



# SidneyPacific SPeaker

Volume 9, Issue 3

Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

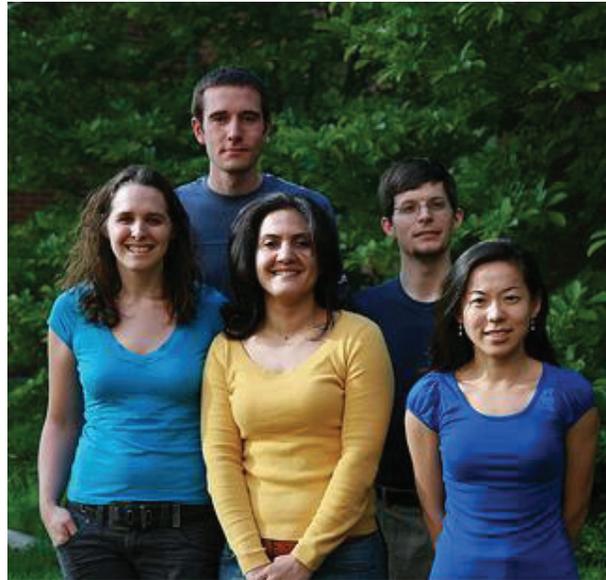
September 2, 2010

## Welcome to Sidney-Pacific!

By SPEC

The Sidney-Pacific Executive Council (SPEC) and the House Council would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our new residents. You've just become part of a vibrant graduate community of almost 700 students. Take full advantage of this unique opportunity by getting out to all of our great S-P events, using our fantastic resources, and becoming an active member of the community.

The next few weeks of Orientation are some of the busiest of the year at Sidney-Pacific and there are many events planned that are not to be missed. S-P is famous across the campus for its large events, and there's no shortage of those during Orientation. We hope you will get a chance to meet us and your fellow residents during our famous barbeque, dance party and brunch. In addition, we host a slew of other smaller events during Orientation that you should enjoy as well, such as outings to the Museum of Fine Arts, the Prudential Center, sailing on the Charles, and many more. All of these great events are organized members of the Sidney-Pacific House Council. Look for House Council members in the blue and yellow "Ask Us" Orientation t-shirts if you have any questions



SPEC 2010-11: Back Row - Tim Curran (VP Resources), Ian Jacobi (VP Information), Front Row - Amy Bilton (President), Mirna Slim (VP Residential Life), Chelsea He (Chair of the Halls)  
Courtesy of SP Photofile Committee

or just want to say thanks!

The members of the House Council continue to plan many great events throughout the year. The social options are endless at S-P from our weekly coffee hours, monthly brunches and parties to our hiking trips, Frisbee games and academic lecture series. In addition, take advantage of our unique, diverse community to learn about other cultures and cultural food through our Sidney Pacific Intercultural Exchange (SPICE) program. Also, if there is something in particular you like to do, enjoy it with some of the rest of our 700 residents through our Interest Group Program.

In addition to our social pro-

grams, members of the House Council also support the infrastructure of the residence, like the inventory, house lounges, movie library, computer lab, and gym equipment. They're also responsible for keeping residents informed through posters, the web site, SPTV, and this newsletter. The 53 members of the house council also include your hall councilors, who organize social events and represent resident interests at monthly house meetings.

There are many other people outside the House Council that make Sidney Pacific a great place to live. We're very fortunate to have Housemasters

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Roger, Dottie, Annette and Roland to support our resident programs. You'll have a chance to meet them, along with our Toddler Housemasters Joshua and Samuel, during our Housemaster Welcome Dinner in the middle of September. We're also lucky to have Jack Ahern, our house manager, and his staff of custodians and mechanics to keep the building in pristine condition.

All of the programs and resources run by the House Council would not be possible without the help of resident volunteers like you. Come on out, get involved and meet other residents of our community. There are many ways to get involved from grilling at the barbecue, to spearheading environmental initiatives, to writing for this newsletter. No experience is required!

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact us at [spec@mit.edu](mailto:spec@mit.edu). Enjoy orientation and we look forward to meeting you!

## Sidney Pacific Speaker

Newsletter Chair  
Yi-Ting Chen

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)



## Have Interests? Join and Use an Interest Group!

By Mirna Slim and Mark Lipson

By now, you've probably realized that SP is a pretty big place! With over 600 residents living at SP, it's not hard to find someone who shares some of your own interests! In order to help you make new friends, SP hosts a number of independent Interest Groups on topics as different as tennis, photography, or even discussing American Foreign Policy! With over 200 different interest groups, there is something for everyone and always room for more groups to be created. More than 400 SP residents have joined at least one interest group, and the SP Executive Council (SPEC) encourages all newcomers to join as many interest groups as they wish.

How can you get involved? It's easy! Once in SP, residents are asked to fill in a profile on the SP website, which includes choosing interest groups to subscribe to. You can also visit the recently updated interest group website at any time by clicking the link on the SP home page or through the "community" tab. For each interest you check off, you're added to the group's email list with the other SP residents who share the same interest.

Now, you're ready to enjoy the interest groups! Anyone can take the initiative to start a discussion or organize an activity. Just email the appropriate list to find people who'd like to get together for hiking, biking, cooking, dancing, painting, jamming, or programming! You can go to a food festival, a sporting event, or a movie; you can play squash, watch episodes of your favorite TV show, or just hang out over dessert. Best of all, SP will provide funding!

Getting the most out of the interest groups is easy, but we need YOU to make it happen. All you need to do is to 1) think of an activity you'd like to arrange, 2) email an interest group list to find a few SP residents who'd like to join you, 3) contact the Interest Group chair, Mark Lipson, to receive a subsidy (\$5-10 per person) for any expenses, and 4) enjoy what you like doing with other SP residents! Simple, isn't it?

You bet it is! We will pay you for doing something you enjoy doing – who doesn't like that? So, take a few minutes to visit the website and see if there are any new groups you'd like to join. Then, consider coordinating an activity or taking part in someone else's. It's a great time to start thinking what is next to do or where is next to go. Have a great fall semester!



S-P residents enjoying an interest group hiking outing.

# A Welcome from the Housemasters



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Courtesy of SP Photofile Committee

By Roger and Dottie Mark

As your Housemasters, we extend our warm welcome to all the residents of Sidney-Pacific, especially to those of you who have just arrived!

Housemasters are faculty members who live in community with students in MIT dorms. We are appointed by the president, and report to the Dean of Student Life. Our goal is to facilitate the building of community within the living group, to represent and advocate for the needs and desires of the students to the administration, and to communicate the policies of the administration to the students. We work closely with the officers of the student government as advisors and supporters, but the student government takes full responsibility for

policies, strategies, and programming in the dorm.

Roger is a member of the faculty of EECS and HST, and his research area is biomedical signal processing, particularly in the context of critical care. He is also a physician with a limited practice of internal medicine. Dottie is a former elementary school teacher, social worker, and homemaker. She likes genealogy, she once ran the MIT furniture exchange, now manages a thrift shop at our church, and she loves to entertain S-P residents! We both grew up in the Boston area; we have 4 grown children and 10 grandchildren. For more details come and ask!!

We are eager to get to know each of you! We are always avail-

able for advice and counseling on academic and/or personal issues ... please feel free to contact us, either for advice or just to chat! (Housemasters may be particularly useful as advisors since we are faculty members but not directly in your academic hierarchy.) We will certainly try to be visible at coffee hours, brunches and social affairs, and we plan to host housemaster dinners in our apartment, where we'll be inviting residents from the various floors to come for a meal and a chance to talk with various MIT faculty. This will be ongoing during the academic year. We hope you will each plan to come, introduce yourself and let us get to know you a bit better.

Sidney-Pacific is an incredibly diverse and international group and we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn from each other during our time together. We encourage each of you to consider joining a small SPICE group which will give you an opportunity to meet with others from various cultures and backgrounds twice a month over a meal, to listen and chat among yourselves. It is a superb way to make friends and to bridge cultural and national boundaries!

We are so glad you're here and hope that your experience at S&P will prove to be a wonderful adventure! We have a great group of officers and volunteers who make this a terrific place to live and grow and learn! Please jump in and GET INVOLVED to make the most out of your S-P experience!!

# Much to Munch at SP's Brunch!

By Birendra Jha

Brunch at Sidney-Pacific is part of long-running tradition among students at MIT. Once a month on a happy Sunday about ten SP residents gather to cook and prepare breakfast for about 200-300 graduate students. We have been doing it for many years now and it is getting popular every time around. Students love it and so do we. Let's go behind the scenes and see what makes it all happen.

At the beginning of the brunch week, we publicize the event by putting up posters around SP and MIT. We also include it in the SP announcement email. The fact is that our brunch is so popular, it doesn't really need publicity. The flyers are mostly to announce the date of the brunch. We also send a fun and enticing email to recruit volunteers that help us in the kitchen on the brunch day. And those who have volunteered, also, just note the date because they know how much fun it is to do a SP brunch. Ask our volunteers on the brunch day and they will tell you all the perks – it goes beyond the 'first dibs', trust me.

Now, the food. We get fresh and ripe seasonal fruits from our vendors – berries, melons, apples, oranges, pineapple, banana, grapes, mango. We shop at Costco for your favorite cheesecakes, pastries, sausage, bacon, eggs, cheese, baked beans, smoked salmon, juice, you name it. Every time Joseph and I make that trip on Saturday morning, it gets more and more fun. You will laugh how much food we carry in our car. If you don't and are the serious type, here is one for you – how many eggs do we get for a typical SP



(up) MIT graduate students enjoy brunch prepared and served by S-P volunteers and Christine Ortiz, Dean for Graduate Education (August 15, 2010)



(right) Fresh fruits and delicious cakes  
Courtesy of SP Photofile Committee

brunch?

On the brunch day around 8 AM, volunteers gather in the SP kitchen and the cooking storm begins! Morning air smells of fresh coffee and the apple strou-dels. Groovy music plays in the background (if you like Lady Gaga you will be friends with some of the most influential people at SP, kidding). From chopping forty lbs of potatoes to ten lbs of onions to cracking hundreds of eggs to slicing and dicing hundreds of fruits, there is no way you can escape fun in there. We have a pancake master, an egg cracking master (she had a new contender last time), scrambled egg gurus, sausage queen and bacon master, baked beans expert and a few all-rounder chefs who have come up with hit items like bread pudding, delicious smoothies and stylish international dishes in the past. Somehow in all that hoo-ha, the food gets ready. We lay out everything in the multipurpose room in a nice elegant way and what a pleasant sight that is (just look at the pictures in SP photo gallery)! Volunteers join and eat to their fullest, get ready in the serving positions, doors open and...action!

Everything about the brunch is special and makes us feel satisfied. Whether it is shopping for the latest cheesecakes, cracking eggs real fast, learning to make caramelized banana pancake, feeling the last minute rush, or meeting the students lined outside the door with their plates - it is all special. Granted, there is work involved but since it is so special and once a month, it is definitely not the work we do in our labs. With a bunch of students just like you, it is always unique and never short of fun. We'd just say this - if you have never been inside our brunch kitchen, just come on in this time. You are welcome here.

In 1895 Guy Beringer wrote in Hunter's Weekly "Brunch is cheerful, sociable and inciting. It is talk-compelling. It puts you in a good temper, it makes you satisfied with yourself and your fellow beings."

We at SidPac agree with Mr. Beringer one hundred percent and hope you do so as well. Hey, did we mention – it's free!

If you have any ideas, recipes you'd like to see or anything to improve, just let us know at [sp-brunch-chair@mit.edu](mailto:sp-brunch-chair@mit.edu)