

FRANKLY SPEAKING

Olin's unofficial,
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source.

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 6

APRIL 2014

FREE, AS IN BEER

Mending a Broken Room Draw

Zach Homans
Contributor

Ah, springtime! The melting of snow! The chirping of birds! The wonderful return of warmer weather and longer days! Spring break has come and passed, and now life has returned to how it's meant to be! Stressful, chaotic, yet in many ways serene.

But what's this?! Off in the distance! 'Tis a storm brewing, threatening to engulf us all! It is the harbinger of broken promises, shattered friendships, and destroyed souls! Ah! We should have known this day was coming, as it does every year! This enigmatic force is known simply as "Room Draw".

Although embellished, the scene I've described portrays Room Draw fairly accurately. Whenever the topic is brought up, it's almost always accompanied by several sighs or "Ugh"s. It consistently appears as a returning source of malice, fear, hatred, and disappointment. Yet, this seems odd to me; aren't we, as a school, supposed to acknowledge what needs changing and "do something"?

Before we dive deeper, I'd like to put my disclaimer

here. In no way am I an expert in this topic. I've not attended meetings with Student Life, nor have I taken surveys or spoken to numerous people to gather my data. I'm simply recounting what I've heard, so treat this more as a personal account or opinion. I do acknowledge that my experience is not everyone's, but I think I have some insightful things to say regardless.

Before formulating the solutions, we first must identify and understand the problems. There are two different problem areas here – conveniently one for each Hall. Since I'm a junior, let's tackle East Hall first.

For rising seniors and juniors, Room Draw is all about the suites. The vast majority of seniors live in suites, and getting the right suite for your group is generally considered very important. For those that don't know, suites are assigned a number of points based on their members. Seniors are worth 4 points, juniors are worth 3.

Because points determine priority in choosing a suite, problems arise when considering who will be in your suite. A friend and I were

discussing who should fill the sixth slot in their suite. I suggested a rising junior. The backlash was instant. "No way! Then we'll have less points! We can't do that!" I was shocked. Is having less points really worth rejecting someone, possibly a strong match, instantly? To many, yes, it is. More points are favored over a better group simply because a small point disadvantage puts you in dead last when it comes to picking your suite.

This is a major issue. Olin should be encouraging people of different classes to live together, not push them apart. As a tour guide, one of the best things I love telling people that sets Olin apart is the inter-class relationships, which are stronger here than anywhere else. But when it comes to Room Draw, it seems like Olin has taken the opposite stance: seniors should live with seniors.

I fully understand the meaning of seniority. I get that seniors have been here the longest and therefore should get first say. But that doesn't mean the system isn't broken. People are more than just points, and the current system doesn't reflect that.

continued on next page

In looking for a solution, one can stay within the established solution space by enabling groups to choose three or four people to count for their points, instead of all six, encouraging the extra spots to be occupied by juniors. And if we were to start from scratch entirely, I'm certain Oliners could design a more appropriate solution that caters fairly to all sides. Build Day project, anyone?

If you thought it was bad in East Hall, let me tell you right now: it ain't lookin' so hot over in West Hall either. From my outside perspective, there seems to be two major issues plaguing many first years.

First is room entitlement. This pretty common every year and for every class, and it happens in East Hall as well. This year it seems especially bad. Many students began claiming rooms or hallways over a month before Room Draw began. This always works out poorly, as multiple people inevitably claim the same room. All sophomore doubles have the same number of points, so that means their ranking is randomly determined. When that's decided, someone is going to feel cheated no matter what. Becoming attached to a room before Room Draw begins is just asking for catastrophe.

Second is the first floor. I've heard many freshmen say things like: "The first floor has no culture." "No one wants to live there!" "That place sucks!" The outcry was so strong that Student Life changed their

policy this year, moving freshmen into 1N and opening up 3N to sophomores.

This makes me both frustrated and disappointed for several reasons. One, the first floor does not suck, and it does have culture. Saying no one wants to live there is an insult to people who currently live there by choice. It's incredibly disrespectful.

"People are more than just points, and the current system doesn't reflect that."

Second, if the first floor does suck, then why force incoming first years to live there? This baffles me to no end. The students of this college are supposed to respect and look out for one another. But from my point of view, it feels as if there was little consideration for the next class. This goes against everything we stand for as a school.

"I don't want Room Draw to signal despair."

There's a very good reason as few first years as possible live on the first floor. If you haven't noticed, the stairs are designed to encourage students to interact when going back to their rooms. Freshmen year is when students need this kind of support the most. Shoving new

first years to the first floor severely limits the amount of interaction on the third floor, which is known to be a largely first year lounge.

Now, I can see a possible good ending that comes from this change. Perhaps with more freshmen living in 1N, the first floor lounge will be reinvigorated with new life! Maybe everything will turn out wonderfully for everyone involved. But even if the outcome is positive, I don't feel it excuses the lack of respect this decision demonstrates towards our incoming students.

Taking a step back at Room Draw as a whole, I think it's valuable to consider the amount of importance we as Oliners place in where we live. Living next to your best friends can be awesome, but just how important is it? Do you really need to live in the party hallway? Is walking up some steps to visit your friends really so bad?

Last year, I lived in 4W in WH. My best friends who I visited every night lived in 4W... in EH. So every night I went down the stairs and went back up the stairs in EH to see them. Guess what? It wasn't that bad. Would I have liked to have been closer? Sure. But regardless of the distance, we were friends, and I was willing to go even if it took more than ten seconds.

This year, I live in 1E in EH. I usually hang out in 3N or in WH. Why? Because I like the people there! Distance is irrelevant! In the end, it doesn't matter where you live! Because as long

as you have friends who want to see, you are going to make the effort to see them, even if it means traversing a couple of stairs.

In the end, I want the system to improve. I don't want Room Draw to signal despair, like in my opening scene. And I believe we need to take steps towards positive change. But how can we expect the system to improve if we can't improve ourselves? First things first. We need to stop feeling entitled to the rooms we want and understand that living

somewhere "undesirable" doesn't spell doom. In the end, we all live here at Olin, and in my opinion, that's pretty desirable. What mat-

"In the end, we all live here at Olin, and in my opinion, that's pretty desirable."

ters is that you make friends worth traversing those "distances" for.

So calm down. Relax. Don't let Room Draw whip you up into a frenzy. While we search for ways to improve the system, remember that we are Oliners; we have all promised one another our respect. And if everyone understands and starts acting upon that respect as we should, then maybe, just maybe, next year's Room Draw won't bring about such feelings of malice, fear, hatred, and disappointment. Each and every one of us wants that to be true. So let's make it happen.

Honor Board MadLibs

Cases before the Honor Board are wide and varied. Topics range from personal differences and academic dishonesty to misuse of public materials. Above all, the Honor Board is a means for Olin Community members to work out their differences safely and confidentially. Find a friend and fill out the MadLibs in the paragraphs below to learn about a past case.

A suspected violation report form was submitted to the Honor Board by a(n) _____ [noun] who felt that parking _____ [plural noun] in Lot B were not being _____ [past tense verb]. The reporter in this case felt that students who parked in Lot B for more than _____ [number]

hours were disrespectful by not _____ [verb ending in -ing] the needs of students that use their _____ [plural noun] on a regular basis.

The _____ [adjective beginning with i] _____ [noun beginning with t] (IT) focused its attention on how the request for _____ [same number as before] hour parking was _____ [past tense verb] to students. The IT found that for several reasons, the _____ [same number] hour parking request was not to be regarded as a(n) _____ [adjective] violation. In addition, the IT found _____ [number] different parking _____ [plural noun] circulating around the student body, which created _____ [noun] about

the use of Lot B.

Because _____ a(n) _____ [adjective] resolution could not be found, the IT decided to dismiss the case and referred it to _____ [organization]. Upon hearing about the problem, _____ [organization] decided to reinforce the first come, first served parking policy on all student parking for the remainder of the _____ [time span] because short-term parking in Lot B was _____ [adjective] and lacked broad community support.

This is loosely based on an Honor Board case from Spring 2006 about parking in Lot B. You can read the original case at honorboard.olin.edu, under "Abstracts."

Time for Change at Olin

Adela Wee
Contributor

Passion for the Welfare of Olin College

"I will be a steward for the welfare of Olin College through a spirit of cooperation, concern for others, and responsibility for the reputation of Olin College."

Openness to Change

"I will be receptive to change, supportive of innovation, and willing to take risks for the benefit of the community."

I want you to think about those two statements and think about how you may or may not have applied them to your life at Olin. Over the past few years, I've noticed an increase in the lack of stewardship towards the college with each incoming class. I remember as a first year that the senior class was very vocal about things they wanted to see happen, namely the change from the half-tuition scholarship back to the full-tuition scholarship. In contrast, at our last town hall meeting, the student body was practically silent. In general, even though we've been paying more for our education than past classes, we are not nearly as vocal or persistent about the change that we'd like to see happen at Olin. Professors have also commented that current students do not take as many risks as students did in the past, especially in

partner year. This is probably indicative of the times we live in, but it still leaves me wondering if other Oliners are aware of our changing culture and how we're maybe not taking as big a risk as students before us.

Olin struggles with change. Last year, I attempted to change the Olin tour guide training system (I was tired of hearing things being

"I have noticed an increase in the lack of stewardship towards the college with each incoming class."

made up about the robotics lab on a daily basis). In the spring I tried to make it a build day project with David Zhu, but nothing came of it – admissions did not want to waste the paper necessary to make postcards showcasing the various activities on campus, nor did they support having a PowerPoint presentation style guide that would help tour guides keep track of updated information. Ultimately, they claimed that any changes to the tour guide training process would be left in the hands of the tour coordinator. That whole process left me wondering if other Olin students felt that, despite their efforts to make change, they felt major push back and consequently be-

came discouraged.

That's not to say that change isn't possible. At the end of last semester, a few peers and I sat down with Dave Barrett and Drew Bennett to discuss improvements to the robotics curriculum and ongoing research. The robotics lab was stretched thin, taking on over 8 different projects simultaneously. We wanted to make sure that valuable feedback was given to Dave and Drew to help improve the research experience, as well as the robotics curriculum, for the generations after us. What was the result? Well in the short term, it ended with us adding more structure to our group, such as setting goals for our research, and creating a set of labs for Robotics 2 culminating with a Mars rover challenge. Additionally, at the meeting we decided the lab should create informational handouts and cards for prospective students to take home. The cards that we developed were popular amongst the Candidates, and the Marketing department has now seen them and is supporting further efforts. Furthermore, we have inspired other labs such as Jean's and Joanne's biology labs to also develop cards of their own to increase the visibility of their work.

Above are a few of my own experiences, but my point is that if I'm feeling push back, and therefore, some frustration, do other

Oliners share my experience? After much introspection and discussion, I've concluded that there are two main causes for the push back against change: either Oliners are trying to initiate change but are becoming discouraged, or they are seeing that others become discouraged and therefore don't even try in the first place. Both are not good mindsets for anyone or great things to have as a part of our culture. I really like to hope that nei-

ther will be the case for long.

Some of us will be gone

"Olin struggles with change."

in two months, and others will be gone in three or more years. I'd like to point out that the stewardship of the college, where it will be in ten or twenty years, is highly dependent on the culture and the values of the students, faculty, and staff. Olin's

mission is to bringing about change in engineering education and the way higher-level education is approached. Are we, the student body, really content with what is here, or are we just begrudgingly accepting things that we feel little power to change? If we let ourselves become complacent, and we continue not to take action, will Olin then plateau and become more like a traditional engineering school? That is something I would prefer to avoid.

The Olin Library

Uncovered



Have you ever touched paper made out of sheep poo?

No, really, have you? Sheep Poo Paper™ has the same uses as traditional paper and is commonly used for printing, writing and crafting. The paper is produced in Wales using only Welsh water. Want to learn more and see it for yourself? Come to the library and discover our Materials Samples Collection! Located near periodicals, these items cannot be borrowed; however, the collection is quite extensive. With over 100 in stock, you can learn about sample composition, manufacturing processes and what each sample is most commonly used for. Additionally, you

can search the collection online using the "Materials Database" link on the library website (library.olin.edu) under Library Service and Collections.

Need a power drill, drill bits, a mallet, or a soldering iron?

We have that too! We even have a sewing machine. The library has a Circulating Tools Collection downstairs next to the Materials Samples Collection. The funding for this state of the art project comes from the class gift of 2012. We are currently hard at work purchasing more items to add to the collection. Tools are checked out like any other borrowed library material and are due back in a week. However, due to the

high value of these items, each is locked up and a librarian or student worker must retrieve the tools. If you need a tool when the library is not open to the public, (after five during the week or over the weekend for example) simply send an email to LibraryHandTools@olin.edu. One of our fabulous student workers will reach out if they are able to meet you in the library to get you the item in need. You can view what we have so far by visiting the "Tools Database" link on library website (library.olin.edu) under Library Services and Collections.

Kelly McDaniel
Columnist

Making Olin a Better Place

From last time: "What is one thing you think could be done to make Olin a better place?"

I really like Gui and Eric Van Wyk's seminars this semester. I hope we see more low-commitment "come and learn for fun!" classes like these in the future.

Forrest Bourke
Contributor

Removing the credit system. Credits are outdated and inaccurate; they hardly represent how much effort each student puts in to a certain aspect of his/her lives. If we are a truly innovative college, we would find other ways that make validation for success more logical. This way, budgeting for time spent during a semester would not be as unbalanced, and people could make better choices that shy away from over-commitment.

David Zhu
Contributor

There are far too many things, for me to pick just one! I'd like to see a stronger feedback culture at Olin. I'd like to have more discussions in our community about our cultural context. I'd like to see students consider whether they should choose to work less. I'd like us to make an effort to embrace risk. I'd like to explicitly incorporate reflection into every course. And I'd like everyone to be more understanding of people who have

different beliefs from them - but that's going to be the case anywhere and always.

Graham Hooton
Contributor

Better transportation to Boston. The Olin bubble makes us think too narrowly. I often hear students talk about Olin making a better place, but perhaps if we got out of Olin more, we'd think more about making Boston and the US a better place. Maybe even the world, if we went out of country.

Anonymous
Contributor

A lower credit maximum.

Anonymous
Contributor

If the dining hall plated the small items on big plates. I need space for more food!

Anonymous
Contributor

My main complaint about Olin (specifically West Hall) is the kitchen. One too many times, I've found the sink clogged up with slimy food scraps, stepped on or leaned my elbow into a sticky puddle of some unnamed sauce, or grabbed a supposedly clean pan from the shelf and found my hand covered in grease, butter, or even leftover food gunk.

Any improvement would be a good one. Some examples could be installing an actual garbage disposal, scheduling a weekly cleaning (perhaps with some reward

for participation), or some kind of check-out check-in system for kitchen supplies (pots, pans, measuring cups, etc.) to encourage personal accountability for the care of community resources.

Allison Patterson
Contributor

Sky bridges between the buildings. Think how much more interaction between Halls there would be if you could just walk between the top floors. No longer would we have to drudge through the cold during the arduous walk to class. Besides, who doesn't love walking on sky bridges?

Zach Homans
Contributor

It would be amazing to have a design stockroom (butcher paper, post-it notes, sharpies) in East Hall.

Anonymous
Contributor

More well rounded students who do athletic-based extracurriculars rather than just academic.

Anonymous
Contributor

A lost and found spot. And an ability to recognize what is put somewhere and what is left somewhere.

Anonymous
Contributor

For next month: "Who is someone at Olin you appreciate a great deal, and why?"

Run for a Leadership Position

Trevor Hooton
Contributor

CORE, Honor Board and SERV are all having elections for important leadership roles, and you should run for a position! Step up and have a say in directing Olin next year. Help to shape the student experience and continue to improve Olin! Come to open "office hours" on Wednesday, April 2nd at lunch to talk with current leaders about why they love their positions and why you should run. If you're at all interested in a position, talk to us, learn what the role would entail and RUN!

While they may sound daunting, all these positions are all extremely rewarding, and only take a couple of hours of work per week. Every student who holds a leadership role in these various organizations is proud of the direct impact his or her actions and opinions have on the Olin community.

Lately, some of these positions have been suffering from a lack of candidates, leading to uncontested elections. It isn't for a lack of qualified students or even a lack of interest; many people assume that if a well suited candidate declares interest in a position, that role is sufficiently accounted for. The current elected officials all

believe in the democratic process and the necessity of contested elections. If you are remotely interested in a position, let the community decide how to fill the roles.

There are several positions to run for in each organization:

CORE

The Council of Olin Representatives (CORE) needs a new President, Vice President, Master of Coin, Clubs and Organizations Chair, and SAC Chair. CORE is Olin's student government, but true to Olin's nature it has none of the stuffy and rigid connotations. It's a dynamic group that responds to students' needs, interfaces with administration and dispenses the student activities fee for new initiatives, infrastructure improvements, services to students, funding clubs and hosting fun activities. If you want to have a say in spending over \$60,000 to enrich the Olin Experience, run for a CORE position! (Questions about CORE? Contact Larissa: Larissa.Little@students.olin.edu)

Honor Board

The Honor Board is electing a new Chair and Vice Chair and up to four general members. Members of the Honor Board bring the Honor Code to the students,

relate world events to the Olin community, and handle honor code violations as they arise. The Honor Board amends our Honor Code to keep this document relevant and important. If you care about integrity, change, the welfare of Olin College, respect, and doing something, consider running for the Honor Board. (Questions about HB? Contact Alex: Alex.Kessler@students.olin.edu)

SERV

SERV is electing a new Chair, Vice-Chair, Manager of Finances and Records, and three general Members. SERV's role is to celebrate volunteerism and to bring interesting and exciting service opportunities to the Olin community. Next year, SERV is undergoing some major transformations, so you can have a big impact in defining the future of service at Olin. If you care about community and mindfulness, run for SERV! (Questions about SERV? Contact Ari: Ariana.Chae@students.olin.edu)

For more details on each individual position, see the elections email sent out by CORE on April 1st, meet with the current leaders at lunch on April 2nd or email the contacts listed above! We hope to see you on the ballot!

Frankly Speaking has a website!
www.franklyspeakingnews.com

Predicting Course Enrollment

Berit Johnson,
Sarah Strohkorb
Contributors

This semester we (Berit Johnson and Sarah Strohkorb) set out to answer some predictive questions about Olin courses, students, and majors. More specifically, we're attempting to answer the question, "can we predict what one student will take for any given semester based on their course history?" which easily expands to, "can we predict Olin's total course enrollment for Spring 2014 based on all of the students' course histories?"

Our preliminary results show promise, but there is significant room for improvement. We'd like to share our work with the Olin commu-

nity and also welcome feedback and suggestions.

Methods

To begin, our work depends on the assumption that Olin students act somewhat predictably: the courses people have taken in the past can tell us something about what they are likely to take in the future. We therefore obtained the anonymized list of all courses taken by each Olin student from the Fall 2002 semester to the Spring 2014 semester. This data became the input to our model.

To make our predictions, we used a logistic regression which is a model designed for classification and used to predict a binary outcome based on a set of predictors. We train the model by

giving the model input data with known classifications. In this case, the input is the set of classes a student has taken up to a given point in their academic career and the classification is whether or not that student takes a given course in a particular semester. Once we have trained the model, we can verify its validity by using it to classify testing data that the model has never seen before.

In order to predict Olin's entire course enrollment, we predicted the enrollment for each course individually, and within each course predicted the enrollment for each graduating class (first years, sophomores, etc.). For example, let's say we're predicting the enrollment of sophomores in Software

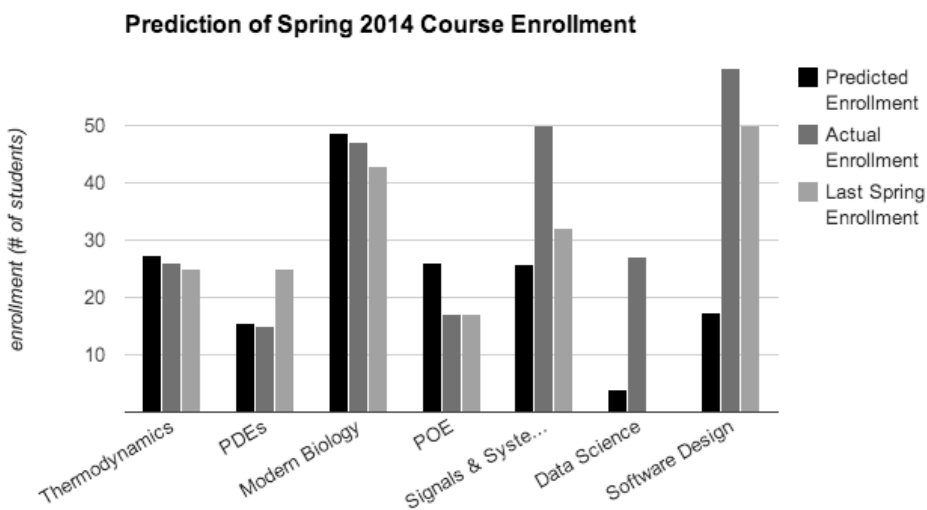


Figure 1. A comparison of predicted, actual, and last Spring's course enrollment for a particular set of courses for the Spring 2014 semester. The predicted enrollments were determined by the output of our logistic regression model. PDEs stands for Partial Differential Equations and POE stands for Principles of Engineering.

Systems for the Spring 2014 semester. We extracted all of the current sophomores from the data set to form our “testing data.” We then created our training data by taking all of the other students’ course histories up to the first semester of their sophomore year and recording whether or not they took Software Systems during the second semester of their sophomore year.

We fit our logistic regression model to the training data and used the model to make predictions based off of the testing data. In this example, for every current sophomore the model outputs a probability that they will take Software Systems. Summing these probabilities yields the expected number of sophomores to enroll in Software Systems in Spring 2014.

Results

We compared our predicted enrollment for each course this semester with the actual enrollment and displayed representative re-

sults for seven of the courses offered in the Spring 2014 semester in Figure 1. Of the 57 courses we predicted enrollment for, 9 had less than 10% error, 7 had 10-30% error, 12 had 30-50% error, and 29 had over 50% error. We also compared our model to the enrollment for the previous year as a baseline. We can see that when our model does well, it does very well, out-performing the baseline, but when it does poorly, it does very poorly indeed.

Our analysis of the predictions suggests that our model performs poorly for newer courses like Data Science and other “Special Topics” courses because there is no history of students taking these courses. The courses that our model does well with tend to be more well-established like Thermodynamics or PDE’s. Additionally, for courses like POE, Signals & Systems, and Software Design, enrollment can vary due to variance of student interest, trends within graduating classes, and how the course is advertised.

There are also a variety of factors that can affect enrollment that our model does not take into account such as enrollment caps or whether a given course satisfies a major requirement.

Future Work

One problem that we encountered with our data was the amount of variance in the Olin curriculum from special topics that are only offered once to changes in the First year curriculum. In order to improve the quality of our predictions, we could group related classes and predict whether or not students are likely to take a course in a particular group.

Additionally, we are considering answering other questions with this data such as: “who is likely to wait until senior year to take Mod Bio?”, “what major is person X most likely going to graduate with?”

If you have any feedback/suggestions or questions you think would be interesting to try to answer with this data, please let us know!

A Puzzle by Midnight Math

New Puzzle

Try to imagine an irrational number between 0 and 1, represented in decimal, such that nowhere in the infinite sequence of digits does the same digit repeat twice in a row. Does such a number exist? If so, show why. If not, show why not.

Previous Puzzle

Correct Answerers

Greg Edleston

Jae Young-Park

A myriad of sillies

who didn't write in

Answer: The [little] prince lives on a spherical asteroid with a circumference of 400 paces.

Errata: Jae Young-Park solved February's puzzle as well and was not credited in last month's issue.

Send in your solutions (with proofs) to midnight.math@outlook.com. If you are correct, you will be given the highest of accolades: your name mentioned here, next issue.

A Crash Course on Seizures

Kai Austin
Editor

Epilepsy is the most common and historically recognized of all neurological “disorders” affecting approximately 1% of the population. I am someone who has it. What does that mean? It means I have seizures on a regular basis. As a result, the majority of my life revolves around keeping my body in equilibrium and avoiding possible shock so I can minimize the accumulation of subtle “damage” which has decided to center itself in the language processing areas of my brain.

But what is a seizure anyway? The number one misconception people have is that it is obvious. A person suddenly falls to the ground and begins flailing, unconscious yet jerking around like a flopping fish in electric shock therapy. No words can express how incredibly wrong this is. There are 3 types of seizures: absence (petit mal), partial/focal, and grand mal (Tonic-Clonic). I am going to ignore sleep seizures because I might have them, but I am too busy sleeping to care.

An absence seizure is small. Usually involves someone blanking out for a few seconds, suddenly stop walking in the middle of the hall, and other little mini-bursts like a robot who forgot what it was doing. Expect subtle confusion, disorientation, unconsciousness

(“sleeping”) and memory resets. You never notice these, mostly because they only last 3-30 seconds. Downside is that someone can have about 50-100 a day (though more common with children).

Partial/Focal seizures are ones with greater magnitude. Being incapable of speaking, muscles contracting, mood swings, sensitivity shooting through the roof, and even twitching. Pick and choose your combination or get creative with your own. They can be pretty trippy. The key identifier is that the person is conscious. One seizure I had (at Park Street) was my sense of space completely vanished. I could not tell where the floor was, all I knew was that I was in a vacuum of emptiness and I clung to a wall as fast as I could (a child asked their parent if I was blind). The more “common” partial I have happen when I am sitting down. My arms curl up, my fingers become distorted and ice cold, my head flops to one side, and I am completely incapable of speech. Is it obvious? No. Unless you are paying attention then it is easy to notice something is wrong. Each seizure will last for about 2-5 minutes.

Grand mal seizures, you probably already know about because it is the epilepsy poster child. Unconscious fall on ground, flailing, the whole drama scene. They are rare. The rare people who have them (I am not one) use

medication to stop from having them or at least minimize frequency. They can last for 2-5/5-20 minutes.

Do they happen out of the blue? No. Most people can generally tell when they are going to have a seizure. It's called an “aura.” I generally know I am going to have one within 1 minute to a full 3 hours before it happens. Symptoms start to show up, there is a wind down, I start feeling weird – the longer that is, the worse of a seizure I can expect. Then after I have it? My seizures end with a slam of a headache and boom, I can move again. But I may not walk well. Or talk at all. Thus after every seizure, I need to go take a nap to help my brain “heal” – though that does not always work. One time I was stuck in a British accent for 24 hours.

However, in no way are my seizures the norm. Why? Because seizures are different for everyone with epilepsy. How seizures manifest is as diverse as the personalities of the people who have them. You learn a person's patterns eventually, you can even ask for them. For me, if my head is not straight up or I am wearing sunglasses during class, I am definitely having one or am about to.

What triggers a seizure?

The number one misconception is flashing lights. For the past two Halloweens (and a party), I have approached a room with a sign outside:

"If you have epilepsy, do not enter this room." I don't take offense to this and dismiss it as a sincere effort to actually keep other people from getting hurt (though considering the reputation of the people who wrote it, it was likely a joke). However, the general ignorance still stands – and the fact that I could stand outside the room and see there were flashing lights before even noticing the sign meant that, if it was a legitimate concern, I would have had a seizure right there and the warning was useless/ill-placed. Additionally, I already live with the prospect of not getting a job or having my driver's license taken away because I may be deemed "mentally incapable" of doing something – I already cannot donate blood or drink. Telling me outright not to do something I'm perfectly capable of judging myself is really, really rude. Better wording would have been appreciated.

So, setting the record straight, flashing lights can cause *anyone* to have a seizure. This is why Las Vegas has the highest rate non-epileptic seizures in the entire US (relayed by my sister who lives there). People's brains are hardy and can take quite a bit of abuse. The catch is when that abuse goes too far. Everyone is expected to have at least one seizure in their life.

People with epilepsy are no different. No, blinking a light bulb in front of me does not trigger grand mal – and you should not shine light in

to people's eyes in the first place. Blinking a light in front of me when I am sleep deprived, stressed out, dehydrated and just had a hearty meal of everything I am allergic to *might* trigger an *absence* seizure, but more likely a huge headache of disorientation. If it did trigger a seizure, then what could you genuinely say the cause was? Most people with epilepsy do not actually know the causes of their seizures. The only guide lines we have to go by are trial, estimation, and error. I have never had a seizure when I was cold, but am guaranteed to have one with less than 6 hours of sleep. Wearing sunglasses reduces a seizure's magnitude; travel shoots it through the roof. Being around mind altering smells like incense lowers my threshold. The worst seizures I have had were all in public places. Because my brain cannot properly process emotions, I even risk a seizure if I get excited or angry (good luck with that though). The list goes on, and that is just me. As I said, everyone is different.

What should you do if you notice someone is having a seizure?

Short answer, there is nothing you can do. Long answer, remove any obstacles, don't stick anything in their mouth (grand mal myth), and just let it happen. Unless...

We get to a situation that happened to me last spring. There I sat having a partial during the busiest part of lunch hour. I could not talk

or move, I was slumped over my lunch – 5 minutes passed. No one said anything. A few people were sitting across from me having a nice conversation. Then 10 minutes had passed. Still nothing. There was a moment where my diaphragm stopped working, but it was brief. Then 20 minutes had passed. The people who were with me before had gone, been replaced by new ones. Somewhere around 30 minutes, slamming headache, boom! I could move again. Getting up, I limped away, dragging my right leg along, and made the long trudge back to my room in EH 3. Someone was kind enough to ask if I was alright, but I could not reply because I could not speak. Out of spite, I took the stairs, then fell asleep in laughing hysteria.

What is wrong with this? A seizure lasting longer than 5 minutes is considered a medical emergency and you should call 911. Seizures longer than 20 minutes risks brain damage. A seizure longer than 30 minutes guarantees it (especially if grand mal, there is a risk of death). In my case, my seizures have never been life threatening since they are not that bad. I don't blame anyone for not doing anything; I generally don't expect anyone to care. Trust me, I'm used to it. Plus making a scene is embarrassing (the social stigma is generally regarded worse than the seizures themselves) and ignorance is forgivable. But why this isn't part of standard first aid classes, I only wonder.

FRANKLY funnies

Horoscopes by Drunk Editors

Aries (March 21 – April 19): Now is a great time to have that discussion you've been putting off. It may not be comfortable, but you'll be happier for it in the end.

Taurus (April 20 – June 20): Having apocalyptic thoughts? Feel like the world is going to come crashing down? It just might.

Gemini (July 22 – May 21): This month you will meet a frog. You won't want to, but perhaps you should give it a second chance. You never know what a frog might become.

Cancer (June 21 – Oct. 23): It's spring cleaning time. Clean your dirty laundry! Clean your room! Clean your life!

Leo (Jan. 20 – Aug. 22): You may feel like some aspects of your life are cemented in place. Don't. It's just an illusion.

Virgo (Aug. 23 – Jan. 19): Imagine you are a seal with a ball balanced perfectly on your nose. You may feel uncomfortable letting it fall, but you have to eat sometime.

Libra (May 20 – Oct. 22): Your life is a condo. It's a luxurious getaway, but it just doesn't feel real. This month, figure out how to fix that.

Scorpio (March 20 – Nov. 21): Where did all that sand come from?

Sagittarius (Sept. 23 – Dec. 21): Did that flicker of warm weather get you down? Don't worry, I'm sure there will be at least

one more month of freezing cold, miserable weather this year. We do live in New England after all.

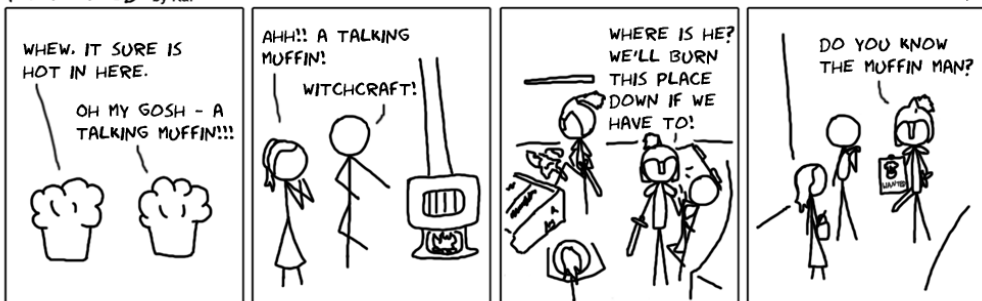
Capricorn (Dec. 22 – Sept. 22): The duck signals a discontent in your future. Catch the duck and eat it, before it ruins your life and your friendships.

Aquarius (July 23 – Feb. 18): Fill up your bucket with your worldly possessions and set out on a journey. It will be nice to clear your mind and reevaluate your life decisions for a while. Don't forget to write home intermittently.

Pisces (Feb. 19 – Nov. 22): Remember all those promises you made to yourself at the beginning of the year? It's not too late to start making progress.

NOT XKCD by Kai

SO IT BEGAN



(BUT UNLIKE MOST NURSERY RHYME ORIGINS, THIS ENDS WELL. THEY ARE STILL TRYING TO FIND HIM TO THIS DAY.)

Education Synergy - A Merger

Colby Sato
Contributor

On March 18th, while most of you were away, Babson College and Olin College signed an agreement detailing the acquisition of Olin College by Babson College. Under the new arrangement, Olin College's official name will be the Olin Center for Engineering and Entrepreneurship.¹

Olin has had difficulty paying off the debt it acquired from the construction of an entire school.² To mitigate the damage endured by the fund, the full-tuition scholarship has been replaced with a half-tuition scholarship, and spending on post-its has dropped. Funds were so short last year, Olin leased parcel B out to the local delinquents to grow bud. Unfortunately, these efforts have not been enough.

Fortunately, the influx of capital will not only allow us to pay off our debts, it will also allow Olin to invest in two new dorms, called tentatively "Innovation" and "Entrepreneurship." According to Olin's Marketing Director, "These new dorms will be hotbeds of innovation and entrepreneurship. In fact,

the more we say those two words, the more they will happen, and students don't have to do anything differently!"

Though some had hoped the acquisition would allow the restoration of the full-tuition scholarship, it is being reported that in order to fulfill the mission of Babson College, all scholarships will be suspended. Starting next year, students will pay the full 60K required to fund the Olin Education. Additionally, in efforts to build the portfolio of Babson College, all intellectual property developed at Olin will now belong to Babson College.³

Students at Olin should not have the impression they are being used. No, the elite education delivered at Olin will be supplemented by Babson's new ownership. All Babson first years take a course called Foundations of Management and Entrepreneurship (FME), in which they build a business over the course of a year, selling products and services. In the past, products have been USB sticks and wrist bands. To take greater advantage of the market insights of Babson students and give students a taste of the "real world,"

Babson FME teams will "contract out" POE, Software Design, HFID, Mobile Proto and Mech Proto teams. This will allow Olin students to spend less time figuring out what they want to do, and more time simply doing. "I came to Olin, because I don't care about the bigger picture. I just want my 100K and flat in San Francisco," explained senior Drank Underwood. "With this new change, I can start working towards that dream even earlier."

This fusion of academic life will extend to the dorms, where Babson and Olin students will share dorms. To celebrate this bridging of cultures, a snowman monument will be erected between all four dorms—a snowman that will neither melt nor topple.

Students and faculty at Olin have expressed concern that Olin is "plateauing." However, with this new deal, 2014 will be an inflection point for this brave phoenix.

[1] *Aka. Babson's Engineering Department*

[2] *Buildings and labs, a cafeteria and two dorms! Who does that?*

[3] *Open-source is what the Commies would have wanted us to do.*

HAVE SOME FUNNY FOR THESE PAGES?

SUBMIT COMICS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The following two pieces were submitted in response to the article *Argument Against Marriage* by Kai Austin published in the March issue of Frankly Speaking. To read the original article, visit Frankly Speaking's website www.franklyspeakingnews.com.

The Value of Marriage

Jeff Moore
Alumnus Contributor

When I read Kai Austin's article *Argument Against Marriage*, I realized that I had found my new trench. See, I am Catholic, and Catholics have gotten quite adept at falling short in societal debates about marriage and sex. In the last sixty years alone we have been the losing interlocutors regarding contraception, divorce, pre-marital sex, and abortion. Now, as we rapidly lose ground on same-sex marriage, I needed a new trench, a new line to hold, and Kai gave it to me: I am not yet ready to give up on the value of marriage.

Before I explain myself, though, I should make my relative bias clear: not only am I Catholic, I am training to be a Catholic priest. Among other things, this means that I will never get married. Priests are asked to forego personal marriage in order to give themselves in complete service to the Church. Some may think that my swearing off of marriage disqualifies me from defending marriage, but I think of it as a scientific bonus - I am an outside observer who can comment on the system without reducing it to my own experience. And what are my

observations? That marriage is ultimately a life of love-as-service and that society has an important interest in promoting and protecting such an institution.

But let me build up to this thesis by first addressing Kai's. On my reading, Kai is not arguing against marriage per se, but against our image of marriage as an institution of and for love (though the implication is that if marriage is not motivated by love then no other motivation can justify it either). He makes his argument historically, by asserting that marriage has always been an institution of economics and power, and practically, by suggesting that even today's love-based marriages are not actually motivated by love and do little to support or sustain love.

"World literature associates love and marriage as far back as the Bible's Song of Songs."

Let us start with the history. While his assertions are certainly not groundless, my primary critique of Kai's

history is that it comes to us through Marxist historical analyses (which view history primarily as an economic system). Granted, all historical research requires a data filter and the Marxist approach is well-worn in academic circles, but its predisposition to favor economic data makes it less than ideal for an analysis of love. To give love the benefit-of-the-historical-doubt, one might instead choose a filter that takes better account, for example, of world literature, which associates love and marriage as far back as Homer's *Odyssey* and the Bible's *Song of Songs*. Those interested in marriage history might look into Stephanie Coontz,¹ the most prominent proponent of Kai's view, and her book *Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage*, and then move on to the many and varied responses to Ms. Coontz' works, especially an article by Kay Hymowitz² arguing that marriage actually developed as an institution of childbearing / childrearing and that it still holds value today for exactly these purposes.

But Kai's deeper point is not about history, it is about the relationship between marriage and love. He is cer-

tainly correct that something significant changed about this relationship in the 19th century, but I fear that he has confused the cause for the effect. It is not our views of marriage that changed, but our definition of love.

What is love? It would seem that Kai, mirroring contemporary western society, follows Webster in thinking that love is “a feeling of strong or constant affection for a person.”³ But this definition is incredibly novel. For more than two millennia, from Aristotle until the end of the Enlightenment, love had a completely different definition in western philosophy, “to will the good of another,” and this definition is the only definition that makes love-based marriage make sense.

Note well: according to the classical definition, love is not a feeling, love is a choice. What we designate today as “love” is, at best, “joy” and, at worst, a selfish, hedonistic addiction to an evanescent infatuation. While attraction and compatibility are powerful motivations for love, we should not confuse the aids to love for love itself. Love is service. If you authentically love someone you serve them, you do not desire to use them as a means for your own pleasure.

Certainly love often brings joy, but the absence of joy does not preclude the ability to love. In fact, you can identify true love by the fact that it persists even when the joy does not. Taylor Swift did not “love” Jake Gyllenhaal in the same sense

that Blessed Mother Theresa “loved” the poor. Let me assure you that Mother Theresa did not always feel joy when she was cleaning the diseased sores of the marginalized of Calcutta, but she chose to keep serving them, to keep loving them, anyway. For

"Love is not a feeling, love is a choice."

that matter, I am fairly sure that Jesus was not feeling a whole lot of joy being tortured to death by his Roman overlords, and yet Christianity holds up his crucifixion as the greatest act of love the world has ever known.

"If we are using the Taylor Swift definition of love, I absolutely agree that love is a poor reason to enter marriage"

Let us be clear, though: even under the classical definition, love is more than a stocic duty. Love is what makes us human. Love brings us closer to God and makes us like God. Love brings us joy but transcends joy, bringing us a level of peace and happiness that hedonistic pleasure seeking cannot begin to explore or understand. Even when we suffer for the sake of love, it is love that gives meaning to the suffering and, in so doing, meaning to all

suffering around the world. As counterintuitive as it may sound to the contemporary ear, it is in giving ourselves to others that we discover our true selves as human persons.

Now, if we are using the modern, Taylor Swift definition of love, I absolutely agree with Kai's contentions that love is a very poor reason to enter marriage and that marriage, if not actually hostile to love, certainly does nothing good for it. If familiarity breeds contempt, then there is nothing worse for love than to become family.

But if we define love as service, as willing the good of another, then we arrive at the surprising notion that marriage is not about good feels, but good works. In fact, for marriage to be the highest expression of love, it must be the highest expression of service: complete self-sacrifice for the sake of another. The last person you should be thinking about when you are getting married, therefore, is yourself.

Even previous forms of marriage, imperfect as they were, contained the seeds of love-as-service. Loveless arranged marriages may not have had service-to-spouse in mind, sure, but they were dutifully entered into in service to one's family or, in the case of royalty, one's people. Women's rights in many places were dismal, certainly, but forcing the husband to make sure her economic needs were met is still love-as-service, even if incredibly diminished.

Yet today, with our enlightened outlook, our mar-

riages should contain vastly more love than these economic models, right? Nope! We have exchanged our ancestors' quest after property rights and legitimate heirs for our quest after self-fulfillment and the avoidance of bad feelings. Of course, according to our standards, ours is the nobler quest, but it is equally loveless and selfish. Neither model has as its goal "to will the good of another".

Still, our failings are no reason to abandon marriage, but to embrace it all the more strongly. Marriage, properly understood, is the antidote to hedonism and, if we only lived it out, would instantly create a world that could surpass any utopian hippy pipe-dream. You cannot give your whole self in service to another and not begin to serve others in your life outside the home. And it would be sustainable to boot, because the children of these marriages would be equally affected by being raised in micro-communities of service.

It is understandable, then, why a love-based marriage must have certain characteristics. Marriage must be a complete self-gift because abandoning oneself for another creates absolute vulnerability and the only protection that is compatible with love is the knowledge and trust that the other person is giving him/herself in an equally complete manner. When spouses hold back from each other, or (worse) when the level of self-gift is unequal, marriages break down quickly. Marriage

must be exclusive and monogamous because a complete gift of self can only be made to one person at a time. Marriage must be life-long because the only motivation for love during periods of joylessness is a definitive and unending act of the will.

"Marriage, properly understood, is the antidote to hedonism and would surpass any utopian hippy pipe-dream."

And, if I may be so bold as to assert the Catholic position, marriage must be the only appropriate context for sex because (1) if sex, the highest form of physical self-gift, is given in relationships otherwise marked by partial self-gift, then there remains no unique physical act of self-gift that can mirror the other unique intimacies present in relationships of complete self-gift and (2) sex being the ordinary means of procreation, the optimal environment for child rearing is a micro-community of complete self-service.

It is further understandable why our government has a significant interest in maintaining, encouraging, and defending marriage: because even one love-as-service marriage builds a more robust society. A population grounded in child-rearing micro-communities of self-service cannot help but be

stable, peaceful, fruitful, and civic-minded. Though today's high divorce-rate is certainly tragic, how impossibly more tragic would society become if there were no marriage at all?

Idealized? Yes. Impossible? No, but a certain heroism is undoubtedly necessary. It takes a hero to be true in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health and to love and honor the other all the days of his/her life. If, instead, we replace heroism with hedonism, if we cannot muster the self-sacrifice necessary to commit ourselves to such an essential form of life, then the status of marriage does not really matter anyway; our society will already have rotted to its core. Fortunately, I still believe in heroes, and I still believe in marriage. Now, if you will excuse me, I have to go man a trench.

Thank you, Kai, for your article and thank you, Frankly Speaking, for hosting such an important discussion.

[Jeff Moore is a member of the Class of 2010 (E:C). He is a resident of Burien, WA, but is currently finishing his final three years of priestly training at Mundelein Seminary, outside Chicago. He can be reached at jeffrey.moore@alumni.olin.edu.]

[1] <http://stephaniecoontz.com/>

[2] <http://www.cato-unbound.org/2008/01/16/kay-s-hymowitz/marriage-gap>

[3] <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/love>

God, Singleness and Lust?

A Response to "Arguments Against Marriage"

Aaron Crenshaw
Contributor

In *Argument Against Marriage*, the author effectively claims that the Bible teaches that singleness is superior to marriage. I would like to make a few clarifying points, with the disclaimer that there is a large diversity of interpretations of the Bible within Christendom and, while I may think mine is correct, I am human and subject to error. I cannot possibly represent the beliefs of all Christians on these matters. Additionally, I am Protestant, rather than Catholic, though I do not closely identify with any one denomination beyond being fairly conservative.

Regarding Christianity "work[ing] its way into marriage," the author states that "the Catholic church was well aware marriage was man-made and did not put any claim on marriage as a sacrament until the 1200s." The author cites his source, though I believe that a better place to start research into this might be the Wikipedia page, "Marriage (Catholic Church)." The "History of marriage in the Catholic Church" section of the Wikipedia entry reads, "Marriage is acknowledged in the New Testament scriptures. The first recorded miracle by Jesus is at a wedding feast in Cana, and the Catholic Church believes this signifies

his approval of the institution of marriage..." with a provided citation. This, however, is tangential.

As a (Protestant) Christian, if I'm trying to decide whether or not the union of a woman and a man is sacred, divinely ordained/regulated, etc., my first source is not Catholic Canon Law, but rather the (Protestant) Bible itself. To start, I look back to the account of Adam and Eve and the establishment

"Before the formal establishment of religious sects, the Judeo-Christian God of the Bible designed holy unions."

of the nature of a holy union as given in Genesis 2:24-25. What I see here is that before the formal establishment of religious sects, the Judeo-Christian God of the Bible designed holy unions (later to become formalized as "marriage"). Therefore, saying "religion... has worked its way into marriage" isn't exactly inaccurate... but if you accept the Bible as truth it is not entirely accurate either. I will not pursue this topic further; the subject of the divine authority of Scripture is not within the scope of

this particular piece.

It is (somewhat) accurate to claim that Paul endorsed singleness as "an ideal that Christians should strive for" (though technically the citation should be I Corinthians 7:7-9). However, it might be worth reminding readers that within this context, if there is no marriage there is absolutely no sexual intercourse. It's also worth asking why, and I feel reasonably sure that Paul's reasons are not the reasons the author is presenting. In Matthew 19:12, Jesus said, "there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven." (Note that "eunuch" here is, at least in my experience, widely accepted as being a metaphor for one who chooses to remain celibate and does not refer to a literal eunuch.) The benefit of singleness presented here is the lack of distraction that comes with marriage and family, for the singular purpose of allowing people to better serve God. If either Jesus or Paul cited other reasons for singleness, I am not currently aware of them.

The flip side of this is the question, "Does this mean the Bible says I should only get married if I have lust problems?" I don't think so, but if you're craving sexual satisfaction than singleness might not be for you (just sayin'...) That said, I cannot emphasize enough that sex

should NOT be the singular (or primary) reason for getting married. In this respect, I support many of the things the author wrote, such as the author's denouncement of marriage as a problem-solver and fulfillment of social expectations. I particularly liked it when the author wrote, "People want to have someone to love, because love is a beautiful thing. People want to have someone love them back, because love is a rare thing." I think the experience of a committed union, with all its ups and downs, is beautiful and can make a person grow in ways singles can't even imagine and can teach us more about what it really means to love than we would ever expect. The commitment is important, partially because it forces personal growth. You

could say that we choose monogamous, committed marriage not because it is easy, but because it is hard. I will stop here; when it comes to the topic of love, it would not be difficult to fill an entire issue of Frankly Speaking. I will also entirely avoid the topic of arranged marriage,

"Commitment is important, partially because it forces personal growth."

though I will say that I much prefer the choose-your-own-spouse method and suspect that God prefers it, too.

The last item I would like to address is the author's use of Luke 20:35 as a citation

for the phrase "Jesus taught that it was better to be unmarried and celibate." Matthew 19:12 can serve as an alternative citation that at least approaches the claim that it is better to be celibate. The actual meaning of Luke 20:35 makes it an inappropriate citation for this claim. In Luke 20:35, Jesus is speaking about what happens to marriages after the Resurrection of the Dead, a future event when everyone who has ever died will be resurrected. Long (and admittedly strange) story short, what we learn here is that marriage is exclusively a blessing for this life and has no place or applicability in the life to come. You can learn more about this by Googling "Christianity and the Resurrection of the Dead" and reading Luke 20:27-39 and Romans 7:1-3.

Time to Find a Successor

Trevor Hooton
Contributor

There comes a time when every president, director, CEO and dictator for life must cede his or her title to a successor (okay, maybe not dictators for life). If you run a student group now, but you won't in the fall, now is a perfect time to start thinking about next year's leadership! Ensure the continuity of your group: appoint, elect, or train

a successor.

If this school year ends and your club has no certain direction, your community and vision may have trouble finding its feet next year, or may not even exist at all. Ensure next year's leadership so you can hit the ground running in the fall.

Once your student group gains new management, email me. After the CORE elections, email the newly elected SAC Clubs and Ac-

tivities Chair instead. See? I'm thinking the future of my post already, and so should you!

The end of the school year is coming up faster than you expect. Before you get caught up in the excitement of the end of the semester, lest your projects overwhelm you, or you check-out for the summer, remember to take care of this one important detail! Don't put it off until it is too late.

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VIDEOGAMETRIVIA

Elizabeth Mahon
Columnist

Nintendo was not the only company that was experimenting in the 16 bit era. Sega, too, tried many ideas, some successful, many less so. One of their more successful experiments was the Sega Channel. Released in 1994 and lasting until 1998, the Sega Channel was a service offered by cable companies that would plug into a Sega Genesis, which was known as the Mega Drive outside of the US. This gave the user access to a set number of games on a rotating basis, some of which were not released commercially. It also featured demos of upcoming games, Sega news, and the occasional contest. At the peak of its American popularity, a third of the population had access to it, of which 250,000 households subscribed. This was out of 2 million Genesis consoles sold in the US.

A notable game that came only to Sega Channel was Pulseman. This game, made by Game Freak, the creators of Pokémon, came out commercially in Japan. But in the US, it was only available for a limited time on Sega Channel. However, the game's preexisting English translation from the Sega Channel likely paved the way for its eventual release on the Nin-

tendo Virtual Console.

The Sega Channel is particularly notable for its international nature. At a time when many games and services came only to Japan, the Sega Channel was not only in Japan and the US but also Europe, Australia, and South America. This partially speaks to how Sega was relatively decentralized.

"Infrastructure laid in part due to Sega allowed for modern cable and internet connections."

Unlike Nintendo, where the American subsidiary was completely commanded by the parent company in Japan, Sega's branches had more autonomy. Sega of America even formed a team to work on their own console during the development of the Dreamcast. It also shows how Sega was more internationally popular than Nintendo – Nintendo did not have much luck with distributors outside of the US, while Sega did much better. That influence can be seen to this day in Brazil.

The demise of the Sega Channel came in 1998, not long before the release of the Sega Dreamcast. At the time,

Sega was reeling from the continual failure of the Sega Saturn, caused by a failure to localize and advertise good games properly. They likely wanted to focus all of their few remaining resources on getting good launch games for the Dreamcast, but abandoned good games they already had for the Genesis.

The Sega Channel's "games on demand" approach is very reminiscent of game download services today. But despite this early innovation, the Sega Channel is a relative footnote in history, and Sega no longer makes consoles. This is a pattern that is seen often when looking back on Sega's history, and it goes to show the importance of proper management, not just products. Good games and innovative hardware are all well and good, but if they aren't advertised properly, they stand no chance.

However, one of the more surprising and subtle contributions of the Sega Channel has nothing to do with games at all. In order to send the amount of data required by the Sega Channel, good connections were required, so cable companies that offered the Sega Channel had to improve their networks. The infrastructure laid in part due to Sega, therefore, allowed for modern cable and internet connections.

Olin to Cut the Power

Lyra Silverwolf
Editor in Chief

At 3pm today the College will turn off all non-essential power.

The idea of turning off the power was first pushed by Assistant Dean Nick Tatar after hearing about several experiments to turn off the internet on other campuses. "The reports coming back from those campuses were incredible. It was like the weights had been taken off everyone's shoulders. Everyone seemed so happy to not have to keep one eye on their inbox and the other on Facebook and Twitter. We're just taking this one step farther by turning all of the power off for the day."

The initiative has required a great deal of coordination. The dining hall has cut down on perishable food orders so that the refrigerators can be turned off without causing food to spoil. Facilities has been working closely with any faculty who have chemicals or other materials

that have to be kept within a defined temperature range. IT has been kept in the loop so that Olin's servers don't overheat (the back-up fans have limited power supply) and the fire department has agreed to be present while the sprinkler system is down.

A couple of faculty members have added their expertise to the initiative. Professor Siddharta Govindasamy has agreed to put up some wifi dampening technology in the oval that's he's been developing. This will prevent community members from creating their own wireless hotspots and Mark Chang (Former ECE professor, now working for Google) has helped the cause by inserting code onto every Olin community member's computer so that it will be impossible to connect to off-campus servers and wireless guest networks. "I've learned a lot about this sort of thing since joining Google.... [Nefarious snicker] The real trick on my end was making it impossible to change the clocks

on everyone's computers so that the timing works out just right. The rest was easy as eatin' chicken wings!" said Chang.

"I think it's a wonderful way to get students, faculty, and staff talking again" said Assistant Dean of Student Life, Nick Tatar. "Those first few years at Olin were defined by face-to-face conversations, not tweets and anonymous feedback surveys. Facebook in those days meant talking to someone and reading a real book. If all goes well in this experiment, I'll ask Rick and the Trustees to lengthen the experiment next year."

Tatar said he does not expect everyone will be ready to unplug and that the experience could be traumatic for some students, staff and faculty. To aid community members who are struggling without internet access and electricity in their lives OSL is bringing in Colony Care for additional on-campus hours and a Q&A session in the EH 1 lounge with the R2s.

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Editor-in-Chief: Lyra Silverwolf

Editors: Kai Austin, Anne-Marie Buchenan, Juanita Desouza, Pratoool Gadtaula, Julianne Jorgensen

Contributors: Forrest Bourke, Aaron Crenshaw, Greg Edelston, Zach Homans, Graham Hooton, Trevor Hooton, Ian Hoover, Berit Johnson, Elizabeth Mahon, Kelly McDaniel, Jeff Moore, Allison Patterson, Colby Sato, Sarah Strohkorb Adela Wee, David Zhu

Special thanks to Allie Duncan.