

## The Official Newsletter of the Ashdown Community

### Message from the Editor

Hello Readers,

Happy new year! I hope you all are having a wonderfully relaxing IAP (and/or a productive research spree without classes or other obligations to clog your work flow). I decided to use this month to learn a new skill: river kayaking. I'm trying to exercise more this year, so I thought that this would be a good time to start as any. So, after renting a boat from some people with strangely skeptical looks on their faces, I set off onto the Charles. But, before I got very far, my boat got lodged in some ice. Luckily, I had some firewood to warm myself up as I waited for someone to rescue me. Unfortunately, my boat also caught fire and promptly split in two and sank. As I swam to shore in the freezing cold, I remembered what that vendor told me: "You can't have your kayak and heat it too."

In this issue, we have the seventeenth installment of the Puzzler Twins (Minions!), a different kind of puzzle (you'll see what I'm talking about), the story of an Editor's crazy 2013 adventures (I heard he's quite handsome), an interview between cub reporter Ben Berinsky and resident Affi Maragh (robotic boats and the Super Bowl!), and the next chance to Choose Your Own Adventure (what is the question?).

Wow, that last paragraph was one long sentence. TL;DR is below. If you have any questions, comments, concerns, complaints, or constructive suggestions, I'd love to hear them, so please e-mail me!

Happy reading!

Sakul Ratanalert

Ashdown Newsletter Officer

ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu

### In This Issue

- ❖ Ash and Dawn, the Puzzler Twins – #17
- ❖ A Different Kind of Puzzle
- ❖ Practice School 2013, Part 1: Eurotrip
- ❖ Ben's Corner (a.k.a. A Kid Asks Stuff!)
- ❖ Kids' Corner (a.k.a. Ask the Kids Stuff)
- ❖ Choose Your Own Adventure, Part 5

## Ash and Dawn, the Puzzler Twins – #17

Ash and Dawn are MIT second-year graduate students, and reside in Ashdown. Their stories will be chronicled in the upcoming issues. Each story has a **SECRET CODE WORD**. E-mail the Editor (at [ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu](mailto:ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu), not his personal one) the correct **SECRET CODE WORD** by **February 25, 2014**. **ALL CORRECT SOLUTIONS** will be entered into the **SEMESTER PUZZLE RAFFLE**. **FIND THE SECRET CODE WORD AND WIN!!** (The **SECRET CODE WORD** can be found on [Dictionary.com](http://Dictionary.com). No anagramming is necessary unless otherwise stated.)

It's Ash and Dawn's birthday! Since Dawn loves Minions from Despicable Me, Ash gave her a birthday card with some Minions singing in Minionese. All Dawn gave Ash was three jars of protein powder, but Ash loved the thoughtful gift. He told Dawn he planned to use the second jar first and the first jar last, but Dawn was too busy listening to the Minions sing to her. Can she understand what they're singing?

<p><i>"Rga. Eul laa sna lyg spa lng sna!  Hep lei rga ers hrt, Sna lng alv lug eul!  Hep lei rga ers hrt, Rpt lng rga spa!"</i></p>	<p><i>Happy Birthday Dawn!</i></p>  <p><i>Enjoy the singing Minions!</i></p>
---	--

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

Oct/Nov 2013 Issue Winner: **Aarthy Adityan** (the only correct solution) for submitting "ENTER" to last month's puzzle (Solution on last page of this publication). Congratulations! You are now in the semester Puzzle Lottery! And thanks to everyone who submitted!

## A Different Kind of Puzzle

Hey there, it's me again, the Editor. Nice seeing you on the third page.

Anyway, I have a puzzle for you all. As you may know, I offer prizes to puzzle solvers and to article writers. I used to offer Amazon Gift Cards, but MIT is no longer allowing that due to fears of embezzling and such. So, I am now on the hunt for better prizes. It must have the following properties:

- 1) People must want it (so my used gym sock idea is unfortunately out)
- 2) People must want multiple of it (either same or different varieties), so that people are still motivated to solve puzzles and write articles. (Oh yeah, please write articles!)
- 3) It can't be "like money" (so no gift cards or checks or counterfeit bills)

As a starting point, I thought of having Ashdown 3AM coffee mugs, so that there could be some cool design element, but no one really wants multiples of the same mug. (Multiples of different mugs? Still unlikely...)

I look forward to seeing what ideas you come up with!

Thanks,  
The Editor



## Event Correspondents Wanted

Are you going to an event (for **FREE FOOD** or whatever)? Do you like to earn **AWARDS**?  
Try being an

# EVENT CORRESPONDENT!

Before an **Ashdown event**, e-mail me saying you are interested in being a reporter for the event. Then, after the event (say, a week or two), e-mail me a small report of what happened at the event! **IT'S SO EASY!** And you'll be rewarded for your efforts (which just involves changing observations to words)!

They don't all even have to be your words! Feel free to get quotes from other attendees about what they think of the event! Take some pictures if you want to add 1000 words to your submission! (Though at least 100 non-picture words would be nice.)

So, if you were planning to attend an event anyway (or now you feel inspired to), spend a few minutes to write a summary and see it in the next issue of the **3AM!**

## Practice School 2013, Part 1: Eurotrip

For those who don't know, as part of my Master's Program I participated in MIT School of Chemical Engineering Practice, or "Practice School." This required me to take four months off from my PhD research to work as a consultant at two companies, solving chemical engineering-related problems. (And no, the problems were not related to my research. All we were expected to know we would have learned in our first-year chemical engineering core classes. Whoops.)

The first company was Novartis, so I had a wonderful ~~excuse to take a week off~~ opportunity to explore the European continent for the first time. I flew through a whirlwind tour of Paris, Lyon, Nice, and Marseilles in France and Rome, Italy (during which I almost got pickpocketed twice. I'm some unfortunate combination of unlucky, naïve, and clearly a tourist, apparently). After this exciting and exhausting week, the eight other students and I arrived in Basel, Switzerland, our home for the next two months.



Basel rests at the tri-country border of Switzerland, France, and Germany. Because the population of Switzerland is largely wealthy, items such as groceries are very expensive (roughly 10 Swiss Francs per pound of chicken, for example, where the Franc is approximately a US Dollar). Using our super engineering optimization skills, we bought most groceries in France instead. The border guards made sure we didn't export too much at once, but otherwise this money saving plan was a success (excluding my laziness to go shopping in France instead of paying more to shop down the block).

It was not unusual to cross the borders between Switzerland and France or Germany. In fact, the project I worked on for two months was stationed at the Novartis campus in Huningue, France, so I crossed the border twice each day for work. The other projects were stationed in either the Novartis Headquarters or the campus literally across the street from my apartment, both in Basel. (A friend enjoyed the benefit of going to work, then taking lunch off to do a load of laundry.) Luckily for me though, the cafeteria in the French campus had much better food for lunch than any Swiss campus, so I was never forced to bring my own lunch (so I could continue being lazy).

While I can't go into specifics about what I worked on at Novartis (lest something unspeakable befall me), I can say that I had to learn some new software, and enough French so that I could understand what I was coding. (« *Pourquoi y a-t-il une erreur dans mon programme?!*») Each Friday, each project group (2-3 students) had to give a presentation to our Station Director, other students, and various Novartis employees about what we have done and what we planned to do with the project. (Read: one near-all-nighter every Thursday to finish slides, for eight weeks.)

Nearing the end of our two months in Basel, we were preparing to go to our next station in Morocco... but alas, we could not travel to North Africa due to the recent uprisings in the area (Safety first!). So, instead of a second station, we were asked to return to Boston two months early, and finish our Practice School obligations in October-December once they've found another company to take us orphan students in. Housing was quite a mess, since most of us sublet our apartments for the full four months... Oh well, off to Barcelona, Madrid, Lisbon, and London! (*Story continues next issue...*)

## Practice School 2013, Part 1: Eurotrip



Our journey of France began at the Arc de Triomphe, and ended with a wave in Nice that was not so nice

## Ashdown Reviews

*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 **Ashdown 3AM Merchandise**. Let Ashdown know where they should go when they have (gasp) free time!*

## 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 **Ashdown 3AM Merchandise**.

### 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](mailto:ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu).



## Ben's Corner (a.k.a. A Kid Asks Stuff!)

*Cub reporter Ben Berinsky interviews an Ashdown resident in his ongoing quest to figure out what it is these MIT grad students are all about... If you would like to volunteer to be interviewed, please email Ben at [ben.berinsky@gmail.com](mailto:ben.berinsky@gmail.com) or the Editor at [ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu](mailto:ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu). Thank you!*

*This month, Ben interviewed Janille "Affi" Maragh!*



**Ben: What do you study?**

**Affi:** I study mechanical engineering.

**Ben: So what does that mean?**

**Affi:** Well, I study robotic boats. One thing that is cool is that we can use them to explore the ocean, send them underwater to explore ships or marine life.

**Ben: How long does it take to build one?**

**Affi:** Oh, it takes hundreds of people, lots of money, and a long time. They actually get built somewhere else, but we write the programs to make them run.

**Ben: How long have you been working on that?**

**Affi:** This is my first year as a grad student, but I was here at MIT as an undergrad too, so I've been doing this for about three years.

**Ben: So, what do you like to do in your free time?**

**Affi:** Watch a lot of TV.

**Ben: Cool! What shows?**

**Affi:** Scandal, Revenge – I guess not a lot of good values there, but entertaining. I like to watch English soccer, too.

**Ben: Do you have any opinion on the Super Bowl?**

**Affi:** My best friend from undergrad is a Broncos fan, but I was sad when the Pats lost.

**Ben: Yeah, me too.**

**Affi:** I guess you kinda want the team who beat your team to win.



## Why did the graduate student read this at 3am?

*Because he had time to during IAP! Okay, that probably wasn't very funny, but hopefully the rest is more entertaining:*

**Q:** Did you know that vegetarian girl?

**A:** No, I never met herbivore!

## Kids' Corner (a.k.a. Ask the Kids Stuff)



**Got questions you want to ask Apolo, Ben, Dante, Lila, and Max?  
E-mail the Editor!**



**Also, check out  
Ben's new column!**



## Choose Your Own Adventure, Part 5

*In an effort to generate more feedback and hear from you readers, this new section will let you choose what happens to Annie Boddy, a graduate student at MIT living in Ashdown. After a little bit of story, there will be four options, one of which is "Other." E-mail the Editor to pick what happens next!*

*Story continues on the next page...*

In the vandal's hand was a **chicken club sandwich with extra mayo**. Now, this wasn't just a normal sandwich. This was a sandwich that Annie was going to use to bribe her lab mate to keep his side of the bench clean, so her experiments would no longer be contaminated. Annie grabbed the vandal by the collar and pulled him up to face her glare. She asked,

- a) "Who are you?"
- b) "What are you doing with that sandwich?"
- c) "What is the square root of 1764?"
- d) Something else! Suggest something!

## Solution to Puzzle #16 (Oct/Nov 2013 Edition)

*(See the Oct/Nov Edition for the Puzzle Statement, designed by Sakul Ratanalert.)*

One may first notice that all six of the costumes are characters from different Pixar movies. All but one share one thing in common: their voice actor, John Ratzenberger.



"Ratzenberger" happens to have 12 letters, which fits the blanks under the Yeti's snow cones. Eliminating #4, Crush the Sea Turtle, from the list of numbers leaves us with "86351". Mapping to the 12 letters in "RATZENBERGER" reveals "ENTER". SECRET CODE WORD FOUND.

## Contact the Editor

Please direct any comments or queries about "3am" to Sakul Ratanalert at [ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu](mailto:ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu)