

Welcome

Dear Club Members – it's been many months since our last newsletter and there are lots of events to report. As the summer arrives we have more activities coming up. Especially to those who have never attended any Club events yet, I encourage you to sign up and give it a try.

I also kindly request any of you who prefer an email version of this newsletter, to please contact us (via email, of course!) to let us know about this preference. It helps to save trees and printing costs, and will make newsletter preparation more efficient.



Jonathan Claman

Past Events: Tours and Fun

Annual Thanksgiving Dinner (30 November 2013)

This year over 30 people attended our Swiss MIT Thanksgiving, including several from outside Zurich and further abroad. Somehow I managed to fly home two hours before the party began. We had a fabulous groaning board with many diverse selections including of course a huge turkey.

This was the third year that the Swiss club has organized Thanksgiving celebrations and it is becoming a real (expat) tradition. Special thanks to Martin and my family for organizing and setting up in my absence, and to our members for making it a celebration to remember!



Bublu Thakur-Weigold

Visit to Museum Tinguely and AGM (12 April 2014)

On 12th April, a group of over 20 alumni and family/spouses met in Basel at the Museum Tinguely. The club had organized a guided tour by well-informed art historians, who added significantly to enhancing our understanding of Tinguely's art and its philosophical underpinnings. Following the museum tour there was a group lunch at the museum and then a scenic, albeit short boat ride across the Rhine.

Next the group gathered at the Roche office of member Norm Mazer, who had generously offered it as a venue for the club's Annual General Meeting. At the AGM, a number of standard items were presented and voted on, such as presenting last year's accounts and this year's budget. All executive positions stayed the same, except Jonathan Claman who was voted in as the new Club Secretary.



Martin Hahn

Annual Whitsun Bike Tour (7-8 June 2014)

This is an abbreviated version; please see the website for the full story.

In a well-established tradition, this was the ninth year in a row for the Club's Whitsun weekend bike trip, and the second time for a circuit around Lake Constance. The fourteen members of our group were a diverse set of alumni, friends and family, which included one current MIT undergraduate student who has a summer internship here in Switzerland.

We gathered on Saturday morning in Romanshorn, and then rode together across the German border to Constance

where we ate a relaxing lunch. A short ferry ride brought us to Meersburg, and from there we biked to Friedrichshafen, our destination for the evening. That night, we all shared many stories and fun jokes over dinner and drinks in the hotel. The next morning we rode along the perimeter of the lake, passing by the tourist town of Lindau, and crossing into Austria on our way to Bregenz. After a long lunch break by the scenic Seebühne, we crossed back into Switzerland and continued to follow the perimeter of the lake clockwise back to Romanshorn.



Jonathan Claman

Past Events: Professors

Talk by MIT Professor Vladimir Bulović (20 January 2014)

Professor Vladimir Bulović of MIT visited us on his way to attend the World Economic Forum in Davos. He shared many recent breakthroughs in the field of nanotechnology and its role in the future of renewable energy. He painted an exciting

picture of the future, where windows would power office buildings and computer screens would be as flexible as paper. It was a very stimulating talk and a great gathering of club members. We thank Professor Bulović for finding the time to present to us!



Duane Hudgins

Luncheon with Professor Noëlle Selin (22 May 2014)

Professor Selin was visiting Geneva while accompanying her husband, a BU prof giving a summer course at BU's Geneva campus on Global Governance. Eight local MITers met her for lunch and discussed her specialty, atmospheric and oceanic chemistry and climate change. Virtually everyone at the lunch had an opinion beyond the normal knee-jerk statements, and the

discussion was quite lively. One major nay-sayer was present, who brought printed documentation to show the world is wrong in saying that the earth is warming up. Other comments were about energy delivery systems and the needs for controls of oceanic pH lowerings. All in all, a very interesting luncheon, and certainly Prof. Selin was properly impressed!



Howard Hornfeld

Past Events: Sloan Speaker Series

MIT Sloan Speaker Series: Ellen Lederman (26 September 2013)

Ellen Ledermann S.M.'91 presented on the topic of impact investing to an audience of non-finance professionals. Impact investments are "intended to create positive impact beyond financial returns." Typical impact investing areas are microfinance, education and health care for people at "the bottom of the pyramid." Ellen gave many examples of

social impact companies such as SCA Trafalgar, which provided dental services for over 80,000 people annually in poor areas of the UK. It is estimated that between USD 25 billion to 40 billion are currently allocated to impact investing. However this allocation is expected to continue to grow due to increased interest from asset managers.



Viara Nedeva Thompson

MIT Sloan Speaker Series: Dr. Wolfgang Knecht (30 October 2013)

This is an abbreviated version; please see the website for the full story.

Dr. Knecht began working on Neuroscience 20 years ago by modeling neuronal networks, but soon moved onto the behavioral consequences of its structures, noting that in Switzerland alone over a million people suffer from anxiety disorders, 66,000 of which are personality disorders and over 70,000 psychotic in nature. Starting with an overview of research at the ZNZ, he discussed both what we know about the brain (for example, how it reacts to sound), as well as what we don't know, like why the cells in the Central Nervous System do not regenerate like all other tissue. In particular, since there is no unifying brain theory, a mathematical language or logic of how the brain actually works, he admitted that, "there are a lot of question marks."

Preliminary tests to treat chronic pain with non-invasive surgery, using MRI technology and focused ultrasound to penetrate the blood-brain barrier with drug molecules have been promising. We also heard of windows being installed into the brains of mice, in vivo, enabling special microscopes to follow the activities of single cells.

The evening afforded us a glimpse into one of today's most high-profile fields, including its assumptions, history, and limitations. Although the tools at their disposal have developed dramatically in recent years, brain scientists admit that it will take many more decades of study to truly understand the processes at work. Waxing philosophical, Dr. Knecht reminded us that, in Science, it is often the projects which seem to "fail" which trigger the most promising new avenues of research.



Bublu Thakur-Weigold

Reminder of Recurring Events

Please consider joining one or more of these informal events to meet new people and learn about new topics. Information will be mailed out separately in advance.

Zurich after-work drinks

These are informal gatherings for members in the Zurich area to meet for drinks and some conversation. All alumni and friends are welcome. Times and locations are coordinated by a Doodle poll.

NEW Basel after-work drinks

Similar in concept to the Zurich events, members of the Club who live in the Basel area can also relax and socialize with other MITers in the local area. Please sign up at the address below to stay informed.

MIT Sloan Speaker Series

This series hosts presentations on professional topics, for an informal platform on business-oriented discussions and networking. The Series is open to all alumni, and other clubs are invited occasionally.

Upcoming Events

26 July – Sendoff of new students – more details will be available soon.

29–31 August – Hike around Les Marécottes and Salvan – please see details on the website.

25 October – Blockbuster event to celebrate the Club's 40th anniversary – details coming soon.

29 November – Thanksgiving gathering – once again this year we will host a fun tradition.

Impressum

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Board

Martin Hahn (President)
Makoto Ikeda (Communications)
Jonathan Claman (Secretary)
Bublu Thakur-Weigold (Events)
Nicolas Haenni (Treasurer)
Hans Hagenbuch (Auditor)
Frédéric Chambour (Deputy Auditor)

Alumni statistics (as of June 2014)

There are 430 alumni in Switzerland
20% have degrees in Management
12% in Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
76% are graduate degree holders
(Please contact us by email if you'd like more details)