

My Political Cookie

Nathan Pallo '11, East Campus President

The M&M duo will be the amplifier for our student voice, the catalyst that encourages the growth of an improved student-administration relationship, and the force that accelerates the UA's already growing progressive agenda. But regardless of how many course related metaphors I use to describe them, Mike and Maggie really are great candidates for UA P/VP. Mike has shown that he will vehemently defend students' rights and interests in the face of an often stubborn administration, while remaining open minded to new solutions to the issues we face. Maggie has demonstrated a drive to improve student involvement and transparency within our own dorm government as former Vice President of East Campus, and she will bring this same spirit and energy to the UA. Together, these two make a competent and complementary pair that will lead the UA in the following year.

Andrew's New Furry Fish

Nate Pallo

Well...it's more of a sea kitten. Andrew got a new fish. It likes pointing downward and eating noms. The blue fish like chasing it. It has perpetual seizures. But it's living free and truly loving life - though it would like to have more company. Maybe someday Andrew will saturate his tank.

Ask Dr. Dice

Dr. Dice

Q: What is the Glomar Explorer?

A: The Glomar Explorer is but one of the reasons ocean engineering kicks the ass of mechanical, electrical, computer and aero/astro engineering.

To fully understand the Hughes Glomar Explorer, we must go back to the start. On March 8, 1968, the Soviet ballistic missile submarine K-129 sank northwest of Oahu. K-129 was a Golf II class sub, over 300 feet long and displacing 2700 tons. It also carried a complement of Soviet naval cryptographic equipment and a payload of SS-N-5 SERB nuclear missiles. While there are many theories regarding the cause of the explosion, the most popular theories are an accident while snorkeling to recharge the batteries, or an explosion caused by insufficient venting of hydrogen gas produced when the batteries recharge.

Regardless of the cause, on March 8, the US navy SOSUS sonar arrays picked up an explosion, and dispatched the

USS Halibut (SSGN-587) to investigate. The Halibut located the wreck in August 1968, under 16,000 feet of water. Over 20,000 close-up photos of the wreck were taken, supposedly with the assistance of the bathyscaphe Trieste II. Based upon this information, in 1970, the US government and the CIA opened Project Jennifer.

Project Jennifer was an attempt to recover the intact front half of K-129 off the ocean floor. To do so would require a new type of vessel, as no salvage this deep had ever been attempted. In addition, the vessel would have to be build for a civilian, for civilian reasons. To that end, the CIA approached Howard Hughes with a secret contract. The 63,000 ton, 619 foot long Hughes Glomar Explorer was to be constructed, nominally for the Summa Corporation to mine underwater manganese nodules. To make the cover story even deeper, Hughes and the government created a media flurry around the idea of underwater mining, eventually leading to a dedicated UN treaty that has almost never been used, as almost no companies have tried underwater mining.

To protect the operation from other vessels, spy planes and satellites, the entire operation was to be done inside the ship, around a massive hole through the hull where K-129 would be held for transport.. The recovery would be performed by a giant claw at the end of a metal rod: stored in 60-foot sections, the rod would be lowered 60 feet, a new section would be attached, and the rod would be lowered again, repeating the process for over 16,000 feet. While this system was notoriously unreliable, it did have some advantages, mostly related to the control over the submarine's position during lifting.

However, the unreliability of the mechanism would prove the undoing of project Jennifer. While partially lifted, approximately half of the section held by the claw broke off and fell to the ocean floor again. Officially, the section that broke off contained all the ballistic missiles and cryptographic equipment, though some theorists dispute this claim. All was not lost though, as the recovered section contained several nuclear torpedoes.

In the time since, there have been repeated moves to mothball the Explorer, which is now serving as a deep-sea oil drilling platform. It will always live on, however, as an example of how large a conspiracy can get without any public knowledge.

If you have a question for the doctor, email ask-dr-dice@mit.edu.

Musical Challenge!

Samantha Palazzolo

Email the title of the following song to sampp@mit.edu and *possibly* win a prize!

The image displays a musical score for piano accompaniment, organized into three systems. Each system consists of three staves: two treble clefs and one bass clef. The time signature is common time (C). The first system shows the initial four measures, with the bass line starting with a quarter rest followed by eighth notes. The second system continues the piece with more complex melodic lines in the treble and bass. The third system concludes the piece with a final melodic flourish in the treble and a bass line ending with a quarter rest.