By Brian Spatocco and Javier Daniel Sanchez-Yamagishi

On August 6th, at 6:41 PM, the Northwest Shuttle made its last cut through the balmy August streets of Cambridge. This route, which was flanked evenly by academic buildings in the north and hugged the river along the southern return, is one which is to be closely followed by the new, enhanced, EZRide Service.

Many colleagues have asked the reason for the merging of these two shuttles, and have rightly issued concern with the seeming loss of service resulting from this consolidation. I wanted to take some time here to first explain the context of the switch-over and then offer some factual information to help clarify details of the day-to-day operation which may not be gleaned easily from the previously distributed EZRide pamphlet.

EZRide, which is operated by the Charles River Transportation Management Association (CRTMA), is jointly funded by a number of organizations who each “buy in” to become participating EZRide members. It should come as no surprise that MIT is not only a shareholder in this scheme, but by far the largest one. In fact, MIT’s membership is viewed as a community responsibility, one which it is politically bound to. Thus, a couple years back when MIT Transportation officials, professors, and students sat down to analyze the efficacy of the shuttle service, resolving the redundancy of the Northwest Shuttle and EZRide lines by forgoing EZRide membership was not an option on the table. What was instead proposed (a grad student wrote a thesis about this) was that with negotiations and minor changes in service, EZRide could cover all of Northwest’s responsibilities, offer more frequent service, and do so for less money.

See more in P2
The Northwest/EZRide Switchover

Since then, the Graduate Student Council, in conjunction with the presidents of all the affected residence halls, have been in negotiations and consultation on the project for over a year. We are proud to say that we’ve finally found a compromise which will better fulfill the needs of our students.

In addition to running more frequently and having more passenger spots per bus, the new EZRide service will also allow students to reach the Galleria, Lechmere, and North Station all on the same line. These wins did of course come with some compromise. First, students are expected to show MIT ID upon bus entrance and should be prepared to take the bus (out on the corner) as much as possible. Secondly, the NextBus service will not be available until around October. NextBus requires a lead time of about a month to “perfect its prediction algorithms”. Although we expect the bus tracking system (the live map) to be active, we don’t expect any time predictions until early Fall. Finally, MIT riders should be cognizant of the fact that the morning and evening routes are not campus loops. What this means is that once the bus stops at the MIT Media Lab it’s en route to North Station; only the midday service (10:44-3:04) will perform a campus loop.

I encourage all riders to look at the maps provided to resolve any details of their specific trips. The morning and evening lines, although similar, follow different routes heading outbound. Further, some stops (e.g. along Vassar) do not exist on the evening’s outbound service. In spite of this, we are confident that the new service will much better fit our community’s needs and are always happy to address any of your critical comments and concerns.

Want to learn more information about shuttle switchover?
Call: 617-839-4636
Web: www.ezride.info

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Don’t miss them!!
8/13: The Greater Boston Food Bank
8/14: New England Revolution
8/15: Brunch
8/18: Cultural Coffee Hour
8/19: Bike Maintenance Workshop
8/31: Orientation BBQ

Sudoku? Sudoku!

How to Play: Fill the empty squares with digits from 1 to 9 so that each row, column, and 3x3 square features each digit exactly once.
S-P Residents Get a Taste of Asia

By Ivan Chan

S-P residents are a talented bunch; of that, there is no question. But exactly how they are talented never ceases to amaze me, no matter how long I live here. For example, I know our humble dormitory is well stocked with theoretical physicists and molecular biologists and engineers of every shape, size, and smell, but until recently, I never knew that we also housed a master sushi chef, a genius of Korean cuisine, the knowledge to make the perfect scallion pancake, and an authority on bacon-wrapped asparagus with Enoki mushrooms. I would weep at my own mundanitiy if I weren’t too busy being fascinated by the skills of my fellow residents.

If memory serves, a few weeks ago I had just returned from my lab at the exceptionally early hour of 3am. I found an email in my inbox from George Lan, the 3-South Hall Councilor, proposing to myself and a few other S-P residents that we unite the sundry talents mentioned above to organize an “Asian Street Food” multi-hall event, inspired by the yummies sold by street-side vendors in Asia. My initial reaction was “Sure, another joint-hall dinner, why not?” But not so for Brian Spatocco, the 3-North hall councilor: he wanted to go big, and the others (Eunhee Sohn, our Plants Chair, and Jit Hin Tan, our newly minted S-P Trustee) agreed.

For the residents that attended the Asian Street Food event on July 19, the rest is history. The night was epic. Our guests were treated to a host of delicacies coming hot off the grill or frying pan every 5 minutes, giving us no pause in the kitchen. Everything was a delight on the palate, be it Eunhee’s Korean BBQ chicken or George’s scallion pancakes, Brian’s sushi or Jit’s coconut-saego dessert, and or any of the other goodies served. I’m sure the other 35 or so mouths that attended would agree with me. Fine food, and excellent company: what more can one ask for?

And it was far from being just the event organizers doing their thing: special thanks to Javier Sanchez-Yamagishi for preparing the best gyoza (a meat filled dumpling of Japanese origin) this side of the Pacific Ocean. Then there is the small brigade of volunteers who helped in the kitchen or with the grill that night. The list of names is too long for this brief article, but for any volunteers who might be reading this: you guys and gals are troop-ers, helping with the cooking and chopping and holding out until the bitter end to help with clean up. It would have been utterly impossible without you, so know that you have our thanks.

I sleep easy knowing that no matter how boring I might be, the world will never be a dull place so long as an S-P resident walks the earth.
By Holly Johnsen

The first time I listened to Japanese pop music, J-Pop, I was not too impressed. I remember it being pretty annoying—full of shrill, way-too-cutesy women’s voices singing about who-knows-what.

That was before I taught English in Japan for two years, where I became immersed in the culture, both traditional and modern. And to hold a conversation with my students—or to go out for drinks and karaoke with my co-teachers—I quickly realized that it was necessary to know at least the basics of the J-Pop they all loved. Despite denouncing all the corny American boy bands while I was a middle school student, I quickly became a fan of Japan’s. With lyrics about chasing one’s dream and raps about never giving up (great while training for the Tokyo marathon), and with music videos often set in a classroom (where I spent the majority of my Japanese life), listening to J-Pop this year has always made me nostalgic for my Japanese hometown, my friends, and my students.

But after a year of listening to the same songs over and over, I realized that I needed a change, if only for my roommate’s sake. It’s practically impossible to buy Japanese music here, and my roommate’s suggestion to look online just resulted in a lot of X-rated pop-up ads... so I turned to one of Sidney Pacific’s many resources: the Japanese pop music interest group!

All it took was an email asking for people to swap music with me, and now I find myself with several hours worth of new songs to feed my obsession. A couple people dropped CDs by my room, and a few of us met for a few hours on a Monday evening to talk music, snack on Japanese treats, share funny youtube videos, and plan our next event—karaoke night. I’d better stop writing and start figuring out which of my new songs to practice singing before then!

Domo arigatou, J-Pop interest group!

PS— We’ll have English songs available to sing at our karaoke event too, and it’s not too late to join the mailing list to get in on the fun!