



Housemasters Offer Advice, Share History of Building For Residents

By Matthew Walker

As you may know, Sidney Pacific opened to residents for the first time in the fall of 2002.

The Sidney Pacific community, however, got its start a year earlier, when the President and the Division of Student Life called for applications for the housemaster position at MIT's newest graduate dorm.

Roger and Dottie had previously considered applying for a housemaster position when their children were growing up, but decided against uprooting the family, which lived about 35 minutes outside of Boston at the time.

This time, the children were all grown up, and Dottie had always thought it would be fun to live in the city. Furthermore, it was a job that the two of them could undertake together.

After submitting their application, they were called before a search committee headed by Vernon Ingram for an interview. Having passed that hurdle, they had an opportunity to dine with some students that were interested in Sidney Pacific. Unfortunately, the building had yet

to be completed, so this dinner took place in the Warehouse.

In February 2002, Roger and Dottie finally learned that they would be the first housemasters of Sidney Pacific. They immediately dove into the task of designing the community of the new dorm.

With a group of students who had experience leading the GSC and Ashdown, a constitution was drafted. This group went on to form the first SPEC.

Thanks to Michael Owu, the contractor for whom a room is named on the first floor, there was money in the building budget allotted for student infrastructure. Building features such as gym equipment, pianos, SPTVs, and A/V equipment were provided with this fund.

Though they spent a lot of time getting Sidney Pacific ready at the beginning, Roger and Dottie are always considering new ways to improve the community. Their current goal is to increase interaction between the many different cultural groups in the building.

Of the 700 students who live here, about 300 are from abroad, representing over 55 countries. Roger notes that most

people are unlikely to ever be in such a diverse environment again. It's a great opportunity to build bridges and connections with people who strive to be outstanding in their field. Unfortunately, people seem to take the opportunity for granted so Roger and Dottie are trying to think of ways to foster more networking.

Housemasters are a resource for academic troubles. Grad students seem to follow a certain trajectory, which can include anxiety, conflicts with advisors, and discouragement. Having been around the block a few times, our housemasters can provide encouragement, having seen similar situations before.

Asked to offer some advice to SP residents, Dottie urged new students to sit down with their roommates for ten minutes at the beginning of the year to set some guidelines. Getting to know each other's habits beforehand can go a long way towards defusing conflicts that can build up over the course of the term. And if conflicts do occur, she reminds everyone that the housemasters' door is always open for people to come talk or get a cup of tea.

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Introducing the Newest Aspect Of SP Social Life: Eating Clubs

By Leslie Rogers and
Brandon Owens

Are you tired of the food at the Student Center and Stata Center? Are you nostalgic for some home cooking? Do you have a new recipe that you are dying to try? Would you like to meet new friends with similar culinary tastes? Do you enjoy a good quality, yet inexpensive meal? If so, you should join (or even create) an eating club!

An eating club is a group of people that meets regularly to enjoy a home cooked meal together. Eating clubs are an important component of university culture at many institutions. They have been a part of student life at Stanford since 1894, and at Princeton, their membership boasts more than half of the university's upperclassmen.

The existence of eating clubs at Sidney Pacific dates back to 2005 when Brandon Owens, a Stanford alum, imported the idea from Palo Alto. Brandon and then 2-South hall councilor, Tom Krenzke, teamed up to start a new eating club that has become a popular 2-South social tradition.

For over two years this club has served monthly dinners, with participants taking turns preparing the meal. Eating clubs in Sidney Pacific have not been confined to 2-South, however, as Hoda Eydgahi has recently founded a club on the ninth floor.

Motivated by the lasting success and popularity of the clubs in 2-South and the ninth floor, this summer we will be promoting the eating club concept within all of Sidney Pacific. An eating club webpage has been linked to the main Sidney Pacific website. Through this webpage residents can join or create an eating club, learn about the guidelines for operating an eating club, advertise meetings, and post recipes.

Why should you participate in an eating club? The answer is not just "good (inexpensive) food," but also "good friends" and "good conversation". Eating clubs provide an ideal opportunity to get to know your neighbors and to meet new friends.

While all official eating clubs at Sidney Pacific are currently associated with a particular floor, we hope that the new webpage will serve as resource encouraging the development of clubs catering to the various ethnic cuisine preferences and dietary practices of Sidney Pacific residents.

This project is in its infancy and we are still working out the guidelines that must be followed for a group to be considered an eating club. We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this initiative. Please contact sp-eating-club@mit.edu to leave feedback, to learn more, or to get involved. Bon appetit!

Visit s-p.mit.edu/EatingClub for more information.



Photo Courtesy of L. Rogers

The 2-south eating club enjoyed Philly cheese steaks cooked by Joe Thomer at their April meeting.

Boston Pops Concert Entertains Residents

By Tim Chen

This was my first Independence Day in the US. What could be better than joining the performance from "the American Orchestra" -- The Boston Pops?

Although we left kind of early, at 3:45 pm in the afternoon, the Esplanade was already full of people when we arrived. The weather was nice that day; after 40 minutes of standing in line we finally got into the oval, and barely occupied a spot at the end of the lawn. It

was only five o'clock, and the concert started at 8. Plus, it was only the rehearsal. My expectations were growing high.

We spent the rest of the time before the concert picnicking, chatting, and board-gaming. As the skyline gradually darkened, the stage lit up, and the concert began!

Before the intermission, the performance that impressed me the most was the 1812 overture. I am sure lots of people heard it on July 4th and saw the fireworks and the cannon fires ac-

companying it. On July 3rd there were no fireworks in sight, but the cannons sounded a lot more substantial being right there. The orchestra performance was excellent and rich in details.

After the intermission John Mellencamp's "Our Country" was a really spectacular song. It was simply breathtaking hearing him sing "this... is... our..... coun..try." Although I am not a US citizen, I tried to sing along with those patriotic songs. But why is "Yankee Doodle" a patriotic song? Anyone?

The Stars and Stripes ended the concert. This was a familiar song, yet the performance gave it a high spirit and a deep soul. After the concert I almost

Sidney Pacific Speaker

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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



Photo Courtesy of T. Chen

These three Sidney Pacific residents were among those that beat crowds by attending the Boston Pops rehearsal concert on July 3.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, July 21: Pool Party

Sunday, August 5: Brunch

Tuesday, August 14: Movie Screening

Late August (Date TBD): White Mountains Camping Trip

Coffee Hours: July 25, August 8, August 22, August 29

believed there would be fireworks -- the host was really doing a good job at his rehearsal.

This was really an excellent and delightful concert. For those who missed it, if you are still in Boston next year, make sure you don't miss it again!

Arboretum Shows Off Beautiful Fauna

By Adrienne Li

The Arnold Arboretum is a part of the beautiful string of Boston parks known as the "Emerald Necklace" (Franklin Park, Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Pond, Olmsted Park, Riverway Park and Back Bay Fens).

Established in 1872, the Arboretum occupies 265 acres of land in Jamaica Plain and is the oldest public arboretum in North America. It is named after its financier, James Arnold, who left most of his estate to Harvard.

Harvard University uses the arboretum as a nature museum to "discover and disseminate knowledge of the plant kingdom" with a mis-



Photo Courtesy of A. Li

On July 8, this crew from Sidney Pacific took a tour of Arnold Arboretum in Boston, where they learned about a variety of plants.

sion to "foster greater understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the Earth's botanical diversity and its essential value to humankind."

The plant committee recently organized a trip to the Arnold Arboretum. It was a sunny afternoon and we attended one of the free guided tours offered throughout the year. Our tour

guide told us about the history of the Arboretum (including how Harvard can rent the land for just \$1 a year!) and we learned about how unique each tree is.

The highlight of the tour was the Larz Anderson Bonsai collection, where we were awed by the beautiful fusion of plants and art. We were also surprised to know that the oldest tree in the Arboretum is actually one of the bonsai trees; it is a few hundred years old! After the tour, we all walked to a shop nearby to enjoy an ice cream, the best way to end an outing on a hot summer day!

If you missed our trip, the Arboretum can be conveniently reached by the subway (Forrest Hills station). The grounds are open everyday from sunrise to sunset with no admission charge. For more information: <http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu/index.html>.



Photo Courtesy of A. Li

Part of the Larz Anderson Bonsai collection, these trees are among the most exciting specimens in the arboretum.