



Experiencing Eating Club Food

By **Charles Lin**

Good food does more than provide nutrition: it creates community. You'd think as graduate students, chasing free food day in and day out, we might consider the latter part of that statement a bit more, but for whatever reason, we don't. A cursory glance of the kitchens in S&P tells the story. More often than not, they're empty. Why is it that we don't eat together?

Brandon Owens, a third year resident, pondered this very question upon his arrival here. "When I came down here, I realized there was a kitchen on every floor and Star Market was only a few blocks away." To him it seemed the perfect opportunity to form an eating club, a place where graduate students could get together every so often to share a home cooked meal and forge a sense of community.

He certainly had the background for it. He's part of an eating club tradition that goes back a hundred years. Yeah, you read correctly. Hailing from Stanford, where he did his masters, Brandon was part of the now defunct Breakers Eating Club, a club that dated back to 1909. It was there that he was first introduced to the concept of an Eating Club, where six nights a

week, he and about 40 other graduate students got together for a home cooked dinner.

"The [Breakers Eating Club] had more of a co-op scheme. Each of us had to cook or clean one night a week," he recalls. It was a great set up. In exchange for a few hours of work one evening, he had a meal waiting for him the other five.

When he got to MIT, Brandon sought to take a page from the Breakers Eating Club. In 2005 Brandon and then 2-South Hall Councilor, Tom Krenzke, started the 2-South Eating Club, a first for S&P. In the intervening years, the club has grown and become something of an institution for 2-South residents.

The club aims to help bring people together, teach about cooking, and most importantly allow residents to enjoy a stress free home cooked meal. On this Tuesday night at 2-South, it certainly shows. We're treated to Mexican chicken and baked squash, prepared by Andy, a fourth floor resident, along with an incredibly tasty frozen raspberry cheesecake for dessert made by 2-South Hall Councilor Leslie Rogers.

Past dinners have featured lamb stew, Greek salads, and even a make your own pizza night. And al-

though it might sound daunting to cook for upwards of 10 people, it's not so bad.

"I was totally inept at cooking before I joined the eating club," Brandon admits. For his first cooking night, he was paired up with several more experienced cooks who helped him learn the ropes. And ever since then he's been hooked.

He hopes that this model for enjoying food and friends will spread across S&P. So far in addition to 2-South, two other eating clubs have sprung up, Le Petit Bistro (a French Cuisine Eating Club) and the 9th Floor Eating Club. The current eating clubs at S&P are open to all residents. And better still, there's plenty of room for more clubs.

As Brandon points out, "we have at least 8 kitchens here in S&P and there's possibility for each floor or a group of people interested in a type of cuisine to all have an eating club. I'd like to see a lot more of them." With good food and a chance to hang out with your fellow residents, one can only bet that more eating clubs will be around the corner at S&P.

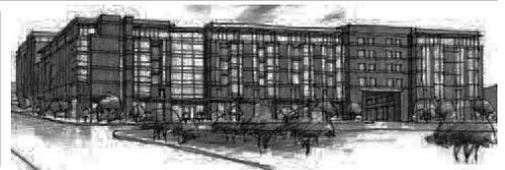
For more information about eating clubs including how to join or start one, check out the S&P website.

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Suggestions For that First Date

By **Dating Doctor**

This is an article in a series by your very own in-house dating doctor. He can be contacted at sp-hitch@mit.edu.

You've found her. She completes you. The most incredible specimen of a woman. Never before. Never again. THIS IS THE ONE. You ask her out and she says yes. (Refer to October's SP newsletter for a quick refresher on how to get here. You saved that newsletter didn't you?!?). The big question now is what do you want to do on the date? Dinner? Brunch? Drinks? Art Gallery? Let's walk through all these options.

Dinner. I'm not a big fan of dinner early on in the courting process. You go through the same standard questions: 'How many siblings do you have?'; 'What kind of music do you like?'; 'Where have you travelled to?'; 'What movies have you seen lately?' Blah blah blah.

If she is an attractive girl, and gets asked out a lot, stop and consider that nearly every guy she has ever gone for dinner with has likely asked her that same set of questions. She's heard it all a million times. And I'll bet you a million it won't be the last time she hears it. You're on a date. You're not in an interview. You don't want it to feel like an interview. That's not exactly a great way to convince her that you're the f'shizzle she's been looking for her whole life. That is, unless you're going to also offer her \$200k, a signing

bonus and dental insurance.

Let me qualify this though. If you're quite the conversationalist, and as charismatic as Frank Sinatra, by all means, go for dinner. Pick a place that you're familiar with. Somewhere where you know the menu, can recommend items, and know the food is good. Do not ever, ever, ever take a woman to Cinderella's. No ifs, no buts, no maybe's. Just don't do it. And if you're laughing now, trust me, I know more than a handful of women living in this very dorm who have been taken there on a date. It does happen. Don't do it. If you do and I find out, I will bitch slap you. Note that if you take a woman to a movie before about date #5, I will also slap you silly.

Brunch. This is a little less formal. Find a nice café/coffee shop. Something that doesn't scream 'I am a franchise'. Look on citysearch.com. Explore the city. Go to Brookline, go to the South End. We have an amazing array of food options less than 20 min away on the T. Relax. Watch normal people in normal places. Realize (again) that there are normal people outside MIT. Find a world outside Cambridge.

Drinks. A little known gem is the downstairs wine bar at Son-sie, on Newbury St. Its cozy, its romantic and its about a \$6 cab ride away in winter. In summer, the walk to Newbury itself is worth the trip! Find a wine bar you like. Try some wine. Get a cheese platter. It's a lot of fun. It's different.

Art Gallery. So when I say this,

it really is more broad than 'Art Gallery'. I mean something exciting. Something a little quirky. A theatre production maybe. DO NOT do something you don't care for. She'll be able to tell and then you go home alone. The Boston aquarium is a ton of fun. Take a ferry ride to the Boston Islands. (It's about \$10 and you will get brownie points for a great view of the Boston skyline and the picnic you remembered to pack) You don't have to worry as much about forced conversation, let the activity do the work for you. One of my favorite memories of a girl I dated in undergrad is us going to the zoo on our first date. To this day, when we talk, she still remembers that date. In sum, this entire article is making but one very simple point: girls just want to have fun.

Follow this advice and you are well on your way to a second date. We'll leave the discussion of a second date to another article, it truly is a topic in itself. Don't forget however, as much as you think any girl is 'the one', there really is a fine line between true love and a stalking conviction. And trust me, it is a little hard to explain a stalking conviction in an interview. Or on a date for that matter.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this article is an opinion, and it should be used for personal entertainment purposes only. You are responsible for your own behavior, and none of this is to be considered legal or personal advice.

Lady Love Saves Valentines' Day For Local, Misguided Romantics

By **Lady Love**

Dear Lady Love,

My adviser is making me run an experiment all night on Valentine's Day; however, there is a special someone on my hall who I want to ask out. Is it OK if I take her on a date to my lab?

--Single in SP

Dear Single,

By asking this wonderful woman out to your lab, you're telling her that your fear of your adviser outweighs your love for her. Not cool, my friend, not cool. Knights

in shining armor aren't afraid of people just because they have tenure. Tell Dr. Strainedlove that you have a date and recommend the same for him/her.

Dear Lady Love,

Help! I told this total hottie that I was an amazing cook, but, honestly, I can't even make EasyMac without burning it. He's coming over to my apartment for a homemade dinner on V-Day, and I want us to have a smokin' hot time, not an actual fire.

--Burnt Toast

Dear Toast,

I hate to say this, but most fires involving EasyMac are caused by carelessness and/or stupidity. Since you're at MIT, I'll assume the former, not the latter. I think your best bet is to ask a friend who is a good cook to help you prepare this meal a day or two in advance. Sample your creation. Make sure it is delicious, and—here comes the hard part—reheat it on Valentine's Day. Store your food in a non-metal container (ask someone in material science if you're confused) and microwave it only as long as your buddy recommends.

Dear Lady Love,

My girlfriend is my princess, and I want to pick her up in a carriage for Valentine's Day. Unfortunately, the only "carriage" I can afford is a shopping cart. It

would not be hard to find one because there are Shaw's carts all over Sidney-Pacific and at all the doors. I am planning to wheel the cart to her door. Then, I am going to sweep her off her feet and drop her into the cart (all in one graceful, flowing motion). My friends say this is crazy and lame, but I say, "What female wouldn't love to be wheeled around all night in a shiny, steel-barred carriage?"

--Prince Charming

Dear Prince Charming,

Shopping carts don't have suspension systems, and steel tends to get cold, especially in February. In response to your question, any woman who doesn't want a bruised, frozen behind will refuse your ride. There is also another issue here: looking homeless. When you push a stolen shopping cart, you are saying, "I think it's cool to act like I live on the streets." My suggestion is that if you're gungho about the carts, you should round them up and return them to Shaw's. Not only will you be saving the store hundreds (maybe thousands) of dollars in revenue lost due to stolen carts, but you'll clean SP up as well. Of course, as an added bonus, no woman can resist a man who loves to clean.

Happy Valentines' Day!

Sidney Pacific Speaker

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





Courtesy of A. Li

Clockwise from top left: James Lee and Eric Lam work on their bonsai plants. A group of SP residents proudly display their accomplishments. Ben Renkowski shows off his tree. Instructor Pete offers advice.



Courtesy of C. Lin

Members of the 2-South Eating Club (left) enjoy their dinner of Mexican chicken and baked squash, which was prepared by fourth floor resident Andy Lutomirski (right).