TechNews

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SINCE 1928

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

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Occupy Chicago enters second week of protests

By Mike Purdy

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

"We are the 99 percent," declared many voices in unison, as a crowd of roughly 150 participants marched throughout the streets of downtown Chicago on Saturday afternoon. This demonstration of political protest is one of many that have occurred over the past week in support of the movement formally known as Occupy Chicago.

An off-shoot of the original, ongoing "Occupy Wall Street" protests of New York City, Occupy Chicago has been gaining substantial momentum, along with an ever-increasing influx of new activists, funds, supplies, and most importantly, attention.

This 24/7 occupation is centered at the corner of Jackson and LaSalle, located outside of the Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago's financial district. As this movement enters its second week, now is the time to foster a greater awareness of what is happening both on our doorstep and throughout the nation as a whole.

This peaceful revolution began on September 17 in New York City, and thousands have gathered thus far to express their displeasure with the current state of the American government, namely corporate greed, economic inequality, and political corruption.

The protests have been targeting the top one percent of the United States' population, specifically those wealthy corporate owners and profiteers, in an effort to display the growing social and economic issues facing both a newly emerging generation of working-class citizens and those who have become the victims of an unfair system of greed and corruption.

Although the message may seem a bit ambiguous to those who would prefer one concrete mission statement, herein lies the beauty of it all - American citizens are finally standing up against a slew of capitalistic flaws, exposing a corporate agenda that has left the common man behind.

Up to this point, hundreds of protesters have been arrested, and there have been reports of police brutality as the intensity of the demonstrations builds daily. A strictly non-violent movement, Occupy Wall Street is showing not only the power of solidarity, but also exhibiting a surge in unity amongst the ordinary citizens of America as the movement is spreading like wildfire across the entire nation.

In Chicago, the message is no different; "We will gather in solidarity, exercising our constitutional rights while protesting American corporate politics until our voices are heard," they're saying.

From my observations, people of nearly all generations, ethnicities, and social backgrounds marched in harmony Saturday afternoon, proclaiming a wide variety of demands while working together to ensure a controlled, thoughtful procession through the city streets.

A high level of excitement and energy seemed to pierce through the frigid air as the crowd assembled in front of the Federal Reserve, where a makeshift base camp has been set up for those who are in it for the long haul.

Posters and chants ranged from statements such as "People over Profit" to "Banks got bailed out, we got sold out", and Guy Fawkes masks could be seen in abundance as a symbol of the potential revolutionary status of

this undertaking.

In light of the recent execution of Troy Davis, another prevailing topic of the protests was a campaign to end the death penalty. Along with their determined support of those fellow activists in New York, the people involved in Occupy Chicago appear to be well-informed and educated on what it is that they're ultimately standing for.

"We want to send a signal to Washington and the corporations that we want change," a protestor by the name of Babur explained. "Our politicians are working for the corporations... a lot of people are waking up to the situation."

As of now, there has been very little news coverage of the Occupy movements, but this is bound to change as more and more demonstrations are taking place and their magnitude is becoming more apparent. This is also not to mention the crucial utilization of social media networks including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube in helping to get the word out and spread the message far and wide.

At this moment in our history, we are engaged in a revolution of sentiments with no clear end in sight. In nearly every region of the United States, from coast to coast, the actions of the Occupy movement are taking hold. Whether it is Occupy San Francisco, Occupy Miami, or Occupy Philadelphia, something big is happening, and it will not soon be diminished or forgotten. Hopefully once all of the smoke has cleared, we will emerge a stronger and more unified democracy – where we live in a tomorrow created by the people, for the people.

I encourage you to check out Occupy
Chicago and maintain an awareness of the situation at occupychi.org



Photo by Mike Purdy

CERN experiment challenges relativity laws

By Chris Roberts

LAYOUT EDITOR

Something incredible, in the literal meaning of that word, happened two weeks ago.

An experiment at CERN, the world's largest particle physics laboratory, fired a beam of neutrinos through 450 miles of solid earth from Switzerland to a detector in Italy. That is the mundane part of the story.

The exciting part is that the beam reportedly traveled from point-A to point-B 60 nanoseconds faster than it should have.

You might say, "So what? Big deal." Well, the big deal is that by "faster than it should have" I mean faster than the speed of light in a vacuum.

...I will repeat that. Scientists clocked neutrinos, particles with minuscule but detectable mass, traveling faster than light moves in a vacuum.

If its results are officially verified and reproduced, this experiment would mean that Albert Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity is flatly wrong. However, this single event flies in the face of decades of observations

and experimental data which support Special Relativity.

Basically, this is the physics equivalent to reading that Rick Perry and Michele Bachmann have eloped to Amsterdam to promote renewable energy and social tolerance; it is simply not supposed to happen.

What I find to be the most interesting part of this story is how researchers at CERN have reacted.

Rather than run shouting to the Nobel Prize Committee, they spent months reviewing the data, inspecting their equipment, accounting for the time it takes electricity to travel from the detector to their computers, and generally doing everything they could to find a mistake that would explain the results.

When no errors were detected, they made press releases stating that the experimental results were preliminary and asked the wider physics community to look into their data and attempt to reproduce their results.

This is a great example of scientific skepticism.

An experiment was conducted which appears to have contradicted a foundational rule

in our understanding of physics. No mistakes have been found.

Some might think this would justify throwing Relativity onto the ever-increasing pile of disproved theories, joining geocentrism and phlogiston.

However, scientific progress does not move that heedlessly. Adhering to the scientific method, no result is considered conclusive until others can verify and replicate it.

Did CERN scientists disprove Einstein? If they did, this will likely be remembered as one of the greatest discoveries of the past century.

Physics and history textbooks will have to be rewritten.

A new model for how the universe functions will need to be developed. However, the notion that Special Relativity is wrong, after countless experiments, including ones conducted at CERN, have supported the theory, seem nigh-impossible.

What is certain is that a mistake has been made. Whether that mistake was in the experiment or our understanding of physics remains to be seen.