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SUBMIT!

Write for the Sidney-Pacific Newsletter

Send articles, cartoons, photos, puzzles, or ideas to [sp-newsletter-chair \[at\] mit \[dot\] edu](mailto:sp-newsletter-chair@mit.edu).

summer is almost over...

But it's not over yet! There are many more fun activities going on at Sidney-Pacific this summer, including a BBQ and a Sunday morning brunch. And don't forget weekly coffee hours, impromptu poker nights, and cleaning your countertops and floors to make way for the SP cleaning crew.

In this Summer Edition of the Sidney-Pacific Newsletter, there are photographs from one of Sidney Pacific's biggest summer events: the Cultural Festival. There is also an article by Anita Villanueva, who has been running to raise money for leukemia, and a personal account of the Democratic National Convention, written by Christopher Zeineh. This issue also features an opinion piece by Mr. Zeineh about Michael Moore's controversial documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11*, one of the summer's most talked about films.

In a few weeks, new residents will be joining our graduate community, so let's tell them about all the ways they can get involved in Sidney-Pacific, MIT, and the Boston area. Submit articles for the Orientation Edition of the Sidney-Pacific Newsletter, coming out in late August—review your favorite restaurants, local bands, or clubs; write about your committee or organization; express your opinion about a film or politician; write about a sporting event or athlete; or start a monthly comic strip or cartoon. Please let me know if you have any ideas or suggestions for the next newsletter.

Happy reading! 

news

summer cultural festival comes to sidney-pacific

Last month, the Sidney-Pacific Graduate Community hosted a summer cultural festival, organized by Adrian KC Lee, the S-P Orientation Chair. The day of festivities included ethnic foods from some of MIT's cultural organizations, Greek dancing, a live percussion show, Latin music, and a Tae Kwon Do performance. The event was extremely well-attended and attracted a large crowd of students and community members. It was sponsored by the following organizations: S-P, Ashdown, InterLink, Korean Graduate Student Association, CSSA, Hellenic Students' Association, MITALY, and S-P Spanish Community. (Photos by Johnna Powell). **SP**



The Cultural Festival's Tae Kwon Do demonstration.



Performers in the live percussion show at the Cultural Festival.



Students get some treats at the Cultural Festival.

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Traditional Greek dancing at the Cultural Festival.

features

august 08 – september 01, 2004

time	date
	wednesday, august 11
7 pm – 9 pm	Weekly Coffee Social and Volleyball
	sunday, august 14
4 pm – 7 pm	S-P BBQ
	wednesday, august 18
7 pm – 9 pm	Weekly Coffee Social and Volleyball
	wednesday, august 25
10 am – 5 pm 8pm onward	S-P Orientation Desk S-P special “Weekly Wednesday” at Muddy Charles
	thursday, august 26
10 am – 5 pm 11am & 2pm	S-P Orientation Desk S-P House Tour
	tuesday, august 31
2 pm – 6 pm 7 pm – 9 pm	First Stop Shopping (TBA) Prudential SkyWalk, Ice Cream (6.45pm S-P lobby)
	wednesday, september 1
5 pm – 7 pm 8 pm – 10 pm	Welcome Reception under the Dome (10-500) Salsa night: Special Coffee Hour @ S-P (co-organized with GSC and Ashdown)

be a mentor!

Remember your first day at MIT? Join the GSC Mentorship Program by registering yourself as mentor to a new graduate student at MIT. Interact with people, make new friends, attend free-food parties and have fun! Visit <http://web.mit.edu/gsc/www/firstyear/mentoring>. Register before August 15, 2004.

planning an event?

List it in the monthly calendar! Send event announcements to [sp-newsletter-chair \[at\] mit \[dot\] edu](mailto:sp-newsletter-chair@mit.edu).

features

two days at the democratic national convention

by Christopher Zeineh

When I first heard about the DNC coming to Boston, all I could think of was the endless stream of talking heads flooding my TV and the rescheduling of the T-lines hindering my ventures to Boston for lunch. I figured there would be plenty of big shot personalities at the events, but, I thought, I'd never get inside the convention, nor would I see any of those guys, so why bother. I assumed that if anything interesting happens, I could catch it on the late night talk shows. They usually have shots of the VIPs coming into the convention. Then it hit me: I could do that too! All the big

shots have to get in through the gates, right? Maybe I'd get to meet some of the heavyweights in the political realm—maybe even talk politics with them. There are a ton of political views I espouse that don't get much play on the airwaves, so I thought I could get someone at the convention to act as a courier. As a news junkie, I couldn't pass up this opportunity, so I packed my camera and took the next T to the convention center. Here are some photos from my journey. (Photos and captions courtesy of Christopher Zeineh. For more photos, go to <http://www.mit.edu/~czeineh/dnc/>.) **Sp**



On the left is Howard Dean, who doesn't respond to Howard Dean-style yells.



*Good use of pun: 3 points.
Appropriate structure in the background: 10 points.*



A shot of the designated "Free Speech Zone" for protestors, otherwise known by convention-goers as the "cage" or "pen," littered with various political messages, such as "Segregation sucks."



Somebody was distributing cardboard rally signs, so I took one and wrote a vaguely political yet deliberately nonsensical message on the back.

***fahrenheit 9/11*: deception through omission**

by **Christopher Zeineh**

Fact: The first NASCAR race took place on April 24, 1954 in Dearborn, Michigan, and was originally an advertising showcase by the Ford Motor Company. Now, did you have any reason to doubt what I just said? Probably not, and I don't blame you, unless you are well-versed in NASCAR history. I'm certainly not; I just made that "fact" up. It did sound right, though, didn't it?

This is precisely the weakness upon which Michael Moore preys in *Fahrenheit 9/11*, leading his audience to believe a web of conspiracy theories that they are helpless to rebut unless they are aware of contradictory evidence. Moore's *modus operandi* is the Socratic Method—he asks a series of rhetorical questions with answers that imply that President Bush is an incompetent, greedy tool of the Saudi government. Moore provides just enough information to keep the line of questions moving, yet the problem is that he deliberately and consistently omits important facts that would otherwise contradict the answers you are meant to derive. Since average movie-goers are not news junkies, most audience members do not have enough information to properly counter Moore's implied arguments. Instead, they falsely accept them as fact.

For instance, in a bid to insinuate that Bush's only motive behind invading Afghanistan was to cash in on oil contracts, Moore observes that a Taliban representative visited Texas while Bush was governor to negotiate the terms of a deal for an oil pipeline. What he doesn't tell you is that it was Clinton administration officials who met with the Taliban, and not only did the deal go bust in 1998, but the Taliban never even met with Bush on this trip. Since these facts break down a crucial link in his conspiracy theory, Moore omits them and hopes his audience does not question him. Similar problems and distortions litter the entire movie, from doctored quotes, to self-contradictions, to flat-out lies, all designed to pave a path of flawed logic.

This is not to say that the film bears no redeeming qualities. The 9/11 black-out scene and the ensuing footage of

frightened New Yorkers and floating debris is artistically brilliant. Moore presents useful information about the Patriot Act that is often ignored in the public discussion, and the clips of those mourning the loss of loved ones in the Iraq War add a human face often lacking in the more sanitized news media. Moore, however, loses much of his credibility in this work by poorly incorporating it into his conspiracy theory, particularly regarding the civilian victims of the Iraq War. Attempting to blame Bush for as much evil as possible, Moore seems to argue that all the evils in Iraq result from American actions. All Iraqis shown before the war are happy, playful, and productive, while all Iraqis shown in its aftermath are either injured, dead, or mourning. The movie even dismisses the countless lives taken or destroyed by Saddam Hussein as not legally amounting to "murder" and ignores the good that has ensued since his ousting and subsequent capture. It is as though Moore has insufficient confidence in his audience to allow them to consider the justifications of the war in a balanced debate.

"This is precisely the weakness upon which Michael Moore preys."

Some common defenses for *Fahrenheit 9/11* include how the movie earns sufficient merit in daring to ask the "tough questions" in today's politics, or that since most of Moore's statements are either questions or just limited truths, he's not actually guilty of "lying," *per se*. Such critiques sidestep the fundamental charge that Michael Moore abuses the Socratic Method in a deceptive, one-sided attempt not to rebut proponents of the Bush administration, but to drown them out in a deluge of propaganda. **Sp**

For more information, Mr. Zeineh recommends Dave Kopel's "Fifty-nine Deceits in Fahrenheit 9/11" at davekopel.com, which addresses Moore's own rebuttals on michaelmoore.com. Additional links are available at centigrade911.com.

NOTE: The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the newsletter staff or the Sidney-Pacific Graduate Community.

sports

saving lives, one mile at a time

by Anita Villanueva

Okay, so most of you probably already know that I have been training for a marathon, to raise money for leukemia research. But you might be wondering how I got started in all this in the first place. After all, I've never trained for a marathon before, nor have I ever tried to raise money for a charity.

Well, toward the end of April (read: when the weather got warmer), I started running again and began checking out runnersworld.com for race listings. There I came across an ad by the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, encouraging people to run various races through their Team-in-Training (TNT) program. TNT is an endurance sports training program that provides participants with experienced coaching for an endurance event in exchange for raising money on the Society's behalf. I attended an information session in early May and that same day I signed on with TNT to train for the Maine Marathon in October and raise at least \$1,800.

I was really excited about this, but also intimidated—I was doubtful that I could raise that much money on my own, nor was I sure that I could actually run a full marathon. I knew that whatever I did would make a huge difference in many lives. About 10 years ago, I attended a funeral for a family friend who had died of leukemia—she was just 13 years old. It was really hard for my local community, as many of her family members and our friends, priests, and teachers had no choice but to watch her battle this awful disease. At the time, it seemed like there was nothing I could do to stop something like this from happening.

That soon changed after I signed up for TNT. I learned how much money its participants had raised in the past, and was astounded. Since TNT's founding in 1988, 190,000 individuals have raised over \$430 million toward blood cancer research. Forty years ago, the 5-year survival rate for people diagnosed with leukemia was only 10%. Now the survival rate is 46%, thanks to research supported by projects like TNT.

For the first month, it was going very well—I was averaging 15-20 miles week. In the beginning of June I began developing knee pain, which I foolishly ignored for a few weeks. It got worse and eventually rendered me unable to continue training. I was diagnosed with ilio-tibial band syndrome (ITBS), a very common overuse injury among runners. It seemed to stem

from a combination of a muscle imbalance, lack of strength, and not stretching properly. Unfortunately, because I didn't realize this right away, my recovery took much longer than expected. For the past 6 weeks, I have only been able to run a few miles every week, while at the same time doing physical therapy. Because I was still recovering and I had missed so much training, my orthopedic doctor advised me not to run the marathon (now is only 2 months away).

Initially I was disappointed, especially with all my success in fundraising (I had already raised about \$1500). I am not giving up that easily, though, and I am still determined to run a full marathon with Team in Training. I am shooting for the Walt Disney World Marathon on January 9. I will have to be super-careful not to get re-injured, I'll have to raise even more funds for that race (\$3,200), and I will have to be running 20-milers in December. But, I say, bring it on. **SP**



photo courtesy of Anita Villanueva

For more information about the Team in Training program, visit www.teamintraining.org.

If you are interested in supporting Anita in her fundraising, email her at [anita7 \[at\] mit \[dot\] edu](mailto:anita7[at]mit[dot]edu).