

The Official Newsletter of the Ashdown Community

Message from the Editor

Hello Readers,

My name is Sakul, and I'm the Newsletter Officer for the 2012-2013 academic year. I know many of you Ashdown residents probably won't read this publication (though I wish you would), so if I started talking about something random in the middle of a paragraph, no one would complain, and I Am the very model of a modern Major-General, I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral, I could get away with pretty much anything. But, for those who do decide to read these publications (thank you very much, you are officially awesome), I hope you enjoy the upcoming year!

In this issue, we have the second annual Summer Writing Contest (so you can brag about how awesomely your research is going), the first of a series of Puzzles (to stretch your mind when you find your research isn't doing enough of that), Ashdown Reviews: Ruth's Chris Steak House (mmm... food), details about the Thirsty Ear Alumni Event (and some movie about PhD students), a Funny Caption Contest (turtles are funny, right?), and Kids' Corner (Max and Dante answer questions we've been dying to know the answers to).

Wow, that second paragraph was one long sentence. TL;DR is below. Also, there are lots of chances to win/earn money for your contributions, so keep on reading!

Happy reading!

Sakul Ratanalert

Ashdown Newsletter Officer

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Ashdown Summer Writing Contest

In **less than 1000 words**, talk about how your research is making a difference to the world in a way that someone else not from MIT can understand it. The judging criteria are (on the next page):

- 1) Accessibility to a completely non-technical audience
- 2) Effectiveness of message

Word limit: 1000 words

Eligibility: All residents of Ashdown House are invited to participate

Submit by: August 31, 2012

PRIZES: **\$25 gift card to Amazon** for the winner

\$10 gift card to Amazon for each of the two runners-up

Publication in the Ashdown Newsletter, "3am" for all essays of merit.

Ash and Dawn, the Puzzler Twins – #1

*Ash and Dawn are MIT first-year graduate students, and recently moved into Ashdown. Their stories will be chronicled in the upcoming issues. Each story has a **SECRET CODE WORD**. The first **three** people to e-mail the Editor the correct **SECRET CODE WORD** by **July 31, 2012** will win a **\$10 gift card to Amazon**. **FIND THE SECRET CODE WORD AND WIN!!** (The **SECRET CODE WORD** can be found on Dictionary.com. No anagramming is necessary unless otherwise stated.)*

Ash challenged Dawn to play a new game he just learned, Tic-Tac-Toe. Dawn, being the well-read scholar of the two, already knows how to play like a pro. Ash is so confident in his Tic-Tac-Toe abilities, he bets that he will win. Ash and Dawn come up with three things that the loser will buy for the winner, written neatly on engineering paper below:

	1)	D	I	G	I	T	A	L		C	A	M	E	R	A				
	2)	C	A	N		O	F		C	R	E	A	M	E	R				
	3)	C	A	M	P	I	N	G		T	E	N	T						

Because Ash insisted on the can of creamer even though Dawn doesn't drink coffee, Dawn demands that she gets to go first, as "X". Their first two moves are shown to the right:

		O	X

Ash has no sense of strategy, but he knows the rules of the game and won't lose due to stupidity. Dawn knows that if she plays correctly, she can corner Ash and force a win. While there are multiple ways to victory from here, none of Xs in the winning line are neighboring her initial X. Once she is crowned champion, Dawn (always one to make things overly dramatic) plans to record the path to victory for posterity and read all her fan mail, even if she pulls from a mail box full of letters.

What's the SECRET CODE WORD? (Puzzle designed by Sakul Ratanaalert)

Ashdown Reviews: Ruth's Chris Steak House

*This column, Ashdown Reviews, aims to provide 3AM readers a chance to read what other readers have thought about restaurants and other places around Cambridge and Boston. **You can contribute too!** Submit a review of a restaurant or other recommended locale you have been to recently (pictures would be nice, too), and if it is selected you will be rewarded with a **\$10 gift card to Amazon**. Let Ashdown know where they should go when they have (gasp) free time!*

This issue's contributing writer: Chen Song

Ruth's Chris Steak House – Boston
Old City Hall
45 School Street
Boston, MA 02108

A friend and I chose this place as a farewell dinner for her because she is leaving the US soon. We considered steak as an icon of delicious American food, so our search for steak houses led us here. One of the more important reasons that we selected Ruth's Chris is that it is located inside the Old City Hall around downtown. You can imagine how decent the environment would be. It is a seven-minute walk from Park Street Station.

If you come early, you can wait for other friends at the bar area. It is separated from the dining area, so the dining environment is very quiet, which I like very much. We ordered a set with appetizer, steak, and dessert and an additional single steak. But, it turned



out that it was still too much for two girls to share. We ordered a filet and a rib eye. Both are very good; while the rib eye is juicy and a bit salty, the filet is very tender. The only concern is that the plates could have been fancier to match the good steaks.



The dessert looked pretty good and the chocolate was very dense. I am not a big fan of sweets so the chocolate was a little too much for me, especially after a ton of steak. Overall, this is a very good steak house to try with good environment, delicious steak, and reasonable prices.

Delicious chocolate dessert! Photos courtesy of Chen Song.

Thirsty Ear Alumni Event & PhD Movie Screening



On Saturday June 9, 2012, MIT celebrated Graduate Alumni Day as part of the campus' Tech Reunions Weekend. Approximately 60 alumni and 40 current graduate students joined together at the Thirsty Ear to enjoy a cocktail hour, with a free drink from the bar to complement the nachos and other snacks provided.

After the cocktail hour, the guests relocated to the Hulsizer Room for a screening of The PhD Movie, based on the webcomic "PhD Comics", both written by Jorge Cham. The 90-minute movie was selected as a light way for the alumni to reflect on their days as graduate students and for the current students to watch their current highs and lows experienced by someone other than themselves (especially the lows).



Amy Bilton, coordinator for this event, asked attendees about their experiences as she guided the alumni back to the main campus to continue on with the Alumni Day events. When asked for a summary of the impressions she gathered, she replied, "People really enjoyed the event at the thirsty and the movie viewing. Several attendees reflected about the early days of the Thirsty in old Ashdown. Attendees also enjoyed the movie, with several people wondering where they could get a copy."

Special thanks to Amy Bilton for her contributions to this article. Photos courtesy of Andy Wright.

Why did the graduate student read this at 3am?

Because she just got back from lab! Okay, that probably wasn't very funny, but hopefully the rest of this page is more entertaining:



Funny Caption Contest!
Submit your hilarious caption to the Editor at ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu by **July 31, 2012** and the Top 3 submissions will be posted in the following issue and win a **\$5 gift card to Amazon** (lots of chances to win money in this issue, aren't there?). Readers can vote on their favorite of the Top 3, and the winner will receive an additional **\$10 gift card to Amazon**.

Q: Why was the mole of oxygen molecules excited when he walked out of the singles' bar?

A: He got Avogadro's number!

Q: Anyone know any good jokes about sodium?

A: Na

Photo courtesy of Aarthy Adityan

Kids' Corner (aka Ask the Roman Kids Stuff)



Max

1. What is your favorite color?

Hmmm... black and red. Because black makes it dark and nobody can see me, and red is bright and I just like to draw with it a lot.

1.5. Least favorite?

I don't like pink and purple because they are girl colors.

2. What is your favorite part about living at MIT?

It's because my dad works there and I love to play with him. I like the grad students, the close parks (some are really far away but I don't care). There are grad students that are my friends.

2.5. Least favorite?

Maybe the bugs and spiders. I only like caterpillars and slugs.

Dante

1. What is your favorite color?

Ummm... ummmm... black and red. Because I like them.

1.5. Least favorite?

And which color I don't like it purple and pink I don't like. Those colors I don't like.

2. What is your favorite part about living at MIT?

I like grad students. I like my TV. I like Papa. I like Denise, too.

2.5. Least favorite?

I don't like shooting Max with hard bullets.



Citizen's Corner: Submission Guidelines

Do you have a flair for writing?

Do you have an experience you would love to share? A cause you want to speak out for? An event you would like publicized and reported?

The ears of Ashdown are thirsting to hear your story!

The "Citizen's Corner" is a section of "3am" aimed at reflecting the lives and perspectives of Ashdown residents. All Ashdown residents are invited to contribute, and all kinds of material are welcome. In the past, we have received everything from overseas exchange program stories to essays about environmentalism. We are especially keen on the views of international students comparing the way of life (in terms of culture, atmosphere, education system etc.) here to the ones they were used to.

If your contribution is selected, you will be rewarded with a **\$10 gift card to Amazon**.

Guidelines in a nutshell:

- Submissions should be between 100 and 1500 words.
- No politically sensitive, religiously sensitive, or pornographic material.
- Pictures to accompany text are welcome.
- Email Sakul Ratanalert at ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu.



Contact the Editor

Please direct any comments or queries about "3am" to Sakul Ratanalert at ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu