all to gain 10 minutes of action visuals that didn't even exist in the book. In all, I can't say I was terribly impressed. There are some things that were done amazingly well. I won't say it all here, you'll have to check it out for yourself.

A Politically Correct Holiday Wish

Please accept with no obligation, implied or implicit, best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially conscious, low stress, non-addictive, gender-neutral celebration of the winter solstice holiday, practiced within the most enjoyable traditions of the religious persuasion of your choice, or secular practices of your choice (with respect for the religious/secular persuasions and/or traditions of others, or their choice not to practice religious or secular traditions at all) ... and a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling, and emotionally uncomplicated recognition of the onset of the generally accepted calendar year 2006, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of any other culture, and without regard to the race, creed, color, age, physical ability, religious faith, or sexual orientation of the wisher.

Holidays around the World

In Cataluña, Spain, there is a very interesting and fun Christmas tradition called “Cagatío”. During December, children feed a tree stump in their backyard with fruits and other foods. Parents take away the food so the kids believe that the log ate it.

Then early in January comes the special day: Parents put the gifts next to the log covered by a sheet and then the kids come armed with sticks and sing a special song that boils down to “Caga, caga, Cagatío, because we want our gifts”. And after singing in circles and beating the log with sticks, they uncover the gifts excreted by their Cagatío and celebrate with great joy. Now that’s a cool Christmas tradition! "And Daniel!

Recommended Ingredients

Restaurants – Rock Bottom (Theatre District, 115 Stuart St., Boston), Pho Hoa (Chinatown, 17 Beach St., Boston), Trattoria il Panino (North End, 11 Parmenter St., Boston)

Bars – The Tap (Boston Common, 19 Union St., Boston), The Field (Central Square, 20 Prospect St., Cambridge)

Clubs – Gypsy Bar [formerly Pravda 116] (Boston Common, 116 Boylston St., Boston), Roxy (Theatre District, 279 Tremont St., Boston), Avalon (15 Lansdowne St., Boston)

Of course, don’t forget the conveniently located Thirsty Ear and the Muddy Charles.

For deals on cover charges and to learn about new clubs subscribe to: parties@euroclub.mit.edu

Geek Talk

The conversation starts somewhere in the signals and systems world...

Natalija: negative frequencies are just a tool, like imaginary numbers
Mitch: “They just are”? Natalija: yes
Mitch: mmm... they’re like cycles that never happened at a certain period Natalija: like male PMS
Mitch: they’re like cycles that never happened at a certain period that doesn’t exist
Natalija: like male PMS
Mitch: oooohh... ouch... burn

Last Note – The authors of this newsletter are the S-P government take absolutely no responsibility for any problems resulting from the application of the content of this newsletter, whether the content be correct or in any way misstated.

In this edition:
1 | House Updates
2 | Weather in Boston
3 | NBA and FIFA
4 | Holiday Curiosities

House Updates

The December house meeting was exemplary of “keep it short and simple”.

Outreach – make the holidays more enjoyable for someone: volunteer at CASP’AR, Rosie’s Place or donate to the Toys for Tots program. Contact Kyungbum and Esmeralda at sp-outreach-chair@mit.edu

Good company, free food

Brunch
Sunday, December 11
Noon – 2pm

The Joy of Cook... Clubbing

While good company is essential, there are some places in this city that will make just about any night-on-the-town recipe spicier.

Start with two parts of good company and one part weekend. Gather people from lab, dorm, family, and random other places. Like it or not, group coalesces. Provide plentiful nourishment at a restaurant. Slowly add targeted marketing, such as “we got to go out on Saturday”. Include a dash of reminiscing about memorable parties from last year, and a pinch of margarita salt. Move the mixture to a local bar. Slowly stir by the bar until the mixture appears talkative and excited. Remove from bar and gently pour onto the dance floor of the nearby club. Add drinks and music until bubbly. Stir in dance moves until frothy. Finally, when mixture starts to slow down, transfer in groups back to homes, add plenty of water to avoid hangovers. See page 4 for restaurant, bar and club recommended ingredients! Natalija
What’s Arctic Air Doing in Boston?

On December 2nd you may have looked out the window and saw a beautiful site: crystal clear skies and bright sunlight that simply made the red and golden foliage seem luminous. You may have also thought: “it’s got to be at least 60°F” and dressed accordingly. I saw a guy wearing sandals that day. Sandals! It was 27°F at noon! That is the description of a typical Arctic air day. It looks beautiful and warm, but the reality is freezing.

These days happen when a mass of cold Arctic air descends to the Northeast. Your first weather commandment of living in New England is:

I shall always check the outside temperature before getting dressed for the day.

Another atmospheric peculiarity of New England’s winter weather are the Northeastern storms, or Nor’eas’ners as locals call ’em. Northeasterners are winter storms characterized by heavy snowfall and high winds. Sounds like a winter equivalent of a hurricane, doesn’t it? A Northeaster can drop two to three feet of snow within 24 hours. The Nor’eas’ners usually catch a northeaster in development in time to warn the local population. So you will have ample warning to buy enough food so that you can stay in your room for a day or two. Alternatively, here is the second New England weather commandment:

In case of a Northeaster I shall dress in layers.

So, what is the proper clothing and where do you get it? Let’s start from the outer layers. A good winter jacket suitable for Boston weather has a removable fleece lining, adjustable hood, a windproof and waterproof shell, and enough pockets to store the gloves, the keys, etc. As mentioned before, the Boston weather makes it perfectly reasonable to wear a pair of windproof and waterproof ski pants over your regular pants until you get to work. It might not look stylish while you are on the street, but once you get to the office you can remove the ski pants and revel in being one of the few people in your office in DRY PANTS!

As for the underlayers, sweaters are not the only option. Novel synthetic materials are what professional winter-sports athletes swear by. These materials make very comfortable and soft clothing that wicks moisture away from your skin to keep you dry and warm. The morale here is not to use cotton for the layer closest to your skin.

The REI Outlet (rei-outlet.com) has great winter gear at deeply discounted prices. They carry well-researched brand names like Columbia and the North Face. The downside to the REI Outlet is that it is only online so you have to estimate the size you need. Don’t worry, returns are easy through local REI stores. If you really want to try things on before buying them, a good place to shop is the Burlington Coat Factory. No... they don’t carry just coats. They too have deeply discounted brand-name clothing. Of course, should you be willing to pay full price, any old department store will do.

Yeah, Northeastern winters come with weird weather. But it is precisely that weather that makes it possible to enjoy winter sports. So, get your teeth when it’s cold and enjoy the skiing, sledding and snowfights whenever possible! ▲ Natalija

College Football Update

What now? So up to early November, everyone thought the undefeated Virginia Tech would be a candidate to the national title. Then along came Miami Hurricanes and pounded into pulp VT’s aspirations to the national title. Miami took VT’s perfect streak with a cruel 27-7 victory at home! It has become obvious that USC, once again, will be in the ultimate game battling the Texas Longhorns, which fought to keep its high ranking throughout the season. Texas pounded Colorado for the Big 12 Title 70-3 at the same time that USC took care of UCLA 66-19 for their 34th straight win. They will be meeting in the Rose Bowl for the national championship.

The SEC championship was taken by the Georgia State Bulldog’s after beating the mighty LSU Tigers 34-14. The Tigers had lost only one game to Tennessee (30-27 OT), having to play 10 straight weeks afterwards due to the missed dates early in the season due to Hurricane Katrina. The ACC title was taken by FSU Seminoles beating Virginia Tech Hokies 27-22.

Boston College played against Maryland on Nov 21 for a 31-16 win, which gave them 19th place overall after Michigan lost to Ohio State in the last seconds of game. Navy beat Army 43-23 in a game of classic rivalry. Another game worth noting is Georgia Tech beating the Hurricanes at Miami, putting GaTech back in the top 25 and yielding the ACC title game to Virginia Tech. ▲ Daniel

The Rest of the Sports

In NFL, Pats are mildly leading the East conference, Brady playing as well as it is expected, while Cincinnati Bengals have clawed their way to lead in the North. In the South, Indianapolis Colts are red hot and still undefeated. On the other end of the continent, Seattle Seahawks secured themselves a nice conference win. Are the Pats going to take the fourth set of rings home? I sure hope they don’t break any more fingers.

So, yeah, it’s football season. But in NBA, Detroit and San Antonio look good. It’s going to take us a while to get to NHL’s playoffs. The international spin: Trinidad and Tobago celebrated nationally on November 17 – everyone got a day off because their soccer team qualified for FIFA World Cup 2006 in Germany. The US qualified too, but really – how much does that contribute to FIFA? Recall 1998 and 1990 specifically, and the 40 year absence before that. Final draw, which determines who plays in which group, is on Saturday, December 9. ▲ Natalija

Clean Fun: HP4

The newest installment of the Warner Brothers Harry Potter series is an action-packed 2.5 hours of quality entertainment.

As Harry attends his fourth year at Hogwarts, his challenges get more frightening and even more dangerous. This year brings even scarier creatures, such as dragons, mermaids, and a trial of self-endurance in a dangerous competition. You’ll be stuck in your seat for most of the film waiting to see what’s looming around the corner for Harry.

As for the downsides...If you haven’t read the book, the movie feels choppy and very rushed. There is a good reason for this: the fourth book is nearly double the size of the third, yet the film is only 16 minutes longer than Harry Potter 3: Prisoner of Azkaban.

Now, having read the book, I left the theatre with a sense of “What happened?” It was enjoyable to see the creative talents working on this film to craft some stunning visuals to match the book, but the fact of the matter is that some of the crucial characters were erased from the plot, and the rest of the story was rewritten to match this.