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FREE, AS IN BEER

Vote! Make a Difference!

Elizabeth Mahon
Contributor

Hey, you. Yeah, you, with the US citizenship (sorry, international students). I heard you're over 18. Have you registered to vote yet?

No? Why not?

There's no difference between the politicians – they're all a bunch of (insert something negative here)!

What may seem like a miniscule difference in positions to you can make a difference to millions of people when it's played out over an entire country. Political issues are real and affect everyone in some way. While you may not care about, for instance, whether the federal government or state government decides how Medicaid money is spent now, in fifty years when you're eligible for Medicaid, you probably will care. And if you can make a difference, and decide not to, you really have no right to complain about the result. It's one of the purest possible applications of the “Do Something” principle.

So what? Politicians never follow through on their campaign promises anyway.

While a popular senti-

ment, politicians actually do tend to carry through on their campaign promises. Or try to, anyway. Our system of checks and balances makes it relatively hard for anyone to push their agenda through, but in general, campaign promises are broken because there was too much opposition to the idea, not because the politician didn't try to follow through on their promise.

I don't know how to!

I can help you there. College students are allowed to register either at their college or where they consider home. Every state is somewhat different in their requirements, which they generally list on their website. You can find a list of all the state websites at http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/register_to_vote.aspx. Despite varying requirements (mostly about ID and where you send your completed form), there is a form that can be used for every state, which can be found on the same website. In general, you fill out that form, attach a copy of something that proves you live where you say you do, and mail it to the local election authority.

If I can register to vote in

two places, where do I register?

Good question! There are two important considerations:

Absentee Voting/ Mail-in Voting: If you register to vote in your home state, you probably won't be able to get to the polls there on election day, and even if you register to vote here, it may be difficult to get to the polls. States vary widely in how restrictive they are about absentee or mail-in voting. In general, western states are more permissive. Massachusetts allows you to vote by mail if you will be absent from your city or town during normal polling hours.

Competitiveness of the state: Contrary to “all men are created equal,” some votes really do count more than others. Here's a guide to help you decide:

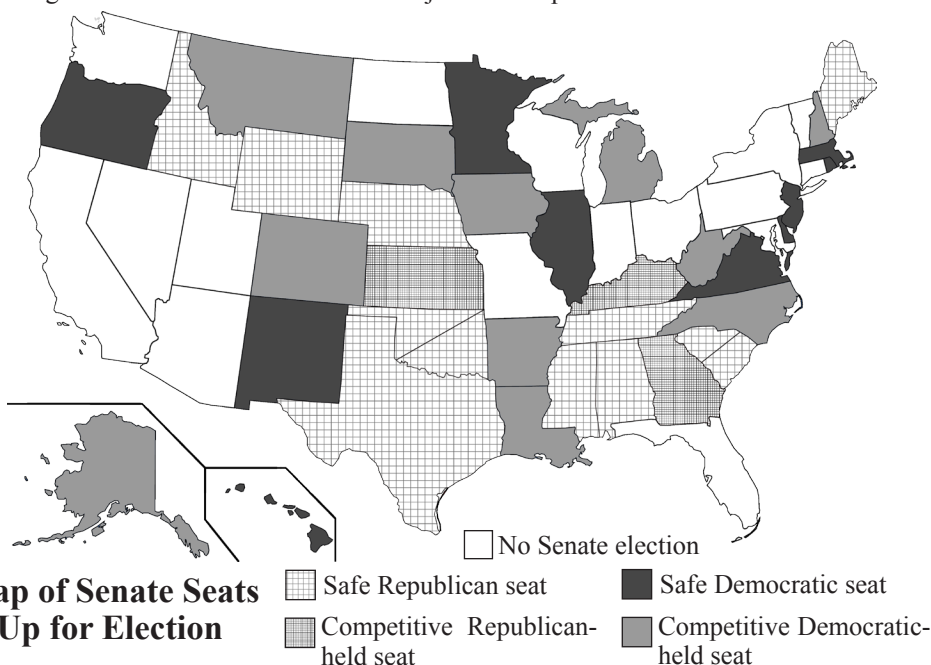
Thirty-three Senators are up for election this year. Not all the races are competitive, of course. However, it's harder to quantify 'competitive' for senate elections, since they only happen every six years, and are subject to the differences between midterm and presidential election years. (Going back three elections for the Senate

would put us back in 1996, a very different election). Wikipedia, conveniently, has compiled the predictions of several respected predicting groups shown below.

There are more elections this year than just for the Senate and the White House. Eleven governors will be

chosen this year. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives are up for election, and the House is key to getting anything done in the capital. And, last but not least, there are innumerate local elections. Indeed, in several states, voters themselves – not just their repre-

sentatives – can vote on the law. Space constraints preclude me from delving into these issues, but it's safe to say that no matter where you register to vote, there will be something interesting and worthwhile for you to vote on. So, what are you waiting for?



**Map of Senate Seats
Up for Election**

Letter to First Years

Kai Austin
Editor

Greetings to everyone who is reading this, especially the first years. By now you are getting into the final stages of your honeymoon at Olin. Classes are intense. You have turned in an assignment or two and tried out half the clubs. All fun and games now, but as I said – the fascinating joy of the magical Olin world is winding down and reality is slow-

ly creeping back in. So I am going to act like a sage senior here and give you some advice. I hope these things I learned during my time at Olin will help you one day.

You do not need to be good at everything.

Olin is very driven place filled with well rounded and talented people. Our school is known for that and, one of the reasons we have pass-no-record the first semester is so you can jump in on the magical ride of trying every

single thing without it putting a dent in your first semester academic life. But some of you may already be feeling that some of your classmates are better than you.

It hurts, but remember, you are you. You are not anyone else. You are different from me. This is not good or bad; it is just a pure, simple fact.

You have things you like. Things you are good at. Not everyone likes the things

you like. Not everyone is good at the things you are good at.

It goes the other way as well. You do not always like the things other people like. You are not always good at the things other people are good at. You do not have to be.

People who are “good” at things often have the advantage that some of what they do here at Olin they have done before. Their school had a robotics program, so they know something about robots. Their middle school taught a programming course, so they know something about programming. The unfortunate sadness comes when you have no background in those areas because you never had or did not know you could pursue those opportunities. If you have never done something before and are comparing yourself to someone who has a year of workable experience – of course they will be better at it.

It is okay to not know things. It is okay to ask questions. You are learning, and the point is that you are trying to get better – that you are always striving to be better than who you used to be because the only person you have to be better than is who you are now.

For example, I have been actively writing since I was 5 years old (for those of you who do not know, I am currently attempting to publish two books). Using a sore underestimation of 30 minutes every day for 16 years, that is 2952 hours to-

tal. You would have to write non-stop 12 hours every day for the next 8 months to get an equivalent. If I am not remotely decent now, then there is something wrong with me.

"You do not need to be good at everything."

You may also think that you are learning at a different pace from your peers. You do not think the way everyone else does, thus you do not learn the way everyone else does. You learn some things faster and some things slower. Sometimes you have to go about it differently, or maybe even put in more time. But realize how you think also gives you an edge in other ways.

"It is okay to ask questions. You are learning."

As another example, I learn things via mimicry, patterns, and examples (i.e. “bottom-up”). Do I think I’m an idiot when people around me are working hard and I do not get what I’m supposed to do because all I have is a concept to work from? Yeah. But how I think gives me an edge in creativity and ambition. I rarely have an end in mind; just a towering mountain of “what about this?”

Finally, time is a precious and limited commod-

ity. What do you really think is worth it? How you prioritize your time affects how you learn new concepts just as much as your innate ability does.

These are delicate questions because many other factors can apply (like classes), and there are some sacrifices you will need to make. You can hate people, but knowing how to talk to them may be invaluable.

However, if you had one hour to do anything – what would you do? Is it worth it in the long run to spend your hour tinkering with python or CAD? Would you choose exercise or a nap? Reading alone or on an adventure with friends? Naturally, the more you do something, the more your mind develops in that area and the better you will get. Practice makes perfect.

Here's a not-so secret of mine: I do not think I am good at writing. Why? The more you do something/learn, the more you realize how much you do not know, and the prospect of ever being good at it is scaled accordingly. It can blind you to your accomplishments. You may fail to realize just how good you are and what you are truly capable of, because you think of yourself as an impostor who does not deserve to be where you are.

Yes, being well-rounded is a defining aspect of Oliners. By all means, if you want to try out everything, then do so. Just remember, you don’t have to be good at everything.

Cheers!

Valuable Lessons from Summer

This month's short answer question was: "Describe the most valuable thing you learned this past summer."

At Olin, the opportunity for interaction is handed to you on a silver platter. We're in a world where you have to talk with your peers, which really greases the wheels of friendship. In real life, you have to make an active, forward effort to establish and maintain friendships – they won't just happen to you.

Greg Edleston
Contributor

That PAC-Bayes is learning.

Anonymous
Contributor

Just do it. Don't wait for people to tell you it's okay.

Anonymous
Contributor

Some people are not worth your time, your energy, or your motivation - no matter how long you have known them or whatever loyalty has been established. Broken relationships require both parties to invest. But if you are the only one bowing your pride, you're just going to be shoved further down as

an ego boost for the other. It solves nothing and is not worth the tax on you.

Anonymous
Contributor

If you put on a bathing suit and cover yourself in honey, no one will want to give you a hug, and everything around you will become sticky. (Maybe not the most personally valuable thing I learned this summer, but I don't want anyone else to learn this lesson the hard way.)

Anonymous
Contributor

You can always find something useful to do on your project. Most of the time, I would be waiting for an answer to a decision I'd made from my boss, but I found that even when I 'had nothing to do' there were a bunch of small tasks I could perform like sending emails or documentation, cleaning, etc.

Anonymous
Contributor

Things can be traumatic without necessarily being immediately life threatening. Also, not all sexual assault is rape. Those two things

have really changed the way I view my past and myself, and explain a lot about me that I had never understood. I spent a good portion of the summer in group therapy at a mental hospital, and heard a lot of people describe things as abuse that have also happened to me that I just considered part of life being unfair, or blamed myself for.

Anonymous
Contributor

How to use git - correctly.

Anonymous
Contributor

Being "busy" is just an excuse I use to put off things I don't want to do. I realized that over the summer my self-imposed business of cooking, working out, reading, etc. was preventing me from doing little things like calling my sister. If I can't make time for tasks as simple as that over the summer, how can I possibly think that I will make time for it in "real life" later on?

Anonymous
Contributor

Look out for next month's short answer question: "What is one thing you regret not doing?"

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October Updates from the SERV Board

Happy October from the SERV board! First and foremost, we are thrilled to welcome our two newest SERV members: Michael Costello and Brenna Manning! Just as a reminder, though, service is for everyone. The role of the SERV board is to give you the funds and resources necessary to make service easy. If you ever have an idea for a service activity or want to volunteer, let us know!

We had an exciting month in September. This semester's kickball tournament was one of our most successful yet, and we raised over \$160 for Kick-it, an organization dedicated to children's cancer research. The weather was great, and we had a lot of fun and friendly competition! Congratulations to the winning



team, Baller Not Ready.

In September, we also cleaned up Parcel B and made blankets for Project Linus during Alumni Weekend, had Olin students and faculty walking in the Jimmy Fund Walk and running in the Charles River Center 5K. To cap it all off, we held a Thankathon with the Office of DFAR to call parents and alumni who donated to Olin in the past fiscal year. Thanks to everyone who participated and made this month's SERV events a success!

Here are the events coming up in October that you should look out for:

10/3 – Blood Drive
Contact Michael Resnick for more information.

10/11 – International Day of the Girl Child
In order to participate in this annual event to promote gender equality, SERV had combined forces with SWE and eDisco to invite middle school girls from the community to come to Olin

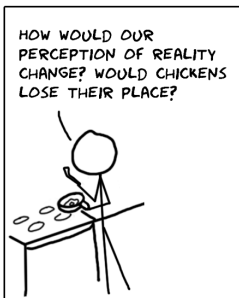
from 9am-12pm on Saturday October 11th to hear from women role models and learn more about engineering. We're still looking for volunteers, so let us know if you want to help out!

We will also be making more blankets for Project Linus at Family Weekend. You should all keep an eye on your inbox mid-October for the SERV Auction kick-off. This is SERV's biggest event of the year, and we're really excited to get started. If you're interested in helping out this year, email serv@olin.edu - we can use all the help we can get!

Remember, SERV is here for you, and we are always open to your exciting new ideas! E-mail us at serv@olin.edu, follow us on Twitter @olinserv, and Like us on Facebook! Have a great month and eat lots of apple cider donuts!

Ari Chae
SERV Chair, Columnist

NOT XKCD by Kai



(I DISCOVERED YOU CAN ASSESS WHO YOUR FRIENDS ARE BY THEIR REACTION TO HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS)

VIDEOGAME TRIVIA

A Brief History of Super Smash Bros.

Elizabeth Mahon
Columnist

Super Smash Brothers for Nintendo 3DS comes out this Friday (Oct 3), so what better time is there to look back at the history of the series?

For those of you unfamiliar with it, Super Smash Brothers is a series of fighting games for Nintendo systems. Unlike most traditional fighting games, which rely on a health bar, Super Smash Bros. uses only ring outs; as characters gain more damage, they fly further, until you can launch them right off the screen. Its other major distinguishing feature is that it is a crossover of Nintendo's best known characters. Ever wondered whether Mario would win in a fight against Link? Wonder no more.

Sales-wise, Smash Bros. is a pretty big deal. The first one, for Nintendo 64, sold so well in Japan that Nintendo decided to sell it worldwide. More than 5 million copies were sold worldwide, a respectable number given that the console sold 32 million units worldwide. The sequel, Super Smash Bros. Melee for the Gamecube, improved on that number, selling 7 million units and becoming the best-selling title on the Gamecube. The Gamecube only sold 21 million units

worldwide, so one in three Gamecube owners owned the game. The next game in the series, Super Smash Bros. Brawl, was on the Wii. The Wii console sold more than 100 million units overall. The larger install base would imply larger software sales, and that turned out to be true, with 12 million units sold as of March 2014.



For such a large and important series, Super Smash Bros. had a humble start. In 1999, Masahiro Sakurai, creator of Kirby, and Satoru Iwata, who is now the president of Nintendo, were working on a fighting game for the Nintendo 64. Iwata handled all the programming, while Sakurai handled everything else – planning, design, movement, etc. It was called “Dragon King: The Fighting Game.” This limited team came about because the project was not assigned by their employer. Instead, it was an idea that Sakurai had come up with and showed to Iwata, who offered to help. Iwata enjoyed it so much that he “seemed to come to life” when working on it, which he did even on weekends. The

goal of the project was to create a “4-player battle royale” that would be different from the standard 2D fighters that were popular at the time. As the game developed, they realized that the faceless stand-in characters they had been using failed to set up an atmosphere, and no one would want to buy it. So they put in a request to use Nintendo's all-stars. At the time, Nintendo was very skeptical of the idea of creating a crossover like that, so Iwata and Sakurai had to write up extensive documents supporting their proposition. Their persistence paid off, though, and the first game contained 12 characters from 10 of Nintendo's biggest series. They had to be inventive for some of the moves characters used, though – Captain Falcon of F-Zero fame had never been seen outside of his car, for instance. Rumor has it that the famous “Falcon Punch” that resulted is actually a remnant of “Dragon King.”

The success of the first game led to more support being thrown behind its sequel. As a result of the high expectations, Sakurai worked for 13 months straight, with no holidays and few weekends. To show off the new abilities of the Gamecube, HAL, the company behind the game, worked with three different

graphics companies to create the well-known opening sequence. Not long after Melee, Sakurai became disillusioned working at HAL, when he realized that people expected a sequel every time he worked on a game. As a result, he left and started his own company, Sora Ltd.

When the Wii was revealed in 2005 with the code name “Revolution,” Nintendo announced that it would have support for online play. Iwata said at a press conference that he hoped that in the future, one of the games they would release with online play would be a new Super Smash Bros. Unfortunately for him, many observers took this as an announcement that Nintendo was working on a new installment in the series. So Iwata asked Sakurai, who was looking for a project to work on next, to meet with him. While Iwata understood that Sakurai may decide not to work on the project, he felt that without Sakurai’s involvement, it would be impossible to add new ele-

ments – it would almost be a re-release of Melee. With that implicit threat and with the knowledge that a new Super Smash game would make lots of people happy, Sakurai agreed to work with Nintendo again to create Brawl. Since Nintendo had not been planning to work on the game, their internal development teams, including the one that had worked on Melee, were all busy.

As a result, they contacted another company – Game Arts – to help get the project started while they hired more staff. Partially due to this, Brawl was developed outside of Nintendo’s traditional Kyoto area, in Tokyo. Sakurai even moved, because in his words, “if you want to make a new Smash Bros., you have to be ready to put everything else on hold if you want to make it work.” While this is an unusual way to make a game, particularly for Nintendo, it worked out impressively well. Averaging professional reviews, Brawl holds an ag-

gregate score of 93 out of 100, one of the highest on the Wii. Iwata and Sakurai attribute this to two factors: the love all the staff had of the series and Sakurai’s ability to envision what a completed game will look like from the start.

Now Sakurai once again reaches the end of a development cycle for a Super Smash Brothers game with the impending international release of Super Smash Bros. for 3DS and the release later this year of its Wii U counterpart. Until it is over and he has time to do interviews rather than work on the game, we cannot get a complete look at their development. I can tell you, however, that I’m certain that just as with earlier games in the series, the entire team worked their hardest with a commitment to delivering a fun game to us fans.

For complete citations, find this article on the Frankly Speaking website franklyspeakingnews.com.

A Puzzle By Midnight Math

A Passel of Polite Passengers

Kevin buys a bus ticket from Singapore to Malaysia, but he is unaware that his ticket has an assigned seat. Upon boarding the bus, he sits in a random empty seat. Passengers continue to board and sit in their assigned seats until a passenger sees Kevin in their seat. The passenger, not wanting to be rude and displace

Kevin, assumes they have made a mistake and sits in a random empty seat. The next passenger whose seat was taken also sits in a random seat, and so on until the last passenger sits in the last seat left. Given that the order of passengers entering (including Kevin) is random, and that each passenger (who isn’t Kevin) will sit in their assigned seat unless it’s taken, and that Kevin is not the last passenger, what is the

probability that the last passenger in line will sit in their assigned seat?

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.

Kevin O’Toole
Midnight Math
Prime Minister

Awesome 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.

_____ (name 1) submitted an Honor Board report regarding three of his/her roommates' messiness in the suite lounge. Problems included old _____ (noun) left in the refrigerator and _____ (object 1) left out in the suite lounge for several _____ (duration of time). At one point, a _____ (noun) was left out for several _____ (duration of time). The _____ (same noun) melted and started running onto the _____ (location) and _____ (common Oliner possession) in the lounge. Another incident

happened before break when _____ (name 1) found perishable _____ (plural noun) that were not his, such as _____ (noun) and _____ (different noun), left in the refrigerator. Everyone else left for break, and the mess was left for _____ (name 1) to _____ (transitive verb).

_____ (name 1) decided to submit a report after his/her roommates repeatedly ignored his/her _____ (plural noun, exclamation or sound) to clean up the lounge. The case came to the Honor Board after _____ (name 1) _____ (past verb) rooms. The roommates' actions were cited as _____ (present verb) of the Respect for Others clause of the Honor Code. In a hearing, the roommates agreed with the facts _____ (name 1) presented including the _____ (object 1) and refrigerator incident. They never fully realized how much it made _____ (name 1) feel _____ (emotion). They also ad-

mitted that their actions did not respect _____ (name 1) and have since tried to remain neater.

_____ (name 1) was not seeking a sanction so much as a _____ (noun) for future situations, and the accused also _____ (past verb) that ways of handling similar situations should be devised. In particular, _____ (name 1) was interested in building a list of associated _____ (plural noun) for room damages, which he felt would be _____ (adjective) for him and other students. The accused agreed that this would be _____ (same adjective) and worked with _____ (name 1) and facilities to develop a reimbursement sheet for students.

This MadLib was loosely based on an Honor Board case from Spring 2008 about suite cleanliness. You can read the entire abstract in the Honor Drive (\\fsvs01\\Student-Groups\\HonorBoard\\Abstracts).

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