

## 64 percent pass writing exam

By Marcia Smith

Of the 651 freshmen who took the freshmen essay evaluation, 64 percent passed or marginally passed, and 36 percent failed. Seven percent fewer freshmen failed last year's exam.

Students can receive three different grades. The 173 students who passed complete Phase I of the Institute writing requirement, as do the 242 students who marginally passed. The 236 students who failed the exam must either

pass a writing course or turn in an acceptable paper from another class.

Students can also satisfy Phase I by scoring 750 or more on the English Composition (essay test version) Achievement Test. This year 14 students passed the requirement this way.

Those who did not take the rush week tests can elect to take a similar test Oct. 15. The Writing Program added the later test date to help alleviate the pressure the

freshmen feel during R/O week.

"I figured [the freshmen] needed a few weeks to get organized and settled, but I didn't want it so late that they'd be overloaded with problem sets," explained Bonnie J. Walters, chairman of the Committee on the Writing Requirement.

Based on test date preference cards the students filled out, Walters expects around 75 people to take the exam on the new date.

Last year 970 students took the rush week exams, 319 more than this year. Last year's freshman class had about 80 more students.

Walters noted that the smaller number taking this year's test might have been caused by either students opting for the later test date or a conflict some freshmen had with swim test times.

Two sessions were held, on Tuesday Sept. 2 and Friday Sept. 5. About 250 students elected to take the first evaluation, and 400 (Please turn to page 2)



Isaac Chuang

Harold "Doc" Edgerton '15 gives his annual lecture Wednesday.

### Freshman Essay Evaluation

	Pass	Marginal	Fail
1984:	19%	45%	36%
1985:	30%	41%	29%
1986:	26%	37%	36%



## OCS establishes minority program

By Marcia Smith

The Office of Career Services has begun a new program to help minority students find summer jobs called the Practical Experience Program. Ann Davis Shaw, who worked at Simmons for 14 years before coming to MIT this summer, will direct the program.

"It's best described as an expansion of the Second Summer Program," Shaw said. "It offers jobs in all different fields, not just engineering, and it's open to students of all years, including graduate students." Also if a person wants to take fall or spring term off, Shaw will help the person get a job during those months.

In addition, unlike Second Summer, students do not have to meet any requirements. No one will be turned away, she added. The student merely has to make an appointment with Shaw, who will help the person write a re-

sumé if needed.

Shaw and the student will then discuss the student's career goals, interests, and limits, decide on the possible options, and set up interviews with the employers. Shaw keeps in touch to find out how everything is going, and to guide the student in making a choice for summer employment.

Shaw has been visiting and corresponding with many potential employers, discussing what jobs are offered, what qualities and experience the students should have, and what benefits the student should expect while working there. She hopes to place all students who apply, including any Harvard or Wellesley students.

Shaw hopes the students who get jobs will return and report about whether or not they liked their jobs. She "envision[s] students coming back to talk about the good points and potential

## Omniturf to cover practice fields

By Jai Young Kim

A sand-filled artificial surface known as "Omniturf" will soon cover the area of Briggs Field between Steinbrenner Stadium and the du Pont Tennis Courts, according to Roger Crosley, MIT sports information director.

Project Construction Coordinator John Barbado anticipates the turf will be in service by the second week of October, fol-

lowed by a ten day period of brushing and watering. problems, and perhaps giving presentations and/or discussions to other students interested in the same employer for the next summer.

Interested students can look for the weekly posters of what companies will be at MIT, or call the Office of Career Services to have their names put on a mailing list or make an appointment with Shaw.

## Abt discusses his chances in 8th

By Joel H. Friedman

Clark C. Abt '51, Republican candidate for the Massachusetts 8th Congressional District seat, spoke before 30 students at MIT Tuesday night to muster support for his upcoming race against Democrat Joseph P. Kennedy II. The talk was sponsored by the MIT Republican Club.

"I believe that I have prepared for the job of representing you in Congress for about 30 years now," Abt began. He cited his experience doing research and development studies for federal government agencies, including the departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Transportation, and Defense. He also founded Abt Associates, an economic research center in Cambridge.

"Very few congressmen, possibly none... have my set of experiences in technology, in enterprise development, and in overall economic and social problem solving," Abt claimed.

With the proper representation, the 8th CD can obtain an estimated \$5-10 billion of potential public and private investments available to the area, Abt asserted. This could be used for improvements in transportation, housing, and education, he said.

Abt suggested methods to provide more low-cost housing

throughout the area. He proposed modifying the construction of office buildings to allow free space for residency and constructing "courthouse design" structures, which would place housing over empty lots without taking away precious parking

areas. "All of that is pending the arrival of a new congressman," he explained, "who knows what's needed to make effective data-based arguments for it."

Abt charged that Kennedy (Please turn to page 2)

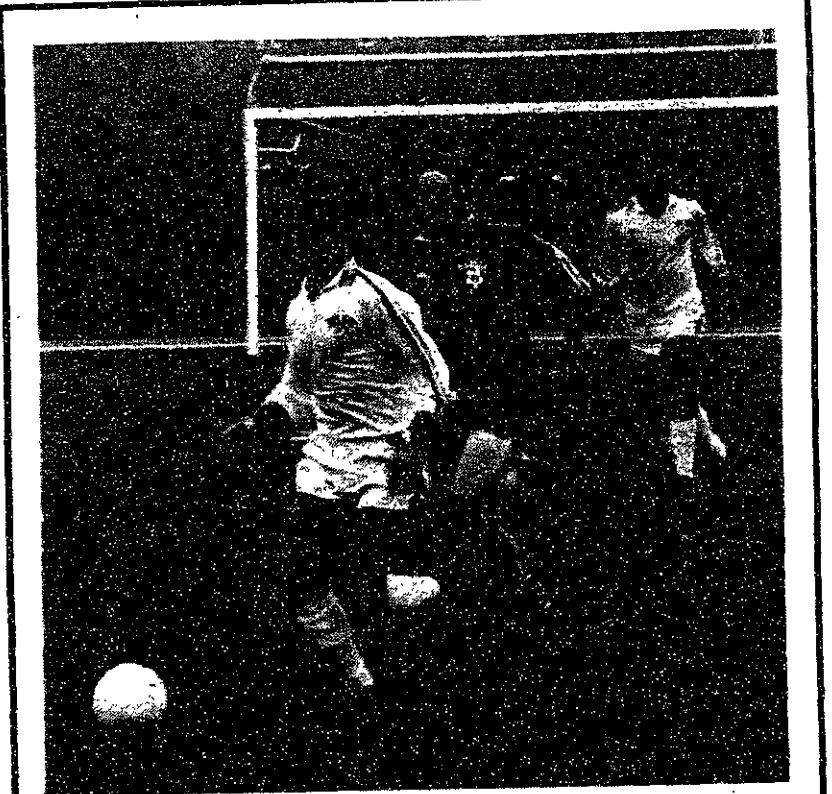
England. "It's going to be a new experience, with a much broader participation use," he said. "I'm convinced that Omniturf is a very desirable athletic and recreational surface."

"With the engineering minds here, you know we don't settle for second best," Crosley added.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute installed Omniturf in 1985, Crosley said, the first place east of the Mississippi to do so. MIT is the second, having begun construction in mid-July.

The new field, slightly less than 100,000 square feet in area, is intended primarily as a practice and intramural facility. The Omniturf "will increase usage of the field by over 30 percent," Crosley said.

Color-coded fibers in the Omniturf mark off a large east-west regulation field for football, soccer (Please turn to page 2)



Jerry Broda

Jesper Otterbeck '87 runs with the ball while Matt Richter '87 follows in Wednesday's soccer game against Babson. MIT lost the game 0-1.

## inside

You've gotta see "The Knee Plays" at Loeb. Page 9.

\* \* \* \* \*  
"night, Mother" depicts life of suicidal woman. Page 9.

(Please turn to page 6)

# MIT lays new Omniturf

(Continued from page 1)  
cer, field hockey, and lacrosse, overlapped by three intramural fields placed side by side, running north-south. Two softball diamonds and backstops are also planned.

Supervisor of Intramurals David Michael explained, "With the more extensive programming, we'll have more options, particularly in bad weather. We're going to make the most we can make of it."

Students transitting between dormitories and classes will still be allowed to cut across the field.

Both Flippin and Crosley see the new field as an aesthetic addition. The Omniturf "will provide another showpiece of the athletic facilities here," Crosley elaborated.

"MIT has made student involvement and student recreation a high priority, and this is just another example of that commitment," he said.

## Fewer frosh take R/O Week writing tests

(Continued from page 1)  
took the second. The 651 included about 60 freshmen who took the English as a Second Language test which included the essays.

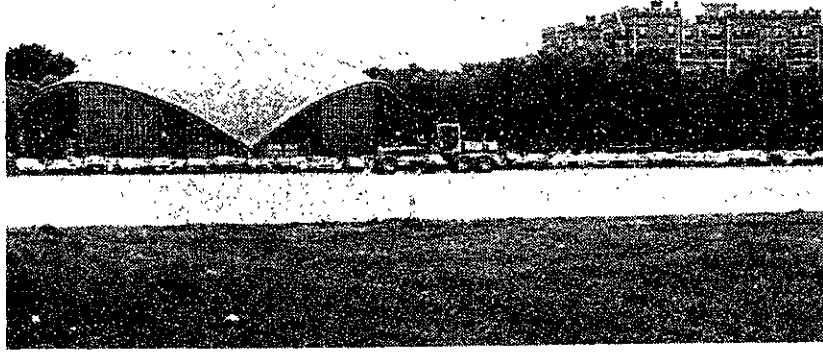
The students were given three hours to plan, organize, and write a 500 word essay on one of the following topics: a "light-bulb" experience, students' responsibility to the homeless, what one expects from MIT, one's opinion about SDI, a student's suspension for "lewd, vulgar, and obscene language," or an opinion about the script of a television series about the life of Peter the Great.

Throughout the four years, the essay evaluation has been through some minor changes, but Walters sees no major changes in store until there is more data to consider.

"The Class of '87 is the first to complete both phases of the writing requirement," Walters elaborated. "There have only been four years of Phase I and this is the first year for Phase II. We'll have to wait a few more cycles to have enough data to justify major changes."


Walter estimated 600-800 seniors have not yet completed Phase II. The deadline for turning in papers for Phase II by students expecting to graduate in June, 1987, has been set as March 1.

The writing requirement is an Institute requirement, Walters stressed. Completion of both phases of the requirement is necessary in order to graduate. Last year a student who had not completed both phases of the program was not allowed to graduate.



Mike Niles  
An asphalt layer is spread before the omniturf is laid on Briggs Field.

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# news roundup

from the associated press wire

## World

### Shevardnadze addresses UN

Foreign Minister Edward A. Shevardnadze said Tuesday that a summit meeting between the United States and the Soviet Union was now "a realistic possibility." In an address of the General Assembly of the United Nations, he said, "Encouraging outlines of meaningful agreements have been emerging lately."

Shevardnadze later told reporters that he had proposed ways of resolving the problem of Nicholas S. Daniloff, the US journalist accused of espionage in the Soviet Union. "There are good chances for solving this problem," he said. "I have made all my proposals. My conscience is clear. These are serious and regular discussions. And the less noise there is, the better for all because wiser decisions are made in a quiet and calm atmosphere." (*The New York Times*)

### Israel raids Lebanon

Israeli jets bombed Palestinian positions in the Lebanese mountains overlooking Beirut. Guerrillas from hard-line Palestinian groups are known to have been living in the district of Aleih. The attack came one day after the Israeli Army was reported to have massed troops and armour along Lebanon's southern border.

Israeli military analysts said pressure was building on the Israeli Army to attack an Iranian-backed Shiite militia involved in attacks on Israeli, United Nations and Christian militia forces in southern Lebanon.

Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli foreign minister, said hours after the strike that Israel has no plans for a new invasion of Lebanon. He called the raids necessary measures. "There is a constant effort of the Palestinian terrorist organizations to increase their presence and their forces in Lebanon," he said. "They would like to renew the situation prevailing before 1982, and we have to prevent it." (*The New York Times*)

### British alliance setback on nukes

The British Liberal Party repudiated the stand of party leader David Steel on nuclear weapons on Tuesday. The decision came by a narrow margin in a vote of the Liberal Assembly, the party's top policy-making body. Steel had made concessions to the policies of the Social Democratic Party, which opposes unilateral British disarmament. The move appears to have thrown the Liberal-Social Democratic alliance into disarray.

Steel and the SDP leader, David Owen, had suggested the idea of nuclear cooperation with France to establish a "minimum European deterrent." They argued that this would be less expensive and require less reliance on the United States.

The nuclear issue is likely to be important in the next general election, expected sometime next year, because the opposition Labour Party has committed itself to decommissioning the Polaris nuclear submarines and rejecting the US cruise missiles based at two sites in England. Many political observers feel that the centrist alliance may hold the balance of power after a general election. (*The New York Times*)

## Nation

### Reagan announces he will veto South Africa sanctions

The White House has announced that President Reagan will veto legislation toughening sanctions against South Africa today. Spokesman Larry Speakes admitted that it will be hard to get enough votes to sustain the veto. The Senate voted 84-14 in favor of the bill, and Reagan would have to carry 34 votes to defeat an override. (AP)

### Nakasone's comments draw fire

At least a dozen congressmen condemned Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone's comments about the United States made this week as racist. Nakasone was quoted as saying, "In the United States, because there are a considerable number of blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans, the [intelligence] level is lower." (*The New York Times*)

### A rose is a rose is our nation's flower

The House of Representatives voted Tuesday to make the rose the national flower of the United States. The senate had already passed a similar resolution last year, and it now goes to President Reagan, who is expected to sign it into law. The House voice vote, coming after a brief discussion, crowned the rose as the "national floral emblem," ending a debate that stretches back to the last century. (*The New York Times*)

### State helps out vanpools

Massachusetts officials have announced a \$250,000 program to promote the use of vanpools on the crowded Route 128 corridor. The state will contribute \$300 per month towards the cost of the vanpool. The program is open to any group of 8-10 people who start a new vanpool to commute to the Route 128 area. Executive Director Carolyn Dimambro says the vanpool would represent a 75 percent savings for riders. (AP)

## Sports

### Yankees, Jays magic numbers at 21

The New York Yankees and Toronto Blue Jays' magic numbers stood at 21 before last night's play. They both have records of 82-69, so if they win all of their remaining 11 games, they will finish two games ahead of Boston. That is, if the Red Sox lose all of their remaining games. (AP)

### Scott no-hitter slams the door on the rest of the NE West

The Houston Astros clinched the title in the National League West with authority last night. Mike Scott pitched a no-hitter against the San Francisco Giants, winning 2-0. Scott struck out 13, bringing his major league-leading total to 298. (AP)

## Weather

### Play it again. . .

It looks as if this weekend will be almost a repeat performance of last weekend. The stationary front that was lying east-west across Southern New England earlier this week slipped south to give us a sunny day on Thursday. The front will move back to the north Friday, bringing with it clouds and showers. Clearing from the north may occur on Saturday as a central Canadian high builds southward across the Northeastern United States.

**Friday:** Increasing clouds, high 72. Light winds east to southeast.

**Friday night:** Cloudy with showers and fog. Winds southwest. Low 60.

**Saturday:** Cloudy with drizzle, showers, and fog early then cloudy. Breaks in the overcast will develop from northwest to southeast during the afternoon. High 65.

**Sunday:** Partly cloudy. High 65.

Forecast by Michael C. Morgan

Compiled by The Tech news staff

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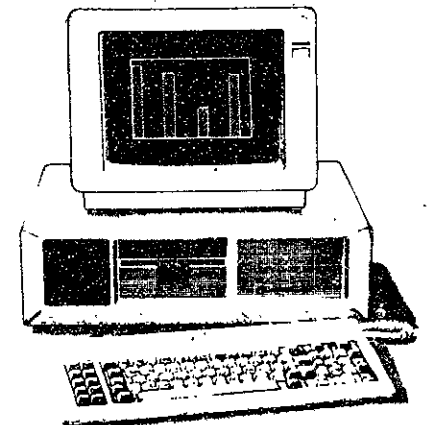
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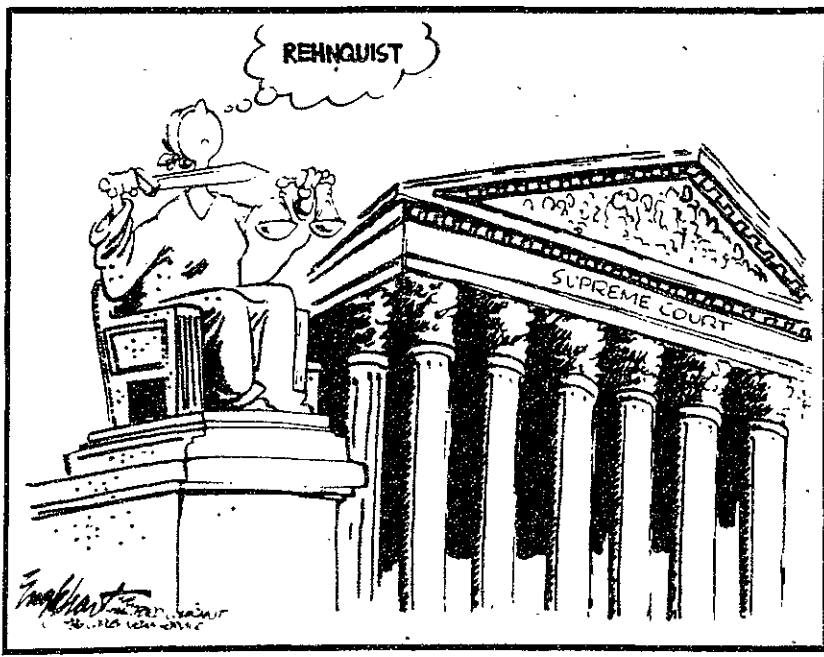
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# opinion



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Guest Column/Steve LeBlanc

## A color that's hard to see

If you plan to attend tonight's Lecture Series Committee movie, you may wonder why it's titled "The Color Purple." After seeing the movie, so did I.

To understand the movie's title you would have to read the novel *The Color Purple* and know something about its author, Alice Walker. Walker is a prolific, black, lesbian-identified author who has been married and has children.

Walker's novel tells the story of a horribly oppressed and abused woman, Celie, who is also married and has children. Her life is changed by the emotional and sexual love of another woman, Shug. The sexual aspect of their love is positive and healing to Celie. It is also essential to understanding Walker's novel. Stephen Spielberg, by removing this homosexual element from his multi-million dollar Hollywood production, has made his movie's title meaningless.

As a gay man, I never wondered why Walker named her

novel *The Color Purple*. Purple has been associated with gay and lesbian people for a very long time. In the underground American gay culture that existed through the 1950s, it was one of a host of widely understood signals that gay people used to identify one another.

"Purple is our color," older lesbians would explain to their younger counterparts. This is according to Judith Grahn, author of *Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds*; and an older lesbian who should know. When gay people came out *en masse* in the 1960s, organizations such as the Lavender Left, The Purple Fist, and Violet Press sprang up to assist and document that process.

In 1986, after almost 20 years of gay liberation, American straight society still finds it very hard to look at the color purple. Though they have long suspected that many of their religious, political and artistic leaders, as well as their maiden aunts, bachelor

uncles and spinster teachers, were gay, they don't want to know about it. Some straights react with fear and hatred to books such as *Lesbian Nuns*, *Breaking Silence* or to academic studies on the homosexuality of Walt Whitman, Tchaikovsky, Michelangelo or Virginia Woolf and the impact of their sexuality on their work. They seem afraid to learn an obvious fact: homosexuality is a positive and important part of many of our lives.

Eliminating the hypocrisy and fear that characterize straight society's attitudes towards homosexuality is a matter of survival for gay people, but it is also in the interest of everyone. Perhaps the color purple can do for our society what it did for Walker's protagonist Celie. Perhaps in learning to love and recognize the homosexuality that has been an important part of humanity since its beginning, we will realize that that which makes humanity beautiful and strong is its diversity.

## feedback

### Pelteir's case should not be ignored

To the Editor:

By now, I think that most people are aware of Nelson Mandela; they are aware that he is a political prisoner who should be set free immediately. But there is another man of whose case many are not aware. This man is Leonard Pelteir.

Pelteir has served ten years in jail — most of these years in a room the size of a bathroom. While in jail, he was denied the right to practice his religion, and was not allowed to see his religious leaders. Pelteir was subject to lockup 23 hours a day, and while he was in jail an attempt was made on his life.

Pelteir's only crime is that of struggling for the rights of his people and struggling to protect our animal and plant relatives and our Mother Earth. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has issued an appeal for his freedom. Amnesty International has investigated Pelteir's case, which issued a statement condemning his mistreatment and unfair trial. Fifty-five US congressmen and 47 religious leaders, including Rev. Jesse Jackson, have submitted an *amicus curiae* calling for a fair trial.

Pelteir was convicted on circumstantial evidence, major parts of which are now being called into question. Major witnesses for the prosecution have now testified that they were coerced into giving testimony against Pelteir. Paul Benson, the judge trying Pelteir, has called him "a disgrace" to his people and has

called his people "the slime of the Earth." This judge refuses to take himself off of Pelteir's case.

Pelteir could be a black in South America, but he is a Native American in the United States. Pelteir lost his last appeal on Sept. 11, and it looks like he'll spend the rest of his life in jail. On Oct. 4, his wife, Stephanie, will be in Boston along with other American Indian Movement members and Amhed Qono, international representative of the ANC. They will be speaking about the cases of Pelteir and Mandela.

Pelteir has received more letters of support from Japan, Mexico, West Germany and the USSR than from the United

States. I am not surprised that people don't know about him, but I am shocked that many don't care, even those who claim to be against apartheid. From my experience at MIT my intellect tells me that people won't care about Pelteir, but my heart won't give up hope.

Stephen Fernandez  
*(Editor's note: Leonard Pelteir was charged with the murders of two FBI agents after a shootout on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota in 1975. He was convicted and given two consecutive life sentences. The Missouri District Court of Appeals determined that the prosecution had suppressed evidence and granted Pelteir a retrial.)*

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*Dissents*, marked as such and printed in a distinctive format, are the opinions of the undersigned members of the editorial board choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial.

*Columns* and *editorial cartoons* are written by individuals and represent the opinion of the author, not necessarily that of the newspaper.

*Letters to the Editor* are welcome. They should be typed and addressed to **The Tech**, PO Box 29, MIT Branch, Cambridge MA 02139, or by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483.

Letters and cartoons must bear the authors' signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. No letter or cartoon will be printed anonymously without express prior approval of **The Tech**. **The Tech** reserves the right to edit or condense letters. We regret we cannot publish all of the letters we receive.

## Intolerance threatens our community

*(Editor's note: The Tech received a copy of the following letter, addressed to President Paul E. Gray '54.)*

Dear President Gray:

Throughout the term and the summer, the MIT Republican Club has been plagued by continued harassment. Meeting announcements have been routinely ripped down and vandalized, and some members were anonymously harassed.

Early in the morning on Sept. 2, the Republican Club poster in Lobby 7 was ripped down and presumably destroyed. The poster was in the correct, reserved position. As those who have made drop posters know, quite a

bit of time and effort goes into making a good drop poster. All that remained was the upper edge, on which was written a derogatory message from someone who identified himself or herself as a "loyal democrat."

This juvenile act displays amazing arrogance toward the basic principles of free discourse on which universities are based. Just as "loyal democrats" are entitled to express their opinions, so are groups having other beliefs. Each of the many groups at MIT should be able to tolerate views different from their own. Tolerance is vital in our academic community.

This radical narrowmindedness cannot continue. The college years should be a time to learn, to gain exposure to many different ideas, and to consider one's own convictions. Unfortunately, this childish conduct represses freedom of expression and undermines the Constitution on which our country was founded.

We look upon this behavior as a serious threat to the well-being of the MIT community. We hope that by making the MIT community aware of the present situation, people will be more considerate of others' efforts and views.

Brett V. Gaspers '87  
*Treasurer, MIT Republican Club*  
 Lori M. Tsuruda '89  
*Secretary, MIT Republican Club*

# opinion



OKAY, OKAY! HEADS WE HIT A SYNAGOGUE, TAILS WE KIDNAP A YANK!

## feedback

### Turtle movers are very untrustworthy

To The Editor:

I would like to alert the MIT community to a less than satisfactory business transaction which recently befell me involving a Cambridge-based moving company, namely, Turtle Transfer and Storage.

My intent was to transport the furniture from my Inman Square apartment to the MIT Furniture Exchange just down the street. I phoned a number of companies in the morning, and Curtiss at Turtle assured me that he could have a truck and two men at the Inman Square address by noon. He quoted me a price for the job, to which I agreed.

I went to class. Before setting out for Inman Square, though, I called Turtle back to confirm the job. They assured me that they were still "go," but stated that they were "putting an extra man on the job" and therefore were raising the price substantially. I was not in a position to cancel the appointment outright (which I would have done ordinarily in such a circumstance), so I haggled with Curtiss until the new price included half his suggested increase.

I went to Inman Square. The situation was further constrained by the fact that the MIT Furniture Exchange closes at 2 pm; when no one had showed up by 12:15 pm, I grew concerned. I called Turtle once again. Curtiss told me that he was "waiting for the guys to call in," and that they

were late. At 12:45 pm, I called again. Curtiss told me that "the guys had stopped for lunch, which they shouldn't have," but they were on their way.

By 1:15 pm the situation was clearly hopeless. I called Turtle one last time and told Curtiss that he had seriously inconvenienced me that afternoon. He

told me that at the price upon which we had "agreed," he was "pretty damned inconvenienced, too." He concluded saying that he was sorry he'd ever taken the job, a sentiment in which I concurred wholeheartedly, and hung up on me.

David Saslav '87

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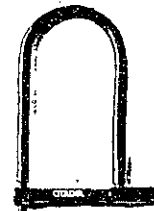
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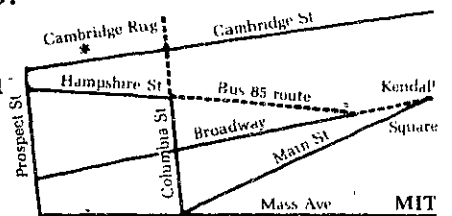
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Jerry Broda

A student uses the Athena registration terminal in the Student Center library.

## Athena entering new phase of development

(Continued from page 1)

analysis (18 percent), communications (14 percent), and storage (11 percent) from last year.

There were no significant increases in the use of Athena for on-line searches, games, problems sets, or data entry. The survey reported that, on the whole, students are satisfied with the system, although they overwhelmingly requested more terminals and less crowded facilities.

Many students also cited a lack of working printers and dial-up lines as major problems. Project Athena is responding to the lack of printers by adjusting its budget for the purchase of more and higher quality printers, some of which are already being tested and installed, according to director of Project Athena, Professor Steven Lerman '72.

### Athena enters second phase of development

This fall, Project Athena is entering its second phase which is designed to make the system more accessible by turning the current time-sharing system into a workstation environment. By the end of this phase in 1988, approximately 1,500 workstations will have replaced all of the current time-sharing terminals, Lerman said.

Each workstation will be an individual computer powerful enough to run any Athena software package and will be networked to the rest of the system, Lerman explained. Also, workstations are being installed in five living groups this fall — Delta Upsilon, Zeta Beta Tau, Theta Delta Chi, Pika and Next House — with more living groups scheduled to receive workstations in the future.

### Athena and education

Although Project Athena is a five-year experiment aimed at improving the education of students at MIT the majority of its users regard the system as a service rather than as an experiment, the survey indicated.

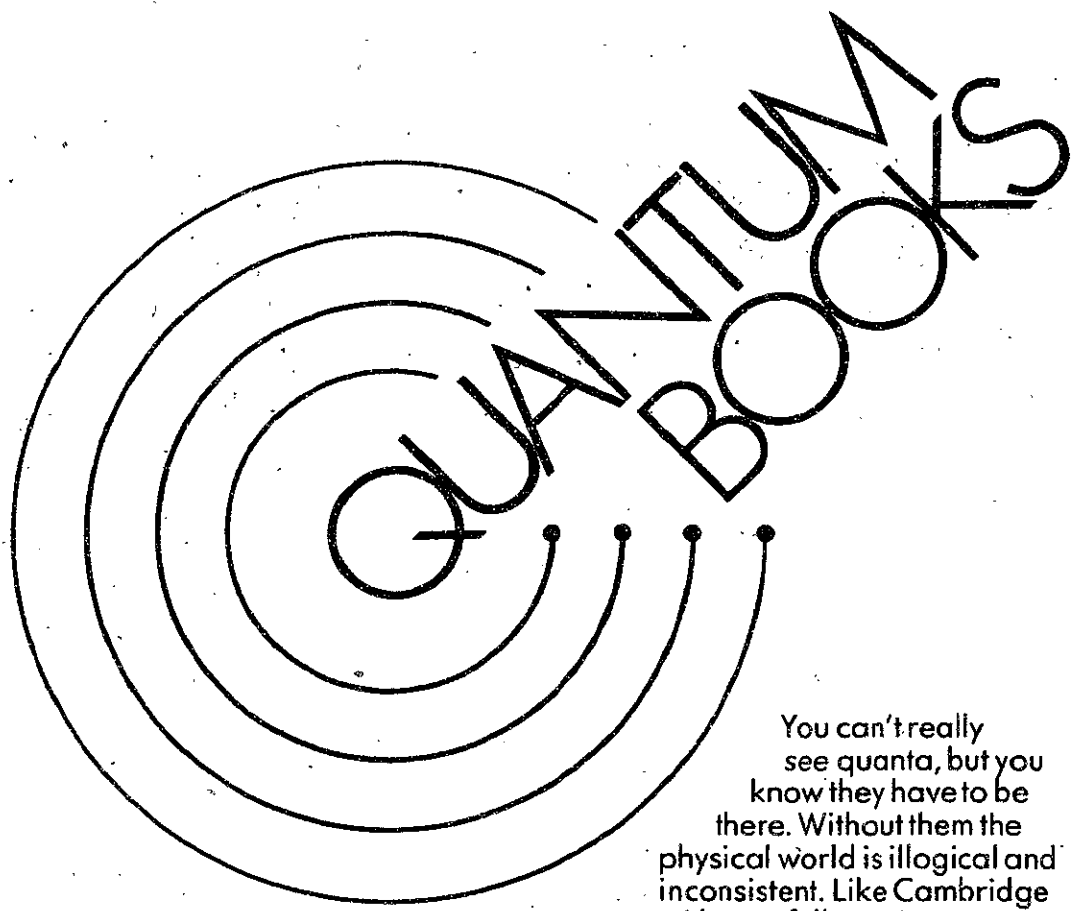
This is evidenced by the fact that more students use Athena for word-processing than any other application. Lerman said he expected the system to be used for word-processing, but the question was whether the system could be used to teach students how to write.

Ninety-six curriculum development projects are currently being developed with the goal of making Athena a broad educational resource. One of the most ambitious projects is a software package that will use Athena graphics and audio facilities to tutor students in foreign languages. Another software package will help students develop their writing skills.

One of the applications of Athena that has increased dramatically over the last couple of years is the required use of the system for courses. Students enrolled in courses that require the use of Project Athena last year reported spending 24 percent of all of the time they spent in and on those classes with Athena.

Although most of the courses that utilize Athena now are in the Departments of Electrical Engineering and Aeronautics and Astronautics, Lerman expects this to change as curriculum development projects, such as the writing project, are developed.

This year Project Athena is entering the lecture hall with computers that will act as extremely sophisticated blackboards, according to Lerman. Professors will be able to make and alter very complicated diagrams with ease. The only drawbacks of these computers are their high costs and lack of availability, he explained.



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## Abt supports strong space defense

(Continued from page 1)

"gives definite indications of using — possibly abusing — the race for Congress as a launching pad for future presidential campaigns. That may serve his little band of followers well, but it doesn't serve the people of the district well."

When asked about his chances against Kennedy, Abt pointed out the low Democratic turnout for the primary election, and that only half of those voting voted for Kennedy. "My problem is to convert probably about one-half to two-thirds of those anti-Kennedy Democrats."

### Abt on national issues

The ultimate goal of the Strategic Defense Initiative is "to increase deterrence of nuclear war," Abt said. "Deterrence of war, not defense. . . . Its purpose is to maintain the balance of power."

US and Soviet military power are not very well balanced at the present time, he added. "I'd gladly give up [SDI] if they gave up their bomber air defense."

Abt supported only partial divestment from South Africa, specifically from those enterprises that violate the Sullivan Princi-

ples. He cautioned against moves which would cause black unemployment.

"[We should] keep on the pressure," he explained. "If you go all the way with divestment you've got nothing much left to negotiate with."

With regards to Nicaragua, Abt said, "I do support *contra* aid, particularly humanitarian and defensive aid, but I'd be willing to exchange it all for economic aid if we could get the Soviet Union and Cuba to stop assisting the Sandinistas."

### UNDERGRADUATE GUARANTEED STUDENT LOAN APPLICANTS

Legislation which is awaiting the President's signature would require a change in the processing of Guaranteed Student Loan applications received on or after October 1, 1986. Students applying for GSL's on or after this date and who are not applying for MIT aid will nevertheless be required to submit a completed Financial Aid Form including parents' information on income and assets. Since most loans processed before this date will require only the family 1985 Adjusted Gross Income Tax figures, the Financial Aid office encourages students who have not yet submitted their GSL application forms to do so prior to October 1st in order to avoid the additional paperwork.

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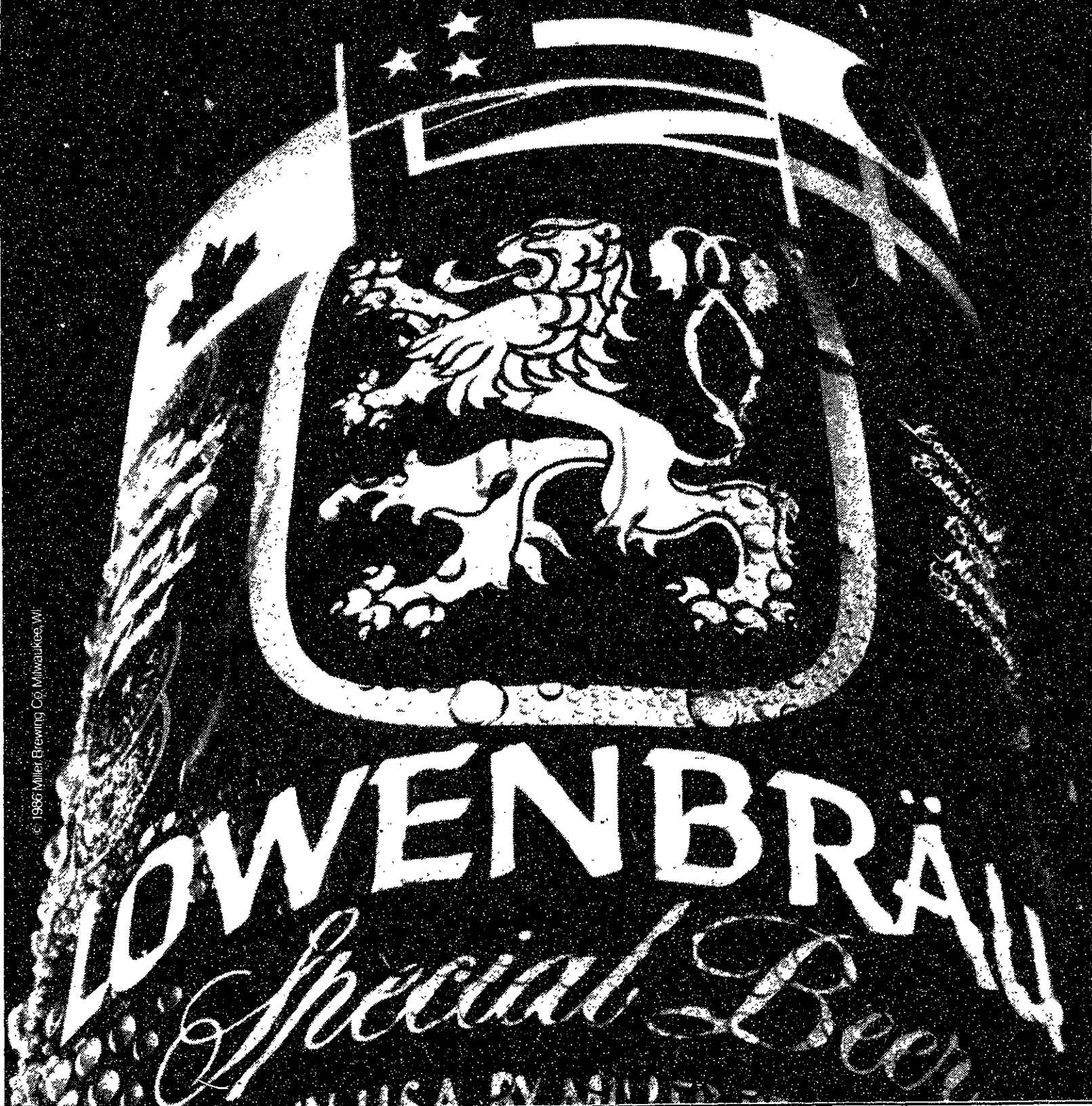
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## ARTS

# "The Knee Plays" meet high expectations

## THE KNEE PLAYS

Scenario by Robert Wilson  
Music and words by David Byrne  
Choreography by Suzushi Hanayagi  
Directed by Robert Wilson  
At the Loeb Drama Center, 64 Brattle St.,  
Cambridge, through Oct. 5.

By MICHEL BOS

**H**OW FASHIONABLE CAN YOU GET? It is a question which almost inevitably comes to mind in connection with *The Knee Plays*, which started a two-week run at the Loeb Drama Center last weekend. With the names of playwright Robert Wilson and Talking Head David Byrne to top the roster, the production has come to Cambridge under favorable auspices if ever there were any. Fortunately, it stands up to the challenge: while not rising above expectations, it does not fall short of them either, which should be enough to make it obligatory seeing.

As their name suggests, *The Knee Plays* were not conceived to stand on their own; rather, they originated as interludes joining different scenes in Wilson's, well, opera *The CIVIL wars*. The gargantuan size of this project has thus far prohibited an integral performance, but bits and pieces have been staged in various parts of the globe. *The Knee Plays*, as the work's "American" section, premiered in Minneapolis during the spring of 1984. Since then Wilson's star, already highly visible here, not least in virtue of the American Repertory Theatre productions of *Alceste* and *The CIVIL wars*' Cologne section



Richard Feldman

In a scene from *The Knee Plays*, the book is assembled.

during the past two seasons.

In this performance each of the 13 *Knee Plays* lasts about five minutes. In line with their framing and connecting function, all of them fit in a single narrative, but each reflects its context in *The CIVIL wars*. (For instance, those who saw *Act III, Scene E* two years ago will recognize the Civil War tents in *Knee Play 10*.) The storyline revolves around a series of transformations: a tree becomes a boat becomes a book becomes a tree again. The simple, yet potent cyclic structure with its archetypal schematism imparts a mythical quality to the story, and the staging is geared to respect this, with minimal sets against a neutral white background and a

forceful choreography of Kabuki inspiration.

David Byrne wrote the texts, which are rhythmically read by a narrator. The dialectics of words and action is not always equally transparent, but the narrative has an understated ambiguity to it which is rather appealing. Topics vary from the deliberations of a lady in front of her wardrobe to a cadence on "We loved each other so much. . ." reminiscent of the final scene of Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach*.

The music, also by Byrne and here played by a brass ensemble provocatively called *Les Miserables*, is a peculiar blend of different idioms. Manifestly Byrne took his clues mainly from the musical tradi-

tions of the American South. But as *The Knee Plays* progress, lyrical, even casual jazzy tunes gradually dissolve in more constrained, in times obsessive patterns. The process culminates in the 12th scene, where the book which was a boat which was a tree and soon will be a tree again is taken and read to a recitation on the theme "In the Future. . ." — at which point the play explicitly reveals itself an allegory of history.

Perhaps the most problematic aspect of the production is its timing, by Wilson's own admission the crucial ingredient of his work. It has often been stressed that Wilson's theatre, though far from lacking a cerebral texture, derives its momentum mostly from its appeal to the viewer's subconscious. Its hieratic concept of space and time, its hypnotic plethora of images, its pervasive rhythm all need time to make their impact. Precisely this is lacking in a set of five-minute pieces (with occasional applause, to make things worse). The short-breathed, sequential structure of *The Knee Plays* is not a particularly congenial environment for Wilson's imagery to resonate, and one has somewhat the feeling of looking at an experienced marathon runner being forced to pull a bunch of sprints.

While this prevents *The Knee Plays* from reaching the intensity and scope of the "full" scenes of *The CIVIL wars*, it also forestalls to some extent the charges of obscurantism raised against Wilson's more ambitious projects. *The Knee Plays* are more detached; rather than absorb our mind, they enchant or tease it. As a result, one who never saw a Wilson play might want to make this the first.

## "night, Mother" chronicles suicidal woman's despair

### 'NIGHT, MOTHER

Directed by Tom Moore.  
Starring Sissy Spacek and Anne Bancroft.  
At Copley Place.

By PETER DUNN

**N**IGHT, MOTHER is neither an action-packed adventure flick nor a fun filled, belly-aching comedy. Surprisingly, considering

the subject matter — a woman's decision to commit suicide — and the fact that this film is an adaption of a Pulitzer Prize winning play, *'night, Mother* is also not a hard biting melodrama confronting the issues of suicide. It is simply the chronicle of a woman's despair.

Once read on a lavatory wall that "Suicide is the only true expression of free will." The validity of that statement is a matter for philosophers to debate and I

am not about to give my opinion on it. However, in the mind of Jessie (Sissy Spacek), it is the one truth in the world which gives her a ray of hope.

Jessie is a woman in her forties, subject to epileptic seizures, divorced from her husband, the mother of a thieving and dope dealing son, leading a lonely, monotonous life with her aged mother. She feels trapped in a miserable existence with no hope for change and sees suicide as the only means of escape. She has in part built the walls of her own prison, even going so far as to refuse to greet neighbors and relatives when they come to visit. From the long, winding tracking shots as she goes about her household tasks, it is clear that to her the house which she and her mother share is merely a dungeon of winding tunnels.

Jessie prepares for her demise in a straightforward, methodical manner. She has a notepad of all the loose ends she must tie up before passing away and checks them off her list as she meticulously carries out each task: cancel newspaper; set aside clothes for charity; get gun; tell Mama you are going to kill yourself.

In this matter-of-fact role, Sissy Spacek is perfect. Her softly spoken lines lend a deeper force to Jessie's convictions and evoke a resigned steadfastness as Mama desperately tries to dissuade her from committing suicide. In Spacek's performance one is convinced that Jessie has thoughtfully looked at all her options and concluded that this is her only logical course of action. Spacek's performance is all the more exemplary because the script gives so little weight to Jessie's arguments; they only occur in bursts, while the major part of the film exposes how little Mama and Jessie truly know about each other.

As the garrulous mother who depends on Jessie to pamper her and who is the only person to whom Jessie has told her intentions, Anne Bancroft is merely suitable. She is slightly unconvincing whenever Mama's emotions shift back and forth from resigned acceptance to angered disbelief; these mood shifts occur far too abruptly, thus lessening the power of her fiery arguments against Jessie's course of action. This is also in part the fault of the script which is certainly more sympathetic to Jessie, always giving her the upper hand. Mama's arguments ring true but they always fall on deaf ears.

In this, Jessie's refusal to directly confront the issues as to why she is committing suicide, lies the crux of the movie.



Sissy Spacek in *'night, Mother*

Those attending this film will be disappointed if they expect a debate over the pros and cons of one person's right to end her own life. If these arguments are even raised, Jessie simply dismisses them in one of three fashions: she states that the argument is not the reason why she is committing suicide, or that she had already considered that months ago — or she just ignores it. Even when Jessie admits to having considered one of Mama's arguments, her rebuttal is often simply a curt reply without substantial discussion.

Although *'night, Mother* is not a confrontation with the issues of suicide, neither is it a glorification of Jessie's triumph over a dead end existence. Although the film makes it hard not to be sympathetic to Jessie's plight, it is also hard to be sympathetic to her motivations since these are never fully explained. As a result, the audience feels none of the happiness of Jessie's resolve, only an understanding that she believes it is the only viable alternative left to her.

Therefore *'night, Mother* is simply a personal diary of one person who decides to commit suicide but skirts many of the issues involved. If you attend this film expecting a groundbreaking treatment of suicide, you are bound to be disappointed. However, as a film dealing with a personalized case of a rather morbid subject, *'night, Mother* is quite good.

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Tickets will be required for all Friday services. Students can pick up free tickets in Lobby 10 on Sept. 25 and Oct. 1 or in Hillel from Sept. 24 until Oct. 2 Non-students should contact Hillel

Holiday meals will be served in the K kosher Kitchen, located in Walker Hall, Room 50-007: Friday at 6:00 pm and 7:30 pm; Saturday at 7:30 pm; and Sunday at 1:30 pm. Dinners cost \$6.50 and lunches cost \$4.50. Prepaid reservations are required by Thursday, Oct. 3. They will be taken at Hillel, the K kosher Kitchen, or the Lobby 10 Booth. We accept both cash and valid id. Following the dedication of MIT Hillel's new torah during services on Saturday a special complimentary lunch will be served in the Student Center, Sala de Puerto Rico.

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## ARTS

## "Nightingale" worth seeing

AND A NIGHTINGALE SANG  
At the Lyric Stage, 54 Charles St., Boston.  
Through Oct. 12.

By STEPHEN P. BERCUK

**W**ORLD WAR II. A Catholic family in rural England in the midst of it; an older sister who weathers the family storms and tells their story; humor, caring, conflicts, and learning.

These are the components of a compelling story, and the performers of the Lyric Stage involved the audience in it. There were small technical problems — some having to do with the theater itself — but overall *And a Nightingale Sang* was quite enjoyable.

The British working class family we follow through the second World War is an ordinary family driven to extremes by the war's pervasive presence. The mother is a devout Catholic, who runs to pray whenever she feels in need, which is frequently. (She explains that her husband was saved from serious injury during a bombing raid because she prayed for him, and "prayed over your sandwiches.") The slightly eccentric grandfather carries his cat around all the time, and periodically professes his philosophy of life ("What will it all matter in 100 years?!"). The father spends most of his time playing often inappropriate tunes on his piano. It is the oldest daughter, Helen, who carries this potentially unstable group — and her younger sister — through it all.

The circumstances which this family must face are difficult. Men, including the younger sister's husband, are off to war. Lives have been altered by the war, and this is part of the struggle which must be faced. The source of many of the conflicts is romance — romance complicated by the war. Yet this

## MIT featured in new comic

SPITFIRE  
AND THE TROUBLESHOOTERS!  
A new Marvel comics series

By JULIAN WEST

**A**FTER 25 YEARS, Marvel comics has suddenly made a concession to reality. Their characters will now age in real time and exist in real world situations. Unfortunately, the old titles have not changed. Rather, Marvel has created a "new universe" and stocked it with new characters.

One of the new universe titles, *Spitfire and the Troubleshooters!* is set in the not-quite-real world location of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "known as the 'Tute to its voluntary inmates." Intrigued, I picked up copies of the first three is-



sues. Unfortunately, I found that the new universe, while a welcome idea, does not have either the depth of characterization or variety of situations of the best of Marvel's established titles.

The eponymous Spitfire is a professor of structural engineering (whatever that is) called Jennifer Swensen, a fiery redhead who studies martial arts. In the most dramatic sequence so far, her father is murdered in his lab, leaving behind an "AI project" called MAX, which is essentially a big robot suit. It falls to Jenny to don the mantle of MAX, keep it from evil para-military interests, and generally fight evil.

She is helped on her quest by a gang of undergraduates sporting blue jeans and orange MIT T-shirts. At least it is realistic enough to have Tim (no relation to the beaver) wear the same T-shirt in all three issues. They call themselves the "Troubleshooters" but they are mostly good at causing trouble, such as assembling a tractor in the dean's office or sabotaging the Yale scull.

group of people manage to survive, not only intact, but perhaps better for the experience.

Sandra Shipley, as Helen, narrates the story, leading us through her emotional ups and downs. The ambivalence and arm-chair wisdom of grandpa (Dexter Witherell) seem to hide a much deeper understanding of what is really going on.

The scenery was sparse; there was only one set, and other locations were projected by the actors and the lighting. The lighting suited the purpose but was not terribly exciting, and the quality of the sound effects should have more closely matched the quality of the acting. It sounded at times as if a track on a sound effects record was being replayed again and again, with gaps.

The theater of the Lyric Stage is small and three quarter round, and the actors did an admirable job of keeping all sections of the audience involved. The small house allowed one to develop a feeling for the characters that would be difficult in a larger auditorium. It was also interesting to see a difficult performance space used with good results.

*And a Nightingale Sang* is definitely worth seeing before it heads off to Baltimore in mid-October.



This motley crew is about as racially balanced as could be desired. There are four men to one woman (a familiar ratio), a black, a Chinese freshman, and an Italian. They have not all progressed to superhero status as of issue #3, but it is clear how things are going. Constructing amazing "AI devices" in a matter of weeks, Tim builds himself a pair of strap-on bionic legs. Eduardo, a fiery Latin with a crush on Jenny, has a similar pair of "strongarms." Teresa, a CS whiz with a crush on Eduardo, has a mind-amplifying device with which she can directly interface with any computer on earth. It won't be long, surely, before Eric and Andy are similarly equipped.

The way these characters speak makes it sound as though university is one big adventure, just as though the books were written for people who may still look forward to university for years to come.

As far as research into MIT goes, the authors seem to have picked up half-a-dozen words like "hack" and use them more or less correctly. Other terms, such as "a first year" are less authentic. Their dormitory room — far too large to be believed — is located somewhere in Building 7.

A few years ago, an issue of the French comic *Natasha* found our heroine at Caltech. In that case, the artists managed to do a better job of capturing the look of the Pasadena campus, although they apparently had only Polaroids from which to work. Surely the Marvel bullpen in New York could have been in closer touch.

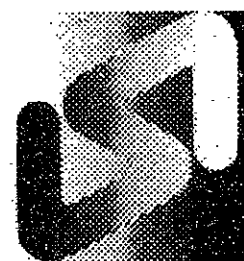
The copyright notice says "No similarity between any of the . . . institutions . . . in this magazine with those of any living or dead . . . institution is intended and any similarity which may exist is purely coincidental." They could just about get away with it at that.

If the plotting is bad, the dialogue is execrable. My own favorite panel shows three of the troubleshooters seeing MAX for the first time and exclaiming: "Wow. Wow. wow." And the art is little better. There has been a new team every issue, mostly of little-known artists, and a glance at the result shows why.

It is refreshing, however, to have the plots work in real time. There are several pointed references to the passage of weeks between issues. By contrast, other Marvel characters never age at all. Kitty Pryde, a some-time X-Man, was introduced as a 13-year old in the late 1970s, and nearly everyone in fandom would put her age between 18 and 21. Yet recent issues have insisted that she is still 13. This despite the fact that two of her friends have met, fallen in love and had a child in the intervening years. Hardly possible, even for mutants.

But if flat characters and repetitive, pedestrian, situations are the price we must pay for realism, the price is too high. I'll stick to my *X-Men*, thanks.

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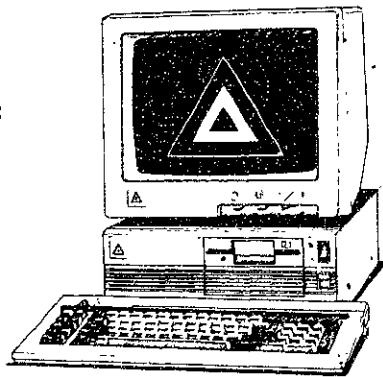
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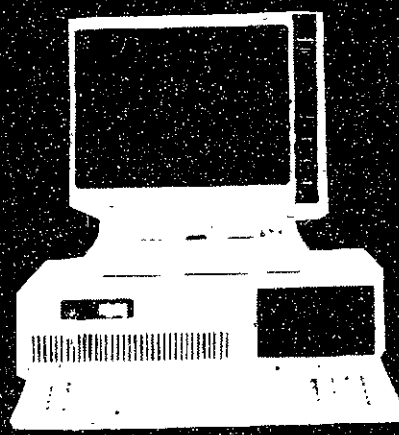
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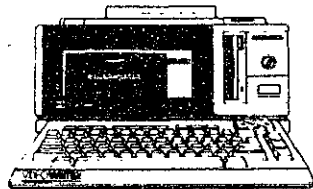
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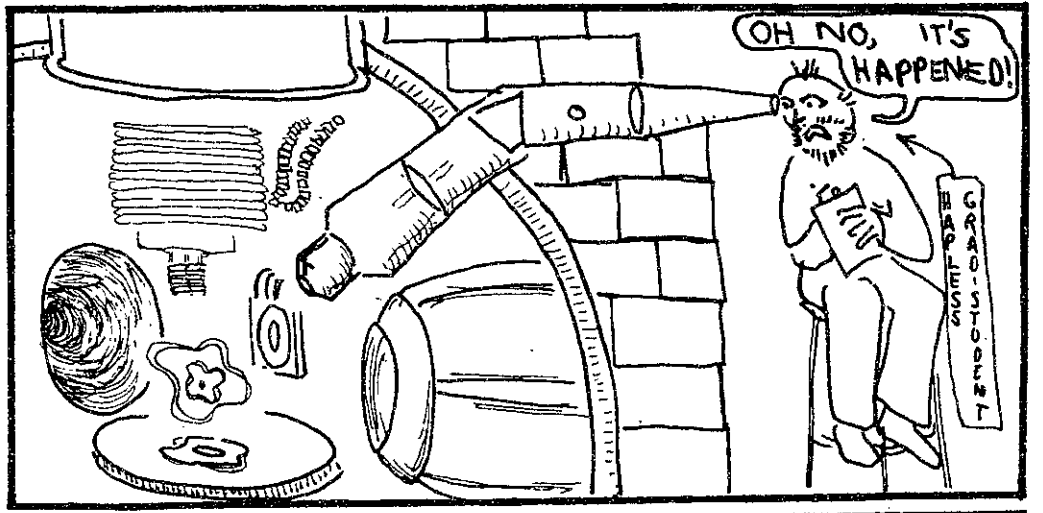
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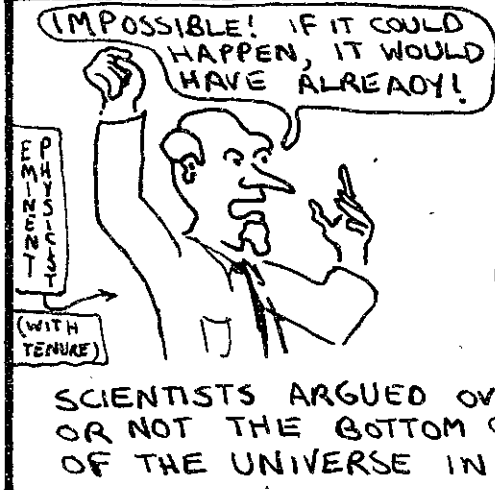
By Jim Bredt

WE RETURN NOW TO ANOTHER EXCITING EPISODE OF THE **VEGAS READ**

THIS WEEK'S EPISODE BEGINS VERY INNOCENTLY: TWO SUBMICROSCOPIC PARTICLES SMASH TOGETHER WITH UNIMAGINABLE VIOLENCE IN A MULTIMILLION DOLLAR EXPERIMENT

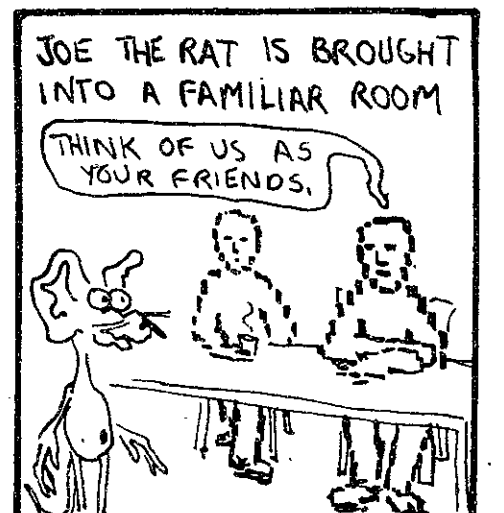
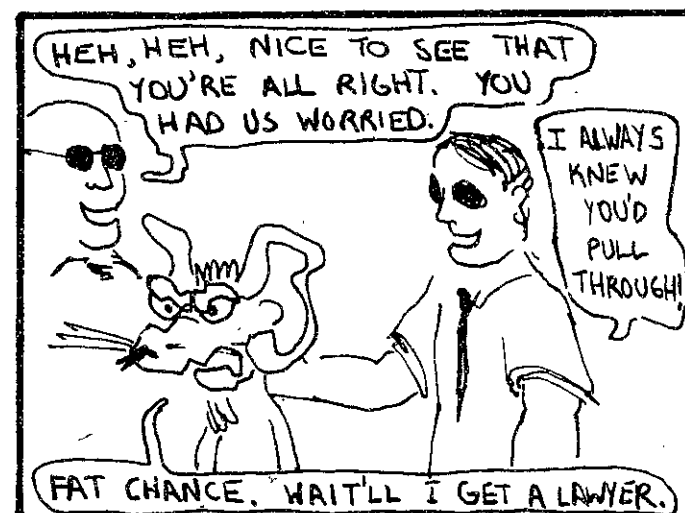


PERHAPS A LITTLE BACKGROUND IS IN ORDER: A GROUP OF PHYSICISTS HAD WORKED OUT A THEORY TO EXPLAIN THE NATURE OF SPACE. EMPTY SPACE HAS AN ENERGY ASSOCIATED WITH IT CALLED THE "ZERO POINT" ENERGY. THIS "ZERO POINT" IS SOMEWHAT ARBITRARY AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME OTHER FORM OF SPACE MIGHT HAVE A LOWER ZERO POINT. SUCH A SPACE MIGHT BE NUCLEATED BY A HIGH ENERGY PARTICLE INTERACTION, AND IF THE NUCLEUS WERE LARGER THAN A CERTAIN CRITICAL SIZE, IT WOULD GROW SPONTANEOUSLY CONVERTING ALL SPACE AROUND IT TO THE NEW FORM.



ONE SUCH HOLE IN THE UNIVERSE WAS CALMLY SITTING IN A MAGNETIC BOTTLE IN LIVERLESS LABS.

SINCE SMALL THINGS ARE BIG IN RECIPROCAL SPACE, THAT TINY DISTURBANCE IN OUR FRAME IS A CATAclysmic SHOCK IN RECIPROCAL SPACE...



AS BEFORE, THE MORTALS IN THE ROOM THINK THEMSELVES TO BE IN CONTROL OF THEIR REALITY. JOE THE RAT DOES NOT REALIZE THAT A DEAL IS BEING STRUCK ON THE PSYCHIC PLANE WHICH WILL INFLUENCE HIS DESTINY..



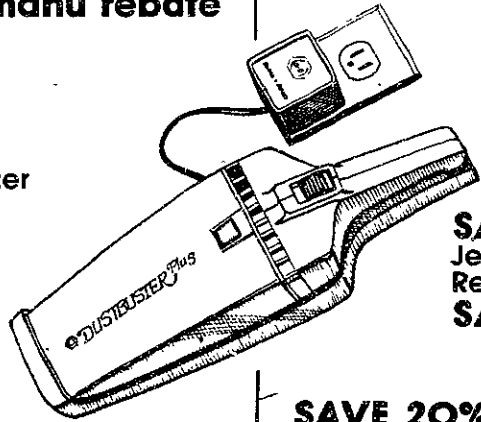
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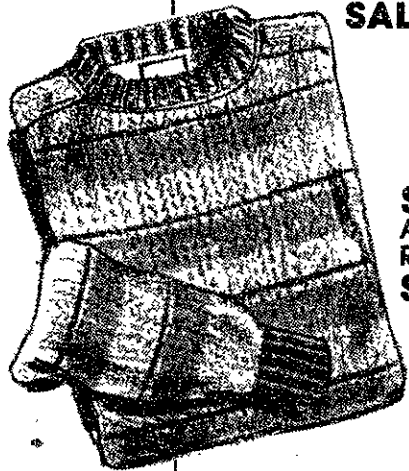
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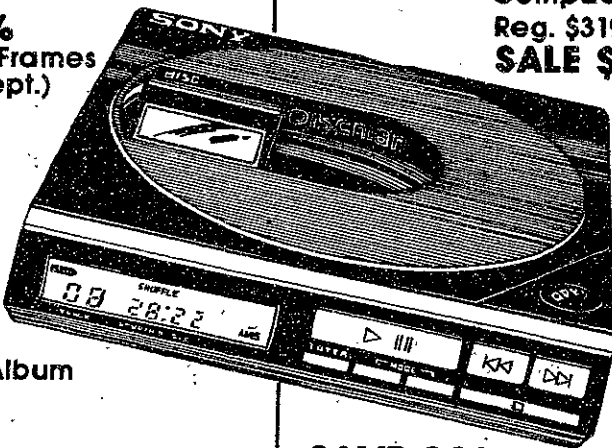
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# sports

## Gordon defeats MIT field hockey

By Marcia Smith

MIT lost last night's field hockey game to Gordon College, 1-3. The loss dropped their record to 2-3 on the season.

"Gordon is one of the toughest teams we play," explained Coach Louise Jandura. "We had to be at our best to beat them, but we came up flat. We just never got on track."

"They were in better shape than we were," added Assistant Coach Julie Chen. "They moved to the ball faster in the second half than we did."

Gordon scored first, eight minutes into the game, on a goal by Patelle. Two minutes later, MIT's whole offensive team brought the ball to the other side. Cathi Cherubino '88 (right inner) finally put the ball in the goal. "The whole team assisted," she said.

During the second half MIT "wasn't playing their game," Captain Martha Beverage '87 stated. "We weren't playing a very controlled game. We started playing hit-and-chase rather than passing the ball."

One trouble MIT had was the reoccurrence of strokes against them, a penalty assessed when a goalie or defenseman blocks a sure goal by kicking it. As a result Gordon was awarded three one-on-one attempts for goal.

The first two were missed by Stables, who hit the goalpost the first time and was wide the second. Gordon went to Colainta for the third, who scored the second goal of the game halfway into the second half.

Stables came back with the last goal with only four minutes left in the game.

MIT had its bright moments, as Beverage frequently stole the ball and brought it up to the other line.

"Ann Ferriter '87 (right wing) had a strong game and Mini Gupta ['90] (right back) was always there," Jandura commented. "When the goalie left the goal, she was there backing her up, when they came to our side, she was there to defend."

Kirsten Domingo '90 (left

wing), Joanie Fand '89 (left inner), and Trinnie Ariola '90 (substitute) showed great teamwork, passing and switching to get the ball close to goal. They earned many corner kicks, but did not quite get the ball in the goal.

### MIT defeats Babson

MIT defeated Babson College

by a score of 5-2 Tuesday night, at Babson. Beverage scored two goals, becoming MIT's career record holder for field hockey with 35. Julia Neuringer '80 held the old record, with 34.

Cherubino, Fand, and Ariola also scored in the game. The goals of Fand and Ariola were the first in their careers.



Jerry Broda

Julie Zimmerman '88 reaches for the ball in a field hockey game against Gordon College yesterday. MIT lost the game 1-3.

## Women's tennis downs Wellesley, 6-3

By Michael J. Garrison

The women's tennis team defeated Wellesley Tuesday, 6-3. This marks only the second time that MIT has won in the last eight matches between the two schools, extending back to 1979.

"It was a big win for a couple of reasons," said Sports Information Director Roger Crosley. Besides the rarity of wins over Wellesley, the match also counted as a win in the New England Women's 6 Conference.

The NEW6, established in 1985, is the conference in which most MIT women's teams play. The conference also consists of Babson, Brandeis, Smith, and Wheaton.

MIT won four singles matchups, including Lisa A. Shields G (7-5, 6-3), Christina M. Alvord '89 (6-0, 6-4), Stacey D. Chinn '89 (6-1, 6-4), and Jennifer A. Hyman '87 (6-4, 7-6). Hyman won the second set on a 7-2 tie-breaker.

Chinn and Alvord also won in doubles (6-1, 6-0). MIT's other doubles winners were Hee Jung Koh '87 and Mimi Ing '87 (7-5, 6-1).

The team's record is now 2-3. They are 1-0 in NEW6 play.

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—Jeffrey Lyons, SNEAK PREVIEWS, INDEPENDENT NETWORK NEWS



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