Welcome to Caltech!



ROTATION HQ:

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The California Tech

Photo Credit: Tatiana Solovieva, Caltech Turtle Club

Vol. CXXX No. 1 | Pasadena, California | Tuesday, September 22, 2026

From Your New Editor

Emily Yu
Letter From the Editor

Hi everyone!

Welcome (or welcome back!) to this small but intellectually mighty campus. With another year underway, there will be much to write about.

A decision that makes sense to certain people may raise questions for others. Reporting can help explain how said decision was made, providing a better basis for discussion. An important role of the *Tech* is to make information more accessible and give people a place to share their perspectives. It is also a place to share the projects and everyday experiences that make up life at Caltech. As an independently funded newspaper, the *Tech* is solely accountable to the community we serve.

If you have a campus issue to bring attention to, someone to spotlight, an opinion to express, or artwork to share, please send along your ideas and content.

Thank you to everyone, especially our industrious staff, who contributes to the paper alongside their other commitments at the Institute. Thank you also to Damian Wilson for his work in leading the *Tech* last year, and to Michael Gutierrez for reviving the paper and his continued support since graduating in 2025. The *Tech* also remembers with appreciation the late Richard Kipling, whose guidance helped shape our reporting principles and who remained a dedicated advisor to us until his passing.

I look forward to building on their work and to another year of contributions from across the community.

With gratitude,
Emily Yu
Editor-in-Chief

Rotation Rules 2026

Interhouse Committee (IHC)
Guidelines

Rotation is a process where incoming students choose which residences they like best. The IHC asks those who participate in Rotation to follow these guidelines to ensure adherence to the law, the honor code, the code of conduct, and the spirit of Rotation.

Guidelines

First Year Students:

1. First year students may speak freely about their experiences in the residences with others. We recommend prefrosh do not share their rankings with other prefrosh, as the decision on where they feel they fit in best is a personal one.
2. As per institute policy, first year students may not drink alcohol or take illicit drugs during Rotation.
3. First year students should not feel pressure to rank any Residence a certain way, remain in a given environment, or interact with other people who make them uncomfortable. If this occurs, they are encouraged to reach out to a member of the IHC, the SFE, an RA, an RLC, or the Deans.

Upperclass students:

1. Upperclass students may speak freely about direct, personal experiences within the residential system at Caltech. To encourage fairness and accuracy, we ask students to focus on their own experiences in the residences rather than rely on rumors or other potentially false information.
2. If you have multiple affiliations, you may only choose **one** house to participate in rotation events with as an advocate. Discussing your personal experiences you've had in other houses is allowed, but you can only rotate with one.
3. Upperclass students should not tell first year students how to rank houses but rather give first year students useful information to help them get a clear and accurate picture of campus. First year students should be encouraged to make their own decisions.
4. Upperclass students may not give first year students alcohol or other psychoactive substances or give first year students extraordinary gifts to encourage them to join a specific house (i.e. taking them off campus for >4 hours, excluding preseason athletes on trips with their sports team). Each of these activities constitutes an honor code or policy violation.
5. Along with the normal event registration process, IHC must approve any large events, prop sheets, videos, and advertisements.

All Rotation Rules are guidelines to follow that will facilitate the Rotation process. If a serious violation of the Code of Conduct or the Honor Code occurs during Rotation, you may be asked to meet with the Deans, RAs, or RLCs.

Rotation Homepage

Rotation Violation Report Form

Rotation Is Weird on Purpose

Camilla Fezzi
The Inside World

If you're an incoming Caltech frosh and Rotation is about to happen to you, everything is going to be weird. That's the point. Nobody is testing you, nobody is lying to you (much), and the week is going to be the strangest, warmest, most disorienting introduction to college you'll ever have. Here's what you should not get shocked by.

People will be dressed like you haven't seen before. Rotation is when Houses turn up the volume on themselves, and every alley leans hard into whatever makes it that alley. Someone might be wearing a full three-piece suit. Someone else will be in a robe, welding goggles, and a homemade laurel crown.

Dinner will be loud. Chants, songs, entire choreographies you did not know were coming. If a room of upperclassmen suddenly stands up and starts hollering, your job is to smile and keep eating. You do not need to know the words. You will, in time.

Everything is a joke, and none of it is. Furniture will move overnight. A door will open onto a wall. Someone will show you a photo of a prank they pulled last spring and you'll have no way to tell whether the photo is real. You'll be told, with a straight face, that a hallway is haunted, that a bathroom is where a Nobel laureate once cried, that a closet leads somewhere it does not lead. Some of it is true. The percentage varies by House and by narrator.

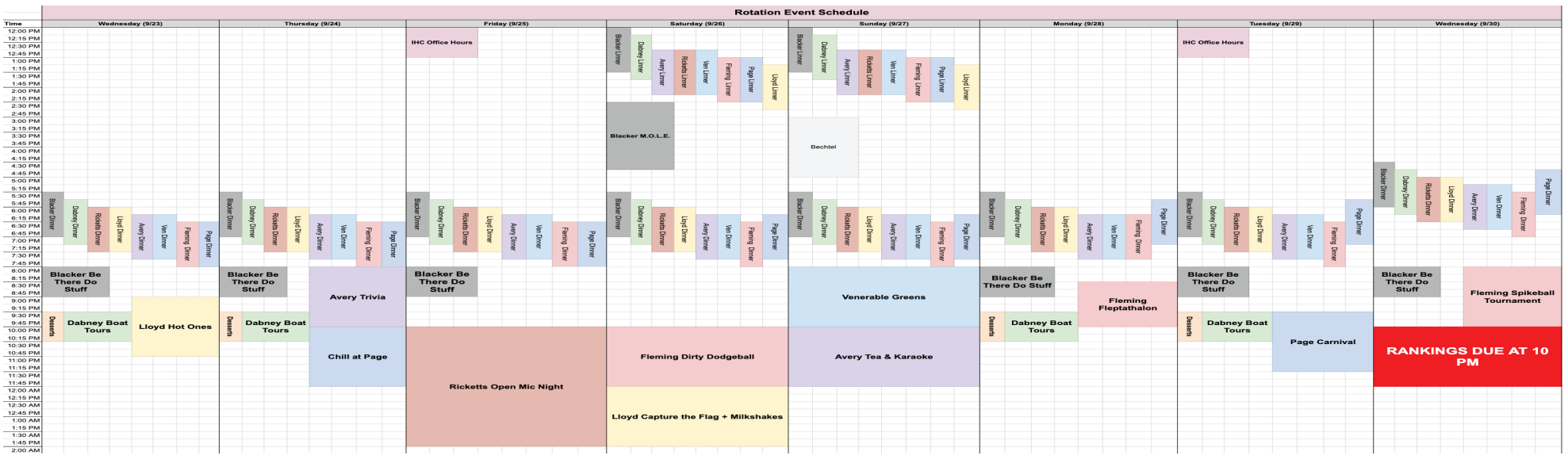
Rumors about other Houses will fly, and most of them are wrong. You'll hear that one House hazes, that one House hates fun, that one House has a secret basement, that one House has a *tunnel*. Some are exaggerations. Some are inside jokes. A surprising number are true but boring. Do not build your Rotation strategy around gossip you overheard at 1 a.m.

People will remember you. This is the part that startles most prefrosh. You'll meet dozens of upperclassmen in a night and by the next dinner half of them will know your name, your major, and something oddly specific. Caltech is small and Rotation is a full-time job for the current members. It's just that everyone genuinely wants you to end up somewhere you'll be happy.

You will feel out of place. Somewhere around the third dinner, or possibly the first, you'll look around at a room full of people who seem to already know each other and you'll feel like you accidentally walked into someone else's family reunion. That is not a signal that you don't belong. Everyone in that room felt the same way one, two, or three years ago, remembers it clearly, and is actively working to make it stop feeling that way.

And then it ends. After the last dinner and the ranks and the moment when you find out where you landed, you'll be somewhere. Some of the weirdness will suddenly make sense in retrospect. Some of it will never make sense. That's also fine.

The one thing worth internalizing before Week 0 hits you like a train: the weirdness *is* the welcome. You don't have to be shocked by any of it. You just have to show up and let yourself get pulled in.



Rotation Schedule

Times listed below are the beginning of the reception. The meal will begin 30 minutes later.

Date		Avery	Blacker	Dabney	Fleming	Lloyd	Page	Ricketts	Venerable
Wed 9/23	Dinner A	6:15pm	5:30pm	5:45pm	6:30pm	6pm	6:30pm	6pm	6:15pm
Thur 9/24	Dinner B	6:15pm	5:30pm	5:45pm	6:30pm	6pm	6:30pm	6pm	6:15pm
Fri 9/25	Dinner C	6:15pm	5:30pm	5:45pm	6:30pm	6pm	6:30pm	6pm	6:15pm
Sat 9/26	Lunch D	12:45pm	12pm	12:15pm	1pm	1:15pm	1pm	12:45pm	12:45pm
	Dinner E	6:15pm	5:30pm	5:45pm	6:15pm	5:40pm	6:15pm	6pm	6pm
Sun 9/27	Lunch F	12:45pm	12pm	12:15pm	1pm	1:15pm	1pm	12:45pm	12:45pm
	Dinner G	6:15pm	5:30pm	5:45pm	6:30pm	6pm	6:15pm	6pm	5:45pm
Mon 9/28	Dinner H	6:15pm	5:30pm	5:45pm	6:30pm	6pm	5:45pm	6pm	6:15pm
Tue 9/29	Free	6:15pm	5:30pm	5:45pm	6:30pm	6pm	5:45pm	6pm	6:15pm
Wed 9/30	Free	5:15pm	4:30pm	4:45pm	5:30pm	5pm	4:45pm	5pm	5:15pm

Date	Wed 9/23	Thur 9/24	Fri 9/25	Sat 9/26	Sun 9/27	Mon 9/28	Tue 9/29	Wed 9/30
Lunch	--	--	--	House D	House F	--	--	--
Dinner	House A	House B	House C	House E	House G	House H	Free	Free

Date	Time	House	Event
Wed 9/23	9:00pm-11:00pm	Lloyd	Lloyd Hot Ones
	9:30pm-10:30pm	Dabney	Dabney Boat Tours (Caltech Pond)
Thur 9/24	8:00pm-10:00pm	Avery	Avery Trivia
	9:30pm-10:30pm	Dabney	Dabney Boat Tours (Caltech Pond)
	10:00pm-12:00am	Page	Chill at Page
Fri 9/25	10:00pm-2:00am	Ricketts	Ricketts Open Mic Night
Sat 9/26	2:30pm-4:45pm	Blacker	Blacker M.O.L.E.
	10:00pm-12:00am	Fleming	Fleming Dirty Dodgeball
	11:59pm-2:00am	Lloyd	Lloyd Capture the Flag + Milkshakes
Sun 9/27	3:00pm-5:00pm	Bechtel	Bechtel “Shrektel”
	8:00pm-10:00pm	Venerable	Venerable Greens
	10:00pm-12:00am	Avery	Avery Tea and Karaoke
Mon 9/28	8:30pm-10:00pm	Fleming	Fleming Fleptathalon
	9:30pm-10:30pm	Dabney	Dabney Boat Tours (Caltech Pond)
Tue 9/29	9:30pm-11:30pm	Page	Page Carnival
	9:30pm-10:30pm	Dabney	Dabney Boat Tours (Caltech Pond)
Wed 9/30	8:00pm-10:00pm	Fleming	Fleming Spikeball Tournament



Desserts are held at 9:30pm on Wednesday (9/23), Thursday (9/24), Monday (9/28), and Tuesday (9/29).

FCC Group	Wed 9/23 Dinner	Thu 9/24 Dinner	Fri 9/25 Dinner	Sat 9/26 Linner	Sat 9/26 Dinner	Sun 9/27 Linner	Sun 9/27 Dinner	Mon 9/28 Dinner
Hydrogen	Venerable	Dabney	Lloyd	Ricketts	Avery	Blacker	Page	Fleming
Helium	Fleming	Page	Blacker	Avery	Ricketts	Lloyd	Dabney	Venerable
Lithium	Avery	Blacker	Page	Fleming	Venerable	Dabney	Lloyd	Ricketts
Beryllium	Page	Fleming	Avery	Blacker	Lloyd	Ricketts	Venerable	Dabney
Boron	Dabney	Venerable	Ricketts	Lloyd	Blacker	Avery	Fleming	Page
Carbon	Lloyd	Ricketts	Venerable	Dabney	Page	Fleming	Avery	Blacker
Nitrogen	Blacker	Avery	Fleming	Page	Dabney	Venerable	Ricketts	Lloyd
Oxygen	Ricketts	Page	Lloyd	Fleming	Dabney	Avery	Venerable	Blacker
Flourine	Avery	Dabney	Blacker	Venerable	Page	Ricketts	Fleming	Lloyd
Neon	Page	Ricketts	Fleming	Lloyd	Avery	Dabney	Blacker	Venerable
Sodium	Dabney	Avery	Venerable	Blacker	Ricketts	Page	Lloyd	Fleming
Magnesium	Lloyd	Fleming	Ricketts	Page	Venerable	Blacker	Dabney	Avery
Aluminum	Blacker	Venerable	Avery	Dabney	Fleming	Lloyd	Page	Ricketts
Silicon	Fleming	Lloyd	Page	Ricketts	Blacker	Venerable	Avery	Dabney
Phosphorus	Venerable	Blacker	Dabney	Avery	Lloyd	Fleming	Ricketts	Page
Radium	Ricketts	Avery	Page	Dabney	Lloyd	Blacker	Fleming	Venerable
Chlorine	Avery	Ricketts	Dabney	Page	Blacker	Lloyd	Venerable	Fleming
Argon	Page	Dabney	Ricketts	Avery	Fleming	Venerable	Lloyd	Blacker
Potassium	Dabney	Page	Avery	Ricketts	Venerable	Fleming	Blacker	Lloyd
Calcium	Blacker	Lloyd	Venerable	Fleming	Avery	Ricketts	Dabney	Page
Iron	Lloyd	Blacker	Fleming	Venerable	Ricketts	Avery	Page	Dabney
Copper	Fleming	Venerable	LLoyd	Blacker	Page	Dabney	Ricketts	Avery
Zinc	Venerable	Fleming	Blacker	Lloyd	Dabney	Page	Avery	Ricketts

Caltech Wildlife: A Welcome Guide (2026)

Jieyu Zheng
The Inside World

With the historic heat wave temporarily subsiding, our Caltech campus settles into a new academic year. As the Tech's resident wildlife columnist, I'm here to extend a warm welcome to everyone new to Caltech — though after this summer, "warm" may not be the compliment it once was.

Like many urban areas around the world, Caltech is an ecosystem where humans and other animals coexist. The campus is small, but a one-hour walk around it can easily turn up thirty wildlife species. In this guide I highlight a few notables. Some may even work as conversation openers at the socials; if you run out of lines, you can always ask, with no euphemism intended: "Have you seen a squirrel at Caltech?"

The fox squirrels know how to handle the heat. In the morning, long before students head to class, they are already up and sniffing the ground with great focus, alongside the equally diligent gardeners working the same lawns. A passerby barely startles them — they are thoroughly used to us. Fox squirrels live three to ten years in the wild, so a few of them may accompany our most enduring PhD students through the entire degree.

The resident turtles are just as unbothered by the start of term, swimming over to greet newcomers who stop by the Throop Memorial Garden ponds. These turtles — mostly red-eared sliders — are likely released pets, but their meditative presence has made them icons of campus life. They even have a dedicated fan circle: the Caltech Turtle Club, whose members collected hundreds of signatures arguing that a turtle would make a more fitting mascot than the beaver.

Our campus is also a steady habitat for local and exotic birds alike. Allen's hummingbirds, with their coppery gorgets and buzzing wings, work the blossoms for nectar year-round. Landscape trees such as floss silk and eucalyptus feed more exotic visitors, including the endangered red-crowned amazon. Pretty green birds like these — a category that also includes the Indian peafowl — are unfortunately not sweet-sounding vocalists. Listen for the cacophony at dawn and dusk: that is how they announce their membership in the greater Pasadena bird community.

As a birder, what excites me most this year is the increase of Western Bluebirds on campus. For the past few years we have had only a couple of them, under constant pressure for nest sites from introduced species. So this year's successful brood truly deserves celebration — and believe it or not, they hatched in the middle of the noisy dining area near Red Door Cafe. While you eat lunch, look up for these bright blue fairies snatching a meal midair.

Want more nerdy wildlife columns? Follow the links in this article to past Tech columns on the subject. You can also scan the QR code to the right to visit Caltech's official wildlife page, where more of my photos live.

All photos by Jieyu Zheng.



Eastern fox squirrel lying on its stomach under the heat. With little pressure for survival, the Caltech squirrels often reduce to this relaxed posture.



The most common turtle species in the Throop Memorial Garden is the red-eared slider. They love sun basking on the rim of ponds.



Exotic but local: since Lucky Baldwin brought these Indian peafowl as pets to his mansion, these beautiful relatives of chicken have been roaming around Pasadena and Arcadia, including our Caltech campus.



Allen's hummingbirds are facing some trouble elsewhere, but still thriving in California. Setting up a nectar feeder is the easiest way to make a hummer friend.



Exotic but local: many parrot species from Central and South America establish their colonies after escaping pet shops and their rich former owners' homes.



More western bluebirds appeared on campus this year after fledging from the maple tree outside Browne Dining Hall. This photo features an adult male.

Today in *Tech* History

Volume XCI, Number 1 Pasadena, California September 22, 1989

She's a *Glamour* Girl

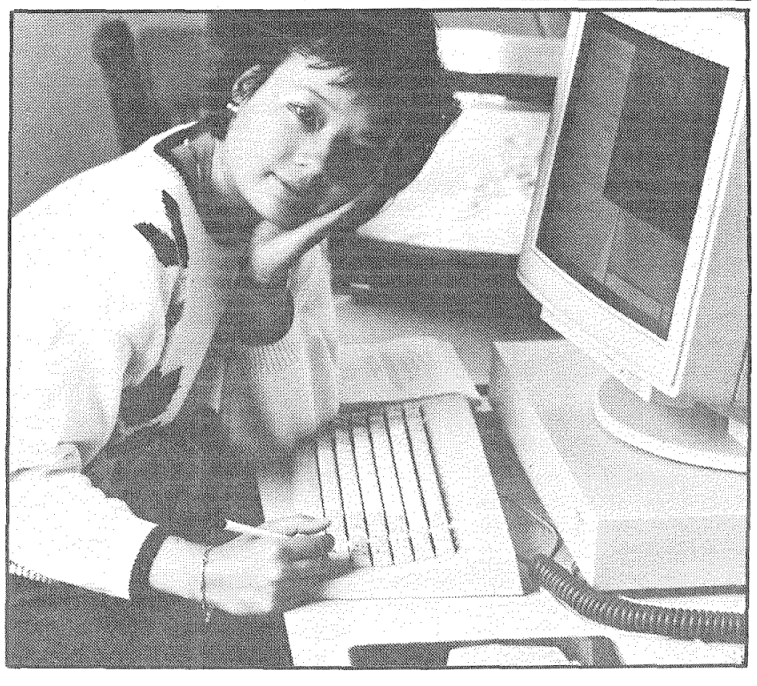
Vivian Chow, a senior at Caltech, has been named one of *GLAMOUR* magazine's Top Ten College Women for 1989. Chow, who will earn both her bachelor and master degrees within four years, is featured in the October issue of *GLAMOUR*.

Chow, a computer science major, was chosen by *GLAMOUR* because of her accomplishments in science and technology. She worked as a computer programmer for a film company and designed a graphics package for a brokerage firm in Hong Kong, her birthplace. A member of Tau Beta Pi with a 4.0 G.P.A., Chow's senior thesis will be an ongoing project to link the telephone and computer. She is captain of the debate team, has won championships in badminton and basketball competitions and is an active member of the Caltech Chinese Students Association.

"College students have become increasingly focused in recent years. To recognize this development, for the first time we've selected winners who have excelled in a specific area of study," says Ruth Whitney, *GLAMOUR*'s editor-in-chief. "In addition to their academic achievements, they have prepared themselves for careers in their chosen fields with extensive extracurricular activities and 'real world' experience. Each possesses that vital combination of talent and drive necessary to shape tomorrow's society."

Chow says she "would like to finish school in four years so that I can start working in industry, applying by knowledge in computer science to solve problems in real life. Thus a parallel B.S./M.S. degree is an ideal choice for me."

Chow, who has lived in the United States for five years, tells *GLAMOUR*, "I have to thank my parents for giving me the chance to study in the U.S. Because of limited facilities and fundings, college students in Hong Kong often are forced to pursue fields that are not necessarily their interest. My stay in the U.S has given me the opportunity to pursue an education in areas that I am truly interested in, namely computer science."



The California Tech Journalistic Principles

The News-Opinion divide
All articles shall be clearly and explicitly labeled as either News or Opinion/Editorial.
News articles report on topics that have been thoroughly researched by Tech staff writers, and should be impartial to any one point of view. In a News article, the writer shall not insert their own personal feelings on the matter; the purpose is to let the facts speak for themselves. The Tech assumes full responsibility for all content published as News.
In contrast, Opinion articles (including Letters to the Editor) may be written and submitted by anyone on any topic; while the Tech will edit all published Opinions to ensure no wrong or misleading information, we do not otherwise interfere. Again, the role of the Tech here is to help the whole campus communicate their ideas and share their stories, not promote specific ones. Content published as Opinions do not necessarily represent the values of the Tech or our staff.
An exception to this is Editorials, which are written by Tech staff and represent official opinions of the Tech. Any information and sources in Editorials shall be held to the same standard as News reports, but there is no promise or expectation of impartial coverage.

Fair Reporting
All facts of major significance and relevance to an article shall be sought out and included.
If an assertion is made by a source about a specific person or organization, they shall be contacted and given a reasonable amount of time to respond before publication. In other words, no second-hand information or hearsay shall stand on its own.

Quotes and Attribution of Information
Facts and quotes that were not collected directly by Tech reporters shall be attributed. Articles shall clearly differentiate between what a reporter saw and heard first-hand vs. what a reporter obtained from other sources.
Sources' opinions are just that — opinions. Expert opinions are certainly given more weight, as are witness opinions. But whenever possible, the Tech shall report facts, or at least corroborate the opinions. A reporter's observations at a scene are considered facts for the purposes of a story.

Sources
All sources shall be treated with respect and integrity. When speaking with sources, we shall identify ourselves as Tech reporters and clarify why we would like to hold an interview. Sources for the Tech will never be surprised to see their name published.
In published content, we shall put our sources' quotes into context, and — as appropriate — clarify what question was being answered.
We always ask that a source speak with us on the record for the sake of journalistic integrity. We want our audience to receive information that is credible and useful to them. Named sources are more trustworthy than unnamed sources because, by definition, unnamed sources will not publicly stand by their statements.
That being said, we realize that some sources are unwilling to reveal their identities publicly when it could jeopardize their safety or livelihood. Even in those cases, it is essential that the Tech Editor-in-Chief knows the identity of the source in question. Otherwise, there can be no certainty about whether the source and their quotes were falsified.
This also applies for Letters to the Editor and Opinion submissions to the Tech. If the author requests that their piece is published anonymously, they must provide a reason, and we shall consider it in appropriate circumstances. No truly anonymous submissions shall be published. Conversely, no submissions shall be published with the author's name without their consent.
When we choose not to identify a source by their full name, the article shall explain to readers why.

Corrections Policy
We strive for promptness in correcting all errors in all published content. We shall tell readers, as clearly and quickly as possible, what was wrong and what is correct.
Corrections to articles will be immediately updated on the online version of the Tech at tech.caltech.edu. If appropriate, corrections will also be published in the following Tech print issue.

Honor Code Applies
In any remaining absence of clarity, the Honor Code is the guiding principle.

The California Tech

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The California Tech aims to publish biweekly except during vacation and examination periods by the Associated Students of the California Institute of Technology, Inc. The opinions expressed herein are strictly those of the authors and advertisers. Letters and submissions are welcome; email submissions to tech@caltech.edu, or submit them on our Discord server (https://discord.gg/Zaah8749s2). The editors reserve the right to edit and abridge all submissions for any reason. All written work remains property of its author. The advertising deadline is 12 PM on Friday; all advertising should be submitted electronically or as camera ready art, but *The Tech* can also do simple typesetting and arrangement. All advertising inquiries should be directed to the business manager at tech@caltech.edu.

The California Tech CalGuesser

Every issue, we'll show you a different location on campus. Find the place and find the QR code hidden there to sign the log book and **win a fabulous prize! Gift cards sponsored by CalGuesser Benefactor Kevin Kan, but only if you find it before he does!** *"On campus" is defined as the convex hull of the buildings shown on caltech.edu/map/campus.*

CalGuesser will return for our next issue in October!

The California Tech

REPORTERS & COLUMNISTS WANTED

Calling ALL members of the Caltech community — not just undergrads.
***The California Tech* is the voice of the people, and we need you to speak!**

Visit tech.caltech.edu/write (or QR Code)
to see story ideas and open positions

tech.caltech.edu/submit
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Do you love design and visual storytelling? Join the production team — *The California Tech* needs creative minds to craft aesthetic layouts in InDesign! Reach out to get started.

Tech Editor's Corner

Ithaka

By C. P. Cavafy
Translated By Edmund Keeley & Philip Sherrard

As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope your road is a long one.
May there be many summer mornings when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.