



the sidney-pacific newsletter

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bye, bye s-p...hello new officers!

**Congratulations
to all the
Graduates!**

**Thank you to all the
outgoing officers
and
congratulations
incoming officers!**



OPEN MIC NIGHT Thierry Vanhaverbeke and Jon Mendenhall playing instruments at the Open Mic Night this past fall. (Photo by Johnna Powell).



news

open mic night: truly open

by Jon Mendenhall

If you happen to be a musician of any instrument and ability, I suggest performing at the Open Mic Night. The atmosphere is supportive and the effort and intent is what is rewarded. No notice ahead of time is necessary—there will be a sign-up sheet at the event with open slots. There will also be a piano and guitar for you to use. The Open Mic Night is a great venue for trying out pieces you might be working on.

Aside from encouraging you to attend and possibly perform at the Open Mic Night, I'd also like to let you know about the S&P Music group, an email list for S&P residents interested in a variety of music styles. The list is maintained by Lennon Rodgers, the current music chair. If you are looking for someone to play with casually or more seriously, you can use the list to find someone with similar interests. Even if you are not interested in performing, this list includes people interested in listening to music. For example, you might look for folks who want to see the BSO (Boston Symphony Orchestra) or go to a local music venue.

I hope to see you on May 11th for the Open Mic Night, and, if your interest happens to be spacey alternative music (or not), feel free to drop me a line at any time. I'll always be willing to play. S p

Newsletter Chair:

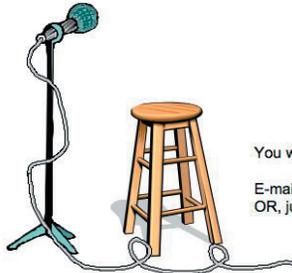
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Music @ S&P Presents:

Open Mic Night!



You wanna play a song??
E-mail: sp-music-chair@mit.edu
OR, just sign up that night.

During the **LAST Coffee Hour** before Finals
May 11th @ 9 PM in the **Multi-purpose Room**
Come and **play** a song or **listen** to others while enjoying **FREE drinks and treats.**

safety @ MIT

by Margret Bjarnadottir and Obrad Scepanovic

On Mar 29 Sidney-Pacific hosted a Safety Forum. The purpose of this event was to inform the residents and the wider community about matters relating to personal safety in the area and answer the common questions and concerns of students. The first part of the forum was an interactive talk by Sgt. Cheryl Vossmer regarding safety tips. The second part was a panel discussion with Chief John DiFava and Lt. Al Pierce from MIT Police, Karen Nilsson, Director of Housing, Jim Wallace, Director of Operations of Facilities, and Larry Brutti, Operations Manager for Parking and Transportation.

The forum underscored the idea that the area around the MIT campus is generally very safe compared to other places in Cambridge. The biggest crime affecting the MIT community is theft, which in many cases is caused by people not locking their doors or looking after their property. When walking back from campus to S-P, however, students should use common sense to avoid being victimized. Some safety tips and advice suggested by Sgt. Vossmer and the panel included:

- Be aware of factors/circumstances that diminish awareness, such as alcohol, cell phones, iPods, lack of sleep, or stress for instance, that may cause you to be an easier target for criminals.
- Carry money separately from identification. In case of

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two variations on a jazz theme

“in this house, on this morning” = S&P Jazz!

by *Olivier Koch*

“I’ll play it first and tell you what it is later.”

-- *Miles Davis*

When Louis Armstrong was asked “What is jazz?” he replied: “Man, if you gotta ask you’ll never know!” Hopefully, for those who don’t know, there is another option today: the Sidney Pacific Jazz Band. Whether you play piano like Ray Charles or you don’t have a single idea of what jazz means, you will always be welcome in the band. We actually have one thing in common: we strive for fun, relaxation, and enjoyment. For rehearsing, we picked a day in the week where usually nothing happens: say, Sunday morning at 11 am. And, for showing off, we picked a day where there is usually a lot going on: say, Wednesday Coffee Hour! It works out very well. Everyone in the Jazz band is free to bring whatever he/she wants to play. Don’t expect us to ask you something like: “Dude, would you mind transposing this Dorian up one step and half so that the Bbm7 sounds better?” What you will learn in the band is how to play a tune you like with people you like. Isn’t that the real life after all? Does “The Girl from Ipanema” mean anything to you? Or “Take Five?” Or “Autumn Leaves?” Whatever the answer is, come join us, but make sure to bring your instrument, your voice, and yourself. We’ll provide the music scores!

“It’s like an act of murder; you play with intent to commit something.”

-- *Duke Ellington* S P



JAZZ MUSICIANS A few of our favorite S&P Jazz Band members. Left to Right: *Jacob Eisenstein (bass guitar), Matteo Brocco (piano), Daryush Mehta (sax, flute, clarinet), Lennon Rodgers (guitar and percussion), Olivier Koch (trumpet).* (Photo courtesy of the S&P Jazz Band.)

jazz is simply cool

by *Matteo Brocco*

“One of the things I like about jazz, kid, is I don’t know what’s going to happen next. Do you?”

--*Bix Beiderbecke*

As it happens for all the most beautiful things, defining jazz is hard. For me, what is really striking about jazz, especially after the advent of bebop (a creature of people like Miles Davis, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie), is that it has been able to influence all other forms of music existing on Earth. Why? Simply, because, it’s cool.

Jazz is the only context where the word “contamination” has a positive meaning. Mixing jazz improvisation with spicy Latin-American rhythms produces the breathtaking blends of Latin jazz, while putting it into bossa nova and samba gives smooth Brazilian jazz pieces that will speak to all your feelings. Believe me on this: listening to jazz will make you happier. S P

features

we choose to go to the moon...again!

by Lennon Rodgers, S-P Music Chair

"We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win..."

-American President John F. Kennedy at Rice University on September 12th, 1962.

"First, I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish."

-American President John F. Kennedy to Congress on May 25th, 1961.

The year of 1961 was rough for JFK. The Russians were successful in being the first to launch a man in Earth orbit (April 12th) and the Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba was a major embarrassment (April 17th). It was extremely risky since the U.S. was way behind—but Kennedy felt that racing the Russians to the Moon was exactly what our nation needed. He was totally right. I'm sure most of you know the ending, right? The U.S. beat the Russians to the Moon and everyone lived happily ever after... well at least the first part is true.

I occasionally come across a skeptic who holds onto the bogus conspiracy that the U.S. didn't land a man on the Moon on July 20th, 1969. The reality is that it did happen, and it is by far the most amazing engineering muscle that has ever been flexed in the history of mankind. Any appreciator of technology should read at least one book

on the subject, and I'd be more than happy to make suggestions. Just to clear things up: twelve Americans landed and then explored the Moon. The last men to walk on the Moon were Gene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt in 1972. The latter I have been privileged to meet and interview a couple of times. The actual landing of the Moon was part of the Apollo missions, though there were many missions before and after. The story is full of cliffhangers, as well as many technical, social and political details. You might be interested to know that MIT engineered the entire guidance and navigation system for the Apollo missions. Just like all previous explorers, they used the stars to find their way. The father of Astrodynamics is a professor here at MIT, and is still teaching the mathematical techniques he used to put men on the Moon.

"By stretching out his arm and blocking Earth with his thumb, one astronaut beautifully captured the essence of exploration: to see your own world from a different perspective—seeing how fragile it is..."

Last year, President Bush formed new initiatives for NASA that aim to put Americans back on the Moon by 2020. Though I'm a bit skeptical that this goal will be met without huge budget increases, I really like the idea. It may be horrible for NASA in the sense of being nearly impossible under the

present conditions, and may end up cutting many other critical missions, but the explorer in me says that we should really go for it.

In December of 1968, three Americans were the first humans to ever leave Earth's orbit (Apollo 8). For the first time ever, human eyes peered back at the little blue ball we call Earth. After spending some time in lunar orbit the spacecraft headed back for home. By stretching out his arm and blocking Earth with his thumb, one astronaut beautifully captured the essence of exploration: to see your own world from a different perspective - seeing how fragile it is, and realizing that you must protect what you have and respect that which you don't completely understand. S p

features

SPTV FAQ

by Neha Soni, S-P SPTV Chair

Q. What is SPTV?

A. SPTV=Sidney-Pacific TV. SPTV refers to the screens that hang in the main lobby above the front desk, the screens opposite the elevators on all floors, channel 3 on your personal TV screens, and the computer that runs the code to display all the information on these screens.

Q. How does SPTV work?

A. The SPTV video server sends a feed into the building's cable TV distribution unit in the basement. From there, it travels as channel 3 to the video screens by the elevators and into all of the student rooms.

Q. Is it just a powerpoint slide show?

A. It used to be. (Warning: nerd talk coming up) Not so long ago, the powers that be decided to make the move to a more robust linux OS running Debian. Java Swing was used to write the program that cycles through the files to be displayed. In addition to being more hacker-resistant and breakdown-resistant, this allows us greater flexibility to add more functionality to SPTV.

Q. What is being displayed on SPTV?

A. We display flyers about events and information for residents, real time Cambridge weather, a scrolling news ticker to display regularly updated news headlines from sites such as Reuters, the *Wall Street Journal* and sports news. We are also trying to encourage residents to submit personal (birthday) announcements, photos, or art work.

Q. Who can send files for SPTV, and how?

A. Anyone with MIT certificates can send files to SPTV. The (recently invented) form for uploading files (including the guidelines) is linked from the SP homepage, under "News and Information."

Q. I have many cool ideas for SPTV. For starters, a bachelor/bachelorette of the week. How do I get involved with SPTV?

A. We'd love to hear about your suggestions, ideas and/or participation. Email us at [sp-sptv-chair \[at\] mit \[dot\] edu](mailto:sp-sptv-chair@mit.edu).

Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped out with SPTV. Your input has been most valuable! S P

safety @ MIT

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- robbery, be ready to toss the money away and run in the other direction, toward a "safety resource."
- Know about emergency phone numbers. For MIT police dial 100 from any campus phone or 617-253-1212.
- Walk with the "don't mess with me attitude." Body language speaks loudly and can be a deterrent to criminals.
- Let police know about any suspicious activity. The police would much rather show up and find nothing wrong than have you be the victim of a crime.
- Keep your personal body space so that you're comfortable in your surroundings.
- Carry your keys in your hand so you don't have to fumble getting them out in front of your car or building.
- Seek the "witness-rich environment." This means an area where there may be people around in case of emergency. Run toward the main roads, gas station, places where people gather if necessary. People will assist you in need and may help in identifying perpetrators, taking photographs, calling the police.
- Don't draw attention to yourself, i.e., don't use your laptop on the subway, count cash out in the open, or wear iPod headphones.
- Try to think like a criminal and anticipate what a criminal may do; then take measures to protect yourself.
- If you are the victim of a crime remember your attackers description, particularly look for distinguishing features such as a limp, tattoos, scars, etc.
- The police don't recommend you carrying weapons or pepper spray because often these weapons can be used against you by criminals. Instead, rely on your built-in weapons such as your voice and yell for "Help," use a whistle to draw attention to yourself and create a "witness-rich environment."
- Don't cross the railroad tracks at night; stay along the main roads such as Mass Ave and Albany Street. Know the location of the campus blue light emergency telephones.
- It's safer to walk down Albany than Landsdowne; Albany Street is mostly MIT property, there are more people around, more traffic, dorms.

The students also expressed their appreciation for the Winter Shuttle. This shuttle service could become permanent contingent on the funding approval. S P

SIDNEY-PACIFIC GRADUATE COMMUNITY, THE DEAN FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS AND THE DEAN FOR STUDENT LIFE PRESENT:

LIFE IS TOUGH AND THEN YOU GRADUATE

LECTURE AND BOOK SIGNING WITH

JORGE CHAM

CREATOR OF THE POPULAR COMIC STRIP

"PILED HIGHER AND DEEPER"

THURSDAY MAY 12

4:30PM TALK AND Q&A IN LECTURE HALL 26-100

5:30PM RECEPTION + SIGNING STATA CENTER LOBBY (BLDG 32)

MORE INFO AT: S-P.MIT.EDU/PHDCOMICS



FIRST 150 STUDENTS GET A \$5 DISCOUNT OFF THE NEW PHD BOOK!

FREE FOOD!