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TechNews

Student newspaper of Illinois Institute of Technology since 1928

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Paint IIT Pink supports breast cancer research

Genevieve Hummel
TECHNEWS WRITER

Paint IIT Pink, the campus-wide day dedicated to showing support for breast cancer research, was brought back for a third year last Tuesday, October 20. Kappa Phi Delta and the Illinois Tech Women's Volleyball team joined forces to host this event. The day started with students waking up to find that these girls had tied pink ribbons on many of the posts on campus as well as decorating the windows and sidewalks all over campus with motivational and supportive messages to those who had survived breast cancer or had been affected by breast cancer. Students and faculty were also given the chance to fill out a form with the name of anyone they knew who is or was personally affected by breast cancer. The names gathered from this form were then written on pink ribbons that the sisters of Kappa put up

lining one of the walkways to the MTCC.

Event t-shirts went on sale the week before the event for \$10. This year, the shirts were black with a picture of the MTCC and the tube, with pink paint spilling out of the tube's opening. All proceeds from the sale of these shirts went directly to the Lynn Sage Cancer Research Foundation, a local Chicago foundation funding some of the country's most promising researchers in the field of breast cancer. Students who did not purchase event t-shirts were encouraged to wear pink to show support for breast cancer awareness. Some students went all out for this event, dressing in formal attire, while others got creative by wearing shirts that simply had the word "pink" on them. Many students showed support by donning attire in all shades of pinks and reds, wearing ribbons, donating money, or simply cheering on the volleyball team as they played the Dig Pink game that concluded the

day's events.

Other events that took place during the day included a table on the bridge where medical professionals were handing out information about breast cancer. This table was intended to offer students a place to ask questions and gather important information concerning things like the signs and symptoms of breast cancer. In the afternoon, students could head over to the Greek Quad where Kappa girls were selling cookies or event buttons or t-shirts to raise money for the Lynn Sage Foundation.

The culmination of the evening, the Dig Pink volleyball game, brought together many of the students and staff of Illinois Tech. Many of the people who attended the game wore pink or event t-shirts and the bleachers were full of all shades of pinks and reds. The girls of the volleyball team were also adorned in pink, wearing special shirts for this event.

The game was played against Moody Bible College, a team that proved to be a challenging rival. However, Illinois Tech managed to stay within a few points of Moody the entire time, making them work for the first win. Following the initial loss of the first set, Illinois Tech played well and succeeded in winning the following three sets. Winning the volleyball game was a wonderful way to end a great day dedicated to the support of breast cancer research and the support of those who have had personal experiences with breast cancer.

The combined efforts of the Illinois Tech Women's Volleyball Team and the Kappa Phi Delta sorority ended with over \$3,000 being raised. All money raised was donated directly to the Lynn Sage Cancer Research Foundation. Thank you to all those who attended these events and showed support for those affected by cancer.



Photos by Genevieve Hummel

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TECHNOLOGY SINCE 1928

McCormick Tribune Campus Center
Room 221
3201 South State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60616

E-mail: editor@technewsiit.com
Website: <http://www.technewsiit.com>

TechNews STAFF

Editor-in-Chief	Kori Bowns
Opinion Editor	Austin Gonzalez
IT Manager	Kristal Copeland
Copy Editors	Kristal Copeland Kayleigh Stevens Anoopa Sundararajan Annie Zorn
Layout Editors	Sijia Wu Xiaoyu Zhang Annie Zorn
Distribution Manager	Khaleela Zaman
Financial Advisor	Vickie Tolbert
Faculty Advisor	Gregory Pulliam

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Model United Nations holds first General Body Meeting

Genevieve Hummel
TECHNEWS WRITER

The newly-formed Model United Nations club at IIT held their first general body meeting on Friday, October 23, during lunch-time, in the Perlstein Hall auditorium. The turnout was not as high as expected; however, those students who did attend were very enthusiastic about the club and most were willing to jump right in. Even the students who have never been part of a Model United Nations club before were enthusiastic about the club and seemed very willing to learn how the club works.

The purpose of Model United Nations is to serve as a replica of the real United Nations. Students in the club will represent the committees and countries that are part of the real United Nations and make resolutions to solve real world problems. One of the great advantages of joining the Model United Nations club at IIT is that students who are part of the club will get a chance to work on their

public speaking skills. On top of that, students will be keeping up with current events and will be able to look at both sides of things that are happening around the world, giving them the opportunity to better form their own opinions on these subjects.

The future plans for this club include hosting two conferences every semester, a monthly general body meeting, and sending out a weekly email to all members that contains a brief description of current events in order to bring international issues to the attention of the members. The next general body meeting will be held next month and food will be provided for all attendees. During the meeting, exact information will be given concerning the plans for the first conference. There will be a more detailed explanation on what it means to be part of Model United Nations and how the conferences will be organized. There is also the chance that the board will be expanded to include positions beyond the two co-presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer. Anyone interested in becoming a board member for Model Unit-

ed Nations should consider attending the next general body meeting to learn more about the potential openings.

Based on the amount of time left in this semester, the group will probably only hold one conference. However, this conference will be more laid back and instructional with the goal of teaching members the rules and procedures involved in being part of a Model United Nations conference. Each conference will be held on a Saturday or Sunday in one of the classrooms on campus. Conferences will be approximately four hours long and will keep a focus on more recent events.

Anyone interested in learning more about Model United Nations at IIT should attend the next general body meeting, follow them on the "Model United Nations at IIT" Facebook page, or contact co-presidents Mete Morris (mete@hawk.iit.edu) or Adi Parakh (adi@hawk.iit.edu) for more information or to join the mailing list.

Creative writing and art by students at 1000 Words Paint Festival

Ricardo Torres
TECHNEWS WRITER

Now that midterms are coming to an end, there will be more events and opportunities for students to relax and calm their mind. The Story, Writing, Animation, and Production (SWAP) team has taken the initiative to provide students with a place where they can freely express their feelings through their creative writing and drawings. On Friday, October 23, the SWAP team hosted an event called the 1000 Words Paint Festival located on the MTCC Bridge. The purpose of this event was to give students the opportunity to express themselves by drawing or writing on the windows, and to give everyone else the chance to see their artwork.

The festival began at 12 p.m., when

the members of SWAP brought out the art materials and assembled them on the tables by the MTCC Bridge. The materials included a supply of notecards where students could write one word. The fun part of this activity is that students had to write a word that began with the last letter of the previous word. Another activity was to create a story by giving every student an opportunity to participate. A student could take a note card and write a sentence fragment on their notecard. It would then be taped on the MTCC Bridge windows so that other students could see it. Another student could then continue the story by adding another sentence fragment.

The main activity that many students participated in was the painting activity. This is where students were able to use the many painting colors that were made available

by the SWAP organization, and use them to express themselves by creating a drawing next to the others. The colorful drawings included a painting of the Earth, a saxophone, Man on a Bench, and even a painting of Arthur from the television series. The 1000 Words Paint Festival was successful with many students contributing with their creative writing and drawings. The Story, Writing, Animation, and Production team will be hosting more events in the following weeks where you can join the fun. Some events include the second part of Intro to Animation and Basic Video Editing that will take place on November 5 and Advanced Animation that will take place on November 19. For more information or questions you may contact the SWAP team at swap@iit.edu.



Photo by Ricardo Torres

Immunization holds to prevent students from class registration

Kori Bowns
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With the Spring 2016 class schedule already published and registration for classes opening on Monday, November 9, students across campus are already working out their preferred class schedules and arranging meetings with their academic advisors. Before getting too excited about class registration, students should first ensure that they will have no holds on their student account preventing them from registering for the next semester of classes.

Holds on a student's account can come from a variety of offices for a multitude of reasons; for example, a student who still owes the university tuition payment from the

current semester might be unable to register for the next semester of classes. Another type of hold, and one of the more common holds experienced by students at the university, is an immunization hold from the IIT Student Health and Wellness Center (SHWC). According to Anita Opdycke, Associate Vice Provost for Student Health and Wellness, "All students who have not submitted or completed their immunization requirements will receive a hold on their account, preventing Spring Registration, on November 3, 2015."

Illinois state law requires that university students enrolled in at least half-time credit hours be immunized against certain communicable diseases. When students first enroll at the university, they are encouraged to submit a record of their immunization history

prior to the beginning of classes. Students who don't submit this form or don't meet the immunization requirements will need to visit the SHWC to obtain the proper immunizations or visit their own healthcare provider to do so and send their records to the SHWC office.

IIT's SHWC wants to help students obtain proper immunizations and get their records up to date to help students avoid the registration hold. Opdycke added, "The Student Health and Wellness Center would like help you meet the requirements set forth by the State of Illinois in order to achieve compliance at the Illinois Institute of Technology. You may contact us at (312) 567-7550 to schedule an appointment to receive any necessary vaccines or to determine what vaccines you may need." Students who will need their immunization

record updated should contact the SHWC as soon as possible; appointment slots fill up quickly and lines at the health center's office tend to become very long once students are being prevented from registering for classes.

In addition to being required to register for classes, immunizations are important for the overall general health of each student and the campus community. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the widespread use of vaccinations in the United States has limited the occurrence and transmission of preventable diseases. Students with any questions about immunizations can contact the SHWC at (312) 567-7550 or student.health@iit.edu.

Students Speak 2015: We want your voice to be heard

Sean Wright
PROJECT LEAD CONSULTANT,
IIT CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND SERVICE

With the approval of the President and Provost, your fellow IIT students are once again looking for your input in discovering how we can improve the quality of student's experiences with various service areas and departments here at IIT. The Students Speak program aligns with the President's and Provost's commitment to advancing student satisfaction and the quality of services provided to students.

The project is headed by a committee of students, who are tasked with identifying how the university's services can make your lives as IIT students better. Their focus is on you – their fellow students and they want to understand what your needs, concerns, and ideas are surrounding the university. The committee is made up of a diverse team of individuals that come from many different backgrounds, ranging from SGA, ISO, Camras Scholars, the Leadership Academy, varsity teams, the Greek community, graduate student organizations, and more. They are committed to helping the administration establish

benchmarks of performance for student services, identify priorities for improvement, create action plans for change, map progress, and instill accountability for those changes.

Once the committee has identified areas within the university services that are most important to students, they will develop the survey to focus on each of those key areas and ask students to provide feedback so that they can gauge what the university is doing right and what needs improvement. The committee will present the results from the Students Speak survey to the President and Provost in January and will also give feedback to the departments and service areas included on the survey. Student committee members also submit specific recommendations on how administrators can make the necessary changes needed to increase student satisfaction with their offices' services. These recommendations will stem from the survey findings collected and from additional input from members of various student organizations.

The Students Speak committee is supported by Dr. George Langlois, the Executive Director for the Center of Research and Service (part of the Lewis College of

Human Sciences) and the IIT Leadership Academy. For those that do not know him, Dr. Langlois is an Industrial/Organizational psychologist whose office also conducts the annual faculty survey and provides consultation to numerous high profile clients outside of IIT. His knowledge and expertise in survey design and analysis serves as a valuable asset to the committee. The Students Speak project is especially important to Dr. Langlois, as he received his PhD here at IIT and the project allows him and his office to give back to the university by helping to make students' experiences here the best that it can be.

The committee has the manpower, the determination, and the contacts, but they need one more crucial piece in order for this survey to make a difference – you. They need as many students as possible to provide feedback on the various student services in order to really gauge what has been working well for students and what needs improvement. Traditionally, the number of student responses has been close to half the total student body and the goal this year is to get an even larger proportion of students to participate. A couple minutes of your time is all it takes to help drive

positive change by ensuring that your voice is heard when the committee presents their findings to the President and Provost.

As an added incentive for participating in the survey, there will also be a raffle drawing that any participating students will be entered in, where they will have the chance to win up to \$150 in the form of a gift card. This is your chance to influence positive change for all IIT students and to have your opinions heard by the university's leadership and senior administrators. Again, the Students Speak Survey is focused on you, the student and this is your chance to help make a positive, lasting impact for current and future IIT students. The survey goes live October 26 and continues through November 6. All students will be sent an email with a link to the survey, but in case you miss it, you can simply go to (http://www.iit.edu/students_speak) and complete the survey there once it goes live, or stop by the kiosk that will be set up in MTCC during lunch hour. Take the survey and let your voice be heard – it only takes a few minutes of your time to make a difference at IIT!

Lewis College to host data roundtable

Kori Bowns
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The work of IIT's Lewis College of Human Sciences is situated at the intersection of humans and technology. As a part of promoting cross-disciplinary dialogue, the college will be hosting a roundtable event this week titled "Algorithms: Human Influence on the World of Data."

The college's roundtable event will be taking place on Thursday, October 29, in the MTCC Auditorium from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. On the Lewis College of Human Science's website, the description of the event reads as follows: "Algorithms convert

data into results—online news aggregation, investment trading decisions, and targets of surveillance programs are all determined by them. But this process is not morally or politically neutral; each algorithm carries in it cultural and political values. Behind every computation sits a person or group of people who've decided what information to collect, how to store it, how to analyze it, and how to use it. In this roundtable, we will discuss how algorithms shape the information we receive, and how transparent the social and political implications of these equations should or shouldn't be."

The event is open to any member of

the IIT community and is free. A reception will follow the event in the MTCC Ballroom.

Four featured roundtable participants will be present. Angela M. Cirucci has her Ph.D. from Temple University's School of Media and Communication. She is a current assistant professor of communication studies at Kutztown University. Jason Resch, who received his computer science degree from Illinois Tech in 2006, will also be joining the roundtable discussion. Also joining will be Christian Sandvig, associate professor of communication studies and information at the University of Michigan. The last featured panelist is Nick Seaver, a Ph.D.

student of anthropology at University of California-Irvine researching how people use technology to interpret sound. According to Stephanie Healey, Director of Marketing and Communications for Lewis College of Human Sciences, the four panelists will "Discuss how algorithms affect the information we receive, and how transparent the social and political implications of these equations should or shouldn't be."

Healey highly recommends that students attend the event. More information as well as an RSVP form can be found at <http://humansciences.iit.edu/roundtable>.

Illinois Tech Robotics presents at MSI Robot Block Party

Kori Bowns
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry (MSI), the largest science museum in the western hemisphere, premiered its newest exhibit, Robot Revolution, this past summer. The exhibit showcases dozens of robots and highlights the ways that humans and robots interact and the ways robots make work easier for humans.

To complement the exhibit, MSI has also hosted events called "Robot Block Party;" for these events, the museum invites local robotics experts into the museum to informally

present their work to the museum's audience. The most recent of these events was held over Columbus Day weekend, October 10-12. IIT's extracurricular robotics student organization, Illinois Tech Robotics (ITR), was the only local exhibitor to present at the museum all three days and reached over one thousand guests.

Illinois Tech Robotics brought four items to the museum to share. The most popular was a project known as mini-Roslund, a one-half scale functional model of ITR's oldest robot, Roslund. Mini-Roslund, armed with a Nerf dart launcher, was available for guests to drive around as well as shoot darts at targets on a field that students from ITR had set up.

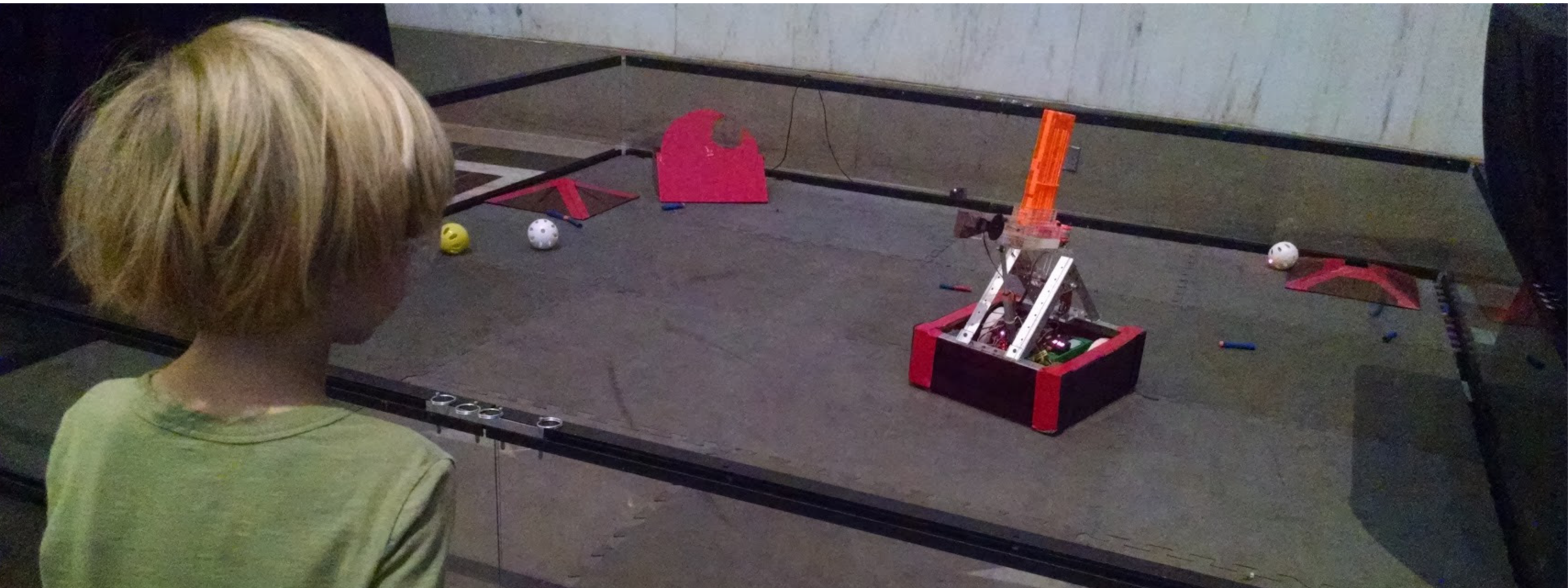
Hundreds of children had the opportunity to drive the robot and aim the dart launcher in a rotating target.

In addition to mini-Roslund, ITR also brought two other robots, Icarus and Fenrir. Icarus, ITR's quadcopter flying robot, was available for guests to see up close. Guests got the chance to interact with the robot by lifting and turning it and watching the robot's artificial horizon display change on a laptop screen. Fenrir is ITR's gravity-drive robot, a robot with two large wheels and a center mass on the axle between them. Guests who visited ITR's table at the museum learned about Fenrir's similarity to a Segway as well as the sensors necessary

to create a balancing robot.

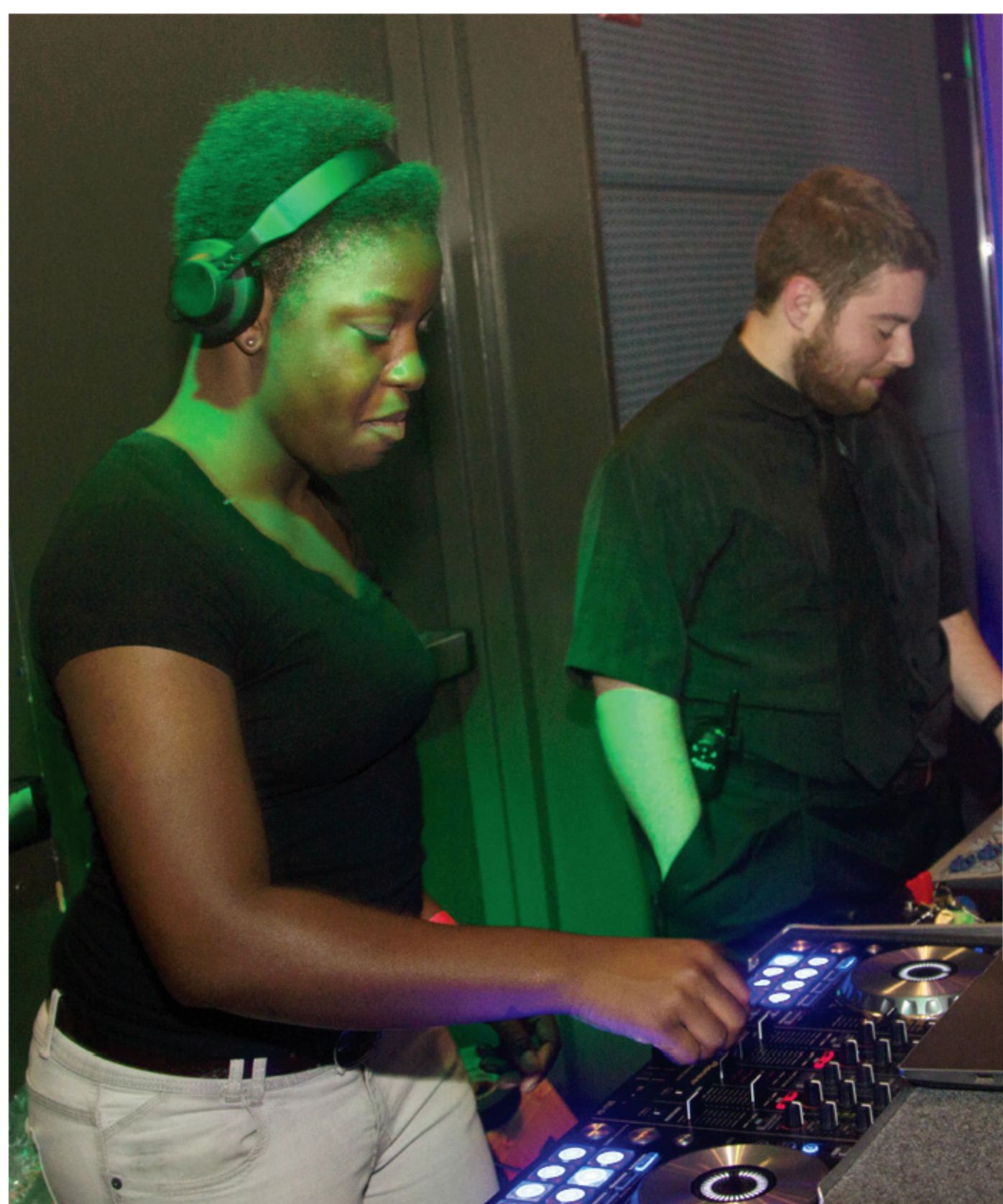
The last item of interest included at ITR's display was their 3D printer, which was designed and built by IIT and ITR alumnus Paul Kim. ITR explained the principles and uses of 3D printing to guests and printed off small trinkets for guests to take home.

Even though MSI's Robot Revolution exhibit will only be open through early January, ITR looks forward to presenting again at MSI's next Robot Block Party event, which will take place during National Robotics Week in April 2016.



Photos by Kori Bowns

Students attend Greek Formal at Hard Rock Hotel Chicago



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Chvrches put on performance at Chicago Metro

Annie Zorn

LAYOUT EDITOR

If you wanted to see the Scottish electro-pop band Chvrches last Saturday night, you had to be prepared to spend over \$150. That was the asking price on ticket reselling websites for their show at the Metro that sold out in 20 minutes when they went on sale this August.

The venue was packed as the opening act, Mansionair, varied their mellow Australian alternative chill songs to and make them a bit more upbeat for the live show. They

played a 45 minute set that included songs from their two EP's, closing with their most well-known song, "Hold Me Down."

Chvrches played a mix of songs from their first LP released in 2013, "The Bones Of What You Believe," and their most recent album, "Every Open Eye." They started off the show by playing "Never Ending Circles," a synth-heavy song from the newest album. Their instrumentation is a collaboration mainly between clean synth beats and lead singer Lauren Mayberry's vocals.

Within the simple nature of their music, the songs are complex and sonically diverse. The band showed diversification and

versatility as the lead singer played drums for two songs and the synth player Martin Doherty took center stage to sing "Under the Tide." The other member, Iain Cook, plays a variety of instruments on stage including synthesizers guitar, and bass.

In between songs Mayberry bantered with the audience about topics ranging from the Miley Cyrus movie "LOL" that had a scene filmed at Metro and also the band's plans to watch the newest Paranormal Activity film on their following day off. During a technical difficulty, Mayberry also had a short Q & A with the crowd.

After a raucous minute of clapping

and chanting the band came back on stage for their encore to play "Afterglow," a slower song that closes "Every Open Eye." They then finished the show playing the popular "Mother We Share," which was also their official debut single back in 2012.

For those who missed the show because of plans or weren't able to get tickets, Chvrches will be playing in Chicago again December 30 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont as part of the Reaction New Year's Eve Festival and it is sure to be an enjoyable show.

Fall Fest at The Lincoln Park Zoo

Abha Dalmia

TECHNEWS WRITER

The Lincoln park zoo is a must-visit on every student's list, and what better time to do it than the zoo's Fall Fest? Albert Camus, a French Nobel Prize-winning author, journalist, and philosopher, had once said that "Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower." The essence of this statement can be enjoyed in abundance at the zoo.

The zoo is only a seven-minute bus

ride away from the Clark and Division stop on the CTA Red Line. What's more is that admission to this well-kept zoo is free from 10 to 5 pm. The zoo boasted species from the grassland, aquatic, dessert as well as the forest biomes. The tundra biome is still under construction and would probably be ready by the end of the year. The whole area consisted of various exhibits and animal houses, namely the sea lion pool, African journey habitat, bird-house, swan pond, forest habitat and others. In addition, they had a show where they showed us techniques they used to train the seals. An

interesting fact we learned was that in order to not surprise the seals with doctor visits, the zoo keepers make the sea lions turn on their backs and open their mounts for dental check-ups everyday. They even have a weighing scale in place for the seals.

There were exotic animals from all over the world and many of some of them were actually endangered species that people will rarely get an opportunity to see and learn about. Specifically, to celebrate fall, parents and children could be seen picking out pumpkins from a pumpkin patch with an array of pump-

kins with different shapes and sizes.

Visiting the zoo is a very effective way to release stress. The whole experience was refreshing and enjoyable. In addition, it was a pleasure to watch small kids being able to tell the difference between mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. A visit to the Lincoln Park Zoo keeps you wanting more and to be honest can make for a romantic date for those of you looking to go out with your significant others!

Chicago Theatre hosts presentation on global financial crisis

Shachi Sayata

TECHNEWS WRITER

If you crossed The Chicago Theater at 6 p.m. on the evening of October 13th, you would probably wonder what so many people in suits and briefcases were doing there. I am certain if I'd throw a stone in the air it would hit someone who worked at a bank (and would hopefully give me a job). It was indeed a remarkable evening with The Chicago Council hosting an event with Ben Bernanke, former chairman of the Federal Reserve and Martin Wolf, a renowned economic commentator; who had gathered to converse about the Global Economic Crisis.

This highly intellectual crowd was not only eager to hear the speakers that night but also receive signed copies of Bernanke's latest book "The Courage to Act." It then dawned on me, I was at one of Chicago's finest events,

surrounded by the most intellectually stimulating people and was about to attend the most breathtaking presentation of my life. I learnt a lot of interesting things on this occasion since the speakers lucidly covered a wide range of events that occurred during the crisis and the measures that were taken thereafter as well as the overall health of the global economy today.

Bernanke highlighted how he started writing his book as a method of keeping a chronicle for himself. The book thus provides the reader with an augmented experience of the crisis. It is a summary of all significant events in his life, these include his academic career, research, work with Alan Greenspan, and finally his role as the Federal Reserve chairman during the crisis. Wolf rightly exclaimed how Bernanke's early interest and research with the Great Depression was serendipitous considering the role he would play later in his life with the Federal Reserve.

The most important question that

arose that evening was a question that has definitely crossed everybody's mind. Didn't the regulators see this coming? Couldn't they have contained it when the scale was much smaller? To this Bernanke said, "We understood that housing prices were very high and the mortgage prices were too low. However, we did not fathom that the system was fragile and highly dependent on short term lending. Further, banks were meeting the capital requirements of that time. Ultimately the responsibility lies with those who took the risk but I agree that the regulators should have taken better measures."

This presentation was followed by a round of questions from the highly erudite crowd. These questions were answered by both the speakers with great detail and enthusiasm. One could easily note how they had the timeline of the events memorized at the back of their hand. As they objectively answered these questions to palliate the queries of the rather

zealous crowd, I wondered to myself, it is mesmerizing how the economy is recuperating today and how the crisis has not only lead us to be more cautious but also more aware of our financial system.

Though the crisis unfolded in 2008, it is still a subject that is extensively researched. Further, there have been multiple documentaries, books and blockbuster movies that were created to depict the topic. The impact of the crisis cannot be quantified however, it has led to many changes in reforms and increased our understanding of the financial system. The Federal Reserve under the leadership of Ben Bernanke earlier and now Janet Yellen continue to take preventive measures and safeguard the American economy. As I read the signed copy of Bernanke's book, it makes me realize "The Courage to Act" is indeed a befitting title.



Reviews:

New music review: 'U.S. Elevator'

Soren Spicknall

WIIT MUSIC DIRECTOR

On a warm, humid evening in April of 2013, I somehow found myself as the guest of someone who was attending a folk concert at The Frog Pond, an invite-only, BYOB venue in the middle of a collectively-run farm in Silverhill, Alabama, 20 miles southeast of the modest city of Mobile and 20 north of the Gulf of Mexico. It was there, among an army of folding chairs and hundreds of glass jars filled with true southern moonshine that I came across Johnny Irion for the first time. Headlining in a duo with his wife, Sarah Lee Guthrie (daughter of Arlo and granddaughter of Woody, both folk music legends,) Irion was joined additionally that night by Mobile natives Will Kimbrough, Grayson Capps, Corky Hughes, and Spencer Bohren on some of their numbers to form a full Americana band, something that longtime followers of Guthrie and Irion know is seldom heard of from the pair. Though their work is compelling in its own right, the best moments of the show came when the talents of additional performers were added to their compositions, breathing new life into each track. In my mind, it was that night that the seeds were sewn for U.S. Elevator, the new roots rock band fronted by Johnny Irion. A creative mind like Irion's deserves the power of a full range of musicians behind it, and the challenge of working with other creatives of the same caliber. On their first album, a self-

titled LP due out on November 3, we begin to see whether such a collaboration brings out the best in Irion like it should in theory.

Johnny Irion comes from a long line of artists from one discipline or another. His great-uncle was John Steinbeck, writer of such landmark American novels as "Grapes of Wrath" and "Of Mice and Men." His grandmother, Rubilee Knight, was a professional violinist and one of the leading figures in classical music in the American south for a number of decades. Others in his family tree have written, sung, or otherwise performed their way into history, and Irion himself is set to do the same. His first two solo albums, 2001's "Unity Lodge" and 2007's "Ex Tempore," were released on Yep Roc and Rte. 8, respectively, and gained quiet yet concentrated critical acclaim. His collaborative releases with Sarah Lee Guthrie have expanded his reach even more, including one that was added to the catalog of Folkways, the Smithsonian-run label that has a permanent mandate to never allow any of its albums to go out of print. Now, Irion has settled in California and put his full weight into U.S. Elevator, along with Anders Bergstrom on guitar, Brett Long on keyboards, Erich Riedl on drums, and Nate Modisette on bass. The result? A debut album that shows off the talents of each member and sounds mature for a newly-formed band, but suffers from a lack of fresh, passionate material. While everything on "U.S. Elevator" is certainly pleasant, as well as a welcome change

from the low-key, traditional folk sound that characterizes previous work from Irion, it seems like many of the best songs of his might be behind him. Stylistically, it's impossible to deny that "U.S. Elevator" is a natural step forward for Johnny Irion. Spiritually, it feels sometimes like his heart is not really in it.

The first track on this new album, the instrumental "Pierre Lafond" (named for the founder of a namesake vineyard and market in Santa Barbara County), sets an encouraging tone for the LP, with floating sitar tones, a welcome change of pace for Irion. However, the momentum of that impressive piece is dampened by the next couple of songs that follow it, with backing harmonies lacking much spirit and songwriting that seems too intentionally alt-country in style (for example, "Community Service" is all about not being able to tour due to one member of the band having committed a minor crime, territory that has been covered extensively by hundreds of Americana acts in various forms over the years.) In fact, until midway through the album, it almost seems as if "U.S. Elevator" is a dud. From there, though, a bright light suddenly flickers into existence, and stays with the recording through to its end. If it weren't for this album's latter half, it wouldn't even be worth writing about. Listening the whole way through, though, you get the sense that the band formed actively as they recorded these songs, getting into their groove more with each passing moment in the studio.

Starting with "Where The Rubber Meets The Road," Irion and his group begin to seriously diverge from their old folk rock habits, touching on territory claimed by groups like My Morning Jacket and The War On Drugs rather than Neil Young and Jackson Browne. The band shifts styles with remarkable maneuverability, traversing between Dawes-style storytelling and early Rolling Stones psych in a single verse without any loss of cohesion. The sitar comes back into play at some point, and synths are even added in a re-invented reprise of "Pierre Lafond," an element that could have potentially huge ramifications for the group's relevance going forward. There is currently a notable gap in audience between the Americana and Folk Rock communities in the U.S., and with Johnny Irion and Sarah Lee Guthrie firmly in the former camp on previous releases, an electronically-aided expansion of their sound could open up the entire genre to experimentation that has previously been considered taboo to many purists. This willingness to innovate is U.S. Elevator's saving grace, since the actual written content of their debut isn't incredibly strong and songs one through six are pretty forgettable. If they settle into a traditional folk formula from here, it's not likely we will hear much from them again. If they continue to explore new territory, they could become one of the keys to keeping Americana alive and vibrant. For now, though, there's still progress to be made. 5.8/10

SUDOKU

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The word Sudoku, above, is actually the abbreviation of "Suuji wa dokushin ni kagiru," meaning "the digits must be single" or "the digits are limited to one occurrence."

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Tuesday, October 27
Women's Soccer
vs. Mt. Mercy
6 p.m.

Women's Volleyball
vs. Concordia Chicago
7 p.m.

Wednesday, October 28
Men's Soccer
vs. Carthage
7 p.m.

Friday, October 30
Women's Volleyball
@ Benedictine
2 p.m.

Women's Volleyball
@ Dominican
6 p.m.

Saturday, October 31
Swimming and Diving
vs. Beloit College
1 p.m.

Women's Volleyball
@ Milwaukee Engr.
9:30 a.m.

Women's Soccer
@ Roosevelt
11 a.m.

Women's Volleyball
@ North Central Ill.
11:30 a.m.

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Obama Sweeps to Historic Victory

Nation Elects Its First African-American President Amid Record Turnout; Turmoil in Economy Dominates Voters' Concerns

By JONATHAN WEISMAN AND LAURA MECKLER

WASHINGTON—Sen. Barack Obama