



New SPEC Announces Upcoming Initiatives, Additional Resources

By SPEC

Hi everyone, we're the Sidney-Pacific Executive Council (SPEC), and we're excited to take on our leadership roles this term. We're here to help organize events, foster community within S-P, maintain the S-P equipment and infrastructure, connect S-P to the greater MIT community, and improve life at S-P.

There are many initiatives that we would like to pursue, some of which we have already begun to implement in conjunction with the hard-working officers of the House Government.

We wanted to let you know about some exciting upcoming events, courtesy of the Office of Residential Life and the Hall Council, including a Cultural Festival, a halls BBQ, an outdoor pool party, movie screen-

ings, monthly brunches, and bimonthly coffee hours -- of course all of which involve free food! And don't forget about your hall events!

The Office of Resources is happy to announce the acquisition of upgraded AV equipment in the Multipurpose room, 8 new computers, over 100 new DVDs for our collection, and last but not least a Wii! As a side note, some of us are partial to Wii boxing :)

The Office of Information is dedicated

to notifying residents of upcoming events, documenting life at S-P, and improving communication through the up-and-coming online forums and Unified Publicity Interface.

The Office of the President maintains relations with other on-campus residences, external organizations, and S-P alumni. In addition to long-standing neighborhood outreach, CoSI and Housefellows programs, we will establish corporate relations

and reach out to our growing alumni base.

We're happy to be a part of such a vibrant community and to work with such an enthusiastic group of student leaders. In addition to the initiatives we've mentioned, we are really interested to hear any ideas that you may have to improve residential life, as well as any comments or questions. Please don't hesitate to contact us at spec@mit.edu. Enjoy the start of the summer!



Photo Courtesy of B. Mares

SPEC Members (from left to right) Michelle Sander, Rosaria Chiang, Nan Gu, Swati Mohan, and Wendy Iskenderian.

Inside This Issue:

Page 2:
How To Not Lose Your Passport

Page 3:
SP Furniture Exchange Program

Page 4:
Residents Go Rock Climbing



International Student Advice: An Alternative Form of Identification

By Monica Martinez Bravo

If you are an international student living in Boston area, you might already know that in most restaurants, bars and clubs, the official ID of your country is not accepted as a valid ID.

That means that unless you have an American ID, you have to carry your passport every time you go out. That is exactly what I did my first two years at MIT without realizing that it is in fact a big imprudence.

Like most things, we don't value them enough until they are missing and a passport is not an exception.

A couple of weeks ago, I went out to celebrate the end of my exams with some friends and during a short distraction somebody stole my purse.

As you can imagine, the feeling of many important things being stolen is not a pleasant one. But, at that time, I was unaware that my biggest headaches were going to come from a bunch of stapled papers that were inside my purse: my passport.

After canceling all my credit cards and cell phone number and making a police report I spent the next couple of days trying to get duplicates of all the cards and documents that were stolen. I had to postpone a flight to Washington DC to have enough time to get these transactions done and to get a new passport, since you cannot take a flight without proper identification.

In the consulate of my country, Spain, they were nice enough to speed up the process of issuing a new passport as much as they could and I got it in 4 business days (the electronic passport can only be issued in Spain, not in the consulates). With my new passport I could legally stay and travel in the USA without any problem.

But! If I exited the country, before coming back to the USA, I had to have a student visa in my passport. And if you are not an American citizen you must know that getting a visa is a long and expensive process.

First of all, they can only be issued in the

American Embassy of your country. I was planning on taking a two-week vacation in my city Barcelona, to see family and friends. To renew the visa, I would have had to change my flight and go to Madrid and spend at least one day of bureaucratic procedures there.

Second, as you might know, processing a visa takes time; officially three to four weeks. For a moment I thought that I wouldn't be able to go to Spain at all in the summer and I had already bought the ticket!!

I could not take more than two weeks off, and if that had not been enough time to process the visa I would not be able to go home! And everything for a stolen passport! However, this story has a happy ending :)

When I called the American Embassy

in Madrid, they said that two weeks would be enough; in case of a renewal of a visa they could speed up the process and do it in two weeks.

Moreover, right before I flew to Washington DC, the manager of the club where my purse was stolen called me to tell me that my passport and some other documents were found at the club. I was so happy to know that I would not have to go through the process of issuing a new visa!

The morale of the story is the following: do not carry your passport when you go out!!! You don't have to!!! You can get a Massachusetts Liquor ID or a driving license. It will take a few hours to apply for them and they can save you lots of headaches! That is definitely the wiser thing to do.

GSC Summary

The GSC discussed the new DAPER fee, which amounts to \$20 per month, compared to \$8 per month for the rest of the year, which is taken from student fees.

One representative

proposed a strike of the facilities, but that was abandoned because it would hurt club sports.

The GSC is looking for a webmaster.

There is an ongoing competition for this year's orientation logo.

Old Furniture, Dishware Target of New Program

By Chia-Hung Wu

SP-MORE stands for "Sidney-Pacific Moving Out Recycling Exchange," which is a program involving collection of any usable items distributing them to new residents for free.

Everyone loves free food and free gifts; it's part of our MIT grad culture! That's

one reason why during the move-out season, many items appear in the lobby and in corners of every floor. Unfortunately many items are simply thrown away. Last summer a few hall councilors started collecting those unwanted but usable items and piling them in their own apartments. When the new residents came, hall councilors had useful free gifts to offer them. The initiative was focused on new residents because they are usually not familiar with the environment, especially those coming to the US for the first time, and we wanted them to experience the hospitality of this graduate community.

The initiative last summer elicited many positive responses from the community. The people moving out were glad to see their belongings recycled; the people moving in were happy to receive some free items.

Some enthusiastic residents even continued to donate items to their hall councilors all year long.

During the SP officers' retreat in early February, our housemaster Roger had the idea of establishing a dorm-wide furniture exchange. With help from housemasters, our housemanager, SPEC, hall councilors, publicity chairs, and some volunteers, the program SP-MORE was officially inaugurated, and reusable items donated by residents have found their temporary home in the 2nd floor study room. Residents can drop off

items near the SPTV in front of the 2nd floor study lounge. They can also contact hall councilors or email sp-more@mit.edu. We collect ANY usable items, including food, furniture, cooking ware, dishes, silverware, and household cleaners.

SP-MORE is still in its infancy, and we are in the process of learning and experimenting. Any suggestions are welcomed. Hopefully when new residents arrive at the end of the summer, they will be astonished by the piles of free items to choose from, and grateful for the hard work and effort put forth by members of this wonderful community.

Sidney Pacific Speaker

Newsletter Chair
Matthew Walker

The Speaker is published monthly to serve the Sidney Pacific Graduate Community. Submissions of articles, photos, events, and other items of interest can be sent to sp-newsletter-chair@mit.edu



Upcoming Events

Wednesday, June 20th: Yoga Class Begins

Saturday, June 23rd: Rueda Party

Sunday, June 24th: Brunch

Tuesday, June 26th: Hall Councilor BBQ and Movie Screening

Sunday, July 8th: Brunch

Saturday, July 14th: Movie Screening

Saturday, July 14th: Beach Outing

Saturday, July 21st: Pool Party

Residents Scale to New Heights

By Jessica Edmonds

On May 19 a group of SP residents attended a Beginner's Rock Climbing trip at MetroRock, in Everett.

We spend part of the afternoon with an instructor, who taught us how to harness ourselves up, and most importantly, how to belay somebody else so that they don't fall!

Luckily nobody had much of a fear of heights, and we were all very trusting of our partners, so we quickly became brave enough for the "big wall".

After a handful of 5.6's and a few 5.7's and 5.8's, our forearms and fingers became so shaky that we decided to call it a day. We each received a free pass for another day of rock climbing.... When shall we go, guys?



Photo Courtesy of J. Edmonds

A pair of Sidney Pacific residents, Daniel Truque and Alex Taussig, demonstrate improper belaying techniques and how much they enjoy SP outings.

Room Decor Suggestions



Dear Baby Housemaster,
My room is so bland! All of my friends have really neat apartments. How can I liven it up?
--Bored of White Walls on Floor 5

Dear Bored,
I once helped Martha Stewart overcome a similar problem in her apartment. You can do things like buy a small rug, borrow art from MIT Visual Arts, get a cool lamp shade, or put up some pictures of your favorite people. A good start might be your favorite Baby Housemaster!
--JT