Hobby Shop Gets Scrappy

Abigail Hine, DSL EHS

Everyone knows that MIT students love to build just about anything, out of anything they can get their hands on. Fortunately, there is a place on campus where this can be done to their hearts content. The MIT Hobby Shop, located in the basement of W31, has been an integral part of MIT for 70 years. Under the direction of two expert woodworkers, Director Ken Stone, and Instructor Hayami Arakawa, students and faculty can use the shop to work on class or personal projects.

With the limited budgets many students have, students often get creative in finding the materials they need to build the projects they dream up. While some materials must be purchased, others can often be found and repurposed. “MIT is the best place for scroungers,” says Ken. “It’s amazing what they find and what they’ll do to find what they need.”

The Shop, as it is endearingly referred to by its members, also has its own “recycling” program. They take old table tops from renovated dorms and offices, strip off the varnish, and use them to build new tables. When the registrars’ office was renovated, they donated 200 tops from their old desks. Certainly, no wood is ever wasted here. “Wood is too precious to waste. What scrap is left from one project is used for another, and when it’s too small it makes great kindling,” says Ken.

Hayami has also found a way to use even small pieces that some might find unusable. He has been making furniture from the cleats of tables that are no longer used. Cleats are smaller pieces of wood that are used as support;
On September 30, 2007, Robert M. Randolph, formerly Senior Associate Dean for Student Life, was officially installed as MIT’s first chaplain to the Institute.

When MIT’s Chapel was first opened there was a lot of conversation at MIT about having a Dean of the Chapel on the model of Duke University, but nothing ever came of it...until recently.

Last fall, Dean Benedict asked Robert Randolph to take responsibility for religious life on campus. After his esteemed 28 year service as a dean the challenges of this new role were very attractive. On January 1, 2007 I Robert Randolph was named the first official Chaplain to the Institute and his installation was scheduled.

As the Chaplain to the Institute, Randolph’s role will serve the entire community: students, staff, faculty and research staff. In addition to the symbolism, the goal for the Chaplain to the Institute is to foster dialogue across religious boundaries while at the same time supporting the communities of faith that exist at MIT.

Now, Randolph has a blog that is intended to engage the broad MIT community, including alumni and students. You can read it by visiting his web page at http://web.mit.edu/dsl/chaplain and clicking on Chaplain’s Blog. The proceedings from the Installation of the Chaplain to the Institute are also online and can be seen at http://techtv.mit.edu/file/326/.

Since the program is so popular, we may miss a name from time to time. We’re sorry, but if you let us know, we’ll fix it next time.
Scrap cont.

they are usually hidden underneath the furniture piece. This reusing of materials cuts down on costs, which is certainly a plus. Having the wood already there saves students and the many other Hobby Shop members hundreds of dollars.

The magazine, American Woodworker, recently published an article highlighting Ken and Hayami and their woodworking savvy. It features both their “recycled” top table, which now resides in the student center, as well as some creative woodworking. An example pictured in the magazine is Hayami’s ball-and-claw bats.

It’s not only a wood shop though; almost anything can be reused with enough imagination and ingenuity. The Hobby Shop also has an extensive assortment of scrap metals, such as steel, copper and aluminum. Most of this scrap actually comes from other shops around MIT. “What other shops consider scrap, we see opportunity,” says Ken. “A lot of projects have been started based only on what’s in the scrap piles.”

Getting the Royale Treatment

Kimmel Yeager and Stephanie Keeler

The Student Life Orientation Program and Events Committee (SLOPE) planned an entertaining and spectacular Orientation Week. Many of the events were organized by outside groups represented on the SLOPE committee, and yet some of the events such as the Boston T-Party, and the All-Class Event were planned by the SLOPE Committee.

The event planning committee designed an extravagant Friday night to kick off the Class of 2011’s MIT experience with the overall orientation theme of “Tech Royale.” The Boston Longwharf Marriot was the site of the program, with the stunning Boston skyline and harbor views as the backdrop for the night.

The evening for the Class of 2011 and their Orientation Leaders began with an elegant mocktail party in the Palm Garden Room complete with glittery tables, stylish event programs, hors’douvres, fruity drinks and an orientation slideshow presented by The Tech staff photographers. Students then danced the night away in the Grand Ballroom with music provided by the Dance Mix Coalition.

For a quieter experience, the junior ballrooms were transformed into swanky lounges complete with board games, movies, and plenty of laughter and great conversation. At the end of the evening, students returned on busses, complete with gift bags full of goodies provided by CopyTech, LaVerde’s, The Asgard, Finale Dessert Company, Dove Chocolates as well as resources provided by the Office of Community Development and Substance Abuse Programs and the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling. From planning and development to the final event, it was an unforgettable experience for all involved.
Coming Soon to DSL!

In DSL, there is always something happening, always something big on the horizon. As DSL staff, while we only sometimes need to mark our calendars, it is always nice to know what is coming up soon. Here are a few of the happenings on the horizon for DSL this fall and winter.

November 7-8

The DSL Visiting Committee Meeting - It is during this meeting, which occurs once every two years, that members of the MIT Corporation visit to hear updates on what is happening in Student Life. They hear presentations from staff and students and discuss the current and future needs of students at MIT. At the end of the two day meetings, they provide a report with their thoughts about how well we are doing the work of student life and recommendations about things we might consider in the future. It is always valuable to hear their feedback and it should be an exciting time around the division.

Early December

The MIT Public Service Center and Panhellenic Association work with 14 local agencies to collect gift requests from hundreds of children. Each request is matched to a Giving Tree participant, making the Giving Tree a more personal experience. To participate, pick up gift label(s) between November 16 and December 14 from the Public Service Center, 4-104. The label will include the child’s name and/or gender, age, and in most cases, the gift request, as well as the sponsoring agency. Secure the label to your wrapped gift, so we can make sure it is given to the proper child, and return it to 4-104 by December 17.

December 14 *Mark your calendar for this one!

The DSL Annual Holiday Party - This is a fun gathering of DSL staff during which we can talk and enjoy time together in a casual setting. This year’s holiday party will feature the traditional elements of the party - food, music, conversation, door prizes, - along with something new. We have reserved the ice skating rink in Johnson so our staff and their families can enjoy spending some time on the ice, in addition to the regular festivities. That’s right, I said families. This year, the party is also open to families, so you are welcome to bring your children and significant others if you desire. Everyone should mark this date on their calendars and expect invitations soon.

To request that your events be included in the DSL calendar, please email sharon7@mit.edu by January 1.