



MITSF'S FAMILY ALBUM  
V. 2 VOL. 1



# **The MITSFS Family Album**

Version II Vol. I

as compiled by Scrapcomm  
in the year 2017  
61.2 Ksec SST

All attempts have been made to preserve the accuracy,  
inaccuracy, and bananas of the original family albums. Additions  
and corrections may be made, subject to the Skinner's approval,  
in permanent archival pen or via a label maker - no other tape,  
glue, sticky notes, etc.



# **The Sacred and Solemn Rites of the Instrumentality a.k.a. the Keyholder Notes**

Being a partial description of the Powers and Duties  
of those holding Keys to the Library  
along with the Guidelines thereto  
and many helpful Hints.

2014/07/26 00:00:00 UTC

## **Introduction**

These are the Keyholder Notes; thousands of man-years and billions of zorkmids went into making them accurate and easy to read. The accumulated knowledge and wisdom of MITSFS is here, except when it's not. Errors their are nun, but should you have any suggestions they may be welcome.

As you read, you will notice that references are made to other parts of the Notes. This is sometimes to clarify an obscure point and sometimes to confuse. All of these references are in boldface.

When you finish reading each page, please initial and date the back;<sup>1</sup> in doing so you give us permission to fine you as much as we want. (This is a prerequisite for being a Keyholder.)

While the MITSFS Constitution is the fundamental governing document of the Society, these Rites constitute our basic law and policies, except where specifically overruled by the Skinner, Star Chamber, or a vote of the Instrumentality. In particular, these Rites trump behavior of Greendex that contradicts them!

Keyholders are expected and assumed to have read, have understood, and be familiar with these Rites. It is strongly suggested that you reread them at least once a year, even if you think you remember everything.

Ye Downtrodden Members will be allowed the privilege of reading only three parts of these astute Notes: Library Rules, Fine Rules, and 9.2 Tax Information for Potential Donors. The first two are posted on the door; the third is online at <http://www.mit.edu/~mitsfs/gifts.html>.

1

If your current initials conflict with existing Keyholders' (glance at the list on the door outside to see theirs), or with "SFS", "XXX", "BD", "SR", "LHE", or "VGG", or are otherwise likely to be confusing, change them now. Three-letter initials help minimize confusion, though two-letter initials are ok. You need not use your actual initials.

## **Opening and Closing the Library**

This page intentionally left blank. Secret arcane rituals happen behind closed doors.

## **Library Rules**

1. RESERVE materials are not available for check-out. All reserve materials live in the main room and all magazines or bound magazines are reserve. Ask a Keyholder if you're unsure if something is reserve.

- Reserve materials do not leave the Library without the explicit permission of the Skinner.
- Special Reserve materials do not even leave the back area (Damnation Alley) without a special "sign-out" that allows an item to be read elsewhere in the Library.

2. CIRCULATING materials are available for check-out. They are not supposed to have orange stickers, but some still do: ask the Keyholder if you're unsure.

- 
- 
- 
- 

Members may borrow Circulating materials for up to twenty-one (21) days.

Members may have a maximum of eight (8) items in circulation at any one time.

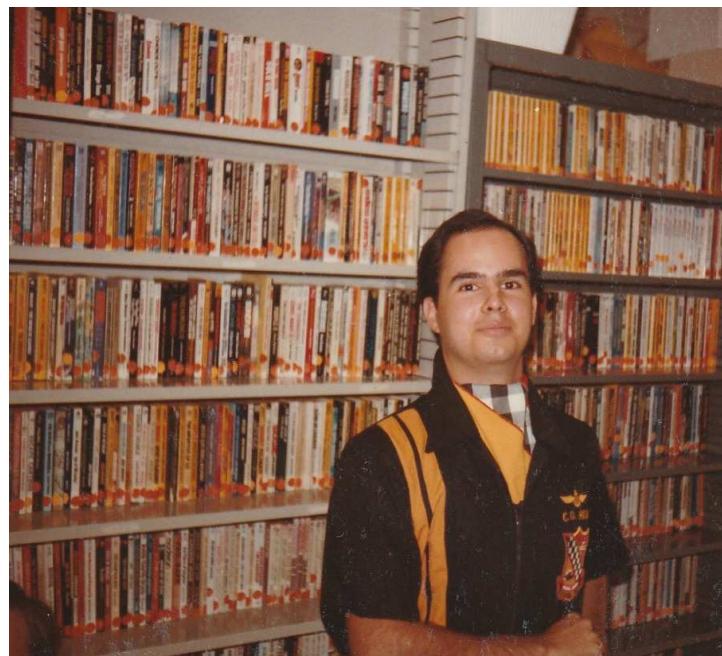
ALL books must be signed out by a Keyholder.

Only a member may sign out books on their membership. Anyone may return a member's books.

- Books must be returned to the Library. There is a slot in the door for returns at arbitrary times; hence, that the Library was closed is not a valid excuse for overdue books.
- Books mailed back to the Library are considered returned as of the date of the postmark.

# **Skimmers**

Tim L. Huckleberry '83-'84



Janice M. Eisen (and Telzy)  
'84-'85

Andy T. Su '85-'86



Sue S.D. Tucker '86-'87

D. Scott Kitchen '87-'88



Herb A. Miller '88-'89



Phil C. Nesser III '89-'90



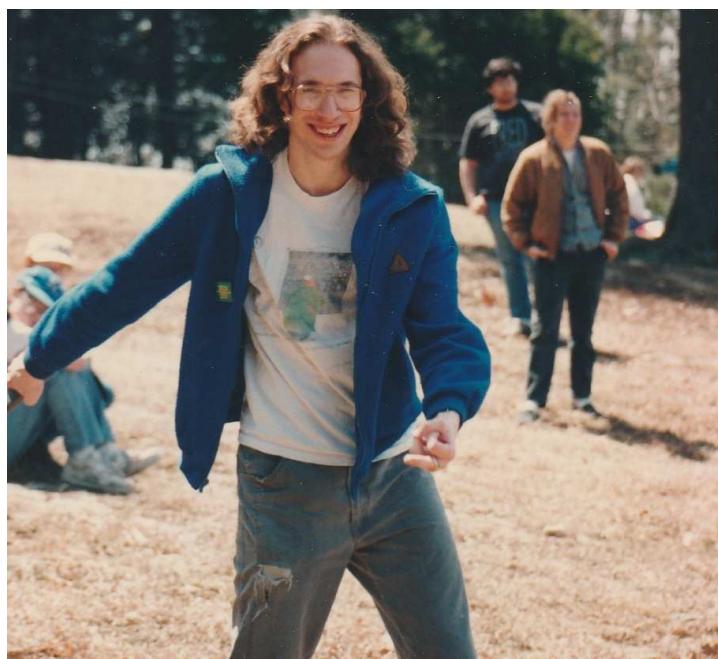
John C. Conger (and Telzy)  
'90-'91



Derrick Kong '91-'92



Sherrian Lea '92-'93



Jamie Morris '93-'94



Marcus Sarofim '94-'95

Chris Hooker '95-'96



Jay Muchnij '96-'98



Jen Murphy '98-'99



Jenwa Hsung '99-'00



Jade Wang '00-'02

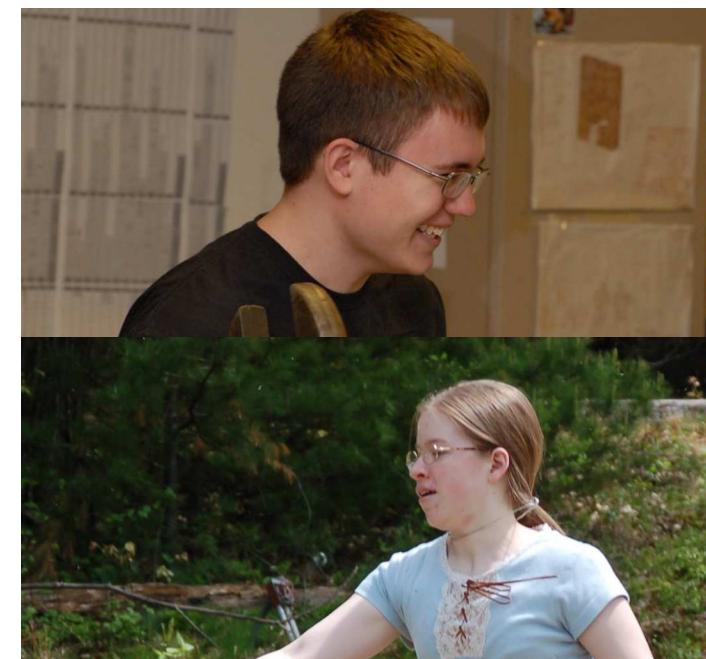


Ed Keyes '02-'04





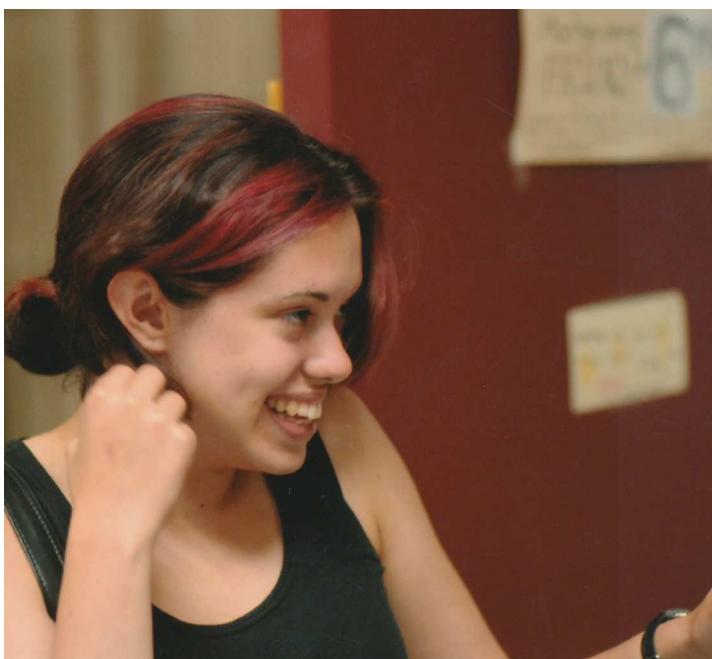
Kat Allen '04-'05



Andrew Clough '05-'06

Kevin Riggle '06-'08

Christian Ternus & Kendra Beckler  
Interim Skinners Summer 2007



Ekaterina "Kate" Kuznetsova  
'08-'09

Miss Katie Ray '09-'10

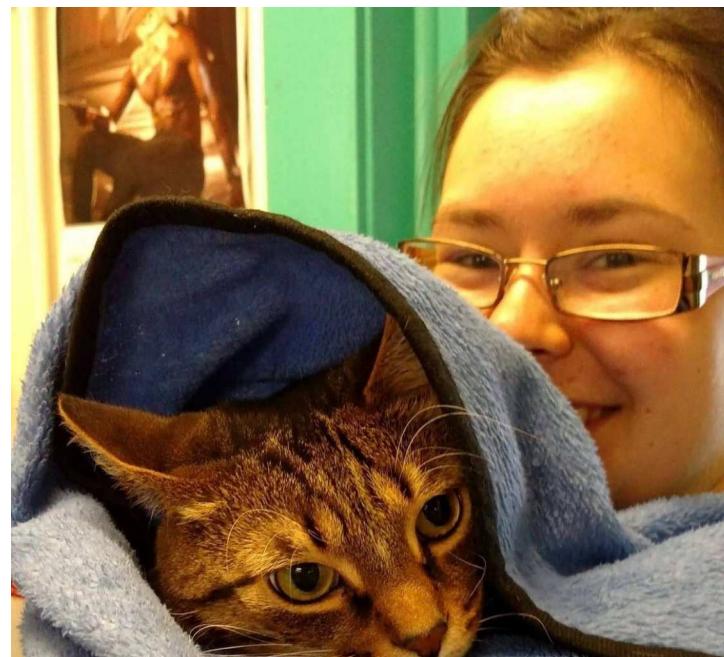
Paul Weaver '10-'12



Alex Westbrook '12-'13



D.W. Lemur Rowlands '14-'15



Cathleen Nalezyty '15-'16

Rachael Skye '16-'17



Carissa Skye  
Elected Skinner 2017



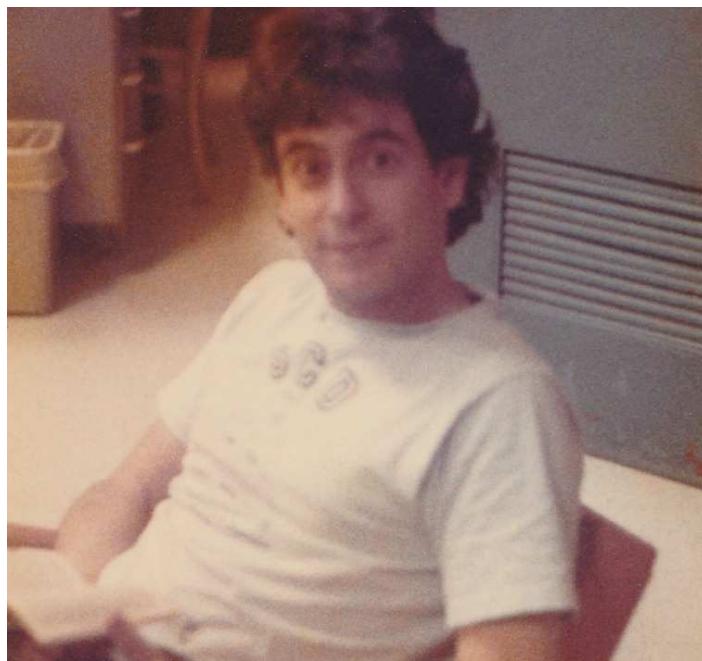
## **Keyholders**

Regrettably incomplete.

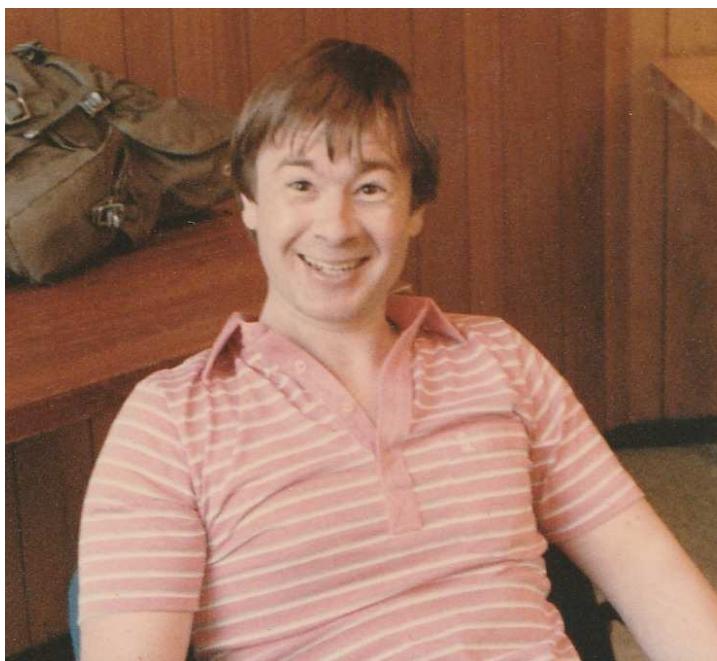
Many more faces have adorned the rogues' gallery, but have  
been lost to time.



W.H. Desmond  
**Uncle Willy**



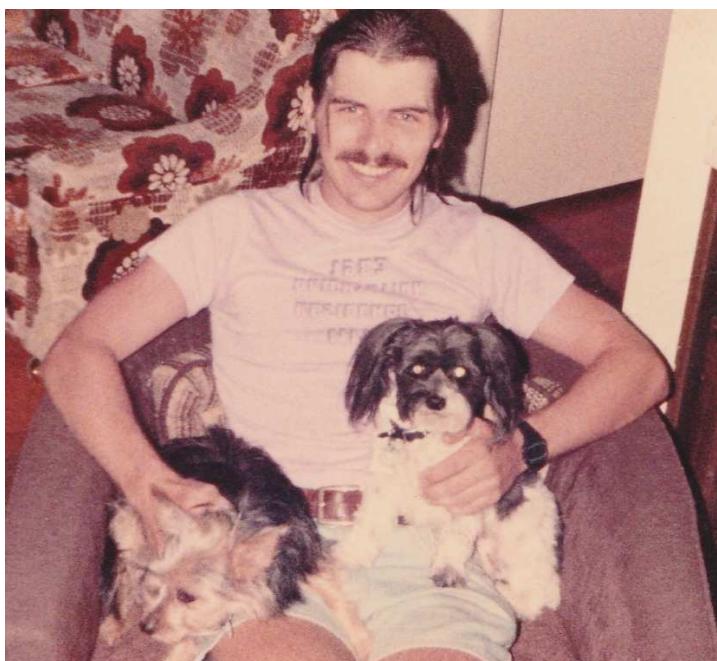
Paul Mailman  
**Analogcomm**



Michael Toon  
**Bluebellcomm**



Jim Mahoney



Pete Smoot



Harry Teplitz  
**Boredcomm**

Val Stark  
**Onseck & Coofcom**



Linda Cordella  
**Assistant Treasurer**



Lisa Miller  
**Vice, Telzy, Jourcomm, & Mancinicomm**



Rob Gates  
**LHE, Vice, Wittercomm, & MITSFS Mistress**

Sue Pitts  
**LHE, President, & Mancinicomm**



Tom McKendree



Justyna Bodziuch  
**Assistant Treasurer**



Stephanie Tai  
**Picniccomm & Fweekcomm**



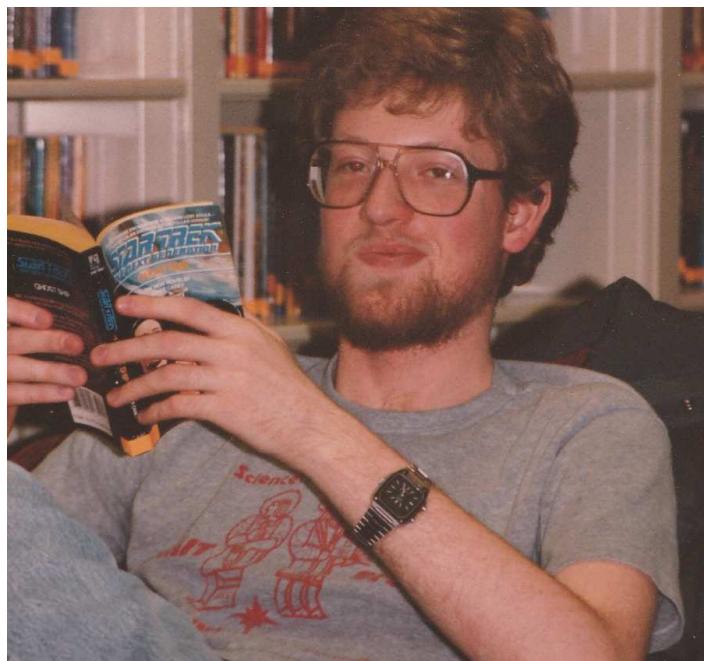
Ellen Kranzer  
**VGG**



Bill Starr  
**Mobcomm & Panthercomm**



Larry Lenhoff  
**Cousin Larry**



Robert Poole  
**Randomcomm**

Donna Bell  
**Vice & Pumpkincomm**



Steve McDonald  
**Charcomm**



Connie Hersch  
**Speaker to Ingres**



Jamie Morris  
**Chancellor & Dexmistress**



Mike Whitson  
**Hasslecomm**



Meredith Elaine Peck



Jennifer K. Chung  
**Theftcomm**



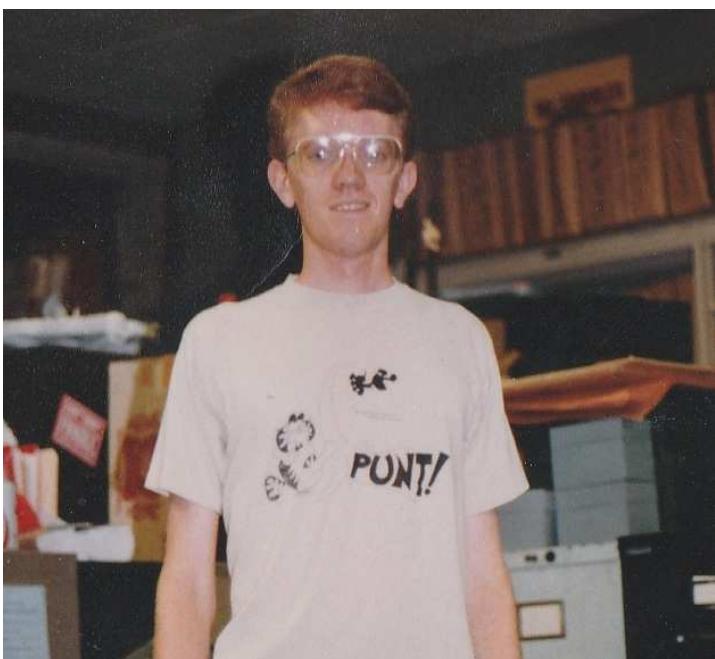
Jennifer Szostak  
**Bluebellcomm**



Joe T. Foley  
**Magdexter**



Jen F. Murphy  
**Smilescomm**



Dave B. Wilson



Erin M. Pantaja  
**Surgeon**

Jen M. Clay  
**hBarcomm**



Aaron Ucko  
**Vice**



Edwin K. Karat



Elizabeth Ditchburn



Derrick Kong

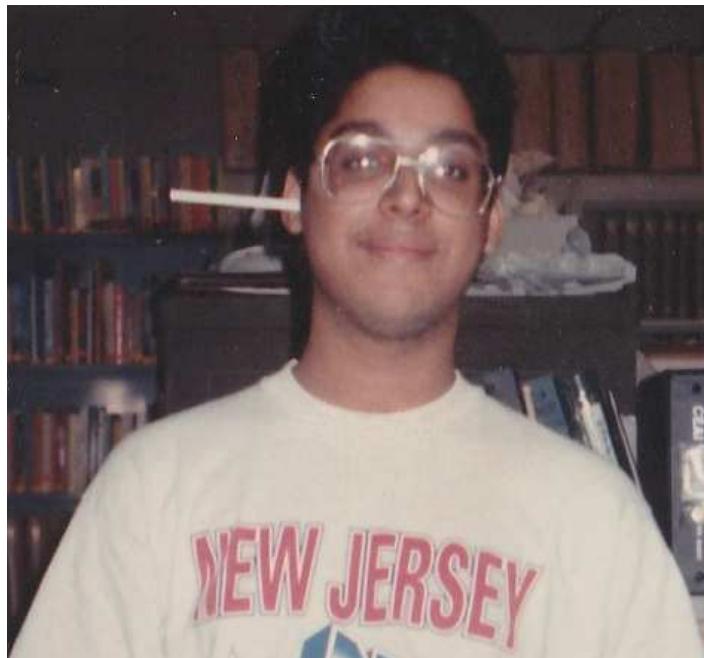


Nathan C. Wilmes  
**Hasslecomm**





Jennifer W. Shih



Carl Witty  
**Bluebellcomm**



Neel Krishnaswami  
**Bluebellcomm**

Dave S. Kern  
**Bluebellcomm**

Heather Grove

Seth Gordon  
**ROSFAP**



Scott E. Kullberg  
**Theftcomm**



Tony Leier



Yevgenia Nusinovich

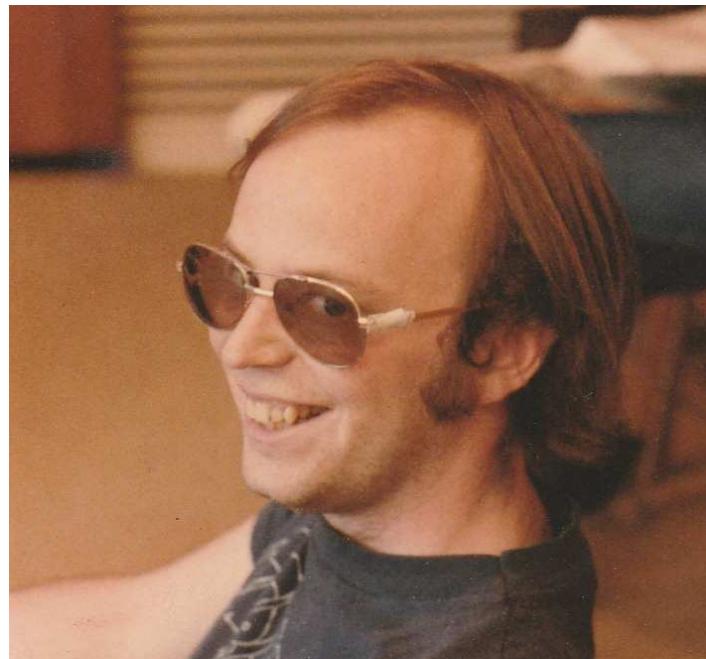


Anca Mosiou

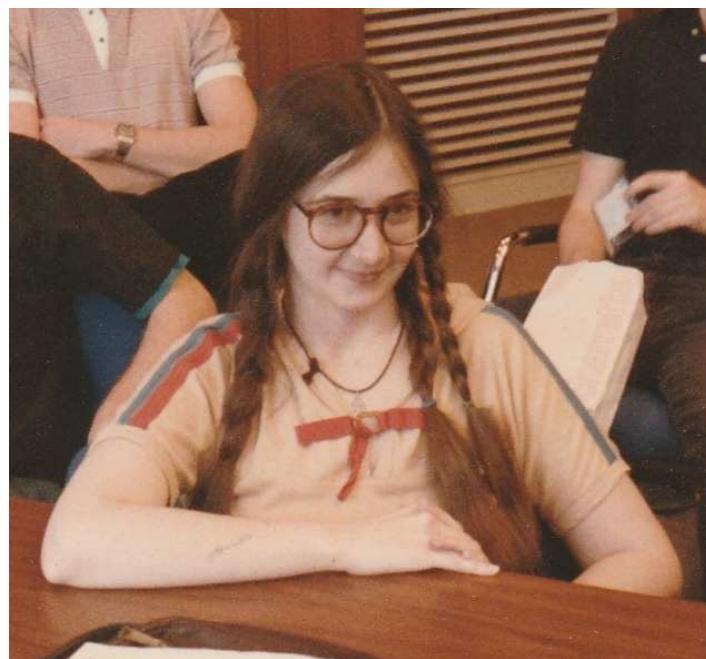
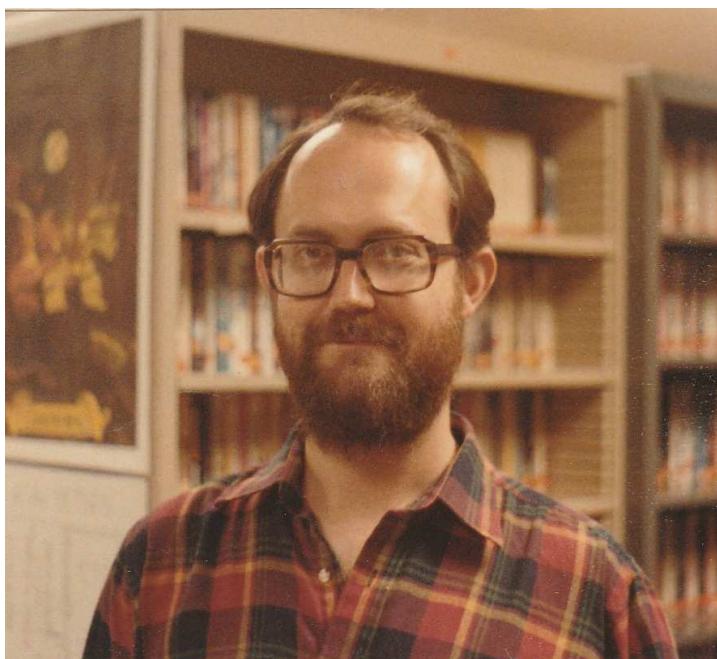


George Phillies  
**Grand Old Wedge of the  
SGS**





Tom Lang  
**Honorary Plant**



Robert K. Weiner

L. Shawn Gramites  
**Jourcomm**



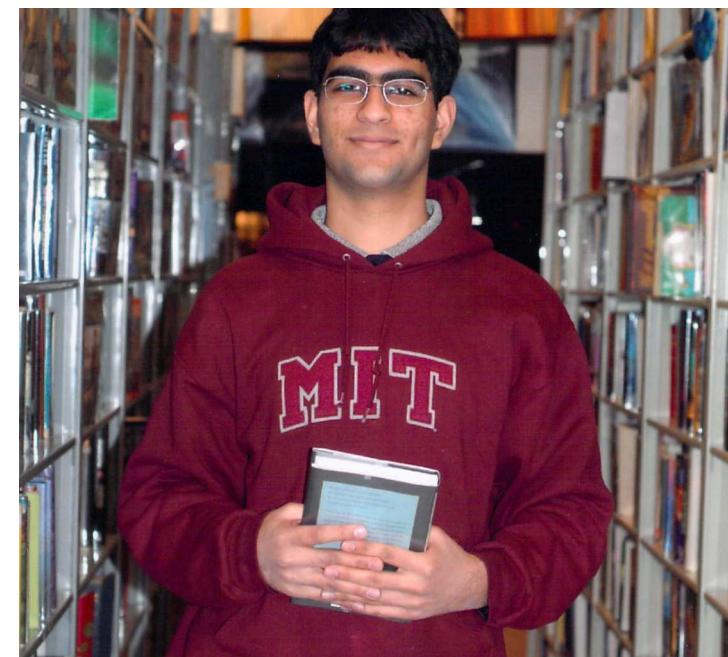
Susan Born

Toby Elliot  
**Mobcomm**

James Penna (PJM)  
**hBarcomm**



Kaleb A. Ayalew  
**Miscomm**



Sukrit I. Ranjan  
**Hasslecomm**



Kristen L. Berry  
**Assistant Surgeon**  
**Bondagecomm**

Miss Katie Ray (MKR)  
**Thunderbunny**  
**Panthercomm**





Kevin Riggle



Lori Thomas



Jacky Chang



Ekaterina "eKate" Kuznetsova  
(ESK)



Jake Beal (JSB)



Aaron Ucko

Malcom Skerry (Y)



Andrew Menard (ARM)  
**Mobcomm**



John Hawkinson



Stephanie Fried

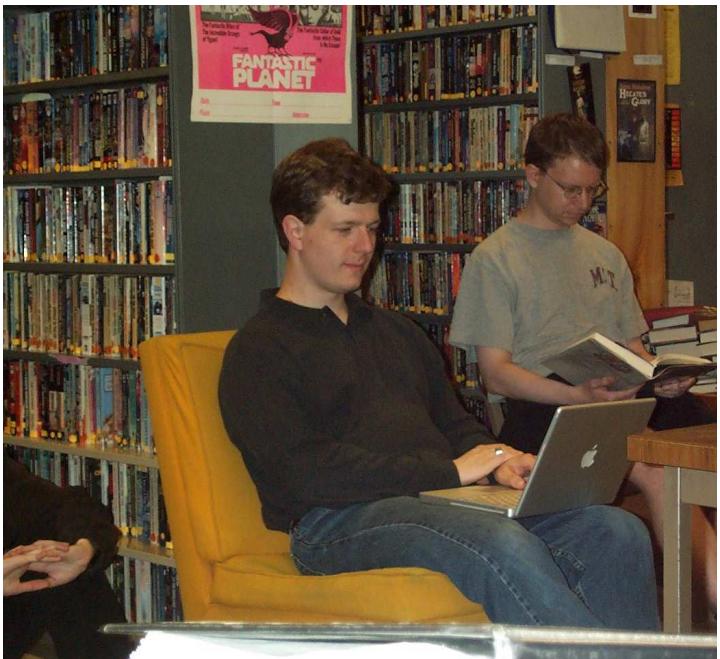


Margaret Gentile (MGH)  
**Vice, Picniccomm**



Cassie Huang





Brian Sniffen (BTS)  
**Onseck, Dexmistress**



Paige Phillips (PEP)  
**Pianocomm, Atomcomm**



Kendra Beckler (KKB)  
**Panthercomm, Catacomm**

Kristan "Kree" Berry (KLB)

Karl Ramm (KCR)

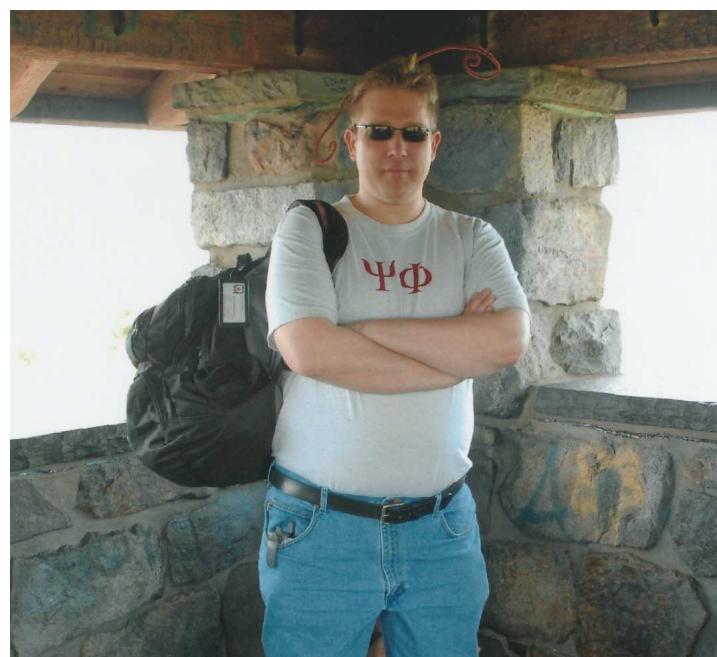
Yevginiya Nusinovich



Natasha Olchanski



David Broadbent



Andrea Humez

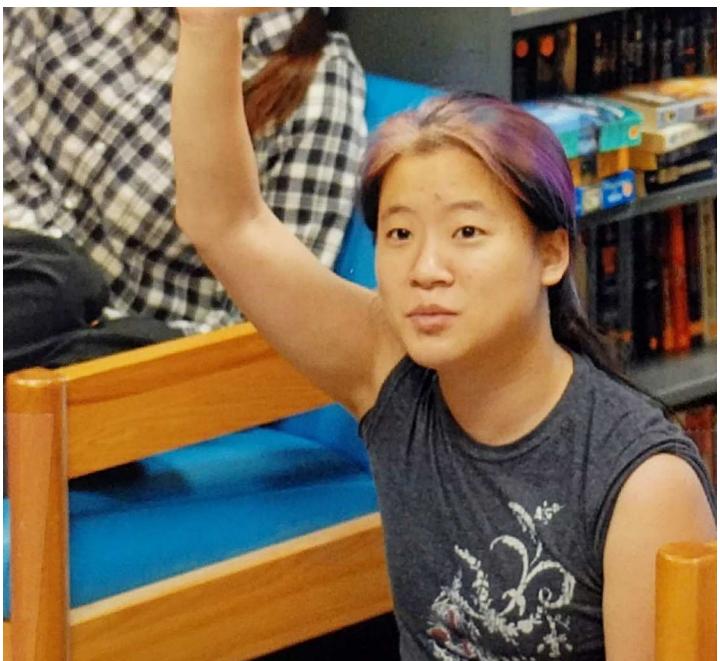


Mika Braginsky  
**Trojan**



Drew Hillard (ACR)  
**Bluebellcomm, Sheepcomm**



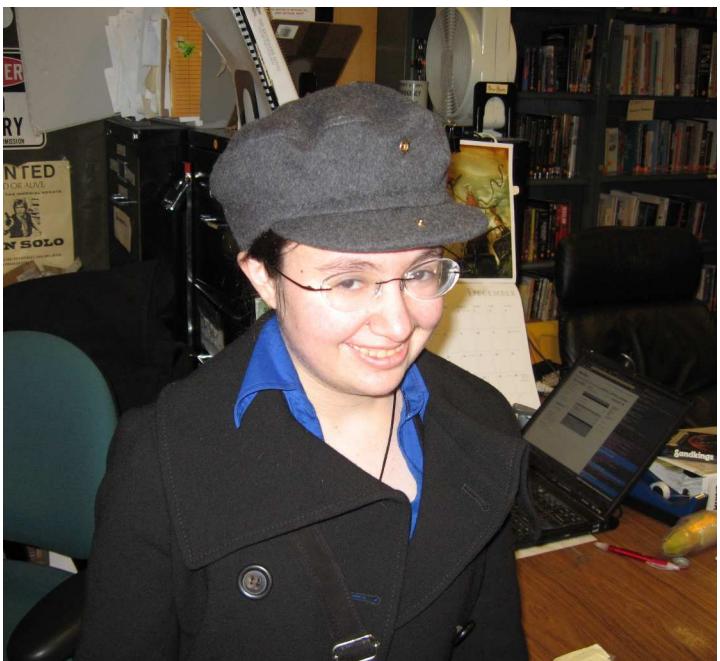


Jacky Chang  
**Niagaracomm, Pianocomm**



Sarah Coe (COE)  
**LHE**

Jack Stevens (JHS)  
**Analogcomm, Onseck, Vice**



Cathy Zhang (ZEK)  
**Mancinicom, Pressgangcomm,  
Chancellor, Libcomm**

Lee Fuchs

Ben Kaduk (BJK)  
**Catacomm**

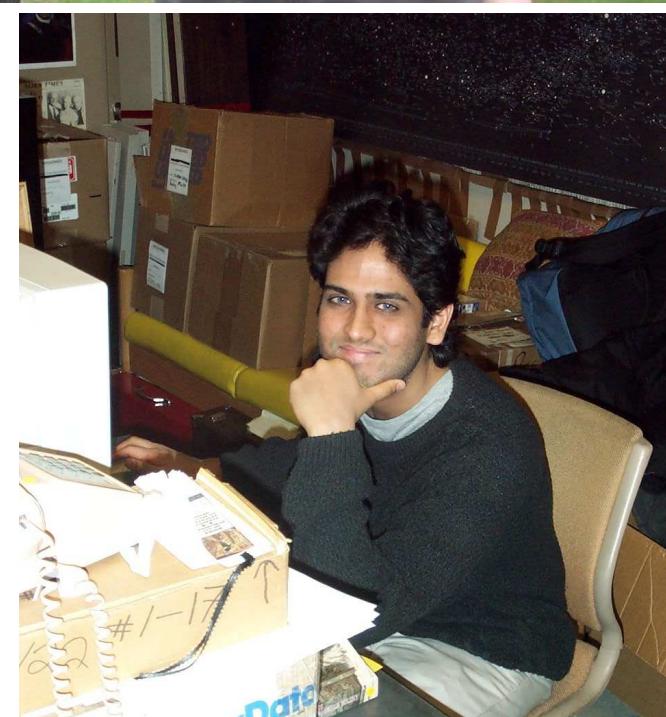
Sueshep Shepherd



Andrew Boardman



D.R. Kumar (DKR)



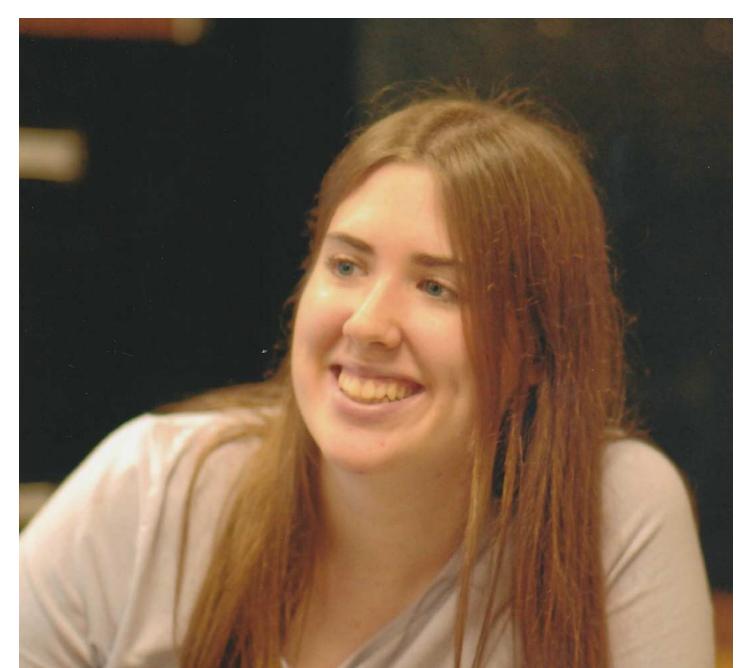
Emily

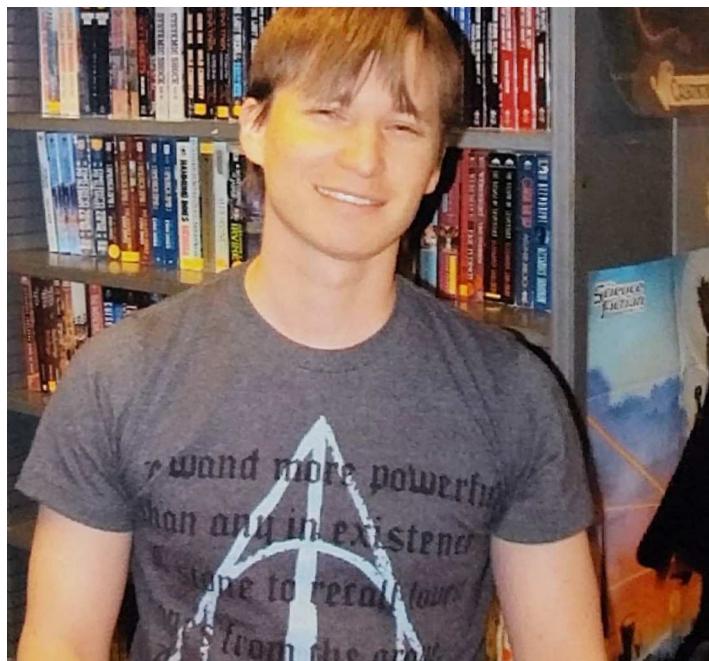
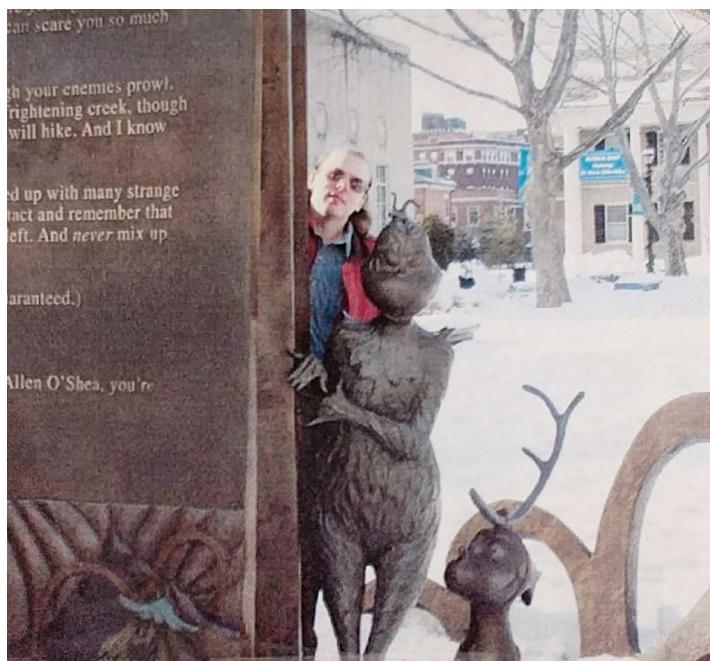


Jake Beal



Carrie Keach



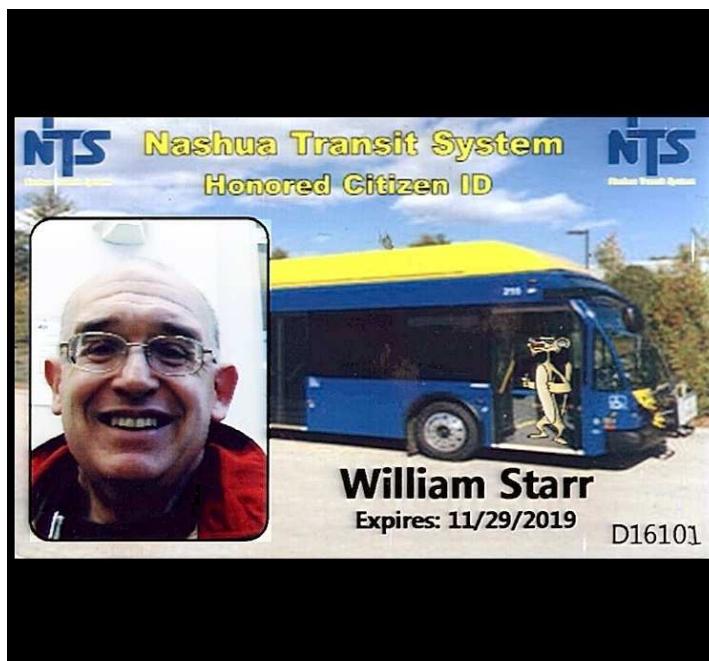


John F. Carr  
**Alohalnescomm, Vox  
Sciurorum**



Peter Enyeart  
**Catacomm**

Ben Lenehert (DUK)  
**Catacomm**



Emerald Ferreira-Yang  
**hBarcomm**

Cathy Douglass  
**Picniccomm**

William D. Starr  
**Panthercomm, Mercator**

Eileen Hu (TA)  
**Panthercomm,**  
**Bluebellcomm**

Christian Ternus









# **Correspondence**

Pre-1984

MIT Science Fiction Society  
Room W20-421  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

March 30, 1978

Mr. Harry Stubbs  
12 Thompson Lane  
Milton, MA 02187

Dear Harry,

Hello again! How are you? As you've probably guessed, it's that time of year again, when throngs of happy science fiction fans trip off to the Great Blue Hills to ingest large quantities of food and sunshine. This year we would like to ask you to select the date of the picnic: May 7 and April 30 seem to be the best bets as far as the MIT school calendar goes, although April 23 is also a possibility. Naturally when you are making your selection we would like you to consider that MITSFS members prefer blue sky, warm temperatures with highs in the mid-70's, gentle breezes and dry ground; if you would choose such a ~~dry~~ day we'd be most grateful. In the event that you'd rather have rain we can hold the picnic in the MIT Student Center, a much poorer place because it has tile instead of nice green grass and walls instead of hills.

We're looking forward to hearing from you soon, and to seeing you at the picnic. Is the sequel to Needle out yet?

Yours,

Gary Goldberg  
Skinner of MITSFS

MIT Science Fiction Society  
Room W20-421  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

15 November, 1979

Dr. Isaac Asimov  
10 West 66th St., 33-A  
New York, NY 10023

Dear Dr. Asimov:

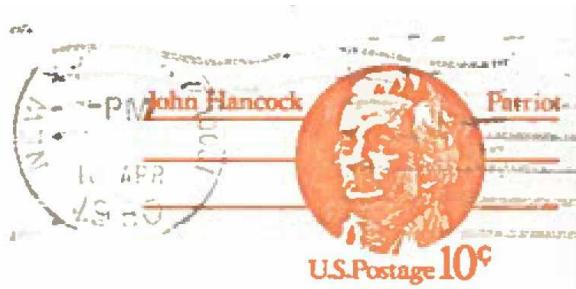
We hope yoore tript to bawston las, t mon thwas  
enjoiable for. you It's a pittee THat yu / were unnable tu  
vizit usswhi le/\*you wur hear:

Wenyou nexxt kumm tu Bostonn we hope yoow willl "S%&\_;;  
dropp bi to c us. inn thee libererarery. ore perhaps you  
could...jojowantbananajojowantbananajojowantbananano NOW!  
perhaps you could send th Twilight Zine (or fannzine) a A  
liddle story &\_ormebbe a Letter Aletterrrr??½ we  
wood like that verrry mUchk ; we r  
eagerlee a weight ing your repli

sinseerly\*

*Carl Hylin*  
\*E. Carl Hylin  
Vice, MISFITS

25. Have you ever considered having a term of apprenticeship along some working lines? They are good workers & easy to teach. However, they do have some considerable ambitions. I don't think they would work well in science fiction for you but they seem to make compensation when



4th  
MIT AF  
E. Carl Hylin  
MIT Science Fiction Society  
Room W20-421  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge  
Massachusetts, 02139

© USPS 1978

10 April 1980

Dear Mr. Hylin,

I suggest 4 May

Isaac Asimov

MIT Science Fiction Society  
Room W20-421  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

February the 20, 1981

Dear Dr. Asimov:

The MIT Science Fiction Society would like to invite you to our annual Roast Beef Rally and PICNIC. Through our somewhat indeterminate prognostications, we have managed to find that it will (has) be (en) held on the 3rd or the 10th of May, this year of 1981. Since rain and inclement weather cloud our predictions, we would like to know which day it will (has) be (en) held on. Even though your attendance is most greatly craved (the Blue Hills just aren't the same without you), we need to know the correct date. Our fortune-teller is most desperate.

Our fortune-teller has also predicted that your daughter will receive her Masters degree at one of the local competing universities. You and your family are certainly welcome to visit the Society on this blessed occasion (or any other). We would like to send your daughter a letter of congratulations and need her address for this kindly deed. We knew that she was slated for great deeds ever since she signed one of our books in her strong, forthright, and somewhat childish handwriting so many years ago.

You should visit the Blue Hills once more and we feel that the traditional and sacred PICNIC is the right time of year. Besides, (according to Hal Clement) it will be the center of culture in the Boston area in a few years. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Ken Meltsner

Ken Meltsner  
The Hon. Scribe of the MIT SFS (Onseck)

Alex Storts

Alex Storts  
Provider of Victuals and Sustenance (Picniccomm)

Harry C. Stubbs  
12 Thompson Lane  
Milton, MA 02187



Janice Eisen  
MIT Science Fiction Society  
Room W20-421  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

12 Thompson Lane

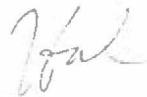
Milton, MA 02187

14 April 1982

Dear Jendy:

Many thanks for the invitation to the MITSYS picnic. I would like to be able to come as usual, since I always have a good time; but I'm GoH at Marcon in Columbus that weekend. My regrets to the crowd.

Sincerely,



MIT Science Fiction Society  
Room W20 421  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

4-11-82

David Asimov  
124 St. Mary's St. #6  
Boston, MA 02215

David,

On behalf of the MIT Science Fiction Society, I am hereby inviting you to attend our annual picnic. Thanks to your father's weather prediction, it will be held this year on Sunday, May 2, in the Blue Hills Reservation.

We'd love to have you there. We've heard all sorts of nice things about you, and they weren't even all from your father. If you want to come to the picnic, you can write or call (MITSFS 225-9144 or Cheryl Wheeler, 225-6245) or whatever to get any details you need.

I hope to see you on May 2.

Sincerely,



Wendy Rowe,  
MITSFS Onsec

MIT Science Fiction Society  
Room W20-421  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

4-11-82

Ben Bova, Fiction Editor  
Omni Magazine  
909 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

On behalf of the MIT Science Fiction Society, I am hereby  
inviting you to our annual picnic. It will be held Sunday, May 2,  
in the Blue Hills Reservation.

We'd love to have you there. All of us are interesting people,  
but we still like to have other interesting people around.

If you want to come and want any more details, write or call  
(MITSFS (617) 225-9144 or Cheryl Wheeler (617) 225-6245). I hope  
to see you there.

Sincerely,

*Wendy Rowe*  
Wendy Rowe,  
MITSFS Onsec

January 23, 1985

Mr. Harry Clement Stubbs  
12 Thompson Lane  
Bilton, Massachusetts 02187

Dear Mr. Stubbs:

The Society has asked me to write you to request that you select the date for our annual Food Rally in the Blue hills.

As you may know, it has been traditional for us to make this request of Isaac Asimov. However, since the ~~great~~ Doctor has been absent from our festivities for so these many years, and since you have proved yourself a true and loyal friend to the ~~WDSFS~~, the Star Chamber has decided to rewrite our tradition. Thus, this missive.

We would like you to select a Sunday at the end of April or beginning of May, i.e. April 24 or May 1 (with May 3 as an option if you in your infinite wisdom should determine that to be the best course of action). Of course, we would like the benefit of your august presence at the aforementioned feast. Also, we hope that you can see into the future accurately enough to predict on which of those Sundays the Weather Ghcd (blessed be his name!) is least likely to release his anger upon us, his children.

This is a heavy burden which we have thrust upon you, and we apologize. In these hard times, though, everyone must contribute his share to the fight against encroaching sanity.

We hope to hear from you soon with an acceptance of our invitation and a favorable date.

Yours most sincerely and humbly,

*Janice Eisen*

Janice Eisen  
Noble Secretary (Onsek)

May 14, 1983

Mr. Harry Clement Stubbs 696-5266  
12 Thompson Lane  
Milton, Massachusetts 02187

Dear Mr. Stubbs:

The Society would like to express its overwhelming gratitude to you for your help in making our annual picnic a great success. Your honored presence and the beautiful weather you arranged for last Sunday are very much appreciated. We certainly hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

Enclosed you will find (It's hard to miss.) your official genuine version of the new MITSFS T-shirt. Wear it in good health.

Again our deepest thanks.

Yours truly,

Andrew Su  
The New Onseck

P.S. We would love to start a new tradition and see you at our picnics in the future.

MIT Science Fiction Society  
Room W20 421  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

4-11-82

David Asimov  
124 St. Mary's St. #6  
Boston, MA 02215

David,

On behalf of the MIT Science Fiction Society, I am hereby inviting you to attend our annual picnic. Thanks to your father's weather prediction, it will be held this year on Sunday, May 2, in the Blue Hills Reservation.

We'd love to have you there. We've heard all sorts of nice things about you, and they weren't even all from your father. If you want to come to the picnic, you can write or call (MITSFS 225-9144 or Cheryl Wheeler, 225-6245) or whatever to get any details you need.

I hope to see you on May 2.

Sincerely,



Wendy Rowe,  
MITSFS Onsec

MIT Science Fiction Society  
Room W20-421  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

3/18/82

Dr. Isaac Asimov  
10 W. 66th St., 33A  
NY, NY 10023

Dear, Most Honored and Amazing Dr. Asimov:

The time has come, once again, for the MIT Science Fiction Society to invite you to our annual picnic. This will be held in the Blue Hills on either Sunday, May 2 or Sunday, May 9, depending on which date you decree will have the stupendous weather befitting the blessed event.

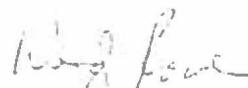
Cheryl, Adina, Judy and I (the all-female Star Chamber) are anxiously awaiting your selection of the proper date in order to know exactly when to anxiously await your esteemed presence there.

But, much as I hate to cast aspersions, I feel duty-bound to remind you about last year's picnic. It rained.

We hope nothing of that sort happens again. Perhaps your predictions can only be guaranteed if you are present at the event?

Of course, if you are at the picnic, I'm sure that even if it rains, the Star Chamber won't take much notice of it.

Sincerely,

  
Wendy Rowe, MITSFS Onsec

P.S. -- Send your daughter.

P.P.S. -- Think you could manage sending a son??

March 6, 1983

12 Thompson Lane  
Milton, MA 02187

Dear Hal,

Oh boy, oh boy oh boy!!

Weaall here at the MITSFS are really excited that you'll be able to make it for the picnic on May 8 at the BlualHplæm. Reservation. General jubilation ensued when I read your letter to everyone in the libmzzy.

Well, we haven't got the wild orgy quite planned yet, but we do believe that Robert Sheckley will bshow. The Skinner has offered you the first throwaat the gavel toss, though personally I think she did it because she'd afraid she can't make a respectable toss.

We're all looking forward to seeing you at the Blue Hills on May 8 for some wild times.

With Joy and Anticipation,

Merryl Gross  
(Onseck)

April 13, 1983

12 Thompson Lane  
Milton, MA 02187

Dear Hal,

Due to a serious flaw in our interpersonal communication lines ("Whaddaya mean, you didn't tell him what time?") ("Gimme a break, you want perfection!") I neglected to tell you what time you should appear at the MITSFS for the picnic. Well, that time is 11 o'clock on May 8 and the place is the address above (unless they tell me something else). If you have any problems with this, be sure and call or write us. You can call me at (617) 225-6349 or the Skinner, Judy Passman at (617) 225-9623 or you can call the library at (617) 225-9144.

This is going to be fun. They promised me, so it must be true. We hope to have the brand new MITSFS T-shirts ready by then. The designs very good and it should come in long and short sleeve. I don't know what's for lunch, but I think I heard Tim Huckleberry, the Lord High Embezzeller, mention that we would have it at MIT and then make the mass pilgrimage to the Blue Hills.

We'll be seeing you at 11 o'clock on May 8.

Yours Most Expectantly,

Merryl Gross  
(Onseck)

May 14, 1983

Mr. Harry Clement Stubbs 696-5266  
12 Thompson Lane  
Milton, Massachusetts 02187

Dear Mr. Stubbs:

The Society would like to express its overwhelming gratitude to you for your help in making our annual picnic a great success. Your honored presence and the beautiful weather you arranged for last Sunday are very much appreciated. We certainly hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

Enclosed you will find (It's hard to miss.) your official genuine version of the new MITSFS T-shirt. Wear it in good health.

Again our deepest thanks.

Yours truly,

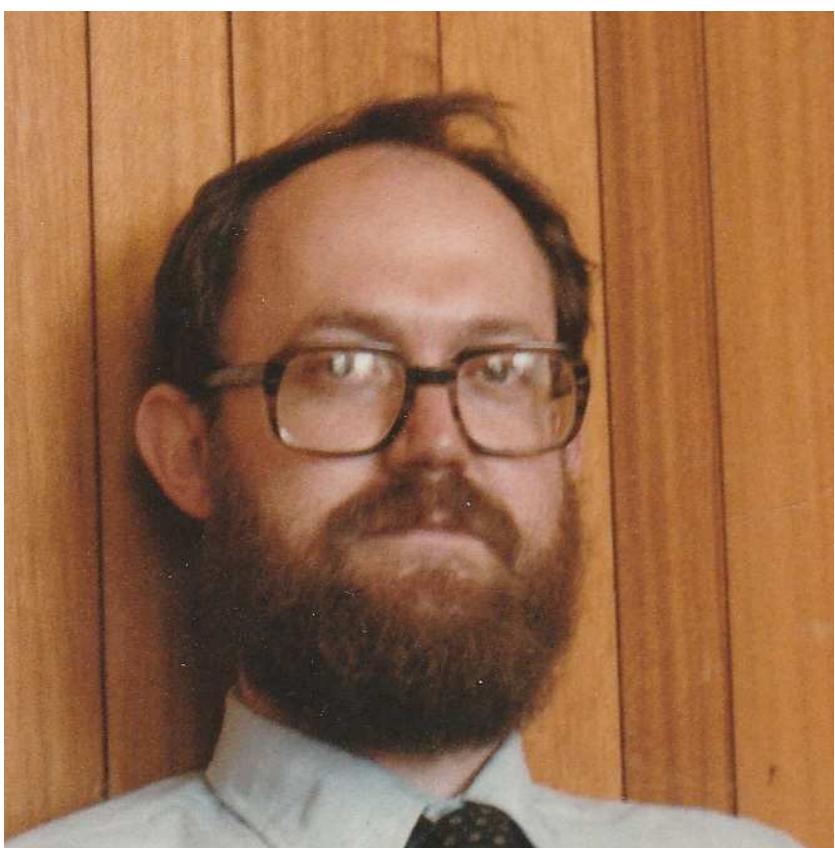
Andrew Su  
The New Onseck

P.S. We would love to start a new tradition and see you at our picnics in the future.



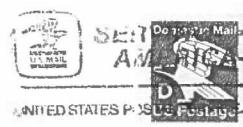
# **Election Meeting & Picnic**

## **1984**



# Election Meeting & Picnic 1985

B. BOVA  
207 SEDGWICK ROAD  
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107



Ms. Janice Eisen  
President, MITSFS  
W20-473  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge MA 02139

**BARBARA and BEN BOVA**

207 SEDGWICK ROAD • WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107 • (203) 521-5915

2 May 1985

Ms. Janice Eisen  
President, MITSFS  
W20-473  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge MA 02139

Dear Ms. President:

Thanks for your gracious invitation to the annual MITSFS picnic. Unfortunately, I will be in Austin on 12 May, working on a book (what else?).

I do appreciate being invited, though, and one of these years I might even stun you all by showing up. In the meantime, is there a published schedule of MITSFS meetings for the year? I get up to Boston fairly often, and perhaps I could drop in sometime.

As ever,





MIT Science Fiction Society  
W20-473  
84 Massachusetts Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02139

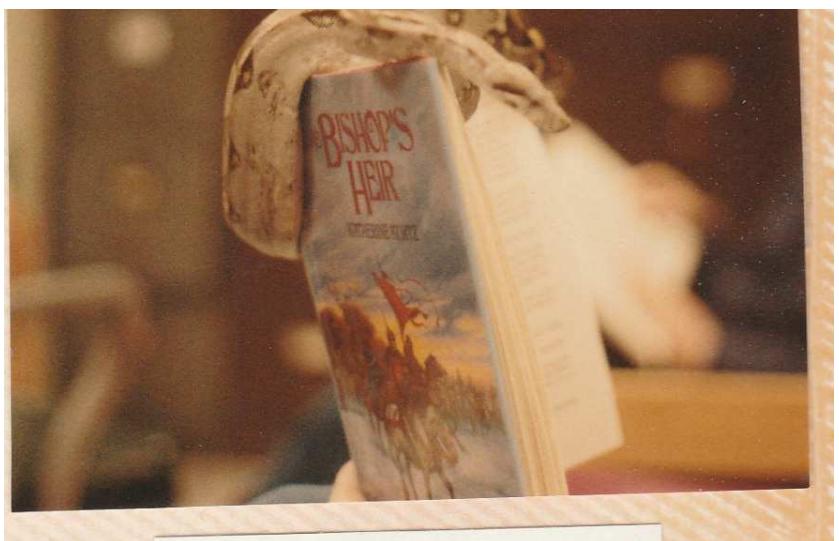
(3 April)

Dear Janice & Herb—  
12 May will be fine with  
with me — and I hope, fine period.  
See you at GBH.

Hal



**Election Meeting & Picnic  
1986**



Hal Clement  
12 Thompson Lane  
Milton, MA 02186



Donna Bell  
MIT Science Fiction Society  
Room W20-421  
84 Massachusetts Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02139

12 Thompson Lane

Milton, MA 02186

28 April 1988

Dear Donna:

The word on the MITSFS picnic has been received and taken properly to heart. I will endeavor to find the appropriate choreography for an anti-rain dance, and to persuade enough people to perform it so there is a reasonable statistical chance that at least one of them has the Talent. I just hope it doesn't involve doing an ordinary rain dance on one's hands.

I expect to be with you; I certainly have no out of town cons scheduled (which may be almost as surprising as having your soothsayer settle on only one picnic day; I had 19 in 1987, and this weekend (Marcon in Columbus) will be the 9th for 88....). The only obvious possible complication is the ETA of our first grandchild on the 9th; but if that happens a day or two early there will still be the evening for proper grandparenting, and I can gloat at the picnic.

Best,



# Election Meeting & Picnic 1988

*(incidental music)*

Where am I?

In the Village.

What do you want?

Information.

Whose side are you on?

That would be telling. We want  
information, Information, INFORMATION!

oops, stop that, it's silly. reboot.

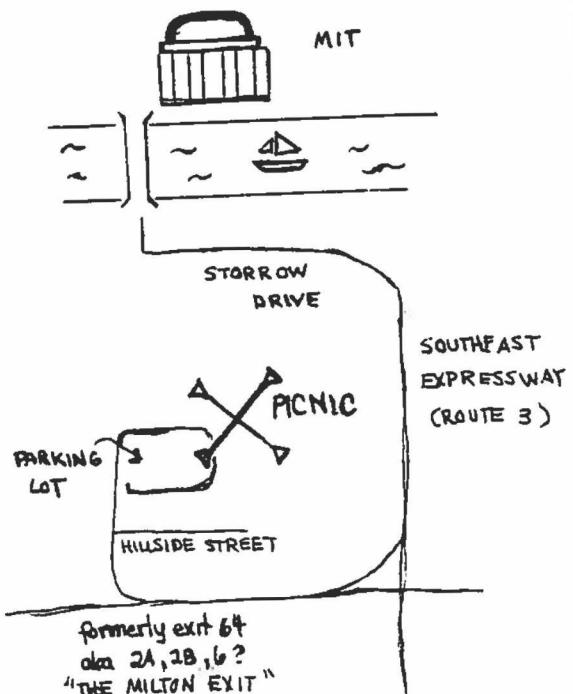
It's spring, flowers bloom in the vale, birds twitter in  
the trees, and slyly loves do gyre and gimble in the bale.  
You, however, have not seen a speck of green beyond those  
frustrating little dots on your Athena Vax station.

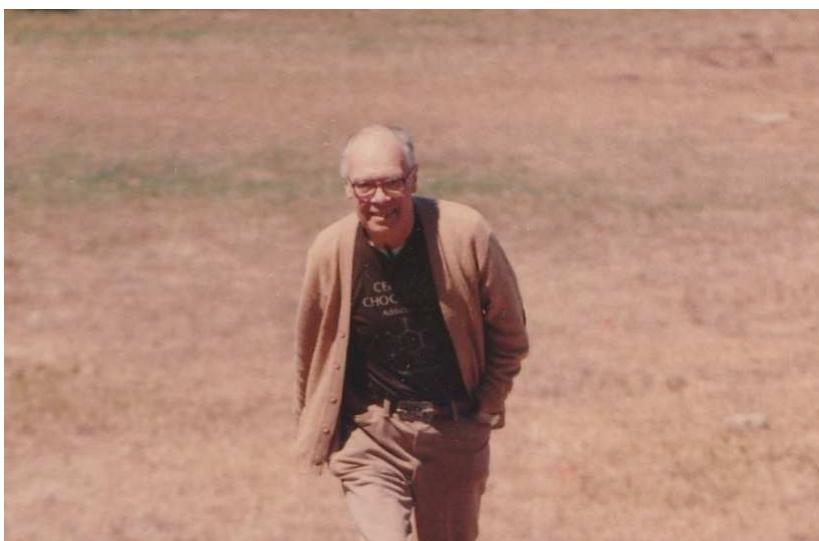
**Take a Break**  
(sheesh, you deserve it.)

Yes, once again it's time for the Annual MITSFS Picnic. On Sunday, May eight, 1988, hordes of ravenous Science Fiction fans will trek out to the Blue Hills Reservation for roast beef and watermelon. This gathering will commence at 10:00 am in the library (Rm 473 MIT Student Center.) In the case of nasty-bad rain, gather anyways because we can always trek elsewhere! And of course, if there are any wonderful, sweet, kind, people-types out there who own a (gasp) CAR (or anything that passes motor vehicle inspection) please, please, please VOLUNTEER (eagerly even) to drive.

And it's FREE (free free). Well, actually it's free for those members who DO NOT owe fines or have overdue books! And guests can be dragged along (no, not kicking and screaming, not this year at least) for \$2.00

The route is as follows: take Sorrow Drive to the Southeast Expressway (Route 3). Go south for 15 to 20 minutes, then turn west onto Rt. 128. Drive on a couple more miles until you reach the former exit 64 (Milton exit - sightings have reported it as exit 2A, 2B, and 68). Well, whatever it is nowadays, get off there and head north. In under one mile, there should be a road off to your right (Hillside Street). Pass that on the way to the parking lot and hopefully you will see lots of silly and/or happy people scampering about.









# Election Meeting & Picnic 1989

The time: 1000 SST - Sunday, May 6, 1989

The place: Blue Hills Reservation

Your mission: To infiltrate a gathering of MIT Science Fiction Society members heading to their annual spring picnic.

The leader of the group, the "Skinner", has apparently called together a meeting of all members who do not owe money or books to the library. The alleged purpose of the meeting is "feasting", "entertainment", and "fun." You are to disguise yourself as an ordinary MIT student, and join the picnic, perhaps even having some "fun" yourself, if you wish. The members will be meeting at the MITSFS library (W20-473) at 1000 SST. At this time precisely, and at this time only, will the members be picked up by "volunteers" who will drive them to the picnic.

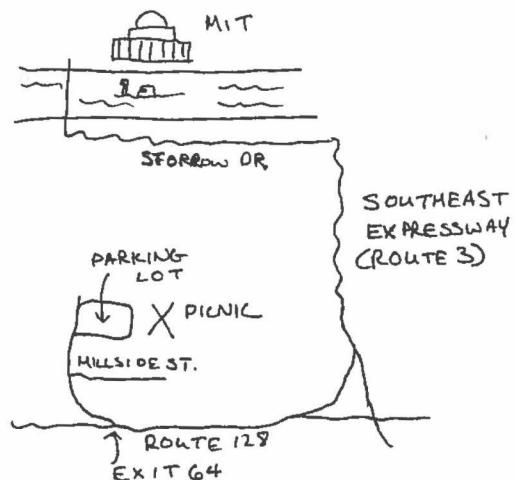
Should you miss this chance to infiltrate the group, all hope is not lost. You can still reach the site of the meeting. Drive South down Storrow Drive for 10 to 15 minutes. At this point, you should be able to turn west onto Rt. 128. Go a few miles down Rt. 128, and then get off the route by taking an exit of Milton (which is 2B). Head north on this exit for a mile until passing Hillside Street on your right. You will then arrive at the parking lot of the reservation, and you can quickly join the picnic from there. The password is "paraquat".

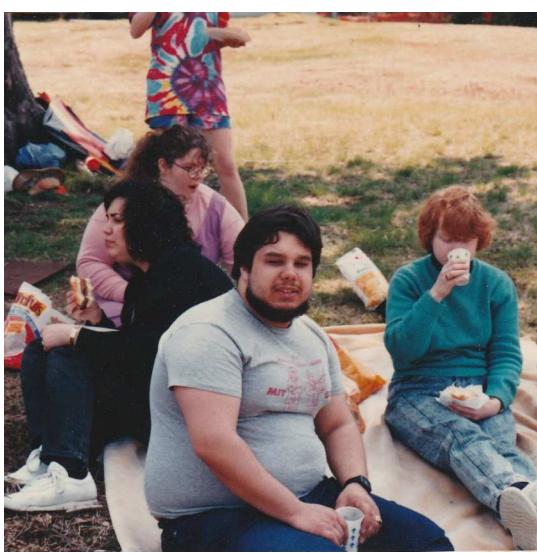
If the weather is bad, the picnic is scheduled to be held at some other yet unnamed location. However, the MITSFS members will probably have that location posted on the door of the library, so do not hesitate to check there.

Another meeting to keep in mind is the MITSFS elections on Friday, May 4, 1700 SST in the Star Chamber. It will be much more difficult to infiltrate, but will give you a good idea of the mentality of these people.

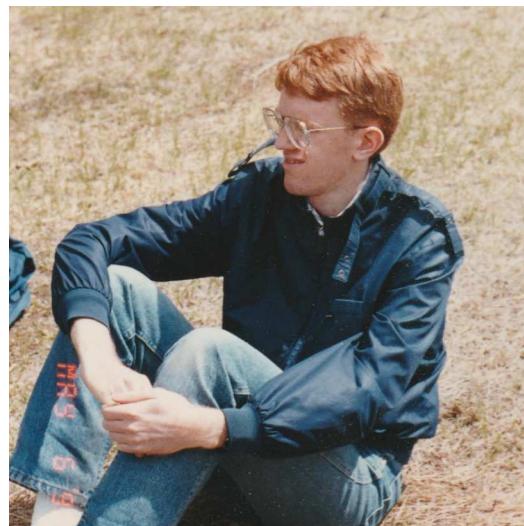
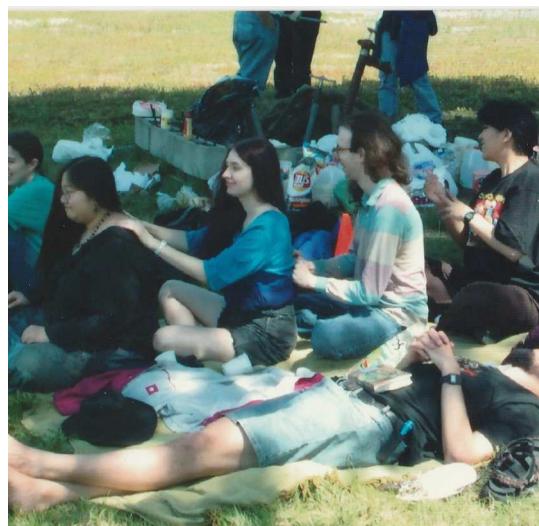
Remember, this may be our only chance to infiltrate this organization. Do not fail us.

This message will self destruct in five seconds.

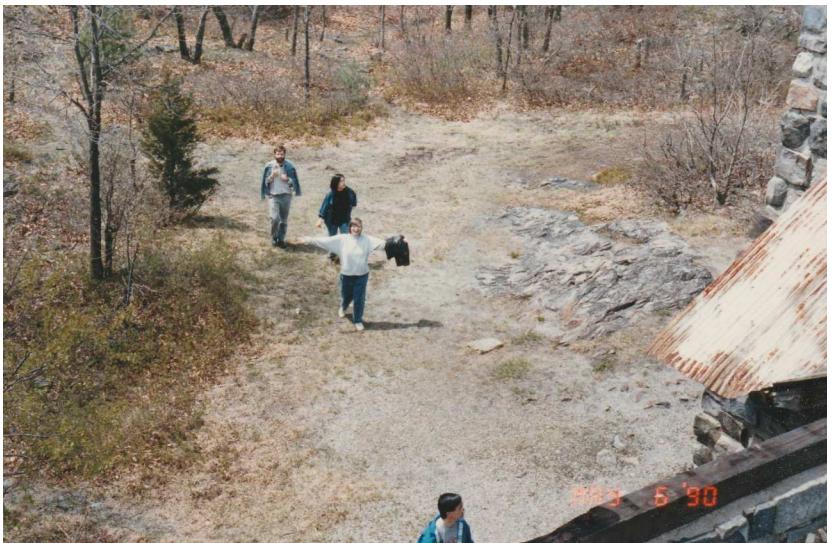




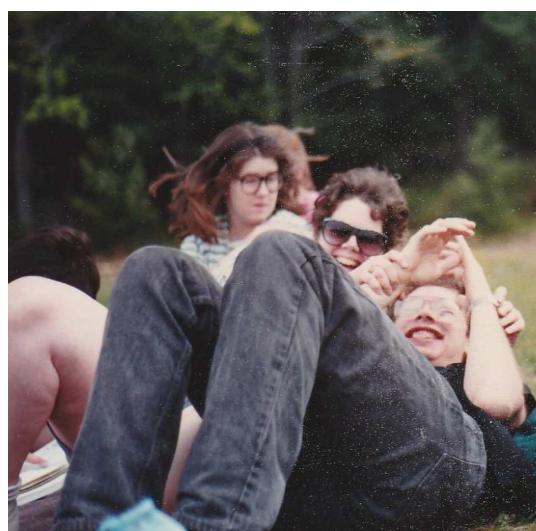
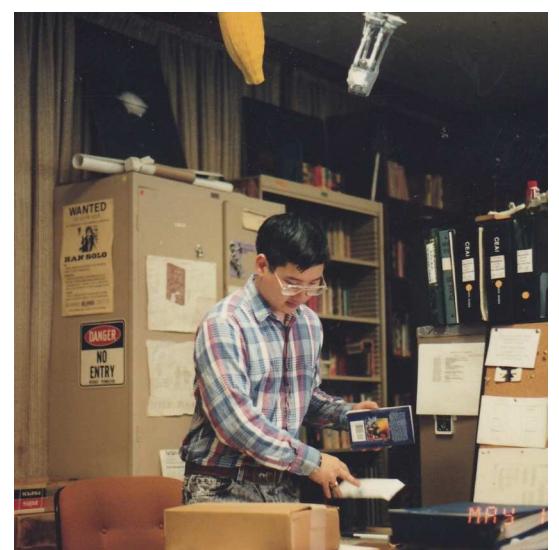
**Election Meeting & Picnic  
1990**







**Election Meeting & Picnic  
1991**



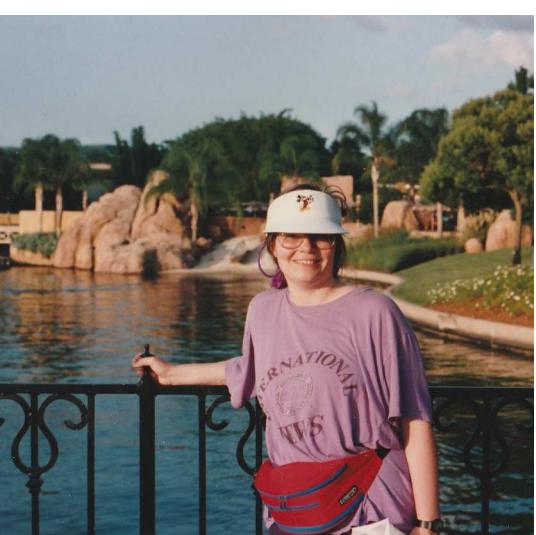
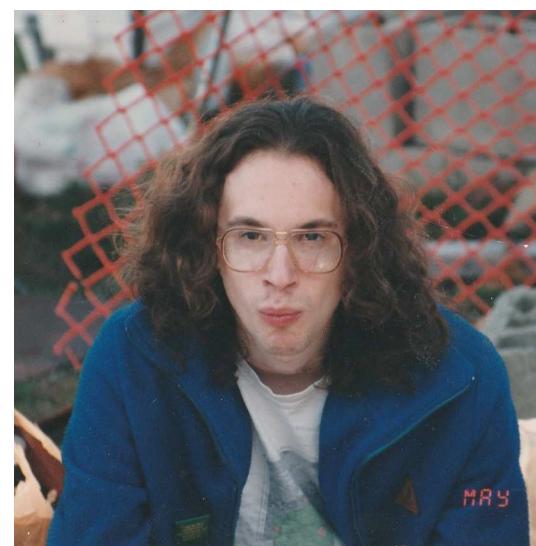




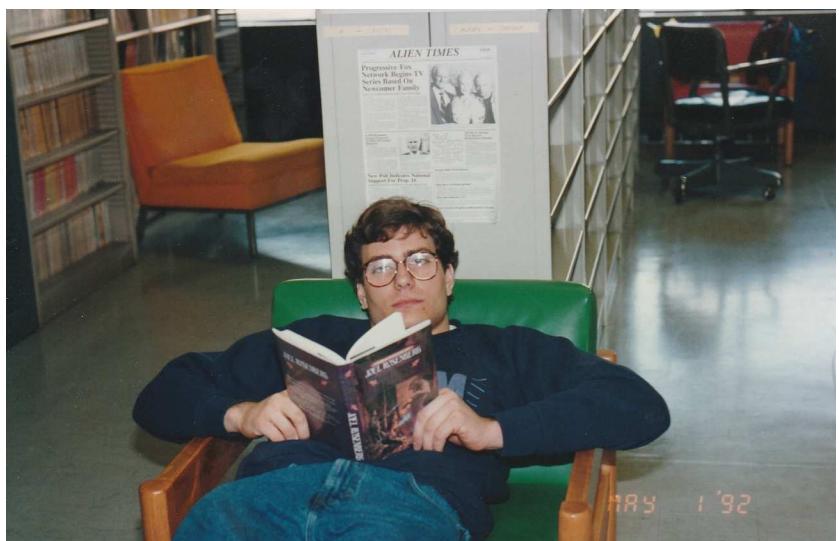




**Election Meeting & Picnic  
1992**



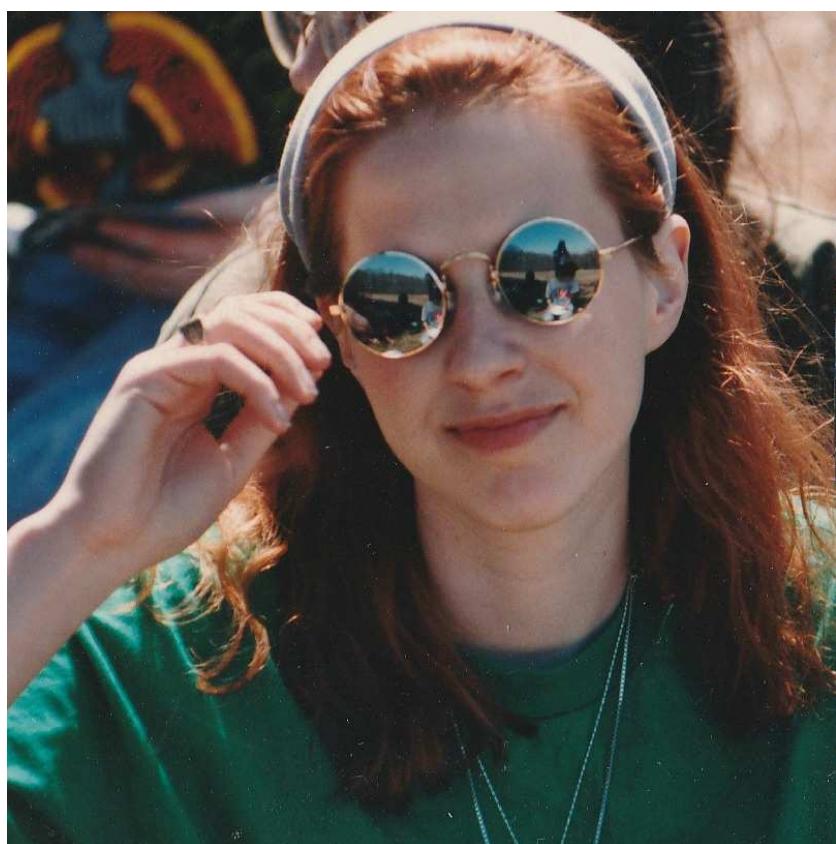








**Photos existing in a time warp 1993 or earlier**



# **Election Meeting & Picnic 1993**

All is not well in Middle Earth...

The minions of Morgoth are loose in the realm again. None know how this has happened but all of note agree that something must be done, and soon. It seems that many beings of power will be gathering to conduct an odd ritual called the MITSFS picnic.

It is said the picnic is to occur on Sunday, May 2nd in the Blue Hills Reservation. Those without their own gas-burning dragons should meet at the Library (W20-473) at 10:00am so that those people with extra transportation power may take them to the site. These beings with cars should sign up at the Library to show that they are willing to be godlike. Powerful beings that may attend are the ones with no fines nor books due. Guest may attend for a small fee. If the Rain Maia Nimbus is not defeated in time for the picnic, the festivities will occur in W20.

At the conference of the wise, the great ones will begin to imbibe humongous amounts of roast beef, bubbly potions, and other ambrosia around 11:30. Strange activities will of course take place. The legends speak: The bashing of Coconuts (A powerful Ballrog) with the Great Gavel Grond, The throwing of Grond for likely diabolical purposes, The scaling of the Blue Hills, The sacrificing of a Virgin Watermelon (a type of elf?) to the Maiar Nimbus. And many other wondrous things, including fireworks - If Gandalf shows up of course.

There are also rumors of an election of MITSFS members to the Star Chamber. The old members of this exalted body will be thrown out, and new, younger, more powerful beings will be promoted to excellence. This meeting is supposed to take place at 1700 SST on Friday, April 20 in the Star Chamber.







April 6, 1993

Mr. Harry Stubbs  
12 Thompson Lane  
Milton, Massachusetts 02187

Dear Mr. Stubbs,

Greetings! It is again nearing the time of year in which the annual MITSFS picnic is held. It is spring, and the fun-loving multitudes of science fiction lovers desire an activity in the Blue Hills in which they can consume a lot of good food and hold odd rituals. We would like for you to attend our feast. The best date for us would be on May 2, but May 9 or April 25 would also be acceptable. Please choose the date that would be best for you so you can come.

If the dreaded Rain of Despair decides to make its presence known, the Picnic will instead take place at the MIT Student Center, where the Rain would not be able to interrupt the gathering.

We hope to see you at the picnic!

Sincerely,

Sherrian Lea  
Skinner of MITSFS







**Election Meeting & Picnic  
1994**

The Star Chamber election will take place in the Star Chamber (5-216) at 6:00 PM on May 6.

---

Date: May 8, 1994  
From: alpha-complex@alpha-complex.edu  
To: Memb-R-SFS@alpha-complex.edu  
Subject: MITSFS Picnic

Greetings Troubleshooters:

It has come to the attention of the wise and powerful Computer at Alpha Complex that you are a member of a secret society called MITSFS. Belonging to a secret society is something only Commie mutant traitors who deserve to be used as reactor shielding do, but the Computer in its infinite mercy has decided to spare your life if you volunteer for a hazardous and probably fatal mission. The mission, if you choose to accept it (and if you don't, you will force the Computer to regrettably terminate you and activate your next clone, so the Computer is assuming you decide to accept) is to spy on the annual meeting of this traitorous and Commie-ridden society. The evil traitors who run MITSFS, knowing that loyal children of the Computer have the greatest difficulty venturing Outdoors, are holding their annual Picnic (a pre-Oops ritual of some kind) in a place called the Blue Hills Reservation.

This Picnic is occurring on May 8, 1994 at 11:30 in the Blue Hills Reservation. All of those Troubleshooters without groundcars, and those who have been assigned cars by R&D and are willing to serve the Computer by taking other Troubleshooters to the Picnic, should show up at the Library at 10:00 AM. Remember, to properly infiltrate the Picnic, you must be a member of MITSFS and not have any outstanding fines. Non-member Troubleshooters will find they need to bribe the faithless anti-Computer traitors of MITSFS a small sum. If it is Raining (a dangerous Outdoors phenomenon), meet in the Library at W20-473.

Despite the fact that this Blue Hills Reservation is obviously beyond your security clearance, the Computer -- long may it protect Alpha Complex -- is sending you there anyway. The tasks you must accomplish without screwing up are:

1) Get Outdoors and to the Blue Hills Reservations [Probability: 23%] To find the Blue Hills Reservation, take Storrow Drive to the Southeast Expressway (Route 3). Then go south for 15-20 minutes until you reach Rt. 128. Turn west onto 128, and a few miles farther down is exit 2B at Milton. Go north here. In less than a mile you will see Hillside Street to the right. A little past is a parking lot for the park. The evil mutant traitor scum of MITSFS will be on a hill there.

2) Eat MITSFS' food. [Probability: 99.999%] The Computer has decreed that you may redeem your trespass into a Blue clearance zone by testing the MITSFS food. Your mission is to discover what "roast beef", "soft drinks", and "junk food" are.

3) Sabotage MITSFS. [Probability: Classified] Sacrifice their Virgin Watermelon. Hurl their Great Gavel as far as possible, and scale the Blue Hills. There are other possibilities -- investigate. Also, check rumours of an "election" in the Star Chamber. It is at 6:00 PM (EST) on Friday May 6 in the Star Chamber (5-216). New traitors will assassinate and replace the old ones.



1994 miscellaneous shenanigans



# **Election Meeting & Picnic 1995**

Skinner has no hair at all,  
hair at all,  
hair at all,  
Skinner has no hair at all,  
It's just a ball of fuzz!

WILL THE NEXT SKINNER HAVE NO HAIR?  
AT ALL?

Just days after elections, on Sunday, the Fourteenth of May, join us at our Annual Picnic, and help ridicule Our New Skinner.

We've discovered that we will desire a new song to celebrate our new Skinner (whose existence you will have assured on Friday the Twelfth, along with the elections for the President, Vice, LHE, and Onseck. Elections happen at Five Thirty O'clock Post Meridian in the Star Chamber (Room 5-126); tour guides leave the library at 24 minutes past the hour.).

We shall convene at the MTISFS Library at Eleven O'clock Ante Meridian, and from there head out to the Blue Hills. Those with cars are encouraged to volunteer to drive (sign up in advance) and meet those of us afflicted with carlessness. If Hal Clement, our honored guest, fails to successfully appease The Great Rain God Nimbus, the picnic will be held in Twenty Chimneys (Student Center).

When the Sun rises to its Peak, we will:

Have unfathomable amounts of cooked cow (and other food, too)!

Observe the Sacrifice of the Virgin Watermelon

(to Nimbus, our Great Rain God)!

Imbibe several lakes full of Coke!

Perform the death-defying gavel toss!

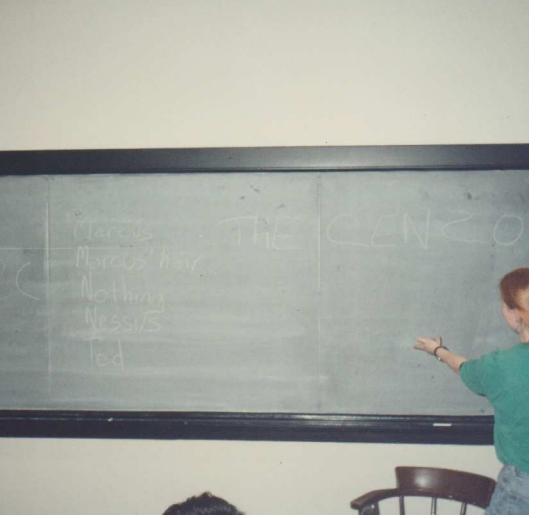
Heroically scale the Great Blue Hill!

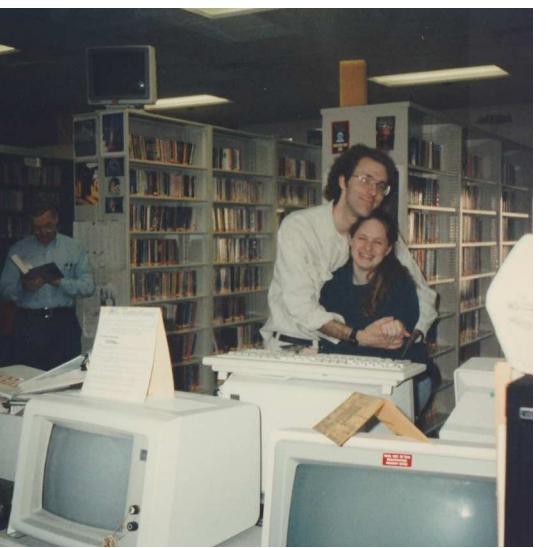
HOW MUCH IS IT???

It's FREE! Except when it isn't.

(Specifically, those owing dues must pay, and guests are \$2.)







# MIT Science Fiction Society

W20-473

84 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

13 March 1995

Mr. Harry Stubbs  
12 Thompson Lane  
Milton, MA 02187

Dear Harry,

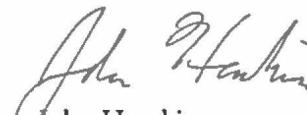
Hello!, and greetings from the MITSFS, those desirous of fine sunshine and wonderful Blue Hills!

Apologies for taking so long in getting around to writing you; I spoke to you briefly at Arisia about picnic planning...

Anyway, as usual we'd like you to pick the date for the Annual Picnic. May the 7th and 14th look good, though the 30th of April could also work.

As this is such an important and momentous occasion, the Society is anxiously awaiting your consideration and decision. We know that we can count on you to select an appropriate day based on the criteria we hold so dear, viz. Weather, Weather, and not-to-forget-the-most-important, Weather.

Yours, respectfully awaiting reply,

  
John Hawkinson  
MITSFS Picnicomm

PS: Perhaps we'll talk @ Lunscon...



# **Election Meeting & Picnic 1996**

It was the dawn of the twelfth of May, two days after the election of the new leaders of MITSFS. The Annual Picnic was a nightmare given food. Its goal: to be held on a sunny day by sacrificing a virgin watermelon to Nimbus the Great Rain God with a really big sword. It's a clearing in the Blue Hills - library away from library for Twinkies, Old Crusties, and others. Members and non-members wrapped in 3 meter long rolling metal, all alone on Route 128. It can be a silly place, but it's our last, best hope for free food\*. This is the story of the current MITSFS Picnic. The year is 1996. The name of the places is the Blue Hills.

\*Free food for members in good standing. Members who owe money must pay up before eating, and non-members must pay \$2.

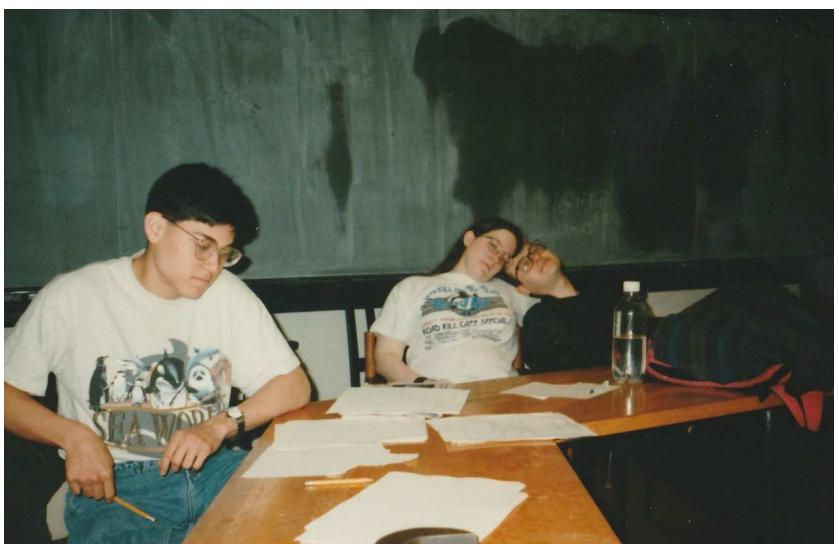
The elections will be held at 5:30 pm on Friday, May 10, 1996 in room 5-216 (the Star Chamber).

The Annual Picnic will be held on Sunday, May 12, 1996. Meet at the library (W20-473) at 10 am if you have no car. If you do have a car, please meet at the library at 10 am too, because we need you to give rides to the tireless out of the goodness of your heart. Please sign up on the car signup sheet on the door of the Library, or send mail to [mitsfs@mit.edu](mailto:mitsfs@mit.edu) saying how many free seats you have.

The events:

- The Sacrifice of the Virgin Watermelon to the Rain god Nimbus
- The Gavel Toss
- The Coconut Smashing
- The Hike up Blue Hill
- The Eating of Lots of Food
- The Throwing of the Frisbee

The picnic will be held in the Blue Hills, rain location Student Center, in Twenty Chimneys. (Ivanova says No Food in the Library. Ivanovo says We Will Be Led From The Library To The Food Without Leaving The Building If It Rains)



# **Election Meeting & Picnic 1997**

The Wheel of Time turns, and Ages come and pass, leaving memories that become legend. Legend fades to myth, and even myth is long forgotten when the Age that gave it birth comes again. In one Age, called the Third Age by some, an Age yet to come, an Age long past, many members of MITSFS gathered together in their great library, on the fourth floor of a building called the Student Center. The gathering was not the beginning. There are neither beginnings nor endings to the turning of the Wheel of Time. But it was A beginning.

South and west the gathering traveled, from the Student Center to the Blue Hills. There was no rain, for Nimbus (hereafter known as The Great Lord of the Rain for safety reasons) had withheld it from the land at the humble request of the Skinner of MITSFS. We meet to sacrifice a virgin watermelon to The Great Lord of the Rain with the Ritual Dagger That Is Not A Ritual Dagger, or the Ritual Dagger That May Not Be Touched. The gathering continues with an orgy of fun, games, and free\* food that would have excited even Graendal, if she were present. Welcome, in the name of The Great Lord of the Rain.

\* Only applies to members in good standing. Members who owe money must pay up before eating, and non-members must pay \$2.

The elections will occur at 5:30 PM on Friday, May 16, 1997, in the Star Chamber (Room 5-216).

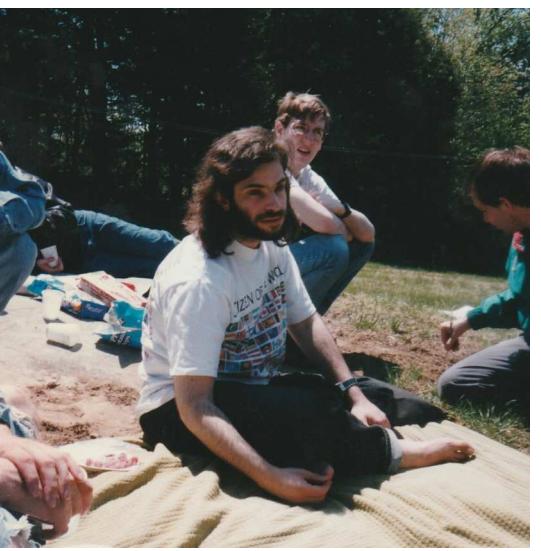
The Annual Picnic will occur on Sunday, May 18, 1997. Meet at the library (W20-473) at 10 AM with a car if you have one. The car signup sheet is on the door of the library.

At the Picnic:

- The Sacrifice Of The Virgin Watermelon To The Great Lord.
- The Gavel Toss.
- The Coconut Smashing.
- The Hike Up Blue Hill.
- The Eating Of Lots Of Food.
- The Throwing Of The Frisbee.

Location:

- No Rain--The Blue Hills.
- Rain--Student Center, Twenty Chimneys.







# **Election Meeting & Picnic 1998**

Coming soon to a theater near you, it's...

PicnicComm XLIX!

MITSFS's long-running series has continued to draw rave reviews:

``Two pseudopods up!'' --- Trebe and Leksis

``A laugh a blurgle!'' --- The Deneb Daily News

``Very exciting; kept me guessing till the last minute.'' --- Dan Quayle

Filmed on location in Massachusetts, Earth, and starring Jay Muchnij, Erin Pantaja, Jennifer Murphy, Jenwa Hsung, and a mystery cast of new officers as themselves, this film will keep you glued to your seat till the last minute.

It opens with people gathering in the notorious Star Chamber (known as 5-216 to some) at 5:30 pm on Friday, May 8, 1998, for arcane rituals known as elections, at which the mystery cast is revealed.

It then cuts to another scene of people gathering, this time at the MITSFS Library (W20-473) at 10 am on Sunday, May 10, from which they drive to the Blue Hills for the picnic taking up most of this movie.

This part of the movie features new versions of the scenes we've come to know and love from this series, including

- \* The Sacrifice of the Virgin Watermelon to the Rain God Nimbus
- \* The Gavel Toss
- \* The Changing of the Skinner
- \* The Hike Up Blue Hill

and of course

- \* The Eating of Lots of Food.

You'll laugh! You'll cry! Non-members will kiss two bucks goodbye!







## Election Meeting & Picnic 1999

At MIT did Picniccomm  
A stately MITSFS feast decree:  
Where Charl's, the muddy river, ran  
Past bookshelves measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and domes were girdled round:  
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree,  
And here were tunnels ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding secret spots of MIT.  
But oh! that academic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!  
A savage place; as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By Mech-Es working on machines that hover!  
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,  
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,  
A mighty fountain momently was forced,  
Amid whose swift half-intermittent burst  
Huge fragments vaulted like the spilling guts  
Of watermelons and smashed coconuts:  
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
It flung up momently the muddy river.  
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion  
Through wood and dale the muddy river ran,  
Then reached the bookshelves measureless to man,  
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:  
And 'mid this tumult twinkies heard from far

Ancestral voices prophesying war!  
The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
Floated midway on the waves;  
Where was heard the mingled measure  
From the fountain and the caves.  
It was a miracle of rare device,  
A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice!  
A damsel with a dulcimer  
in a vision once I saw:  
It was an Abyssinian maid,  
And on her dulcimer she played,  
Singing of the Library.  
Could I revive within me  
Her symphony and song,  
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,  
That with music loud and long,  
I would build that dome in air,  
That sunny dome! Those caves of ice!  
And all who heard should see them there,  
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
Weave a circle round him thrice,  
And close your eyes with holy dread,  
For he on Mountain Dew hath fed,  
And drunk the Coke of Paradise.



# Election Meeting & Picnic 2000

## It's the End of the Term as We Know It (And Picnic Time)

That's great, it starts with elections, gavel and Skinner, a Star Chamber, and the members are not afraid.

No hurricanes, listen to yourself read - Nimbus serves its own needs, Blue Hills serve everyone's needs. Sacrifice a watermelon, grunt, no, coconut baseball start to play with hope for no rain. Frisbee on the grass, representing many games, drivers for hire and a hiking site. May fourteenth and coming in a hurry with fun for the whole day. One by one the frisbee players come in, tired, frisbee dropped.

Look at all that food! Fine, then. Uh huh, coconuts, watermelons, lots of food, guess it'll do. Enjoy yourself, serve yourself. Everyone serves their own needs, listen to yourself be happy in the sunlight and the fun, and the food, right. You fun happy person, playing games, frisbee, bright light, feeling pretty psyched.

It's the end of the term as we know it.  
It's the end of the term as we know it.  
It's the end of the term as we know it and picnic time.

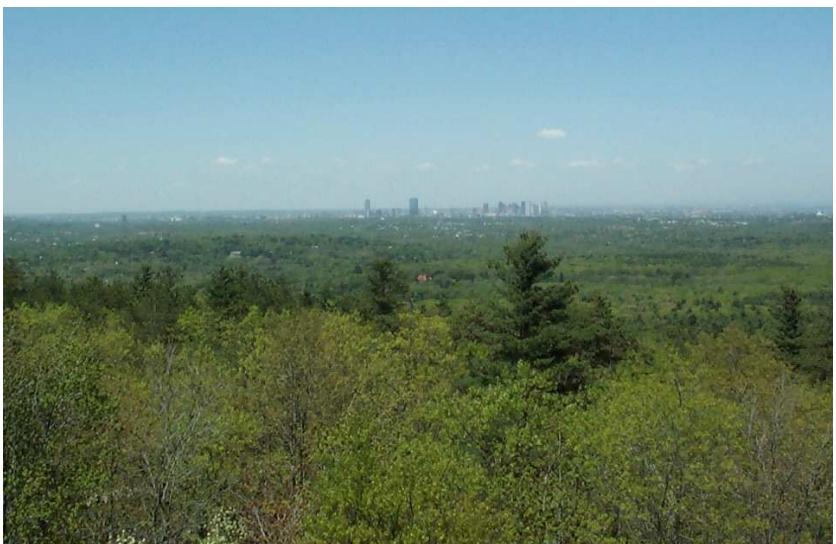
Ten a.m. - meet at the Library. Don't get caught in random delays. Bring a car, bring friends, try to pay your fines before. Locking the Library, driving off, hoping for no rain. The god Nimbus is great. Student Center if he is irate. Sign up to drive, sign up to ride. Pay up fines, get in free. Watch your membership expire, don't pay fines, uh-oh, this means pay two dollars. What you should do is clear. A picnic,  
a picnic, a picnic of fun. Offer me suggestions, offer me ride sign-ups, and e-mail picniccomm.

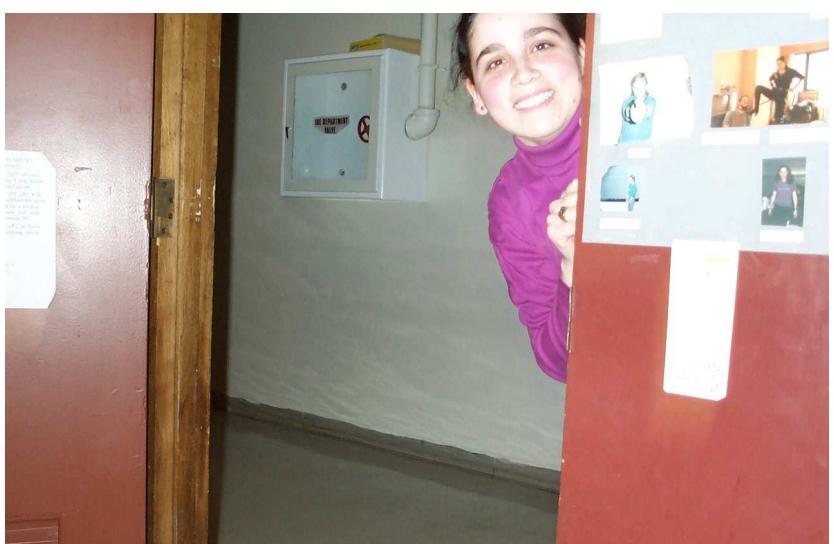
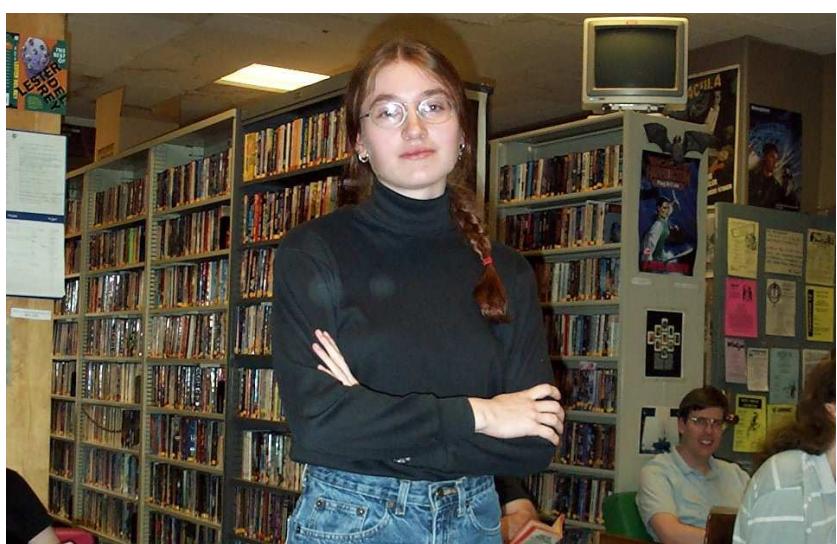
It's the end of the term as we know it.  
It's the end of the term as we know it.  
It's the end of the term as we know it and picnic time.

The other night I dreamt of knives, watermelon sacrifice. Coconuts sit in a line. Natasha Olchanski, Jenwa Hsung, Aaron Ucko and Jade Wang. picnic fun, coconuts, yummy things, boom! You SF-reading, picnic-loving, MIT person, right? Right.

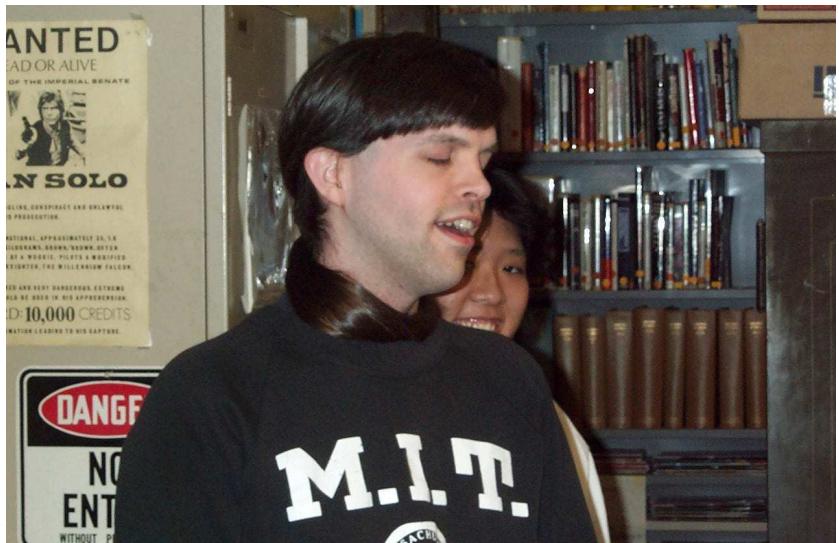
It's the end of the term as we know it.  
It's the end of the term as we know it.  
It's the end of the term as we know it and picnic time... time...







2000 extravagant shenanigans





## **Election Meeting & Picnic 2001**

A fairly short time from now...  
I can just imagine how  
The Blue Hills will be nice.  
And I know I will get some sun  
I'll throw a frisbee and have fun  
And maybe I'll go hiking for a while.  
It will be warm and I won't shiver  
And my friend MITSFS will deliver  
Some good food on the hillside  
And we will all sit there beside.  
Coconut baseball there will be  
And other fun things to do and see  
And it would really be quite nice  
To watch the virgin sacrifice.  
So--

Now that Friday you can elect us  
Where fun and laughter are infectious  
And that is how it has to be.  
When the Vice, she waves around her whip  
And the Onseck's minutes never slip  
It's a fun place for you and me.  
Oh, and if with us you're driving down,  
A roadmap below can be found,  
And dates you should record...  
Those who miss it will be bored.  
Take a break from reading books on quarks  
Good leisure time's in hills and parks  
And we'll come home before it's dark  
The day the Picnic's held.  
But we'll be singing...

Bye bye coconut in the sky,  
Take your Chevy to the picnic and the "baseballs" will fly  
Them Star Chamber types are eating roast beef on rye,  
Singing "Bye bye coconut in the sky,  
Bye bye coconut in the sky."

Bye bye coconut in the sky,  
Take your Chevy to the picnic and the "baseballs" will fly  
Them Star Chamber types are eating roast beef on rye,  
Singing "Bye bye coconut in the sky,  
Bye bye coconut in the sky."







# Election Meeting & Picnic 2002

Two tossings of coconuts under the sky,  
Seven pounds of roast beef on the picnic ground,  
Nine immortal frisbees, doomed to fly,  
One Gavel for the Skinner on block to pound  
In the sunny Blue Hills where the Picnic lies.  
One Bing to rule them all, One Bing to find them,  
One Bing to bring them all and to the MITSFS bind them  
In the sunny Blue Hills where the Picnic lies.

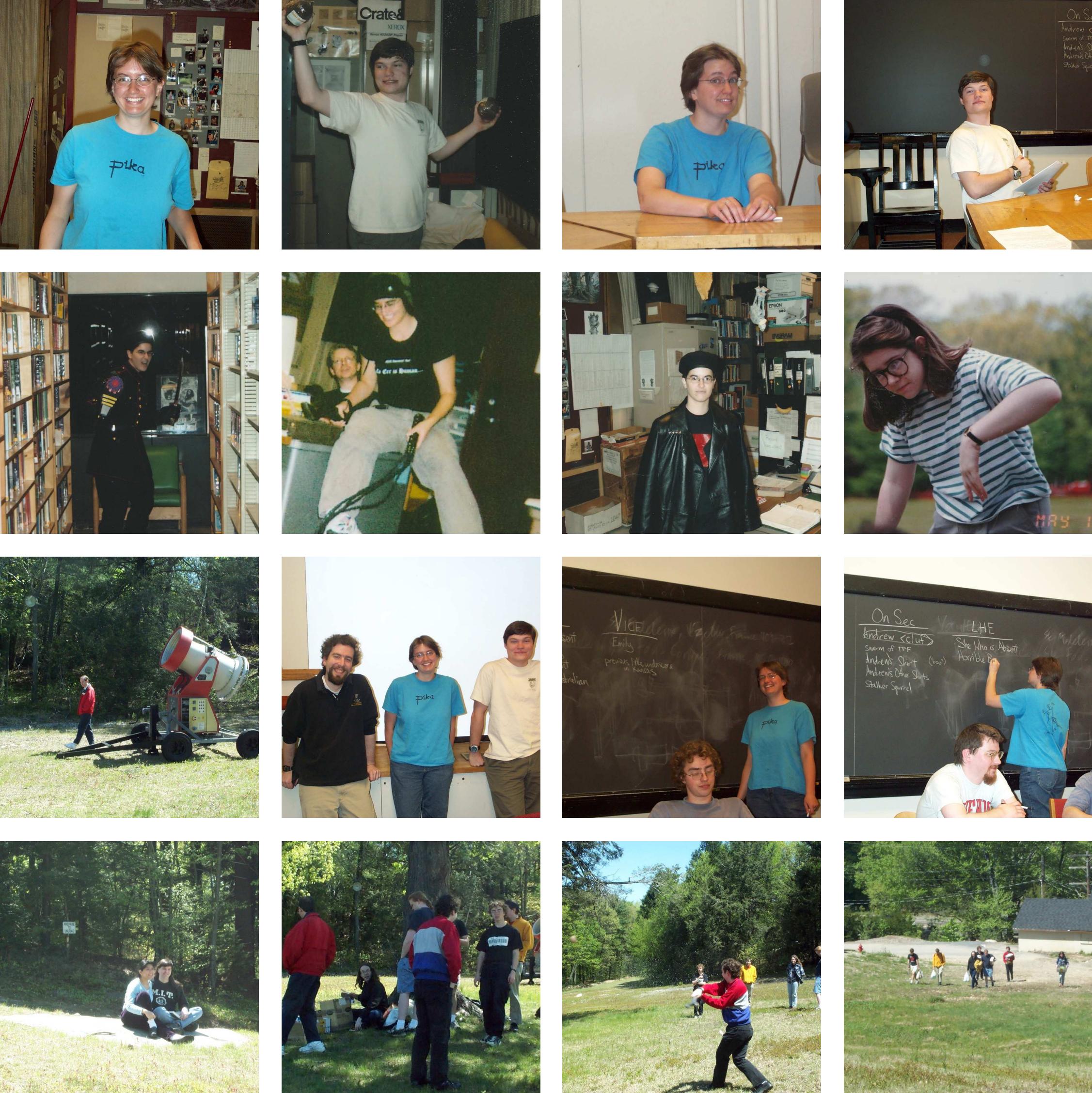
For many months the Great Picnic lay dormant. As books were borrowed, read, and returned it waited, slumbering, in the darkness. But now, as the Third Semester of Middle-Campus draws to a close, the Picnic again awakens. A brave Fellowship shall meet at 10:00 A.M. Saturday, May 11, 2002 in the Last Homely Student Center, at room 473. From there shall they sally forth on an arduous journey to return the Great Picnic to the Blue Hills from whence it came.

There in the Hills shall be held a great feast, along with much smashing of coconuts, tossing of gavels, and throwing of frisbees never to be found again until the world is made anew. In an ancient and unhallowed rite shall be sacrificed a virgin watermelon to the Rain God Nimbus, claimed by some to be a dark and terrifying aspect of the Vala Manwe. Then shall the undaunted Fellowship scale the mighty rolling peaks before returning, tired, for well-earned naps in the sun.

Unless it rains that Saturday, in which case the Fellowship shall still meet at W20-473 at 10:00, and very similar things shall come to pass, but inside the Last Homely Student Center and not in the cold wet nasty world that drips on us, yesss, it doess.

Before the Picnic, on Friday, May 10, shall the Wise gather at 5:30 P.M. in the Star Chamber (5-216), take council concerning who among their number has wisdom enough to rule MITSFS, and there elect the suckers.

Those intending to come to the Picnic are asked to sign up on the door of the Library (or email [picniccomm@mit.edu](mailto:picniccomm@mit.edu)) as much in advance as possible, letting us know how many you are, and whether you bring a vehicle---if so, how many more passengers you can take; if not, whether you'd be willing to drive a rental car.



# Election Meeting & Picnic 2003

Lord of the Wind (to the tune of "Against the Wind") with commentary

It seems like yesterday  
But it was long ago  
[Crow: Or was it?]  
Nimbus was happy he was the king of the winds  
[Servo as Nimbus: Yippee!]  
There in the Blue Hills with the day aglow, no more  
snow, and  
The Coconuts we broke  
The Mountains that we hiked  
Frisbees and gavel flying out of control  
Til there was nothing left to eat & nothing left to do  
[Mike: And then we go home and do nothing there.]

And I remember what we sacrificed  
[Crow: Sacrificial goats!]  
[Mike: There weren't goats.]  
[Crow: Awww...]  
How delicious it was in the end  
I remember how we chopped that watermelon just right  
Wish I'd saved some for now of what I didn't eat then

Lord of the Wind  
Nimbus was the Lord of the Wind  
[Crow: One wind to rule them all!]  
We were young and strong, throwing gavels against the  
wind

And the year rolled slowly past  
And I found myself alone  
Surrounded by problem sets I knew weren't my fiends  
Found myself further and further from my sanity  
[Servo: What sanity? Heh heh]  
And I guess I lost my way

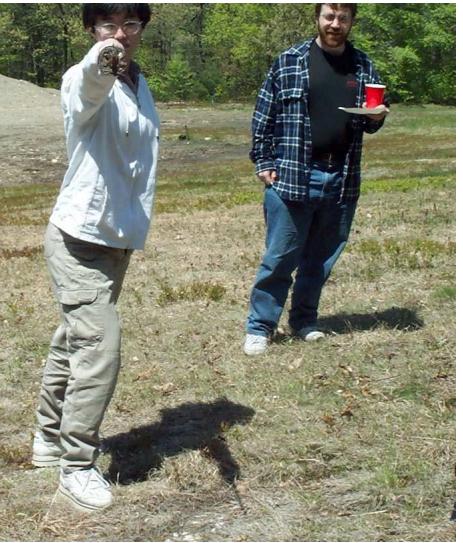
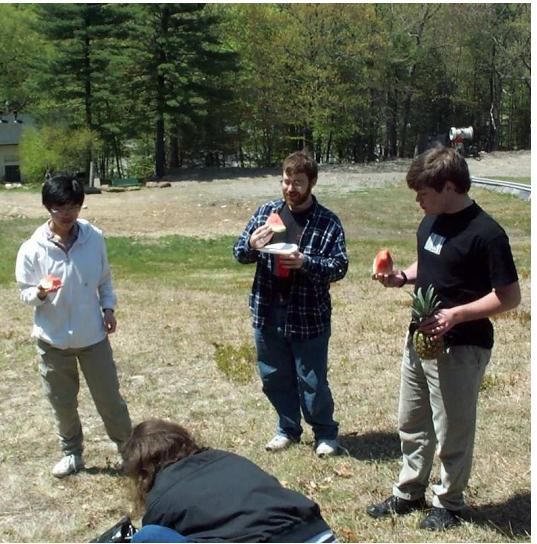
There were oh so many tests  
I was tooling to test and testing to tool  
[Mike: You forgot tooling to tool.]  
Never punting, not reading nor even watching TV  
[Mike: Aagh! The pain!]

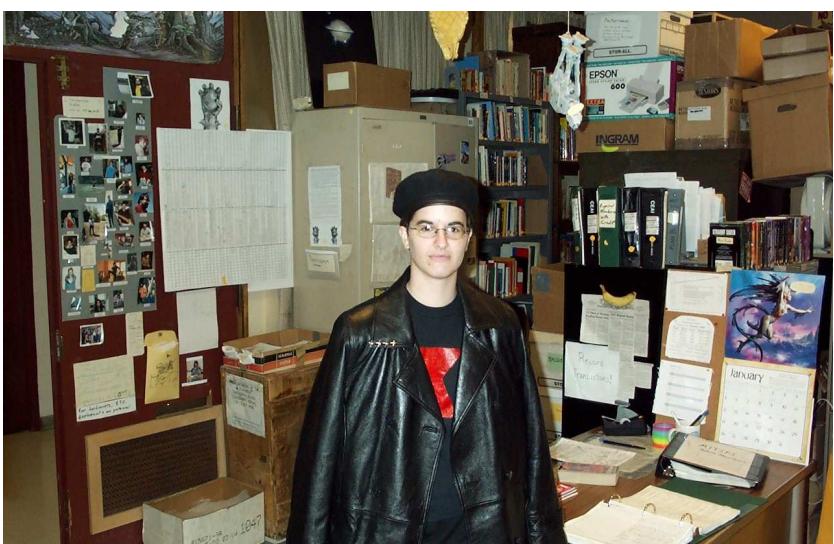
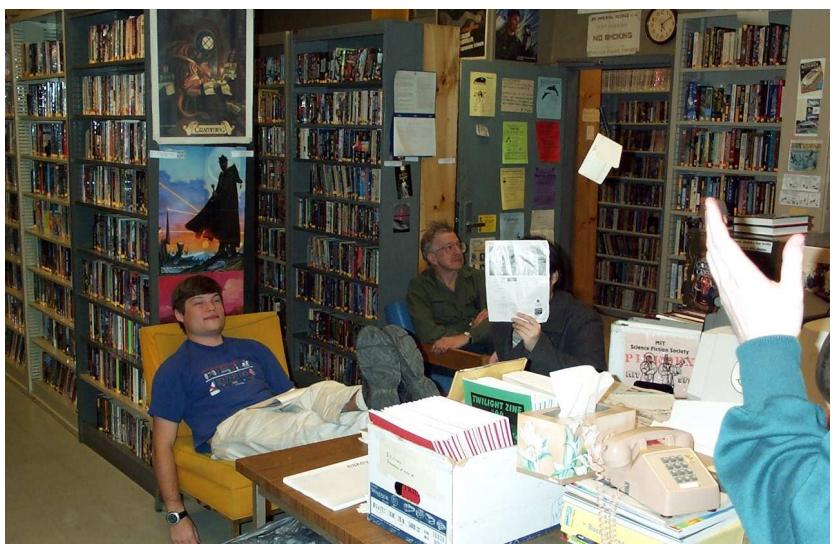
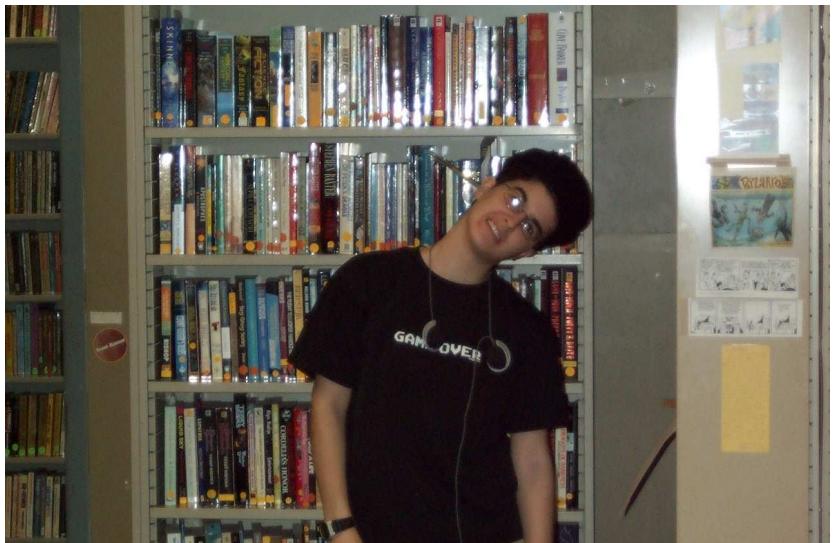
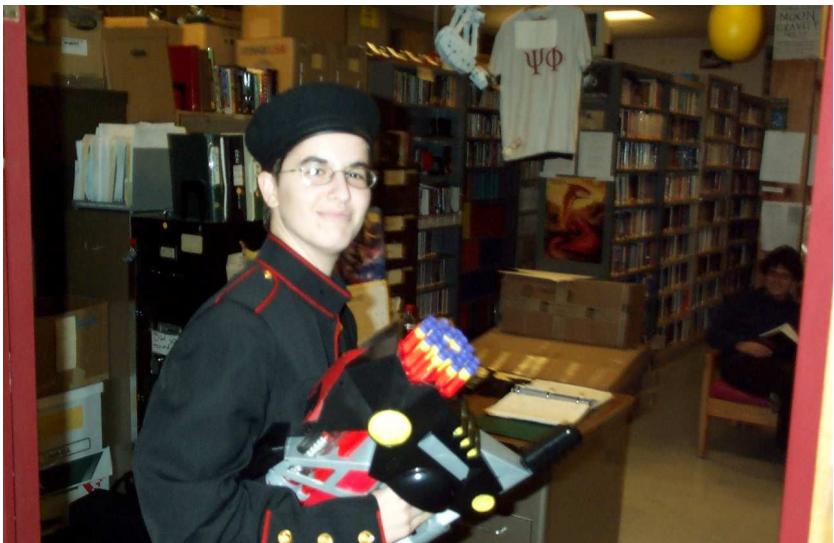
Writing eight lines a minute for months at a time  
Breaking all the abstractions I'd learned  
[Servo: The fractals are attacking me!]  
Began to find myself wondering  
If I'd ever see the sun again  
[Crow: Not in Cambridge...]

Lord of the Wind  
Nimbus was the Lord of the Wind  
We were young and strong, throwing gavels against the  
wind

Well those freshman days are past me now  
I've got so much more to tool about  
Final projects and exams time  
Will I stay in, will I fail out

Lord of the Wind  
Nimbus is still Lord of the Wind  
[Crow: No he isn't!]  
[Servo as Nimbus: I'll smite you!]  
Though we're older now let's throw gavels against the  
wind  
Against the wind...  
[Crow singing: And through the window...]







## **Election Meeting & Picnic 2004**

The Picnicator belongs to an elite order, a hallowed sub-category. He's got esprit up to here. Right now he's preparing for the Event, foretold by a four-gazillion-pound nuclear bonfire slipping into a certain section of the sky. The constellations there spell out "blue hills" in the Mayan alphabet. But that's just a coincidence.

His equipment is pro, no expense spared. The Block is a chunk of titanium alloy, cut from the hull of a Soviet sub which wandered a bit too close to the Bikini Island base that doesn't exist. It's so dense it comes loose from the Earth's gravity with a sucking sound when you lift it, and if you drop it it won't stop until it shoots up out of the ocean off the coast of Australia, your toes still stuck to it.

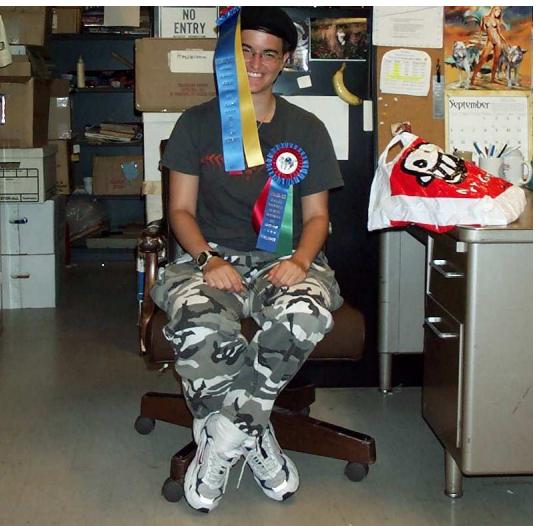
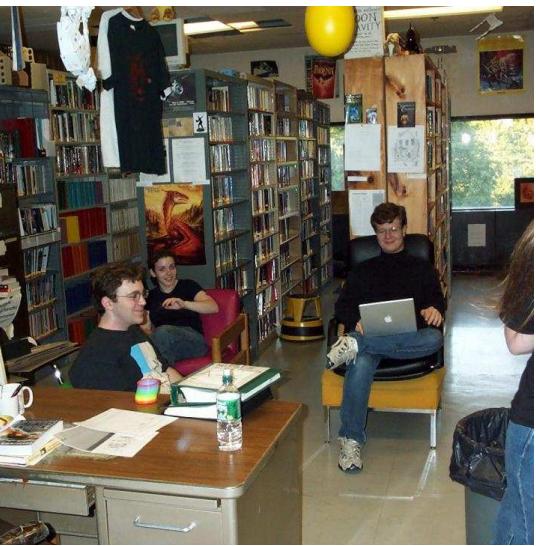
The Gavel is for tightening bolts on the walking tanks the Japanese swear they don't have. "Just a cartoon": yeah, right. It resonates at the exact frequency used by the ultrasound homing missiles of the Myanmar Air Force. But that's just a coincidence.

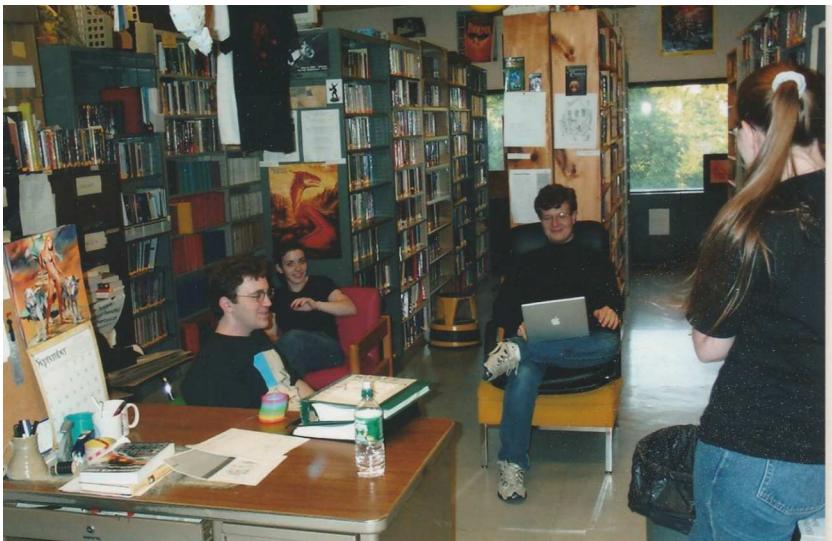
The Sports Gavel has an internal chamber filled with quicksilver, which changes the center of mass in mid-toss to eke out an extra half-meter on every throw. Banned in the Olympics since 2016, and singularly responsible for nine varieties of coconuts on the endangered species list.

The Dagger was forged on an anvil consecrated to Nimbus, and quenched in a bucket of rainwater collected from the petals of ten thousand lotus flowers. It slices through virgin watermelons like a red-hot monofilament through cheesecake. The curvature of the blade is exactly 5.232 times more shallow than the median for bananas grown in 2004. But that's just a coincidence.

Yes, the Picnicator is ready. Because after outsourcing, and offshoring, and inshoring, America still does four things better than anyone else:

- high-speed pizza delivery
- mass emailing
- silly elections
- picnics







**Liz Karagianis, Communications and Donor Relations**  
**April 7, 2004**

"Science fiction has to make sense, but reality doesn't," said Ed Keyes, adding that reading science fiction has blasted open his mind to all that could be possible. "We don't know how many aliens are out there, or what they're like, or if there are any at all, but science fiction teaches you it's plausible. In reality, weird things and bizarre coincidences actually do happen."

Science fiction stars aliens, cyborgs and clones. It's a world of time travel, telepathy and supercities where people don't die. Sometimes pee-pol-tok-like-ro-bots. Sometimes the setting is Mars. Often there is a Lost City. Frequently there's a takeover. But always, said Keyes, president of MIT's 52-year-old Science Fiction Society, there is a message and a rollicking sense of adventure and fun.

MIT has the largest open-shelf science fiction library in the world--50,000 volumes. The Library of Congress actually has more volumes, but it doesn't let you browse the shelves.

MIT has more than 90 percent of all science fiction published in English, including fantasy, high-tech and horror. And there is a huge collection of magazines and several thousand volumes of foreign language books and magazines. The Science Fiction Society also produces the Twilight Zine (as in magazine), which accepts science fiction submissions or science-fiction related stories, art and book reviews.

Students say they read science fiction as an escape, to relieve the stress of student life. They read it to spark new ideas in science. And they read it for sheer fun.

"I love science fiction," said Keyes, who has read 400 novels. "It helped me to develop an imagination."

Keyes graduated from Vanderbilt University with a degree in physics and math. At MIT he's earning a Ph.D. in plasma astrophysics. The son of a physicist and a chemist, he was raised on science.

"My parents were the kinds of people who would pull out the telescope on Saturday night and stargaze, rather than going to a movie," said Keyes, who quickly developed a love of science as a child, playing often with chemistry sets, Legos and his own computer.

At age eight, his interest in science led him to science fiction, and he zoomed through one book after another. Recently, Keyes began writing his own science fantasy novel. "As a physicist, I'm unable to work with magic without definite laws to follow. I hope the result will be a tightly plotted mini-epic exploring the drive for immortality, the relation between science and magic, quantum mechanics, and true love," he said.

Keyes said science fiction has been invaluable to his work as a scientist. "Reading science fiction is a great way to move beyond life as we know it, without actually having to go to Mars," he said.

One of the values of reading this literature is that often stories probe probable futures, Keyes said. As a result, it's made him think deeply about the moral and ethical implications of science.

"A good amount of science fiction is a cautionary tale," said Keyes. "When it comes to artificial intelligence or genetic engineering, the consequences of what we do could be terrible and terrifying. It's made me think about the effects that science can have on others in the long term and made me think more responsibly."

"I don't have a crystal ball, but I know the future is not set. Science fiction is a way to try on various possibilities, and to think through what might happen if you follow a

particular course," Keyes said. "By getting people to think ahead, we can plot a future that we want, rather than one we don't. Some authors have worked out logical, plausible ways that humans could either become gods or become extinct. I realize now we have a choice.

"The more you read, the more you realize you know nearly nothing at all. When your world view is fixed, you're confident that all you know is true. But after reading science fiction, it expands your thinking. Imagining the impossible realigns your view," Keyes said.

*A version of this article appeared in MIT Tech Talk on April 7, 2004.*

# **Election Meeting & Picnic 2005**

Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the western spiral arm of the Galaxy lies a small unregarded planet. Inhabiting this at a distance of roughly 7400 kilometers from its center is an utterly insignificant little blood-and-concrete-themed university whose ape-descended life forms are so amazingly primitive that they still think graphing calculators are a pretty neat idea.

This university has - or rather had - a problem, which was this: most of the people in it were unhappy for pretty much all of the time. Many solutions were suggested for this problem, but most of these were largely concerned with the movements of small stapled stacks of paper, which is odd because on the whole it wasn't the small stapled stacks of paper that were unhappy.

And so the problem remained; lots of the people were hosed, and most of them were sleep-deprived, even the ones with graphing calculators. Many were increasingly of the opinion that they'd all made a big mistake in coming to college in the first place. And some said that even high school had been a bad move, and that no one should ever have left kindergarten.

And then, one Saturday, nearly one year after another innocent junior had her immortal soul imprisoned in a giant wrench and condemned to eternal hosage, one girl sitting on her own in a small cafe in Somerville suddenly realized what it was that had been going wrong all this time, and she finally knew how the university could be made a good and happy place. This time it was right, it would work, and no one would have to be eternally hosed by anything. Sadly, however, before she could get to a computer to tell anyone about it, a terrible, hosing round of exams were scheduled, and the idea was lost forever.

This is not her story.

But it is the story of those terrible, hosing final exams and some of their consequences. It is also the story of a library, a library run by the MIT Science Fiction Society - not an academic library, never funded by academia, and until the terrible catastrophe occurred, never seen or heard of by any faculty.

Nevertheless, a wholly remarkable library.

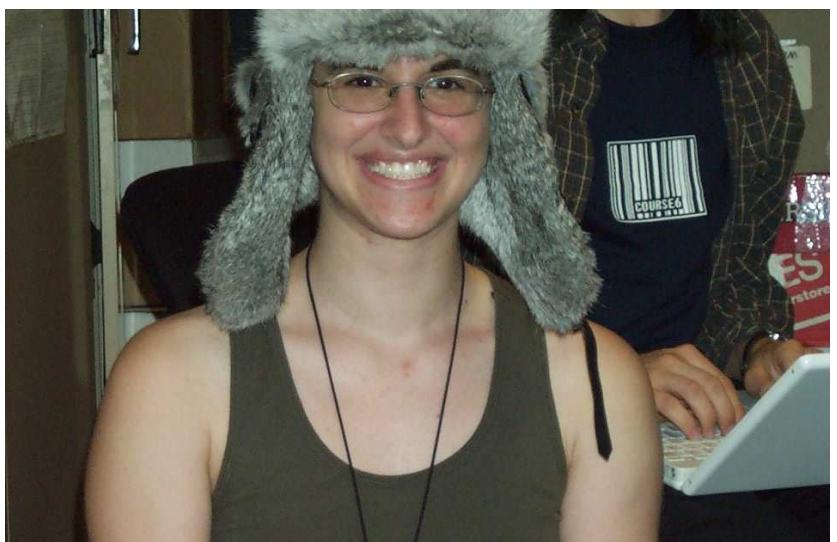
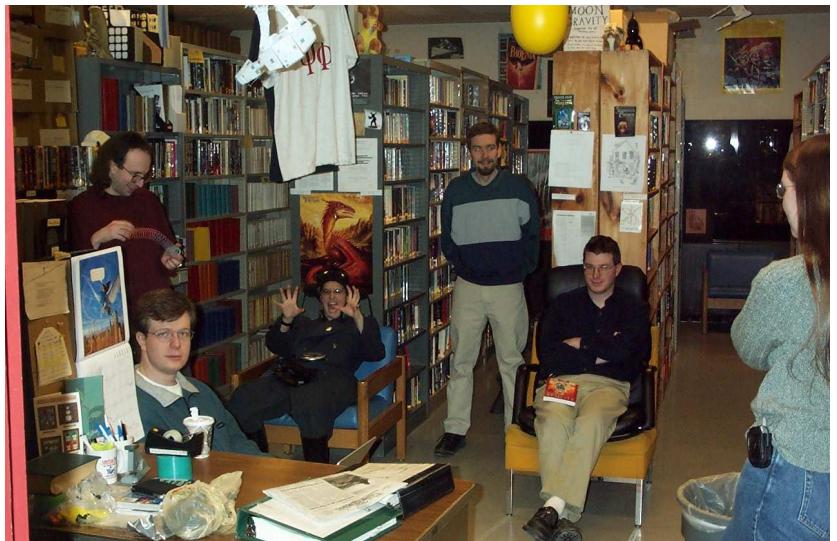
In fact it was probably the most remarkable library ever to have been powered by a 11" by 2.5" by 9.5" block of titanium - of which no faculty had ever heard either. Not only is this library a wholly remarkable student group, it is also a highly successful one - more popular than the Student Information Processing Board, better selling than LSC movies, and more controversial than The Tech. In many of the more relaxed civilizations on the eastern side of the United States, MITSFS has already supplanted the great Library of Congress as the standard repository of all science fiction, for though it has many omissions and contains much that is apocryphal, or at least wildly inaccurate, it scores

over the older, more historical library in two important respects.

First, it is slightly less heavily guarded; and secondly it has the words "We're not fans, we just read the stuff!" inscribed in large friendly letters over its door.

But the story of this terrible, hosing Saturday, the story of its extraordinary consequences, and the story of how these consequences are inextricably intertwined with this remarkable library begins very simply.

It begins with a picnic.





# Election Meeting & Picnic 2006

It is said that a year after his summoning he returned from the Golden Cloud to take up once again the gauntlet of weather, to oppose the mass of toolage and the professors who have ordered it so. His followers had prayed for his return, though their prayers were sin. Prayers should not trouble one who is surrounded by countless science fiction books, no matter the circumstances of his presence. The members of MITSFS prayed, however, that he who likes watermelons should come again among them. The Twilight Zine is said to have written...

He who has hacked Skynet  
who is independent of root,  
whose meetings are endless-  
bingful and free-  
his path is unknowable  
as that of books not found in Inventory  
--- Twilight Zine(85)

His followers called him Cumulonimbusstratus and said he was a god. He preferred to drop the Cumulo- and the -tratus, however, and called himself Nimbus. He never actually claimed to be a god. But then, he never claimed not to be a god. Being a raincloud, he couldn't talk. Therefore, there was a mystery about him.

It was the season of finals....

"Hail, Lord of Rain!" It was the Lord High Embezzler who spoke these words.

His eyes blinked. They did not focus. Nowhere in the Star Chamber was there any movement.

"Hail, Cumulonimbusstratus!" said the Skinner.

The eyes stared ahead, unseeing.

"Hiya, Nimbus," said the Onseck.

The forehead creased slightly, the eyes squinted, fell upon the Onseck, moved on to the others.

"Where...?" he asked, in a whisper.

"The MIT Science Fiction Library," answered the Embezzler.

He shut his eyes and held them tightly closed, wrinkles forming at their corners. A grin of pain made his mouth a bow, his teeth the arrows, clenched.

"Are you truly he whom we have named?" asked the Skinner

He did not answer.

"Are you he who grants MITSFS a Picnic free from rain?"

The mouth slackened.

"Are you he who loved virgin watermelons?"

The eyes flickered. A faint smile came and went across the lips.

"It is he," said the Skinner; then, "Will you smile upon the Picnic?"

He seemed lost in thought, for a while.

"We will sacrifice yet another watermelon," reminded the Onseck.

"Perhaps," Nimbus said, then "Perhaps, I will. In the past, I have helped you, there, at the Blue Hills. You tossed around your Gavel. You hiked up the hill. You threw frisbees. You smashed up coconuts. You ate free food. Lots and lots of free food."

"But...You will have changed," Nimbus added.

"Well, yes, of course. The

ANNUAL ELECTIONS

will take place at 5:30 on

FRIDAY MAY 19TH

Shortly beforehand we meet at the Library; then we travel together to the sacred Star Chamber where new officers will be chosen. "And we thank you," said the Skinner.

"And the Picnic?"

"It will take place on Saturday the 20th of May. Attendees will gather at the Library by 10:00," the LHE stated. "Unless... your lordship, should you vex us with rain, we shall feast within the Student Center instead."

"I shall... consider."

# **Election Meeting & Picnic 2007**

This is a story about fun and where it goes and perhaps more importantly where it comes from and why, although it doesn't pretend to answer all or any of these questions.

It may, however, help to explain why fun can be found in greater concentrations in different places. Because this is also a story about a party, although not in the form-two-groups-and-scream-about-how-the-other-group-is-messing-the-country-up sense unless the MITSFS elections on Friday, May 11 at 5:30 in room 5-232 get totally out of control. They might.

However, it is primarily a story about a library. Here it comes now. Watch closely, the special effects are quite expensive.

A bass note sounds. It is a deep, vibrating chord that hints that the brass section may break in at any moment with a fanfare for the cosmos, because the scene is the blackness of deep space with a few stars glittering like the dandruff on the shoulders of God. (Well, actually the red of a cloudy night over Boston, and when we say few, we mean so few you can count them on two hands.)

Then it comes into view underfoot bigger than the biggest, most unpleasantly-armed starcruiser in the imagination of a three-ring film-maker: a library, over fifty thousand volumes big. It is MITSFS, one of the rare repositories of amusement where things are less as they are and more like people imagine them to be.

As the view point swings around, the whole of the library can be seen by the light of the tiny glowing street lamps. There are shelves and canals, hardcovers, paperbacks, magazines, and even a handful of bananas. The inhabitants of this place, it is obvious, won't have any truck with any circular reasoning. Their library, crammed into two rooms and partially overhanging empty air, is as boxy and square as a refrigerator, though nowhere near so cold.

A library like that, which exists only because the gods enjoy a joke, must be a place where fun can survive. And parties too, of course.

The annual MITSFS Picnic will be on Saturday, May 12, in the Blue Hills if Nimbus favors us with nice weather or in W20 if it rains. In either case, meet at MITSFS at 10:00 am to claim your share of roast beef, witness coconut baseball and the sacrifice of the virgin watermelon, try your hand at gavel-tossing, and go hiking.

Drivers should let us know how many people they can take, passengers should let us know they need seats, and everyone planning to come should tell us so that we know how much food to get and whether to rent an extra vehicle. Send email to [picniccomm@mit.edu](mailto:picniccomm@mit.edu) or sign up on the Library door. Drivers should also tell us their cell numbers in case people get lost.







## **Election Meeting & Picnic 2008**

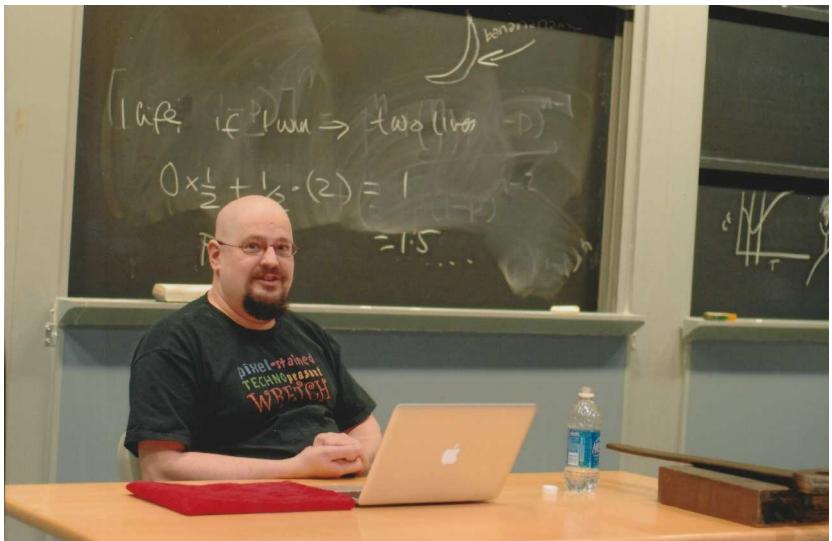
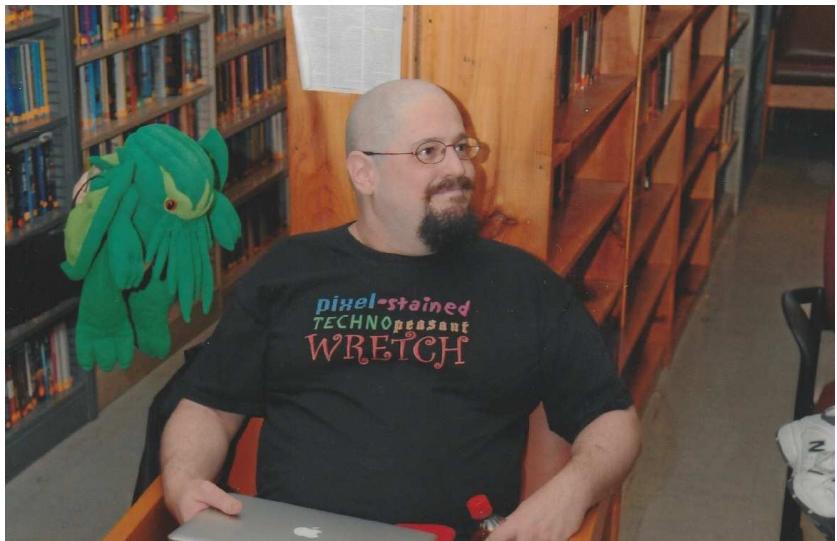
Green sky at night; keyholder's delight.

I'm lurking in the shrubbery behind an industrial unit, armed with a dagger, a banana, and a gigantic wrench. It's humid and drizzling slightly, the kind of penetrating dampness that cuts right through waterproofs and gloves. I've been waiting out here in the bushes for three hours so far, waiting for the last workaholic to turn the lights out and go home so that I can climb in through a rear window. Why the hell did I ever say "yes" to the Skinner? Library-sanctioned burglary is a lot less romantic than it sounds--especially for nothing but fine credit.

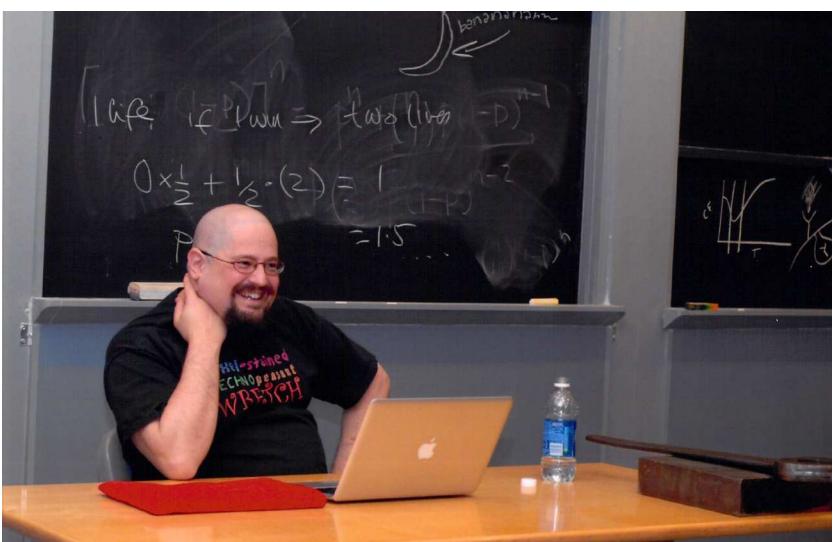
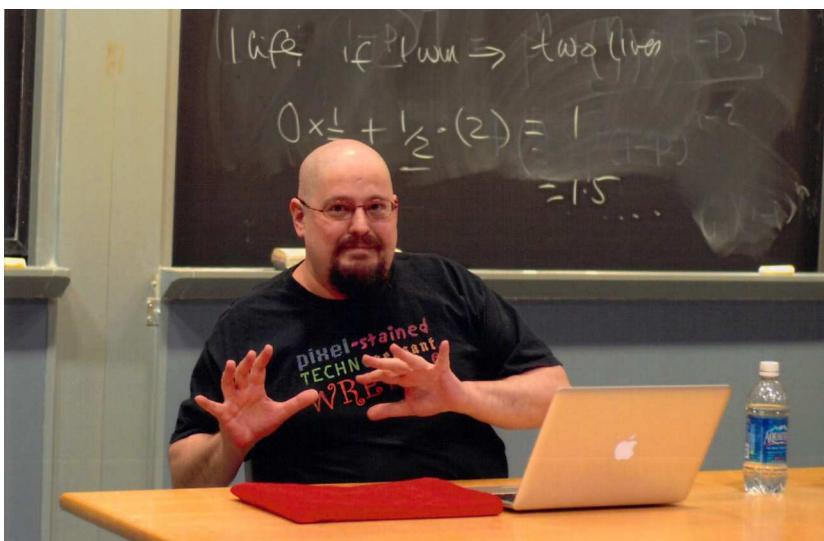
I stamp my feet and blow on my hands. There's no sign of life in the squat concrete-and-glass block in front of me. It's three in the morning and there are still lights burning in the Athena clusters: Don't these people have a bed to go home to?

There's a sudden sensation like a swarm of bees throbbing around my bladder. I swear quietly and hike up my waterproof to get at the pager. It's not backlit, so I have to risk a precious flash of torchlight to read it. The text message says, STDNTS LVNG 5 MINS. I don't ask how they know that, I'm just grateful that there's only five more minutes of standing here among the waterlogged trees, trying not to stamp my feet too loudly, wondering what I'm going to say if the CPs come calling. Five more minutes of hiding round the back of the student center of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology--then I can do the job and go home. Five more minutes spent hiding in the bushes at a college where the white heat of technology keeps the lights burning far into the night, in a place where the nameless horrors don't suck your brains out and throw you to the Vergeltungsflotte--unless you owe outstanding fines, or forget to make blood sacrifice before the altar of Nimbus.

# 2008 Author Visit



**Charlie Stross**





# **Election Meeting & Picnic 2009**

Space... The final frontier...

These are the voyages of the Starship MITSFS.

Its continuing mission:

To explore strange new books...

To seek out new life; new civilizations...

To boldly go where no one has gone before!

Skinner's Log Stardate 61.2Ksec SST

Skinner: Status!!!!

Vice: We are currently headed at 2009km/s at 16 degree trajectory towards a Blue Hill.

Skinner: We are going to crash?!?!?!

Vice: It would seem so.

Skinner: Are we going to die!?

Vice: The odds are 5863.5 to 1 in favor

Skinner: Well, tell the crew to fire up the pink drive

Vice: I can't. The crew is debating a new Skinner in pod 5 section 232

Skinner: They mutinied?

Vice: They decided to turn to a barbaric form of government known as a democracy.

Skinner: This would never have happened in the original series.







# **Election Meeting & Picnic 2010**

MIT Science Fiction Society  
W20?473  
84 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
<http://www.mit.edu/~mitsfs/>  
<http://twitter.com/mitsfs>  
mitsfs@mit.edu

Voco Suur Skinner of the Centenarian Chapter of the Order of the Star Chamber.  
Voco Fraa Vice of the Centenarian Chapter of the Order of Star Chamber.  
Voco Fraa Lord High Embezzler of the Decenarian Chapter of the Order of the Star Chamber.  
Voco Suur Onseck of the Millenarian Chapter of the Order of the Star Chamber.  
Voco ...

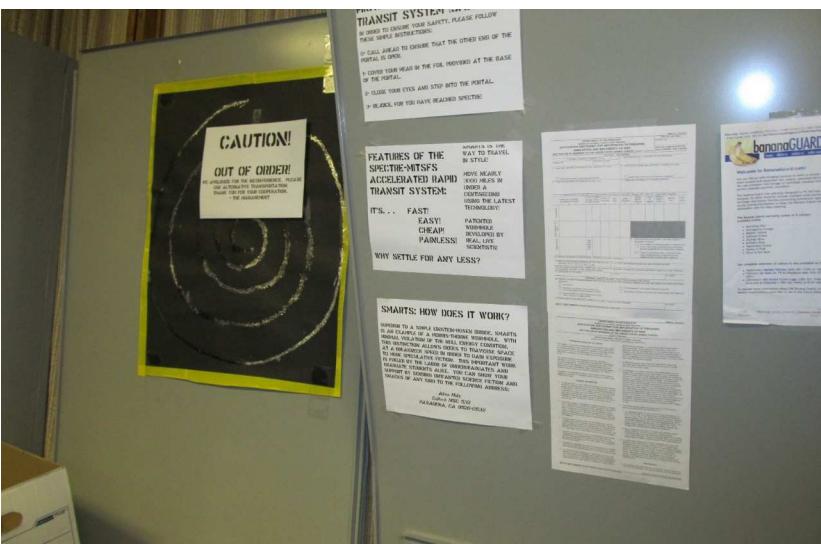
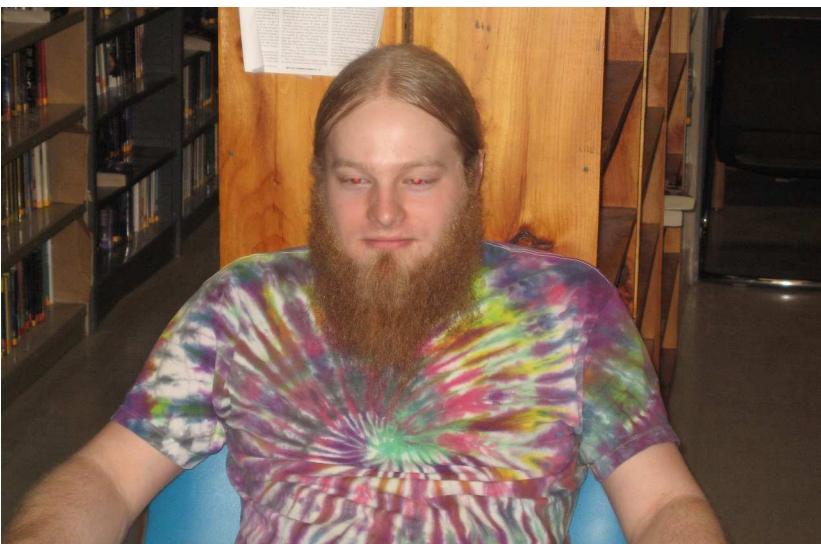
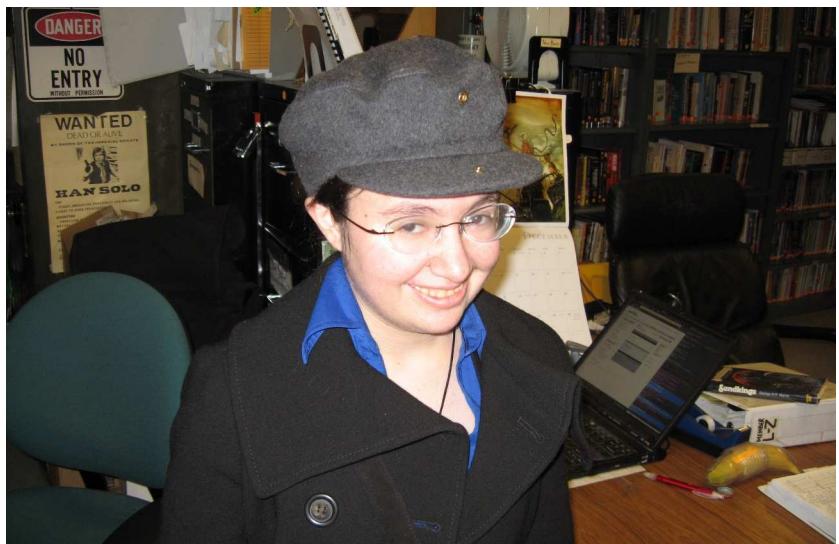
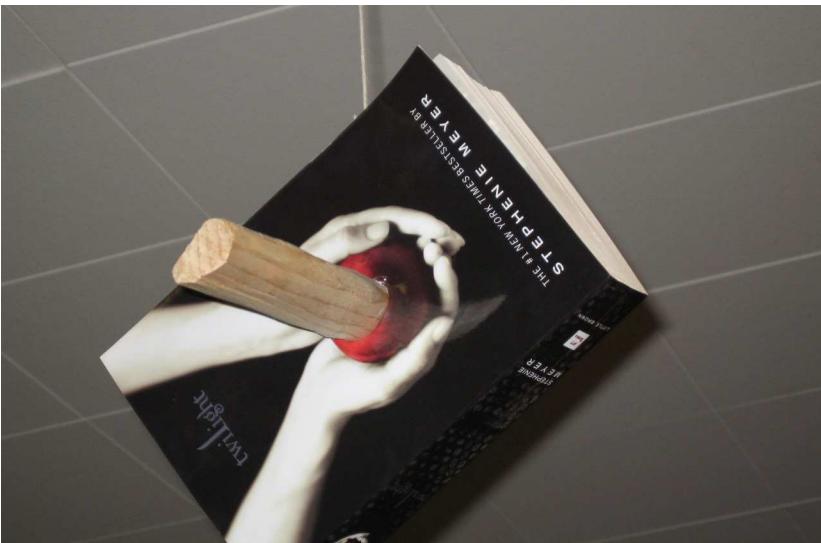
Skinner: For what purpose have we been Evoked?

Vice: This note here says that we have been summoned to Convox. MITSFS elections will be held on Friday, May 7, six-and-a-half hours past Provener in the Star Chamber. The next day, we will meet two hours before Provener at the Concent and, should Nimbus favor us with dry weather...

Onseck: Deolators!

Vice: ...we will make Peregrin to the Blue Hills for the annual Picnic. Or if not, we will meet at the same time and Picnic in Twenty Chimneys.

Lord High Embezzler: Since the Saecular Power has not provided any transportation for us to reach the Blue Hills, we will have to find our own. If anyone from the Extramuros world can aid us in this, they should post information on what transportation they can provide on the Day Gate, or else contact the Ita over the Reticulum at picniccomm. Similarly, those who require transportation should inform us.



2009 time and space traveling shenanigans

## **Election Meeting & Picnic 2011**

My name is Piknic, pronounced nearly the same as "picnic." Names are important as they tell you a great deal about a person. I've had more names than anyone has a right to. The Adem call me Maedre. Which, depending on how it's spoken, can mean The Flame, The Thunder, or The Broken Banana Tree.

"The Flame" is obvious if you've ever seen me. I can not stand water, and am thus at Nimbus' mercy. His abeyance comes at the price of the most succulent of virgin watermelons.

"The Thunder" I attribute to the large amount of noise made by MITSFSians playing frisbee and generally having a good time whenever I'm around.

I've never thought of "The Broken Banana Tree" as very significant. Although in retrospect, I suppose it could be considered at least partially prophetic.

My first mentor called me E'lir because I was clever and I knew it. My first real lover called me Dulator because she liked the sound of it. I have been called Shadicar, Lightfinger, and Six-String. I have been called Piknic the Bloodless, Piknic the Arcane, and Piknic Skinnerkiller. I have earned those names. Bought and paid for them.

But I was brought up as Piknic. My father once told me it meant "to rest."

I have, of course, been called many other things. Most of them uncouth, although very few were unearned.

"I have stolen gavels back from sleeping barrow skinners. I burned down the town of Trebon. I have spent the night with Felurian and left with both my sanity and my life. I was expelled from MIT at a younger age than most people are allowed in. I tread paths by moonlight that others fear to speak of during day. I have talked to Gods, loved women, and written songs that make the minstrels weep."

You may have heard of me.



# Jack Steven's 50th (Keyholder) Anniversary





# **Election Meeting & Picnic 2012**

My Lords and Ladies,  
Prepare  
yourselves for the  
event of the century.  
You are hereby  
invited to the nth  
annual (for large n)  
tournament in honor of His  
Royal Majesty, Our High Lord  
Skinner. Come witness the  
brave knights of our realm pit  
all of the strength and wit they  
possess against one another in  
this most honorable test of courage and skill. Please join  
us in a grand feast in celebration of this most  
momentous of festivities on the 28th day of the month of  
April, at two hours before high noon. We will be  
gathering at the hills in the Duchy of Blue, so come and  
rejoice with us for summer is here and the days are long.  
Celebrate while the world is full of life, and enjoy it  
while you can, because winter is coming.

Yours truly,

g{x \_ÉÜwá Éy c|vÇ|v



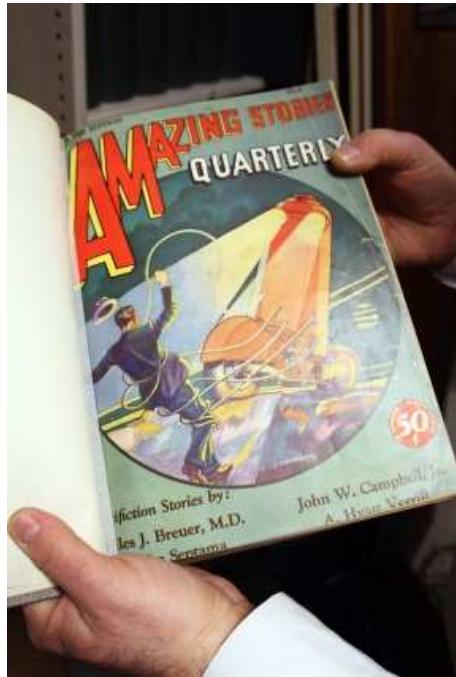
# **Science Fiction Society's massive library is out of this world**

**W20 library boasts extensive collection and colorful history.**

MIT News Article: May 7, 2012

With ironic vigor, MIT graduate student and Society "Onsec" (secretary) D.W. Rowlands acts out a scene from Pel Torro's *Galaxy 666*, a remarkably melodramatic piece of science fiction, at an MIT Science Fiction Society meeting.



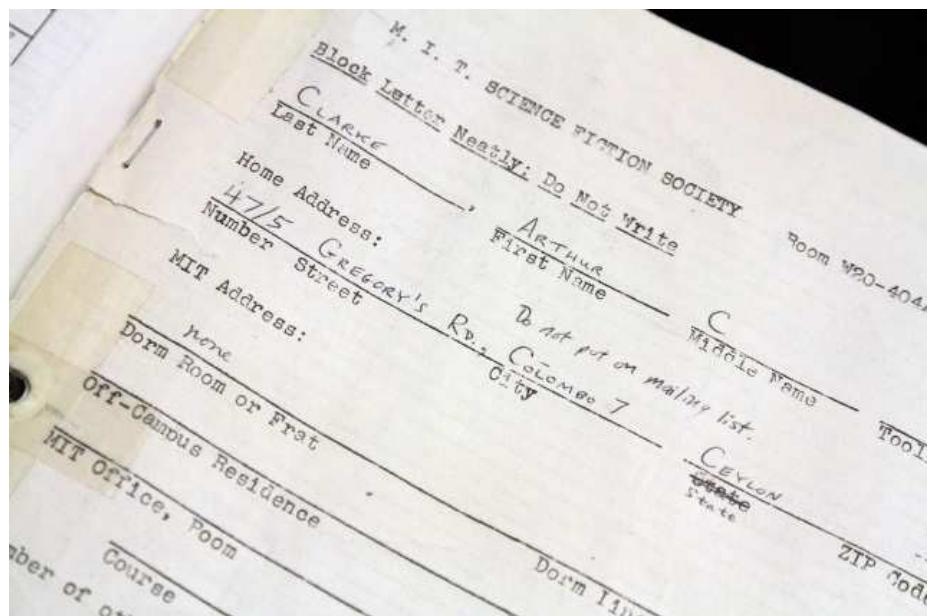


While much of its stacks are filled with novels, the library also features an extensive collection of comic books, graphic novels and vintage publications, such as this sci-fi magazine from the 1920s.

Society members have included science fiction icons such as author Arthur C. Clarke, whose membership card is preserved in the library. Other renowned authors who have had Society affiliations include Isaac Asimov and former Vatican Astronomer Guy Consolmagno '74.



Society alumna Jennifer Chung '02 returns to campus to read to dozens of fans from her novel *Terroraki*, which she penned in under 72 hours to win the 2011 International 3-Day Novel Contest.



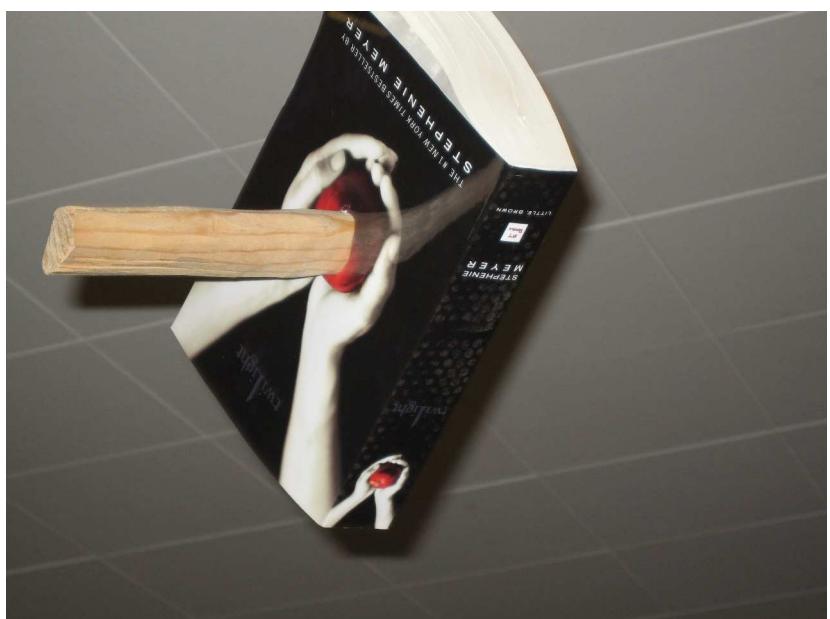
Standing in for the Society 'skinner' (president), pseudo-Skinner Lee Fuchs calls to order a Society meeting using the large iron wrench that serves as the group's gavel. While they rarely impact actual policy, the quirky meetings serve as energetic gatherings for some of the most dedicated members.



With more than 90 percent of all English-language science fiction ever published, the Society finds creative ways to squeeze an enormous number of volumes into a modest space.



One Society member insisted that driving a stake through the heart of Stephanie Meyer's best-selling *Twilight* and hanging it from the ceiling is not an editorial comment about the book, but internal opinion on the novel still varies.



## **Nick Holden | Student Life**

**May 7, 2012**

Nearly 200 MIT students, alumni and local residents form MIT's Science Fiction Society, which curates an enormous library containing more than 90 percent of all English language science fiction ever published. The library's impressive stacks make it one of the top three largest publicly available collections of science fiction in the world.

A dedicated subsection of the Society meets weekly to discuss library affairs, as they and their predecessors have since the Society's founding in 1949. In a typical meeting, a student will call members to order with the piercing clang of a three-foot wrench on the end of a desk. The meeting will likely include a medley of unusual philosophical discussions, whimsical sidebars, and maybe even a dramatic reading of poorly written literature.

"The tone at our meetings is largely humorous," says D.W. Rowlands, an MIT graduate student and veteran member of the Science Fiction Society. "There's generally not much 'real business.'"

Despite the lack of actionable agenda items at meetings, the group does vote on motions. In November, in honor of the Thanksgiving holiday, the Society passed a motion to develop a vegan turkey made of bananas, although they shot down a measure that sought to develop a banana-colored turkey.

Each member votes four times — once with each limb — on every motion. This allows a member, for example, to support a measure with his left arm and right leg, while dissenting with his right arm and abstaining with his left leg.

Rowlands serves as the Society's "onseck," short for

honorable secretary. Like many elements of the Science Fiction Society, officers' titles are a nod to an obscure piece of science fiction literature or a long-forgotten inside joke.

"Sometimes we carry on traditions, but we have no idea where they originated," says Jade Wang, an alumna of the Science Fiction Society who graduated from MIT with an SB and an MEng in 2002 and a PhD in 2008, all in electrical engineering.

About 20 members of the Science Fiction Society are designated as "keyholders." They serve a number of important roles, most importantly as volunteer librarians. Checking out literature, opening and closing the library, and ensuring that books are in good condition are all responsibilities of these dedicated Society members.

With more than 40 years of experience, Jack Stevens '76 is the longest serving active keyholder. He determines the library's weekly schedule, which he bases on keyholder availability and posts to the Society's website, during his regular Wednesday night shifts. For a period, Stevens also managed the Science Fiction Society's amateur science fiction magazine, the *Twilight Zine*.

"Science fiction has had an 80-year tradition of amateur publication," Stevens says. "It's another fun thing to do. It's a chance to be involved with science fiction in a different way."

Some Science Fiction Society members have gone on to become widely published authors. Society alumna Jennifer Chung '02 entered the 2011 International 3-Day Novel Contest. In just 72 hours, Chung wrote a science fiction novel about family and chicken teriyaki, a food that is both ubiquitous in her hometown of Seattle and forbidden by her own vegetarian diet. Chung's novel, *Terroryaki*, toppled the other 547 contest entrants and is now available at bookstores and libraries around the world, including the Science Fiction Library at MIT.

On Nov. 18, Chung returned to campus to read selections from her novel to dozens of captivated fans. She signed copies of her book and fielded a range of questions on her work.

The Science Fiction Society has a number of connections to other science fiction authors as well. Society alum Guy Consolmagno '74 has penned a significant body of science and religious literature as an astronomer for the Vatican Observatory. Before his death, prolific science fiction author Isaac Asimov attended the Society's annual picnics.

With its focus directed overwhelmingly toward preserving the MIT Science Fiction Library, the Society serves a unique niche for science fiction readers. The group meets every Friday and organizes a weekly movie series, yet members of the group distance themselves from the title of "science fiction fan."

The New England Science Fiction Association (NESFA) is a 1970s creation of former MIT Science Fiction Society members who decided to enter the world of "fandom." NESFA hosts a massive Boston-area science fiction convention, Boskone, annually. Although it maintains some ties with NESFA, the MIT Science Fiction Society's only participation in Boskone is through selling its surplus books.

"Our primary mission is to be a library, not a discussion group," Rowlands says. He says that the group refrains from participating in "fannish" activities. Instead, the Society covets its motto: "We're not fans, we just read the stuff."

The Science Fiction Society's dedication to its role as a library curator is steadfast. In operation for more than 60 years, the library stands as the oldest collegiate science fiction collection in the country, and its role has changed little since its beginnings.

"It's been a constant. It's kind of neat that way," Stevens says. "Here is a niche bit of literature that has inspired a whole lot of people at MIT and elsewhere. The Science Fiction Society is all for fun and enjoyment and keeping one's sense of wonderment, because that's what science fiction is all about."

Photo Credits: Tom Gearty, Stephanie Keeler

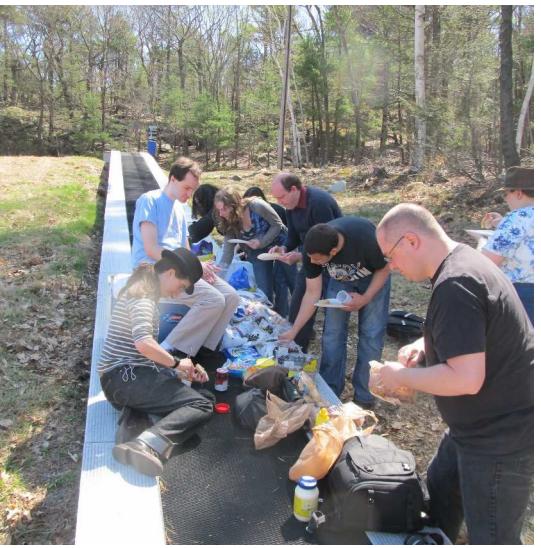
## **Election Meeting & Picnic 2013**

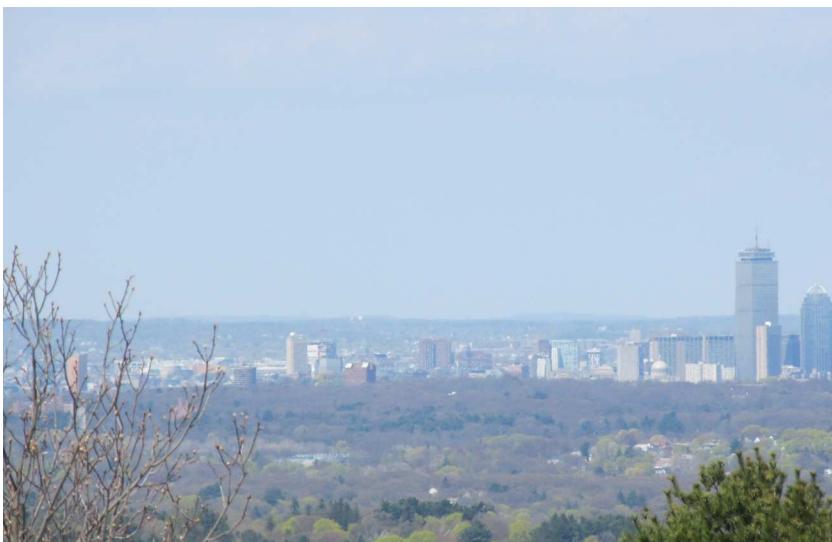
You peep through the hole in the cavern overlooking the Hatching Grounds; below, a dazzling number of various colored eggs sit still, waiting. Soon, the day of hatching will arrive and new-born dragons will Impress on their Candidates. One egg, larger than the others seems almost to wiggle a bit before your eyes. That will be a gold, a queen, larger than all the others. Perhaps, it will Impress on one who is to become the next Weyrwoman.

---

On behalf of Weyrwoman Skinner and all of Mitsfus Weyr, Candidates and visitors are welcomed to the next Hatching and the following festivities. Impressions and election of new \*chamber officers will occur Friday, April 26th at 6pm in 5-232. Festivities for all members of nearby Weyrs, Holds, and Halls will take place Saturday, April 27th. The festivities will occur in the surrounding Blue Hills, except in case of Threadfall, in which case it will be held in the Student Center, W20-407. In either case, meet in Mitsfus Weyr, W20-473, at 10am.

For Candidates and visitors without dragons (or who do not wish to fly Between to an unfamiliar place), please let us know how many seats you will need. Dragonriders who can accommodate extra passengers should let us know how many people they can take. Everyone planning to come should let us know so we know how much food to bring. To do so, email [picniccomm@mit.edu](mailto:picniccomm@mit.edu) or sign up on the Library door.







# MITSFs Reorganization Touches 40K Books

By Omari Stephens Jan. 16, 2013

This past weekend, the MIT Science Fiction Society (MITSFs) shut its doors for a massive reorganization that touched an estimated 95 percent of the ~40,000 books in its library in room 473 of the Stratton Student Center.

The purpose of the reorganization was two-fold. First, the group merged its reserve and circulating collections into a single, large, circulating collection.

They then changed how books were stored on the shelves in an attempt to pack more books on the shelves to make more use of the fixed amount of space in their library. Standard-height paperbacks and hardcovers will still remain in distinct areas in the library, however.

So on Saturday morning, Jan. 12, the first of hundreds of book-filled boxes marked “Mergatory” — purgatory for merging — were moved down the hall to W20-491, where the merging process began.

Here, (left to right) Cathleen E. Nalezyty '16, Susan A. Shepherd '14 (obscured), Karl C. Ramm, and Naomi A. Hinchen '11 participate in the merge process.

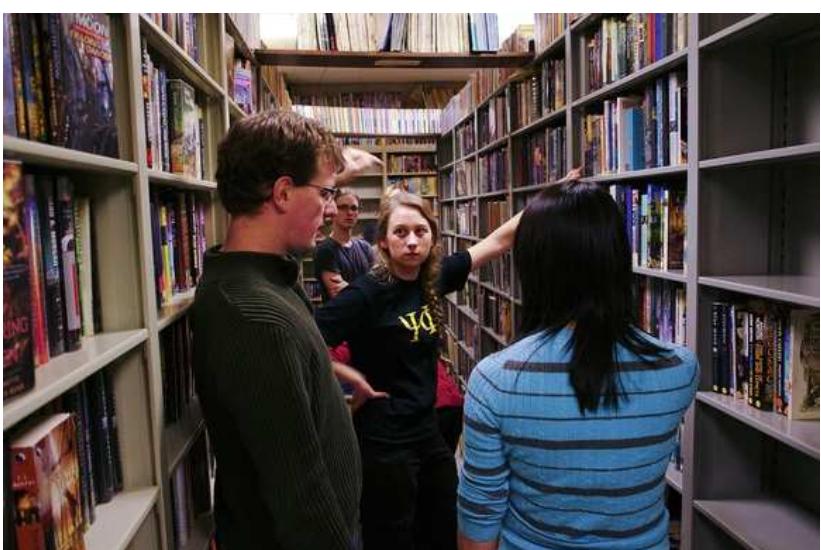
In general, the participants proceeded through sections of authors in alphabetical order, beginning with one column of books from the reserved set and one from the circulating set, and “zippered” them together into one merged output column. Next, someone shifted the merged book set onto a mobile book cart, to be taken back to the library and reshelfed.

Andrew M. Boardman thumbs through a set of paperbacks, looking for the proper spot for a book. At times, the similarities among last names of different authors made the merge process time-consuming and error-prone. For instance: Dick vs. Dicks vs. Dickson vs. Dickinson.

This image also illustrates a still-pending aspect of the reorganization. To save space on the shelves, the library plans to prune their in-library collection to at most two copies of any particular title. The prior limit was two circulating copies and one reserved, but with the merge, all copies will circulate. Once this next phase is complete, the redundant copies will join tens of thousands of other books that MITSFS already keeps in long-term storage.

During a pause in work, participants listen as Brian T. Sniffen '00 (left) offers a solution to a problem that has been discovered.

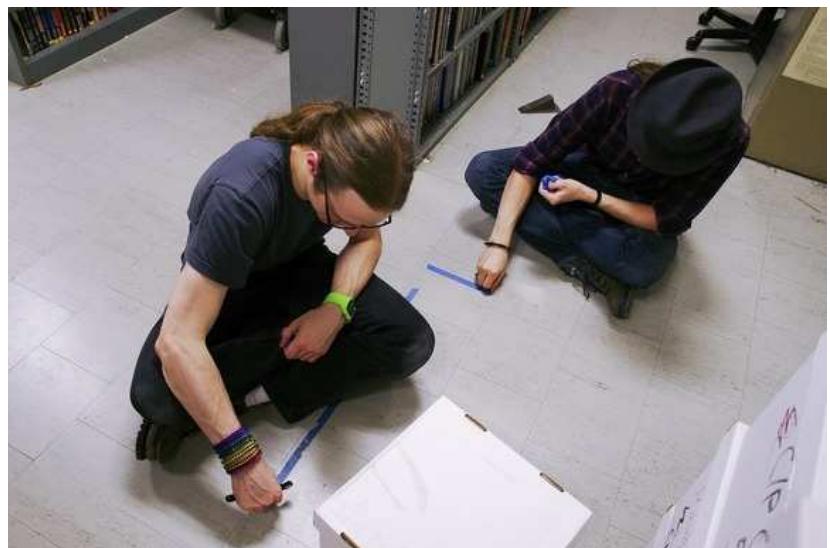
After the merge phase, the books returned to the library for reshelfing. Since most books moved from their original shelf locations, mistakes made during the reshelfing process caused kinks that participants fixed as the process continued.



Alexandra M. Westbrook '13 (right) passes a book to Cathleen E. Nalezyty '16 as the two "bubble" the books toward the far end of the shelves, in essence propagating the free space toward the near end of the row of shelves. The bubbling process served both to compress books on the shelves — after bubbling, wide books would typically be oriented to face outward, leaving more space for other books behind them — and to coalesce open shelf spaces in order to avoid "gotos" — points where the logical continuation of a set of books was located in a disjoint location in the library.



At the end of the Saturday work period, Jesse M. Ashcraft-Johnson '11 (left) and Kevin A. Riggle '08 remove the line of tape which formerly delineated the demarcation between circulating and reserved books. As the reorganization process had done away with that distinction in the collection, the line on the floor had become simply a memory of the prior state of the library. MITSFS remained closed on Sunday to finish the major aspects of the reorganization, and opened again on Monday, Jan. 14. Though significant aspects of the reorganization still remain to be completed, MITSFS Vice President D.W. Rowlands G noted that they had succeeded with their primary goals for the weekend.





# Fandom in student groups

By Jessica J. Pourian May. 14, 2013

Fandoms come in all shapes and sizes, and MIT has a smattering of several groups dedicated to different aspects of pop culture. *The Tech* sat with a few groups on campus to examine where fandoms fit in at the Institute. Not all groups we wished to interview were available for comment.

## **MIT Science Fiction Society**

**Members:** 200–300 officially, about 0–15 attend any given meeting.

**Office location:** W20-473

**What is it?**: “We’re not fans, we just read the stuff” is one of the mottos of MITSFS. Housing the world’s largest collection of science fiction and fantasy, MITSFS has over 65,000 titles in their library (and more copies of books located off-site). They have everything from Asimov to the most recent sci-fi novels — most of the club’s money goes towards buying books.

MIT community members pay \$11–15 a year for a subscription to the library, and can check out any book they like. In addition to serving as a library, MITSFS invites authors to speak. Recent guests have included John Scalzi and Charles Stross.

**Popular fandoms:** “In regards to fandoms, we declare ourselves not fans,” said Alex Westbrook ’13, former Skinner (president) of MITSFS. “We have novels based on a lot of fan things ... people generally read what they want to read.”

**Thoughts on the survey:** It’d “be interesting to see if we could ask everyone [about sci-fi]” Westbrook said, “To see what percentage of MIT is actually interested in that stuff.”



# **Election Meeting & Picnic 2014**

Captain's Log, Stardate 42424.7

After extricating ourselves from the diplomatic situation involving Mr. Okona and the Coalition of Madenaz we are headed for the Ramatis System to retrieve a peacekeeper for a diplomatic mission to Solais. I am taking the opportunity to review the quarterly crew evaluations during what should be an uneventful journey.

Captain's Log, Supplemental

As we crossed into the Beta Quadrant, we detected a temporal-spatial anomaly. Mr. LaForge suggested sending a Class-2 Probe to collect more information. As we began to analyze the data stream, an unidentified energy beam locked itself on the Enterprise and began to pull us into the center of the anomaly. Unable to counteract the beam, we were pulled through the center of the anomaly and deposited into what appears to be the outer Sol system in the early part of the twenty-first century.

Captain's Log, Supplemental

I have begun organizing away teams to investigate the alien incursions in the Blue Hills area of New England. Mr. Data assures me that unless accurate countermeasures are taken, any disruption to the historically significant picnic scheduled there this afternoon could have disastrous consequences for the timeline.



**Sarah Schwartz | MIT News correspondent**  
**October 10, 2014**

It is a Tuesday night, and on the quiet fourth floor of MIT's otherwise bustling Stratton Student Center (W20), the MIT Science Fiction Society (MITSFS) is holding open hours. Inside room W20-473, colorful books line the walls from floor to ceiling.

"We aim to have a library full of science fiction and fantasy and horror, and tangentially related genres, that we can make accessible to MIT, the community, and anybody else who's interested," says Laura McKnight, the Society's "vice" — a role she describes as "approximately vice president" — for the current academic year.

Just inside the door, a small plywood box is stacked on its end. This, McKnight says, is the Society's original library. When freshman Rudolf "Rudy" Preisendorfer founded MITSFS in 1949, members would pass their books from dorm room to dorm room in this box. Things have changed a bit in the last 65 years.

"Our total book count is, last I heard, 62,270," McKnight says. "At one point, our goal was to collect all the science fiction that had ever been published. But with the rise of self-published science fiction, that's not even sort of possible anymore."

Still, MITSFS (pronounced "MITS-fiss") maintains what is believed to be the world's largest open-shelf collection of science fiction. The Society strives to acquire every new science fiction publication for its collection, sometimes obtaining proofs before a book is officially published.

The results are staggering: In addition to the two rooms of stacks in W20, MITSFS maintains a warehouse facility for extra copies. "We do all sorts of shenanigans to try and fit as many books as possible in," says McKnight, adding that ladders are required to reach the top shelves of paperbacks.

The age of many of the library's materials hints at how far MITSFS has come. McKnight points out "Weird Tales" — an anthology of stories from a science fiction magazine of the same name that was published from 1923 to 1954 — beside several other periodicals that were hand-bound by members over the years. Early science fiction was primarily published in magazines, McKnight says, and the Society's collection is full of stories that "you can't really find many other places."

The culture of the Society also reflects the past. "Since MITSFS is so old, we have a lot of basically 50-year-old in-jokes that nobody remembers the origin of," McKnight says. As evidence, she points out the library's curious collection of bananas, which are everywhere — strung from the ceiling, tucked into shelves, and sitting on the limited desk space by the doorway. The bananas are plush, rubber, or plastic; one is dressed in chainmail, while another has a shark erupting from its peel.

McKnight says nobody knows how the fruit obsession began, but that members may check out certain bananas to take home with them. "Be warned that we have a digital electronic checkout system, and if you return the banana late, it will fine you," McKnight says.

Most MITSFS members come to check out not the bananas, but the books — up to eight at a time, for as long as three weeks. Membership is not restricted to MIT students; McKnight notes that many alumni retain membership, and members don't even have to be affiliated with the Institute at all — although MIT students do pay a discounted membership rate.

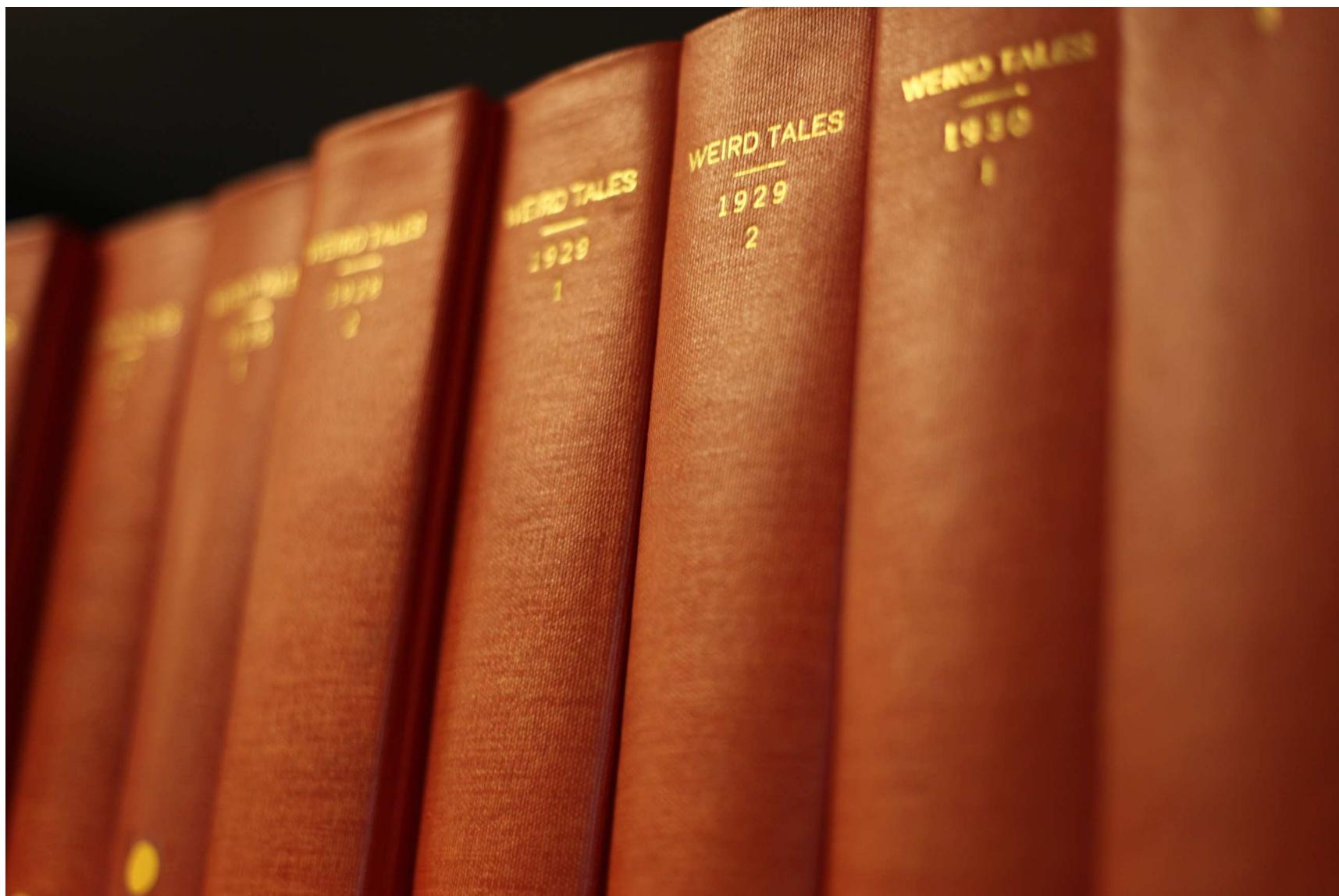
McKnight estimates that there are "some number of hundreds" of members this year. And Jesse Ashcraft-Johnson, a "keyholder" in the Society — he has a key to the stacks, and can hold the library open — thinks that if there were a single sheet of paper representing each member, they "would fit into a reasonable binder."

These members carry on a labor of love 65 years in the making.

After wandering through the stacks, the “original library” by the doorway seems quaint. The box has now become a time capsule, McKnight says. There’s only one problem, she says: “Nobody knows when it’s supposed to be opened.”

For now, it remains sealed by the stacks, a testament to how far MITSFS has come.

Photo Credits: Jose-Luis Olivares/MIT



One of the library's more notable collections is its volumes of "Weird Tales," originally published in magazine form. The Society's collection is full of stories that "you can't really find many other places," McKnight says.



The wooden box that originally housed the MITSFS library in 1949. The box was originally passed from room to room. Now, it has become a time capsule. There's only one problem, McKnight says: "Nobody knows when it's supposed to be opened."



An assortment of books from the MITSFS Library.



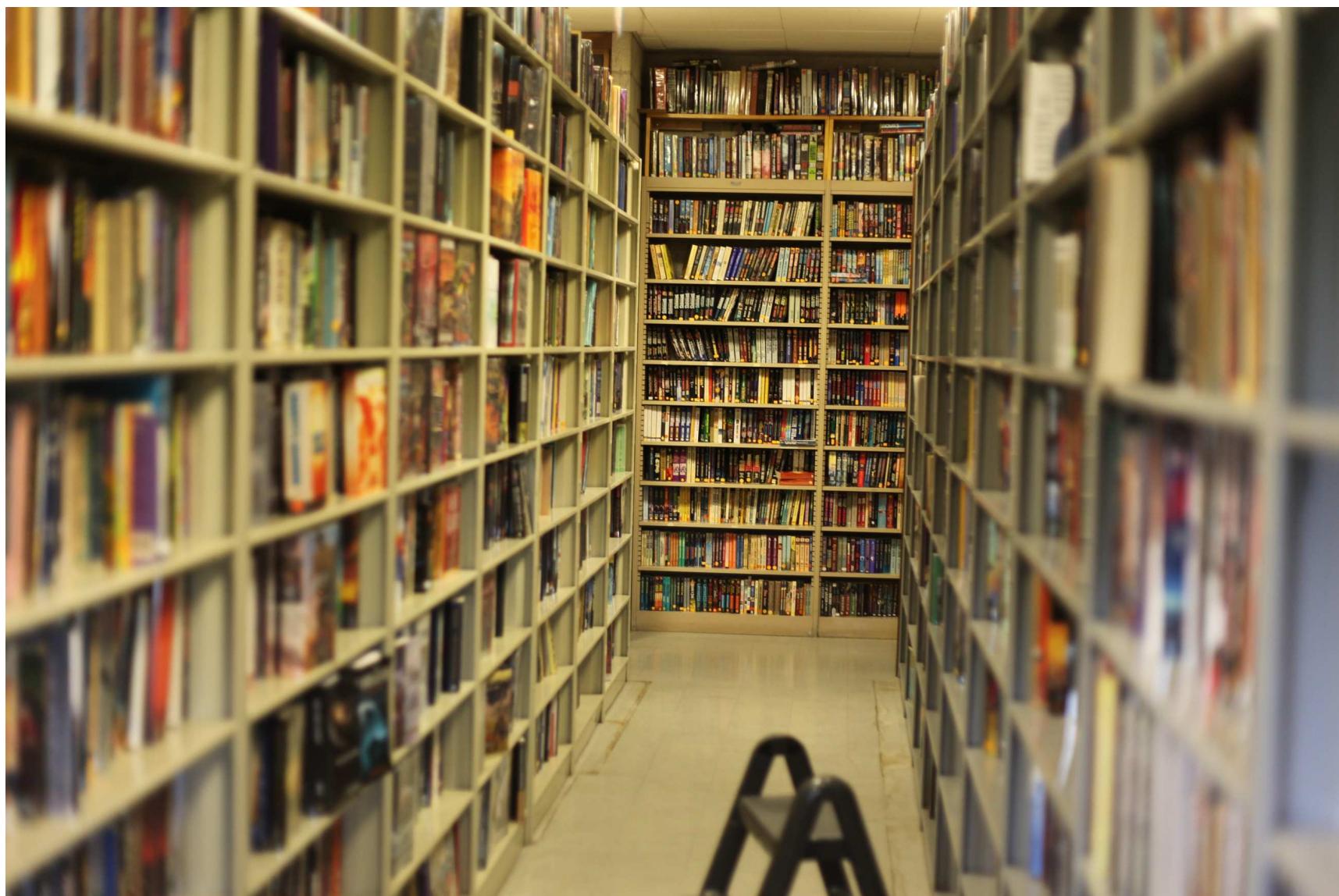
One of the library's collection of bananas hangs from a shelf. The bananas are available for check out. "Be warned that we have a digital electronic checkout system, and if you return the banana late, it will fine you," McKnight says.



D. W. Rowlands, president and "skinner," goes through the stacks in the society library. The Society strives to acquire every new science-fiction publication for its collection, sometimes obtaining proofs before a book is officially published.



Laura McKnight is the “vice” of the MIT Science Fiction Society, meaning she serves as the vice president of the Society for the current academic year.



The MITSFS Library contains 62,370 books and 34,561 titles. Members can check out eight books at a time for as long as three weeks.



## **Skimmers: Half a Decade**

(and then some)

Paul Weaver '10-'12, Alex Westbrook '12-'13, Laura McKnight '13-'14  
DW 'Lemur' Rowlands '14-'15, Cathleen Nalezyty '15-'16



## Election Meeting & Picnic 2015

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

My knowledge of the thing began in the late winter of 2015 when the snows still covered the lands of New England. As part of an archeological dig at the Miskatonic Institute of Technology, I found a queer wooden box embossed with the letters MITSFS which I found extremely puzzling. The box itself seemed normal at first, if well worn though I felt much averse from showing it to other eyes. It had been locked and I did not find the key till it occurred to me to examine the evidence locker from the fire that had burned down the Department of Alchemy a few years ago. There I found a tarnished key embossed with the same acronym as the eldritch chest that lay before me. Indeed, I succeeded in opening it, but when I did so seemed only to be confronted by a greater and more closely locked barrier. For what could be the meaning of the queer clay bas-relief and the disjointed jottings, ramblings, and cuttings which I found? Indeed the University records showed no sign of a MITSFS ever existing. Was this box the creation of some sort of madman or a hoax meant to dull the minds of those who found it? I resolved to search out the eccentric sculptor responsible for this apparent disturbance and restore my peace of mind.

The bas-relief was a rough rectangle less than an inch thick and about five by six inches in area; obviously of modern origin. Its designs, however, were far from modern in atmosphere and suggestion; for, although the vagaries of cubism and futurism are many and wild, they do not often reproduce that cryptic regularity which lurks in prehistoric writing. And writing of some kind the bulk of these designs seemed certainly to be; though my memory, despite much the papers and collections contained within, failed in any way to identify this particular species, or even hint at its remotest affiliations.

Above these apparent hieroglyphics was a figure of evident pictorial intent, though its impressionistic execution forbade a very clear idea of its nature. It seemed to be a sort of monster, or symbol representing a monster, of a form which only a diseased fancy could conceive. If I say that my somewhat extravagant imagination yielded simultaneous pictures of a banana, an eagle, and a human caricature, I shall not be unfaithful to the spirit of the thing. It was the general outline of the whole which made it most shockingly frightful. Behind the figure was a vague suggestions of a Cyclopean architectural background.

The writing accompanying this oddity appeared to have been written recently and made no pretense to literary style. What seemed to be the main document was headed "Science Fiction Society" in characters painstakingly printed to avoid the erroneous reading of a word so unheard-of. This manuscript was divided into two sections, the first of which was headed "The MIT Science Fiction Society, it's history and it's eventual destruction", and the second,

"Narrative of the MITSFS Picnic, <address>, Notes on Same. and the Rites of Opening and Closing the Way". The other manuscript papers were brief notes, some of them accounts of the queer dreams of different persons, some of them citations of theosophical books and magazines (notably *Weird Tales* and *Astounding Stories*), and the rest comments on this apparently long-surviving secret society. These cuttings largely alluded to outbreaks of group folly and mania in the spring of 2015.

The first half of the manuscript told a very particular tale. It appears that on April 11th, 2015, a group of members of the mysterious MITSFS gathered in the Blue Mountains for a day of merriment and the sharing of food. The manuscript went on to describe such vulgar activities as gavel throwing, coconut baseball, an arcane rite known as 'frisbee', and even the sacrifice of a virgin watermelon.

It was then that a rambling tale began, one which suddenly played upon a sleeping memory and won my interest. The manuscript described, in serpentine language, a method of enacting one of these picnics. I will not repeat this foul rite in its entirety here as I do not wish to subject others to the contents of the manuscript. Suffice it to say, the end of everything I hold dear is at hand. I have come to believe that this box came into my possession so that I could stop what was to come. A new star chamber must be chosen, at the ritual of the picnic performed.

I leave you now with a warning. That is not dead which can eternal lie, and with strange eons, even death may die.

Ia! Ia! MITSFS fhtagn!  
Ia! Ia! Skinner fhtagn!  
Ia MITSFS! Ia Skinner!  
ph'nglui mglw'nafh skinner MITSFS wgah'nagl fhtagn



2015 surreptitious shenanigans



## **Star Chamber 2015**

Laura McKnight (Vice), DW 'Lemur' Rowlands (Skinner), Sarah Coe (LHE)  
Cathleen Nalezyty (Onseck), Cathy Zhang (Chancellor)

An unusual photo in that it has three people who have been Skinner (Lemur, Cathleen, and Laura), and three who have been Chancellor (Lemur, Cathy, and Laura), and three who have been Onseck (Lemur, Cathleen, and Laura) and three who have been Vice (Lemur, Cathy, and Laura), but I think only one who has ever been LHE (Sarah).)



# **Election Meeting & Picnic 2016**

23 April 2016

Who will be in the next Star Chamber?  
If we're a Sci-Fi library, why so much Fantasy?  
What's the difference?

For the answers to these questions and more, we cordially invite you to the MITSFS 2016 Picnic.

Please RSVP to [picniccomm@mit.edu](mailto:picniccomm@mit.edu) or sign up on the library door.

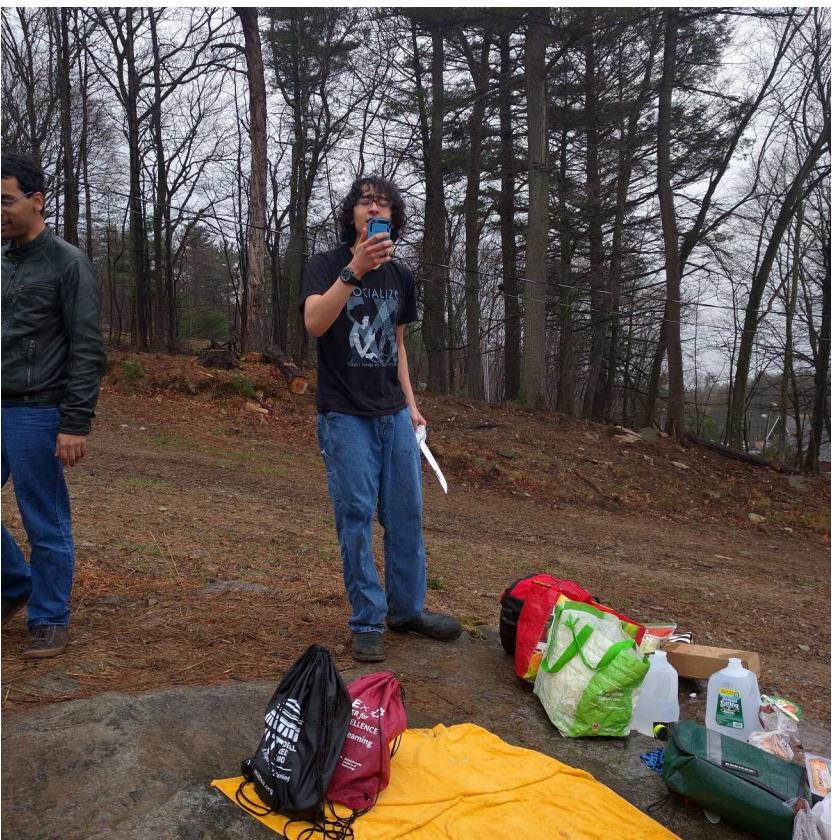
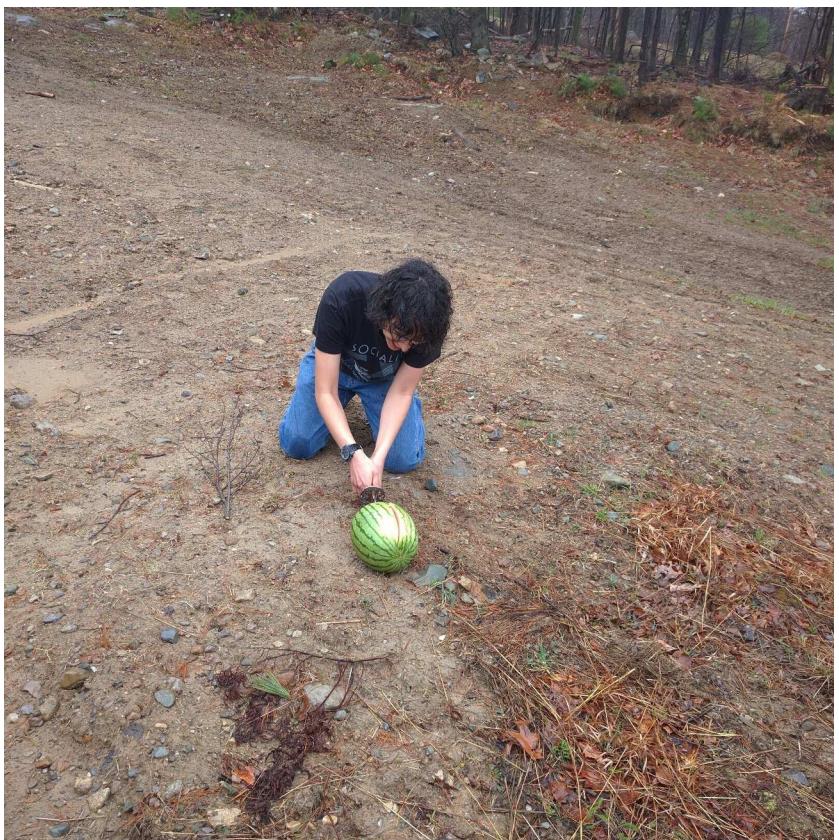
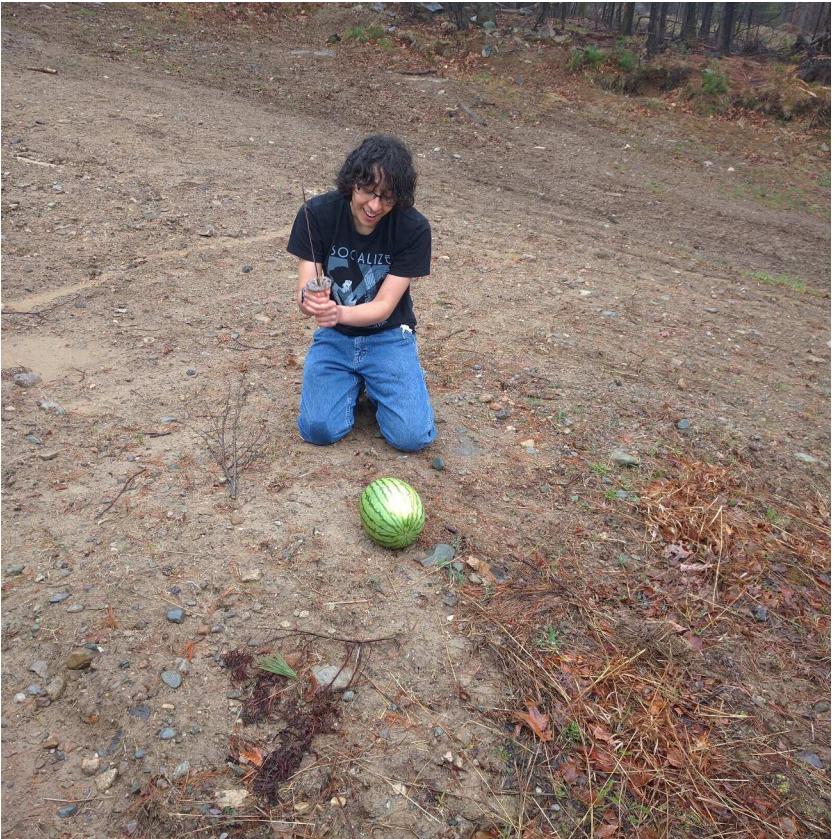
Please mention if you will 1) be able to provide transportation from the library or 2) will need transportation from the library.

MITSFS elections on  
Friday, April 22nd at 6:30  
MITSFS Library

Post-Election Picnic on  
Saturday, April 23rd

at Blue Hills (Rain location TBD)

Meet at MITSFS at 10:00am - for hiking, gavel-tossing, coconut baseball, lunch and the sacrifice of the virgin watermelon



# Lore of the MITSFS

## #1: The Officers

Janice M. Eisen  
(with some help from Guy Consolmagno and Tim Huckelberry)  
retyped by Karl Ramm

October 10, 2016

Newcomers to the MITSFS often stop to puzzle over a large organizational chart that hangs by the door to the circulating room. (See the reproduction accompanying this article; the original, created by Greg Ruffa, is much more impressive.) They are generally advised not to try to make sense of it. This is sound advice, because even by MITSFS standards the chart has little relationship to reality. Only a small number of the offices are filled in any official fashion, and many are mere relics of the past.

However, the chart does provide some insight into the history and traditions of the MITSFS, although, as in most oral traditions, conflicting versions of the past abound. In the interest of collecting some of this history (as well as filling some pages in TZ), I have put together all known or guessed-at information about the origins and functions of the various Officers of the MITSFS. Any old-timers who cherish different versions are welcome to let us know.

### 1 The Star Chamber

President: Has but one power, to appoint the Skinner, who runs everything. This division of offices was made in the days when Institute rules required that the President and Treasurer of student organizations be undergraduates, in case a time should come when there were no undergrads qualified to run the MITSFS. Except in unusual circumstances, the President usually appoints him or herself Skinner.

Skinner: Ruler of the MITSFS. Definer of Natural Constants, Keeper of the Gavel, etc., etc. L. Court Skinner was a popular two-term President of the Society, circa 1960-63. Prior to his tenure, each MITSFS committee had its own province and made its own decisions; Skinner consolidated them under the authority of the President. When he graduated, the office was named after him.

Vice: *Not* Miami. A fairly obvious choice of names.

Lord(Lady) High Embezzler: The LHE keeps track of the money and is traditionally supposed to abscond to Brazil with it. The use of this title in

a listing for *Technique* prompted yearbook types to call the Onseck into their office because they felt the wording was libelous. They did not accept the offer to come see the MITSFS's organizational chart, but did print the listing.

Onseck: Named during a period when Cordwainer Smith was in vogue around the MITSFS. It comes from his novel *Norstrilia*, in which the title had evolved from "Honorable Secretary." The Onseck keeps the minutes, deals with correspondence, and does other such Onsecknal things.

## 2 Other Offices on the Chart

Permanent Deceased Librarian and President: This office is held by George Phillies, who is still among the living, or at least looks like he is. As Skinner, he bought the collection of paperbacks that formed the nucleus of the book portion of the Library. He also helped found the Strategic Games Society (S.G.S.).

Jourcomm: Journal Committee. responsible for editing and publishing *Twilight Zine*. The post was inspired by Hugo Gernsback's urging that the Society publish an educational journal. This probably isn't what he had in mind. The traditional Jourcomm report at meetings is "TZ Real Soon Now," sometimes supplemented with plaintive requests that people write something.

Libcomm: Library Committee. Originally responsible for nearly all the work involved in running the Library. Its functions were eventually split into other committees. Nowadays it is identified with Ken Johnson, who is responsible for the magazine collection and some of the rarer books.

Interactivities Liaison: The greasiest person around, and originally a joke. MITSFS has become substantially greasier in recent years, with the apex probably a two-year period when a UA Vice President (Ken Meltsner) was a former Onseck, one Skinner (Judy Passman) was ASA President, and the following Skinner (Tim Huckelberry) was LSC Chairman.

ROSFAP: Registrar of Science Fictional Amateur Publications. In other words, keeps track of the fanzines.

Atomcomm: See **Seitz**, below.

Vergeltungsflotte: German for Vengeance Fleet, usually abbreviated VGG. Seeks to recover books and money due the Library, and imposes fines on naughty Keyholders.

Eli Heffron & Sons: A Cambridge electronics surplus store.

People's Albanian Embassy: When someone is flaming (or, more often these days, makes a bad pun) at a MITSFS Meeting, and people don't want to listen to him, his speech is defined to be in Albanian. The People's Albanian Embassy exists so the Society can communicate with him if need be. The Embassy is also responsible for collecting science fiction written in Albanian.

Seitz: J. Russel Seitz, once Vice, was reputed to have a Titan II missile (or three Atlas missiles — the stories vary) which he had constructed out of government surplus parts. He may also have claimed to be capable of acquiring an atomic warhead; however other versions of the story say Atomcomm was responsible for obtaining one. Atomcomm was also in charge of acquiring money for

the Society by atomic, biological, or chemical blackmail. The Spofford Painting (see Spofford) was at one time named Lord High Blackmailer. (Seitz is now at Hahvahd and is occasionally quoted in the press as an expert on nuclear weapons.)

National Committee to Map John Kenneth Galbraith into the Complex Plane, Inc.: Just what it says.

Theftcomm: In charge of stealing the Bonestell murals from the Boston Museum of Science. Failing that, in charge of putting up posters advertising the MITSFS. It took over the functions of the previously existing Compost (Poster Committee), Feecomm (Feeler Committee), and Publicity Committee.

Moocomm: Movie Committee. In the distant past, MITSFS's major source of income was the science fiction movies it showed once per term. Circa 1965, LSC became the only organization allowed to show movies regularly and charge admission, thus making Moocomm obsolete. Moocomm now reports on science fiction movies being shown by LSC or elsewhere in the area.

Coofcomm: Colonial Office Committee. In charge of helping fledgling sf clubs at other schools (e.g. ChUSFA at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana). Also responsible for maintaining a strict policy of mercantilism with regard to fledgling sf clubs.

Carnalcomm: Carnival Committee. Up until the late '60s, APO ran a carnival every spring at which student activities had booths; Carnalcomm ran the MITSFS booth. Carnalcomm is now in charge of the MITSFS booth at the Activities Midway, held for the incoming freshlings each fall.

Picniccomm: Buys food and mails invitations for the annual MITSFS Picnic.

Hostess: Looks pretty at the picnic. (Well, the office was established in the mid-60s.)

Gavelcomm: Keeps track of the Gavel.

Titancomm: Keeps track of the titanium Gavel Block.

Atlascomm: Finds a rock suitable for substituting for the Gavel Block, or lugs the Block itself to Elections, Boskone, etc.

Wellcomm: Wellesley Committee. Set up in 1967 to absorb Wellesley into the Library. Later responsible for publicizing MITSFS at Wellesley. It has fallen into disuse these days, I suppose because of the increased number of women at MIT.

Fweekcomm: Freshman Week Committee. Coordinates MITSFS membership recruitment during R/O week.

Cofincomm: Committee for Foreign Correspondence. Established to maintain communication with Dick Harter when he went to South Dakota.

Meyercomm: Keeps track of Ed Meyer, a super-fan of the '60s, who started an APA called **Ed's APA**, the members of which formed the nucleus of what became **NESFA** (The North East Shanghai Food Association).

Spofford: MITSFS meetings used to be held in the Spofford Room, which belongs to the Civil Engineering department and contains a large portrait of Spofford. Regular meetings are now held in the Library itself, but Election Meetings are still held under Spofford's gaze.

Deceased Plant: A dead potted plant in the Spofford Room was made a Quaternary Officer for failing to defeat the Evil ARLewis for the office of Onseck. After it left, various other objects (equally dead) were named **Honorary Plant**.

Catacomm: Catalogs the magazines. Like Libcomm, the post is identified with Ken Johnson.

Flushcomm: In charge of arranging to have all the Institute toilets flushed at once, to test the theory that doing so would destroy the Institute's plumbing.

Bootcomm: The Alpert, who was Skinner from 1970-72 (his first name is Marc; I don't know when the Society stopped referring to Skimmers with the definite Article) used to wear big boots.

Moccomm: The Davidson (Scott), who was Skinner after The Alpert, wore moccasins. Skinnerial footwear seems to have become rather dull afterward, since there are no more offices named after it.

Throgcomm: Wears hideous yellow polka-dot ties to meetings.

Flamecomm: Flames at meetings. (For whatever non-MIT types may have gotten this far, I should explain that flaming is an all-purpose MITism referring to any speech that is too loud, too obnoxious, too long-winded, too argumentative, too political, or otherwise annoying.)

Randomcomm: Detects and gloats over scientific errors in SF.

Untitledcomm: (Represented by an empty box on the Chart.) Writes weird replies to weird Letters the MITSFS gets. Originally set up in 1972 to respond to a letter from UCLA asking for advice on how to form an SF society, saying they only had a comic book club. The committee consisted of Irwin T. Lapeer (aka Guy Consolmagno).

Slobcomm: Set up to investigate the question of what evil Mr. Lobdell could have done to cause a dining hall to be named after him. It was also in charge of writing words with calculators (e.g. 77308075 is Slobdell upside down). This was considered highly amusing back in 1973 when calculators first came out.

Tablecomm (R.I.P.): Created in 1961 to arrange informal discussions of SF by MITSFS members and other. (May also have been in charge of caring for the MITSFS's microfilm and tape collections, such as they are.) Its exact fate is shrouded in mystery, though it is rumored that it eventually deteriorated into a comic book discussion group and died out. Others hold that it was abolished and even its name effaced because its members were obnoxious.

Den Mother : (There are six blank spaces after "mother.") This office is awarded to the person in the MIT administration who screws over the MITSFS most. There are always more than enough candidates.

GAcomm: General Assembly Committee. Attended meetings of the GA, which used to be "governing" body of the Undergraduate Association. It was recently replaced by the UA Council, which is smaller but functions just as well. The office was a joke, too.

Official Theologian: The person who pontificates the most. The Alpert was appointed to both this office and that of **Chief Hairsplitter, 2nd Class** for hairsplitting, etc.

Chief Biter: Like the above, mostly self-explanatory. A person who is stupidly obnoxious in a destructive manner.

Baloneycomm: Brings baloney to the Picnic.

Charcomm: Burns the roast beef for the Picnic.

Pumpkincomm: Reaffirms the Society's faith in the Great Pumpkin each Halloween. For a time, also had the duty of making sure that the Foreign Students bulletin board had posted on it the Sunday comics, particularly Peanuts, the Wizard of Id, and Pogo (later, Doonesbury).

Bananacomm: Bring banana-related stuff to meetings.

NASAcomm: Oddly enough, responsible for NASA. Went to space shots. Its functions have been taken over by Whooshcomm, a revival of the ancient Rocket Committee. (Well, rockets sort of go *whoosh*.)

Candycomm: Responsible for sending a one-man, one-way expedition to Mars, George Phillies to be that man. (*Mars*, get it, huh?)

MADcomm: Keeps track of the Society's collection of MAD magazines.

Analogcomm: In the archives, it is said that the Society used to own some *Playboy* magazines with SF-related stories. They were sold, with the notation: "Received \$N for *Playboys* and so forth." A committee was established to find out what the and-so-forth was. And-So-Forth becomes A.S.F = *Astounding Science Fiction*, which became *Analog*, hence the name. Since the person appointed, Paul Mailman, also happened to be responsible for the Keyholder schedule sign-up sheets, the committee absorbed that function.

Official Second: Honorary title given to the member of the Loyal Opposition who runs against the official slate. Generally assigned to whichever hack nomination was most beaten into the ground at the election. Past title-holders include Cherey's studded leather belt, the blue string macramé bikini, and Klyd (a boa constrictor), among others.

Coopcomm: Tells the Coop what SF to buy. I have no idea if it was ever functional.

Chartcomm: Designed the organizational chart.

Cornelia Otis: A person that is not the same as *our* skinner. (Cornelia Otis Skinner was a somewhat famous actress and author.) Collects and reports on all entropies at meetings. At its creation in 1968, Joe Ross was appointed to it and ordered to generate random noise.

Ambassador to the Null Set: May have been created in 1970. May have a rationale for existence, or maybe just seemed like a good idea.

International Committee to Overdamp the New Wave: Also probably seemed like a good idea.

Intercomm: Responsible for international SF, that is, trades magazines with non-MIT fans. Also collects Perry Rhodans, etc.

Kangaroocomm: The Society's contact in Australia.

Keeper of the Schultz: Paula Schultz was a member in the '60s whose current boyfriend was given this post.

Secretary of HEW and Grammarcomm: I have absolutely no idea. If anyone does, please let me know.

Hub Overgovernment: A reference to the **Telzey Amberdon** stories — the organization in charge of the "official" psis, as opposed to the unofficial ones like Telzey.

Telzey Amberdon: The Skinner's "significant other." It used to be the Skinner's girlfriend, but has become a unisex post now that MITSFS is an equal opportunity organization. Traditionally vacant, but this has not been true for the past few years. Named for a character in stories by James H. Schmitz who was supposed to be the most perfect woman in the universe. (Every so often, somebody looking through old magazines runs across a story called "The Telzey Toy," and this provides hilarity for a few days.)

Stranglecomm: There are three different versions of what this office is: 1) Mark Swanson threatened to call The Alpert at 3 a.m. until he got an article for TZ out of him. (I sympathize!) The Alpert said he would strangle him. The committee was set up to call The Alpert at 3 a.m. and identify itself as Swanson. 2) Calls up the Skinner at 3 a.m. and says "My name is Marc Alpert, and I'm cool." then hangs up. 3) Calls up Jourcomm at 3 a.m. and asks, "When is the TZ coming out?"

Ass.comm: Committee to assassinate the Skinner.

### 3 Active Offices Not Appearing on the Chart

Panthercomm: Responsible for Pinkdex, the index to the MITSFS Library. Pinkdex was named after its first compiler, Fuzzy Pink (Marilyn) Wisowaty, known these days as Fuzzy Pink Niven (yes, that Niven). Assisted by **Mancini-comm** (Henry Mancini wrote the Pink Panther theme music).

Treasurer: Repairs books. This office may have been named to provide an out if there were no qualified undergrads to be LHE. Then again, maybe not.

Boredcomm: Puts stuff on the MITSFS bulletin board, which is found just off the Infinite Corridor.

Mobcomm: Purchases books at the New England Mobile Book Fair, which has everything in print at a discount. We use it to fill gaps in the collection.

Acidcomm: Assistant Idiot in charge of book covering. Puts plastic covers on the hardcover books. (Also known as **Bluebellcomm** since the plastic came from Bluebell Plastics.)

Sitcomm: Reports on television programs of interest to the Society.

MITSFS Mistress: Sacrifices the Virgin Watermelon at the Picnic. There may have once been other job requirements; Sylvia Johnson, the first one, resigned the post because of "back trouble".

Pianocomm: Responsible for the display of Keyholder pictures in the Library, as well as revisions of the Keyholder Notes.

Boscomm: Reports on Boskone.

Famecomm: Reports on mentions of the Society or its members in non-MITSFS publications.

## 4 Dead, Defunct or Dormant Offices

War Council: Set up to contend with the Fountainhead of Evil on Campus Here (FECH), i.e. Inscomm. (The Institute Committee was the governing body on campus prior to the creation of the UA General Assembly. It consisted of a bunch of greasy student types.) It later expanded to "fight the good fight" against *The Tech*. Also got bookcases for the Library.

Banquomm: Originally Bankcomm, in charge of food for the annual MITSFS Banquet (which is also defunct).

Pilecomm: Compilation Committee. In charge of making lists of the best SF or keeping records of books in the Library.

Knockcomm: Assigned to get a Gavel. It did, and also got a sounding board. Flushed November 18, 1960.

Psico: Set up September 23, 1960 to investigate (seriously) psychic phenomena. Its members were referred to as psicoceramics (crackpots). It was flushed less than a year later.

Provisional Committee to Look Into Dean Drive: What it says. Set up October 7, 1960.

Special Committee to Write to L. Sprague de Camp Asking Him To Come If It Won't Cost Us Too Much: What more can I say? Established September 23, 1960

Ughcomm: Set up March 5, 1976 for Uri Gutman. (UG-Comm, h=hyphen)

Dismil: Dishonorable Millercomm. Set up in order to adjourn Meetings February 6, 1976 because Miller wasn't there.

Malcomm: Formed February 9, 1979 to find out what Malcom (Skerry, aka Malcolm Y) was dropping before he claimed there were *people* in the Library.

Omnicomm: Set up briefly to reply to a letter from *Omni* concerning the Society and how it could get the membership list for the Sales Department. Later reported on random *Omni* articles.

Smokcomm: Formed October 13, 1961 to promote a MITSFS smoker. (An event, not a nicotine addict.)

Cardcomm: Got membership cards from Cambridge Press. Established February 9, 1962.

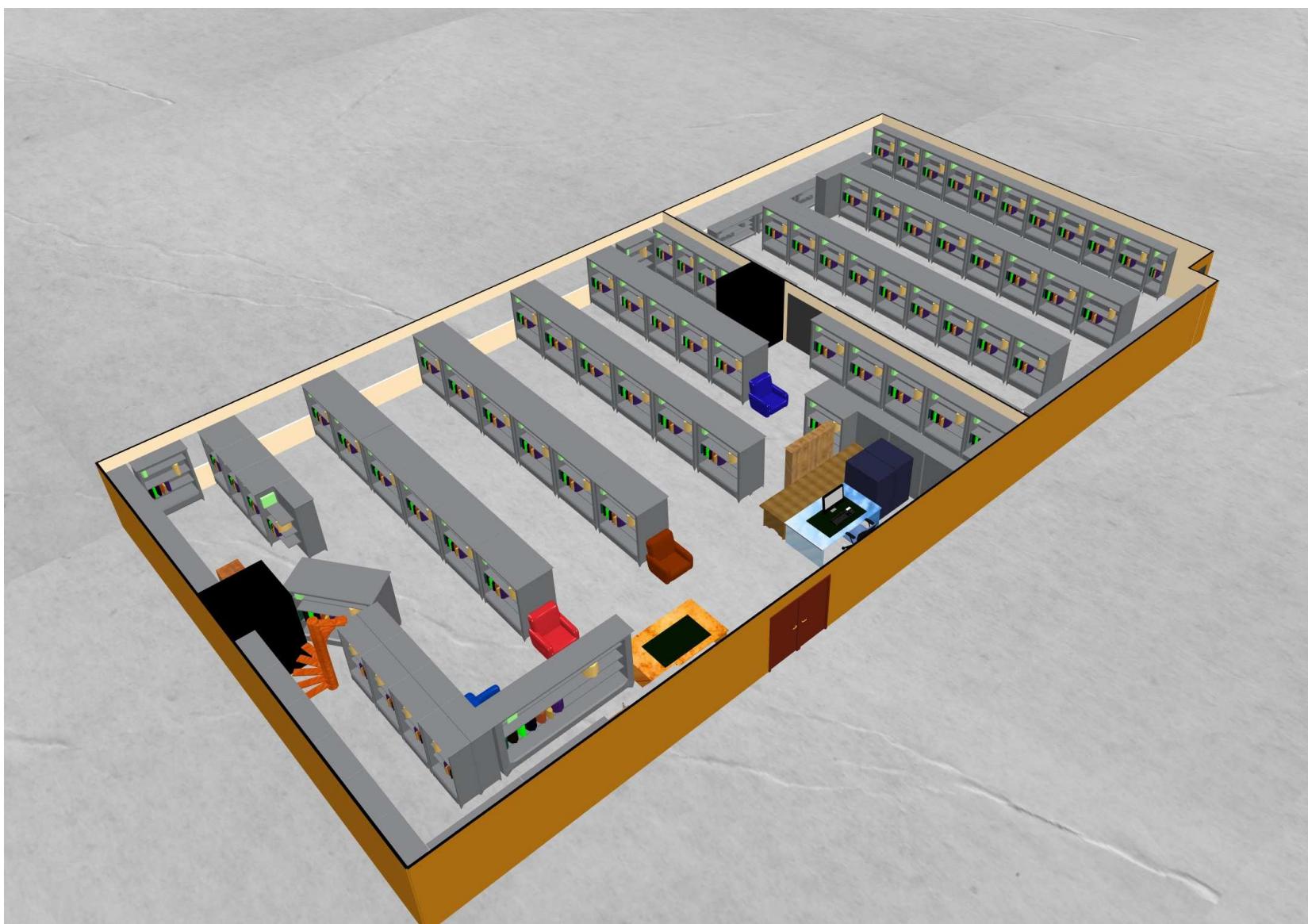
Ambassador to Boston University, So Called, Administration Thereof: Set up right after the B.U., So Called, Administration was recognized by the society on October 12, 1962. There is no evidence that it ever did anything — the Ambassador, not the Administration.

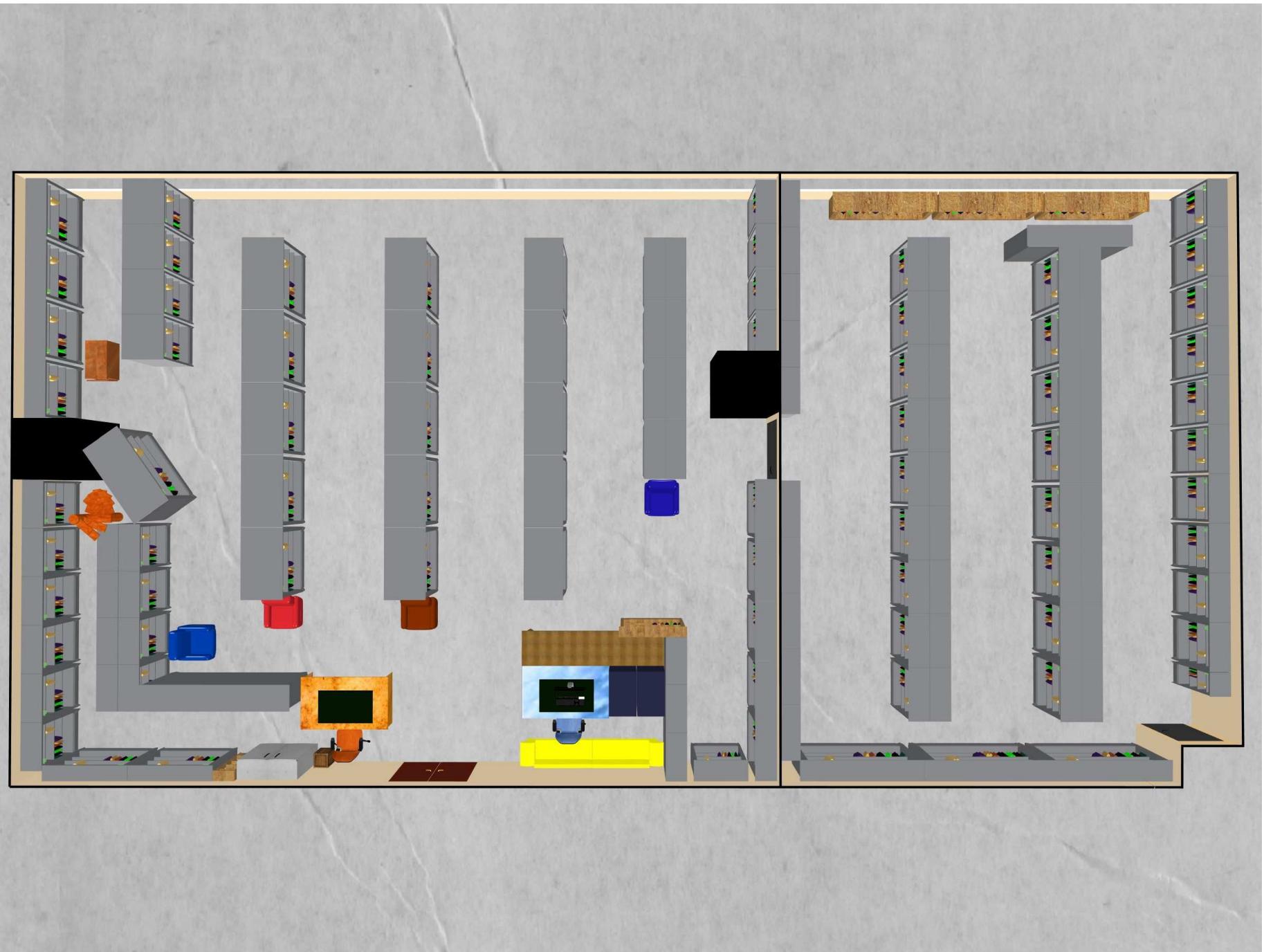
Comité d'Affaires Étrangeères pour les Pays de Langue Française (Roughly translated, Foreign Affairs Committee for French-Language Countries): Wrote a letter to Charles De Gaulle, and actually got a reply (from a flunky). I hope the letter was written in better French than the committee name was.

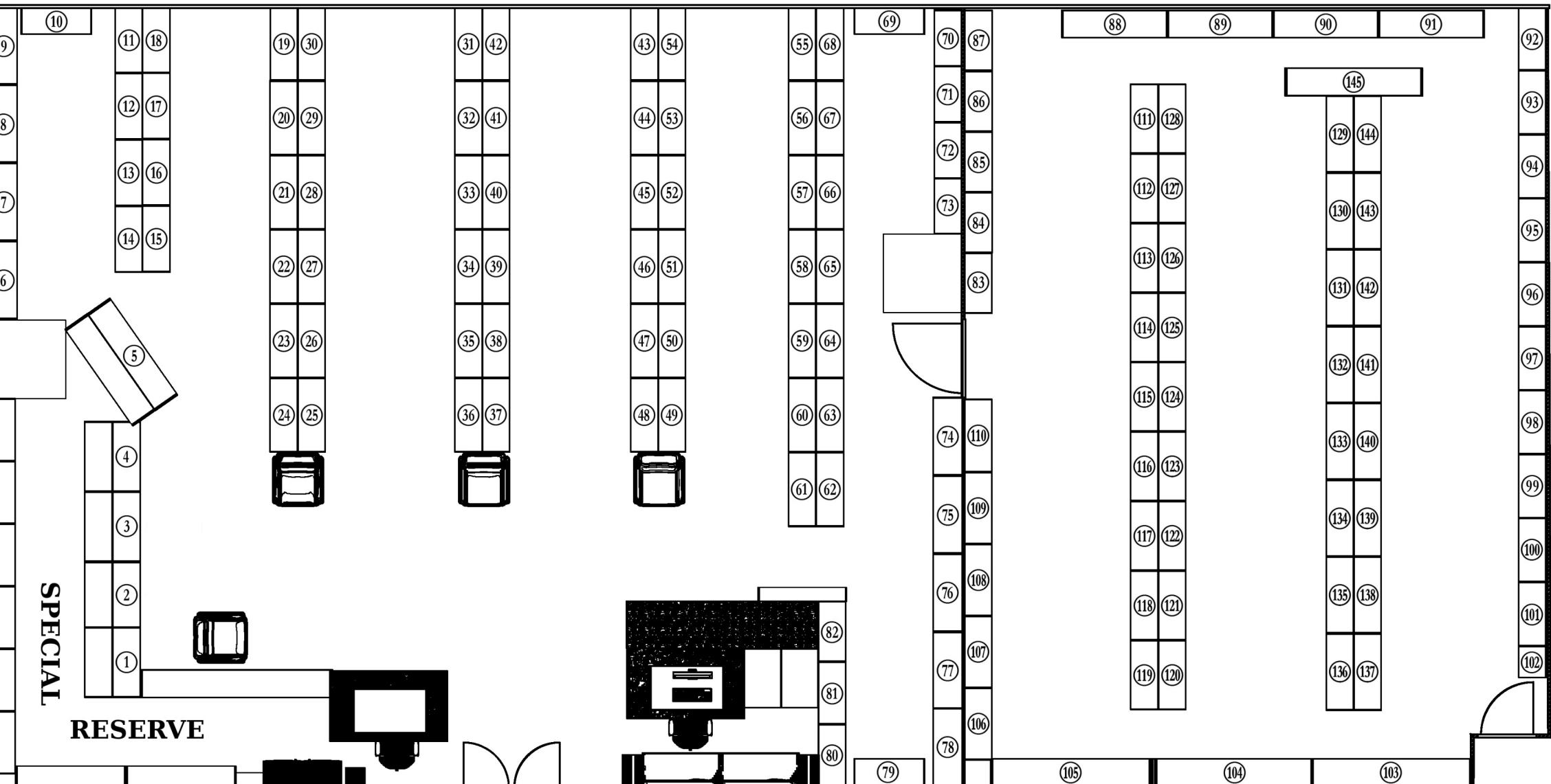


# Library Redesign

courtesy of the Mercator







## Shelfcodes for All Reserve and Circulating Material

<u>Category</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Location</u>
Technological Artifacts of the Lower Holocene	ARTIFACT	1 (reserve)
Booklet Double	BD	1 (reserve)
Binary Star [doubles]	BS	1 (reserve)
Circulating Mixed Media	C/MM	9
Ace Double	D	1 (reserve)
Dictionary	dict	1 (reserve)
Eraserhead Double	ERD	1 (reserve)
Foreign-language Hardcover Anthology	FH	5 (reserve)
Foreign-language Hardcover Anthology	FHA	5 (reserve)
Foreign-language Paperback Anthology	FP	5 (reserve)
Foreign-language Paperback Anthology	FPA	5 (reserve)
Gryphon Double	GRD	1 (reserve)
Gollancz Double	GZD	1 (reserve)
Large Fiction	L	55 – 79, 111 – 145
Large Circulating Comics	L-CX	9
Large Circulating Reference	L-REF	7
Large Anthology	LA	80 – 82, tops of 92 – 110, tops of 83 – 87
Millennium Binary [doubles]	MB	1 (reserve)
Ocean View Doubles	OVD	1 (reserve)
Large Reserve Art	R/L-ART	1 (reserve)
Large Reserve Comics	R/L-CX	3 (reserve)
Large Reserve Reference	R/L-REF	4 (reserve)
Reserve Multimedia	R/MM	4 (reserve)
Small Reserve Comics	R/S-CX	3 (reserve)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Location</u>
Small Reserve Reference	R/S-REF	4 (reserve)
Very Large Reserve Fiction	R/VL	1 (reserve)
Very Large Reserve Art	R/VL-ART	1 (reserve)
Very Large Reserve Comics	R/VL-CX	3 & 4 (reserve)
Very Large Reserve Reference	R/VL-REF	4 (reserve)
Very Large Reserve Anthology	R/VLA	1 (reserve)
Even Bigger Reserve Fiction	R/XL	4 (reserve)
Even Bigger Reserve Art	R/XL-ART	1 (reserve)
Even Bigger Reserve Comics	R/XL-CX	4 (reserve)
Even Bigger Reserve Reference	R/XL-REF	4 (reserve)
Even Bigger Reserve Anthology	R/XLA	4 (reserve)
Small Fiction (authors A-L)	S	17 – 54
Small Fiction (authors M-Z)	S	83 – 110
Small Circulating Comics	S-CX	9
Small Circulating Reference	S-REF	6
Small Anthology	SA	10 – 17
Tor Double	TD	1 (reserve)
Very Large Circulating Fiction	VL	9
Very Large Circulating Reference	VL-REF	6 & 7
Very Large Circulating Comics	VL/CX	9
Very Large Circulating Anthology	VLA	9
Even Bigger Circulating Reference	XL-REF	7 & 8
(New Books)		2 (reserve)
(Recent Magazines)		3 & 4 (reserve)

(list does not include Special Reserve shelfcodes)

shelfcodes01.pdn  
January 2015

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For all but a few oddball categories the shelfcode format is:

# [R/] *size* [-*category*]

(Items in brackets are optional.)

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"R/" means "on reserve, does not circulate." Additionally, the following also don't circulate: DICT, ARTIFACT, foreign books, doubles (e.g., Ace Doubles), and anything on the New Books shelf. With those exceptions, anything that doesn't have the "R/" prefix does circulate.

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*size* is based on the book's height:

- up to 7 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches: S (small)
- 7 $\frac{1}{4}$  to 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches: L (large)
- 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  to 12 inches: VL (very large)
- above 12 inches: XL (extremely large)

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*category*... is a zoo, but the major ones are:

(none) Fiction, single-author works. Novels or collections of stories all by the same author.

A Fiction, anthologies. Collections of stories by different authors. (Note: anthologies are alphabetized by name-of-editor. Also, there's no hyphen for these, thus e.g. "LA" rather than "L-A".)

REF Non-fiction, reference work.

CX Comics/graphic novels.

ART Art books.

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