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BEFORE



Photo by Matthew Glassman

AFTER



Fleming Cannon Gone

BY: ANNA HISZPANSKI

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Students Volunteer

BY: MATTHEW GLASSMAN

Instead of hopping on a plane to the tropics for a week of partying, some Techers opted for a less traditional way to spend their Spring Break this year. Two weeks ago, over forty students took part in three separate community service oriented trips organized by the Caltech Y. Devoting part or all of their highly-valued time away from classes, problem sets, and lab, these groups of undergraduates, graduates, and Y staff helped rebuild hurricane-ravaged Biloxi, Mississippi, experienced a different culture in Mexico, and went to dried out Owens Valley, California.

In addition to the variety of community service activities it offers throughout the year, the Caltech Y introduced the Alternative Spring Break trips to give students the opportunity to explore first-hand a number of problems that face the world today. This is not a new idea; it is a growing, nation-wide trend that the Y has been a part of for over a decade.

Student leaders do most of the

planning and organizing, commented Christopher Kealey, the Marketing and Development Director of the Y, who also went on the Owens Valley trip. "We're big on student leadership. Our bosses are ExComm," he said, referring to the group of students who play a large role in managing most of the Y's activities.

"On the trips, you get a great intermingling of grads and undergrads," Kealey noted. After a long day's work, the groups would often spend evenings together talking about environmental issues and learning about each other's values. These stimulating conversations were intended to get students reflecting on their own experiences. Kealey thought that it was important for students to not only get the chance to give back to society, but to learn something about themselves as well.

"I was impressed with how

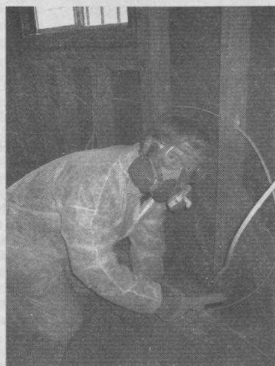


Photo courtesy of Jason Juarez

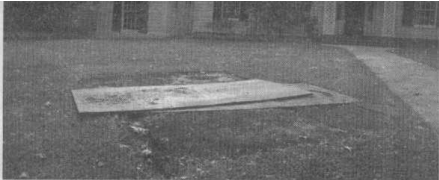
Mold remediation by Jonathan Gardner

quickly students jumped right in and became fully involved with what they were doing," recalled Jason Juarez, an intern on staff at the Y. Juarez preferred to think of the trips as "educational opportunities" rather than as class field trips where students were supposed to learn something pre-

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Photo courtesy of Marissa Ceal



Fleming Cannon Gone

BY: ANNA HISZPANSKI

Most Caltech students like a challenging puzzle. However, figuring out what happened to a 1.7 ton, 130-year-old, antique cannon with a twelve-foot barrel is proving to be more of a challenge than it initially appeared to be. Early Tuesday morning, at approximately 6:00 am according to security reports, the Fleming Cannon was realized to be missing.

A service mechanic noticed a gray and black early GMC model truck towing the Fleming Cannon on a trailer and alerted security at 5:26 am.

"When security stopped the truck [on Wilson Avenue], the people presented the security officer with a work order saying they were to move the cannon from Steele to the parking lot next to Spalding Building, which they in fact did," said Caltech Chief of Security, Gregg Henderson.

"That is not unusual for us; we do run into contractors that have work that we were unaware of [...] It's not unusual for us to have contractors come to campus and work at one or two in the morning."

The security officer guided the driver to the Spalding parking lot on California Boulevard, and the men unattached the trailer with the cannon from the truck.

However, the workers from the fictitious contractor "Rudolph and Sleppan" did not remove the Fleming Cannon from the trailer because the "foreman" stated that he feared the trailer may break in the process.

Believing the workers and papers to be legitimate, the security guard left them to their job. Approximately twenty minutes later according to the security report, the service mechanic who ini-

tially reported the truck contacted security again to alert them that he saw the men with the truck and cannon leaving eastbound on California Boulevard.

Security searched the area and found no signs of the men or the Fleming Cannon.

"This was not a couple of guys just getting together," said Henderson. "This was well planned and very sophisticated."

At this point no one knows who took the cannon or whether the incident was a theft or a prank.

"I'm not setting aside the possibility that it's a theft, but overall, based on everything that we've seen, my feeling is that it is a prank," said Henderson.

Several theories on who is responsible for the taking of the cannon are circulating the campus.

"The theory that makes the most sense is that [the incident] is somehow involved with Harvey Mudd since it happened around the twentieth anniversary of the last time they stole it," said Fleming House President Scott Jordan.

Twenty years ago, also in the latter part of March, a group of Mudders took the cannon in an effort to create a rivalry between Caltech and HMC. The students fork-lifted the cannon onto a truck around 8:30am, according to an issue of *The California Tech* from the week of the heist.

Similarly to the 2006 incident, students in 1986 posed as workers taking the cannon for restoration and provided forged work orders when security officers questioned them.

"Overall, the general feeling is that Mudd did it," said Henderson. "I'm waiting for it to show up on someone's lawn. I actually

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Cannon's Location Still a Mystery

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have people from my group that are going out to Claremont on a daily basis looking for it."

However, Caltech has contacted HMC, and nobody at HMC has claimed responsibility.

"I've been told [...] that we contacted a dean at Harvey Mudd, and he didn't know anything of it," said Jordan. "The [Mudd] dean sent an email to the students asking if anyone had it. If it is Harvey Mudd students, the majority of them don't know it, and they're doing a good job hiding the cannon."

Another theory is that MIT students took the cannon in retribution for the pranks played on them last year by Caltech students during MIT's prefrash weekend. According to Henderson, Tom Mannion has contacted MIT and is looking into this possibility, but nothing has come up yet.

Some others believe that the original Mudders who took the cannon in 1986 are responsible for this incident, as well. This seems unlikely, though, since according to Henderson, the seven to eight men involved in the incident were "somewhere in their twenties."

Typically, however, pranking parties leave identifying notes or hints so that those being pranked may contact them if problems arise. No notes were left, and as days pass and still no one claims responsibility or contacts Caltech, Henderson is taking the matter more seriously.

"I filed a police report early this morning [Thursday, March 30th] for grand theft," said Henderson.

"The reason I delayed [in filing the report] is because I was hoping to hear that it was a prank [...] My filing of the police report now requires me to say, yes, we will prosecute. Now if it is a prank, I don't want to throw some kid in jail for that."

Fleming House is also taking the matter seriously, particularly because the cannon is not RF-able (RF is a Caltech term for a prank) according to the Inter House Committee's Resolution I, Section 6, which states:

"...Specifically exempted from RFs are the Blacker dining hall tapestry, the Fleming House Bell, the Fleming Cannon, the wall-sized Fleming Flag, the Lloyd Gong, the Ricketts House Gong, the Ricketts House brakedrum, the Ricketts Firepot Grill, and the Discobolus Trophy due to their irreplaceable natures."

"Part of the reason why the cannon is not prankable is because of its age; we're not sure when something might break," said Jordan. "That's why it would not be in good humor if it was pranked because it's historic, valuable, and fragile."

Security and Ted Doyle, the Fleming Cannon Master, are working on developing new methods of communication to prevent a similar incident in the future.

"Ted Doyle and I talked about better ways to secure the cannon, better ways of communication so [Security] know[s] if the cannon is being worked on—really opening lines of communication," said Henderson. "We discussed ways to perhaps lock it down, under-

standing that the cannon is in a temporary position"

Before its theft, the cannon sat on the lawn of Steele House on Holliston Avenue, across the street from the Holliston parking structure and Security Office. Steele House was the cannon's temporary home since its permanent parking space in front of Fleming House is unavailable due to the South Houses' renovation.

According to Henderson, in its previous position in front of Fleming House, the cannon was typically locked to the ground.

Currently, however, everyone's efforts are focused on simply having the cannon returned safely and quickly.

Originating from the Franco Prussian War, the cannon was obtained by Fleming in 1972 from Southwestern Academy in San Mario which was trying to revise its military image. Besides its monetary worth, the Fleming Cannon is considered a priceless part of Fleming House and Caltech.

"This is a precious piece of Caltech history that I want to see preserved," said Henderson. "If someone was to call me today and say 'We have your cannon, we know where it is, everything's safe,' then okay—no problem. Give it back to Fleming, and we'll resolve the issue. There's way too much history on the part of Caltech and the cannon at stake."

Anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of the Fleming Cannon or pertaining to the case are asked to please contact Caltech Security at (626) 395-4701.