

Faculty rejects CEP proposals

Opts for no action on overcrowding; opposes restricting EECS enrollment

By Robert E. Malchman

The faculty at a special meeting yesterday rejected by a two-thirds majority a proposal that would have restricted some entering freshmen from majoring in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

The faculty earlier in the meeting voted to consider that motion instead of one more strongly recommended by the Committee on Educational Policy. The committee's preferred proposal would have required members of the Class of 1988 desiring to major in Course VI to submit an application and pass an examination.

The Committee on Educational Policy does not like either proposal, said its chairman, Professor of Electrical Engineering Arthur C. Smith.

"When I became chairman of the faculty," Smith said, "I had a dream of presenting a program of great educational merit to the faculty. . . .

"I find myself presenting a motion . . . that leaves a lot to be desired," he said.

The first option is the least damaging, according to the committee's report. An application and examination testing "basic preparation, not degree of sophistication," would give students more time to consider career choices.

The plan would not pressure freshmen as would an evaluation of their first-year performance, the report states.

Anthony P. French, professor of mathematics, said he opposes any action that would create a "two-class" system at MIT.

Frank E. Perkins '55, dean of the graduate school, said there is no way to eliminate freshman performance from the application procedure. Students could "find a mechanism" to include their performances in the essay, he said.

"Option one is thoroughly unacceptable," French declared. "I can't imagine a test that satisfies" the report's conditions. He supported a modified version of the second option, but urged the fac-

ulty to take more time to consider the problem.

He suggested a biased admissions process favoring a more balanced class as a better solution.

Admissions bias discussed

Felix M. H. Villars, professor of physics, said emphasizing verbal skills through that section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test would be better than biasing admissions away from students interested in Course VI.

Director of Admissions Peter H. Richardson '48 said he is "distressed by the focus" on Scholastic Aptitude Test scores. His office considers the entire scholastic record, and would have difficulty implementing Villars' suggestion, he said.

Jerome Y. Lettvin '47, professor of electrical bioengineering and communications physiology, said the first option contravenes the spirit of the freshman year. "The first year should be kept inviolate," he said. The faculty should hold the examination after the first term of the sophomore year, he continued.

Smith replied that prolonging students' uncertainty would be too high a cost for Lettvin's suggestion.

"Fantastical" solutions

Professor Joel Moses PhD '67, head of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, said the first option would entail denying between 100 and 200 students entrance to Course VI. Those students would have difficulty transferring to another school because of the nationwide popularity of electrical engineering and computer science, he said.

Moses moved that the faculty consider the second option, to limit Course VI majors at the admissions level. The proposal has the overwhelming support of Course VI faculty, he said.

Joseph J. Romm G, a student member of the Committee on Educational Policy, said the sec-

ond proposal would institute a "four-year class system."

William S. Widnall '59, associate professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics, said that proposal is superior because a high school senior would have the choice of applying to another school.

Stephen D. Senturia '66, professor of electrical engineering, said, "Trying to apply a filtering function without pressuring the filteree . . . is fantastical."

High school students do not know enough about the subjects of electrical engineering and computer science to make an informed decision on whether they wish to be excluded from the department, Senturia continued. "They see [the subjects] in narrow terms."

Fairness question raised

Richardson said his office has been telling applicants they would have freedom to choose their majors. It would be unfair to change the policy so late, he said.

"Option one, even with the uncertainty, is fair to those students we've been talking to for a long time."

The faculty then voted 180 to 34 accept Moses' motion, replac-

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Tech photo by Henry Wu
Professor Joel Moses PhD '67, head of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

Analysis

EECS faces troubled future

By Burt S. Kaliski

The MIT faculty, faced with two uncomfortable immediate solutions for enrollment pressures, has decided to avoid both and to allow problems in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science to continue until long-term solutions are found.

Had the faculty decided to require freshmen wishing to enter the department pass an examination, it would have moved away from free selection of majors at MIT. That solution would likely have increased academic pressure

during the already overloaded freshman year.

If the faculty had decided to admit some applicants on the condition they not enroll in the department, the Institute may have created a segregated undergraduate population.

The faculty's decision not to invoke short-term solutions to crowding in the department, however, will strain the department's resources even further in coming years. Even immediate action would not have affected enrollment until fall of 1985, and longer-term actions will not be noticed until the end of the decade.

The faculty held yesterday's meeting so that any decision on departmental selection could be communicated to the applicants to the Class of 1988 with early action letters of acceptance. Any changes made after those letters are sent would only affect future classes.

The questionable fairness of changing policy near the end of the application process was a important consideration for the faculty. There will be no such question when it will next consider what action to take in February for the Class of 1989.

The faculty is now faced with selecting a long-term solution to reduce crowding in the department and in the School of Engineering as a whole. It will have to choose wisely among the long-range actions listed by the Committee on Educational Policy.

The actions include departing from the Institute's image as a

science and engineering school, and creating new subjects and degree programs to draw students away from the department.

Dangers of overcrowding

The Committee on Educational Policy claims enrollment problems, if not addressed, "seriously jeopardize the intellectual balance at MIT and the diversity of interests within the group of students who choose to study here."

Requiring either a departmental entrance examination or restricting admission to that department would have contradicted Institute policy on course selection.

The 1983-84 issue of the MIT Bulletin states, "... every student should be prepared to examine with an open mind the various Courses at the Institute." Either proposal would have restricted the extent to which students could examine different majors.

Gray has called a restriction on enrollment during admission "a drastic departure from what we have done," but admitted, "It's the only way we can stand a chance of putting a ceiling" on enrollment in the department.

Most faculty members attending a previous meeting opposed suggestions that the Institute admit students to MIT while simultaneously requiring they not enroll in the department.

Increased interest in the department is apparently a result of the booming high-technology job market. Students are also choosing to major in the department

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Professor Arthur C. Smith, chairman of the faculty.

Tech photo by Henry Wu

Opinion

Editorial

Hamlet's choice remains

The MIT faculty, after rejecting immediate solutions to reduce enrollment in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, must now vigorously pursue long-range methods to control overcrowding.

An imbalance in enrollment affects all undergraduates at the Institute. The Committee on Educational Policy has correctly identified this, and has recommended several long-term and short-term solutions to the problem. The committee also listed immediate solutions to avoid "a residual short-term problem."

The option rejected by the faculty was, after emendation, better than the one recommended by the Committee on Educational Policy and was the best choice of a bad lot. The proposal called for prospective students to declare on their application whether they wish to be considered for admission to Course VI. Interest in the department would not negatively bias a candidate's chances. After accepting the applicant, MIT would decide whether he could major in Course VI, and so inform him before he accepted.

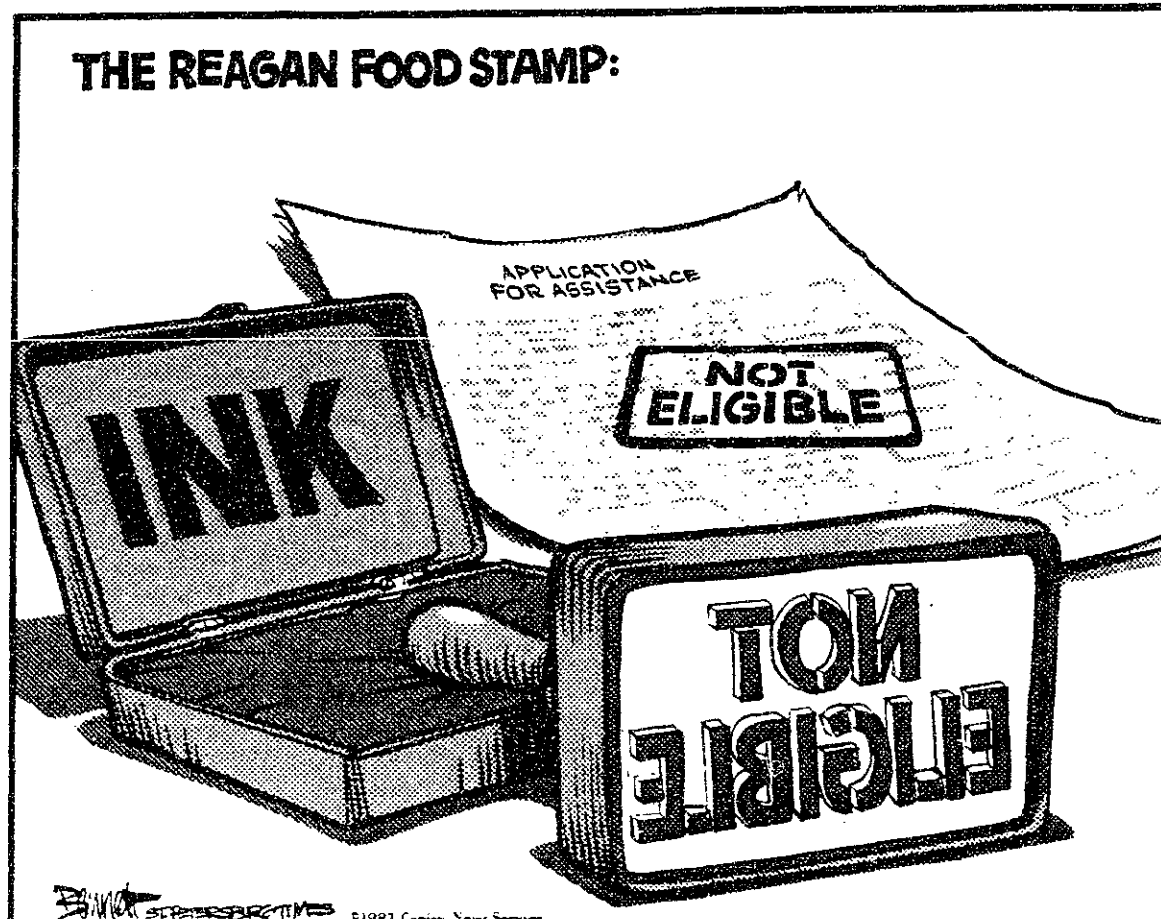
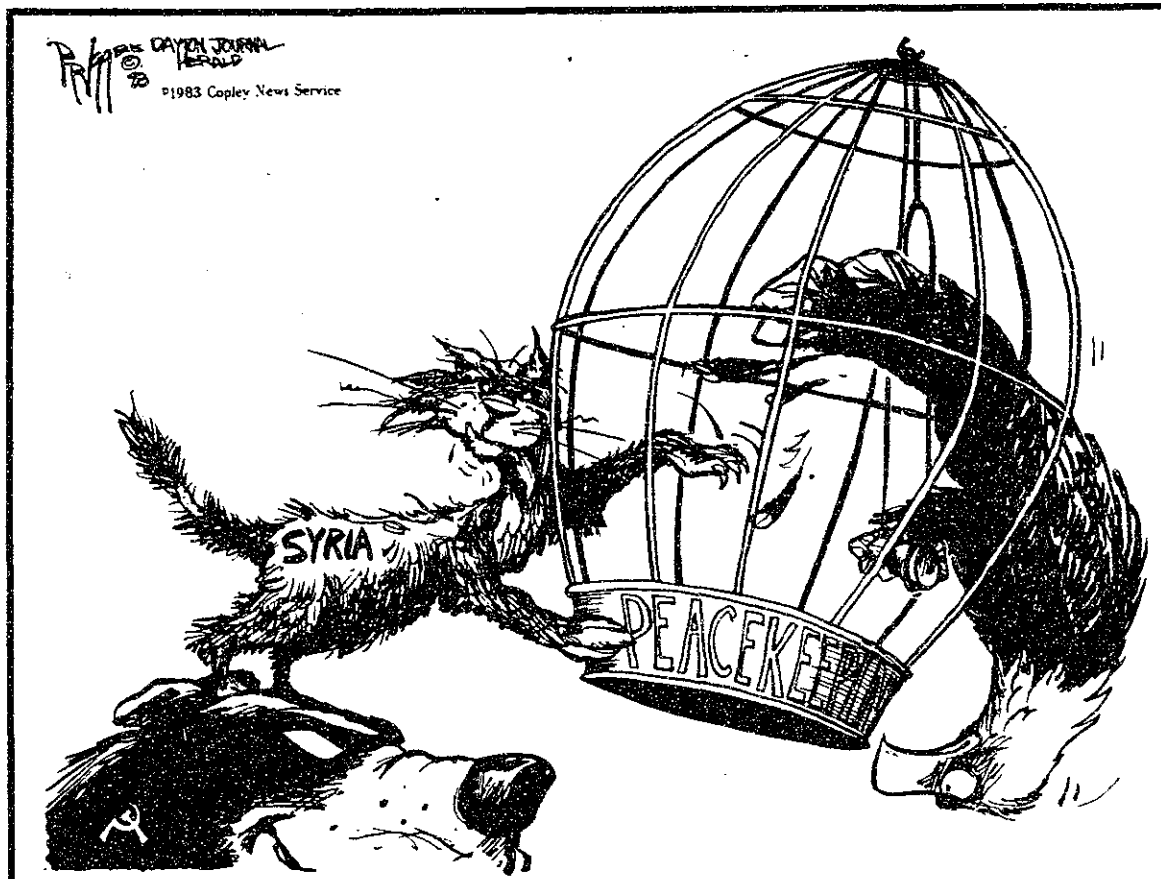
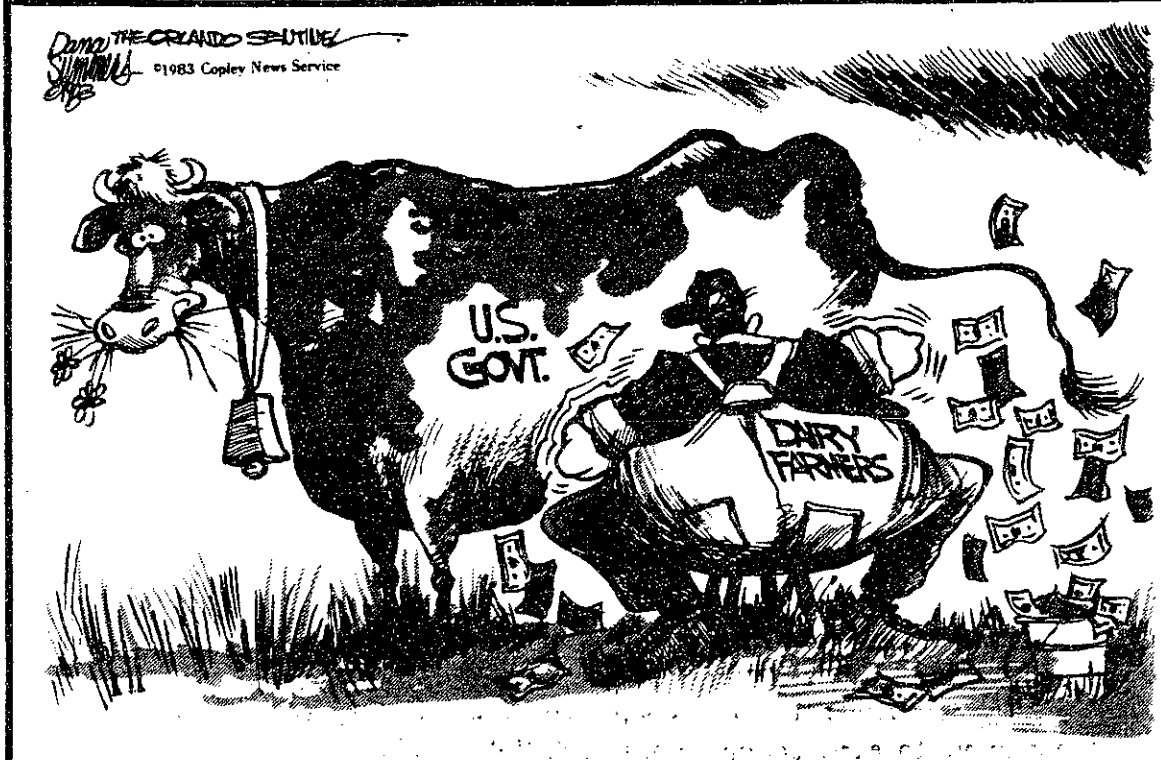
The faculty has not acted on those immediate solutions, and the department faces an increasingly difficult future. The decision to postpone solution of the problem indicates the faculty's unwillingness to act without complete study.

Every action the faculty could have taken yesterday had serious drawbacks. Its members were faced with Hamlet's choice: to bear the ills it has, or to fly to others it knew not of. The consequences of refusing to accept an immediate solution are distressing, but the faculty cannot be castigated for choosing a known evil rather than chancing an unknown one.

That known evil is continued overcrowding in Course VI. It strains both the department's human and physical resources. It detracts from the department's ability to teach and will ultimately result in an education inferior to what the student deserves.

The Committee on Educational Policy and the faculty must act soon. Chairman of the Faculty Arthur C. Smith said the faculty would have to act before March if applicants for the Class of 1989 are to be informed from the outset.

The long-term solutions, although they would not take effect until the end of the decade, would not threaten the undergraduate experience nearly as much as the immediate solutions would have. MIT should not delay enacting these procedures, especially the solution recommending MIT broaden its image "to encourage students' interests in fields outside Course VI." MIT cannot afford to become solely an institute of technology, much less one of electrical engineering and computer science.



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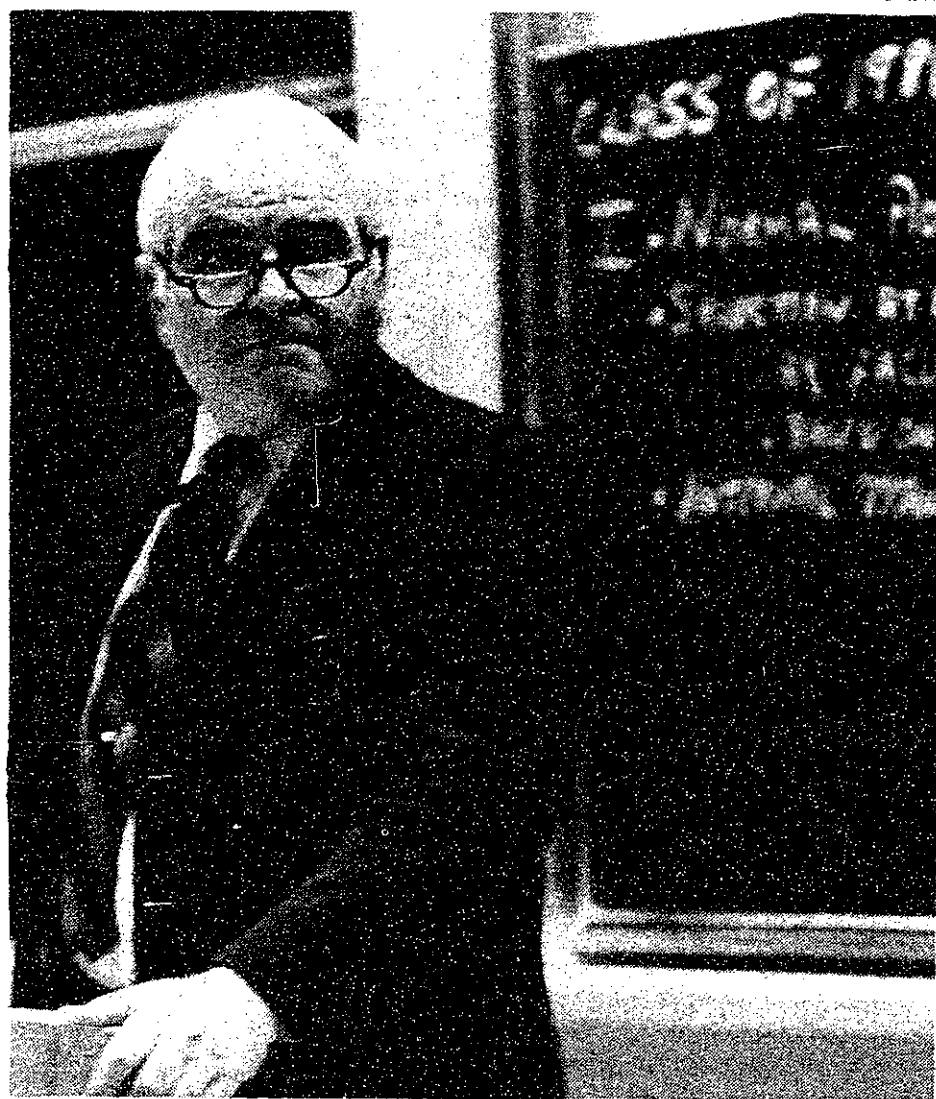
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Tech photo by Henry Wu

President Paul E. Gray '54 presides at the special faculty meeting yesterday.

No action on EECS for Class of 1988

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ing the Committee on Educational Policy's preferred proposal.

William McC. Siebert '46, professor of electrical engineering, moved to change the proposal so that declaring a desire for Course VI consideration would not diminish an applicant's chances for admission. The change would ease, among other things, Richardson's job, Siebert said.

Richardson agreed, but noted that if passed, the proposal would not apply to early action applicants, who receive letters of acceptance this week.

The Committee on Educational Policy opposed such a change in its report because applicants, with nothing to lose, would ask for Course VI consideration. Many would then be denied that option, creating a "class structure at admissions [that was] unsatisfactory," the report stated.

The amendment passed narrowly, 99 to 90.

Wilson cites dangers

Gerald L. Wilson '61, dean of the School of Engineering, said if the faculty did nothing, Course VI would have to limit enrollment in some of its classes. The

department has taken such measures on a small scale already, he said.

Course VI faculty members have no time to plan research or to write textbooks, Wilson asserted. The department may have to eliminate the thesis requirement because the faculty cannot supervise so many students.

The department would require 30 faculty and a \$1.8 million budget increase to teach students adequately if the faculty chose not to act, Wilson said.

The faculty then rejected the motion, 131 to 67.

The fairness question may have unduly influenced some members, Smith said. "There are a lot of [faculty members] who don't know how admissions works. . . . The fairness question made it easier" for the faculty to reject the proposal, Smith said.

"The committee will meet on Thursday," Smith said. "I would like to come back [before the faculty with a proposal] in February."

Moses declined to comment after the meeting on the faculty's action.

Members will meet again on Dec. 21 at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting.

Troubled future follows troubled past for EECS

(Continued from page 1)

much earlier than in the past; the high freshman enrollment last term in Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs (6,001) is evidence.

Felix M. H. Villars, professor of physics, said at a November faculty meeting that students should have more time to choose a major, and MIT should develop stronger support for sophomore year curriculum.

The department has already shown ominous signs of exceeding its capacity: It eliminated 141 freshmen from the required core subject 6.001 last term, and permitted only a handful of sophomores to take a required computer science class this term.

Members of the department have often said the department can handle only 250 new majors each year. President Paul E. Gray '54 has estimated, however, that 450 members of the Class of 1987 will enroll in the department next year.

Course VI has long been aware of an unhealthy increase in enrollment, but the Institute has not often acted. While the Institute welcomed an increase in engineering enrollment 10 years ago, the department warned of future crowding.

"While our faculty could probably teach more graduate students in the classroom, their graduate thesis supervision load cannot be increased significantly," the department wrote in the 1974-75 *Report of the President and the Chancellor*.

The department also consistently underestimated the enrollment trend at the time. Its report for 1975-76 admits: "Past projections of increased undergraduate enrollment in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science have proven to be very inaccurate since the year-to-year increase was roughly twice our estimate, the current figure being about 850 students against an estimate of 800."

news roundup

World

Kuwait bombings leave seven dead — Six bombs exploded Monday in Kuwait, killing seven and injuring 62. In an incident similar to the bombing of US Marine barracks in Lebanon last month, a truck loaded with explosives smashed through the gate of the United States Embassy compound. One of the two terrorists on the truck and five Kuwaiti embassy employees died. Five remote-controlled car bombs were also detonated in separate areas of the city, killing one person. A sixth car bomb was defused before it exploded. No Americans were killed, but several received minor injuries. A group known as Islamic Holy War claimed responsibility for the attacks. President Ronald Reagan has warned Iranian officials to curb terrorists believed to be acting on that nation's behalf.

KAL flight 007 report released — A report on the shooting down of a Korean Air Lines Boeing 747 released yesterday says that the jet's crew had turned on the automatic navigation system, and was not aware that the plane had drifted off course and into Soviet airspace or that Soviet fighter planes were tailing them. The International Civil Aviation Agency, which released the preliminary report, says the report would have been more complete with Soviet cooperation, and stresses that the KAL jet was not on a secret spy mission. Issuance of a final report is delayed until next month to permit Soviet input.

Military rule in Argentina ends — Raul Ricardo Alfonsin was inaugurated 45th president of Argentina in Buenos Aires Sunday, marking the end of almost eight years of military dictatorship in the country. The inauguration was accompanied by celebrations with more than 100,000 Argentines showing their support in the streets. The new president is a leader of the center-left Radical Civic Union, which defeated the Peronist party in Oct. 30 elections.

General assumes presidency of Bangladesh — Lieut. Gen. Hussain Mohammed Ershad, head of the military government of Bangladesh, proclaimed himself president Monday after dissolving his cabinet. The 53-year-old general came to power after a nonviolent coup in 1982. The move is seen as an attempt to consolidate his power before the proposed May presidential elections in which Ershad intends to run.

American schoolchildren flunk international test — A standardized test given to more than 600 sixth-graders in eight countries indicates that United States schoolchildren are among the worst mathematicians in the industrialized world. American children finished last on the math test, achieving only half the score garnered by the first-place Japanese. The US sixth-graders were sixth in science and fourth in geography; Swedish students finished in first place on both tests. More than one-fifth of the students at one Dallas elementary school could not locate the United States on a map of the world.

Nation

Long Island recruiting station bombed — No injuries were reported as two bombs exploded at an East Meadow, N.Y., Navy recruiting station yesterday. A group protesting US military intervention in Central America reportedly planted the bombs, each equivalent to 10 sticks of dynamite.

Louisiana inmate executed, Georgia inmate reprieved — Convicted murderer Robert Wayne Williams died in Louisiana's electric chair this morning after the Supreme Court refused to issue an eleventh-hour stay of execution. The high court did grant Georgia death-row inmate Alpha Otis Stephens, also convicted of murder, a temporary reprieve from his execution originally scheduled for today.

Grenada forces return home — The last 1000 US combat soldiers who took part in last month's invasion of Grenada flew home Monday to Fort Bragg, N.C. Another 1000 support personnel will return to the United States by the end of the week, leaving only about 300 noncombatant military personnel on the Caribbean island nation.

Supreme Court will not hear "Baby Jane Doe" case — The Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal in the "Baby Jane Doe" case, letting stand a New York state court decision allowing the girl's parents to withhold life-prolonging surgery which would have enabled the girl to live until the age of 20, but with multiple handicaps. She is expected to live only two years without the surgery.

Nationwide drinking age proposed — A special presidential commission on drunken driving has proposed the enactment of a nationwide legal drinking age of 21. States which fail to raise their drinking age would lose federal highway funds under this proposal. Currently, 28 states allow people 20 years old and younger to drink legally.

Tractor tour tickles terminal tot — Will Vincent, a terminally ill 4-year-old, got his "last wish" with a tour of John Deere Tractor Works this month. His favorite toy is a model John Deere truck. The boy, who suffers from leukemia and a brain tumor, was given a ride on the biggest tractor made by Deere and was allowed to sit at a wheel of a smaller tractor. "Will eats, sleeps and breathes John Deere tractors—he just loves this," his father said.

Local

Arms protesters arrested — Boston police arrested 70 demonstrators Monday while attempting to block entry to a missile-marketing conference held at Boston's Park 57 Plaza hotel. Several of the approximately 400 protesters managed to gain entry to the hotel, where they put up antinuclear posters and chained themselves to an elevator. One woman poured a red liquid she claimed was blood over a podium in the hotel's conference room.

Boston teacher strike unlikely — The executive board of the Boston Teachers' Union has recommended its members reject a one-day walkout planned for Thursday, saying that progress is being made on contract negotiations. The board did not rule out the possibility of a future job action. Union members can still vote to overrule the recommendation not to strike. Boston School Superintendent Robert Spillane said schools would remain open in the event of a strike.

Steve's Ice Cream goes nationwide — Integrated Resources purchased Steve's Ice Cream Monday from Joey Crugnale for an undisclosed amount of cash. Integrated plans to open 500 stores across the country. Steve's was founded by Steve Herrell, who sold both his business and his name to Joey, founder of Joey's Ice Cream. Steve had to stay out of the ice cream business for three years, after which he opened Herrell's Ice Cream which now competes with Steve's, formerly owned by Joey. Gus Rancantore, founder and owner of Toscanini's Ice Cream, used to work for Steve when Steve owned Steve's, but could not be reached for comment.

Sports

Patriots still in playoff hunt — The New England Patriots are still in the running for the remaining National Football League American Conference wild-card slot, but must beat the Seattle Seahawks Sunday to earn a spot in post-season play. The Seahawks, Cleveland Browns, and Buffalo Bills are also in contention for the remaining AFC wild-card berth; the Miami Dolphins, Pittsburgh Steelers, Los Angeles Raiders and Denver Broncos have already clinched playoff spots. In the National Conference, the Washington Redskins and the Cowboys are assured of post-season action; the Detroit Lions, Green Bay Packers, San Francisco 49ers, Los Angeles Rams and New Orleans Saints will battle it out for the remaining three positions.

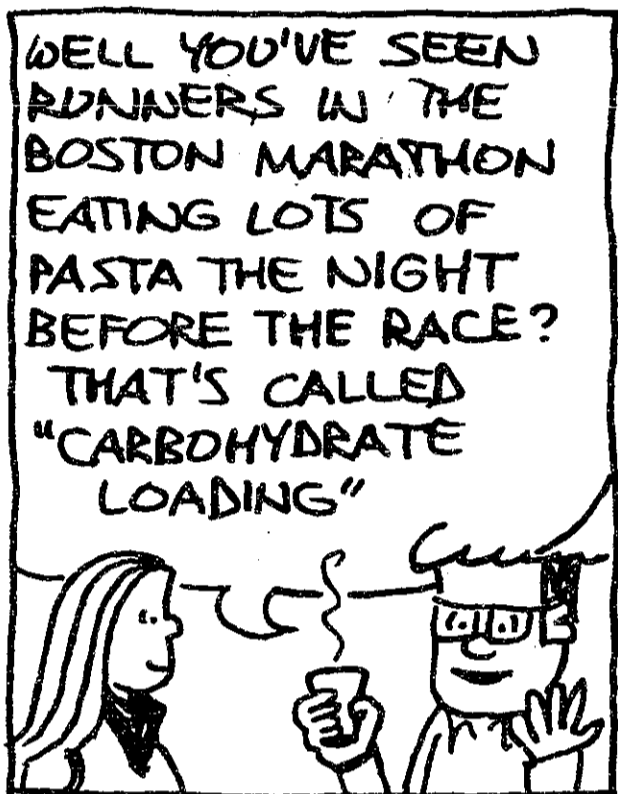
Pistons, Nuggets run and gun — The Detroit Pistons defeated the Denver Nuggets 186-184 in triple overtime action last night to set new scoring records for the National Basketball Association. The Boston Celtics had held the previous high score of 173.

Weather

Damp and dreary — Cloudy and wet conditions will continue through this evening with a chance of off-and-on drizzle and fog; highs in the upper 40s to lower 50s. Rain will become heavier tonight and continue through tomorrow. Lows tonight will be in the mid-to-upper 40s and highs tomorrow will be in the mid-to-upper 50s. Flooding of poor drainage areas is expected to continue.

Drew Blakeman and Paul Duchnowski

comics



Stickles
By Geoff Baskir

No wonder the pay is so lousy, the benefits are so great.

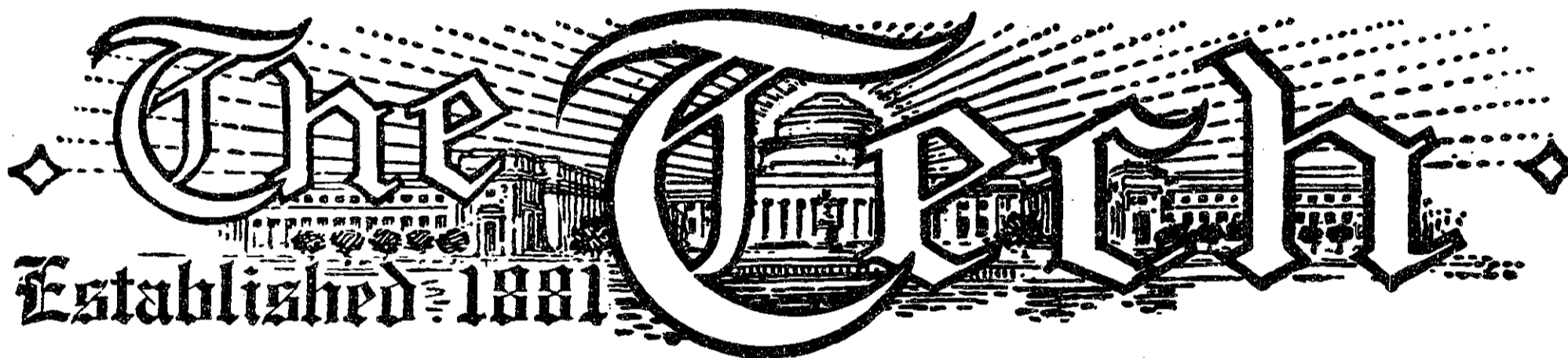
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