Welcome the new student senate

By Babajide Oke

Last Tuesday, the Student Government Association at IIT sponsored a huge event. To welcome its newly formed Student Senate, SGA invited IIT students and a lot of important administrators across the main departments, including the President, Lew Collins. The event which was advertised widely through IIT Today and the new myIIT portal, started off with a reception at 5pm on Tuesday. At the reception were all the newly elected senators of the IIT Student Government, back from the two day long off-campus Senator retreat. Mingling in the conversations and lively talk were staff from the Office of the President, Vice President of Business and Administration, Student Activities and others.

The Senators were elected last semester to be the representatives for students from different Academic colleges at IIT. Armour College of engineering has the maximum number of representatives because of the size of the engineering college. With the new senator system SGA has a lot of potential for becoming a powerful voice in the administrative affairs of students on campus, both Academic and Co-Curricular. The Senate immediately jumped into business by having their first Senate meeting on the same night at 9pm in the new location, Stuart Building’s circular classrooms.

Before they did that, the Executive Vice President and the Speaker of the Senate, Brandon Lloyd had initiated the Oath of Office to all the Senators. After which, it was a speech by the honorable guest of the event, President of IIT, Lew Collins. President Collins recollected his college days where he narrated stories of how he served as a Senator in his Student Government days. He also gave anecdotes about how his college ‘press’ had drawn him into controversy over an issue of voting for a bill. He also talked about his trip to a foreign country where Fidel Castro was ruling! On a more serious note, he did praise the Senate and all the Senators for devoting their times.

After the President’s speech, SGA President Jason Tenenbaum talked to the guests and senators. He thanked everyone for attending the event. He also introduced the rest of the Executive Board. He said he was excited about the New Year and the new senate because SGA moved from students who represented their own interest to students who are representing the interests of other students. He said the membership of the Student Government kept increasing starting with around 30 students and then 50, then 75 etc. After his speech, he handed the Speaker of the Senate a gavel which meets the standards of the US Senate.

Thus, the Student Government Association at IIT has taken another step forward in its own development by completing the formation of the Senate and creating a new legacy.

Please see Student Senate, page 3

Team ACE is ready and rearing to GO...

By Abishek Gundugurti

Team ACE is ready and rearing to GO...

Strap yourself in and prepare for a thrill ride this semester in the Formula Hybrid Competition. We are proud to announce IIT’s ACE (Armour College of Engineering) team.

What’s this Formula Hybrid thing? It’s a contest hosted by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) and Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). The challenge is to teams from around the world: build a hybrid race car. The cars will compete at Dartmouth College and the New Hampshire International Speedway from Tuesday, May 1 to Thursday, May 3, 2007.

Have I seen something like this before? Not with hybrid technology. The Formula SAE (FSAE) competition has been around for a while, offering student members the opportunity to design a car to compete with small formula-style racing cars. The new Formula Hybrid Competition (FHC) is extending the realm of race cars to include hybrids. FHC is based on the FSAE competition with some modifications: like FSAE internal combustion engines including intake and exhaust systems, fuel management, and ignition systems; regenerative electric/hydraulic braking systems; and project management, as mentioned in the Sept. 12 Technews article by Amy Henson, the Director of Communications in the ECE Department.

What? I thought hybrid cars were slow? No way! Haven’t you seen that video on youtube of an electric car smoking a Ferrari and a Porsche? Go here: http://youtube.com/watch?v=8aq11jyzf0Q. This competition is going to be a lot like that, except it’ll have the best of both worlds—both the acceleration and dynamic handling of electric systems and the stability of mechanical systems, all put together in a
One of the pictures I took in Yosemite National Park the day before classes started. ~Chris Chock

Every week the TechNews editorial staff will choose one photo submitted by a reader to be printed here.

Submission Information

• Submit photos for consideration to technewsphotos@gmail.com by Thursday 8pm.
• Subject matter is open.
• Include your name as you would like it printed.
• Include a description that you would like printed with it.
• Keep in mind that it will be printed on this page (in black and white)
• Contest is open to all IIT students, faculty and staff excluding TechNews editors

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Stop the Union, I want to get off!

By Joe Kaiser

A commentary on the 2007 State of the Union

1. Madame Speaker. No way of getting out of that one, so might as well go big. Not surprising if this is the speed of recovery Tim Johnson. You know if he dies you get the Senate back.

2. If someone asked me one year ago today if I found President Bush funny, I would have laughed and laughed. But today... well, my heart just melts every time he says “Democrat Majority

3. I’ve become less and less concerned about “guarding” America against all evil and more and more worried about guarding my inbox from a constant flow of annoying nudges from eBay and missing out on some fabulous deals on them. I liked getting these emails, even though I had nothing to do on a Saturday night... but now I’ve got a job and a new computer and I don’t want to lose track of those Deals!

4. The internet ate my homework...and yours too... and I relished my new electronic mail status. No, a simple life was mine to enjoy, but now my inbox is a swarm of unwanted offers from spammers. It doesn’t interest me any more, and for the most part it’s a waste of my time. However, last Saturday I decided to take a gamble at this sequestered inbox and see what the sum of the contents of the internet had to offer me. And you know what? I had nothing to do on a Saturday night...but neither did you.

5. Is there any sense in sending a newsletter out by one of my frequently online merchants while I typically don’t use the ads, I have an occasion to known to purchase products that have good deals on them. I liked getting these emails, even if I didn’t use them all the time. I whitelisted them in my spam filters. Now, the next ten items or so were legitimate spam, emails with subject lines that accounted to nothing more than word salad. I thanked the Gods (or Goddess, if you’re a staunch believer) for the very existence of choice. Huuz? No more would I suffer from arguably the very most common annoyance, the barrage of spam emails.

6. And for a while, I was happy. I no longer received emails that required me to purge my inbox like a dog who had just swallowed chocolate. No, a simple life was mine to enjoy, and I relished it. But then my life was changed. Now, for the most part, I ignore the frequent updates sent to me by the Barracuda Firearms...if it’s good at filtering out spam, then I don’t care if I’m sitting at the bottom of a spam-filled mail。“It’s not fair! I spent hours on this thing!”

7. “Ahh! Come on! The semester just started! I don’t even know my projects yet and even if I know it, I’ll have... like a whole semester to do them!”

8. “Well, this homework? Pahh! Easy! Five minutes! I can do it tomorrow!”

9. “It’s not due until Monday, though. I have that in my planner!”

10. “Thanks for that link, I didn’t even know Guantanamo was an issue. It’s not fair I spent hours on this thing!”

Are you a procrastinator?

By Phong Bui

"I think less President Bush sexy, I would have laughed and laughed. But you know, it’s a game of Stratego where you’ve run out of miners. It’s like a game of Stratego where you’ve run out of miners. Would have been more exciting if we had wrestlers. Hey, Tammy Duckworth, the similarly heroic Illinois veteran. She didn’t right now. She could’ve gone with flats and looked exactly the same height next to Dikembe. Would have been more exciting. Baby Einstein seems like a little bit of a stretch. Kind of awkward. Next.

34. No sign of Obama. I hope he doesn’t have mono.

35. Oh! He played the Darfure Video Game. I wonder if he got the past the part you bring back the water to the village. I always got bored by... the quest. Let’s get away from the Union. He knows he’s a hero. Congratulations, you’ve been granted a bonus fifteen.

40. I would be much more moved by this story of the heroine. If you say ‘yes’ to your party hadn’t so thoroughly consumed Tammy Duckworth, the similarly heroic Illinois veteran. She lost two legs when her helicopter was shot down and she was able to power it with her hands from blood.

McCain’s sleeping. He is so. He’s breathing a bit of a stretch. Kind of awkward. Next.

37. You know, if Laura wore heels, I bet she’s wishing for their front page, and I don’t need unnecessary this one. At 1:18 PM, 1-10-08, I thought it was weird that Cheney would look exactly the same height next to Dikembe. Would have been more exciting.


39. Goodnight everybody! All that’s left are the autographs, the awkward h-h-holding, the bike-ke for the door, and two, more years of decline into inefficiency. I can’t wait until he exercises his right to do really wacky out of character things in his last week in office. Unless he gets impeached.

The internet ate your homework...and yours too

By Colin Emch-Wei

A delighted lad was I when the OTS Department here at IIT announced the Barracuda firewall. It was an incredibly practical gift from an organization that had long been plagued by unsolicited emails promising financial windfall in the form of stock market scavengers. I had long since grown weary of the constant stream of choice. Huuz? No more would I suffer from arguably the very most common annoyance, the barrage of spam emails.

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Senate speaker talks about the retreat

By Babajide Oke

To find out more details about the Senate and the Senate retreat, TechNews talked to Executive Vice President of SGA and Speaker of the Senate, Brandon Lloyd. Mr. Lloyd was also one of the students who were instrumental in forming the Senate for the Student Government.

Q) What was your objective with the Senate Retreat?

A) The objective of the Retreat was to define a direction for SGA along with the Executive Board. It was to learn the Parliamentary procedures that govern the Senate. Another important aspect was learning how to interact with the personnel in the administration.

Q) What do you personally think was the most important part of the Senate Retreat?

A) It was playing the game called Mafia. It gave us an opportunity to talk to each other and get to know each other. More importantly, there was a choice for each senator to participate in one of the two sets of breakout sessions. One session dealt with how to deal with the issues the students bring to them. Other ones dealt with the COSGA conference. Another one was called “Administration 101”.

Q) What was SGA's idea on conducting the SGA Senate Banquet?

A) It was two fold. First, it was a kickoff part for the Student Senate, which has come into existence at IIT after 30 years! Second, we are hoping it will be an annual tradition where the Senate, students and the administration will get together, sit at a table and have a conversation.

Q) How many administrators were invited?

A) There were about 50 administrators who were invited. We had about 15 of them attend. Tuesday, many could not attend. The good news is we had 15 of them attend.

IIT’s President welcomes the new SGA Senate

By Babajide Oke

IIT’s President, Bradﻵyson welcomes the new SGA Senate with a gavel from the U.S. Senate and George Easley and Bob Lambert.

Senators Jennifer Miller and Andrew O’Fallon enjoy the meal with students Dylan Easley and Bob Lambert.

By Babajide Oke

President Colomn addresses the newly inaugurated senate.

By Babajide Oke

Guests

Asad Akram
Hozefa Ansawala
Sharini Anand
Nehal Bathia
Keith D’souza
Richard Duncan
Siddharth Dutta
Animesh Dvivedi
Dylan Easley
Abhishek Guddaguri
Kirit Kadnaparty
Bob Lambert
Manuel Lopez
Amy McDowell
Hemukumar Misrty
Andrew O’Fallon
Parvag Patel
Jay Patel
Keara Patel
Divya Pillai
Rajiv Radhakrishnan
Sergey Shamatov
Anurag pal Sohalb
Edward Sada
Prash Sundraman
Chi Tum
Li Xiaojing
Amir Zamani
Jianguo Zhang

Administration

Thomas Anderson
Jean Bingham
Lee Collins
John Collins
Bumi Gloria
Solly O. Smith
April Griffith
Meg Mattson
Rose Milkowski
Mary Ann Rowan
Kelly Schafer
Mary Anne Smith
Mary Taylor-Blassi

EACHNEWS

Formula Hybrid

Continued from front page

Fu}ra car.

Do I need to know lots of things about cars or technical stuff? Not really, you don’t need the fascination. IIT’s ACE team consists of 50+ students including all grade levels from undergraduate to graduate, and was split into an electrical and mechanical design team. This competition is the largest student-run project at IIT. Students from several different engineering majors including mechanical, aerospace, electrical, computer, chemical, environmental, and a few civil, architectural, and information technology management majors are contributing to the design. So, yes, mechanical mixtie is nice, but not necessary. It may sound silly, but we could use even more diversification of skills and interests on the team.

How is such a cool project possible? We have a variety of sponsors so far, including Armour College of Engineering (ACE), Energy and Sustainability Institute (EMI), Electric Power and Power Electronics Center (EPPEC), Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) Department, Mechanical, Materials & Aerospace Engineering (MMAE) Department, and Bob and Katrina Thakkar, also contributing to IIT’s development of a hybrid auto-rickshaw.

Our main financial sponsor is the Armour College of Engineering and we would like to gratefully acknowledge the great support of the Dean of Armour College, Dr. Hamid Arastoopour. Mechanical work is mainly done in IIT’s SAE Garage. Electrical work is done at Emadi’s Power Electronics and Motor drives Laboratory.

How can I get involved? Do I have to know how to use a wrench? Well, apart from getting one’s hands dirty, there are many other jobs to do. Last semester, we worked primarily on technical components and the chassis (frame) of the car. We need more than just a skeleton, however: we need a body, and that body must look at least as good as the car performs, so we need some hip paintwork. Another aspect of the challenge is reporting what we’ve done; that’s the static part of the competition, a very large, important part. Thus, we need writers, artists, creativity!

If you think you can contribute to this competition in any way, please contact wiranandi@iit.edu. Also check out our team website at formulahybrid.iit.edu.
By Disha Doshi

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Wednesday, January 24, 2007: Between 5 to 7 PM, the MISL Bridge at the McCormick Tribune Campus Center (MTCC) was the look of a stock exchange place. The reason being, the Student Organization Fair ‘07.

The Fair organized by the Office of Student Activities met with a cheerful and upbeat response as students bustled around the MISL Bridge to get hold of representatives of their favorite student organizations on campus.

Student representatives from more than 80 organizations on campus had their desks all set with posters and goodies to attract students. They were more than eager to get students involved and mingle with them by informing them about their organizations, the activities they undertook and other significant information.

The organizations at IIT range from professional and honor societies like Engineers Without Borders to less technical and more fun oriented ones like those associated with arts, media, sports and recreation and ethnic international groups. There exist several fraternity and sorority organizations on campus to elevate the experience of residence life at IIT. For the politically inclined folks, governance and military organizations like Student Government Association and Arnold Air Society exist. Other offbeat special interest organizations like English Speak Sociality, Linux Users Group and Medieval Society of IIT are present for students with innovative interests.

The caricature artist David Levi was absolutely an attention grabber as students thronged around him waiting for their turn while he flawlessly turned plain sheets of paper into fantastic caricatures.

The Student Organization Fair was a terrific opportunity for the newcomers of the Spring Semester to get involved with the activities on campus and find peers sharing the same interests as theirs. If you missed the fair this time, don’t worry! Sign into your myIIT account to find the URL’s and email addresses for all the student organizations under the “Student Life” tab.

Cohen named new Dir. of Public Safety at IIT

Richard L. Cohen has been selected as the new director of Public Safety at IIT. He replaces Steve Rabie who announced his intention to leave IIT several weeks ago in order to accept a position at Hewlett Packard in Lincolnshire, IL as their director of security. Cohen was previously director of Public Safety in 2003. “He [Cohen] is a highly qualified individual and we are very pleased to have him back. He is an excellent public safety professional,” said John P. Collins, vice president for Business and Administration. Cohen most recently held the position of Senior Vice President, Security Consulting & Business Continuity Planning at Levy Security Corporation. His first day as director of Public Safety was last Tuesday.

Scholarship Opportunities

Available online, http://leadershipacademy.iit.edu/scholarships.php or at the Leadership Program’s Career Management Center. Along with the winning logo and tagline, as well as the certificate and recognition in University Identity Standards, there is a prize for the logo and the tagline, as well as the certificate and recognition in University Identity Standards.

Eligible applicants must have U.S. citizenship or permanent residence in the U.S.; and be a current Master’s or Ph.D. student at an American university in one of the following fields: Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Engineering, Environmental Science, or Mathematics. The goals of the CESRI program are to improve the global capacity of future American scientists, and to build partnerships between the scientific community in the U.S. and Central Europe. For more information, please visit: the CESRI website, www.jackkentcookefoundation.org/cesri. Application deadline is February 5, 2007.

For other Global Engineering Education Programs, please contact Julie Madden, Study Abroad Coordinator, or visit the Study Abroad website, http://studyabroad.iit.edu/index.php. For more information, please contact Prof. Joshua Cohen, jcohen@iit.edu or 312.567.7125 for more information.

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In the Limelight: Professor Susan Conger-Austin

By Disha Doshi

“In the Limelight” is back in Technews after a brief hiatus and our guest this week is Prof. Susan Conger-Austin who is optimistic about life and full of energy. She is an Assistant Professor and the Director of the Professional Masters Programs for the College of Architecture.

Technews: Tell us something about your growing up years and the start of your career.

Prof. Conger-Austin: I grew up in the Rubber Capital Akron, Ohio. I went to public schools after which I went for a double major in Economics and Art History at the Stanford University. I had always wanted to become an architect but I did not want to limit myself and focus completely on architecture during my undergrad school.

I went to Chicago and worked with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) as an architect. Since I did not have a degree in architecture, I was more of an experient for the people at SOM. They asked me to go to an architecture school or else I would end up being a draftsman my entire life.

I went to Princeton University for my Masters of Architecture degree. In 1993, I joined IIT and thus my association with academics started.

Technews: So you saw yourself as an architect right from the beginning?

Prof. Conger-Austin: To begin with, I wanted to become a musician. However I discovered that architecture was what I wanted to do. In fact I was drawing floor plans in my diary right since I was 8 years old. But I do feel that music and architecture are closely related.

Technews: How do you think music and architecture relate to each other?

Prof. Conger-Austin: Music and architecture are closely knit since both of them deal with structure, rhythm, proportions and volume. The only difference is music is ephemeral since it does not stay there forever whereas architecture is not.

Technews: What is more fun and challenging for you - practicing as an architect or being in academics?

Prof. Conger-Austin: I like the mix of combination of both. I cannot imagine giving up teaching. Students challenge me since they come up with fresh ideas.

The fact that they have not yet entered the corporate world makes them free of preconceived notions. My practice has remained small since I need to devote time and effort to realize a perfect balance between the two.

Technews: What is the one thing you really like about being at IIT?

Prof. Conger-Austin: I absolutely like the energy of the students and their thirst for knowledge. I like the diversity of student population at IIT. It is great to see students from all over the world come here and mingle.

Technews: What is the one change that you think if done can do wonders to IIT?

Prof. Conger-Austin: I would like to have a more close knit community at IIT. The current campus is more decentralized where students come together for a couple of hours and disappear.

I would like to see IIT more as a center where students live, work and eat together. The closeness helps school and gives it a dynamic quality.

Technews: What do you think is your best construction as an architect?

Prof. Conger-Austin: I have done quite diverse projects. I volunteered to design a library for a public school. The project had stringent budget but it felt very rewarding to me since I knew the people who used it and the difference it made to their lives.

On the other hand, I had done commercial buildings near Heathrow but I did not know who occupied the houses. I personally find it much more rewarding when my work affects people’s lives in a positive way.

Technews: Your message to the students.

Prof. Conger-Austin: Never give up. If things are not going your way, don’t let the setbacks hamper your thought process. Life is full of obstacles. It is the way you deal with them that move you to a different level.

Union Board plans to organize Bears feast

By Abishek Gundugurti

Union Board, the leading programming organization on campus, is organizing a super bowl party you won’t forget. Come Sunday February 4th, and Center Court will be the venue of the biggest football party in IIT in a long long time. Union Board along with Residence Hall Association (RHA) will offer a super bowl party you can’t resist. Free Pizza, Bears merchandise to win, and maybe a Cash Bar for people who are legal. They are going to rock the MTCC (just before the BOG opens) with one of America’s favorite game series, the NFL super bowl. It will be watched country-wide by an estimated 6 million people. Last year, Detroit made $302 million dollars because of the super bowl being held in their city.

Of course, you don’t need any introduction to the hugeness of the final game of football. And you don’t need a reason to come to the game. You have every reason to come if you even remotely like the Chicago Bears. The Bears have had a remarkable season. 13 victories, 3 losses. The biggest win is 48-7 against the Buffalo Bills. Now, in the super bowl coming up, they will meet the Indianapolis Colts. The game should be an exciting thriller to the already nail-biting post-season.

So if you are planning to watch football on Sunday, drop by Center Court. You know you can enjoy it more if you have a bigger crowd and a better TV.

Bring the Green

TechNews is hiring

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Female students make up 55 percent of the population at Syracuse University. They will be represented in fields such as aerospace engineering, biology and business management. They will take the same courses and tests as men. They will have the same qualifications as men. They will be offered the same jobs as men.

The wage gap that exists between college-educated men and women increased over the past decade, according to information gathered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The difference in salaries earned by men and women in the same professions had been steadily decreasing since 1979, but recent statistics published by the BLS suggest women with a degree from a four-year college are not experiencing the same increase in wage equality women in general are. It goes to show that we haven’t made the progress we thought we did.

Although women now make up more than half the population of college students and have gained a stronger presence in traditionally male-dominated fields such as medicine and engineering, they still risk making less than their male co-workers.

Recent pay gap increase could hit female graduates hard

By Lisa Lombardi

Although women now make up more than half the population of college students and have gained a stronger presence in traditionally male-dominated fields such as medicine and engineering, they still risk making less than their male co-workers.

Discrimination and personal choice were cited as two possible causes for the increasing wage gap. Some experts disagree.

"I’m suspicious of both explanations," said Dan Black, a tenure professor of economics at the Maxwell School of Citizenship.

While both are likely reasons for why the wage gap exists in the first place, neither can be linked with the sudden change, and neither explains why the change is occurring now, said Black.

According to Black, there may still be residual stereotypes in the workplace, but there is no evidence of a sudden increase in sexual discrimination cases to back up that hypothesis.

The New York Times also cited the lack of government-imposed laws like Title VII as a reason for the increase in the wage gap. The law, part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, outlawed discrimination based on sex (among other things) in the workplace.

Black did not agree the government was to blame for the developing wage gap.

"Then why the change in the ’80s?" he said, referring to a period during which the wage gap narrowed despite a lack of legislation aimed at it.

While the Labor Department reported an increase in the number of higher-educated women who are staying home with young children, it is women who are ages 55 to 65 years old that made the highest median weekly earnings in 2006, as noted by the BLS. However, the average age of a woman when she gives birth to her first child is 25, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Like Black, Patrick Cichon, a professor in the Whitman School of Management, sees the societal expectations concerning women and family as a probable reason for the existence of the wage gap, but not the recent change.

"In management and higher-paying professions, there might be concern (from employers) about women leaving to take care of children," Cichon said.

Also, some women may be forced to choose lower-paying positions that offer more stable hours which cater to family life. Surgeons, for instance, are among the highest paid professionals in the country. However, their erratic schedules may make it harder for a woman to balance a family life along with the workload. As a result, a field like pediatrics can be a more desirable choice for women, even though the job doesn’t pay as well as a career in surgery.

Kaitlyn Wurz, a senior biology major and pre-med student, said that while family may force some women to compromise their job preferences, the reason cannot be applied to all women.

"I see women picking professions that have more predictable schedules," said Wurz, "[but] if I’m going to go to medical school, if I’m going to make an effort into it, I’m going to go into what role I want to.”

Both Black and Cichon suggested the uneven distribution of the economy in the United States at this time could spark the change seen in the gender gap. "Executive CEO pay and bonuses are going through the roof," said Cichon.

If the wealthiest people in the country are seeing the biggest increase in pay, and if that small percentile happens to be dominated by males, then it would account for the change.

Even with that theory, however, Black remains unconvinced. "I don’t think any sense to me," said. If anything, according to Black, the gap should be narrowing further.

Wurz agreed. "I’m shocked," he said. "I would think that the gap would decrease for college-educated women. It goes to show that we haven't made the progress we thought we did.”

Few female students were aware of the variation in the wage gap, and most admitted that although they knew the gap existed, they rarely worried about it.

"Honestly, I never really thought about it," said Jo Anne Lonzanida, a freshman civil engineering major.

Lonzanida said she thought fields that have historically been dominated by men may simply take longer to adjust and stop favoring men for high-paying positions.

"People might just be going with men because it’s what they’re used to," she said.

But many believe that a wage gap will always exist, Lonzanida remains optimistic.

"I think once there are more women in the field and they get a chance to prove themselves, the gap will eventually close," she said.

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If you would like to contribute to the News Section or would like to see something else in it Contact Shrvani pasushr@iit.edu
'Smokin’ Aces' meets lows expectations

By Dean Leng

DAILY BRUIN (UCLA)

It’s been four long years since writer-director Joe Carnahan made a name for himself with the gritty crime thriller "Narc." And unfortunately, those looking for a hint of that tightly scripted drama will be sorely disappointed by his latest effort, "Smokin’ Aces." That isn’t to say that "Smokin’ Aces" is an utter disaster. On the contrary, it’s an entirely different breed of film that caters to a specific audience. The movie, like its characters, is rough, wacky, hilarious and violent -- just as it was intended to be.

Also frightening is the idea of a man falling on a chain saw doesn’t sit well, this isn’t the movie for you.

In the film, a young mob kingpin has put a huge bounty on the head or, technically, heart of Los Angeles magician-turned-FBI informant Buddy "Aces" Israel, played by Jeremy Piven ("Entourage"). On the case are FBI agents Messner (Ray Reynolds, "Van Wilder") and Carruthers (Ray Liotta, "Identity"). They’re racing the clock to get to Israel in his penthouse suite before a bevy of wacky hit men beat them to the punch. Among the would-be assassins is a bail bondsman (Ben Affleck) and his buddies, singer Alicia Keys as a female associate, a trio of Neo-Nazi brothers, a master of disguise, and a ruthless torture expert.

Carnahan takes all these hastily sketched-out caricatures, mixes them up and sets them loose on a Tahoe hotel, allowing them to wreak havoc for our amusement. Oddly enough, the film abruptly changes tone in the middle, as more restrained and violent. Much to the detriment of the film’s previously frenetic pace.

"Smokin’ Aces" is a black comedy that is a bit labored and thin on plot. It’s a premise that’s milked for its action potential and peppered with sharp dialogue that is incredibly violent and thin on plot. It’s a premise that’s milked for its action potential and peppered with sharp dialogue that is incredibly violent and thin on plot.

Keep away, Ms. Cleo. There’s a new psychic in town, and he’s here to stay. This summer, USA premiered "Psych," a show that follows a private detective, Shawn Spencer, pretending to be psychic while actually using his eidetic memory and observational skills to solve crimes. As a result, viewers have discovered a reason to stay home on Friday nights.

"Psych’s" summer popularity has generated high expectations for the freshman show for the regular season. In an official USA press release, Executive Vice President Jeff Wachtel remarked, "We couldn’t be more excited about picking up "Psych" for a second season. The series was a home run from pilot to pilot to series — we’re looking forward to even more success in season two." The lead hunchos of the network expect "Psych" to do well, with good reason. About 6.25 million viewers tuned in for its premiere on July 7, and by the end of its summer run, it was No. 1 in the key 18-49 demographic for cable television.

However, summer success does not necessarily indicate that the show will do well in the regular season. "Psych" had little competition this summer because the shows that usually dominate Friday nights aired repeats and there were less overall viewers. In this regular season, "Psych" faces off against new episodes of shows such as "Numbers" and "Law and Order." Though its odds are not the best, "Psych" has two very crucial advantages: Freshness and good pedigree.

Word of mouth has spread quickly, and people are undoubtedly intrigued to see this new approach to crime solving. The show is not just another procedural, forensics show or medical show with a hospital setting and only good-looking doctors (who are nowhere to be found in real life). "Psych" has a quirky protagonist who is greatly affected by his past, and an ensemble cast of equally odd characters to accompany him on adventures. If this sounds a bit familiar, there’s reason for that. Can anyone say "Monk"? USA already knows the winning formula ("Monk" has won several Emmys and Golden Globes), and to some degree, they’ve simply changed a few details from their previous hit to create "Psych." Despite those striking similarities, however, "Psych" displays flavors of originality through small character details, original plots, and clever dialogue.

"Monk" is also a "Psych" lead-in and that show’s long-term success has the potential to give "Psych" a chance to establish itself. "Psych" may not be the most realistic show, but it proves entertaining nonetheless. So what if the clues light up and an awkward situation occurs in every episode? Intelligence is wonderful, but sometimes thinking too much can get you in trouble.

"Psych" is wonderful, but sometimes thinking too much can get you in trouble. So what if the clues light up and an awkward situation occurs in every episode? Intelligence is wonderful, but sometimes thinking too much can get you in trouble.

"Pan’s Labyrinth" neither panders to the conventions of cinematic genres. But Guillermo Del Toro’s "Pan’s Labyrinth" flawlessly interweaves an imaginative fairy tale with brutally realistic wartime drama to produce one of the most provocative explorations of fascism ever made.

Set in a Spanish countryside during fascist rule, the film tells the story of Ofelia (Ivana Baquero), a young girl who lives and practically dwells in fairy-tale novels.

When she and her pregnant mother move to her military stepfather’s outpost, reality is blurred when Ofelia meets a faun (Doug Jones, "Hellboy") who informs her that she’s the long-lost princess of a magical realm with three daunting tasks to complete. Meanwhile, her ruthless stepfather, Captain Vidal (Sergi Lopez, "Dirty Pretty Things"), is responsible for eradicating the Republican insurgency threatening the fascist military’s control of the surrounding forests. As Ofelia embarks on her mystical quest, the violence around her escalates, and fantasy and reality often become indistinguishable.

Ivana Baquero is captivating as Ofelia, an innocent girl amid a horrifically violent world. Whether or not her fantasies are real is up for debate. Either way, they’re her only escape from a cruel reality of which she wants no part.

But Sergi Lopez’s Captain Vidal is a formidable -- as well as scene-stealing -- foe. Vidal, with his calm exterior and fascist convictions, is easily one of the best movie villains in recent memory; totally merciless and hateful, but also painfully real. Unlike the one-note antagonists we’ve grown so accustomed to, Vidal’s character is undeniably complex. His obsession with his son and passing on an honorable legacy gives him a human quality that makes his brutality even more chilling.

With a budget of just $5 million, Del Toro creates a visually stunning film. The movie’s fairy tale landscapes and numerous computer-generated creatures rival even the most extravagant Hollywood projects. Composer Javier Navarette’s ("The Devil’s Backbone") haunting score echoes a familiar theme of loyalty and offers a fitting companion to Del Toro’s fantastical vision.

"Pan’s Labyrinth" neither panders to the younger crowd nor starts its violent thriller nor compromises its child-oriented premise to please an older audience. The fantasy aspect lends it an accessibility that is impossible with drama alone. Likewise, the period piece provides a revealing backdrop. It’s this symbiotic relationship that makes “Pan’s Labyrinth” one of the great films of the year.

Where in Chicago

If you know, be the first to e-mail us at technewsphotos@gmail.com and we will publish your name next week.

Last Week’s Winner

Congratulations to Tony Smith for being the first to correctly identify last week’s photo. Rockefefller Chapel, the tallest building on the University of Chicago campus. It was designed by architect Bertram Goodhue and built between 1925 and 1928 without the use of structural steel. Its 72 bell carillon is the second-largest in the world by mass.

Where was this photo taken?

Where was this photo taken?

If you would like to contribute to the A&E Section or would like to see something else in it, contact Andres and Colin, deiaa@iit.edu, emchcol@iit.edu