

## TechNews

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SINCE 1928

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote student discussion and bolster the IIT community by providing a newspaper that is highly accessible, a stalwart of journalistic integrity, and a student forum. TechNews is a dedicated to the belief that a strong campus newspaper is essential to a strong campus community.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

TechNews is written, managed, and edited by the students of, and funded in part by, Illinois Institute of Technology. The material herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Illinois Institute of Technology or the editors, staff, and advisor of TechNews. There will be no censorship of TechNews publication by the faculty or staff of IIT. Sole authority and responsibility for publication and adherence to the values set forth in this policy rests with the TechNews staff. This paper seeks to bring together the various segments of the Illinois Tech community and strives through balance and content to achieve a position of respect and excellence. TechNews strives for professionalism with due respect to the intellectual values of the university and its community. All material submitted becomes the property of TechNews, and is subject to any editorial decisions deemed necessary.

## SUBMISSIONS

TechNews is published on the Tuesday of each week of the academic year. Deadline for all submissions and announcements is 11:59 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. Articles, photos, and illustrations must be submitted electronically to the TechNews website at technewsiit.com.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

The editors reserve the right to determine if submitted material meets TechNews' policy and standards. For more information about our editorial standards, please email assteditor@technewsiit.com.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor may be submitted by anyone, but are subject to review by the Editor-in-Chief. All letters-to-the-editor become the property of TechNews upon submission. TechNews does not accept or publish anonymous letters or stories.

## ADVERTISING

Legitimate paid advertisements, from within or outside the IIT community, which serve to produce income for the paper, are accommodated. TechNews holds the right to deny any advertisement unsuitable for publication. Media Kits are available upon request. Ad space is limited and is taken on a first-come, first-serve basis. Contact the Business Manager at business@technewsiit.com for more information.

## LOCAL &amp; NATIONAL ADVERTISERS

To place an ad, contact us via email at business@technewsiit.com.

## Waking up 20 years later; thoughts on technological professions in the consumer era

Alexander Cole Eisenberg  
TECHNEWS WRITER

Among the many things that clutter the shelves of my room is a toy. Sitting among my other knick-knacks and thrift store detritus, it is totally and utterly unremarkable. This toy, a Furby to be precise, was merely one of many 'mechanical pet' style toys that were produced in the millions during the 90's before falling out of style and subsequently into the cultural dustbin. It is only insignificant, however, in the abstract idea of the thing: that is to say, it's only insignificant as an old toy, a fuzzy little gremlin from a darker, drearier age before tablets.

If, however, you pull aside the dull platitudes of the dusty fur and the more-creepy-than-cute plastic body, you are left with a highly engineered combination of microprocessors, motors, and sensors. What you're left with is comprised of circuit boards that were designed by ECEs, programmed by

CS experts, and running servos designed to exact specifications by MechEs. It is a device with speakers, microphones, IR transceivers, and motion sensors all in a casing that can fit in the palm of your hand. Oh, and let's not forget that this was in 1998.

Think then, of the hundreds of man hours spent designing the shrill little abomination? The brand, of course, has lasted to the modern day. 18 years of Furby, 18 years of constantly tweaking and rebranding a toy. The teams of trained professionals spending their days figuring out how to coerce marginally smaller amounts of affection out of children that have long since stopped caring. The gargantuan effort expended on determining how to lower the price per unit manufactured by some arbitrary amount for some arbitrary fiscal year.

Most of all, however, think of those who were there from the beginning, those who have been solving the Furby problem for almost 20 years, the span of the most

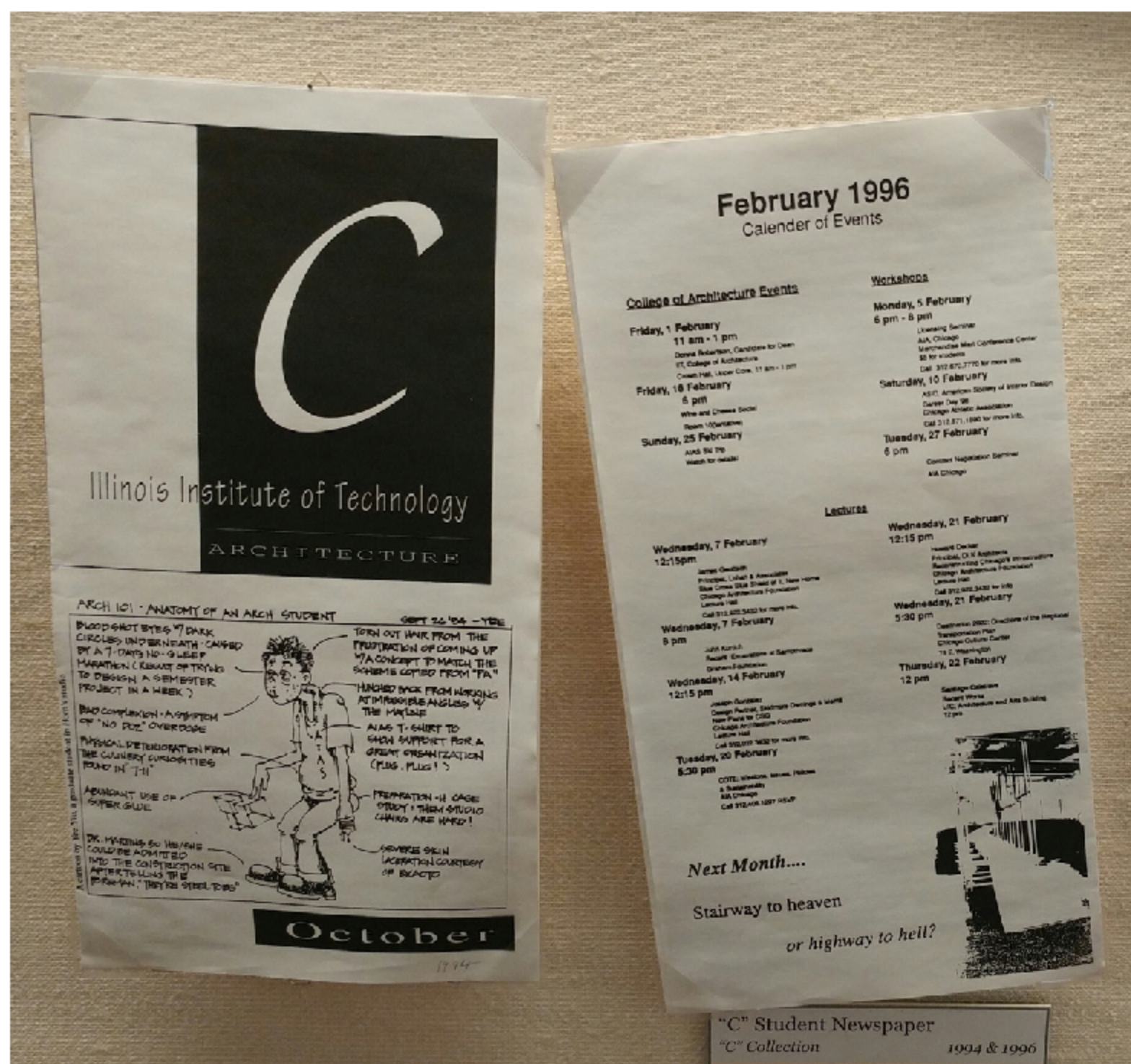
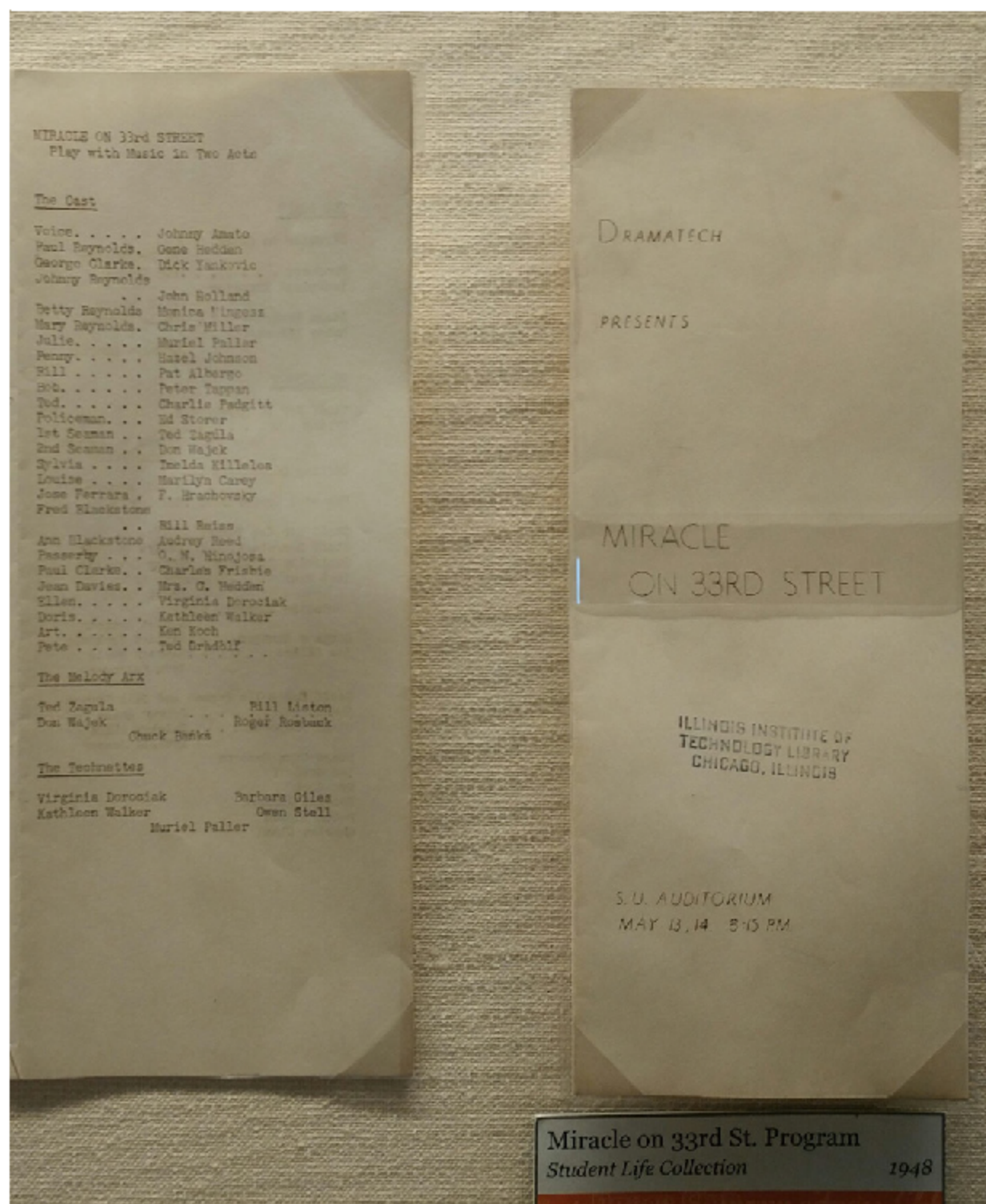
intellectually productive years of your life. Those who spent the better part of their talent and energy not plumbing the mysteries of the universe, not fixing the worlds problems, not even creating something they own the rights to. 18 years of someone's life spent perfecting something most of it's way into the garbage can.

Career Fair has come and gone already, so perhaps whatever the point I'm trying to make is too little, too late. I also can't say I judge those Hasbro engineers too much for doing what they've done with their lives. I will say, however, that us, young STEM majors, don't have to fall into the same complacency of our predecessors, that we can be a force for positive change, that we don't have to burn away our intellectual labor in the trash fire of consumer culture.

We are owed more than labor squandered to planned obsolescence. That is indisputable.

## CAMPUS

## Kemper Gallery opens student organization history exhibit in Galvin Library



## Struck by Apathy?

After an upswing in student activity in the late 1940s and 1950s, the 1960s saw a number of student groups fade away. What happened? One popular explanation at the time was "student apathy," and it certainly seems possible that IIT was also effected by a sense dissatisfaction and disillusionment shared by college students across the country in the 1950s. But looking carefully at campus activities shows not everything was stagnant— and the activities of newer groups like the International Students Club reflect changes in the size, interests, and background of the student body.