

In League...

MIT
WOMEN'S
LEAGUE

February – March 2016

A quarterly newsletter



A Tour of the John Adams Courthouse

Wednesday, February 10 • 10:00 am
One Pemberton Square, Boston

The John Adams Courthouse, located in Pemberton Square in downtown Boston, began without fanfare as the Suffolk County Courthouse more than 120 years ago. In 2002 it was renamed the John Adams Courthouse in honor of the principal architect of the United States Constitution and second President of the United States. On March 31, 2005, after a \$96 million restoration, it was dedicated by eminent jurists, politicians, historians, the Sudbury Ancient Fyfe and Drum Companie, and the Framingham High School A Cappella Choir.

The Courthouse is the home of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court,

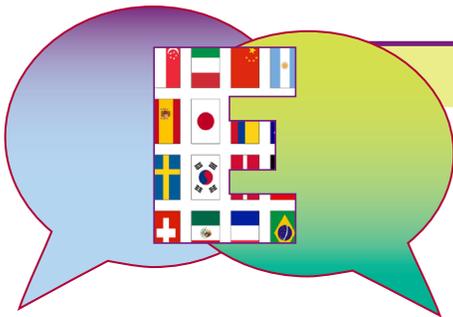
the Appeals Court, and the Social Law Library, one of the oldest law libraries in the United States. It is also the home of the Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. Courtroom, named for the jurist who served as a member of the Court for twenty years before joining the United States Supreme Court. The Great Hall, topped off with a five-story high vaulted ceiling hand-painted in the manner of the Sistine Chapel, houses sixteen allegorical statues sculpted by Domingo Mora, an international artist (1840–1911) and a statue of 19th century Boston trial lawyer Rufus Choate by the sculptor Daniel Chester French, best known for two other statues: the Minute Man

standing before the North Bridge in Concord, and Abraham Lincoln seated in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

This tour will begin at 10:00 am at the Pemberton Square entrance.

We will meet in the Kendall Sq. "T" station at 9:20 am and go to the Park Street Station, walking two to three blocks to the courthouse. The steps to the courtyard are across from the Government Center green line station.

Please make reservations with Sis de Bordenave in the League office, 617.253.3656 or wleague@mit.edu.



Conversational English Class Registration

**Tuesday, February 9 • 9 am to 11 am
Stratton Student Center, Room 491**

For international women arriving at MIT whose first language is not English, our Conversational English classes provide a friendly venue for practicing “survival” English, learning new vocabulary, and engaging in conversations with classmates about a variety of subjects. They are a perfect home-away-from-home for visitors from other cultures and countries.

Students meet women from around the globe and come together to learn and to improve their English skills with the guidance of dedicated Women’s League teachers. The focus is on functional “how to” English conversation and student interests vs. grammar. Grammar instruction, however, is provided and reviewed at the Basic and Intermediate levels.

In addition, these classes offer students opportunities to make new friends, share their cultures and interests and gain confidence while living their new life in the United States. As stories and experiences are shared, speaking and listening competence improves.

Spring classes are held from February to May on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15 am to 11:00 am. Four levels of classes (Basic to Advanced) are offered and after a brief interview with one

of our teachers, each student is placed in an appropriate level class. Babysitting is provided for children, age 6 months to 4 years at a cost is \$150 a semester per child. Textbooks are provided and included in the student fee of \$80 per semester. All questions will be answered by calling Jan Kirtley, coordinator of the English Classes, at 617.277.2628.

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An **English Conversation Partner Program** is provided to students for additional practice in conversational English with volunteers who are fluent English speakers. Since most Partners are MIT employees, these informal meetings usually take place on campus on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Participation is optional and subject to the availability of volunteer Partners.

Breakfast Series with Laurie Boyer

**Wednesday, March 9 • 8:00 am
Emma Rogers Room (10-340)**



Twice-yearly women in the MIT community are invited to informal “breakfast talks.” Known as the Breakfast Series, they are occasions when women faculty and administrators explore the role of women in the academy, sharing the pathways their professional lives have taken — the people and events that have influenced their direction.

Laurie Boyer, our spring speaker, is the Irvin and Helen Sizer Career Development Associate Professor of Biology. Her work focuses on investigating the mechanisms that drive heart development, the regulatory elements that switch genes on and off at just the right

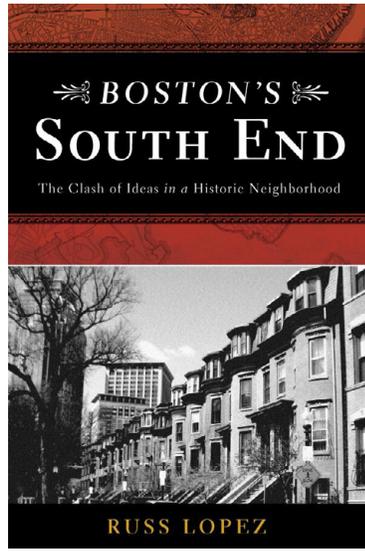
time and place so that one stem cell, having no specific identity, develops into multiple cell types that organize into the three-dimensional heart structure. Learning how this happens, she hopes to understand congenital heart defects (caused by faulty regulation), especially if one day it might help develop cures for heart defects and disease.

The first in her family to attend college, she says that she has “always been inspired and motivated by solving complex problems in biology.” Her work experience after graduating from Framingham State College in 1990 piqued her interest to understand diseases: how things worked, why they happened, and the biology behind it.

Encouraged to return to academia by supervisors and colleagues, she earned a PhD in biochemistry from the University of Massachusetts Medical School in 2001. Dr. Boyer joined the MIT faculty as a member of the Biology Department in 2007.

Please join us and meet Dr. Boyer. Breakfast seating is limited. Tickets are available on a “first-come, first-served, basis” at a cost of \$12.00 and can be purchased from Sis de Bordenave in the League office, 10- 342.

Breakfast is served promptly at 8:00 am.



Brown Bag Lunch with Author Russ Lopez

Monday, March 14 • 12:00 pm
Emma Rogers Room (10-340)

Russ Lopez, the author of *Boston's South End: The Clash of Ideas in a Historic Neighborhood*, will read excerpts from his book and answer questions at a noontime brown bag lunch in the Emma Rogers Room. The first comprehensive history of the neighborhood in over 100 years, the book covers everything from the initial development of the South End to its jazz age to the struggles over urban renewal and gentrification in recent decades.

In its pages readers meet “crusading evangelicals battling to save souls, brilliant women challenging social norms, passionate advocates insisting on their civil rights, and resourceful residents fighting bulldozers and bureaucrats.”

A longtime resident of the South End, Russ Lopez received his Master of City and Regional Planning degree from Harvard University and his doctorate from Boston University. He has worked at City Hall and the State House as a community organizer and as a researcher. One of the foremost historians of the built environment, he has an extensive list of publications on urban studies, income inequality, and racial segregation. Dr. Lopez is an Adjunct Professor in Environmental Health at the Boston University School of Public Health

To learn more about this Boston neighborhood, its residents and its advocates, contact the League office at 617.253.3656 or wleague@mit.edu to reserve your place at this lunchtime talk. Feel free to bring your lunch. Beverages and dessert will be provided.

Notable

2/24
Book Discussion:
Orphan Train
by Christina Baker Kline

3/23
Book Discussion:
A Spool of Blue Thread
by Ann Tyler

League Interest Groups and Classes

LEARN MORE

Book Discussion

Barbara Donnelly
781.646.4617
Nancy Hollomon
nancyredsox@gmail.com

Chorale

Sharon Lin: hllin@mit.edu
Sally De Fazio: de_fazio@alum.mit.edu
web.mit.edu/womensleague/womenschorale

Looking Together

Ann Allen
857.259.6007
acallen@mit.edu

EXPAND YOUR WORLD

Japanese Tea Ceremony

Kyoko Wada
chado@mit.edu
web.mit.edu/chado/www/index.html

Middle Eastern Dance

Loni Butera
617.491.5657, loni@mit.edu

WORK WITH YOUR HANDS

Informal Needlework

Beth Harling
781.749.4055, oharling@mit.edu;
Claudia LaBollita-James
cljames@mit.edu

MIT Gardeners' Group

League Office
617.253.3656
wleague@mit.edu
web.mit.edu/womensleague/gardeners

Women's League Community Craft Fairs

Brenda Blais
bmblais@mit.edu

MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND CONTACTS

CitySide Dining

League Office
wleague@mit.edu

MIT Japanese Wives Group

Kimie Shirasaki
mitjwg@yahoo.com

Groups meet weekly, bi-monthly or monthly. Contact the above women to learn more about their groups.



From left:
Shivangi Goel
and League Chair
Ellen Stordy

“My passion comes from wanting to combine the things I love in life: the technology of computing, architecture, and engineering with my innate desire to grow things.”

— Caleb Harper

The Laya Wiesner Awards 2015

Since 1981, MIT presidents have presented awards at the Institute Awards Convocations. Among those awards are the two Women’s League awards honoring Laya Wiesner, wife of MIT’s 13th president Jerome Wiesner. At the May 2015 Convocation President Rafael Reif presented these two prestigious awards to Shivangi Goel and Caleb Harper for their contributions to improving the quality of life at MIT and beyond.

Sophomore **Shivangi Goel** was named the 2015 **Laya W. Wiesner Award** winner for her contributions to Institute life that have notably enhanced the MIT community. Her citation reads:

Before she came to MIT, Shivangi Goel set her sights on becoming a neurosurgeon — in a sense, the very definition of “mind” and “hand.” And she has worked passionately on both sides of that equation ever since. In the past two years, Shivangi has made remarkable contributions in a wide range of research fields. But as secretary of the Class of 2017, her passion is enhancing life for

her fellow students at MIT. Licensed as an EMT since she was 16, Shivangi is also a devoted volunteer for MIT EMS and is especially motivated to support students in distress. Her tireless efforts as a volunteer and leader reflect the spirit of MIT’s former first lady Laya Wiesner, who promoted the role of women in enhancing MIT community life.

The **Laya Wiesner Community Award** recognizes a member or friend of the MIT community for service that reflects Mrs. Wiesner’s concerns for enhancing life at the Institute and the world at large. **Caleb Harper** was named the 2015 award winner. His citation reads:

As founder of the Media Lab’s CityFARM research group, Caleb has invented his indoor farming system that requires no soil, and produces crops three to four times faster than in the field. Working with his CityFARM team of engineers, architects, urban planners, economists and plant scientists, Caleb is developing high-performance agricultural systems

especially designed for use in cities. He inspires his team to challenge the agricultural status quo and to share their research broadly with others around the globe. In that spirit, he also launched the OpenAG project, the world’s first open source “food tech” research collective. Its goal? To develop a global agricultural data commons...or, as Caleb puts it, the “Linux’ of open agriculture.”

We congratulate and applaud these worthy award recipients.

In anticipation of the 2016 Awards Convocation, we invite League members to take part in nominating candidates for the 2016 awards to be presented at the Awards Convocation on May 10th. Both awards carry financial prizes.

Online nominations open February 1. Direct letters of nomination may be sent to the League office, Room 10-342, or via email to wleague@mit.edu by **March 14**. For further information, please call 617.253.3656.

Connections

February 10 • March 17

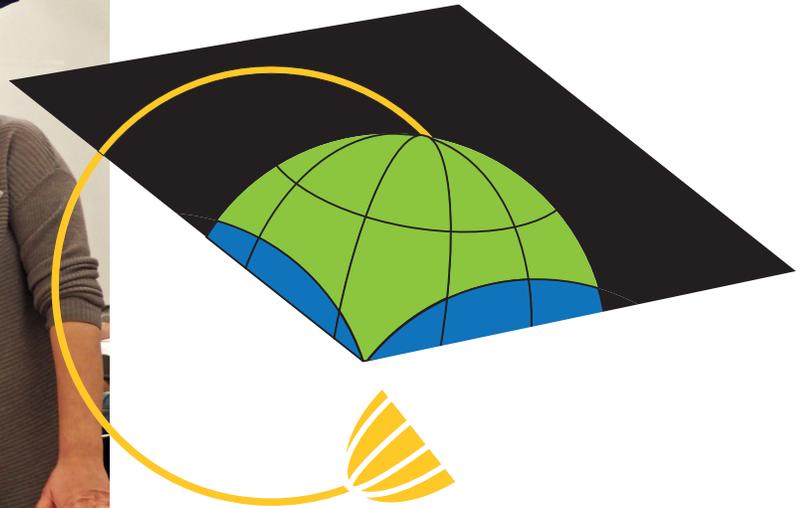
Connections, our informal open house, meets on the second Thursday of each month during the academic year in the Emma Rogers Room (10-340) from 4 to 6 pm unless otherwise noted.

In March, there is an exception. Due to a busy calendar, Connections will meet on the third **Thursday, March 17**.

Join us for a cup of coffee or tea and sample the sweet creations at hand. They are the perfect conversation starter!

Feel free to bring a newcomer or colleague with you. Come when you can and stay for as long as you wish!

Photo: Pamela Manolakis



All sorts of dreams come true at MIT

MIT staff members recently earned their high school diplomas through the MIT ESL Program for Service Employees.

Human Resources
MIT News / November 5, 2015

“Our dreams have come true,” said Tsering Mulug-Labrang, an MIT Facilities staff member speaking for herself and her colleague Dolma Tsering on what it means to receive their adult high school diplomas. These two MIT employees were celebrated for this accomplishment at a gathering on Oct. 29 in the Pappalardo Room.

Mulug-Labrang and Tsering achieved this feat through their involvement in MIT’s ESL Program for Service Employees — a program that reflects a diverse cross-MIT collaboration. Its administrative home is Human Resources; the students are employees from MIT Facilities; and the tutors are MIT Women’s League members, MIT employees, students, and volunteers who are friends of MIT. Tsering thanked everyone who made the moment possible, but in fact all present in the room recognized it was the dedication and drive of these two employees that made it happen. Director of Campus

Services and Chief of MIT Police John DiFava, the first sponsor of the ESL Program, observed, “We helped you, but you did it yourself.” He also placed this accomplishment in the context of a bigger Institute picture: “You represent the most important part of MIT’s mission — a commitment to lifelong learning.”

Among those marking the event included Ellen Stordy, chair of the MIT Women’s League and an MIT retiree, involved in the pilot program — which was the brainchild of Nancy Kelly, the current MIT ESL coordinator and Marlyse Lupis, a Women’s League member. The program started in 2009, and 50 employees have participated during this time.

Tony Sharon, MIT deputy executive vice president, thanked the families of Mulug-Labrang and Tsering for coming to MIT that evening to celebrate the occasion. He turned to their young children and noted that when they were older, they would better understand this important milestone in their

mothers’ lives. Yet despite their age, perhaps they already do, as these two MIT employees and high school graduates are now able to help their children with their homework.

For more information about MIT’s ESL Program for Service Staff, please email esl-admins@mit.edu or visit hrweb.mit.edu/esl.

Janet Walzer
Director of Communications

*Reprinted with permission
of MIT Work Life-Center
hrweb.mit.edu/worklife*



Photo: Casey Atkins

Meet one of the Women's League Scholars

Senior Alyssa Napier dedicates herself to improving MIT Chemistry major works to address social justice issues

by Catherine Curro Caruso
MIT News / December 1, 2015

Whenever Alyssa Napier sees a problem, she feels an overwhelming urge to fix it — and she has found plenty of opportunities to problem-solve in pursuit of a stronger, more inclusive MIT community.

Napier, a senior chemistry major and linguistics minor with a powerful sense of social justice, has thrown herself into numerous organizations and committees dedicated to improving life at MIT. Her passion for activism has inspired her to try new approaches to familiar problems.

Taking action

Napier explains that “MIT has been wonderful in helping me accomplish all of my academic and professional goals. But there’s also the flip side of what MIT culture is, and I feel like I don’t fit in.” Recognizing that others might share that feeling, she has spent a lot of time working to shift certain aspects of MIT culture.

This year she served on the committee that planned MC2, an annual conference that gives MIT students a venue for

talking about multiculturalism and diversity. The conference initiated deep conversations about MIT culture, which Napier and the committee then worked to bring to the larger MIT community. One exercise revealed some mismatches between MIT values and individual values and Napier is now working to raise awareness of these mismatches so the community can make progress.

Some MIT students have found it difficult to deal with tragedies in an intense academic environment. “It’s that feeling that I can’t take a moment to pause because if I do, I will get behind,” she says. She commends President Reif’s efforts to transform MIT into a place known not only for science and technology, but also for its humility, compassion, and caring and hopes MIT culture will continue to become more focused on people and interpersonal relationships.

Involved in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement at MIT, Napier reported that as a series of racially charged incidents between police officers and black Americans unfolded across the country last year, MIT’s slow official response had consequences for the campus black

community. “We were affected in silence, and we were affected in isolation, and we just felt really removed from the MIT community because nobody was addressing it,” she explains. A panel exploring the role the MIT community can play in the national conversation about race, revealed that many black students harbor negative views of law enforcement.

Responding by problem-solving, Napier organized a dialogue between MIT students and officers from the Cambridge Police Department and MIT Police, saying “... there’s no way we can solve anything if we’re not actually speaking to each other.” The dialogue allowed police officers to connect with students on a personal level, explaining why they chose to pursue careers in law enforcement, and how they are working to build community on campus and in Cambridge. Napier and the other students felt a renewed sense of hope afterward, and she is organizing a similar dialogue this year.

Napier also works to encourage conversations about black culture and the challenges of living in a diverse community. As part of MIT’s Black Students Union (BSU), she has helped to run a program called “Ask a Black Person.” It enables members of the MIT community to submit questions to the BSU anonymously via Facebook and has addressed everything from the definition of cultural appropriation, to who can use the N-word, to the kind of microaggressions black students have experienced at MIT.

Napier appreciates that MIT is home to people who are motivated to get things done. In her case, this means channeling

her energies into striving for social justice and making improvements to her own community — and beyond. She hopes to work in educational policy, addressing disparities in the U.S. educational system. She believes that education should be a great equalizer, but many students encounter socioeconomic and racial barriers, preventing them from accessing the education they deserve.

"I had a lot of opportunities, and I'm at MIT," she says. "But the path that I travel is such a rarity, and I want to make my path more standard."

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Save the Date — April 4: Ask the Chef 3

Chef Tim Healey returns to answer your culinary queries! Join us for another lunchtime session with our favorite chef de cuisine at noon in the Emma Rogers Room (10-340). To reserve your seat in advance, contact the League office at wleague@mit.edu or 617.253.3656.

Email update

If you have recently become an email user and would like to receive our notes and reminders **OR** if your email address has changed, please advise the League office at wleague@mit.edu.

General Information

The MIT Women's League newsletter is published four times during the academic year. The deadline for the April–May 2016 issue is March 1. All items should be sent to the Women's League office.

Please call the League office for a hard copy of the newsletter and for answers to questions you may have. The office can also arrange for your membership.

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