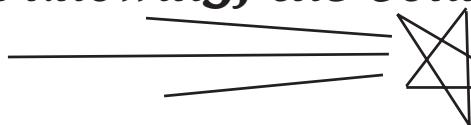


If it's worth knowing, the Connection will tell you!



Volume XXVI, Issue 12

I.T. Connection

****I.T. WEEK (April 17th-22nd) SCHEDULE INSIDE!****

Study Break

Science on Screen

Who's Afraid of Designer Babies?
Wednesday, May 3, 7 p.m.
Bell Museum Auditorium
\$2 suggested donation

Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis or PGD allows scientists to screen the genetic profile of embryos conceived through in vitro fertilization. What is the potential of this technology and who should decide how to use it? The documentary *Who's Afraid of Designer Babies?* chronicles the experience of a couple in Sidney, Australia who decide to use this embryo-screening technology to help save their 4-year-old son's life. Over the past two years, the couple has spent \$20,000 and produced 36 embryos in a quest to conceive a baby whose bone marrow will match that of their ill son. The film raises complex and emotional issues about our potential to "design" our descendants.

Gradumatating?

Check out
Career Services
for students and new graduates
It's never too early to start planning your career. The Career Center for Science and Engineering (CCSE) assists individuals and groups with all aspects of career planning.
Stop by Lind 150 any time.

IMA Public Lecture:

Mathematics and Magic Tricks

Persi Diaconis
Mary V. Sunseri Professor of Statistics and Mathematics
Stanford University

April 19, 2006
7:00 pm, Willey Hall 125

Sometimes the way a magic trick works is even more amazing than the trick itself. I will illustrate with some performable tricks that seem to fool magicians. The math involved has application to breaking and entering, robot vision, cryptography, random number generation, and DNA sequence analysis.

2006 Abigail and John Van Vleck Lectures

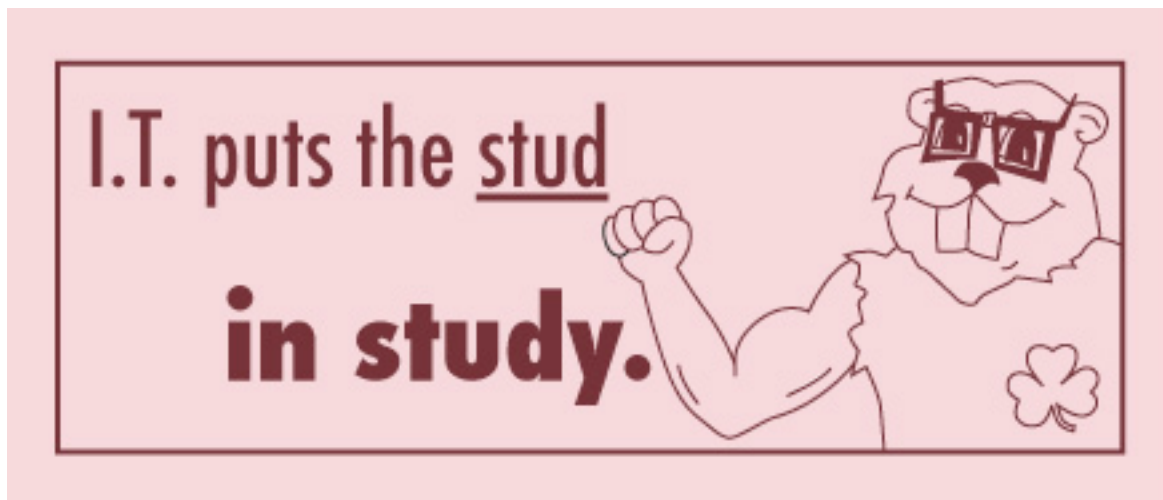
Sir Anthony J. Leggett
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
2003 Nobel Laureate

Public Lecture:
4:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 19, 2006
Tate Laboratory of Physics, Room 150,
Van Vleck Auditorium

Does the Everyday World Really Obey Quantum Mechanics?

Reception following lecture in Physics 216

Quantum mechanics has been enormously successful in describing nature at the atomic level, and most physicists believe that it is in principle the "whole truth" about the world even at the everyday level. However, such a view prima facie leads to a severe problem. In certain circumstances, the most natural interpretation of the theory implies that no definite outcome of an experiment occurs until the act of "observation."



Date	Event	Time	Room	Description
Monday 17th	IT BBQ	11:00 am -12:30 pm	Lind Hall Quad	Enjoy burgers, chips music, and your fellow nerds
	LAN Party	6-10 pm	The Whole	Get recognition you deserve for playing counterstrike instead of studying physics
Tuesday 18th	Poker Party	6-10 pm	Rapson 43	Use your math skills to earn prizes
Wednesday 19th	Panel Disc.	4:30-6:00 pm	EE/CSci 3111	Meet and learn about companies looking to hire I.T. students
	Banquet	6:30 pm	By invite only	Dress classy, eat classy
Thursday 20th	IT night out	6:00-9:00 pm	Sgt. Preston's	Party like a CLA student
Friday 21st	Pi Mile Run	2:00 pm	Northrop Mall	Run 3.14 miles
	Olympics	3:30 pm	Lind Hall Quad	Team up with friends and challenge others
	SWE Ball	8:00 pm – 12:00 am	Radisson Ballroom	Dance
Saturday 22nd	Concert	1:00 pm	KHK (Electrical Engineering Fraternity)	Featuring bands: The Blend, Roster McCabe, and Stereoscope)



History of Plumb Bob



Contrary to popular belief, Plumb Bob is not a mystical secret society made up of a few members all going by the name Robert Plumb. In truth, veterans of World War I formed the organization of Plumb Bob. These young men returned home as war heroes, but soon found that they had forgotten some of the knowledge they had gained in the pre-war times.

In spite of rigorous efforts by these brave veterans, University of Minnesota physics got the best of them. They failed the class and became destined to one more year of the course with an entirely different class of students. The young men who had failed together formed the society of Plumb Bob. New members were warmly welcomed if they met the requirement: to have failed a U of M math or physics course. The members of this group originally met at a bar on East Hennepin to discuss problems relating to their own lives and to the world in general. Over time the meeting places changed, but the king of people in the society did not. The "failure" requirement was eventually dropped in favor of a GPA of at least 3.14, which is the value of pi.

Thus, Plumb Bob became an Honorary Leadership Society.

Since the beginning, Plumb Bob has had the honor of guarding the sacred Blarney Stone. The Blarney Stone is the dearest of all things to a true engineer. The significance of the great Blarney Stone lies in its inscription and history. It is inscribed with the foundation of all engineering: "Erin go Braugh," which can be loosely translated as, "St. Patrick was an engineer!" This is why we pay homage to St. Patrick: he is the patron saint of all engineers.

During the early years of the society, the members of Plumb Bob would carry the Blarney Stone out of hiding and display it on their float in the Engineer's Day parade. All of the engineers would pay tribute to the stone on this day, and in return would be granted the highest of all honors: to kiss the Blarney Stone. At the end of the parade the stone was presented to the gentleman lucky enough to have been dubbed St. Patrick for the knighting ceremony. At the end of the night, the Plumb Bobbers would steal off into the darkness to hide the Blarney Stone for one more year.

For many years the School of Mines was quite envious of the Engineers' sacred Blarney Stone. They began a ritual of attempting to steal the stone from the Bobbers' determined care. On many occasions they were even successful. This turned into an annual event that culminated in the Miners' attempt to crush the stone at a local quarry. Fortunately, the members of Plumb Bob learned of this terrible event before it was to happen, and replaced the true Blarney Stone with a fake. Much to the miners' chagrin, the sacred Stone was safe.

After the School of mines dissolved (many years ago), the Foresters and Law students took over this tradition of trying to steal the Blarney Stone. For decades the Foresters were the chief rivals of Plumb Bob and all engineers. Yet, the inevitable finally occurred: the strength of the Forestry Club waned, while Plumb Bob and Engineers remained strong. It is in this spirit that the early celebration of Engineers began, and in this strong spirit that we continue to celebrate what has become

I.T. Week. .

Upcoming Seminars and Colloquia

Department of Geology and Geophysics

Seminars are presented on Thursdays (unless otherwise noted) at 3:30 p.m. in 110 Pillsbury Hall, followed by refreshments

April 18

Tuesday, 3:30 p.m., 110 Pillsbury Hall
Dr. Jill Banfield, University of California-Berkeley, Department of Earth and Planetary Science

Molecular Geomicrobiology: an Interface of Genomics and Geochemistry

April 20

Dr. Joseph Kirschvink, California Institute of Technology, Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences
The Paleoproterozoic Snowball Earth: A Climate Disaster Triggered by the Evolution of Oxygenic Photosynthesis?

April 18

Hard Rock Lunch
Dan Ruscitto
U/Th systematics in basalts from behind-the-volcanic-front of southeastern Guatemala
Tuesdays at 11:45 or noon in 105 Pillsbury Hall

Department of Mathematics

Friday April 14

Industrial Problems Seminar:
at 1:25 in VinH 20
... Will not meet this week

Probability and Combinatorics:
at 2:30 in VinH 6
Professor Persi Diaconis from Stanford University will speak on "Glauber dynamics, exponential families, and orthogonal polynomials"

Automorphic Forms and Number Theory:
at 4:40 in VinH 301
... Will not meet this week

Department of Chemistry

Held in 331 Smith unless otherwise noted

April 19

4:15 pm
R. Mark Wightman University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Special Seminar: Watching Neurotransmitters in Action with Voltammetry

April 20

9:45 am
Dirk Trauner Univ. of California, Berkeley
Departmental Seminar: A 12 Step Program for Total Syntheses

April 24

4:15 pm
Eckard Münck, Carnegie Mellon University
Special Seminar: Mössbauer and Computational Studies of Iron Diketimate Complexes: Surprises and their Resolution

History of Science and Technology

Fridays at 3:35 p.m. Room 131 at Tate Lab

April 14

Matthew Klinge
Department of History
Bowdoin College
"Seattle's 'Metro Monster': Ecological Restoration and Geographies of Inequality"

April 121

Hans P. Halvorson
Department of Philosophy
Princeton University
"The Fate of Parastatistics"

The IT Connection is an informal, bi-weekly newsletter published by IT Student Publications for the Institute of Technology, University of Minnesota faculty and students. It is funded through student service fees with partial funding through the IT Alumni Society. Opinions in the IT Connection are those of its contributors, and do not portray those of the University of Minnesota, its faculty and students, nor the IT Student Publications organization.

If you are interested in working on the staff, feel free to come in and talk to the editors. Please email the editors to set up an appointment. The office is located in 5 Lind Hall. Phone: 612-624-9816.

If you wish to submit an article or announcement, you must do so at least two weeks in advance. Submissions may be dropped off in the IT Connection mailbox in 106 Lind Hall or emailed to connection@itdean.umn.edu. The weekly deadline for article submission is Tuesday at noon.

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

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