



## Like Living at S-P? Become an Officer!

By **Po-Ru Loh**

Okay, guaranteed housing shouldn't be the only reason you decide you want to be an officer – that doesn't make for a very convincing app – but it's perfectly fine for that to be one reason. In fact, by and large, residents become officers because they like living here: they like attending events, making new friends, enjoying common resources – in a phrase, participating in our community – and are willing to commit a little time to sustaining and improving it.

Wondering if being an officer might be for you? Read on for more about what it's like.

### Do things you enjoy doing

First off, don't be misled by terms like "officership" and "house government": being an S-P officer actually has little to do with "governing" in the usual sense. Instead, S-P officers generally serve the house by applying talents they enjoy.

In the outside world, our officer positions might appear on business cards as Graphic Designer, Photojournalist, System Administrator, Software Engineer, A/V Specialist, Event Coordina-

tor, Trip Planner, or Head Chef, to name a few. Here in S-P, we just call these people our friendly S-P Fill-in-the-Blank Chairs – and that's precisely the fun of it. An officer position is a great sandbox for practicing a hobby, learning on the job, and being both an amateur and appreciated.

You can help plan parties, dabble in design, or configure computers – and have the satisfaction of seeing a few dozen (or a few hundred) people benefit from your effort – without the pressure of having to produce in a professional setting. (Grad students are always a favorable audience for culinary experiments, for instance!)

### Work with a great team

It's cliched, but it's true: another main attraction of joining the house council is the opportunity to work with a dynamic corps of fellow officers. You'll meet people outside your department and outside your social group or cultural niche – and you'll more than meet them. The fastest way to get to know someone is to work together to achieve a goal, and as an officer, you'll have plenty of chances to do that – and develop communication and leadership skills in the process.

The best part is learning from one another. Students here have a knack for hidden talents, and it's always interesting to see these come out while tackling tasks. From tech tricks to slicing secrets, you never know what magic the guy down the hall might be able to teach you.

### Make a difference in our community

Ultimately, these benefits are convenient side effects, however: the real point of being an officer is to serve the community. While your primary job at MIT may be bringing knowledge to bear on the world's great challenges, we hope you also share our belief that using your skills to help your neighbor is worthwhile too. That, in the end, is what makes the officer experience not only fun and educational but also rewarding.

If any of that resonated with you, consider this your invitation to get involved. Visit [s-p.mit.edu/apply](http://s-p.mit.edu/apply) by Wed, Apr 14 to find out more and submit a short application, and don't hesitate to contact SPEC or current officers if you have questions!

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# Biking away to glory!

By **Matthew Blackburn**

With the spring rapidly approaching, many S-P residents may be heading outdoors to appreciate the warmer weather. One great way to both get outdoors and get around town is to dust off that bike you've abandoned since winter or rent a ZipBike and take advantage of the extensive network of bike lanes around Cambridge. If you're looking for places to ride, you should check out the Minuteman Trail or plan a trip using Google's newest addition to Google-Maps: the bicycling function (an option next to walking, public transit or driving). If you are looking for longer, high intensity rides, consider joining the MIT Cycling, MIT Triathlon or MIT Outing Club email lists for announcements from students leading rides (mostly for road-biking and mountain biking) The MIT Cycling Club ([mitcycling.org](http://mitcycling.org)) and the Charles River Wheelmen ([crw.org](http://crw.org)) also post bike-route cue sheets on their websites.

On a different note, the ZipBike program at S-P will be undergoing a major change in the check-out and rental process in order to prevent misuse of the bike fleet and encourage the growth of the cycling community at S-P. The bikes currently available are frequently returned with some sort of damage, with no real

penalties due to an inefficient system for ensuring their care during rental periods. Beginning mid-April, residents interested in using the ZipBikes will be required to sign up for membership in a 'Bike Club' as part of the S-P Bikes Committee, related to the Cycling Interest Group. This will greatly help to keep track of the residents who use the bikes, ensure the users know how to properly lock the bikes, and facilitate maintenance of the bikes. The Bike Club will have no membership fee, but will require enrollment. Any S-P resident who has signed-up will be able to rent the ZipBikes. A new check-in/check-out procedure will be initiated to make sure the bikes are returned in

the same condition they were rented out and to make sure bike repairs (mainly flat tires) are made promptly.

Very soon we will be adding three new single-speed road bikes to the existing set of hybrid bikes, mountain bikes, and cruisers. In addition to the keys for the bikes, the front desk holds a manual bike pump, helmets, and lights for resident use. If you're looking to do some quick repairs, S-P owns a set of tools for bike repairs, but these are loaned out at the discretion of the Bikes Chair, and will be readily accessible to those with Bike Club memberships.



# Ethernet, wireless, routers and all that

By **Po-Ru Loh**

As you're probably aware, the S-P house council has invested a great deal of effort trying to address internet connectivity problems this past year. Here is a summary of what we now know and what we'd like you to know.

*"I'm a resident with basic computing needs: I just have one computer that I want to be able to connect to the internet. What should I know?"*

## 1. Get a free ethernet cable

Ethernet (wired) connections at S-P are both faster and more reliable than wireless connections. Even if you prefer using wireless, you should get an ethernet cable as a backup plan. Fortunately, you can get one for free! Just walk down Landsdowne Street to IS&T in building N42. You probably pass by there nearly every day.

## 2. Know where to report network problems: [rcc.mit.edu](http://rcc.mit.edu)

While it may seem indirect, filing a request at [rcc.mit.edu](http://rcc.mit.edu) is the most efficient way to get help. One reason is that the online form asks you for relevant information you might otherwise forget or not think to provide. Also, on the other end, the ticket system helps RCCs organize problem reports.

## 3. Be aware of what to expect

On the bright side, we're quite confident now that the wired situation is under control: ethernet connections work reliably, and on the occasions that they fail we

now know how to track problems and restore connectivity rapidly. Basically, you should expect ethernet to work, and if it doesn't, you should keep complaining (hopefully not for too long!) until we fix it.

In contrast, the wireless situation continues to be much more thornier. We will continue our efforts to improve wireless connectivity but we expect this will be a long-term process. Therefore, please continue to report problems you experience (at [rcc.mit.edu](http://rcc.mit.edu)) but please also be patient; the RCCs probably won't be able to offer you a quick fix.

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*"I'm a resident with more advanced computing needs. I have multiple devices that I need connected. I feel that the available network is insufficient and I might be running a router (but I didn't say that). I know wireless interference is the main cause of poor wifi in the building and I really don't want to risk hurting other people, but I don't seem to have a choice. What should I know?"*

We (the house government and RCCs) understand that some residents are in this situation. We would like to help you meet your computing needs without adversely affecting others. All you need to do is tell us. In particular:

\* If you just need more ethernet ports, you don't need a wireless router! All you need is a switch. If you happen to have a router, tell us and we'll help you turn off the wireless broadcasting.

\* If you need to use wireless

and you can't get it from the regular wifi network, we can request more access points from IS&T.

\* If we are absolutely unable to resolve the problem, we promise we won't take away your router. Instead, we'll help you configure it to be minimally disruptive to the network (e.g., by using certain frequency bands).

The bottom line is that there is no good reason for you not to work with us. As long as you inform us of your situation, we aren't going to take anything away from you, reduce whatever connectivity you have now, or otherwise punish you in any way.

*"I'm a resident who really doesn't care what happens to my neighbors. If my wireless router takes out their internet, too bad for them. My own internet connection is all that matters. I'm not going to waste my time working with you. What should I know?"*

If we find you, we'll fine you. The S-P Board of Trustees will consider any such situations on a case-by-case basis.

Reiterating the previous section, however, we would much prefer not to be in the business of catching people. If you don't want to be fined, just tell us about your computing needs. You have nothing to lose.

And that's that – the carrot and the stick, and the hope it'll make a difference. With your assistance and continued patience, it will.

# Arts in Boston

[www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org)

By **Yang Sun**

If you are an art lover, exploring the art museums and galleries in Boston can certainly satisfy your appetite. Throughout the year of serving as the Arts Chair of S-P, I had the opportunity to visit some of the finest galleries and museums in the world with the S-P residents. Here I would like to recommend some of the best trips to you.

## 1. The MFA

Near Copley Square, the MFA is one of the most comprehensive art museums in the world. Here you can find everything from ancient Roman mosaic to contemporary abstract paintings. Moreover, there are frequently fascinating special exhibitions. The current one—"the Secrets of the Tomb: Egypt 2000 BC"—is extended through June 27, 2010. With the memberships purchased for us by the Council for the Arts at MIT, we get admissions for free with our MIT ID. Don't miss it!

## 2. The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

Mrs. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum built this museum at the beginning of the 20th Century. The museum has remained unchanged since her death in 1924. The three-floor galleries are filled with paintings, sculpture, tapestries and furniture, all facing an elegant courtyard full of flowers! Tickets are \$5 for students, yet all Isabellas get in for free!

<http://www.gardnermuseum.org/>

## 3. Galleries on Newbury Street

The Newbury Street, claimed to be the most enchanting street of Boston, has eight blocks of boutique shops, restaurants, salons and galleries. Hopping into any of them brings unique discoveries. The galleries display works from oil paintings to photographs to sculpture—all by top-notch artists!

<http://www.newbury-st.com/>

## 4. SOWA Artists Guild

Located at 450 Harrison Avenue, the SOWA Artists Guild is an association of studio artists. On the "First Friday" of every month, the guild remains open until 9PM and the artists open their working space to the public. Talking to them about the inspirations and techniques for art creation can be truly rewarding! <http://www.sowaartistsguild.com/index.html>

Some other resources about arts are:

<http://web.mit.edu/arts/>

<http://www.artsboston.org/>

If you have any questions, please contact me at [sp-arts-chair@mit.edu](mailto:sp-arts-chair@mit.edu)

## Sidney Pacific Speaker

Newsletter Chair

Manya Ranjan

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](mailto:sp-newsletter-chair@mit.edu)



SP Residents "Art Crawling" Newbury St in the Orientation Week