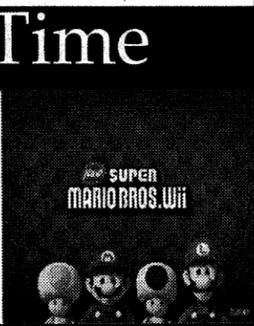


Mario Time

Does the new Mario game live to the franchise's reputation?

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The Sting

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Sorority Recruit

Read the recao on the Sorority recruitment this last rush week. Lea Newlin has the cover.

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Cold one day, warm the next. Make up your mind Weather!

Volume 64, Issue 5

SparkFun's Free Day - Was It Worth It?

David Sluder
Staff Writer

Do It Yourself everything is on the rise these days, and electronics are no different. With the advent of the Arduino and other microcontrollers, prices have come down enough that the average person can buy \$50 of electronics and build a dizzying array of things. And where there's a market, there will be happy companies that come along and sell you what you want.

Here's where SparkFun Electronics comes in. They were started in 2003 by a University of Colorado engineering student named Nathan Seidle. They now have over seventy people on their payroll, well over fifty worldwide distributors, and some of the best looking products in the world of electronics (yep, not only do they perform, they look good doing it). Nathan, now the CEO, loves the idea of free stuff. All of the boards they produce are open source, which means you can download all the information available as to how to make it all yourself with your own materials. But he wanted to go further.



Photo credited to: forum.sparkfun.com

Thus, SparkFun Free Day was born. Here were the rules:

- \$100 maximum per household
- You pay shipping
- Limit of \$100,000 in giveaways for the day
- Starts at 11:00am EST on Thursday, January 7, 2010

You read that right. They were going to give away \$100,000 in product to whoever would get on, add some stuff to his or her cart, and check out. Why would a business want to do something like that, you ask? Well they were clever enough to answer that question on their Web site.

They wanted to give back. Apparently their sales were phenomenal in 2009, and they just wanted to say thanks. Secondly, the company hated the fact that it can't sponsor anyone for anything. Succinctly put, "Because we can't afford to say yes to everyone, we have to say no

to everyone." They wanted an opportunity to give some free gear to those who needed it. Third, they had just recently upgraded their servers and saw an opportunity to test what they could handle. And finally, the company turned seven and thought that the number was something to be celebrated.

So let me explain my connection to the event before actually talking about it. I've owned an Arduino for a couple months now, but I've hit a point where I've built about all I can with the hardware I have. I have ideas and visions, but they don't mean a thing without the components to build them. The night before, I got on the Web site and added what I wanted to my cart so when I got online the next day, all I would have to do is check out. I was ready to pay about \$7 in shipping for \$100 in new toys.

Thursday came, and I was

ready. I sat down at my computer at 10:30, thinking I was going to be able to beat the hordes of people who hadn't yet heard about it. I pull up Firefox (because I'm a discerning browser user, of course), click on my Sparkfun bookmark (because every second counts), and wait. And I wait some more. The server times out. I think "Hey, that's alright, there's probably plenty of people trying to do the same thing." I keep my spirits up, and I press Ctrl + R to refresh the page. And I wait. Another time out. I do the same thing for another ten minutes and then the gravity of the situation sinks in: this has got to be huge.

You're giving away \$100,000 of product to a market that is happy to take it. College students, hackers, artists, engineers, designers - this company crosses boundaries. While SparkFun is a relatively small company, word like this travels fast! To sum up my experience, I sat there for an hour and 45 minutes, constantly hitting F5, hoping-praying-that I would be able to get through. Over the course of that, I logged in, accessed my shopping cart, chose my shipping preference (with about thirty minutes of refreshing in between each of those pages), and then 12:44:44 hit - the \$100,000 mark was hit. I was SOL. And that's how I felt. All that anticipation and hope

- thrown out the door. Now I was angry and ticked off.

To let you know just how popular the event was, let me throw some statistics at you. For those couple hours, SparkFun was the number one search term on the Internet. The SparkFun IRC chat had 2,400 users in it, all complaining that they couldn't get through. Twitter was on fire with comments from people talking about how their browsers were timing out as well. They received a total of 169,132 visits. And when you're only running a 32mbps connection, that's a whole lot.

So was it worth it? Well, I was pretty annoyed and frustrated that I couldn't get in and get what I wanted. As far as for SparkFun, I think it was worth it. There's no better form of marketing than giving away free stuff, and I know their clientele grew quite a bit from this event. Yes, I know there are plenty of others out there who couldn't get through and were grinding their teeth while waiting, but when it comes down to it, getting mad at not getting a handful of products for free is pretty ridiculous. I know I, for one, will definitely continue getting my electronics and hardware from SparkFun; I just have to stop moping first.

Online Gaming that Pays

Zachary Baab
Staff Writer

I know that many people like playing online games, especially when they are free. There is a new free online website that wants people to play its games: www.moola.com. I find many of these games to be fun. These games are games we all know, but they have been given a new fun twist. It is addictive to play these games.

Here is the important part, it pays you to play. Yes, I said pays you to play. Anyone who starts gets a free 'online' penny. This can be lost, but you can get a new one. After you win enough games, versus or single player games, you will win a REAL penny. This may not seem like a lot, but with this penny you have a chance at 10 cents. After that it will build up by doubling your winnings. At \$10 you can cash out, but there is still higher levels. A player can win over \$10,000. This is a lot of money for college students and even teachers.

Another important aspect

of the game is with your friends. If you get your friends involved, they start off with more money. If you get them in then you will also get a percentage of their winnings. This means you don't have to worry about your winnings as much as others, but it is still wise to play wise. When they win a lot and you win a lot, you will get higher amounts of money faster.

There are more ways of getting cash then just playing games. One way is to buy money to get a higher level of play. This means

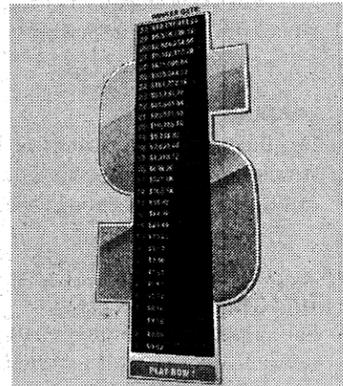


Photo credited to: gigcollege.com

you are spending your own money, though. There are ways of visiting sister sites that can get you free money to spend. Also, spending money on other products can get you free money to spend how you feel.

I have been winning and losing, not going anywhere really, but I know I can slowly build up my winnings. These games are fun and addictive to play. I advise all to at least check out this site, even if it means you have to sign up and register as one of their members.

F. Aid vs. Bookstore

Zachary Baab
Staff Writer

The bookstore is the place we go to buy books for our classes. There is also the Engineer's Bookstore that is across the street. There are few other places to get books, especially online. We learned of the great percentage of students with financial aid last semester. With all these people on financial aid, some must wait for their refund check to come in before they can buy books. Teachers, however, can't wait for some students to get books this way, because it will penalize the rest of the students who have their books. This has caused teachers to give home work out of the book already, even on the first two days of classes. This will cause these students with financial aid to go get books.

This is where the trouble has started. The bookstore has to get paid. To them, financial aid is not a guarantee. They want students to pay for the books right there, even if they have financial aid coming in. This is understandable; it would be bad business to let someone buy an item on

faith that they will have money later. This has caused those that can only buy books when financial aid comes in to borrow or rent a copy until they can buy a book for themselves. This may cause them to get behind in their work, but teachers feel it is the students' responsibility to get access to a book because these students are adults.

There is a good side, though. Many with financial aid could have pre-ordered their books. Or, they could have saved up and bought books the first week of school. There is also a down-side to this method. Some teachers don't use the book on their sheet, or they use it very little. The problem arises when a student has a book that is not needed. These books can't be returned to the bookstore, causing another financial problem with students.

With financial aid already distributed and classes going smoothly, the situation is becoming less of a problem. I feel things have worked out in the end. I have gotten my books and there isn't much complaining any more, at least from what I have heard.

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Atlanta Sports Round-Up

Stefan Seville
Sports Editor

Thrashers Mid-Season Crisis; Kovalchuk Drama

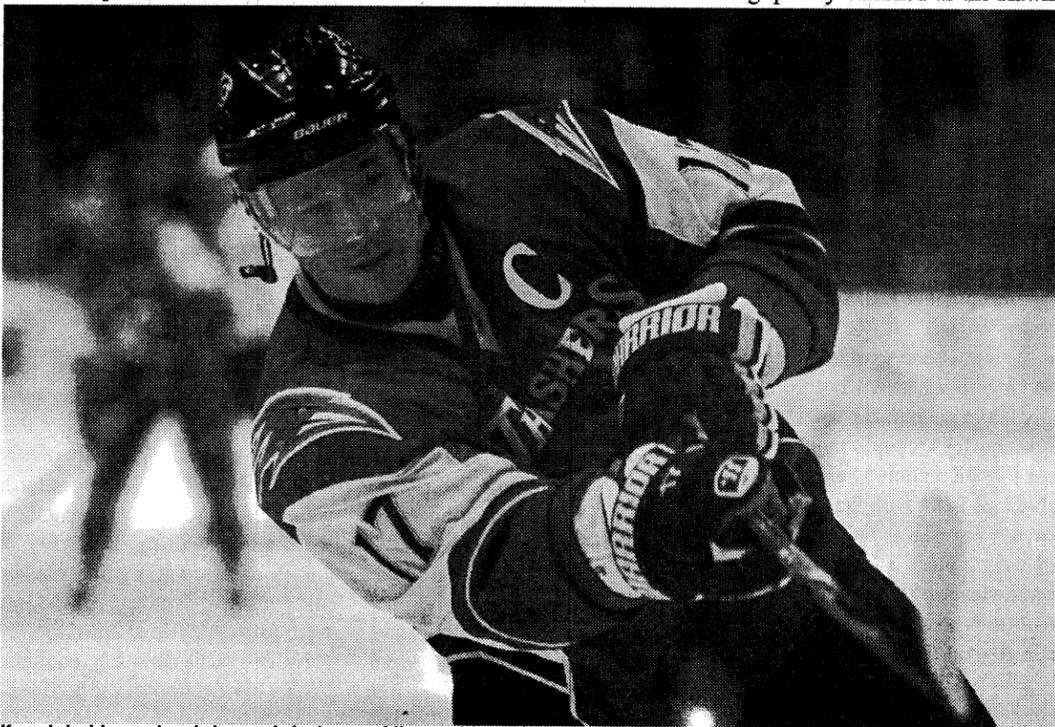
Back in October, I wrote a whole story about how the Thrashers, after a few years of bottom-feeding, were ready to make a serious run at the playoffs. I noted how the goaltending issues had been remedied with the new young Czech, Ondrej Pavelec, how our young defense had been bolstered with the addition of former Stanley Cup winner Pavel Kubina, and how our already potent offense had received boosts from the speedy Max Afinogenov, big Nik Antropov and rookie standout

the league's salary cap, not leaving much room to sign other players in the young core group the team has now. Most observers fear that the other option, trading Kovalchuk, will hurt the franchise more than help it. Kovalchuk's lax defensive attitude severely diminishes his trade value. It is a hockey version of a catch-22 – there is no beneficial, realistic solution to the problem. Kovalchuk has repeatedly said he wants to play his whole career for one team. He has also said that his #1 goal (and the main reason he will not leave the NHL for nearly double the money in European Hockey) is to win the Stanley Cup. At this rate, neither one of these will happen.

whom the Falcons could seem to do no damage. Key losses to the division Saints and Panthers put the Falcons out of the playoff picture a year after being knocked out in the Wild Card round by the eventual Super Bowl losing Arizona Cardinals. High expectations have been set for next year, should the offensively dominant Ryan, Turner and WR Mike Gonzalez stay injury free.

Hawks in mild slump; still in picture

After an impressively strong showing in the first quarter of the season, the Hawks seemed ready for a run at the top of the league. This feeling quickly vanished as the Hawks



Kovalchuk's contract drama is just one of the problems facing the Thrashers franchise.

Photo credited to: Stefan Seville

Evander Kane. All seemed well, right? It did, but only through the end of November.

As the team hit December (after winning over 60% of games in the first two months), the train started to fall off the tracks. The top-5 ranked special teams units wilted and keeled over – for every three penalties Atlanta took, the opponent scored a goal – making for the worst average in the league. The brick wall goaltending from the first two months mysteriously vanished, giving up, on average, one more goal per game in December and the first weeks of January than they had at the beginning of the season. Lastly, the ever-reliable offense was shut down too easily by opponents, leaving us exposed and open for a counter attack after every possession.

As if these problems weren't enough, one giant, off-ice issue has been filling the role of elephant in the locker room since the losing ways began. Ilya Kovalchuk, currently the 3rd leading goal scorer in the entire league, is an unrestricted free agent following this season. While many fans love him for his offensive abilities and excitement he brings to Philips Arena, his recent lack of effort on the defensive side of the puck has an equal number of fans concerned with keeping him. Should the franchise re-sign their #1 marketing figure, they will probably be paying top dollar, or around \$10 million per year of the contract. That means he will alone consume up to 20% of

Possible Trade Scenarios:

Here are my own predictions about Kovalchuk's most likely destinations, should he be traded, and what Atlanta could get in return, should both General Managers play nice.

TO:

- Chicago Blackhawks for Patrick Sharp (16 G, 23 A) and Kris Versteeg (13 G, 18 A)
- Boston Bruins for Blake Wheeler (12 G, 16 A), Milan Lucic (2 G, 5 A) and 1st round pick
- Los Angeles Kings for Alexander Frolov (11 G, 19 A) and Anze Kopitar (19 G, 28 A)

The NHL's trade deadline is March 3rd at 3 PM. Because of the Winter Olympics, all rosters will be frozen by the league from February 15th until the 28th. If Kovalchuk has not re-signed with Atlanta by the break, expect #17 to be on the move.

Falcons set record; disappoint

With their season finishing wins over the Buffalo Bills and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the Falcons attained winning records in consecutive seasons for the first time in franchise history. Even with this surprising accomplishment, the Falcons failed to make the NFC playoffs. Many pointed the finger at the debilitating injuries to QB Matt Ryan an RB Michael Turner, without

failed to show up in key match-ups against the elite in the league; losing back-to-back games against the Cavaliers by large margins and convincingly to the Orlando Magic. At this point last season, the Hawks were 2 games behind their current position, good for first in the Southeast over the slumping Magic by a half game. The Hawks are third in the Conference, trailing second place Boston by a half game, but have not proven that they can contend with the stronger teams. For Atlanta to make a serious Championship run, the defense must crack down on key players who, to this point, have been able to walk all over us in and out of the paint.

Braves send mixed message; acquire antiques

The Braves, while trying to stack their roster for their first playoff appearance since their 14-year division title streak, traded strikeout king and premier pitcher Javier Vasquez to the Yankees for Melky Cabrera. This trade brought a lot of question to General Manager Wren, especially in light of his other big acquisition, veteran infielder Troy Glaus. While these two have a large amount of post season experience, their age and durability remains to be proven with the Braves contending in arguably the most competitive division in the MLB.

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THE TENSTONE PAPERS - THE NORMAL SERIES PART IV: EVERYONE HAS A MENTAL DISORDER OF VARYING INTENSITY

Jarrett Bell
Senior Staff Writer

Over the past three installments, we have chipped away at the word 'normal' and shown how it cannot be applied universally. We have shown that all words are subjective and that standards are based on opinions, prejudices and preconceived notions. The last installment showed that the words 'approximately average' are exclusionary with an unrealistic domain (i.e., the general populace.) For this installment, we will show that normal cannot be universally applied and that no one is normal since everyone has a mental disorder of varying intensity. To show this, we now introduce the fourth and final definition--free from any mental disorder; sane.

Before we begin, we will omit the definition of sane and zero in on the critical word disorder. Disorder, according to dictionary.com, has multiple definitions but we opt for the following definition: a disturbance in physical or mental health or functions; malady or dysfunction. We will omit the second half of the definition and focus on the first half. Now by substituting the definition of disorder into the fourth definition of 'normal', the definition says free from disturbances in physical or mental health or functions. We will use this newly

concocted definition derived from a valid substitution throughout this installment.

The words 'disturbance' and 'free' are critical in this discussion. First, we need to know what qualifies as a disturbance. A disturbance, by definition, is defined as something that interrupts the quiet, rest, peace; to unsettle; to hinder. By using the 'hinder' and 'unsettle' parts in the context of the definition, we can say that someone is considered 'normal' when they are free from anything that hinders or unsettles their mental health and functions. Considering the definition we are evaluating, any disturbance, whether the level of intensity is mild, acute, or somewhere on the intensity spectrum, is nonetheless a disturbance and thus upsets the mental health and/or functions of that person in question.

Secondly, the word 'free' goes hand-in-hand with 'disturbance.' The appropriate definition for application is the following: clear of obstructions or obstacles; unimpeded. This definition creates a black and white zone with no gray area. That is, any obstruction, no matter how big or small is an impediment nonetheless and thus not 'free.' We can also interpret the definition of the word 'free' as clear of obstructions on the entire length or duration of the element in question. Consider Interstate 285,

the Perimeter around Atlanta. This limited-access highway contains no toll booths. Toll booths impede on the usage of the highway as one must stop and pay toll in order to continue using the highway. As a result, the booth constitutes a discontinuity on the limited access highway. From this example, we can see that in order for any element to be free, there cannot be any discontinuity on its entire length or duration. Let us take it a step further--for anyone to be free from anything that hinders their mental health or functions, the individual must not be affected by life's forces in any way possible. That is, events in one's life cannot affect their established mental state and its functions, for example. Specific examples of this include a child's mental state when the parents file for divorce; a high school student not getting into the school they thought they would get into; finding out one's girlfriend is pregnant by another man. (Note that each of these events, among many other possible combinations, can cause a shift in one's mental state and/or its functions. Each of these situations can have different level of intensity on one's state.) However, if one's mental state is not affected by events such as these that were mentioned in some form or another, that person has no emotional component to them, which is impossible

for any human to be emotionless in every situation. We can also say that one whose life experiences do not shape or affect their mental state and/or functions in any way is an omniscient human. (We know for a fact that there is NO omniscient human living on the face of this planet.) Thus, this leads us to our next assertion that we will make without proof--that no human is perfect in any way, shape, or form, including in mental state and functions, contrary to what the fourth definition of normal says. This is where we have the issue.

Considering our statement above, there is no possibility for anyone to be free of any mental disturbances. One's mental state and how it functions is affected by life's forces--whether they're good, bad, or ugly. Life forces are typically something beyond the control of the person in question, such as being born with a condition that affects mental capability. The forces of life affect everyone in different ways, which results in everyone having different experiences. In addition, these forces can also be something voluntary, such as convincing yourself in any state of consciousness (recall this terminology from Part II) that you are ugly, unwanted, etc. Whatever state of consciousness a person is in may or may not be immediately recognizable to them, but recognizable by others. Given these examples, and many other possibilities that can exist, we can safely say that each and every human being on Earth will experience a mental disturbance of some type, whether it is voluntary, involuntary, and in any state of consciousness.

Some people may argue that if a disturbance in one's mental state occurs rarely, then that person can be considered normal. However, we must return to how we interpreted the word 'free.' We stated that in order for someone to be free from disturbances of mental health and functions, there cannot be any discontinuity in the state of one's mental health and/or functions during their lifetime. We also stated that humans will be shaped by life's forces, whether they are voluntary or involuntary. Life's forces will constitute a discontinuity in one's mental health and/or functions as these forces will impose a shift in one's mindset and thinking mechanisms. One can safely assume that avoiding the impact of life's forces is impossible. Due to the changes that these life forces impose on one's life, this implies that humans are not omniscient since such a person would not need to learn anything from life's forces but either already know how to circumvent it or approach the issue such that the outcome is entirely positive for all parties involved.

Given that statement, the discontinuity that results from life's forces unsettles one's mental health and/or functions, positive or negative. The discontinuity that has been described is diametrically opposed to the definition of the word 'free' that we have stated. Since the definition of 'free' has

been violated by this discontinuity and that there is a relation between the definitions of free, disorder, and normal, we can say that by the mathematical concept of transitivity, the fourth definition of normal has also been violated. That is, this discontinuity is a disturbance which constitutes a disorder, regardless of its magnitude. This disorder impedes on the mental health and functions of that person. Since the definition says that one must be free of disturbances and consequently disorders, we can conclude that no one can be normal. Since no one can be normal, normal cannot legitimately exist and universally applied. As a result, it follows that everyone has a mental disorder of varying intensity.

Considering all of the previous installments of this series, the conclusion that we just arrived at is significant. Recall from Part III that we made the assertion that approximately average is exclusionary. That is, those who engaged in the mutual agreement on the belief they share a certain set of traits among themselves are excluding those that do not share the traits that these people believe that they have in common. This belief may lead to those engaged in this mutual agreement to think they do not have mental disturbances. These people will use this belief to apply the same criteria to other people and judge them on the basis that they are mentally superior. At this point, this mutual agreement is attempting to define a normal when it cannot legitimately exist since no one meets the criteria established by the definition. Now considering our Part II discussion, the definition of 'normal' as defined by the mutual agreement establishes a standard based on prejudices and preconceived notions (by using the assertion that these people are mentally superior.) However, since these people fail to see their assignment of mental superiority among themselves is actually a disorder in itself (as in their own way these people are declaring themselves to be omniscient or close to that unattainable state), there is no legitimacy in establishing such a normal.

We have now reached the end of our evaluation of each definition of normal. From each installment, we were able to show that normal is subjective, biased, prejudiced and exclusionary. Up until this point, we have shown through logic that normal cannot be universally applied and with this installment, it also cannot legitimately exist. The last installment of this series will deliver the final verdict. Stay tuned.

Spring Sorority Recruitment

Lea Newlin
Copy Editor

The Spring semester Sorority recruitment, more properly entitled Panhellenic Semiformal Recruitment, took place on the 20th and 21st of January this year. It consisted of two events, the first being a Sorority Bowling Night, while the second night was used as an Info Night. These events were jointly hosted by both Alpha Xi Delta and Gamma Phi Beta, and all events were free for attendees.

During Bowling Night, which took place at the AMF Bowling lanes just off campus, the sororities broke up into many teams, each consisting roughly of two Alpha Xi Deltas and two Gamma Phi Betas. Each attendee then joined a team and had a chance to meet with the sisters and get to know them. When I asked why girls should come out to Semiformal Recruitment, a sister from Gamma Phi Beta, who wished to remain anonymous, pointed out the incredibly uneven ratio of men to women here at SPSU, and explained that coming out to recruitment is always a chance to meet new friends. She said that it shouldn't really matter how interested a girl is in joining, saying, "I didn't know I wanted to join a sorority. I probably wouldn't have, until I met all these people."

Frankie Rimi, a member of Alpha Xi Delta, added that Semiformal Recruitment takes place in Spring, which gives at-

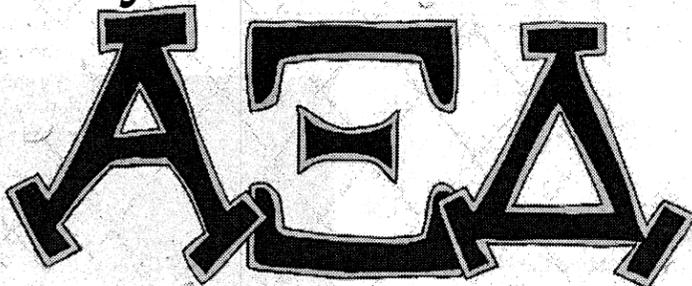


Photo credited to: bunniesandbows.com

tendees a chance to meet some of the newer students who have just arrived. "Semiformal Recruitment is better for the more shy people," Frankie said. "If Formal Recruitment's too much for you to handle at the beginning of the year, this is a lot easier."

The second night had a different feel to it, as the two sororities had separate info tables set up in the Community Center. Each table was full of shirts and photos to show off different events the sororities have had. These tables also showcased the design for the new sorority houses that will be open in the Fall. Although the tables themselves were separated, the casual mood remained, and the members of each mingled and chatted, both with each other and with the girls who showed up to attend. All around the room the conversations mostly consisted of getting to know the girls who took the time to come out. Any questions about Greek life were answered, but the atmosphere was very friendly and welcoming.

As Info Night came to an end, I caught Kay Chapman, and Alpha Xi Delta, talking about

what had made her go through recruitment. She said that when she started college, she made a lot of friends who later turned out to be people she didn't necessarily believe made good friends. She said she'd gotten mixed in a little with "the wrong crowd" and decided to start over again. To do that, she chose to attend Sorority Recruitment in the Fall. She says she feels as though she became a better, more confident person after joining her sorority. "I made my best friend through Alpha Xi Delta," she said, "and if I hadn't gone through recruitment, I never would have met her."

Overall, everyone who attended the Semiformal Recruitment, even the sisters, really seemed to have a good time, and plenty of chances to laugh. The events went without a hitch, and everyone made some new friends.

ARR-DO-EE-NO

David Sluder
Staff Writer

In an effort to start writing a tri-weekly (or however often the paper comes out) technology piece, I'd like to introduce all of you beautiful people to my new friend, the Arduino.

He came all the way from Italy, stopping first at SparkFun Electronics in Boulder, CO until I could buy him and make him my own. He fits in the palm of my hand, has a beautiful blue color, and has the potential to be the centerpiece in any number of incredible projects.

You see, my Arduino is an open-source microcontroller that has revolutionized the world of DIY (Do It Yourself) electronics.

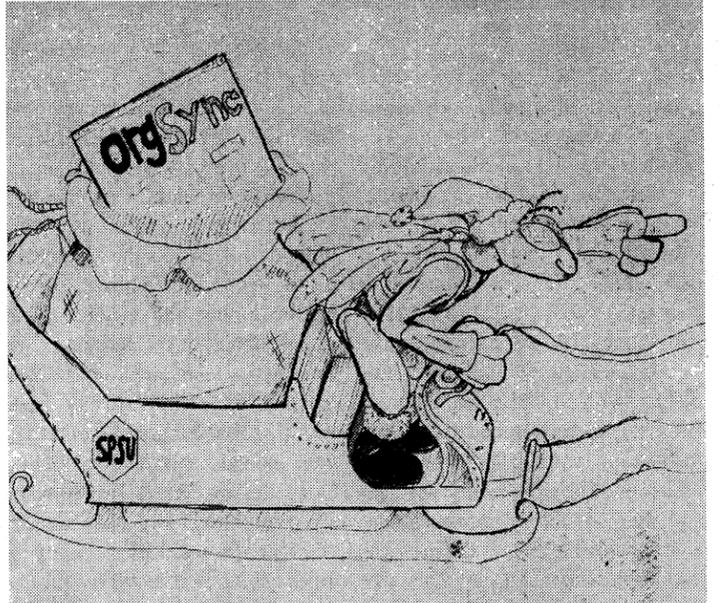
Open-source means you could look up the Arduino Web site, download the board schematic, buy the components, and build it all yourself. Microcontroller means you can hook this up to your computer, write custom programs, download it back to the board, and let it run wild. DIY means you don't have to take a class to use it – it's wonderfully simple to program, and there's a phenomenal online community to boot.

So what does this mean? This means that there is a whole world out there that you've probably never thought about approaching that has suddenly become within your reach. Let's say you'd like to build your own version of The Clapper®. Get

yourself an Arduino, a piezoelectric buzzer to sense the sound, and a relay to turn the power on and off. Maybe you've got a ridiculous car and you'd like to integrate some LEDs into it for some cool effects (like Kitt from Knight Rider maybe?). All you need is the Arduino, some LEDs, and some wire. If you've got plenty of free time, you might want to build an autonomous robot. Get your bad self an Arduino, some motor relays, and the sensors you want to use to help it get around.

If you've ever had an idea that required more electronics knowledge than you had and you didn't have enough money to pay for the classes to get it, then Arduino is for you. If you like to tinker and hack electronics just to see what happens, Arduino is for you. If you've got \$30 and an imagination, then the Arduino is for you.

What I would really like to see is a community of students at SPSU spring up, a community of people who aren't afraid to hook some stuff together and see what happens (it's OK, we've all burnt out LEDs). I think this school gets so wrapped up in giving you a practical education that we forget to play, to find that childlike enthusiasm we've lost over the years and channel it into something cool and interesting



What's that? Santa Hornet bringing a late Xmas gift?

Comic credited to: Louis Alderman

and weird. Who cares that there's no market for your creation? Who cares that you spent twenty hours building something you're just going to tear apart?

When I was younger, I knew that when I took out my box of Legos®, I was going to build something incredible. And when I was done, I was going to love tearing it apart and putting all the pieces back up. When I first got my Arduino, that was the feeling I got, the ear-to-ear-smile-because-I-forgot-what-it-feels-like-to-be-a-kid feeling.

So, in summary, you should go out and buy an Arduino and

make something extraordinary with it. Then, you should show it off to others. Then, we should make a club so we can show it off to each other. Interested? Shoot me an email.

Tune in next paper, whenever that is (and if you're annoyed about how long it takes, come join the paper so we've got enough people to publish it more often) to learn how to etch your own Printed Circuit Boards with readily available materials

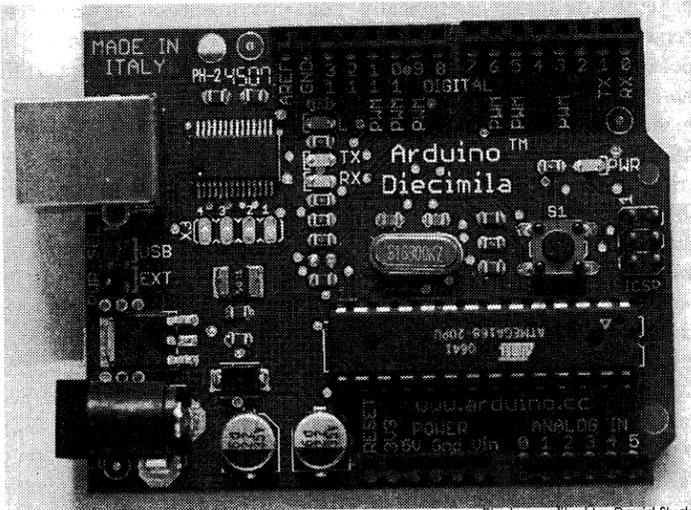


Photo credited to: David Sluder

New Super Mario Bros Wii

It's a Mario Party!

Louis Alderman
Staff Writer

I can still remember waking up on the weekend and dropping down in front of the television as a child. Yes, the unhealthy act of sitting within six feet of the screen with a controller in hand and Mario gracefully dancing across the screen. Well, not so much gracefully dancing as humorously tumbling. My Mario of choice, at the time, was Super Mario Bro's 3. If I could go back and change it all... I would, presuming Nintendo had released New Super Mario Bro's Wii in the early nineties.

Released in the first colored game case for the Wii, the big red box with the supermarket

brand 'New' sticker on the cover holds perhaps the greatest Mario game invented. For the first time Mario and Luigi are both on screen running and jumping across the mushroom kingdom for yet another grand adventure. They are also joined by these two mushroom-headed 'toad's who have absolutely no reason to exist other than to provide you the opportunity to drag not one, but three of your friends over to face the enemies of the mushroom-kingdom in a four-for-all of pain. Don't get me wrong, the single-player game is amazing and it alone is worth the new title, but when your friends start hopping on top of you, hurling you, and accidentally throwing you under a bus (a giant wheel actually)

you begin to see the beauty of this game.

All of the classic Mario moves are still there, even his triple-jump from Mario 64. The Wii-mote is turned sideways to be played like the NES controller and both the 'A' button and motion sensitive controls fill out the control scheme. Almost every single good idea that has graced a Mario game can be found in here, even Baby Mario's bubble from Yoshi's Island makes an appearance in multi-player. Sadly the iconic Tanuki Suit, Cape and Metal Mario cap didn't make the cut... but almost every good idea. New to the series are the Ice flowers, Penguin Suit and Propeller Mushroom, each of which creates a new, yet amaz-

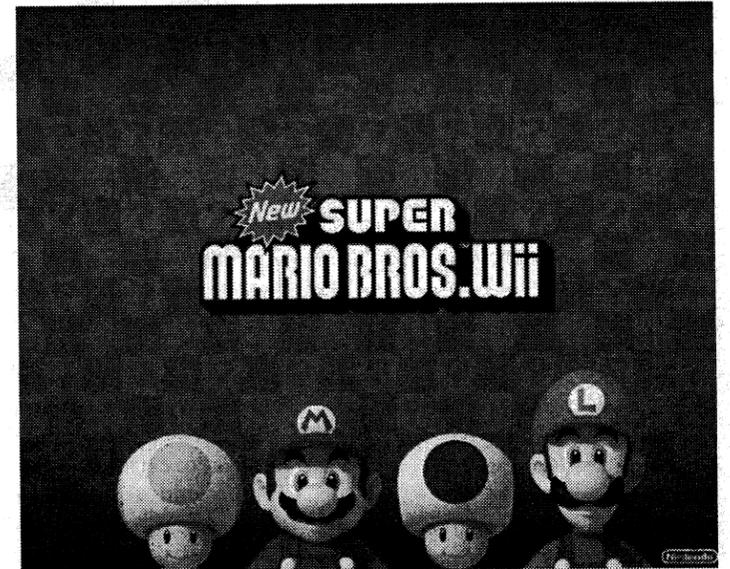


Photo credited to: videogamesblogger.com

ingly fun way to play. Also new to the series is the Super-Guide. Ever wonder how to get that really big coin that seems just out of reach, or what those cannons on the map are for? The Super-Guide lets you spend special coins to watch game play videos of the secrets to the stages, watch a speed run that will blow your mind or even laugh as 4 players pull off amazing tricks during, after, or before they sacrifice pitiful Luigi for their own success. The Super-Guide also gives single players a crutch. If the gauntlet of cannons or bridge of falling sand proves too difficult, Luigi can be summoned to show you how it's done. It isn't flashy and it may take the long way, but it appears that Luigi just gets things done.

If you just happen to be one of those Wii owners who gripes about not getting any game time on your system, your prayers have been answered. With a Co-op, Competitive and Battle mode for each stage, you will see more backstabbing than a game of Monopoly. And with the added challenge of an entire world that is only unlockable from a mastery of each world, you will find yourself crawling back to this game for more.



Photo credited to: thenintendo.com