indicated it expects three rate cuts in 2024.

The Fed said in its policy statement that it will maintain the federal funds rate in a range of 5.25% to 5.5%, marking the third consecutive pause since July, when it last raised rates. Federal Bank officials also signaled the benchmark rate could be cut by 0.75% percentage point in 2024, according to a chart that documents their projections.

"The appropriate level [of the federal funds rate] will be 4.6% at the end of 2024" if the Fed's economic projections hold up, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said during a conference call to discuss today's decision.

Stocks rose modestly after the

Fed's statement, with the S&P 500 gaining 0.5% immediately after the release of the projections signaling the expected path for rates next year. Rate cuts by the Fed would reduce borrowing costs across the economy, providing relief to consumers who have been slammed by higher costs for all types of loans, from mortgages to credit card debt.

Fed officials have raised the federal funds rate 11 times since starting the tightening cycle in March of 2022 to combat the hottest inflation in 40 years. The strategy has largely succeeded in dousing inflation and even led prices to fall for some products, such as used cars, furniture and appliances.

Most Wall Street economists think the Fed is done with additional rate hikes, although they project the bank will likely keep the benchmark rate steady for several more months. Now, the guessing game is when policymakers might start to lower rates, with the majority of analysts

forecasting May or June 2024 as when the central bank might make its first cut.

"Importantly, Fed officials now expect to cut rates by 75 basis points next year, more than the 50bps they were forecasting in September," noted High Frequency Economics in a research note.

Fed Chairman Jerome Powell "will undoubtedly acknowledge progress on growth and inflation and may well characterize the runway for a soft landing as widening," noted David Kelly, chief global strategist at J.P. Morgan Asset Management in an email before the announcement.

"However, he will not want to trigger any further rally in the stock and bond markets towards the end of the year and, consequently, his remarks may express more confidence in the outlook for real economic growth and more doubt about the decline in inflation than he really feels or the data warrant," he added.

Natasha Bertrand, Katie Bo Lillis

CNN

GAZA — Nearly half of the airto-ground munitions that Israel has used in Gaza in its war with Hamas since October 7 have been unguided, otherwise known as "dumb bombs," according to a new US intelligence assessment.

The assessment, compiled by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and described to CNN by three sources who have seen it, says that about 40-45% of the 29,000 air-to-ground munitions Israel has used have been unguided. The rest have been precision-guided munitions, the assessment says.

Unguided munitions are typically less precise and can pose a greater threat to civilians, especially in such a densely populated area like Gaza. The rate at which Israel is using the dumb bombs may be contributing to the soaring civilian death toll.

On Tuesday, President Joe Biden said Israel has been engaged in "indiscriminate bombing" in Gaza. The reporting on the assessment comes at an extremely sensitive time in US-Israeli relations, as the White House struggled on Wednesday to explain Biden's comment that Israel is engaged in "indiscriminate bombing" while at the same time claiming that Israel is trying to protect civilians.

A growing rift between the two countries has opened over how the Israeli military is carrying out its operations in Gaza in its war against Hamas, which it launched after Hamas killed more than 1,200 Israelis on October 7.

Biden said on Tuesday that Israel is losing the support of the international community as the death toll rises in Gaza, where more than 18,000 Palestinians have been killed over the last two months, according to the Hamas-run Gaza Ministry of Health. The US is also becoming increasingly isolated internationally as it refuses to back calls for a cease-fire in the conflict.

A US official told CNN that the US believes that the Israeli military is using the dumb bombs in conjunction with a tactic called "dive bombing," or dropping a bomb while diving steeply in a fighter jet, which the official said makes the bombs more precise because it gets it closer to its target. The official said the US believes that an unguided munition dropped via dive-bombing is similarly precise to a guided munition.

Kirby said on Wednesday that Israel is "doing everything they can to reduce civilian casualties." But the US has repeatedly urged Israel to be more precise and deliberate in its targeting of Hamas fighters inside Gaza, CNN has reported.

Still, the Biden administration currently has no plans to place conditions on the military aid it is providing to Israel, CNN reported on Wednesday. That is despite growing calls by Democratic lawmakers and human rights organizations for the US to stop providing weapons unless Israel does more to protect civilians. A US official said that Biden ultimately believes that a strategy of quiet pressure on Israel to change its tactics has been more effective than threatening to withhold weapons.

Arctic Report Card proves "time for action is now" on climate change

Emily Mae Czachor

CBS NEWS

World — Not unlike the rest of the Earth, this summer was the hottest ever recorded in the Arctic, where scientists say human-caused climate change is heating things up faster than anywhere else in the world. Marked consequences of that have already been seen and felt in communities in and around the planet's northernmost polar region, and their domino effects could end up being even more severe and widespread than they are now.

Citing its latest Arctic Report Card — an annual assessment of how the region is faring environmentally and released this week — the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration warned that ongoing carbon emissions, in the United States and beyond, will only continue to drive dramatic changes in the Arctic that in turn contribute to extreme weather events in places far from there. Officials with the agency urged people to take action.

"The overriding message from this year's report card is that the time for action is now," said Rick Spinrad, the administrator of the NOAA, in a statement. "NOAA and our federal partners have ramped up our support and collaboration with state, tribal and local communities to help build climate resilience. At the same time, we as a nation and global community must dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are driving these changes."

The report came out after the United Nations' weather agency declared earlier this year that the planet had experienced its hottest three-month stretch on record over the summer, with experts drawing distinct connections to between the soaring temperatures and devastating wildfires that scorched huge areas of land across multiple continents and depleted air quality to an extent that threatened human health. And, more recently, the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service announced that 2023 was globally the hottest year on

record, too.

Changes in the Arctic region directly impacted some of the extreme weather this summer across large and more southern parts of North America, with experts linking "unprecedented" polar temperature increases to the warmer spring and early snowmelt over northern Canada that laid the foundation for its worst wildfire season to date.

The consequences could extend further, as the 2023 report showed a continued decline in sea ice extent and melting on the highest point on Greenland's ice sheet — which has only happened five times in 34 years. A separate study on melting in Greenland, published in November, showed that ice shelved in the region lost more than 1/3 of its volume in the last 50 years because of rising temperatures.

The 2023 Arctic Report Card showcased communities and organizations, like the Alaska Arctic Observatory, that are working on solutions to combat climate change and its farreaching impacts.

In Moscow soldiers' wives make camouflage nets, minefield signs

Andrew Osborn

REUTERS

Moscow — Natalia Yermakova's husband, Alexander, has been fighting in Ukraine for over a year after responding to President Vladimir Putin's mobilisation call as a volunteer. Wounded in the leg, he was operated on and then sent back to the front.

A believer in what Russia calls its "special military operation" against Ukraine, Natalia is toiling as a volunteer in a "Family Battalion" in Moscow.

She is one of a group of around 40 mostly female relatives of mobilised men who thread camouflage netting, make signs to mark minefields, gather candles to be used in dug-outs, and put food parcels together in their free

The relatives take turns accompanying the deliveries they assemble - in a more-than-30-year-old van - to the Russian military in what Yermakova calls "the new territories" - Ukrainian land annexed by Russia.

"We really want to support them (the soldiers) morally and emotionally and send them a message...that what they are doing there is needed by people here," Yermakova told Reuters, while taking a break from threading a giant camouflage net.

Some wives of Russian soldiers fighting in Ukraine are demanding that their husbands, who they say have not been given enough breaks to spend time with their families, be demobilised and their places taken by others

"I believe that Russia is waking up, waking up from its sleep, and understands that it (the war) is not just happening for no reason and that there are compelling reasons for it."

That's a reference to the Kremlin's narrative that the conflict is part of a wider existential struggle for a fairer world order against what Putin sees as a decadent West bent on containing Pussia

The West brands Russia's actions in Ukraine as a brutal and unpro-

voked land grab, but this view finds little purchase among Russians like Yermakova. They accuse Ukraine of mistreating Russian speakers in the east since 2014 when a Russian-backed uprising erupted there. Kyiv denies the charge.

Yermakova said threading camouflage nets to help conceal trenches and to fit on soldiers' helmets was the volunteers' main task because it could help save their husbands' lives by keeping them safe from enemy drones.

She and others have also started sewing bandages and baking apple and cabbage pies to send to their men.

Yermakova said she had made several delivery runs, describing the area close to the frontline as "a different world".

Despite the grim nature of war, she said that she and her husband tried to bring a bit of normality to their lives by practising tango dancing, something they both loved, on the rare occasions they saw each other.

Somalia secures \$4.5 billion debt relief deal with intl. creditors

Somalia on Wednesday secured a \$4.5 billion debt relief deal from its international creditors, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank said, which will allow the nation to develop economically and take on new projects.

The deal comes as part of a debt forgiveness program —called the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative— overseen by both organizations. As a result of its participation in the program, Somalia's external debt will fall from 64 percent of GDP in 2018 to less than 6 percent of GDP by the end of 2023, the IMF and World Bank say in a joint news release.

Somalia's national debt currently exceeds \$5 billion, according to official figures.

U.S. Treasury said it intends to cancel 100 percent of Somalia's remaining claims and "urges Somalia's other bilateral creditors to be equally generous and to move expeditiously."

The deal is "a significant milestone in Somalia's path to continued recovery and meaningful reform to promote greater stability and economic opportunities for the Somali people," U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said.

"Debt forgiveness will lead to a change in the world's perception of the country's economic stability, he said. "Somalia will be able to access global funds and investments from all over the world, as it is open to international financial markets."

Somalia remains one of the world's poorest countries, beset mostly by security challenges stemming from years of unrest.

Debt relief will free up revenue, including from meager but expanding domestic sources, to invest in key public infrastructure, said Mohamed Mohamud Adde, an independent political analyst and academic based in Mogadishu.

"It is crucial for the Somali government to have its debts cleared, since the government is not able to raise taxes from the public and cannot borrow money from international institutions due to these debts," he said. "The old infrastructure of Somalia has been eroded by time and civil war. Thus, building new roads is essential for the country's development. This would create jobs and facilitate people's ability to trade with each other."

-Fatima Hussein and Omar Faruk, Associated Press

Why the Indian Ocean could be China's Achilles' heel in a Taiwan war

Every day, nearly 60 fully loaded very large crude-oil carriers sail between the Persian Gulf and Chinese ports, carrying about half of the oil that powers the world's second-largest economy.

As the vessels enter the South China Sea, they ply waters increasingly controlled by China's growing military, from the missile batteries and airfields at its bases on disputed islands to its stealthy Type 055 destroyers.

But when crossing the Indian Ocean, joined by others headed to China from Africa and Brazil, these tankers lack protection in a naval theatre dominated by the U.S.

A dozen military attaches and scholars say that vulnerability is now being scrutinised as Western military and academic strategists discreetly game scenarios about how a conflict with China over Taiwan, or elsewhere in East Asia, could evolve or escalate.

In a major war, Chinese oil tankers in the Indian Ocean "would find themselves very vulnerable", said David Brewster, a security scholar at the Australian National University.

"Chinese naval vessels would effectively be trapped in the Indian Ocean and ... they would have little or no air support, because there are no bases or facilities of its own that (China) could rely on."

Four envoys and eight analysts familiar with discussions in Western and Asian capitals, some speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive topic, said this enduring weakness gives China's adversaries a ladder of escalatory options, especially in a drawn-out conflict, like Russia's war on Ukraine.

—Greg Torode, Reuters

Images of stripped, humiliated Palestinians draw condemnation

The images of the Palestinian men, stripped to their underwear, forced to kneel, some bound, some blindfolded in the custody of Israeli soldiers, were certain to provoke extreme emotions.

When they exploded on social media, similar language across multiple tweets suggested a campaign — organized or spontaneous — to get them to the public.

As photos and video spread on X, Facebook and other platforms last week, they were picked up by Israeli media. "Images circulate of dozens of Hamas terrorists surrendering in Gaza," the Jerusalem Post trumpeted in a typical headline. Israel's military, which censors the Israeli media, did not object to the characterization or prevent the images' spread.

Quickly, though, claims that the detainees were Hamas militants were challenged. Palestinians in Gaza identified relatives who they said were not fighters. Some of them were released. The images, rights activists say, began to convey something different, and darker: an attempt to humiliate and dehumanize Palestinians.

This week, the United States, Israel's closest ally, called the images "deeply disturbing."

Now they are indelible: an enduring cause for rage among Palestinians and anger in the region. For some, they stir echoes of the tableaus of torture that emerged during the Iraq War from the U.S.-run detention center at Abu Ghraib prison.

"No world leaders asking what's the fate of Palestinians arrested, stripped, and humiliated by Israeli forces," Ruba Ali al-Hassani, an Iraqi sociologist, wrote on X soon after the images appeared. "... We live in wretched world that repeatedly tells us what it is."

For some, the public degradation triggered memories of their own ordeals. "You have no idea what this will do to you," said Mohammad Mattar, 46, a Palestinian man who was detained by Israeli settlers and soldiers in the West Bank in October and was stripped to his underwear and photographed, in images that were posted on social media.

—Kareem Fahim, William Booth, Sufian Taha, Hazem Blousha, Washington Post 6 The Tech

GUEST COLUMN

The ASA should de-recognize groups that deliberately violate MIT's content-neutral policies

Even a laudably broad commitment to free speech would not shield against the consequences of violating the ASA's bylaws

MIT has certainly had a notable series of controversial events recently regarding free speech, from the rash cancellation of Professor Dorian Abbot's EAPS lecture in 2021, to the "problematic postering" incident earlier this year, to the set of provocative speakers invited this term by the MIT Students for Open Inquiry group. Out of the first of these controversies emerged the MIT Free Speech Alliance, which advocates for expanded free speech protections at MIT (and of which I am a proud member). Subsequently, MIT adopted the MIT Statement on Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom, which is comparable to the famous Chicago Principles in formalizing freedom of speech and freedom of expression rights on campus. And while MIT is a private university and, hence, is not technically held to the same legal standard that public universities are held to in regard to First Amendment protections, I certainly hope that MIT's free speech policies would be as expansive as those enshrined under the First Amendment.

Recent events, particularly the disruptive protests held by the MIT Coalition Against Apartheid (CAA), have cast an even brighter light on MIT's free speech policies, to a far greater extent than prior controversies did. Indeed, the two recent opinion pieces in The Tech last month discussing these events both pointed to the importance of free speech on campus.

As a starting point, it is worth noting the value in not excluding "hate speech" from standard free speech protections.

My first real exposure to this concept was in 17.035 (aka 21H.181), where Harvey Silverglate was invited to speak to our class one day. Mr. Silverglate is one of the co-founders of the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), which is one of the leading advocacy groups for free speech protections on college campuses across the United States. During our conversation with him, one of my classmates raised a

hypothetical: What about students who advocate in support of hate groups or terrorist organizations (say, a local chapter of the KKK or ISIS)? Mr. Silverglate answered that those students still nonetheless had the right to free speech on campus. This answer, of course, stunned me. "This is protected speech?? Is he crazy?!" I surely thought.

However, after hearing Mr. Silverglate's explanation for his stance, along with thinking more deeply on this issue myself, I came to realize that there may indeed be rational reasons for "hate speech" to be protected as free speech.

Firstly, there is always the concern of speech regulations potentially devolving into a "slippery slope." After all, "hate speech" is already a nebulous term, so it stands to reason that it could potentially be expanded and warped further and further over time, until it encompasses a broad swath of all kinds of speech. An obvious counter to this "slippery slope" argument is that it is merely a logical fallacy, and that the arguer should simply step off the "slippery slope." In an ideal world, this could be the case; unfortunately, history suggests otherwise. In fact, these types of regulations tend to backfire, hurting the very people they ostensibly aim to protect.

Secondly, due to the nebulous nature of "hate speech," there is a strong potential for speech regulations to be enforced in a biased manner, in which a double standard applies depending on the content of the speech. To those who doubt this will occur, I would simply point to the present situation, in which it seems to unfortunately be an all-toocommon occurrence to see someone who previously was very much in favor of free speech restrictions when it came to certain speech content suddenly discover the importance of free speech protections when it comes to other speech content, or vice versa.

Finally, there is the reason that Mr. Silverglate provided for his view in my 17.035 class: He would want to know

who the KKK or ISIS supporter in the room is, if only to know not to turn his back to them. When we heard this, my classmates and I chuckled at how absurdly, yet obviously, true this was. Yes, it can be beyond painful to find out that members of your community hold hateful views; however, surely it is better, if only for your personal safety, to know *who* these people are, so that you can react accordingly.

Of course, the above three points do not mean there is no cost whatsoever associated with allowing "hate speech." I personally have experienced the costs of this myself, whether it was when a passing motorist in the Bay Area shouted at me and my other Asian-American friends to "go back to your country," or when a deranged bus rider in DC lobbed disparaging remarks about my ethnicity at me. These incidents were certainly disgusting to experience, even if I believe they nonetheless involved protected speech. And obviously, these costs can increase further to the extent that such speech grows more severe, more pervasive, or more offensive. So intuitively, there must be some line at which these costs ultimately outweigh the benefits of permissive speech policies.

The Supreme Court has established that harassment that "is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it can be said to deprive the victims of access to the educational opportunities or benefits provided by the school" crosses a line beyond standard free speech protections. This standard makes sense, as it ensures speech is protected up until the point at which it begins to seriously interfere with the ability of our fellow classmates to enjoy the benefits of attending our great school.

I have not been to campus recently, so I cannot personally attest to the current atmosphere here. However, to the extent that any students have been intimidated by rhetoric on campus to a sufficient degree such that, e.g., they are legitimately fearful to venture to

classes, and this rhetoric has been "severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive," then clearly this line would have been crossed. Such rhetoric also clearly would not necessarily need to be aimed directly at those individuals, as long as it satisfied that three-pronged test. To explicitly use one example brought up during the hearing held by the House Committee on Education and the Workforce on recent events, calls for genocide presumably satisfy both the "severe" and "objectively offensive" prongs, simply by their very nature. So, to the extent these calls were also "pervasive" (e.g., being chanted in back-to-back protests, or being repeated in locations across campus), such that the affected students could not effectively avoid this speech while going about their lives, then this rhetoric would no longer be protected speech.

Now, my understanding, based on communication from the MIT administration, is that the Committee on Discipline ("COD") is currently investigating individuals against whom complaints in this matter have been filed. Firstly, in light of recent events, it should be reiterated that the COD must investigate these complaints. Any attempt by the administration to delay, disrupt, or otherwise interfere in proceedings would be not only deeply wrong-headed and immoral, but also insulting and injurious to all the members of our community who have filed complaints. Moreover, I strongly urge the COD to provide due process to all those it investigates and to ultimately pursue proper sanctions, up to and potentially including expulsion, against all those, and only those, who crossed this line from protected "hate speech" to unprotected "severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive" harassment aimed against other members of our community, or those who violated MIT's content-neutral "time, place, and manner" policies (discussed further below).

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GUEST COLUMN

DEI bureaucracy fails the stress test

The recent outbreak of antisemitism at MIT and other campuses puts into stark relief the limits of administrative bureaucracies' ability to solve the problems of human relationships and tribalism. With great fanfare in 2021, the Reif administration announced its massive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiative which by some counts added up to about a hundred professional administrators with some variation of DEI in their titles. Though this initiative was subsequently rebranded "Belonging, Achievement, and Composition" (BAC) after the administration apparently realized the incoherence of the DEI rubric with the Institute's basic culture and mission, the bureaucrats remained. In addition, the administration enlarged and reorganized the Institute Discrimination and Harassment Response (IDHR) office, adding another couple of dozen professional administrators.

How much was spent on all of this? The employment site Glassdoor reports that the low end for salaries of Assistant Deans at MIT is about \$100K. Add up salaries of over a hundred people at this level, their support staff, benefits for all, and ordinary office overhead at average Institute burden rates, and a \$20 million annual price tag for all this feel-good bureaucracy (on top of existing student support such as counseling, psychiatric services, etc.) seems like a very fair rough estimate of the total cost. Do we all feel "belonging" and "inclusion"?

ing" and "inclusion"?

This of course leads us to last month's melee in Lobby 7 between Palestinian and Israeli supporters, and widely reported concerns primarily among the latter, of harassment, intimidation, and the like. The consequences for actions contrary to Institute regulations will hopefully be resolved by the Committee on Discipline. Independently, it seems important to point out the utter failure of this massive bureaucracy to achieve their own stated objectives:

From BAC: "The BAC initiative seeks to build a community at MIT where everyone feels welcome, valued, and respected, regardless of their background, identity, or experiences. This includes fostering a sense of connection and belonging among students, faculty, staff, and postdocs."

From IDHR: "The objective of MIT's Institute Discrimination & Harassment Response Office (IDHR) is to prevent and address discrimination and discrimination

natory harassment across the Institute."

While the DEI/BAC/IDHR bureaucracy is producing training courses for faculty, students, and staff warning that deadnaming a person who has undergone sex transition is a violent act, there are crowds chanting about violence to ethnic groups and a notential community brawl in lobby 7 between Israeli and Palestinian supporters. If the conflict in the Middle East continues, this could be only the first such occurrence. A widely publicized letter signed by hundreds of Jewish and Israeli members of the MIT community attests to the fact that they do not feel welcome, valued, and respected. It's not clear that the supporters of Palestine do either, based on Chancellor Nobles's statements that Islamophobia will be addressed in Standing Together Against Hate (STAH).

So now we are to believe that the solution, however well intentioned, is STAH: that STAH will attend to those identities (somehow) overlooked by DEI/BAC/IDHR. The evidence is incontrovertible that these bureaucracies have failed to allow (at least) our Jewish community to "feel welcome, valued and respected" or to "prevent and address discrimi-

nation and harassment" as well as having seemingly neglected emerging Islamophobia.

Obviously, the current outbreak of antisemitism must be addressed and opposed directly, but the premise that more bureaucratic acronyms and expensive overhead can resolve human relationships needs to be totally re-examined. MIT already has the highest administrative cost per student of any university in the Ivy Plus group, at \$59,506, according to the most recent financial reports that all universities whose students receive federal aid must report to the US Department of Education; the average for the group is about \$27,000.

Before we create another misguided bureaucracy—and particularly before we select the next Institute Community and Equity Officer, this failure of the existing administrative offices should be recognized by an immediate hiring freeze and a thorough examination of these programs by an objective outside party. A potential model for such an inquiry is the retention of a major law firm as MIT did in the Epstein affair, which resulted in an overhaul of the Institute's policies for accepting gifts. President Kornbluth, having inherited this bureaucracy, should have a free hand in reshaping it in light of recent events, and must not feel beholden to what in my opinion is the poor advice she has apparently received from these quarters.

If current trends do not change, there is no apparent end to the creation of administrative bloat with ever more offices perceived to be responsive to discrete identities, denoted by ever multiplying acronyms. In the long run, I can only hope that we move back toward a culture that seeks to attract talent without discrimination from wherever it may come, and that counsels us all to respect each another simply as individuals who, in Dr. King's words, "will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." And, along the way, let us reduce administrative costs so they are no more than those at peer institutions and add \$30,000 or so in annual per student savings back into student aid!

Steven C. Carhart '70, SM '72 is an active volunteer for several alumni organizations, including the MIT Free Speech Alliance, Phi Beta Epsilon Corporation, and the Carroll Wilson Committee, as well as former President of his class and Editor in Chief of The Tech, Volume 89. The views expressed here are his own.

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Finally, even to the extent that "hateful" speech or other extreme rhetoric is lawfully protected, and rightfully so, by no means does that imply such speech should be accepted as is. If anything, the opposite is true: this sick, vile sludge should frequently and consistently be called out for what it is. So, let me be clear here and unambiguously state that:

Assaulting another human being on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religion is

Finding glee in the suffering of another human being is beyond perverse. Calling for genocide is utterly evil.

No ifs, ands, or buts. For friend or foe, for a neighbor or a stranger, I will always stick to my convictions on this matter. Ultimately, refusing or ignoring to call out this speech will only lead to rampant dehumanization. And, absent a widespread collective understanding of our shared humanity, I fear that we will all spiral further and further down into an abyss of collective madness.

On that note, I also want to say, to any member of our MIT community who may have felt isolated or attacked over the past few weeks simply for existing as a living, breathing human being, you are not alone: I will gladly stand alongside you in spirit, and I will always recognize the dignity inherent in you as a fellow human being. And I am certainly always willing and happy to lend an ear if you ever want to reach out.

Now, with this discussion of "hate speech" in mind, are there any (other) limitations to free speech rights at all, whether at MIT specifically or across the United States generally, that are reasonable to enforce? The answer is yes.

For example, I generally have the freedom to rant about how the SALT deduction is terrible. But if a municipality wants to prevent me from talking about this specifically on a megaphone at 2 AM in a residential area, that municipality has the right to restrict me so long as this is part of a content-neutral, narrowly tailored noise ordinance. Similarly, public universities have the right to apply these "time, place, and manner" regulations as long as they are content-neutral and narrowly tailored, and they leave open alternative channels for the speaker(s), following the Supreme Court's threepronged test on this matter. Again, it should be noted that MIT is not a public university, and hence does not strictly need to align with this standard; fortunately, though, the "MIT Statement on Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom" appears to align with current case precedent regarding the First Amendment, specifying that:

'MIT does not protect direct threats, harassment, plagiarism, or other speech that falls outside the boundaries of the First Amendment. Moreover, the time, place, and manner of protected expression, including organized protests, may be restrained so as not to disrupt the essential activities of the Institute.

As an aside, it should be noted that merely stating an adherence to First Amendment principles does not necessarily mean, unfortunately, that these principles will always be followed. To the extent they still occur on campus, unconstitutionally broad restrictions on speech, such as wholesale bans on banners or flags, should continue to be called out and rejected as the illiberal policies they are.

Now, in regards to "time, place, and manner" restrictions, I am aware of at least two clear instances where the CAA deliberately violated such policies.

The first is the organized protest that occurred on November 2, in which members of the CAA disrupted the office of the MIT Center for International Studies ("CIS"). In a letter, the CIS Director, Professor Evan Lieberman, noted that "many staff reported having felt alarmed, intimidated and even afraid," and he followed further that "the protest involved methods that we consider to be unacceptable and a violation of MIT policy." Policies against disruptive protests occurring in semi-private office space would surely satisfy the Supreme Court's threepronged test for "time, place, and manner" regulations.

The second is the organized protest that occurred on November 9 in Lobby 7. The CAA appears to have planned to hold a protest from 8 AM to 8 PM in the Infinite. In a pre-emptive response, on November 8, the MIT administration circulated policies outlining certain areas in which protests could be held, which notably excluded Lobby 7 and the Infinite. One CAA member claimed this came as a "complete surprise" and that it "was very obvious it was a means of trying to censor this and shut down this protest." Undeterred, the CAA moved forward with its plans, first arriving in Lobby 7 at around 7:30 AM. Counter-protestors subsequently showed up, first arriving at around 9:00 AM, with the two sides then facing off for several hours. With tensions escalating, MIT staff evidently tried to have the protesters move to another location, to no avail. By noon, the MIT administration appears to have been concerned about escalating tensions leading to an outbreak of sustained violence, and, as

a result, called on all individuals to leave Lobby 7 by 12:15 PM. According to the article, all counter-protestors subsequently left, but many protestors remained, with the CAA President reportedly saying that the protestors decided it was important to maintain a "strong and unified position." Subsequently, additional, non-MITaffiliated individuals joined this protest. The protest continued until 9 PM, before finally ending.

So, was this protest protected speech, or did it violate MIT's content-neutral "time, place, and manner" regulations and thereby cross the line into unprotected speech? To answer this question, I ignore the distinction of MIT being a private university and consider First Amendment precedent generally, thereby affording the CAA greater free speech protections than it otherwise might receive.

Past precedent suggests that the initial guidelines circulated by the MIT administration the day prior to the protest did not pass the Supreme Court's three-pronged test on "time, place, and manner" regulations. In particular, these policies outlined a limited (albeit admittedly large in area) set of outdoor spaces in which protests could occur, and further specified that "[t] hese spaces must be reserved in advance with reasonable notice." Given that these policies were only circulated the day prior to the protest, it is not clear if they feasibly allowed for alternative venues for the protest to occur in. In addition, given the timing of the circulation of these policies, it is also unclear if this was entirely content-neutral, if they were sent out purely in response to the message that the CAA intended to convey at its protest. Finally, and most importantly, restrictions placed by universities that limit free expression to certain areas (i.e., "free speech zones") have historically been struck down as unconstitutional, with one court ruling holding that free speech must be permitted on "park areas, sidewalks, streets, or other similar common areas ... irrespective of whether the University has so designated them or not."

This being said, what about contentneutral prohibitions only on protests specifically occurring in Lobby 7 or other interior areas, which I understand exist at MIT? Assuming these were publicized well before hand, would these prohibitions similarly fail this test? I would venture no. Namely, an argument could be made that a university has a vested interest in, e.g., ensuring that pedestrian traffic is not restricted by protests, and this reasoning could presumably allow for such a restriction to pass constitutional muster. Nonetheless, the policies circulated by the MIT administration on

November 8, as stated, likely failed the Supreme Court's three-pronged test on time, place, and manner" regulations.

The same, however, cannot be said for the subsequent request by the MIT administration that all individuals leave Lobby 7 by 12:15 PM. As a starting point, the threat of imminent violence has a strong tradition in jurisprudence for tempering freedom of speech; for example, Brandenburg famously established the "imminent lawless action" standard. Given the events of the morning, it seems reasonable to think that sustained violence could have potentially broken out if both protestors and counter-protestors continued to face off into the afternoon. And universities arguably have not only the right, but also the obligation, to prevent violence and uphold general order on their campuses.

Now, turning to the original threepronged test, and considering the prongs in turn, firstly, this request was contentneutral, as it applied to both protestors and counter-protestors. Secondly, this request was narrowly tailored, as it applied solely to Lobby 7. Finally, the MIT administration allowed for the protest to occur in a different venue; in fact, MIT staff evidently attempted to help the protestors relocate, but the CAA unfortunately refused to take this offer. As such, it is clear that the MIT administration's request that all protestors leave Lobby 7 on November 9, due to concerns over violence, would satisfy the Supreme Court's three-pronged test for "time, place, and manner" regulations.

Moreover, as far as I am aware, the CAA has neither apologized for these past violations nor promised to avoid future violations. In fact, at the November 12 protest, the CAA appears to have been unrepentant, with, as I understand it, one CAA speaker saying that: "We remain steadfast ... we won't back down

stood up to one of the most powerful institutes in the world and got them to back down ... we are strong, united, and powerful ... so we will let MIT know that we will keep fighting [and] we will keep pushing.

As such, there is no reason to believe that these two events will be isolated occurrences, absent either the CAA facing meaningful consequences for its actions or a significant shift occurring in the composition of its leadership, with the latter appearing unlikely barring the COD carrying out significant disciplinary action (i.e., expulsion).

Now, how are the CAA's repeated, deliberate violations of MIT's content-

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PINION OPINION

PINION OPINION OPINION



A British flag hangs above Building 7 as part of the Burton Connor Boston Tea Party hack, Saturday, December 9



The Alchemist dons a cape and British flag as part of the Burton Connor Boston Tea Party hack, Saturday, December 9.

OPINION POLICY

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SIXPENCE

meshing!!

"and i'm not sure why, but i will see you soon" - beabadoobee, "see you soon"

By Vi Trinh

i love people!

even if we are complete strangers, i fall in love with every single person i meet. there's something intrinsic to people that makes me want to know everything about them. upon seeing them laugh, smile, or talk, my heart beats and says "you know this joy — why not hold on to it a bit longer?"

however, holding onto that joy is hard when making friends is so difficult.

meeting people is the easy part — see someone often enough, and eventually the two of you wave whilst passing by each other in the infinite. still, talking to them is an ordeal in and of itself, and don't get me started with the struggle that comes with maintaining contact, getting to know people well, and becoming their confidant.

i was insanely lucky to make friends the way i did. a lot of my attempts to get closer to people were somewhat sketchy gambles, but they worked out in the best ways

and so, here are six of those gambles:

- i chose to have random roommates
- during the housing lottery process. i started off a conversation with "hi i think you're cool and i have no idea how to start this conversation so please pretend like i'm saying something of substance."
- i chose the gender neutral cabin during my fpop simply because it was gender neutral.
- i sat next to some kid on the first day of 9.01, who, upon meeting me, opened instagram, pointed to my profile picture, and went "is this you?" (it was in fact me)
- i joined esp, and later, the tech.
- i didn't quit my urop even though it ended up being pure data analysis (i find it boring.)

although some of them led to stronger connections than others, they all mean a lot to me, for these reasons:

By Russel Ismael

tooth satisfied on Monday, Dec. 4, when

MITaly, the Italian Association of MIT, organized an "Italian dessert tour" in

the Stratton Student Center. The associa-

tion offered a myriad of pastries for the

attendees in order to promote sublime

Italian cuisine. The theme for the tour

revolved around Christmas, as a third

of the desserts seen there were what an

Italian would traditionally eat during the

up for the event, eagerly awaiting a bite.

Desserts such as pandoro, panna cotta,

and panettone were just the tip of this

sugar iceberg. Each attendee was able to

take six desserts from an array of tables,

tative, spoke to The Tech about how they

Sol. to Police Story

from page 16

AMBER SOREEYES
PISA OILS

CHANCEMEETING WOO DARN RENEE

AMMO PODIA ETON
SNIPS OKRA ONE
PICTUREWINDOW
ETAL DOHA
HONDURAS OXIDE

REPORT CARDS ESSAYS COAT STEREO ANY

NOGO BAABAA BOOSTERCLUB

APPALL

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Matteo Baracaia, a MITaly represen-

with complimentary drinks.

organized the event.

More than a hundred people lined

holiday season

The MIT community had their sweet

CLUB SPOTLIGHT

- i went random when picking roommates because i wanted to meet new people, but i was still a little worried i wouldn't mesh with them well. however, meeting my two roommates dissipated my fears. from the start, we've always looked out for one another, we bond over the smallest joys and comfort one another through the largest problems, and i don't think the random matching could've given me any better roommates.
- when i introduced myself, i was in a mindset where i was terrified that i wouldn't be able to find community, in a fit of desperation, i took a chance and blabbered it all out to someone i just met. somehow, they thought my introduction was pretty funny and became friends with me.
- one of my goals for this semester was to get more comfortable with myself academically, socially, and personally. therefore, during my fpop, i used my first bout of freedom to explore my gender identity by surrounding myself with other queer people, and it lead to great things! besides bonding with other queer people, i had some crucial conversations about my identity - and others' too — and became more aware of what was beyond me. i find it so amazing that despite the amount of pain weaved into people's lives, they've managed to find joy out of it.
- the fact that i occupied enough space in their mind to be a parasocial presence was intriguing to me so i decided to see where it went. although i wasn't very close to this person at all (to the point where we don't talk at all anymore), our acquaintanceship comforted me a lot, they sat in the same seat every day, would always talk to me during the breaks, and showed me their hobbies and such. it was the

typical classmate relationship, but it was nice having that consistency, especially when i was still figuring out how to navigate life.

- i'll say it over and over again, but esp is one of the most open, welcoming spaces i've ever been in, and a lot of the people i talk to daily are espeople (hehe). i've had fun interactions with people in the tech, from arguing with people about my ambiguous use of "team" in my previous article to eating banh mi with other members.
- at my first meeting with my urop supervisors, i learned that i would have a lab partner — another freshman, no less. they were incredibly intimidating to me at first (i'm scared of knowledgeable and intelligent people, which is this entire institution), but as we got to know each other, i learned that we were like one another (read: insane) and i've met so many people because of them.

as you might be able to tell, i read into things a lot, and i think this stems from the fact that i latch onto people. my therapist described it as "meshing," which is the idea that through loving people, we become entangled into one another and become the best parts of the people we love most. each knot represents an aspect of vulnerability and security, and it's easy to get caught in the whole piece when there are so many aspects of a relationship. trust, hastiness, devotion, dependence, isolation — there are many reasons why a knot is created, and it's important to examine each relationship and familiarize ourselves with the reasons why it's still together.

i believe that to love someone is to know them - and inversely, to be known is to be loved — and i think i've gotten to know many people. i know about their fears, successes, and desires, and they know about mine too. i understand them at their core and they understand me at my core - truly, that's all i can ask for.

t was truly an amazing experience eat-

ing [his] way through the Italian dessert

"limited information about each des-

sert's history and cultural significance."

Regardless, he commended MITaly

for "introducing [him] to both familiar

and lesser-known delights" and wished

that there was a smaller crowd so he

could inform the event organizers of his

rine. Baracaia expressed concern regard-

ing MITaly's financial health and urged

people to donate if they love Italian cui-

sine because they may be unable to con-

tinue doing dessert tours in subsequent

"I think that people who come here

But the ending may not be so saccha-

His only gripe was that there was

eeh hall on call with a friend, thank you for making me laugh. "stop insulting vegetables by comparing yourself to them." what a line, and so perfectly

EXTRA ORDINARY

dear stranger,

least creepy way possible)

i've been watching (in the

By Susan Hong

dear stranger who was sitting in mas-

delivered too. dear stranger playing piano on stud 4 just a few days after it opened,

you're amazing. i almost knocked on the door to tell you that, but i didn't want to startle you. in a way, there's a sort of beautiful peace that comes from sitting alone in a practice room, with nothing but the instrument in front of you and the ghost of hundred-year-old composers around you, and who was i to disturb that? but yes, i did hear your ondine, and yes, it was kind of magical.

dear stranger who barrelled down the hall in your mint green hoodie,

your backpack was unzipped. sorry for not telling you. i only realized after you'd walked away. i hope you didn't lose anything, and if you did, i hope it wasn't too

dear stranger across from my friend and me as our conversation settled into

i hope we didn't scare you too much. you see, there's something fun about leaning too much into the craziest aspects of ourselves sometimes. it's a little break from reality. it's nice to pretend we care too much about something that doesn't matter, because for a moment, the things that do matter become just a little lighter. we were definitely a little too loud, though. also, i hope you figured out the mystery of how to unwrap an onigiri.

who rollerbladed dear stranger through the infinite,

i only caught a glimpse of you before you glided past us humble walkers, turning and twisting and dodging. i stopped breathing — just for a moment — before i realized that you didn't need it. that you didn't need me to hold my breath for you. that, in a way, breathing came more easily to you than it did to the rest of us.

dear stranger who sat at our table on stud 5 before we came,

why would you order a plain green tea without sugar at tea-do? respectfully, what's the point? just kidding. i admire your ability to distance yourself from sugar. an ability that i have yet to figure out.

dear strangers who hugged in front of stata that one cold morning,

i saw you from afar and above, insulated by thick glass and the height of the second floor. i was in lab, waiting for my cell media to thaw, and i had time, so i made up stories for you. was it a confession, perhaps? you, with your hands in your pocket, eyes on the ground as you spoke. you, looking at the other, smiling because you've dreamed of this moment for so long. or was it a reminder of your friendship? a see-you-later, let's-grablunch-sometime. a quiet i've-missed-you.

dear stranger who said crazy exgirlfriend was your favorite show when you saw us watching it in the new house arcade,

you have fantastic taste how did you start watching it, i wonder? were you bored one day, scrolling through netflix, and it unexpectedly caught your eye? or were you hounded by a super-fan friend for months, begged again and again to give the show a chance? you'll love it. i

dear stranger who dropped your chapstick that rainy night as we weaved through the puddles lining dorm row,

sorry for scaring you when i handed it back. it was dark, and i kind of just appeared out of nowhere. i hope you weren't too startled. and i hope you didn't have that much longer to walk, because it was a cold, soggy night. the kind of cold that clings onto your skin and squishes beneath your toes.

dear strangers waltzing through an empty lobby 13,

i wish i could've stood there and watched you dance forever. you made the space seem so small; it was like you were everywhere at once, swishing and twirling and tapping and gliding and — almost flying.

love,

susan

The sugar rush primed MIT's holiday spirit "We had plenty of desserts," Baracaia began. "We had cakes, we had tiramisu, so you could either divide them between cake desserts and pie desserts. These are the two main kinds of desserts here." He further expanded on the dessert types.

saying that there are also a few with

MITaly's dessert tour: a sweet success

cream fillings and some biscuits too. MITaly has also hosted events prior to the dessert tour, as Baracaia said that they have also "participated at the pasta night at the Dante Alighieri [Society of Massachusetts]," an Italian cultural center located in Cambridge that aims to foster appreciation for Italy

The atmosphere of the event was delightfully sweet. Many of the attendees enjoyed the event, such as Kent Oi, who wrote to The Tech that he particularly liked the "diverse selection of Italian sweets, including classics like tiramisu and cannoli."

Qi further added that he "was particularly intrigued by some lesser-known Italian desserts presented," and that "[i]

should donate more," Baracaia stated. "We are in very bad need [of donations] - the MIT dessert tour is going to disappear next year because we had so few

scene."

appreciation.

Sol. to Holiday Season from page 16

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A call to action for ASA to ban content-violative campus groups

ASA, from Page 7

neutral policies relevant for recognition by the Association of Student Activities ("ASA")?

Straightforwardly, in Article III, Section 1 of the ASA's Bylaws, the responsibilities of recognized student groups are laid out, which include point #2: "Each activity shall comply with ... MIT policies on student conduct" (emphasis added).

Moreover, Sections 2 and 3 of Article II of the ASA's Bylaws further specify that "[a]ny ASA recognized activity not meeting its responsibilities as set forth in this constitution and the policies of the ASA may be subject to derecognition." This also intuitively makes sense: ASA-approved groups can use the MIT name and, in some instances, operate with funding from MIT, so that continued ASA-recognition implicitly means tacit approval from the MIT administration.

Again, I understand that the COD is supposedly investigating individuals. However, I am not aware of the COD also investigating the CAA, or other student groups, as a whole. As such, the resulting course of action that the ASA Board must take is clear: investigation and, if (presumably) appropriate, de-recognition of the CAA.

As a former member of the ASA Board, I acknowledge this may be a novel decision to make, and it should certainly not be taken lightly, particularly given any concerns regarding free

speech. While numerous groups have been de-recognized in the past for failing to meet the requirement that their active membership consist of "at least 50% MIT students," I am not immediately aware of any prior instance in which a group was de-recognized for a reason similar to the situation at hand.

Nonetheless, the ASA must carry out its duty, whether it comes to recognizing student groups, approving student group funding, or de-recognizing student groups, in a viewpoint-neutral manner. As such, given the apparent facts of this matter, pending a fuller investigation with due process for those involved, and absent any public contrition from CAA leadership, the ASA Board has an obligation to de-recognize the CAA for having violated the ASA's Bylaws deliberately and repeatedly in a manner that clearly goes beyond free speech protections. I strongly urge the ASA Board to perform its duty on this matter. And if the ASA Board fails to do so, I strongly urge a two-thirds majority of the student group representatives at the next ASA General Body Meeting, this upcoming spring, to vote in favor of de-recognition. Failure to do so would likely either encourage even more unchecked disruptive protests in the future or result in an even more pervasive double standard of regulations being frequently applied unevenly (and likely dependent on content). Both of these possibilities would ultimately further tarnish the credibility of MIT as an institution of higher education, further fracture our community, and perhaps even lead to further intrusive government investigations (which would arguably be warranted).

As an aside, I want to be clear that the above is emphatically not a call for those reading this to harass the members of the ASA Board on this matter, whichever way they may be leaning, particularly for readers who are not MIT students. Those who are motivated can always write up their own opinion pieces, after all. And for those readers feeling upset, you can always send your comments my way at chadqian@alum. mit.edu, if you want to tell me how stupid I am or whatever. "Practice what you preach" and all that jazz.

Now, a diligent reader will probably have realized by this point that I have refrained from explicitly mentioning either "Israel" or "Palestine" in this article so far (external links notwithstanding). This exclusion is deliberate. On one level, I recognize that I am by no means an expert in the geopolitics or history of this region of the world. As such, I would, at best, end up sounding astoundingly dumb if I tried expounding on anything in detail. I just simply know that the atrocities that Hamas committed against innocent civilians on October 7 were utterly, truly abhorrent and barbaric. I simply know that there are humanitarian rules of war that all sides must follow. And I simply know that the fog of war can be blindingly thick at times, with the present conflict being no exception from this rule. I suppose that much at least is axiomatically obvious to me, but, hey, what do I know.

Moreover, I believe the above principles I laid out apply universally. Indeed, if an ASA-recognized student group advocating for a view that I passionately held ("Students Against the SALT Deduction," anyone?) decided to violate MIT's content-neutral "time, place, and manner" policies deliberately and repeatedly, I would hold the same position I expounded upon here. After all, selective application of regulations is corrosively antithetical to the proper, healthy functioning of a rules-based society, like our own.

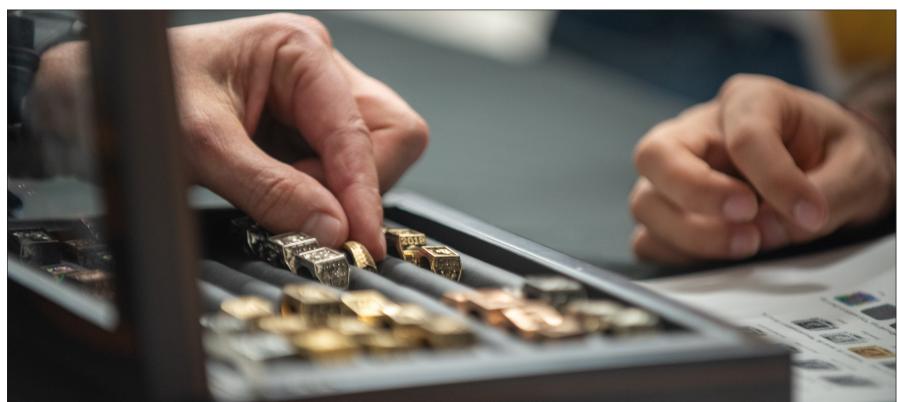
Of course, perhaps it would be remiss of me to not make at least one, somewhat more conclusive comment on the wider "context" of this situation. So, to that end, I will conclude this lengthy piece with a prayer for all Israelis and Palestinians:

May, one day, they all live in peace. Free from suffering.

Free from destruction.

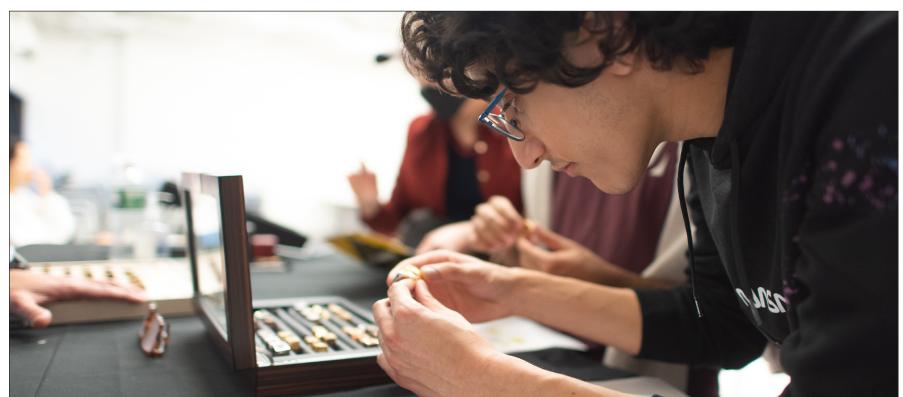
And free from terror.

Chad Qian was a member of the MIT Class of 2020. He was a member of the ASA Board, as an undergraduate representative, from spring 2019 to spring 2020, and he is a member of the MIT Free Speech Alliance. The views expressed above are his and his alone, and do not represent the views of any affiliated organization.



ELLIE MONTEMAYOR - THE TECH

Class of 2026 students attend Ring Sizing at the Stratton Student Center, hosted by the 2026 Ring Committee and representatives from Herff Jones, Wednesday, December 6.



ELLIE MONTEMAYOR - THE TEC

Class of 2026 students attend Ring Sizing at the Stratton Student Center, hosted by the 2026 Ring Committee and representatives from Herff Jones, Wednesday, December 6.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Vialé: Hit or Miss?

An Italian restaurant with nice ambience but mediocre dishes

★★★☆☆

Vialé

Italian, \$\$ **502 Massachusetts Ave** Cambridge, MA 02139

Hours:

Mon-Thu 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Fri 5 p.m.-10 p.m. Sat 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., 5 p.m.-10 p.m. Sun 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., 5 p.m.-9 p.m.

By Vivian Hir, Alor Sahoo

Our decision to eat at Vialé was actually impromptu. Originally, we planned to eat at Brookline Lunch, but we realized that we wouldn't have time to finish our meal because of the long line. Therefore, we decided to check out Vialé, as it was conveniently situated on Mass Ave in Central Square, and we were curious what it had to offer for firsttimers. The sign is inconspicuous, hiding near the greenhouse-like windows that give a clear view into the beautiful interior.

Vialé's website frames the restaurant as an upscale American take on Italian classics, offering both dinner on the weekdays and brunch on the weekends. From classics like the margherita pie pizza to the saffron lumache to the calamari, the menu is enticing for many. Reviewers concurred, with Vialé voted Best Of Boston by Boston Magazine in

When we entered and sat down at a booth, we immediately liked the restaurant's ambience. The wall art had urban street qualities to it, which added color that balanced out the neighboring monochrome white wall. Near the window, there were various kinds of greenery that added vibrancy. Although the lighting was a bit dim in some places, the orange hue from the Edison style string lights and the small white string lights



The margherita pie pizza at Vialé.

along the front of the store made the place feel upscale and intimate.

Besides the lighting and layout, the jazz music in the background was a great addition because its liveliness and energy enhanced the atmosphere. Another special feature was the restaurant's seating variety, from bar seating to the traditional two-person tables. Overall, the environment successfully melded a homey feeling with an upscale, lively one.

Although the menu had a brunch special, it was rather short and had few options. Thus, we weren't sure what to eat. I asked the host for her recommendations for brunch, so I ended up ordering the Shrimp N Grits dish, while Alor decided on the margherita

The Shrimp N Grits had a buttery scent with a hint of seafood, which smelled quite pleasant. The dish was presented well, with the green garnishes of scallion and chives dotting the food. I was pleased to see a good amount of shrimp for the price I paid (\$18). My first bite of the dish started off well, as the shrimp had a hearty taste with a dash of sea brine and the right level of chewiness.

The orange sauce had a nice creamy texture with a trace of sweetness, giving the dish a smooth finish. The sunny side up eggs did not disappoint. The ends of the sunny side had the ideal crispiness, contrasting the rich, gooey flavor of the yolk.

When I tried the grits and the chorizo, however, I was disappointed by the saltiness. Personally, I felt that leaving out the chorizo would have made the dish better, as it was dry and made me feel thirsty. I enjoyed the textural variation of the grits, but wished



The Shrimp N Grits dish at Vialé.

that they could've been lighter to complement the heavier parts of the dish. Overall, the Shrimp N Grits was interesting for its variety of textures and taste, though for \$18 I expected a bit more consistency in the saltiness across the entire dish.

Alor's margherita pie pizza looked decent - a visually appealing, caramelized crust with melted mozzarella and some shredded basil. It had an aroma of caramelized cheese, atop a large serving of sauce. Despite this presentation, the taste and texture left much to be desired. For one, the chewiness of the crust was more suggestive of pita bread than a traditional pizza, which (if intentional) was not advertised on the menu. In addition, the sauce to cheese ratio was somewhat lopsided - despite almost immediately digging into the pizza, he felt that the crust was somewhat soggy from sauce.

This problem was manageable for the 4 corner slices, but magnified for the 2 edge slices. Finally, the pizza felt unseasoned despite the shredded basil on top. The flaky salt and chili flakes at our table helped Alor mitigate some of the textural and flavor issues, but the \$15 price point left him unsure about the dish's consistency and overall

Our experience here left us with mixed impressions. While the food may have struggled to meet expectations, the environment was inviting and service was stellar. We even got boxes of Vialé brand matches, which were a cool little gift to remember the restaurant by. Overall, Vialé's a place that you should come to for the vibes, ambience, and energy, with tempered expectations for the

FOOD REVIEW Balling on **Budget**

By Enoch Ellis

It's 9:30 p.m. on a cold night, you've valiantly conquered your latest midterm, and for once in your life that empty feeling in your stomach isn't because of an unfinished pset: it's hunger. Maseeh D is great and all, but you want something different. Something savory and warm to sink your teeth into; you deserve it. But what can fill the void? A burger? Too basic. Tacos? Too tedious. No, you deserve more.

Follow me to a spot that's only a hop, skip, and jump away (ok maybe it's a little farther than that) as we venture into the wonderful world of bb.q Chicken. Offering a variety of Korean staples, this national chain claims to have "the best Korean fried chicken in the world." And while I cannot confirm or deny this statement, I will say that they rarely disappoint. Established in Seoul, South Korea, founder Yoon Hongguen's principles were simple: "serve great tasting ...fried chicken to the world." Now that's a man after my own heart. Suffice to say I think he succeeded.

Now as someone hailing from the great state of Texas, I take my barbeque very seriously. So when some of my friends from New York first introduced me to this socalled barbeque, I was more than a little skeptical. But my openness to new experiences - coupled with my motto of never turning down an opportunity for free food led me to give the place a chance.

Suffice to say, I'm glad I did.

Recommendations

The Golden Original Chicken with Secret Spicy sauce is a great choice if you're in the mood for something with a kick. Crispy. Crunchy. And full of flavor. What more can you ask for? Don't forget to pair it with their pickled radish and sweet potato fries for a perfectly balanced meal.

Hands down, the Signature Rice Bowl is my favorite item on the menu. There's something incredibly comforting about a bowl of tender rice topped with eggs, chicken ("over seasoned to perfection," as we say in the South), tangy onions, scallions, and toasted sesame seeds drizzled with spicy mayo. And coming in at 15 bucks, this is a steal, especially in this economy!

MOVIE REVIEW

The Holdovers is this year's best film, full of exquisitely rich coming-of-age Northeastern hygge A nostalgic holiday film that's a wonderful, deceptively complex story of bridging

gaps and bringing down personal barriers set against beautiful snowy Massachusetts

The Holdovers

Directed by Alexander R. In theaters everywhere.

By Cameron Davis

I'll show my hand straight out of the gate: I think Alexander Payne is one of the greatest working directors today. Election's biting political satire, Sideways' bittersweet midlife crisis bro comedy, The Descendants' crushing family dramedy on a gorgeous Hawaiian backdrop, Nebraska's slice-of-life Midwestern humor -Payne has proven time and time again that his eye for set design, ear for dialogue, and heart for empathetic but challenged characters are some of the best in the business.

These skills were sadly put on the shelf for the better part of the last ten years after Payne's singular misstep, Downsizing, flopped both critically and in the box office. Payne spent time after the release being a new father, getting a Greek citizenship, and toying with some projects that didn't get off the ground.

With The Holdovers, out in theaters late October and since enjoying a very successful limited release (expanding from six theaters in its opening weekend to almost 1,500 four weeks

later, after Thanksgiving), I can confidently say Payne is back at the top of his form, working with the same eye, ear, and heart that makes his films so special. And this time, it comes with a heaping dose of hygge, the Danish term for a feeling of warm conviviality, that works extremely well as winter arrives in Cambridge.

The film follows Paul Hunham geonly Classics professor at a fictional New England all-boys prep school in 1970. He's cruel and overbearing to his students — whom he views as spoiled and incompetent — and difficult and uncompromising with his fellow teachers. Unsurprisingly, he's also unmarried and lives alone on the school grounds, which gives the academy's leadership justification for making him responsible for "holding over" during the Christmas break. While all the other faculty and staff take vacation, students that can't go home are housed on campus, left under Hunham's militaristic, Spartan care for the two-week

Initially, bonding among the holdovers and classic students-versus-teacher comedy ensues, but soon a fortuitous ski trip saves all the holdover students but one. Hunham, evervigilant and calling to get permission for all the students to ski, is unable to reach the parents of Angus Tully, a precocious and surly student who's arrived at Barton Academy by way of multiple expulsions at other schools and significant family trauma (that, we later learn, further plays into his parents' unreachability). Thus, Hunham and Angus are stuck at Barton together, along with cafeteria manager Mary, for the rest

What follows is a wonderful, deceptively

complex story of bridging gaps and bringing down personal barriers, fostering empathy across differences and how children and adults alike can mature in their own ways. David Hemingson's script (originally inspired by Payne's viewing of a 1935 French film with a similar basic plot) is brilliantly paced, whipsmart without ever being too haughty. Quotes and references to the great works of Western civilization are used by Hunham as weapons against a world that he feels left out of; overwrought responses from Angus are clever but reflect similar insecurities. Mary's simple insights balance out the annoyingness of her two counterparts. Classic script touchpoints, such as a hospital visit, a chosen family Christmas Day, a first kiss, and a climactic parent-teacher conference are all familiar yet fresh. Themes that Payne has explored before, such as youth and aging, wealth and poverty, and personal growth, reappear but with even greater depth.

Moreover, all three lead performances really bring Hemingson's script to life. Paul Giamatti is superb as lazy-eyed Hunham, with an awkward and cold exterior poorly hiding a warm center; Da'Vine Joy Randolph is terrific as Mary, taking what could have been a stereotyped role and infusing deep humanity; newcomer Dominic Sessa is captivating in his first film role, balancing a youthful tomfoolery with a deeper wisdom. Other performances all flesh out the story, like a potential love interest (Carrie Preston), a friendly janitor (Naheem Garcia), a frustrated principal (Andrew Garman), and a host of other privileged prep-school boys (Brady Hepner, Ian Dolley, Jim Kaplan, Michael Provost). Each actor is so well-cast and talented that their world

feels real, and even upon a rewatch I loved taking the journey with each of them.

Beyond the story and acting, Payne and team deliver on an unbelievably rich, beautiful, complex backdrop of Barton Academy, its community, and the broader state of Massachusetts. I was lucky enough to first watch the film in a theater in Boston Commons (which is featured prominently in the film) and was coincidentally joined in the audience by an alumni group from Northfield Mount Hermon (NMH), one of the prep schools used as a filming location. Audience cheers for exteriors of downtown Boston and NMH alike were particularly loud as a result, but really well-deserved: the movie is stunning, with deep whites for snowy days, warm ambers and browns for library interiors, and bright rainbows for holiday parties and bars.

Accompanying the picturesque and exacting set design (all on location across five real Massachusetts schools and their communities and shot beautifully by cinematographer Eigil Bryld) is an equally precise soundtrack from Mark Orton, who also composed the score for Nebraska in 2013. Its strings pluck over snowy countrysides and add a quiet beauty to scenes; new compositions are matched by perfectlyselected songs and Christmas carols from Beethoven, The Temptations, Chet Baker, and Cat Stevens, among others.

A return to peak form for Payne, a terrific star turn introduction for Dominic Sessa, and a strong Oscar contender for hopefully every category, The Holdovers brings laughs and tears in equal measure, and is the perfect film to celebrate autumn and welcome winter.

Thursday, December 14, 2023 THE TECH 11



Maia DeMeyer '26, business chair and co-publicity chair for the Fugues, sings "Angel of Music" from "The Phantom of the Opera", Sunday, December 3.



Beautiful vases, ornaments, and other creations from the MIT Glass Lab are displayed for a holiday sale in Lobby 10, Tuesday, December 12.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAKA EJILEMELE MIT LIVE presents their semesterly showcase, Monday, December 4.



MIT Ohms presents their Frohmzen Fall 2023 concert, Saturday, December 9.

SMALL THINGS

Thanksgiving

Plymouth, Dosa-N-Curry, and dumplings. A Thanksgiving weekend well spent.

By Fiona Lu

11/23

This Thanksgiving, I forgot to be thankful. Initially, I had wanted to travel to Plymouth on Thanksgiving Day due to its symbolic value as the site of the first Thanksgiving, part of a tourist craze that had recently taken hold of my mind despite never having these inclinations back in California. After texting and calling, I couldn't find anybody to go with me on Thursday. I decided to go on Saturday instead, when Roshni, one of my friends, was free. I told myself that on Saturday the city would be less crowded and it would work better with my schedule. But inside, I couldn't help but feel disappointed, forced to stray from my original plan.

I spent most of the day at home, attempt-

ing to embroider a fruit bowl and make a hand turkey that I was unnaturally proud of. I also spent most of the day in my head — in the memories I waded through like a fog.

The day before, I had gone to the Prudential and bought nothing — instead, I sat on a bench in the middle of the mall and cried.

There is something so human about crying in these mundane places. I sobbed while the world around me kept turning and turning and the fake Christmas lights glistened and the passersby walked past me as if they would rather be anywhere else but here. To know that life will always keep moving, just slightly too fast for you to keep up, not bothering to stop for your tears — it makes your struggles seem more real. Tangible, even.

I cried because I thought about my friends from back home, about how they

would be driving back to the Bay Area. I imagined them eating turkey with their families and going downtown together. All the while, I would be just around 3,000 miles away, right at the junction of the semester when the weather got colder and the psets got harder. Most of all, I just wanted to be with them again. To see them and talk to them through something other than an iPhone screen.

Here's a fact about me: I never had Paypal or Venmo or Zelle before coming to college. In fact, I never even considered getting them. In high school, I belonged to a group of friends who paid for each others' expenses frequently and eagerly, expecting nothing in return. Like mini-caricatures of my Chinese relatives, we fought to foot the bill at restaurants. "I'll put it on your friend tab," we would joke as we signed receipts.

"Friend tab" was a rather frivolous phrase that translated to "the amount unpaid by a friend." In other words: "a forgotten debt." In other words: "it's worth it for our time together."

It was only in the evening that my mood improved. I took the T with Roshni and Amber to an Indian restaurant in Somerville called Dosa and Curry. There, Roshni taught me how to eat dosa and I tried Thums Up for the first time!

We walked back to the T stop through empty streets, the usual pedestrians lost to family reunions over home cooked meals. It felt like the three of us owned everything we could see: the streets, the city, the night itself. We talked about AP classes and roleplayed the Plastics from Mean Girls. We laughed into the soot-black sky, punctured with light.

11/24

I woke up to realize that I had missed my second appointment of the month, a session of a study I had signed up for in the pursuit of extra pocket money. The first appointment was a MakerSpace lathe training. I felt a pang of guilt when I received a passive-aggressive email that reminded me that I was "taking a spot away from another student" and "leaving a mentor with an empty seat in their class."

After I swallowed the initial burst of frustration — I felt like I was failing to manage even half of what those around me could — I voluntarily opened up Google Calendar for the first time in my life. What had kept my high school life in a precarious balance was a text document on my desktop where I listed out all my commitments, deadlines, and tasks. I liked it for its convenience and the little effort it demanded from me. (I had shied away from bullet journals for these exact

same reasons.)

I spent an hour in Maseeh setting up my Google Calendar while eating a rather sparse breakfast at noon. As I moved each of my events from my text document to Google Calendar, I started to appreciate Google Calendar's color-coded calendars and week-by-week layout. Most of all, I liked that it could send you as many reminders as you wanted. The more time I spent at MIT, the more I felt like my brain was a kind of sieve. Detail after detail slipped through, no matter how hard I tried to grasp at them: equations from a lecture, early-morning commitments, the faces of acquaintances. Everything just leaked through the holes. I hoped the reminders would keep my life a little more on track.

There was a twinge of optimism in my chest after I put my last commitment into Google Calendar, my earlier frustration washed away. I think that all throughout my first semester, I have been learning how to be an MIT student.

Afterwards, I left Maseeh and rushed to Kendall Square, where I stumbled around above- and below-ground before finding Heidi, a friend from my FPOP I had stayed in touch with, at the Ashmont/Braintree T-station. I had planned for us to walk the entire Freedom Trail, then take the bus to Castle Island to watch the sunset.

Unsurprisingly, we didn't get this done, especially with how early the sun sets here. Despite this, we walked most of the Freedom Trail, only stopping when it got dark outside. Along the way, we admired graveyards and churches and historic halls. We found and lost that faithful red line on the ground about a dozen times as we explored Boston. I discovered that Heidi's mother was once a Freedom Trail tour guide, and, unfortunately, that knowledge about Boston's history is not genetic.

While walking through the North End, we were tempted by a number of Italian restaurants and cafes, though we ultimately decided to eat at a Tatte near Bunker Hill. I forgot the name of the dish we ordered but I still remember its taste: savory and salty and warm and soft and crunchy. If culinary harmony existed, then I had discovered it at Tatte's table 25, right between a foggy window and a spa water dispenser.

Behind every impulsive urge is a desire. This was the day that I discovered why I loved this city so much, wanting to unfold every inch of it and hold it up to the light. I saw a Google headquarters across from a hundred-year-old pub, and walked past a Chipotle that used to be the Old Corner Bookstore, a stop on the Freedom Trail. This is a city that grows with the times and is all the more beautiful for it.

Our journey ended at Bunker Hill Community College, where we had to part ways: Heidi to a movie with her Boston friends and I to a Thanksgiving dinner at Burton Conner. But before we did, I made Heidi promise me that, someday in the near future, we would finish walking the Freedom Trail together.

11/25

On the day I was supposed to go to Plymouth, the Simmons fire alarm woke me up one hour before I needed to be awake. The alarm screeched intermittently for around 17 minutes, during which Roshni and I hid out in my room, banking on the high probability that the alarm was false and that we would not die.

(We were correct, and we went back to sleep when the fire alarm ended.)

After we woke up (at the correct time), Roshni and I left Simmons, starting a multimodal trip to Plymouth. We walked to Kendall, took the T to South Station, boarded a bus to a station near Plymouth, then took an Uber to the city itself.

Plymouth was a haven for my tourist heart. Overpriced museums, old-timey buildings, and the word "Mayflower" scrawled across just about every surface — I couldn't ask for anything more. Always overambitious, I attempted to check out everything a person could find by Googling "Things To Do in Plymouth."

Roshni and I saw the famous Plymouth Rock on the town's shore. It was tucked away in a pavilion made of white pillars, reminiscent of the entry to Lobby 7. Though I was told it was "quite disappointing," I think the trick is to manage your expectations. At the end of the day, it will only ever be a rock.

By far, my favorite attraction of the trip was the National Monument to the Forefathers. I was never one for patriotic appeals, but I loved the way Faith raised her arm to point, into a sky charted with clouds, bruised with the promise of sunset. I felt dwarf-like against the towering stone figures. I took pictures as the sun spilled over the folds of the statues' clothes.

Our return to the campus was the reverse of the morning's journey. The bus to Boston came fifteen minutes late. Not only that, all the seats were full and Roshni and I had to stand at the back. Every jolt and tremble of the bus seemed to be magnified tenfold, and within a few minutes, my stomach twisted with nausea. I was overcome with an intense anger at the other passengers, who sat comfortably, unaware of how we suffered. All the while, I tried to keep myself from falling and I felt like I was going to throw up.

Another burst of frustration, like I had felt the previous morning. I was prone to these flares of feeling, which ebbed away as rapidly as they appeared. This time, I try to calm myself. Looking at the faces of the people on the bus, my first impression was that they were sucked dry of life. In front of me, a woman tried to calm her crying baby, to no avail. Behind me, a young man with dark circles under his eyes stared out the window. He hadn't moved from that position since I first entered the bus. They were suffering, just as I was. Who knows how long they had sat in that bus, packed in rows with perfect strangers?

Eventually, we reached the next stop, and Roshni and I got to sit down. We were quiet during the remainder of the ride, exhausted from the trip.

11/26

My last day of break started with a brunch at German House. I ate delicious home-cooked food for the first time in a while and envied the residents who could somehow survive with less than \$7,000 spent on food each year.

I had dinner at Heidi's house which was just fifteen minutes away from campus. I met Heidi's sister and her parents and spoiled her stuffed lobster with love. Afterwards, my friends and I sat around the dinner table, folding dumplings and joking around.

Here were some of the standouts that I made:

- Flower dumpling
- Dinosaur dumpling'
- Big dumpling
- Peanut dumpling (I do not have an image for this but I hope the title is self-explanatory)

The dumplings tasted amazing — I devoured a whole plate in a few minutes. I never got to find out how the peanut dumpling tasted, since Heidi's dad ate it before knowing what was inside. The other weird dumplings, despite their odd exteriors, still tasted as good as the rest.

I remembered my mom saying, once, that food tasted better when you made it yourself. In this memory, my mother is slicing an apple and the kitchen is filled with a lifetime of light. Her face is blurry, like the faces in black-and-white period films. I am

jittery with excitement because I am about to leave for college and I don't anticipate how much I am going to miss her.

The sun rises in the East and sets in the West. While California had its endings — its blood-orange sunsets splayed across my car windshield — I had gone to the East Coast for college because I wanted a new beginning: without my family close by, without anybody from my high school who knew who I used to be. All the things I suffered for this: a plane ride where I vomited twice from motion sickness, three overstuffed suitcases that I unpacked by myself, a Family Weekend without my family, and a Thanksgiving spent at school because the price of plane tickets always went up before the holidays.

When I stare into the chasm of the future, I quiver every time. Without my mother's embrace, I feel like I am falling and falling and falling. On the car ride home, I thought about how much I wanted to live so close to campus, just like Heidi. Although it was my own decision to travel this far, the desire came as easily as slipping into a silky dress. Or a set of winter clothes, bought just in time for December in Boston.

Once, there was a me who wanted nothing more than greatness — to her, greatness meant good test scores, awards, and a name-brand degree. It meant gliding down the halls of her high school with awe at her heels. So she worked and worked. She wrote essays and drilled math problems and sent emails and left her friends on read until she was left gnawing at the late hours of the night. She learned to fear failure like a death

knell. So, on the day that her dream school released early action decisions, she couldn't bring herself to check.

You could say this old me wanted the wrong thing for the wrong reasons and I would agree. I am so jealous of my classmates' honest pasts. I would feel so much better claiming that I got here on passion alone, that I never scrolled into the depths of r/A2C or CollegeConfidential.

But what I want to remember is this: while the girl who used to be me fidgeted in her room with sweaty hands and her heart rattling in her chest, her dad sat in the kitchen downstairs and checked her application portal in her steed. He marched up the stairs and said, "Congratulations!" in such a delighted tone that the girl thought he had to be joking. So she booted up her computer and entered her login information. And she saw it: the little beaver stickers falling down the length of her computer screen, the slender line of text proclaiming, "We think you and MIT would be a great match."

And for a moment, everything in the universe was good and wonderful and so effortlessly uncomplicated. The girl laughed and cried and did a somersault on the floor for the first time in years. Before then, she had never known what it was like to cry from overwhelming joy.

When I feel down, I think about how much the old me wanted to be where I am now. At a renowned institution, in the cradle of millions of dollars of resources, around peers who make me believe that "geniuses" really do exist. Although I value

MIT for much different reasons than I used to, thinking this way helps me be a little more thankful for what I already have.

Yes, I come from a culture of reaching toward more and more and more. Call it Bay Area culture, tryhard culture, AP Student culture, whatever name you have for it. I did everything I could to collect achievements and even when I succeeded, I convinced myself I just needed one more. And then it would be over. Then I would be happy.

But I want to be better, at least better than the girl who used to be me. Forget learning how to be an MIT student, I want to learn how to be a human being.

I want to start with being more grateful. I want to look at my blessings instead of the shadows they cast, instead of asking for more and more out of life. I am grateful for my new friends, despite missing my old ones. Thank you for making me feel like I am a part of this place. I am grateful for the exams I have failed and the problems I can't solve by myself. There is value in being humbled and challenged by the work you do. I am grateful for the mistakes I have made — my frustrations at strangers, my lack of proper organization, my tendency to schedule too many activities into a single day. I hope that one day, I can become a better person, a better student, and maybe even a better tourist.

I wonder how long it will take for me to learn this. A month? A year? A lifetime? I hope that by next Thanksgiving at least, I will remember to be thankful. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2023 THE TECH 13

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Making history by majoring History at MIT

Meet Haydn, a 2026 studying 21H at MIT

By Vivian Hir, Russel Ismael

This interview has been edited for length

Name and Class: Haydn Long, Class

Area of Study: Major in Course 21H

(History)

Living Group: Burton Conner (Burton

Home State: New York, New York Activities: Board of director for MIT Gala, launch director for Infinite, marketing chair for Burton-Conner government

What made you declare 21H at MIT?

I always loved history. I applied to MIT wanting to major in history. There's something about history that's interesting to learn about, looking back and seeing how everything connects and builds on each other to where we are

Why 21H, and not other majors like Course 17 or 21A?

I have done political science work before. I wrote a political science research paper in high school. I just enjoy the work in history more. I find political science and anthropology interesting, but history just has a special place in my heart since I have loved this subject ever since I was young. I have always loved my history class. It's just been that way for a very long time.

Do you "specialize" in an area of history?

Not yet. For 21H, you have to write your thesis in senior year. Before that, there's a class about methods in history you take, which is a class about researching and gives you insight on how to do historical research and come up with topics you want to dive into.

What does your typical class schedule

This semester, I am taking two history classes. When I take more history classes, I don't have the space to focus on the readings and the coursework, so I am trying not to take too many history classes at a time.

I am in two history classes; one is Inventing the Samurai (21H.154), with my advisor. It's an introductory class on Japan. The other class is American Consumer Culture (21H.315), which is an upper level seminar that has a lot of reading.

History classes are designed to fit around other classes, which means that I have a weird schedule consisting of a long break in the middle of the day.

What's your process for choosing history

I have been taking classes that have a broad scope so I can see as much as possible. I want to start off with something very wide that narrows as I go further down. In freshman year, I took a class on Islam and the Middle East (21H.160) and another one called Gender: Historical Perspectives (WGS.303J).

I also took a Concourse class called Making Books in the Renaissance and Today (CC.120J) because it was something that intrigued me. I love books. As you see, I have a full bookshelf in my room right here.

How many History classes have you takitions for no majors?

I have completed three and then I'm taking two more this year. I would recommend all of them. I think there's something fun about each of them. One class I took last semester, Making Books in the Renaissance and Today (CC.120J), is such a cool class. In this class, you get to make a book, and there's the Beaver press — a replica of the Gutenberg press. Basically, they have all the lead types, and you get to write a book, set it, carve it, and put this book together. It is completely student-led. The only thing you don't decide is the length of the book. And that's just because there's a certain length needed to fill the pages, but you do all the work.

I TA that class right now, so I do a lot of the behind the scenes work. I'm sorting all the type and cleaning the press up, and it's a really cool class. There's a lot of things that you learn in it that you would never think of. Like, paper for a lot of times used to be made out of underwear because it is made out of cotton. Instead of putting new cotton in, they just reused it.

I also really love Gender: Historical Perspectives (21H.109) because it taught me how to do research in a way that I haven't done before. We got to go to archives — the Schlesinger Archives at Harvard — and actually touch the works and artifacts, and things throughout history. It was completely up to you; whatever project you wanted to do for your final paper, you got to do anything. And then you just had



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAYDN LONG

Haydn Long '26 is a History major at MIT. to research it yourself; it was really cool.

I remember I was a little unsure about what I wanted to do, and my professor just gave me the phone number of a historian friend of hers that had been at a bunch of these events from the past. So, what I ended up writing about was the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, which was this music festival that had this huge controversy surrounding transphobia. I talked about transphobia and lesbian spaces, and I got to speak to somebody who went to this event before the whole scandal.

What advice would you give to yourself in the past year?

I would have definitely told my freshman year self to take the readings a lot more seriously. I was reading to get through the readings, but now I'm taking a lot more time to take notes on everything and really annotate the readings. It has really helped me understand the classes and contribute to the discussions so

A lot of the learning does happen from the readings. It would be hard to go through it in an hour and a half lecture. So, it's really important to really spend time on the readings, even though it might take like an hour to read ten pages, which happened this year with a lot of my textbook readings for Inventing the Samurai (21H.154). It really helps me understand a

What's your favorite memory as a Course 21H student so far?

I think something I really loved was in [Making Books in the Renaissance and Today], when we got to see books from the 1500s and hold them. These were some examples of the first printed books, and we just got to hold them in our hands without gloves. I learned that it's actually safer to hold them without gloves as long as you wash your hands beforehand because then you can feel what's happening to the papers. Getting to open these books and see that they are illustrated with gold leaves and incredible detail, to see how much care people put in these books, to see that they're still alive.

You can tell when the books were put back together by the conservation or other groups before they made their way to MIT. It was so cool getting to see these books and that they've survived because there was so much care put into them. I think it was also really funny. There is a bookplate in the front of the books, and it was actually my friend's last name. And I texted this person who's like, "Yeah, that's my greatgrandfather." So, my friend's great-grandfather donated a bunch of signed books that we have from the 1500s; he just had a collection of them.

[Also] check out the Distinctive Collections more. There's like such insane things in there. There's a copy of the Reynolds Pamphlet that belonged to George Washington, the Federalist Papers that belonged to George Washington, Buzz Aldrin's thesis dedicated to the people going to space one day. It's like, "To the people who are going to space one day, I wish you luck. I wish I could be up there with you."

They have such incredible things. And people don't seem to really know about the Distinc-

What can MIT students learn from history? Do you take any lessons to heart yourself?

Something that you can learn from history is how to not repeat it. We don't want to see some events happen again. These events don't come out of nowhere. There are a lot of discoveries and interactions with people and decisions that lead to everything. It is important to look back and see where things come from and how you prevent things from happening. If you are inventing things without considerations, there can be consequences, but if you are discovering and creating keeping that in mind, you will be a much better inventor for it.



A student sells handmade crochet stuffed animals at the UA Incomm Craft Market in Lobby 10, Sunday, December 10.

VIVIAN'S REFLECTIONS

Love for the Charles River

the river that runs in my veins



VIVIAN HIR - THE TECH

The Charles River on May 13th, 2023 (a), Nov. 19th, 2023 (b), Jan. 19th, 2022 (c).

By Vivian Hir

CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR

If I had to choose my favorite thing about MIT, it would be the scenery around MIT's campus. Although some buildings on our campus may not be aesthetically pleasing, overall MIT's campus is quite special. Consider MIT's proximity to the Charles River, which we take for granted at times.

Some of us use Memorial Drive or Killian Court to get to daily classes. Finding a spot to enjoy the view of the river and the Boston skyline is as simple as sitting in Hayden Library or looking out the big windows in Lobby 10. Despite the stressful life that comes from having many assignments, just appreciating my natural surroundings is enough to make me feel grateful for being at MIT.

For me, the first thought that comes to mind when I think of thankfulness isn't necessarily about attending a prestigious university with famous professors and leading research. Rather, thankfulness is what I notice around me, whether it is peaceful sailboats on the Charles River or the blue water that shimmers on a sunny day.

When I see the amazing scene in front of me, I first pause, take a deep breath, and then simply do nothing but savor the moment. I also experience this wonderful feeling on my runs along the Esplanade, focusing on what I like about the present: the fall colors, sunlight shining through the leaves, the pleasant breeze that is just right

My feelings of gratitude for MIT this semester may come from liking my classes more than the previous semesters. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that I gained perspective while being abroad this summer, realizing that I am fortunate to live in a place with such a stunning backdrop; few people get to see this type of landscape in their everyday lives.

I mean, where else will I get to see this spectacular view every day? While I acknowledge that I have had some of my lowest lows at MIT, I am honestly going to miss this place. I am sure that the places I will go after MIT have their unique treasures, but for some reason, the Charles River holds a special place in my heart. I have only been here for two years, but I already have accumulated an abundance of memories that I will treasure in the years to

I still remember my first sunrise from the Harvard Bridge on a cold winter day in my freshman year during IAP. The entire sky was a blend of red, pink, and purple, vibrant colors that amazed me and took my breath away. I wondered how many sunrises I missed out on from not waking up early.

My last sunrise was just as meaningful as the first one, but in a different way. Standing alone at Harvard Bridge on a Sunday morning in November, I watched the sunrise for over ten minutes. I first saw warm hues of vellow and orange at the horizon, which then slowly changed and expanded until they brightened the entire sky and overtook the traces of

Besides the astonishing riverscape, what made this memory so enduring were the ripples. Observing the river's ripples so closely was like seeing the river with a new pair of eyes. Despite the ever-changing grooves, there was a sense of calmness and stillness, the whole thing feeling cyclical.

Focusing on the ripples' rhythmic movements with such intensity made me enter a Zen state of mind, a sensation that I rarely experienced in my life. The mindfulness exercise reminded me of how my body needs more silence and solitude instead of more sound and company.

My fond memories of the Charles River not only revolve around the awe-inspiring setting, but also the time I spent with others there sailing with other orientation leaders, showing my friend from Duke the Boston skyline at night, the list goes on. But the memory that stands out the most is that fine afternoon in mid-May with my first date.

We first went to the Hokusai exhibition in the MFA, then ate a late lunch at the charming Café Sauvage. After our meal, we walked across the Harvard Bridge, enjoying the warm 70-degree weather and how blue the sky was, with wisps of clouds in the background. After crossing the bridge, we kept walking along Memorial Drive until I suggested we sit together on a green bench to admire the view.

But deep down, my purpose was to confess my feelings for him. I said what I wanted to say, and he confessed in return. What followed was one of the most intimate and deep conversations of my life. Looking back, the memory feels like a movie, the two of us being vulnerable, revealing our true thoughts with the Charles River in the background.

I can't wait to have more experiences like these in the future, from watching more sunsets to seeing fireworks on the Fourth of July. Sometimes, however, I worry about how I'll get through the much more difficult and busier semester ahead of me. Would my gratitude for where I am, or my gratitude in general, be enough to carry me through hard times? I don't know.

What I can do, however, is make an active effort to cherish the small things in life that are sometimes overlooked, from the gorgeous sunsets to the warmth of French House dinners. Doing so will remind me that despite how difficult life can be, some aspects of life are undeniably beautiful and still worth living for. Because with every sunrise, there is the opportunity to start the new day better than 14 THE TECH Thursday, December 14, 2023

MOVIE REVIEW

The Boy and the Heron explores grief, acceptance, and Hayao Miyazaki's inability to retire The film reflects on Miyazaki's childhood in classic Studio Ghibli fashion while also featuring

birds — a lot of birds.

The Boy and the Heron (How Do You Live?)

Directed/written by Hayao Miyazaki

Rated PG-13. Now playing

By Ellie Montemayor

After officially retiring for the second time ten years ago, acclaimed Japanese auteur Hayao Miyazaki, of Studio Ghibli fame, has brought yet another "big fantastical film" to theaters. Coming on the heels of his previous "retirements"-turned-feature films with the releases of Spirited Away in 2001 and The Wind Rises in 2013, Miyazaki's new movie The Boy and the Heron (titled アリスとテレスのまぼ ろし工場, or How Do You Live?, in Japan) is an animated fantasy film about a boy moving to the countryside, encountering a paranormal creature, and subsequently finding himself in a magical new realm where he learns about himself and his family in the process.

The Boy and the Heron's release is sandwiched between a series of high-profile Japanese animated fantasy features with comingof-age themes, following 2021's Belle (竜と そばかすの姫), 2022's Suzume (すずめの戸 締まり), and 2023's Maborishi (アリスとテ レスのまぼろし工場), while preceding the hotly-anticipated 2024 release of Kimi no Iro (きみの色). This placement reaffirms Studio Ghibli's place among newer, flashier animation studios, allowing it to remain relevant as

its original audience grows older and introduces its works to the next generation. Despite its well-established cult-classic predecessors and highly competitive release environment, The Boy and the Heron is perfectly set to become a classic.

It's a typical coming-of-age story ripped straight from Studio Ghibli's tried-and-true formula for storytelling success, sharing a lot of elements with past Miyazaki films like My Neighbor Totoro (1988), Spirited Away (2001), and Howl's Moving Castle (2004). However, that doesn't take away from its own uniquely retrospective narrative.

The works of Studio Ghibli have been an integral part of childhoods since 1984's Nausicaä, serving as thematic comfort in the face of looming adulthood. While I only got into Ghibli films midway through high school, I know a lot of people whose childhoods were populated with memories of Howl walking Sophie through the sky, Chihiro nursing Haku back to health, and Sosuke declaring his love for Ponyo. In a lot of ways, from familial to romantic, love defined Ghibli narratives. The Boy and the Heron, however, navigates connection in a much darker way.

The film follows 12-year-old Mahito moving to the countryside in the midst of WWII with his father after his mother's death. With his father's remarriage to her sister and his isolation in an unfamiliar environment, Mahito's internal grief isn't given the space to be processed - and instead turns into an outward bitterness as he withdraws from his community and engages in self-destructive behaviors.

Mahito is transported to a miserable fantasy world filled with various types of birds by a talking grey heron (a thematic extension of Miyazaki's obsession with flight — but in this film serving as a statement of helplessness instead of a demonstration of freedom). He engages with the world's inhabitants and meets companions who help him through his journey, eventually coming to terms with his birth mother's death and accepting a relationship

with his stepmother.

While still carrying on the Ghibli tradition of whimsy, the film is more graphic and mature than its predecessors: we see Mahito bloodily beating his head with a rock; the grotesqueness of a fish being gutted from start to finish; and a conversation with a dying pelican as it affirms the cruelty of the world and the need to kill to survive.

A lot of the creatures from this fantastical world are born of learned helplessness. From the spirit-eating pelicans that inhabit the vast oceanic expanse to the evolved parakeets who are trying to seize control of the realm, all of the world's creatures exhibit a level of defeatist nihilism that greatly parallels Mahito's own disbelief in the joy of humanity. Even more so, the land itself is a manifestation of discord and malice, espoused to the protagonist by its creator. Intended to be a conflict-free landscape to hide away from hate in the real world, its corrupted progression echoes the world of Narnia with an inevitable descent into madness

The Boy and the Heron's tale of acceptance mirrors and ultimately contrasts that of Nausicaä: within the brutal landscapes of both worlds, their respective protagonists have to contend with widespread despair and hopelessness. But the pivotal difference between the two is that of accepting malice in the world, not denouncing it. The creator of the realm -Mahito's great-granduncle — attempts to pressure him into taking on the role of its steward, asking him to remake the world into one that is truly free of malice. Mahito declines, and returns to his reality; he cannot accept the role of a perfect guardian because he himself has given into malice before. However, Mahito comes to recognize that while some — like the pelicans that prey on the spirits of unborn babies out of food scarcity — have no choice but to harm others to survive, for others, doing good is an accessible privilege. Thus, he can return to his world committed to fostering respectful understanding, if not necessarily love, with his stepmother and newfound life.

The film definitely features a more adult take on the classic moral of the story, but that's what makes it so special: in contrast with the usual adolescent effects of Ghibli optimism, the coming-of-age-ness in this film is made especially apparent by the complexity of the protagonist's journey. It's directly applicable to our situations, not just as an idealization of what we could be but how we can live now. We can accept our past mistakes and reckon with the less desirable aspects of ourselves, but that doesn't rule out our ability to still bring our

The success of The Boy and the Heron gives a clear direction for Ghibli moving forward. With the film industry as a whole calling for simultaneously more thematically mature subject matter and more whimsical presentations, The Boy and the Heron's approach allows for the studio to gradually explore more and more complex modalities in its coming films to contend with this decade's film scene.

Ghibli exists as a studio outside of Miyazaki's influence, yes, but the careful balance of mature storytelling presented within a kidaccessible format is a skill that has not thus far been matched in its works by other directors and writers. Still, it's clear as well that in the ten years since Miyazaki's last film and the three years since Earwig and the Witch, that Studio Ghibli itself has grown significantly. The Boy and the Heron excels not just in its context but also its technical execution: it makes excellent use of 3D animation and more modern presentation techniques not to supplant the studio's traditional hand-painted work (previous attempts of which have resulted in negative feedback from its audience), but to supplement and revitalize its signature style.

The film is definitely one of Miyazaki's (and overall the studio's) best, a perfect swan song to close off a storied career — that is, except the fact that he has no plans to retire; Miyazaki is currently in the works for his next big production for Studio Ghibli, and I can't wait for what he plans to explore in the next one.

THEATER REVIEW

Stupid F*cking Bird soars at MIT LOST's fall production

"Stupid f*cking play made me stupid f*cking cry <3"



Jon Rosario '24 and Susan Hong '27 as Dev and Mash, play ukulele while singing a song they've written together.

By Eunice Zhang

The Seagull is a play by Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, adapted into the contemporary piece Stupid F*cking Bird by Aaron Posner. It's also the fall semester production of MIT LOST (Life on Stage Theatre), a student theater group founded in 2020. LOST has a reputation for delivering high-quality theater. As attendee Sofia Galiana '25 put it, "LOST consistently puts out good, high-quality shows," and Stupid F*cking Bird is no different.

The play centers around Conrad, a struggling playwright desperately in love with Nina, an aspiring actress and his flighty girlfriend. Conrad has a strained relationship with his mother Emma, which rapidly deteriorates after he catches Nina making out with his mother's girlfriend Trigorin. Add on a directed acyclic graph of unrequited love between Conrad, his best friends Dev, lonely house help Mash, plus friendly old Uncle Sorn who feels makebelieve, and now you have a story.

What does it mean to truly love someone —

familial, romantic, platonic? Why do we create art, how do we navigate our personal relationship with art and consumption, and how do "old forms" interact with "new forms"? Despite tackling a plethora of philosophical topics, Stupid F*cking Bird keeps the audience on the edge of their seats by intertwining these questions through dynamic interpersonal relations and delightful ukelele playing.

The simple yet realistic staging — from live smoothie blending to hand-made pies so intriguing they were featured on the MIT Confessions page — creates an immersive and intimate atmosphere. The open nature of Little Kresge Theatre made the interactive nature of the play particularly enticing, with Conrad jumping off stage into the seating to converse with the audience as a self-described "site-specific performance event."

But what truly shined most about Stupid F*cking Bird were the actors — passionate, loud, funny, and depressed, their spirit brought together thematic questions and well-designed props into something truly wonderful. While centered around Conrad, the production also gives each character a unique spotlight, allowing further expansion on themes outside of just Conrad's self-centered perspective.

Because each character had a monologue, attendee Nathan Shwatal '24 found this "let the audience really experience what each character was going through on a personal level."

A behind the scenes picture

I attended the play without knowing anything about Stupid F*cking Bird, but I left intrigued. How was this production selected, created, performed?

I needed to know more, if not simply to help me navigate my newfound existential hrrgs about art and the meaning of life. MIT LOST welcomed my barrage of questions with welcome arms, telling me the story of just how this stellar production came to life.

The play brought together seven talented actors with a wide range of acting experience - from freshmen like Mahdi Afshari '27 and Susan Hong '27 to seasoned actors like Joy Ma '25 and Alayo Oloko '25. "I have always had a high regard for people in theater but it seemed scary to join," stated Afshari. Hong echoed this sentiment, as theater was "always something that I wanted to experience, but I either never had the time or just chickened

Reing a first-time actor didn't come with out challenges. Hong struggled with "learning not to take myself too seriously" and feeling self-conscious. Despite being new to the theater world, both delivered great performances. If I hadn't known, I would have thought they were seasoned actors themselves!

Even for experienced actors like Oloko and Ma, Stupid F*cking Bird presented challenges in character immersion. Oloko, playing Conrad's mother Emma, struggled, as she had never played a similar character type before. But with the assistance of director Katrina Chan '26 and her fellow actors, Oloko was able to step into her role and feel satisfaction at her performance's "final form."

"I wish I hadn't had to put myself into Emma's shoes; those heels were rough," Oloko

Ma played Trigorin, an aloof writer and Emma's girlfriend. "When you're working with getting 'inside' of your character... you also deal with a lot of your own inner struggles," Ma explained. For Ma, this meant advocating for herself and Trigorin after feeling a sense of disconnect between herself and her character. Following a practice performance, Chan gave Ma an iPad and pen and "told me to write: to tell her, to tell us about Donna Trigorin."

Through doing so, Ma was able to fully connect with Trigorin, and it showed in their natural and compelling demeanor on stage - aloof and powerful, demanding attention. "When you're able to step into that power, all of it will be worth it," Ma reflected. "I want to give a huge shoutout to the LOST cast and crew for all their hard work," attendee Kiera Reed '27 stated — they highlighted lighting and sound work as standouts. Galiana echoed this sentiment, especially how "real and professional" the exterior of the house looked.

Speaking with Chan opened my eyes to e sheer amount of time and effor making Stupid F*cking Bird possible. Chan has been part of MIT LOST for two years, and currently serves as the club's president. Her touch is evident throughout the production — from organizing auditions and rehearsals, managing the production timeline, even serving as set designer in addition to her directing and informal stage manager responsibilities.

Chan shared an anecdote of going to thrift costumes a week before opening day, "but the T was acting up (as the T does)." As a result, she walked back from Harvard in the rain and then immediately proceeded to direct five hours of

"Every show is a labor of love," Chan reflected. She also highlighted the importance of paying "attention to mental health when it gets overwhelming."

Oloko also foisted multiple roles — acting as Emma and serving as the play's producer and electrician. As producer, Oloko's responsibilities included recruiting production staff, organizing weekly meetings, and managing grant applications and finances.

"I didn't intend on picking up the role," Oloko admitted, because the production

Bird, Page 15

Inflatable figures of Darth Vader, C3P0, and R2D2 adorned with Christmas hats sit at the lobby of Maseeh Hall, celebrating the upcoming winter festivities.



Blow-up decorations stand in Lobdell Dining Hall in the Stud for Tech Twinkles, Saturday, December 9.



Bird, from Page 14

lacked a producer and "I really cared about this production and about LOST, so I stepped up to the task."

The entire production came together in only five weeks, especially impressive given the production's small size — seven actors and eight production staff. "It was pretty quick," Chan admitted. "The most challenging aspect of the production was the short timeline."

Because Chan wanted to give actors as much time with the material, she condensed the auditions and callbacks process. Oloko reflected that Chan is "really good at what she does." Thanks to the well-organized schedule, "I felt really well prepared for the performances."

Hong noted that the small size of the production and the "relatively short timeline" helped everyone involved in the production become closer. Chan agreed, highlighting the "love, community, family that emerged from this relatively short production."

The ways in which this play slayed

Stupid F*cking Bird didn't hesitate to defy tradition across numerous dimensions — a contemporary adaption, interactive screenplay, and its nature as a meta-play.

Actors don't hesitate to break the fourth wall—after Nina and Trigorin become romantically entangled, a despairing Conrad jumps off the stage and pleads with the audience: "How can I get [Nina] to love me again?"

Shwatal found that the "use of the space both on and off the stage really added to the atmosphere in unexpected ways." I personally found the interactive nature of the play both horrifying and hilarious — Conrad, the definition of a delusional man, forces us to confront his humanity — not as spectators, but active participants in his tragic life story.

The audience gave him a myriad of advice, from "get therapy" to "if you love her, let her go." Suddenly, it wasn't just us laughing at the delusional man. Through our interactions, we became the delusional man ourselves — rooting for him to succeed, in one way or another.

Hong seconded this: "Honestly, we all have a little bit of Conrad in each of us." While he may

seem "narcissistic" and "bat-shit insane," his flaws are "more relatable than people might realize." Whether it be through his personal relationships or his hyperfixation on creating meaningful art, "he's just a person who wants to matter to someone, somewhere," Hong explained.

It was also fascinating to see subtle power dynamics reveal themselves. Speaking with Chan also revealed a number of delightful Easter Eggs I hadn't originally noticed. A core motif of the play are the parallels between Nina and a seagull, with a desperate Conrad giving her a gift of a seagull he shot. In the original scene, Nina is wearing a striped navy-white dress. But when Nina self-identifies as a seagull, their roles switch and Conrad now dons a striped navy-white shirt.

Another neat feature was the gender-swapping of Trigorin, who in the script was originally a man. Reimagining Trigorin and Emma's relationship as same-gender provided a new twist on gendered dynamics, and I personally appreciated the queer representation.

At the end, the play delivers a final surprise — all along, this is an autobiographical play of Conrad's life. Everyone besides Conrad himself is an actor. Not only is Stupid F*cking Bird a commentary and a "new form" itself, the entire play is a play of a play.

In classic Chekhov fashion, the end of the play features Conrad contemplating shooting himself with a gun — the typical ending to a Russian tragedy, but he doesn't.

Despite raging that it's simply "another play, over and done," where "NOTHING REAL has happened," Conrad continues on. I found this symmetry satisfying — while the audience begins by "start[ing] the f*cking play," it's Conrad's creation. His life, his story, and ultimately his role to say the final line: "end the f*cking play."

So, what the f*ck's the point?

250+ MIT students and community members attended the five showings of Stupid F*cking Bird, and I was curious to see their takeaways. I was also interested in what the people behind the production took away from Stupid F*cking Bird thought, especially after spending hundreds of hours immersing themselves this world of their characters.

Despite being on different ends of the production — the actors creating and the audience spectating, a common theme that emerged was the messiness of our universal, human nature.

Shwatal found a reminder that "worrying about what others think can consume you and those around you." "I think we've all experienced this but it is nevertheless easy to forget," Shwatal reflected.

watar renected. Afshari emphasized that people are deeper



Alayo Oloko '25 and Joy Ma '25 as Emma and Trigorin.

than they seem, so it's important "not to judge, not to expect everything is as we plan it to be and to be prepared for anything."

For more tangible advice: "Don't cheat on your man (or woman) with the lover of their mother (that is messed up)."

As an enjoyer of meta-art, Reed highlighted the play's unique approach to tackling how creating art interacts with concepts of "creativity and personal fulfillment."

"Even old forms of art can be used for new forms of catharsis," Chan reflected. Oloko complemented this sentiment, instead feeling the importance of needing "new forms."

However, she also noted that ultimately the message of the play is left to the audience — how the play can mean different things to different people. "I'll leave it up to everyone to decide what the play meant to them, even if it just meant an entertaining two and a half hours," Oloko concluded.

Conclusion

Threading together themes of family, un-

requited love, and the philosophical meaning of art, MIT LOST has succeeded in creating a stunning production, making attendees simultaneously laugh, cry, and wonder what the hell is going on, both in the play and the real world. It would not be remiss to say actors and attendees alike left Little Kresge with newfound existential crises.

The cast emphasized their satisfaction at the culmination of the showings of Stupid F*cking Bird. Hong highlighted seeing the audience's reactions to "experiencing the show for the first time" as the most rewarding aspect, as it "helped me see it through fresh eyes again."

Afshari echoed this sentiment, "it was amazingly rewarding to hear people enjoyed the play, know what they feel and what they liked about the character."

Attendees felt the same way. "I hope they keep a lot of the same talent around for the next show because of the great job they always do," Galiana noted. Shwatal felt that the production did a great job, "the emotion and acting throughout was top notch!"

All in all, Stupid F*cking Bird was a phenomenal production — highlights were the passionate actors, immersive staging, thematic exploration, and lack of hesitation to defy theater transition with fourth-wall breaks and the metaplay. Ilook forward to seeing future productions from MIT LOST, and wish them the best of luck in the future.

P.S. You, too, can join MIT LOST!

If theater is interesting to you, I'd share one final message — you can be part of productions like these, too! From acting to production, MIT LOST (lost-exec@mit.edu) shared welcoming invitations to any readers interested in joining the club — I found it interesting how numerous members of MIT LOST all "shamelessly plugged" their club without prompting.

"We focus on creating an environment to nurture growth in theater and community," Chan explained. "Our club is open to both experienced thespians and newcomers."

Oloko highlighted being interested in recruiting more production staff, as "we love teaching people even if they are beginners and we always have a fun time!"



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WEATHER, p. 2
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Snow.

WED: 32°F | 18°F THU: 29°F | 11°F Partly cloudy.

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WEATHER, p. 2

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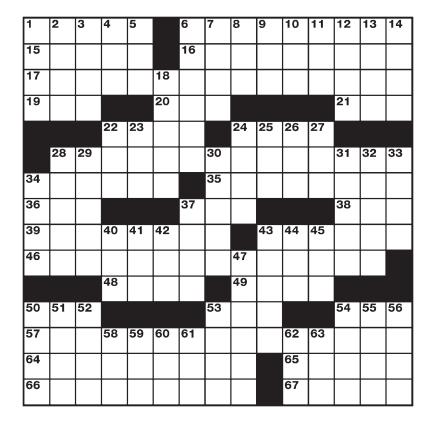






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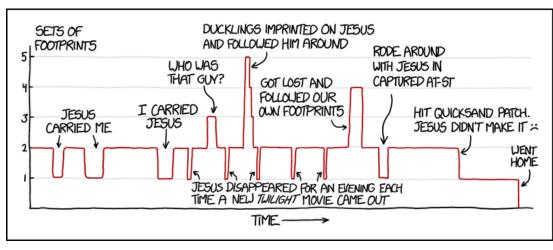
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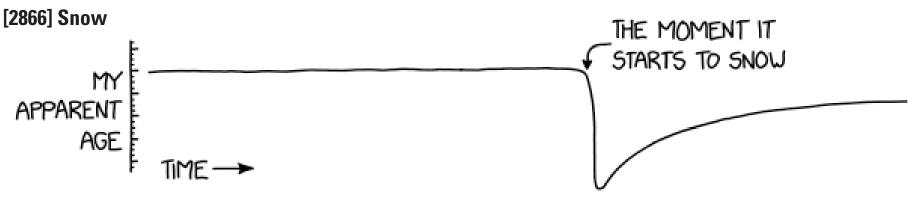


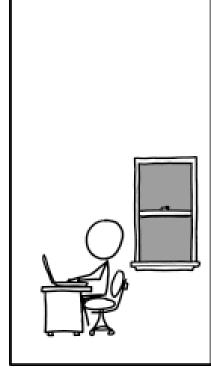
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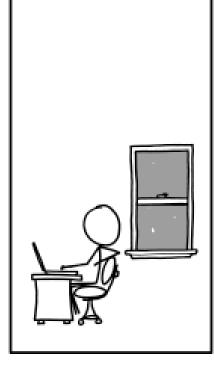


"There's one set of foot-p's cause I was totes carrying you, bro!" said Jesus seconds before I punched him.

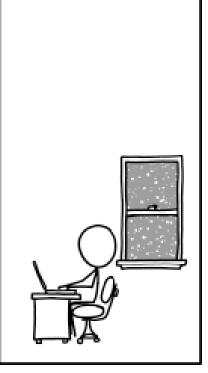












IFE CAMPUS

ALSO SEE INSIDE

Student spotlight: Making history by majoring in History at MIT Page 13

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT History and South End House: what's after MIT? Meet Tobit, a 2023 who majored in 18 and 21H By Claire Wang This interview has been edited 1 stories This interview has been edited

Name and Class: Tobit Glenhaber, Class of 2023 Areas of Study: Major in Course 18 (Mathematics) and 21H (History) Living Group: Random

Home State: Somerville,

Activities: Secretary, Trainer, and Spinner for MIT Spinning Arts

After graduating from MIT in June, what are you currently doing?

I am a paralegal at a law firm in Baltimore. As a senior, I thought I might want to do law school but wanted some experience in the legal profession before committing to the rather high financial and time commitment. Now that I know I enjoy it, I'm applying to law school.

Before coming to MIT, what were you planning to major in? Did you expect to double in 21H? What made you decide to double

Back when I was applying to MIT, I don't think I could have predicted I'd be a 21H/18 double major but I've always been interested in history and math. MIT's SHASS department is really good, and it's often overlooked. So when I got to MIT, I started taking history classes alongside my math classes, and that snowballed into "wait, I'm taking enough classes I can just double major in this!" Towards the end of my time at MIT, I became interested in law school in no small part because of some of the history classes I took.

Math and history really complement each other too, so it was pretty manageable since they're intense in very different ways. Instead of having four psets a week, it felt like a nice combination of readings and essays alongside psets.

Some history classes I particularly enjoyed:

History of the Ghetto: From Venice to Harlem (21H.385), taught by Prof. Craig Wilder. He was an incredible professor. I took it during my sophomore fall, and it really cemented the era of history I realized I was interested in, the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Tobit Glenhaber '23 presents his history thesis on the South End

History of Capitalism — This involved a series of classes on topics like Commodity History, the History of American Economic Regulation (Harvard Law School History 2477), Global Commodities, American Dreams (21H.388), the History of Capitalism (21H.S01/11.S944): The Institutions of Modern Capitalism and the Rise of Market Society, taken in my senior spring), and so on taught me how capitalism has affected American history. These classes had persistent themes of what the government was doing and how the law was being shaped by historical trends, which led to me wanting to go to law school.

What did you write for your 21H thesis?

I wrote my thesis on the South End House, an example of the settlement house movement. This concept took off in the late 1800s and early 1900s, as college-educated women created new ideas and techniques for charity work. Because of the Gilded Age, there were massive slums in many cities, and they were trying to figure out how to reform this. Specifically, I studied the ones in Boston (South End House), and I essentially found some things that are emblematic of the Progressive Era (which is how the historical period is usually framed), but some ways still look at Gilded Age-esque view of capitalism.

The main thing these women did was to teach the people in the slums "how to succeed in Capitalism." They never questioned if this was the best thing to do; they taught the people how to have (what they percieved as) a "good" work ethic or get hired, which perpetuated capitalistic systems They further believed that, by succeeding at capitalism, the people they helped would be able to prosper in all dimensions of American society.

settlement house movement used big data techniques to inform their work, but the thesis ultimately took on a life of its own in the directions it went.

Do you see any intersections between what you learned from Course 18 and 21H, or do you see them as separate entities?

In many ways, they are different, where math is more purely built up from axioms and history is reasoning backwards from the limited set of end results that have survived, but they're both really about abstractions at some point. They're both a limited view of the world, and you have to try to see what you can say from various disparate sources. For example, math asks how multiplication is like addition, if you ignore the right things. Often, mathematicians will take a tool from one field and apply it somewhere else by saying "from a certain point of view, these two areas of math are actually talking about the same thing."

History has some of the energy of looking at multiple things in a weird way to see in what ways they're the same. Like how the 70s is similar to the 20s depending on the way you squint to look at it. One of the key tools in both the historian and mathematician's toolbox is abstraction to be able to compare disparate ideas.

If you were not either a Course 18 or 21H major, what major would you have been?

Possibly a Course 11-6 (Urban Science and Planning with Computer Science). Looking back at this possible major is interesting. I took CS in high school, and for whatever reason, didn't take a CS class until 6.009 [6.1010] (Fundamentals of Programming) in my senior year, so it never really happened for me. But I can definitely see myself being

I was initially interested in how the a Course 6. ALEXA SIMAO - THE TECH

Beautiful vases, ornaments, and other creations from the MIT Glass Lab are displayed for a holiday sale in Lobby 10, Tuesday, December 12.

MIT BY THE DAY

A photo column of the daily goings-on across the MIT community.



Students catch a break in-between classes.



Pedestrians line the sidewalks of Mass Ave as the workday



Samuel Viscosi, MIT Museum exhibitions specialist and Allahna Canario, MIT Museum administrative assistant stop to play ragtime and symphony pieces on the piano outside the Banana Lounge while on their way to Kresge



Chefs at Maseeh Hall Dining celebrate the winter festivities

