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survey says...

Over 98% of S-Pies agree: baby, it's cold out there. The other 2% have been cooped-up inside, finishing finals. Luckily, it's the end of the semester, so we can either flock to other (hopefully warmer) places, or just enjoy a quieter MIT campus.

Speaking of surveys, inside this issue you will find the results of the October S-P survey. Almost half the residents in the dorm responded to it. If you love taking surveys, the S-P website has been regularly featuring online opinion polls. Also inside is an article on the GSC from our GSC rep, Margrét Bjarnadóttir, and one on the Outreach Committee's activities, by chairs Waleed Farahat and Ken Ryu. Finally, there is a list of a few cool classes to check out during January's IAP.

The newsletter staff is looking for writers, reviewers, columnists, artists, and photographers. Let us know if you have any ideas or suggestions for the next newsletter.



(YOU KNOW YOU WANT TO...)

Write for the Sidney-Pacific Newsletter

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

**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!!**

news

gsc presents: news shorts

by Margrét Bjarnadóttir, S-P GSC Rep

let president-elect Hockfield know what you think

There is a committee called “The Student Advisory Board to MIT’s 16th President”—a long name that goes well with its important task of bringing students concerns to the President-elect Hockfield. The Board has been meeting regularly to discuss what information needs to be conveyed to President-elect Hockfield from the student perspective.

The Board would like input from all students. What is your concern? What is the number one student issue? Or number two or three?

should there be a proportional representation for dorms at the GSC?

At the next Graduate Student Council meeting, the representatives will vote on whether or not graduate dorm should have proportional representation as is the rule for departments. That would mean (with all probability) that the number of representatives for S-P

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Performers at the S-P Open Mic Coffee Hour (photo by Johnna Powell).

would go up—now we have one the same as all other dorms.

become a GSC rep!!

Have you always wanted to become a member of the Graduate Student Council? Well, now is your chance. The GSC needs representatives from: Aeronautics and Astronautics, Biology, Brain and Cognitive Science, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Civil & Environmental Engineering, Comparative Media Studies, Computational and Systems Biology, Economics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Engineering Systems Division, Linguistics and Philosophy, Management, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Media Arts and Sciences, Nuclear Engineering, Ocean Engineering, Physics, Political Science, Science, Technology, and Society, Urban Studies and Planning, Center for Real Estate, MLOG/Center for Transportation and Logistics, System Design and Management, Leaders for Manufacturing And for: minorities, Graduate Women and Graduate Family and Partners. Whew!

Please email Margret, the S-P Graduate Student Council Rep at sp-gcs-rep [at] mit [dot] edu with any comments or concerns. The GSC would love to hear from you! 

features

IAP Classes 2005 (A Short Selection)

time	date
6 pm - 7:30 pm	wednesday, january 5 Art and Architecture Tour of the Boston Public Library (meet at BPL)
9 - 12 am	monday, january 10 thru friday, january 14 The Experimental Musical Instrument Workshop at MIT (E15)
12 am - 5 pm	monday, january 10 thru friday, january 14 Junkyard Art: The Art of Recycling (N51 Plaster Studio)
2 pm - 5:30 pm	thursday, january 12 Lego Robotics Competition (24-618)
3 pm - 7:30 pm	sunday, january 16 Old Food: Ancient and Medieval Cooking (Next House Country Kitchen)
1 pm - 2:30 pm	friday, january 21 The 2004 Election (E51-376)
6 pm - 8 pm	wed, jan 12, mon, jan 17, wed, jan 19, mon, jan 24 Real Life Sex and the City (6-120)

*For more class listings, check out <http://web.mit.edu/lap/>
(some of the classes require advanced signup)*

Also: check online at http://s-p.mit.edu/about_sp/oguide2004/calendar.php for events and activities.

features

results from the sidney-pacific survey

by Margrét Bjarnadóttir, S-P GSC Rep

In October, the House Government conducted a survey of the residents of Sidney-Pacific. Three hundred forty-one residents filled in the S-P Survey—a response rate of about 46% of S-P residents. The following is a summary of some of the results.

I see dead people?!: safety around S-P

The question on safety was one of the questions that received the most comments from residents, the question was:

When walking home I:

- a) I never walk home (shuttle service, bike or drive)
- b) Always feel safe
- c) I sometimes feel “not so safe” because []
- d) I never feel safe because []

Table 1 shows the response by gender. As we can see only 18% of female residents said they feel safe.

The reasons that S-P residents do not feel safe, or “not so safe” included reports of being stalked/followed, complaints about dark and deserted streets, and drunk

and/or homeless people. The reasons also included lack of police presence, and one resident even stated that he/she sees dead people!

When asked about what can be done to increase safety around S-P, suggestions included: more lighting, more police patrols, more emergency phones on walking routes toward S-P, and RADD (self-defense) courses.

residents from all over the world

Apart from those countries whose flags are in the lobby, there are S-P residents from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Taiwan, Andorra, the Czech Republic, Armenia, Bangladesh, and Iceland. It is clear that at S-P, there are residents from all over the world.

can the housemasters sing?

We asked a couple of questions about the housemasters. The first one was regarding whether or not residents know the housemasters and more than half the residents know them or have at least met them.

When residents were asked about ways for the

Continued on the next page...

Table 1: Table that shows counts and percentages of by gender. A close look at the numbers shows a big difference between how males and females answered the question.

	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Total	% of total
Never Walk home	11	7	10	5.3	21	6
Never feel safe	4	3	0	0	4	1
“not so safe”	110	72	68	36.4	178	53
I feel safe	27	18	109	58.3	136	40
Grand Total	152	1	187	1	339	1

features

survey results, con't

Housemasters to get to know them better, most of the suggestions included free food – and many were very happy with the housemasters dinner (if you have not been invited to one, you will). But residents also suggested organized outings, random visits and one resident suggested that they sing in a Jazz Band.

the S-P website

Over 65% of residents use the S-P website at least once a week. When asked for what features they would like to see added the suggestions included: A blog, a “new movie indicator,” resident’s directory, live web cam in the gym, and interactive bulletin boards. Also an S-P online dating service, printer accounts, online inventory reservation, bigger MyAccount button, and finally, some dancing hamsters. Our Web-Chairs are already working on some of the suggestions.

to recycle or not to recycle

It is mandatory to recycle in Cambridge. The S-P survey showed that more than 55% of the residents recycle and less than 3% of those who answered never recycle. Residents were also asked whether or not they knew which items are recyclable and maybe the most

surprising response was from a resident that did not know which items are recyclable, but always recycles.

singles, spa, ski and sox’s

S-P Residents had some great event ideas,. For example, suggestions included pottery and arts and craft workshops, outdoor movies in good weather, open mic night, S-P ski weekend, Singles Night, Karaoke, Quiz Night, visits to Boston attractions, a fieldtrip to a spa, Sox’s games, weekend getaways, and trips to New York City. We were happy to see that almost everyone feels that their experience at S-P has been very good or at the very least, good.

The S-P house-government is working on some of the suggestions of the survey as well as striving to make S-P feel like a strong community. If you have any suggestions please feel free to send an email to the officers at spec [at] mit.edu. If you would like to submit an anonymous suggestion it can be done at http://s-p.mit.edu/government/trustees_anonymous_mail.php, an anonymous web form that is sent to the Board of Trustees Chair.



Congratulations to the Raffle winners: Jesus Villacorta Turienzo, George Kokossalakis, and Vivienne Sze.

Residents answers to questions about recycling

Do you know which Items are recyclable	Do you recycle?			Total
	Yes	Sometimes	Never	
Yes	138	60	2	200
I know Some	50	77	3	130
No	1	6	4	11
Total	189	143	9	341

features

outlook on outreach

by *Waleed Farahat, S-P Outreach Vice Chair and Ken Ryu, S-P Outreach Chair*

The Outreach Committee seeks to have the S&P community more integrated within the broader MIT and Cambridge communities. Over the fall semester, our focus has been on volunteering. We have worked on projects with the Boston area community service groups, such as the Charles River Conservancy and the City Year. We paired up with residents from the Warehouse in working to make our CASPAR visits a regular routine. In these events, participants participated in various activities like landscaping, fund-raising, and preparing food for the people who need help and were able to contribute their time toward making a difference in people's lives, make new friends, and feel good! S&P residents who participated in such activities found it to be rewarding and a different social dynamic.

The Outreach Committee also serves as a channel between the city of Cambridge and S&P. We brought in vendor sponsors for the activities fair and were able to get Toscanini's to sponsor free ice cream for Coffee Hour during IAP. We also got \$1 coffee coupons for S&P residents.

The S&P community survey indicated that our residents are interested in tutoring related activities (this is MIT after all!). This will be the focus of the spring semester's activities, as we hope to tap into the pool of S&P students to be integrated within other tutoring initiatives on campus.

Furthermore, there is an exciting line-up of events planned for the spring semester:


- As we gear up for the tax season, we'll be working with the GSC Tax committee in assisting community members with tax preparation. S&P will be one of three sites on campus to help



Performers at the S-P Open Mic Coffee Hour (photo by Johnna Powell).

MIT and Cambridge communities. For anyone interested in understanding better how the tax system works and helping others, this will be a great chance to get involved.

- We will be working with the Careers Office in hosting a Graduate Careers Symposium in March, to be held at S&P. This will be an excellent opportunity to do some networking and career exploration.
- Continuing on a fine one-year-old tradition(!), we'll be working with the chess club to host the S&P chess tournament, to be held in May. Stay tuned!
- And last, but not least, we hope to expand our volunteering drives.

We're always looking for ideas and contribution from residents. If any of the above sounds interesting, or if you have any ideas you would like us to help you pursue, please e-mail us at [sp-outreach-chair \[at\] mit \[dot\] edu](mailto:sp-outreach-chair@mit.edu). 

ARE YOU A PROBLEM-SOLVER WITH A HEART OF GOLD?

Great! Write an advice column for the S-P newsletter. Write to [sp-newletter-chair \[at\] mit \[dot\] edu](mailto:sp-newletter-chair@mit.edu) for more details.