

## The Official Newsletter of the Ashdown Community

### Message from the Editor

Hello Readers,

It's your friendly neighborhood Newsletter Editor, Sakul. Now that many of you are settling into your new apartments and realizing that Ashdown's accommodations are pretty much better than the other dorms around campus, maybe you'll take a few minutes out of your day to read this newsletter and see what else is so amazing about Ashdown. And if you need convincing that Ashdown is pretty rad, then I have a publication for you to read (it's this one).

In this issue, we have the Summer Writing Contest (tell us stuff about your research!), the third installment of the surprisingly popular Puzzler Twins (okay, so I did say I made it harder last time... my bad. This one is not as bad, I promise!), a report on the Speed Friending event from Orientation Week (faster than friending someone on Facebook!), another installment of Ashdown Reviews (no walking elephants were harmed in the making of the delicious meal), the funny caption contest (do people like this section?), the Kid's Corner (very astute observations from the Roman kids), and Helpful Information from Kristin at the Front Desk (say hi to her!).

Wow, that second paragraph was one long sentence. TL;DR is below. Also, there are lots of chances to win/earn money for your contributions, so keep on reading!

Happy reading!

Sakul Ratanalert

Ashdown Newsletter Officer (ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu)

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### Ashdown Summer Writing Contest

In **less than 1000 words**, talk about how your research is making a difference to the world in a way that someone else not from MIT can understand it. The judging criteria are (on the next page):

- 1) Accessibility to a completely non-technical audience
- 2) Effectiveness of message

**Submit by: September 30, 2012**

PRIZES: **\$25 gift card to Amazon** for the winner

**\$10 gift card to Amazon** for each of the two runners-up

**Publication** in the Ashdown Newsletter, "3am" for all essays of merit.

**Word limit:** 1000 words

**Eligibility:** All Ashdown residents are welcome to participate.

## Ash and Dawn, the Puzzler Twins – #3

*Ash and Dawn are MIT first-year graduate students, and recently moved into Ashdown. Their stories will be chronicled in the upcoming issues. Each story has a **SECRET CODE WORD**. The first **three** people to e-mail the Editor (at [ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu](mailto:ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu), not his personal one) the correct **SECRET CODE WORD** by **September 30, 2012** will win a **\$10 gift card to Amazon**. **FIND THE SECRET CODE WORD AND WIN!!** (The **SECRET CODE WORD** can be found on [Dictionary.com](http://Dictionary.com). No anagramming is necessary unless otherwise stated.)*

Dawn's roommate May finally moved in, and they had planned to attend the President's Welcome address together. But when Dawn got to the auditorium, May was so busy with her other friends that she forgot to save Dawn a seat. After returning to her room, she grabbed some ice cream and decided to chat with people online to keep her mind off her inconsiderate roommate.

Holding her ice cream with her left hand and typing with her dominant right, she started a conversation with Ash, which of course began with him teasing her about being ditched. An excerpt of the conversation is shown below:

Ash: Jk I'm joking  
Dawn: Go eat a bee  
Ash: Rly? You no lol?  
Dawn: Few seats I was sad  
Dawn: Ate dessert after we left  
Dawn: Felt great deserted  
Ash: Lol punny haiku?  
Dawn signed off.

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

*July 2012 Issue Winner: **David Wilson** for being the first and only one to correctly submit the secret code word "ANEMONE" to last month's puzzle, even without the hints (Solution on last page of this publication). Congratulations! Please e-mail the Editor to receive your gift card. And thanks to everyone who submitted!*

# Ashdown Speed Friending

by Morgan Dwyer

Almost everyone has heard of Speed Dating...and most people are pretty skeptical about it. In Speed Dating, prospective daters go on multiple "dates" in one night; since each date lasts only a few minutes, the participants only have enough time to go through basic introductions and have a brief conversation before they repeat the process with someone new. The few minute conversations that Speed Dating allows hardly seem like enough time to determine romantic compatibility...but it *may* just be enough time to make a new friend....and that is where Speed Friending comes in.



In Speed Friending, instead of meeting prospective dates, you meet new friends. There is no romantic pressure and participants can take advantage of the structured introductory environment to meet a lot of new people in a short amount of time. On August 27<sup>th</sup>, Ashdown's Orientation Committee held its first ever Speed Friending event to help new Ashdown residents do just that: meet lots of their neighbors in a relaxing and comfortable environment.

Over thirty people participated in Ashdown's first-ever event and many of them came away with new friends and acquaintances. Participants sat across from one another and spent five minutes talking to each new friend before rotating down a long table to meet someone else. Suggested "get to know you" questions were provided to help participants engage with each other but in most cases, the students eagerly engaged in conversation without the aid of the suggested questions. When the whis-



tle sounded to signal the end of each five minute conversation, most students found it hard to wrap up and move onto the next meeting. Luckily, by the end of the evening everyone had met at least eight other people and could continue conversing with their new friends both after the event and hopefully throughout the year at other Ashdown and MIT-sponsored events.

*Photos courtesy of Aarthy Adityan.*

## Ashdown Reviews: Elephant Walk – Cambridge

*This column, Ashdown Reviews, aims to provide 3AM readers a chance to read what other readers have thought about restaurants and other places around Cambridge and Boston. **You can contribute too!** Submit a review of a restaurant or other recommended locale you have been to recently (pictures would be nice, too), and if it is selected you will be rewarded with a **\$10 gift card to Amazon**. Let Ashdown know where they should go when they have (gasp) free time!*

*This issue's contributing writer: Gwen G.*

Elephant Walk – Cambridge  
Cambridge, MA (nearest the Porter Red Line stop)  
5 stars out of 5

Another Ashdown resident and I went to Elephant Walk Cambridge on 8/22 for Restaurant Week (which is, by the way, the most amazing two weeks ever – make sure you go and experience some new restaurants when their menus are prix fixe!). Our reservation was for 7 and we got there a little after 6:30 (mistimed how long it would take us to get there and find it). Regardless of our very early arrival, we were seated immediately. When asked if we wanted to sit inside or out, we debated for a moment and decided on inside because my companion was wearing a sweater and it was still a little too warm outside. We were seated right next to the window, though, which I think was a deliberate move by the host after hearing our indecision. Even if it wasn't deliberate, it was a lovely table with beautiful lighting at sunset! The bread served to us by our amazing waiter was great as well. The service was incredible our entire time there - dishes coming out at just the right time for us and water glasses never empty.



Chilled avocado citrus soup. **“If you come here and don’t get the soup, you are seriously missing out.”**

On to the menu! I had spent probably way too much time trying to decide what I wanted pre-arrival (reading the reviews on Yelp and elsewhere of the dishes) and spent even more time trying to decide once we arrived. Everything sounded so good! They had a four course prix fixe menu of which you could pick three or four courses, so since we weren't feeling dessert, we went for the first three courses. My companion was vegan (and he was thrilled at the multitude of vegan options) , so he ordered the vegan Rouleaux as an appetizer, while I debated heartily between the Petite Bouchée and the chilled avocado citrus soup.

## Ashdown Reviews: Elephant Walk (cont.)

I picked the latter, and it was EASILY the best decision I made all night. Paired with my Pimm's aperitif, the soup was so good I wanted to cry. I and my companion agreed that it was one of the most incredible soups either of us had ever tasted. If you come here and don't get the soup, you are seriously missing out. The avocado had perfect texture, and the orange and lime juice base perfectly balanced each other so while the lime was still at the forefront of the flavour, it was not sour or anything but light and savory. I ate/drank every drop. The Rouleaux were also excellent, and our waiter gave us careful instructions on how to eat the spring rolls with the basil, sprouts, and lettuce (some reviews on Yelp mentioned that they weren't sure how to eat them, so this was a valuable and appreciated lesson). My companion said that the greens really balanced and countered the what would be otherwise overpowering flavour of the spring roll (it was piping hot, crispy, and stuffed with deliciousness). My aperitif was refreshing and the ginger ale base was a good pairing with the avocado soup.

We both got the Nyuom Trasad with Soba Noodles as our second course, mine with chicken, his vegan. While I found the food itself to be delicious, it was way too hot for me. This is not the restaurant's fault - it is advertised as having a "spicy chili-lime tuk trey" dressing, but be aware that this is indeed pretty spicy. I can handle a little bit of spice (I'm a red curry on the scale of massaman to green curry), but this was just a little too much for me. My companion said that his was just fine and delicious, though, so he probably has a better handle on spiciness than me =) The cool temperature felt good though on a summer night.



The Rouleaux. **"It was piping hot, crispy, and stuffed with deliciousness."** *Photos courtesy of Gwen G.*

I was so split on what to eat for the entree, but I eventually settled on the Saumon Rôti aux Petits Légumes while my companion had the vegan Bo Bang (my second choice). My salmon was incredible, but it took me a little while to be able to handle its (temperature) hotness because my mouth was still recovering from the spiciness of the second course. The creamy garlic-lemon sauce helped quell the spiciness in my mouth and eventually I was able to enjoy my flawless salmon. My companion enjoyed his Bo Bang as well (I tried some of the sliced spring rolls on top - delicious). We were both stuffed by the end of the meal, but it was just the perfect amount of food to feel full but not unpleasantly so. This was a great start to my restaurant week experience, and I hope that people won't be discouraged from trying the Elephant Walk by some of the less-positive reviews online (which worried me a bit when I read them) - we personally had an amazing experience!

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

Because she got bored of reading Reddit! Okay, that probably wasn't very funny, but hopefully the rest of this page is more entertaining:



**Funny Caption Contest!**  
Submit your hilarious caption to the Editor at ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu

by **September 30, 2012** and the Top 3 submissions will be posted in the following issue and win a **\$5 gift card to Amazon** (lots of chances to win money in this issue, aren't there?). Readers can vote on their favorite of the Top 3, and the winner will receive an additional **\$10 gift card to Amazon**.

**Q:** How often do you come up with really good chemistry jokes?

**A:** Periodically

**Q:** Want to hear a joke about potassium?

**A:** K

Photo courtesy of Aarthy Adityan

## Kids' Corner (aka Ask the Roman Kids Stuff)



### **5. How do you feel about the laundry room at Ashdown?**

**Max:** The laundry room at Ashdown? Do you mean the one close to the elevators? Not so good. I like the one here a little better. The other one has way too much laundry.

**Dante:** Yeah, that's someone else's laundry. I like the laundry room in our house. Because it cleans up things so nicely. It cleans shoes up so nicely. It cleans T-shirts up so nicely. That's all why we like it.

**6. What do you think about the elevators in Ashdown?**

Dante: I love them because if someone needs to go down, I like it because it goes down. And if a person comes back and then need to go up it goes up.

Max: Dante, don't you like the stairs better? I don't like the elevator very much because sometimes it's super slow. I like the stairs better, and that's why I always go on them.

Dante: I don't love the stairs. That's why I go in the elevator with Mama.



**Got questions you want to ask Max and Dante? Forward them to the Editor at [ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu](mailto:ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu) and we'll see what they say!**

## Citizen's Corner: Submission Guidelines

Do you have a flair for writing?

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

The ears of Ashdown are thirsting to hear your story!

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

If your contribution is selected, you will be rewarded with a **\$10 gift card to Amazon**.

Guidelines in a nutshell:

- Submissions should be between 100 and 1500 words.
- No politically sensitive, religiously sensitive, or pornographic material.
- Pictures to accompany text are welcome.
- Email Sakul Ratanalert at [ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu](mailto:ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu).



# Helpful Info for New Residents, Part 1

*Kristin O'Halloran is one of the faces you see at the Ashdown Front Desk. She has prepared some helpful information for new residents (and returning, just in case you need the reminder). While this will be in parts, you can find the full list of information on the Ashdown Website.*

## **Building Access / Security**

You must use your MIT ID card for building access. If you already have an MIT ID card, you must have the House Manager, Denise Lanfranchi, activate the card for you. Her office is located in the main corridor as you enter the building from the lobby. You can also email her ([dlan@mit.edu](mailto:dlan@mit.edu)) your full name and the card number and she will be able to activate it with this information as well. **DO NOT** hole-punch any MIT ID (you can ruin the chip inside and de-activate the card).

**Security:** Ashdown House takes the security of the building and the safety of its residents/employees very seriously. You play an important role in this regard, please be mindful when entering any door or gate of Ashdown, that you do not allow anyone to piggyback (follow) your entry. This is how non-residents most easily gain entry and violate the building's security.

## **Obtaining Your MIT ID Card**

Domestic Students: Card Office (ph. 617-253-3475) is located in the Stratton Student Center, 84 Massachusetts Ave (Bldg W20- Room 021). Directions: Walk up Albany St, at traffic light, take a right onto Massachusetts Ave, the student center is across from the building with the big, white pillars.

**Hours:** M-F, 8:30am-4:30pm

International Students: You will have to go to the International Students office (ph. 617-253-3795). If you are a regular, F1 student, you will have to bring your Passport and a photo ID. If you have Visitor Status, you will have to bring your registration letter, passport and photo ID. They will sign you up for an orientation meeting where you will get the necessary information. That office is located at 77 Massachusetts Ave, Bldg 5, Room 133.

If you will have to wait an extended period of time to obtain your MIT ID, you can speak with the House Manager, Denise Lanfranchi, about receiving a temporary ID (see Building Access for location of her office). There is no problem with access as a desk worker will be able to allow you access as well. Also, it is possible that the front desk may have a temporary ID for your use, you may ask there as well.

**DO NOT** hole-punch any MIT ID (you can ruin the chip inside and de-activate the card). **Hours:** M-F, 9am-4pm, Closed each Tuesday 10am-11:30am for staff meeting.

## **Front Desk Coverage**

A desk worker is on-duty 7 days a week, 8am-midnight. **You must return and/or borrow items from the desk during those hours only.** After that time, a security guard covers the desk. The only time there may be nobody at the desk is when the security guard is doing her/his rounds of the building which can take 1-1.5 hours. If you find you are waiting longer than 1.5 hrs, you may call Facilities from the phone in the foyer of Ashdown (mounted to the white pole) at x31500 and they will be able to help you.

*(continued on next page...)*



### Locking/Securing Your Apartment/Room

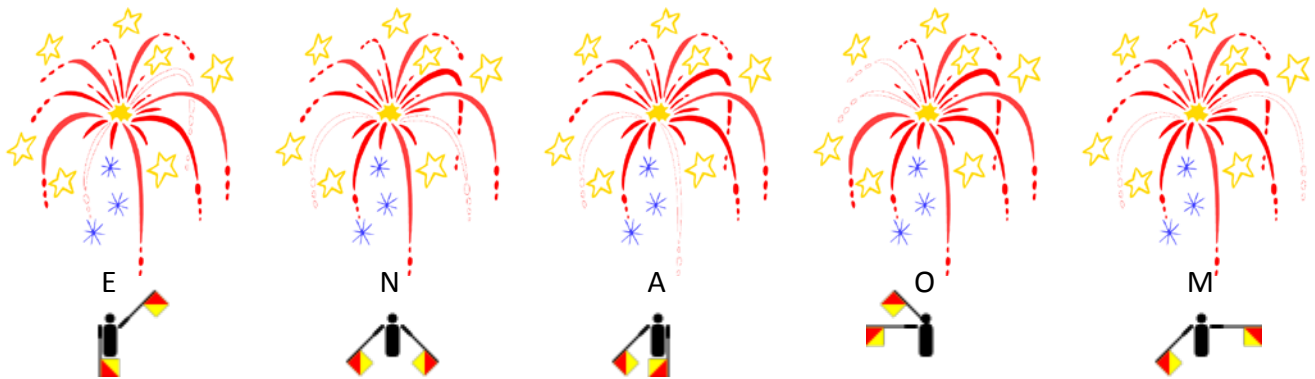
The apartment doors are locked using a “button” on the inside of the door handle. You depress the button and turn to the right. This will ensure your door will be locked as you leave the room (or for when you are in the room and want the door locked). \*\*Test the door, from the outside, to make certain you have locked it properly (\*\*have your key with you!).

*(continued in Part 2, next issue)*

## Solution to Puzzle #2 (July 2012 Edition)

*(See July Edition for the Puzzle Statement, designed by Sakul Ratanaalert).*

Reading Dawn’s description of Ash’s prints, you may have noticed that there aren’t any flags depicted. If you weren’t familiar with flag semaphore code before, perusing the search engine of your choice will have eventually led you there. (The unrelated “flag code” which also came up often was distracting, but noticing the two white streams in varying positions pointed to flag semaphore.) Splitting the five fireworks down the middle made it easier to decode the five letters (images from Wikipedia):



Obviously, “ENAOM” isn’t a word, so let’s see what Dawn’s Waltz tells us. A close eye may see that only the lines have notes on them, and all five lines are used. Perhaps each of the lines corresponds to a firework and the notes tell us the order to read the lines. While there are two ways to read the lines, the fingering (those tiny numbers) show that the lines should be numbered bottom-up (vs. top-down).



Following the notes, the word “ANEMONE” appears. SECRET CODE WORD FOUND.

## Contact the Editor

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