

The Official Newsletter of the Ashdown Community

Message from the Editor

Dear Reader,

By the reckoning of things in the academic world, fall – not spring – is the season of renewal, for it is at the start of fall that a new generation arrives. In the Promethean heat of summer, the veins of Ashdown grow still as people move away or go on vacation. But let the fall roll around and the hallways re-awaken with fresh voices and the rumble of incoming luggage; more than seventy years after Avery Ashdown became its first chairperson, Ashdown House is young again.

In this issue, we look at some of the ways in which Ashdown House welcomed its new residents this fall. Although targeted at newcomers, Orientation is an exciting and much-anticipated time for new and old alike, spanning three weeks jam-packed with social events and outings organized by Ashdown House and other groups throughout MIT.

Practically every Ashdown committee played a part in the success of this Orientation. The entire planning process was overseen by the Orientation Committee, which not only did an admirable job of coordinating the work among the various committees, but also managed to organize quite a few events of its own. On behalf of all Ashdown officers, I would like to thank everyone who assisted at or attended our activities and helped made this Orientation a fruitful and enjoyable one.

Sincerely,
Liang Jie Wong
Ashdown Newsletter Officer

In This Issue

- ❖ Casino Night
- ❖ Freedom Trail Outing
- ❖ Double Decade Delirium Dance Party
- ❖ Ashdown Brunches and Coffee Hours
- ❖ Citizen's Corner: Submission Guidelines
- ❖ Contact the Editor

Casino Night (August 28)

Dealers wearing suits and emerald-green visors. People fingering chips and wondering how much they dare to lose. At the roulette table, a crowd holds its breath as the spinning wheel slows to a halt. At the blackjack table, a lady lifts her cards a fraction of an inch above the table before drawing a third. No, it's not Las Vegas, but Casino Night in the Ashdown Hulsizer Room. "No gambling experience necessary", event posters declare, "No money. Just prizes!" And good, clean statistical fun.



Betting at Baccarat



The housemasters dealing at the Blackjack table

The rules of Casino Night were simple. Attendees were each given a cup of chips valued \$1000 at the check-in table. There were five different stations to lose or win chips at: Blackjack, Craps, Poker, Roulette and Baccarat. At the end of the night (11 pm), attendees received a lottery ticket for every \$200 worth of chips they had. These tickets were used in the lucky draw to win prizes.



Palpable tension at Craps



Prizes galore!

Prizes ranged from DVDs to board games to household equipment. Among the most popular prizes were the clothes iron, the coffee maker, the cast iron skillet, a pair of movie tickets and the tray of homemade brownies from housemaster Ann Orlando. More than eighty people participated in the event

This Orientation's Casino Night was organized by Residential Scholar Coordinator Brandon Luders and Kitchen Officer Amanda Zangari, both of whom served on the Ashdown House Executive Committee (AHEC) last year. When asked about the event afterwards, Brandon said, "I was very happy with the turnout...it was the biggest turnout of the three Casino Nights we've

done so far. Most of the game tables were completely packed the entire night!...We also had a set of wonderful, enthusiastic volunteers, who dealt cards and dice throughout the night, managed the front tables, and in general made it a fun night for everyone who attended.”



Pondering over Poker

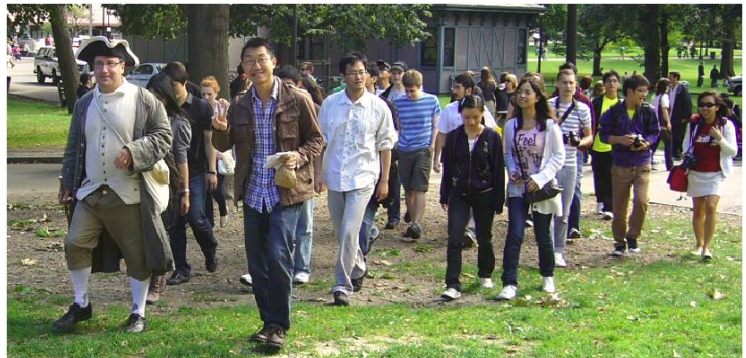


Racing heartbeats at Roulette

Brandon and Amanda look forward to organizing more Casino Nights for Ashdown. Brandon will be graduating soon, but hopes that people will be interested to keep Casino Night going. Will Casino Night become an annual Ashdown tradition? I wouldn't bet against it.

Freedom Trail (September 18)

On a bright, cool afternoon on the cusp of fall, about twenty-five Ashdowners shrugged off the shackles of their academic preoccupations to walk the Freedom Trail, a path through downtown Boston that leads to sixteen historic sites associated with the American Revolution. The event, organized by the Ashdown



Setting off from the Boston Common



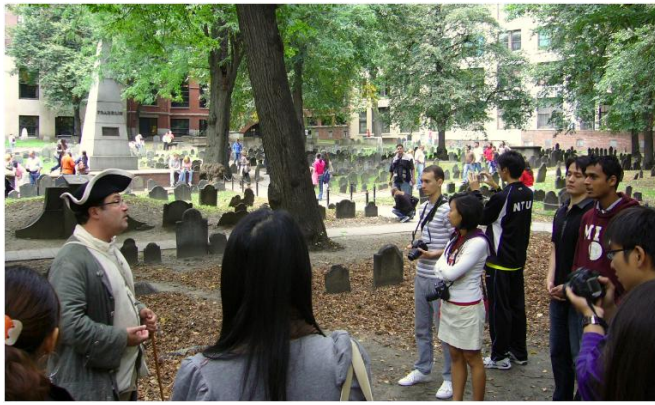
Our guide unfolding the story of Hays

Orientation Committee, was open to all Ashdown residents and included fully-paid public transportation as well as a tour by a costumed guide.

The ninety-minute tour began at the Boston Common Visitor Center and ended at Fanueil Hall. Our tour guide was dressed as Moses Michael Hays, a prosperous Jewish merchant who introduced the Order of the Scottish Rite Masonic Order to America. Hays famously refused to sign a declaration of loyalty to the

American Colonies in 1775 until the phrase 'upon the true faith of a Christian' was removed from the oath¹. In addition to playing his part convincingly, our tour guide was animated and informative, enlivening our walk with many tidbits of history.

¹ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/biography/Hays.html>

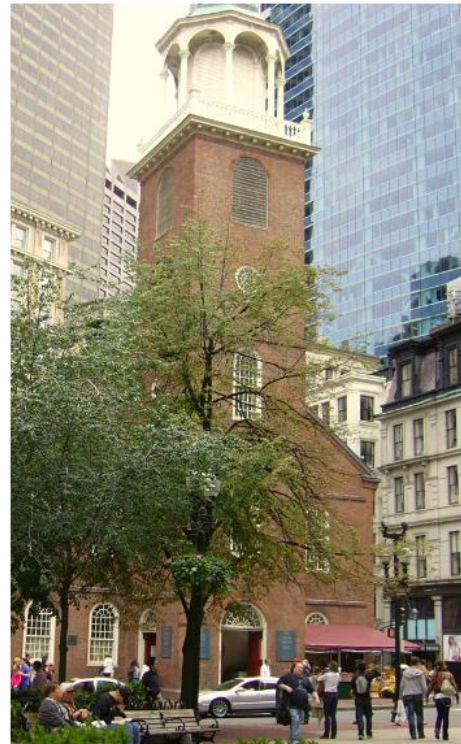


The Granary Burying Ground



The Boston Latin School, America's first public school

Most importantly, perhaps, the tour invited us to consider history critically and recognize its relevance to current affairs. Standing before the gravestone of the five Boston Massacre² victims in the Granary Burying Ground, our tour guide said (I paraphrase him), "Now, five people died. Would you call that a massacre? Certainly a tragedy, but a *massacre*?...I don't question the ends. The American bid for independence was the right thing. But the means?" With those words, our guide transformed an idle stroll past monuments of times dead and gone to a survey of issues that continue to re-manifest themselves in the present. To think of the glorified Paul Revere as one who is not above a deliberate misalignment of the truth is a sobering reminder of the cold, hard realities in politics that complicate morality and cause it to be repeatedly re-defined. The Boston Massacre is over two hundred years old, but distortion and propaganda, which gave it its name, have remained as virile as ever to our day.



Old South Meeting House



At the site of the Boston Massacre



The Old State House

² "Massacre" was the word used by Paul Revere in an inflammatory poster to describe the incident in which five civilians were killed by British troops on March 5, 1770. The legal aftermath helped spark rebellion in some of the British American colonies and led ultimately to the American Revolutionary War. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston_Massacre)

The tour ended at around four o'clock. The weather had turned chilly toward the end of the tour, causing those who had brought their jackets to don them. On the way back to MIT, I found myself wondering how easy it is to forget that we so often, in more ways than one, walk in the footsteps of the ghosts of the past.

Double Decade Delirium (September 25)

The annual MIT-Harvard dance party was held at Ashdown House this year on a pleasant Saturday night. From 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., the Hulsizer Room and front courtyard pulsed with music from the previous two decades, including the Macarena, the Butterfly Song, the Loco-Motion, RoboCop, Hip-Hop music and songs by Britney Spears and the Spice Girls.



Style

The dance party had been originally scheduled for Friday, September 3, but had been postponed at the last minute due to the proximity of Hurricane Earl.

The event featured two dance floors, one in the courtyard and one in the Hulsizer Room, playing music from the 1990s and 2000s respectively. Attendees were given sunglasses, glitter hats, and ties as party favors. There were also lots of pizzas, snacks, drinks and a cash bar.



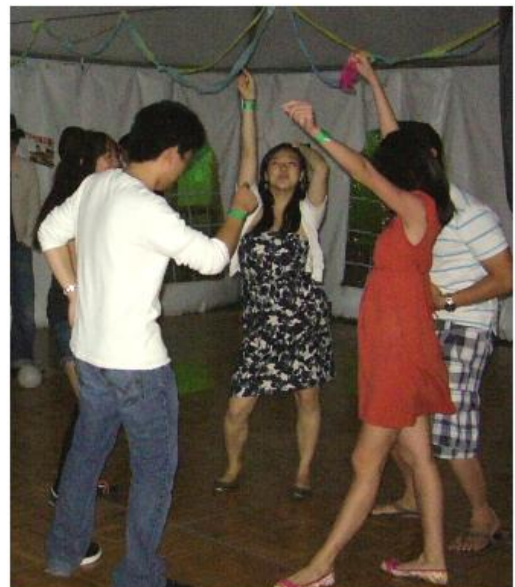
Panache



Dancing the night away



Multicolored party favors



Basking in the beat of the 1990s

An estimated five hundred people, about thirty percent from Harvard, attended the event. Given that it was three weeks into the semester and three parties had already taken place on previous weekends, the huge turnout was a pleasant surprise, as well as a testimony to the effective advertising of the organizers and the indefatigable stamina of MIT and Harvard students.

But perhaps it was really no surprise. A chance to dance the night away to the songs of your teenage-hood while you can still admit to knowing them without feeling old. Who could have resisted?



Caricature artist Emily wowed many with her art



Music and mingling on the dance floor

Ashdown Coffee Hours and Brunches

For the free-food loving Ashdown denizen, there are few pieces of knowledge more crucial than the existence of the weekly Coffee Hours and monthly Sunday Brunches. To welcome newcomers to Ashdown, the respective committees put together a special Coffee Hour and a special Brunch event (on August 29 and September 2 respectively) as part of the orientation.



Coffee Hour: The perfect time to see old friends and meet new ones



Fruits and snacks at Coffee Hour



One happy Coffee Hour-goer

Coffee Hour, introduced in the 1970s by former Housemasters Robert and Carol Hulsizer, is held every Thursday evening from 9 to 10 p.m. "Coffee Hour" is in fact a bit of a misnomer in that coffee is but one of the many things served at the event. The spread includes nutritious snacks like fresh fruit, juices, raw vegetables and vegetable dip, cheese, pita bread and hummus, as well as an assortment of chips, cakes, cookies and ice cream.

Some research claim that foods high in carbohydrates and calcium (such as ice cream) and the amino acid tryptophan (such as cheese, hummus and whole grains) help bring about a more restful night's sleep¹. Coffee Hour is thus for anyone who wishes to take a healthy break from work before bedtime, and not just for the nocturnal workaholic needing a caffeine jolt.



Brunch preparations begin as early as 8 a.m.



Stacks of pancakes fresh off the griddle



The monthly Sunday Brunches are open to the entire MIT graduate committee. Approximately three hundred people show up to each brunch (even more for special brunches) so if you wish to get the choicest morsels, be sure to join the line early! Brunches feature traditional fare like pancakes, hash browns, sausages, scrambled eggs and fresh fruit, but may offer more exotic variants like Chinese steamed buns and dumplings, especially during themed brunches.

◀ A wide variety of fruits to choose from



Because brunches require such a large amount of preparation, the Brunch committee greatly appreciates voluntary help. So if you're an Ashdown officer-aspirant, you may wish to note one of the best ways you can demonstrate your enthusiasm!

Impeccable service by your friendly Brunch staff

¹ <http://www.askdrsears.com/html/4/t042400.asp>

Citizen's Corner: Submission Guidelines

Do you have a flair for writing?

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

The ears of Ashdown are thirsting to hear your story!



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

Each published submission will be rewarded with two AMC movie passes.

Guidelines in a nutshell:

- Submissions should be between 100 and 1500 words.
- No politically sensitive, religiously sensitive or pornographic material.
- Pictures to accompany text are welcome.
- Email title: "3AM SUB: <title of submission>".
- Email Liang Jie Wong ("Liang") at ljwong@mit.edu.

Contact the Editor

Please direct any comments or queries about "3am" to Liang Jie Wong ("Liang") at ljwong@mit.edu
