

MIT's  
Oldest and Largest  
Newspaper

# The Tech

Established 1881

**The Weather**  
Today: Partly cloudy, 40°F (4°C)  
Tonight: Cloudy, drizzle, 35°F (2°C)  
Tomorrow: Rain continues, 45°F (7°C)  
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Volume 112, Number 11

Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Friday, March 6, 1992

## Economics Department to Initiate Optional Thesis

By Sarah Y. Keightley  
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

Starting with the Class of 1993, undergraduates majoring in economics will no longer be required to write a thesis for graduation, said Gary J. King, administrative secretary of the Department of Economics. The decision was made at a recent department meeting.

"The information has gone into the [upcoming *MIT Bulletin*] that the thesis will be optional," King said. The requirement for those who choose not to write a thesis will be an extra elective subject, he said.

Professor Peter Temin '64, head of the department, said that the thesis was made optional because the department "discovered it's not always a useful experience." He noted that the economics department will continue to offer the Undergraduate Thesis Seminar (14.39), which prepares students for

writing their thesis during the fall semester.

"For some students the thesis works, but for other students, the unstructured nature of the thesis proved to be very difficult — it was not a productive use of their time," Temin said. "An elective would be more useful for these students," he said.

Temin said the department hopes students will be able to "self-select appropriately" whether or not they should write a thesis. He said the department will see in a couple of years if the new arrangement is working well.

The optional thesis issue had been a topic of discussion for almost one year, said Temin. "We hope to improve the quality of life for the undergraduate pursuing an economics education," he said.

Professor of Economics Jerome Rothenberg said, "I am one who

liked the thesis requirement. It was a capstone for the entire undergraduate educational experience."

He conceded that there were administrative and operational problems with the thesis requirement.



PHOTO COURTESY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE  
Peter Temin '64

"The potentialities of the requirement were not really being met," Rothenberg said. "The change makes it possible for students who would appreciate it and have the opportunity, to make the thesis a real challenge, as it was intended to be. Others will have the opportunity to get a broad exposure to other economics courses," he said.

"It's worth a trial — this may be a better arrangement. In principle the thesis requirement was a good idea, but in practice it was flawed," Rothenberg said.

Professor of Economics Richard S. Eckaus '54 said the new thesis option "gives flexibility without reducing standards."

Eric A. Portman '92, who is majoring in economics, said, "I think you're going to get a lot of people to opt for the option of not writing the thesis," adding that he would have chosen not to write one. "I personally don't think a thesis is necessary because the topics won't

be educational — it's more of an exercise," he said.

Another economics student, Daniel J. Grana '93, said the change "sort of surprised" him. "I think it's a worthwhile exercise to do a thesis anyway because you pick your own topic; economics has enough interesting topics at our level," he said.

"If some people don't want to do a thesis, it's a way for them to escape," he added.

William H. Orme-Johnson, professor of chemistry and chairperson of the Committee on Curricula, said he has noticed over the years that "there is definitely a trend in universities to eliminate bachelor thesis requirements."

Currently the departments of mechanical engineering, materials science and engineering, electrical engineering and computer science, political science, nuclear engineering, and certain humanities subjects all require theses.

## New Biotech Policy Could Aid MIT

By Karen Kaplan  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

A new federal policy aimed at boosting the biotechnology industry could be a boon to MIT research laboratories doing pioneering work in genetic engineering.

The policy, announced by the White House last week, reflects the Bush administration's position that genetically engineered products are not inherently dangerous and therefore should not be subject to special scrutiny by federal regulators.

The new policy represents "major new ground rules for regulation of biotechnology," Bush told reporters in Washington. "This \$4 billion industry should grow to \$50 billion by the end of the decade," he said.

Commercial biotechnology

firms, which develop and market genetically altered products ranging from medicines to disease-resistant plants, will benefit the most from the new policy, since their products are subject to the most extreme regulation. But these firms often draw upon the basic research done in university laboratories, and some MIT scientists predict that could mean more funding for their labs.

"The major effect [of the policy] will be to encourage investment by society into the biotech community," said Professor of Biology Phillip A. Sharp, who studies RNA splicing mechanisms. "That will create jobs for our students, create research resources for training students, and help research here at MIT."

A substantial amount of MIT

genetics research is conducted at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research. Administrative Director John Pratt said approximately \$1 million of Whitehead's \$20 million annual budget is funded by corporate sponsors. If the regulatory changes have the intended effect, corporate sponsorship could increase, he said.

Lita M. Nelsen '64, associate director of the MIT Technology Licensing Office, said the new policy would have little effect on research at the Institute: "Our research isn't primarily driven by how big the market for a final product is going to be, but by how useful and interesting the science is," she said.

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## UAC Debates Shift in Control of Activity Fee

By Eva Moy  
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

A proposal to shift control of the student activities fee from the administration to the UA was the focus of debate at Wednesday's Undergraduate Association Council meeting.

The proposal suggests that students "take control ... out of the hands of the administrators" on issues such as allocation of funds to student activities and payment for athletic cards, said UA Vice President J. Paul Kirby '92, who co-sponsored the bill with UA President Stacy E. McGeever '93.

"As costs go up and tuition goes up, it doesn't necessarily mean that money for student activities will go up," said Dean for Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs Arthur C. Smith. He added that the proposal would "get [student activity funds] out of the competition" with other Institute funding requests. Students would have to be "willing to tax [themselves]," he said.

Kirby emphasized that this new system would have a "zero-sum gain," meaning that students would not have to pay more money than they presently do. The UA will try to convince administrators to lower tuition by the amount that students would pay into student services, creating no net gain or loss in tuition costs, Kirby said.

The activity charge, which is currently incorporated into tuition charges, would be added to the students' bill in a manner similar to the way a house tax is added, he said.

### Students to vote in referendum

Under the proposal, the UA Finance Board would continue to allocate money to student activities as it currently does. The allocations, however, will be voted upon by a student referendum, said Kirby.

The ballots would be multiple

choice, and, if students agree, the median response for each category would be used to determine the total amount to be billed, he said.

Some dollar amounts suggested at the UAC meeting were \$17 for student services in general (the current amount), \$7 for the Course Evaluation Guide, \$30 for A Safe Ride, and \$20 for an athletic card.

### UA more 'in touch'

Kirby said that the administration "makes decisions contrary to the interests of the student body." The people who make these allocation decisions may be "out of touch with what students' priorities are," he added. He would like a chance to give the campus a choice on activity funding.

Some activities are under-funded compared to other campuses or other MIT activities, Kirby said. He would like to help fund living group-based activities which sponsor or contribute to on-campus events, he said.

"We surveyed 19 colleges that

UA Council, Page 10

## Crowds of Sophomores Attend Annual Ring Premiere; Examine Beaver's New 'Natural Look'

By Sabrina H. Kwon  
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

Over 700 sophomores attended the annual premiere of the class ring, held in Room 10-105 last Tuesday. The Class of 1994 Ring Committee displayed the newest

design of the "brass rat" for two hours. A record-breaking number of curious sophomores came to view their class ring firsthand, said Walter E. Babiec '94, ring committee co-chair.

The new ring keeps the tradition-

al bulky styling which characterizes the general design of MIT's class rings. This year's beaver has a different look than last year's. "We were striving for a more natural look for the beaver, because people had commented that they didn't like last year's aggressive look," said Babiec.

Subtle class identifiers on the ring include "the sticks in the lower left of the base where 'ninety-four' is written out," Babiec said. "The beaver's hands hold sticks that are positioned to read XCIV, the moon has two levels — one that says '94,' and alongside it says '69' to signify our buddy class," he said. "There's also 'MIT' written in the beaver's fur, and a fire hose on the tail which symbolizes both the hacks that are played at MIT and the analogy of an MIT education being like a drink from a fire hose."

### Side designs kept simple

"We kept both seal sides very simple, because it seemed from the survey that everyone wanted them

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STAFF PHOTO BY HUGH MORGENBESSER  
This expressionless beaver was frozen in awe at the Class of 1994 ring premiere Tuesday night.

## INSIDE

■ Bob Kerrey ends his bid for the Democratic nomination.

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■ Nick's Comedy Stop selects the funniest of student comedians from local colleges.

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# WORLD & NATION

## Virginia Backs Abortion Curbs

THE WASHINGTON POST

RICHMOND, VA.

The Virginia Senate approved a bill Wednesday that would require physicians to notify at least one parent before performing abortions on girls age 15 or under, similar to a measure already passed by the House of Delegates.

The Senate's 27 to 12 vote came on a bill that both sides said could produce the most important restriction on abortion rights in Virginia in the nearly two decades since the Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision.

The version passed by the House sets the age at which girls' parents must be notified at 17 and under. If the two houses compromise on the age, the issue would go to Gov. L. Douglas Wilder, who was elected in 1989 on a strong abortion-rights platform.

## Bonn Calls for Honecker's Return

LOS ANGELES TIMES

BERLIN

Germany launched a major diplomatic offensive Thursday to get former East German Communist leader Erich Honecker out of the Chilean Embassy in Moscow, where he has sought refuge, and into a Berlin jail, saying Honecker was well enough to travel even though he says he has cancer.

German ambassadors delivered messages in atypically unfriendly language informing Chile and Russia that Bonn wants the 79-year-old Honecker delivered to German prosecutors immediately. Bonn wants him to stand trial for the deaths of more than 200 East Germans killed trying to cross into the West.

Honecker, the builder of the Berlin Wall, has been holed up inside the Chilean Embassy since December, when the collapse of the Soviet Union removed his protection from German authorities. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev had guaranteed his former ally's safety when the Soviet army smuggled Honecker out of Germany after German unification.

Chilean officials have said they allowed Honecker to stay at its embassy on humanitarian grounds, reporting repeatedly in recent months that Honecker was seriously, even fatally, ill. But Russian physicians who examined Honecker over the past week said they found no sign of illness.

## L.A. Officers Acquitted on 14 Counts

WASHINGTON POST

LOS ANGELES

The federal civil rights trial of six Los Angeles County narcotics officers ended late last night as the jury added one more acquittal to a string of not-guilty verdicts but deadlocked on the remaining corruption charges.

In a split decision that left defendants elated, the jurors acquitted the officers of 14 criminal counts. However, they told U.S. District Judge Robert M. Takasugi that they could not reach a verdict on 13 others, forcing the judge to declare a mistrial in the 6-month-old trial.

The defendants had worked together as members of a successful anti-drug team in the Lennox area of Los Angeles before the team expanded into a joint Los Angeles Police Department-Sheriff's task force targeting cocaine dealers in Southwest Los Angeles.

The veteran officers were indicted last year for allegedly beating drug dealers with flashlights and fists, stealing cocaine that was used to plant on suspects, and skimming cash and valuables from drug traffickers.

Jurors said after the trial that many of them believed that the defendants were guilty but that the government had failed to prove the case.

Prosecutors said they had not yet decided whether to retry the officers on the unresolved counts.

## WEATHER

### "Backdoor" cooling

By Michael C. Morgan

STAFF METEOROLOGIST

A backdoor front, a sure sign of the season, will be located to our south by late this afternoon. Most cold fronts cross our area from northwest to southeast. Sometimes, during the spring and the summer, cold fronts cross the area in a "backwards" fashion - moving south or southwestwards across the area. These fronts are the "backdoor" fronts.

An anticyclone moving eastward through southeastern Canada will provide onshore winds and the attendant cooler temperatures. As the anticyclone moves offshore, winds will become more southeasterly and lower and middle level clouds with coastal drizzle will develop. An approaching cyclone from the Midwest will increase our chances of precipitation late Saturday and early Sunday.

Where is the cold air? Despite our brief cool down today and Saturday, above normal temperatures will persist through early next week. Cold air now in northwestern Canada may reach the Northeast late next week.

**Friday afternoon.** Partly cloudy and becoming chilly. Highs around 40 (4°C).

**Friday night.** Becoming cloudier with some drizzle and fog developing - especially along coastal locations. Low 35°F (2°C).

**Saturday.** Increasing clouds with rain showers arriving from the southwest. High around 45°F (7°C). Low 37°F (-3°C).

**Sunday.** Rain and rain showers ending with partial clearing during the afternoon. High near 50°F (10°C). Low 35°F (2°C).

# Sen. Bob Kerrey Drops Out of Democratic Presidential Race

By Jonathan Peterson and Karen Tumulty

LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON

Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey, having run out of money after a series of primary defeats, called an end Thursday to a once-promising presidential campaign that never managed to kick into gear.

"I feel a little like the Jamaican bobsled team," said Kerrey, who had compared his third-place showing in New Hampshire to winning a bronze medal in the Olympics. "We had a lot of spirit, but unfortunately, we didn't get a lot of medals."

Kerrey added, however, that he had "gained a great deal" from an effort that often resembled a dress rehearsal, rather than an actual presidential campaign. He suggested that he might be willing to try again, possibly as early as 1996, if the Democrats did not win the White House this year.

"The cause that got me into this to begin with is still alive, and I feel a sense of purpose to participate in that cause. I've drawn a bead on the office of the president of the United States," he said at a Capitol Hill news conference attended by several of his Senate colleagues and dozens of cheering supporters. "The spark and the flame is still alive."

Many Democratic professionals continue to view the 48-year-old Kerrey as one of the Democrats' brightest presidential prospects, despite his lackluster showing in his first national campaign.

He is a Vietnam veteran who won the nation's highest decoration for bravery, as well as an entrepreneur who built a thriving restaurant and health club business from the ground up. After a single term as governor and half a term as a senator, the unabashedly liberal Kerrey enjoys a near-worshipful public approval rating in his heavily Republican home state.

Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton, the

Democratic rival of whom Kerrey had been most critical during the campaign, said after Kerrey's withdrawal that the Nebraska senator "deserves an immense amount of credit" for bringing health care to the top of the Democrats' political agenda.

Paradoxically, even though Kerrey failed to win many votes, polls showed him with some of the highest favorable and lowest negative ratings of any of the Democratic contenders.

But the campaign — only the third he had ever attempted — also exposed some vulnerabilities that

said Bob Burkett, a prominent Los Angeles fund-raiser who was Kerrey's national finance chairman.

Although Kerrey's performance on the stump had improved markedly in recent weeks, his strategists now believe that the campaign's fate was sealed when he finished a distant third in New Hampshire, behind former Sen. Paul Tsongas and Clinton, separated by only a few percentage points from Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin and former California Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown Jr.

"Three points in New Hampshire could have made a tremendous dif-

**"I feel a little like the Jamaican bobsled team. ... We had a lot of spirit, but unfortunately, we didn't get a lot of medals. ... The spark and flame is still alive."**

Sen. Bob Kerrey

had not been apparent when he ran for election in Nebraska.

As Mike McCurry, a Kerrey adviser, put it: "He's now got a lot of appreciation for the difference between a national campaign and a campaign for senator or governor. ... Bob Kerrey's going to be back. He's learned from this campaign how to be ready for that moment."

Kerrey failed to convey a compelling national message in a brief period of time, a challenge especially hard for a politician little known outside his home state. And at times, Kerrey also acted impulsively, juggling his themes and advisers early on in a manner that seemed haphazard, compared to rivals who had painstakingly developed their plans of attack.

Kerrey's decision to enter the race last September was a late and impulsive one. "He didn't catch his stride until it was a little too late,

ference," Burkett said.

Perhaps Kerrey's final chance to salvage his beleaguered campaign came immediately after his victory in the Feb. 25 South Dakota primary, when he briefly enjoyed a surge in attention. Kerrey used the moment to attack Clinton, warning that President Bush would open up the Arkansas governor like a "soft peanut" for his explanation of why he did not serve in Vietnam.

But the offensive was "ill-timed, ill-placed and ill-funded," said Democratic pollster Peter Hart, contending that Kerrey would have been better off using the attention to strengthen his own identity.

Kerrey Thursday said his comments about Clinton's electability were merely "political hyperbole," and he pledged to work feverishly for the candidate who becomes the party's eventual nominee.

# FDIC Rejects Proposed Settlement That Would Have Left Milken in Prison

By Victor F. Zonana

LOS ANGELES TIMES

NEW YORK

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. Thursday rejected a proposed settlement of civil lawsuits that would have left imprisoned financier Michael Milken with a personal fortune of \$125 million and his family and former associates with hundreds of millions of dollars more.

In a letter to senior U.S. District Court Judge Milton Pollack, the 85-year-old jurist who spearheaded the settlement, the agency said its board decided to reject the plan because members lacked "adequate or sufficient information upon which (to) base an informed judgment."

The FDIC's rejection was a severe blow to settlement efforts. If the plan ultimately fails, it could lead to at least a decade of litigation — although those who favor a settlement observed that the rejection was not absolute and final. The agency expressed hopes Thursday that its "concerns can be addressed," suggesting that it might eventually approve the settlement of more than 150 lawsuits involving the 1990 failure of Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc. and myriad other financial institutions which invested in Drexel-issued high-risk, high-yield securities, or junk bonds.

The proposed settlement, under which taxpayers would have recovered about \$500 million for losses

incur in the savings and loan fiasco, had drawn fire from many inside and out of the financial world, including former FDIC chairman L. William Seidman and Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) the powerful chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which oversees the regulation of financial markets.

The objections were based on two factors: that Milken would remain one of the wealthiest men in America, and that U. S. taxpayers would only recover a tiny fraction of the \$500 billion the S&L crisis is ultimately expected to cost them.

The FDIC's decision provoked anger and confusion among the attorneys for parties in the settlement: "The FDIC has obviously reneged on the settlement reached by its attorneys," said one prominent attorney in the case. "I think it's plainly political."

Milken and many of his former associates at Drexel were sued by the

FDIC and the Resolution Trust Corp., which is charged with cleaning up the S&L mess, because many of the S&Ls that failed spectacularly had invested heavily in junk bonds peddled by Milken and his high-yield bond department at Drexel. The FDIC said the settlement was deficient because it failed to:

- Disclose detailed financial information about the defendants

and their contributions to the settlement.

- Give the FDIC a chance to determine if the defendants were making an appropriate payment "considering their alleged civil responsibility."

- Give the FDIC and the Resolution Trust Corp. the right to refuse to participate in the deal if they were unhappy with it.

Milken, as reported, had agreed to pay \$500 million, or 80 percent of his current net worth of \$625 million, into the \$1.3 billion settlement pool. Milken has already paid \$400 million into a Securities and Exchange Commission-administered settlement fund, bringing his total contribution to the settlement to \$900 million.

Of the balance of the settlement, \$100 million would have come from various insurance companies and \$300 million from about 200 former Milken associates at Drexel.

Pollack, who is holding a hearing Friday in what has suddenly become a dramatic attempt to rescue the settlement rather than the pro forma affair that many had expected, could not be reached for comment Thursday.

But last week, in an interview with the Los Angeles Times, the jurist called it "a very fair settlement," adding, "and I'm not easy."

# Anxiety Grows in Ottawa Over Quebec's Threat of Secession

By William Claiborne  
THE WASHINGTON POST

OTTAWA

Anxiety is growing in this 134-year-old capital city over Quebec's threat to hold a secession plebiscite next October if its demands for greater autonomy are not met by the federal government.

Many here fear that instead of being a monument to the cultural duality of the Canadian confederation, the national capital that stretches from Ottawa, in Ontario province, across the Ottawa River to the city of Hull, in Quebec, could become a pawn in a bitter dispute over settlement of property and patronage.

If Quebec separates from Canada, the move would be most severely felt across the river in the predominantly French-speaking region known as the Outaouais, where nearly a third of the workers could lose their federal jobs. Moreover, the Canadian government would find some of its important federal offices and prestigious national museums located in another country.

"The very thought of separation has shaken families and neighbors and friends. The shadow of separation is acutely felt here. When people look over the precipice, it's

frightening," said Jean E. Pigott, chairman of the National Capital Commission, the official property steward for the capital region.

Ironically, Pigott and other officials said, the Quebec side of the river was deliberately developed in the 1970s to give Hull an equal share of the seat of government and transform Ottawa from a capital city to a capital region shared by the French and English cultures.

Beginning in 1969, more than 20,000 public servants were moved across the river, federal buildings were erected, and roads and other services were installed to assure the bicultural character of the burgeoning capital. From 1971 to 1981, 46 percent of all new jobs created on the Quebec side were in the federal public service.

"This is where the two cultures come together. Even if Quebec doesn't separate, there will have to be a rationalizing of the duplication of services, a downsizing," Pigott said, referring to the insistence of even staunch federalists that Canada's 1982 constitution be reformed to transfer many federal responsibilities to the country's 10 provinces.

Cynics frequently cite the artificiality of Ottawa as a capital city, noting that Queen Victoria in 1858

selected what had been the rough-and-tumble lumber town of Bytown to be the Dominion's seat of government because it was halfway between Montreal and Toronto, then fighting for dominance.

Ottawa remained an undistinguished, predominantly English domain until Prime Minister Mackenzie King met the noted French city planner, Jacques Greber, in 1937 and invited him to lay out a new capital plan.

Currently, the capital region's population is over 800,000, including about 200,000 on the Ontario side and 600,000 on the Quebec side. About 100,000 people are in public service, a third of Canada's federal employees.

many dreams of furthering this expansion have been thrown into doubt and talk has centered on the cost of dividing national assets and national liabilities should the province secede.

There have been a flurry of studies designed to forecast the impact of Quebec separation on the capital region. One, conducted by the National Capital Commission, said a continuation of the present federal-provincial relationship would benefit the French side and intensify its French character.

However, the study predicted

that a modified confederation, with more powers being given to the provinces, would result in a reduction of federal departments in Hull. The Quebec side would face a major task of restructuring its economy and could lose some population, the study said.

The third option studied — outright separation of Quebec — would drastically reduce the federal pres-

ence in the Outaouais and would require an overhaul of the Hull region, according to the study.

The City Council of Hull, which frequently is a forum for militant Quebecois separatists, has advocated the formation of a common-market relationship between Canada and Quebec if a majority of voters in that province demand independence.

## Barr Takes Charge at Justice Dept.

By Sharon LaFraniere  
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON

The rap on William P. Barr before he became attorney general was that he had too low a profile. Certainly no one would accuse him of that now. Barr has moved from working behind the scenes to setting the scenes in three months since he took office. Now the question is not if he can handle the spotlight, but what motivates him.

Some former and current Justice Department officials interpret Barr's recent string of "initiatives" on violent crime and illegal immigration as the acts of a good political soldier trying to help his boss. Others are delighted to discover the department with a clearer agenda after years of stupor and friction.

The debate has sharpened since Barr's announcement late last month that the department would broaden its antitrust power in order to gain what he called "a useful tool" against foreign companies that restrict U.S. exports. Antitrust chiefs from two previous administrations said Barr overstated how useful the new policy will be, while

attorneys with an American Bar Association antitrust task force said Barr rightly reclaimed a tool the Reagan administration tossed aside.

"(Are his actions) politically motivated? (Or) self-serving? I'm asking myself those same questions," said one key Justice Department official who likes Barr. "I think it's just too early to decide."

Barr, 41, began his tenure in late November with one big advantage and one big disadvantage. The advantage was Dick Thornburgh, who had appointed Barr deputy attorney general in May 1990. "Such a bad act, Barr can't help but look good," said one department official.

Thornburgh, who ran the Justice Department for three years ending last August, was the type of official who looked unnatural without his suit jacket. Barr, boyish and slightly pudgy, looks uncomfortable in a suit, as if someone had dressed him up against his will.

Thornburgh seemed forced and tight-lipped even when he wanted to appear relaxed; Barr is comfortable sharing insights sharpened by a keen sense of the absurd.

Thornburgh liked memos to correct with his red pen; Barr likes head-on discussions with a big circle of advisers. Thornburgh seemed wary of change; Barr is willing to break with the past.

Barr's big disadvantage is President Bush's campaign. With Bush seemingly unnerved by Patrick J. Buchanan's challenge, anything Barr does is instantly suspect as a political gesture at a time when he needs to act to establish himself.

"If I were doing nothing, people would say I was a do-nothing caretaker," Barr said in an interview last week.

Much of what Barr has done since his confirmation seems to benefit the administration politically. He pleased conservatives by reversing policy and offering Justice Department help to states that want to get out from under court-ordered prison-population caps. His decision to allow the department to pursue antitrust investigations of arrangements that restrict U.S. exports without harming American consumers made the administration look tough against Japan.



## STANFORD SUMMER SESSION

Stanford is a unique experience, one that is open to everyone only once a year. Summer is also the best time of year to be at Stanford. With concerts and fairs and exhibitions, the San Francisco Bay Area is so alive in the summer even the locals have trouble keeping up. And then there is the beauty of Stanford itself, its cloisters and intimate courtyards perfect for outdoor classes. In 1892, a student wrote to his family: "The late afternoon sun deepened the sandstone arches into gold that summer and made the tiled roofs rosier against the blue California skies. It was a dazzling dream come true."

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# OPINION



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*The Tech* (ISSN 0148-9607) is published on Tuesdays and Fridays during the academic year (except during MIT vacations), Wednesdays during January, and monthly during the summer for \$20.00 per year. Third Class by *The Tech*, Room W20-483, 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-0901. Third Class postage paid at Auburn, Mass. Non Profit Org. Permit No. 59720. **POSTMASTER:** Please send all address changes to our mailing address: *The Tech*, PO Box 29, MIT Branch, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-0901. Telephone (617) 253-1541. FAX: (617) 258-8226. Advertising, subscription, and typesetting rates available. Entire contents © 1992 *The Tech*. Printed by MassWeb Printing Co.

## Paul Tsongas: A Democrat with Integrity and Vision

Massachusetts is one of 11 states where voters will make their choice for the Democratic presidential nomination Tuesday, and we urge all eligible members of the MIT community to exercise their right to vote.

### Editorial

Former Sen. Paul E. Tsongas started his campaign over a year ago with the vision that President Bush was vulnerable. He was among the first to publicly state that postwar euphoria would end quickly and that support for Bush would disintegrate once voters realized the disastrous condition of the American economy.

Tsongas also benefits from untarnished integrity. While there are doubts about the sincerity of many of his competitors, Tsongas is as worthy of this nation's trust as any potential president could be. Tsongas has also removed speculation about his electability with this week's strong showings in Maryland, Utah, Idaho, and Colorado. His economic strategy is well thought-out and makes more sense than the other Democrats' plans.

While Tsongas, a Lowell native, may lack charisma, the nation needs an effective leader, not a suave charmer. This country needs a leader with economic sense as well as concern for the welfare of all. Tsongas fits this bill. We urge readers to

cast their ballots for Tsongas.

It is customary for us to also endorse a candidate for the Republican nomination. This year, however, we feel we cannot.

Bush clearly has not demonstrated the ability to lead this nation. He has shown sparks of brilliance on foreign policy matters, but at the same time has bungled many other opportunities, including his visit to Japan and his response to the massacre in Tiananmen Square. His handling of domestic issues has been even worse.

Patrick J. Buchanan makes a depressing alternative at best. None of his past positions in the Nixon and Reagan administrations have required (nor has he demonstrated) leadership. Buchanan is Tsongas' proverbial "Santa Claus in disguise" on taxation issues. Many of his "isolationist" or "revisionist" stands are thinly veiled racism or xenophobia. He is not worthy of being president.

Voting for Buchanan to "send a message to Bush" is a poor idea. The enemy of your enemy is not necessarily your friend. Voters should cast their ballot for the candidate they feel is best qualified for the job, not because he represents some protest movement. Neither Republican candidate is worthy of Americans' support.

## Jerry Brown: Vote on Issues, Not Electability

By Karen Kaplan  
DISSENTING

Although he has practically no chance of winning the democratic presidential nomination, I support former California Governor Jerry Brown for president.

Flakiness and 800 numbers aside, Gov. Brown has innovative and realistic ideas for bringing out the best in America. His Economic Bill of Rights would guarantee every citizen a living wage, shelter, freedom from hunger, and access to education and health care. Brown has developed a more efficient energy policy that protects the environment, saves money, and increases national security. He sup-

ports a more simple and fair federal tax system, sensible defense spending, and a coherent foreign policy.

Brown has proven his ability to turn these ideas into realities. During his two terms as governor of the world's eighth largest economy, he created over two million jobs — fully one quarter of all new jobs in the country in that period. While in Sacramento, Brown cut taxes, promoted anti-discrimination legislation, enacted consumer protection measures, and made California a leader in alternative energy use, conservation, and environmental protection.

Ideas and issues are more important than electability. I encourage you to cast your vote for Jerry Brown.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Harassment on Ride Van Causes Discomfort

The Tech received a copy of this letter addressed to Dean for Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs Arthur C. Smith.

I would like to file a formal harassment incident report. I am not sure if you are the correct person to notify, but it is not made clear in the harassment booklet whom I should speak to.

Late Saturday evening I was taking A Safe Ride from a party back to my house. A friend, who had also been at the party, was riding the van to her house, so we got on together.

The van was pretty crowded; I sat in the middle seat between two fraternity brothers. The one sitting on the outside got up and moved to the rear seat, so I motioned to my friend that she could come sit next to me.

"Is that your girlfriend?" the man who moved asked. My friend just half-laughed, and sat next to me. "She laughs like 'Shit, no!'" the man said. Then he paused. "Yeah, he's got that pink triangle shit on. He touches my leg, I have to stab him."

He went on to talk to the men he was with, and I discovered they were going to a party at a fraternity which shares a stop with my house. I made sure that I was the first person out of the van, and walked very quickly to my house before they could follow me.

Do I expect too much if I expect A Safe Ride to be safe for everyone? I certainly didn't feel safe on it that evening. A Safe Ride is there so students can feel secure; I felt threatened. I often take A Safe Ride because I'm concerned about gay-bashing, especially since my house is near the Fens, which is notorious for homophobic assaults. It doesn't seem like A Safe Ride is protection enough.

Harassment of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals on this campus is too often overlooked. Tuesday's *Tech*, for example, reported the harassment of "women and minorities," yet statistics about lesbian and gay harassment were conspicuously absent. Until this changes, I can't feel safe. There needs to be a standard procedure of filing harassment complaints; there needs to be a message sent to homophobic people that, "No, it's not okay to harass someone because of their sexual orientation. You can't get away with that."

I want to feel safe on my campus. It frightens me that what is called A Safe Ride isn't

safe for everyone, that my campus is not safe for me. It angers me.

I would appreciate it if you would contact me about this incident, and if some action could be taken by the Institute to stop harassment of all kinds on our campus.

David R. Futato '94

## Survey Skews Picture of Harassment at MIT

The results of the recent undergraduate harassment survey ["Nearly Half of Women Surveyed Report They Were Harassed," March 3] are, as Provost Samuel J. Keyser and President Charles M. Vest suggest, disturbing. However, it is the conclusions being drawn from the survey that are most troubling. Begin by looking at the test sample. Only 49 percent of those receiving the questionnaire responded. Although this is a good response rate for a survey of this type, the subject matter of the questions needs to be considered.

The subject of harassment is emotionally loaded. If someone feels they have been a victim, they are more likely to take the time to respond because it is a way for them to express their views anonymously. Those who don't feel that harassment is important are likely to toss this survey aside with the dozens of other surveys that find their ways into MIT mailboxes throughout the term. If these assumptions are true, then the sample is no longer a random sample and the results are no longer representative of the general population. Claims that "nearly half of women surveyed report they were harassed" lose their punch.

However, this is not the only problem with the survey. The questions were leading and the survey as a whole showed a bias toward the assumption that harassment is a problem for everyone. As one student predicted, "I would not dismiss the possibility of a problem. However, the outcome of this survey will certainly lead its authors to the conclusion that there is one." Here is why: Although there is a section on "Attitudes and Definitions," responses to this section were not used to weigh the meaning of responses to questions on "Personal Experience and Incidents." Harassment is a highly subjective topic. There are innumerable shades of grey dependent on the attitude of the "victim" and the intent of the "perpetrator." In general, a person cannot

be harassed unless he believes he is being harassed. I have been subject to "unwanted teasing," "pressure for dates," "sexually suggestive looks," and "pressure for sexual favors." But I did not consider these acts to be harassment. However, the survey and its results are presented in such a way as to suggest that these acts are always harassment whether I, the object of these acts, consider them to be or not.

You don't need a PhD in statistics to know that a biased test given to a non-random sample of people will not produce meaningful results. However, Vest and Keyser wish to use these results as a springboard for discussion leading to changes in the MIT harassment policy. Kenneth Oye and William Watson claim that "One must conclude from these survey results that women at MIT are forced to live and work in an environment that is much more hostile and much more demanding than it is for men." I argue that one must not conclude anything from this survey other than the fact the harassment does occur. To draw more rigorous conclusions such as taking the numbers at face value or making sweeping statements about the female experience at MIT is irresponsible. To base a policy on these results is ridiculous.

Vest and Keyser wish to use this survey "wisely to create a community where all members treat each other with decency and civility." While this is a noble objective, it's a bit utopian. All we can truly hope to do is educate people in order to raise awareness, and to set up support channels for those who feel they have been victimized.

Any attempt to define guidelines for behavior will be: a source of paranoia for the professor who is afraid to hold a door open for his UROP student for fear he may accidentally brush against her, an excuse for the hypersensitive feminist who doesn't like an editorial cartoon printed in the school newspaper, a further hindrance to the already shy student who wishes to ask his classmate on a date, and a source of misery for the individual who has his past dragged out and scrutinized because someone accused him of making lewd comments.

The administration seems intent on writing down a policy. I can only hope that their policy is better written than their survey. This is not a witch hunt. There are real people on all sides of the issue.

Courtney Moriarta '93

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters, from Page 4

## Column Irresponsible; Impugns Counterpoint

The recent column by Bill Jackson '93 ["*Thistle, Counterpoint War Rages in Print*," Feb. 28] was a piece of irresponsible journalism. In his characteristically pompous style, intended to aggrandize himself and *The Tech*, Mr. Jackson conveniently mixed specious facts and tawdry opinion to impugn the integrity of staff members of both *The Thistle* and *Counterpoint*.

Indeed, legitimate differences of opinion exist between *Counterpoint* and *The Thistle* in the area of student journalism. *The Tech* is not beyond the fray of this conflict, considering its substantial control of student journalism resources. Yet instead of responsibly and objectively reporting on all the issues involved, and then perhaps commenting on them, *The Tech* allowed Jackson to report iso-

lated facts and editorialize on them at the same time.

Jackson has a history of attacking and trivializing competing student journals and journalists. A public apology is unlikely to be forthcoming from either Jackson or *The Tech*. But members of the community should be aware of this unethical journalism, so that they may demand better behavior, or seek the truth elsewhere.

P. Angela Hsieh '94  
and the editorial staff  
of *Counterpoint*

## Abortion Article meant as 'Facts and Figures'

The *Tech* received a copy of this letter addressed to Alfredo J. Armendariz '93, whose letter in the last issue of *The Tech* challenged an article by Yeh.

First, let me state that I was not attempting to "justify the killings" by giving a historical

background of abortion. When I was given the opportunity to write the article, I was asked to write a "facts and figures" article. It was meant to be mainly a synthesis of facts rather than my opinion about the morality of abortion.

My argument is not that abortion should be a means of "population control." Rather, if a woman wants to have an abortion, she should be allowed that decision, and her decision may indeed be influenced by factors in her life including her ability to support — to feed, clothe, and care for — a child. I agree wholeheartedly with Monnica Williams that "any woman who must say 'I had to get an abortion; I had no choice because I have no money' is a shame on us all." Yes, it is a shame and I wish it weren't so. Like everybody else, I wish we had enough food to feed the United States, let alone the world. However, I do not have a solution for these problems and I cannot personally insure that these poor women have the means to meet standards of living that every human being

deserves. Therefore, if they feel that they simply cannot raise a child at that point in their lives, then it is their right to have an abortion.

Again, on the question of adoption, I do indeed realize that many people of color are living "in poverty and near-poverty conditions and cannot afford the adoption fees." Something should be done to change the way this system works. But until it is changed, I must continue to point out that it is not the perfect solution some anti-choice activists would make it seem.

Emily Yeh '93

## Tech Applauded for Not Running Holocaust Ad

I applaud *The Tech's* decision not to run the advertisement from the "Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust" ["No room for 'Revisionists' in *The Tech*," March 3, "*Tech* has Responsibility to Print Truth," March 3]. Instead, *The Tech* ran two columns which explained the situation and the reasoning behind the decision not to run the advertisement. These columns both pointed out a growing problem in our country — the growth of racism and hatred.

The columns by Josh Hartmann and Bill Jackson showed this problem exists. If *The Tech* had printed the advertisement, it would have given credence to the argument. The only way to fight this problem of anti-Semitism is through education. Unfortunately, ads such as CODOH's misuse our means of education. If anyone wants more information about the Holocaust, the library is as far as you need to go.

This year, Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) will fall on April 30. In light of this advertisement and other public disclaimers of the Holocaust, I urge everyone to write this day down on their calendars. On that Thursday, if the MIT community can join together to show solidarity for the memory of the Holocaust, then maybe we can defeat CODOH and its supporters.

Michelle Greene '93  
President  
MIT Hillel

Interested in writing about safety, harassment, or women's issues? How about international or national politics, or anything else at all? Be at *The Tech* this Sunday at 6:30 and find out how to get your ideas into print! Come early (6:00) to eat free pizza and meet other staffers. Want more information? Call Bill or Matt at x3-1541.

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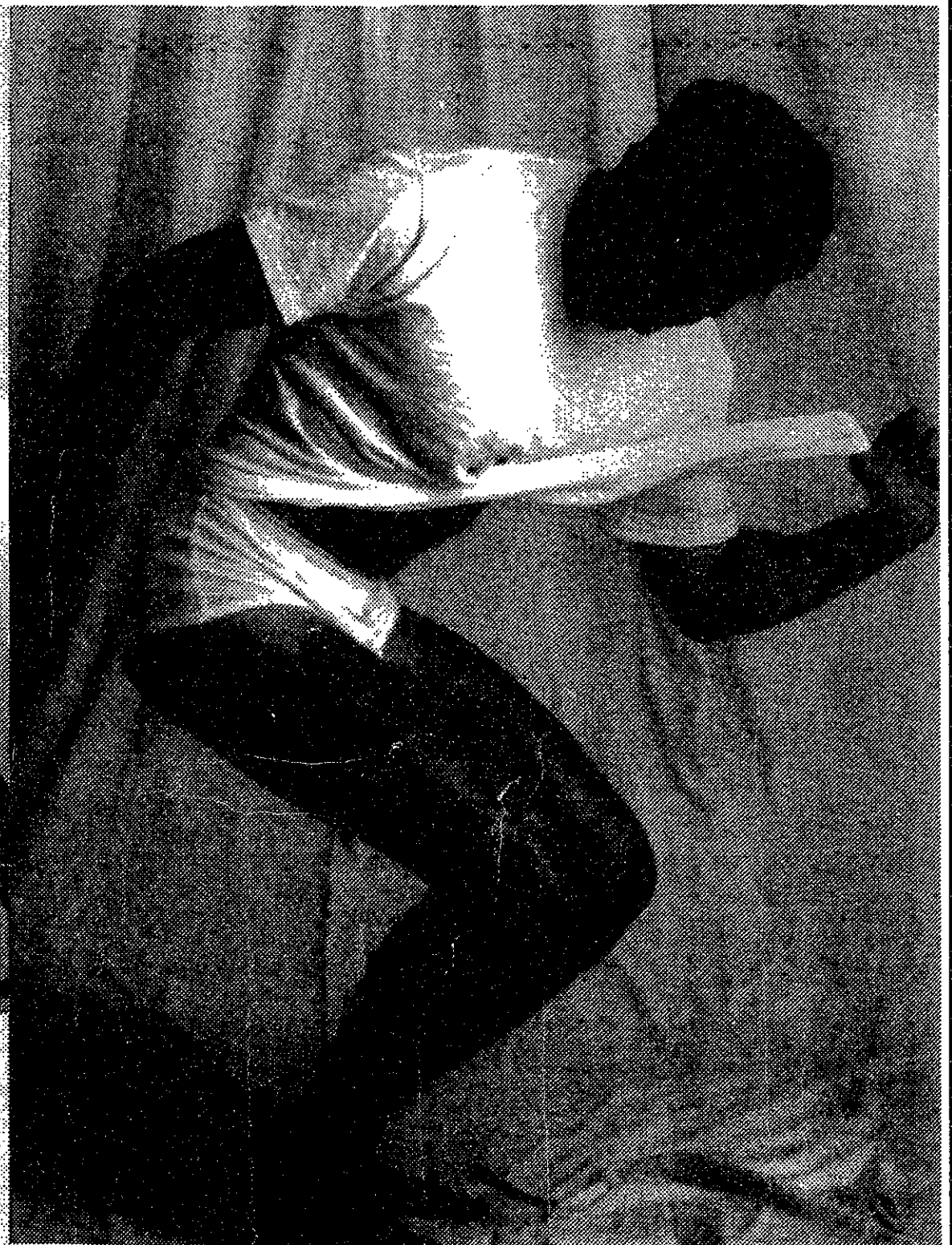
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# THE ARTS

## 'Kerouac' examines *The Road Warrior* from a beat perspective

By Jill Kerouac

As I was watching *The Road Warrior*, I had to think of Dean Moriarty. As the machine whirled and clicked like some gone cat on the skins, I licked my lips and rubbed my belly, just like Dean would have. My tired eyes set upon the long highways of New South Wales, reminding me of the purity of the road. Reminding me of my days with Dean, blasting to Denver with the highway unrolling and hugging our tires as if glued to our groove.

Only Max had it worse than me and Dean ever did. World War Three was a memory. The bombs had beat out of time, crashing, falling with a cacophonous clatter leaving the world looking like a stretch of Highway 99 I remember outside of Fresno. There are no rules in Max's world, only gas. Everybody wants a tank of juice, and for the ruthless the highway is one long self-service station with a glorious sign in its window, insinuating: Please kill attendant before you pump.

The film opens with Max running flat out, balling that jack away from some crazy cats not digging his thing. Max doesn't give a damn about anything, except gasoline. He crawls like a big spider through the streets. His excitement blows out of his eyes in stabs of fiendish light. He rolls his neck in spastic ecstasy. Attempting to steal some juice, Max meets this crazy, tea smoking, whirlybird pilot who, in order to save his own life, tells Max where he can dig all the juice he wants. The Gyro Captain leads him to a hilltop lookout where they can eyeball the tank. Nothing happens that night; they go to sleep. Everything happens the next day.

The remainder of the movie is spent showing how Max gets his juice and kills all the followers of The Lord Humungous. That hip cat leads a band of rebels that look like they just came from Mission Street in Frisco. All

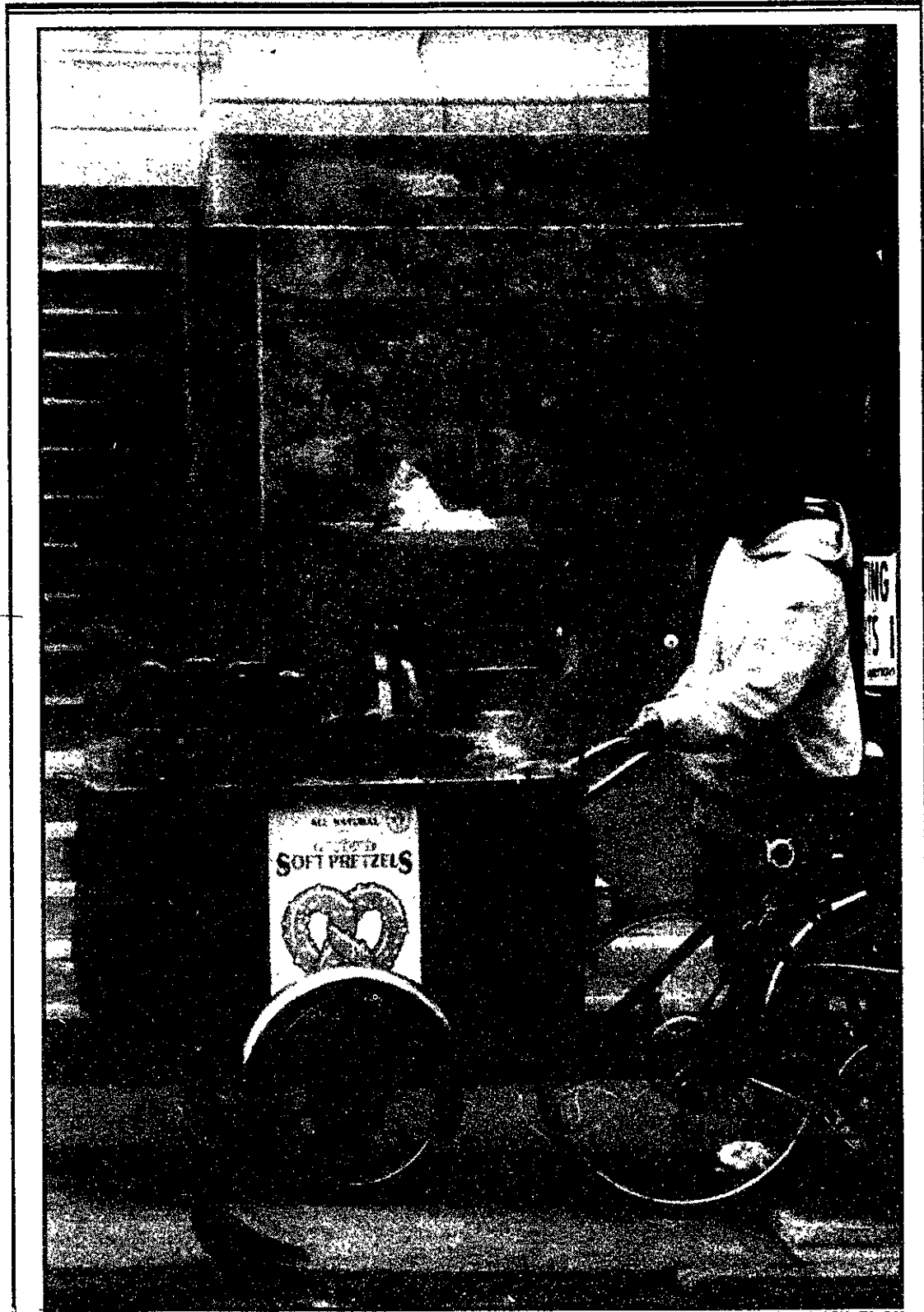
they know is violence; that's their score. And in the end they come up dead even, but none the wiser.

Max digs the streets and gets his kicks. In a time of chaos, where man has chosen to ignore law and order, Max stands for nothing. He's a sonofabitch just like the rest of them. Everything just is, and that's the deal. When Max finds this bleeding cat on the side of the road, he agrees to carry him to safety. Max does not do this out of love for his fellow man; he does this for juice. Sometimes he helps people, and sometimes he hurts people, but he always blows true. Max is BEAT - the root, the soul of beatific.

*The Road Warrior*, sequel to the 1978 cult classic *Mad Max*, is frantically directed by Australian George Miller. His fast paced scenes sing skat. Here's a guy and everybody's there. It's up to him to put down what's on everybody's mind. He starts the first scene, then lines up his ideas, people, yeah, yeah, but get it, then he rises to his fate and has to blow equal to it. All of a sudden in the middle of the movie he gets it - I looked up and knew. Time stops. He's filling empty space with the substance of our lives, confessions of his bellybottom strain, remembrance of ideas, rehashes of old visions. He takes us on a journey, across boundaries of morality and mortality and back again so everybody knows it's not the movie that counts but IT.

The movie lasted longer than a bag of good tea, but I grooved the whole time. The final chase scene hit me hard, like a big shot of heroin in the mainline vein; like a gulp of wine late in the afternoon that makes you shudder; my feet tingled. I can go no further; I am sweating telling about it, dig?

Jill Kerouac is a pseudonym for Glen Weinstein '92 and Henry Sawtelle'93. This is the first of a series of articles in the style of a well-known author.



STAFF PHOTO BY MICHAEL OH

A common sight alongside 77 Massachusetts Ave. is everyone's friend — the pretzel man.

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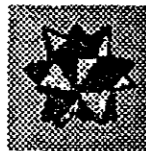
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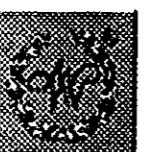
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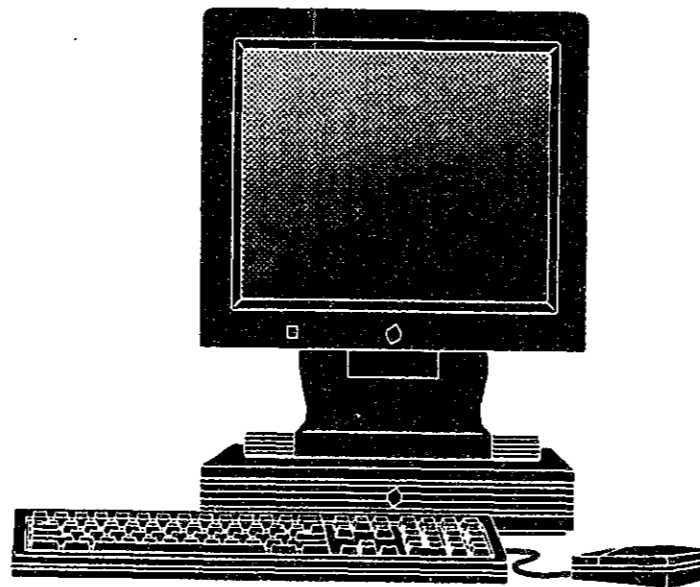
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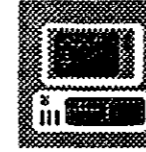
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# Nick's Comedy Stop hosts Boston's funniest college students

## THE BEANPOT PLAYOFFS

Nick's Comedy Stop.  
Wednesday, March 4, 8:30 p.m.

By Joanna Stone  
ARTS EDITOR

Network news reporters, camera crews, columnists, students from colleges all across the city and a Tech reviewer gathered at Nick's Comedy Stop Wednesday night to see who would be named Boston's funniest college student and walk away with fame, the title, a trophy, and \$1,000.

In the first annual "Beanpot Playoffs," Nick's Comedy Stop has held a series of competitions over the past several weeks to choose the funniest student from each of eight colleges in the Boston area. Students from a single college competed on one of several designated college nights, and the winner from each was awarded a trophy, \$100, and an invitation to the playoffs.

Judging by the size of the crowds that gathered and the news coverage that ensued, the competition was clearly a public relations agency's dream come true. It was also a highly enjoyable evening filled with a wealth of young talent and a lot of laughs.

My own bias duly noted, I thought MIT's contestant, Glen Weinstein '92, should have won the competition. Weinstein received the most consistently positive response from the audience. The audience did not stop laughing from his introduction — "I'm the funniest man at MIT, which is a dubious honor at best. It's like being named the tallest pygmy." — through his description of the woman he recently began dating. "Courting is the appropriate word. I feel like I'm on trial ... 'Your honor, if the defendant will go out with me I promise to be a gentleman, to hold the door for her ... Objection! My client is a woman of the nineties.' " to his admission that he

doesn't sleep with anyone he doesn't like unless he's known her for a very long time.

The student who did win the competition was Julie Goldman, from Emerson College, the only female contestant. "Goldman won because she was unique," judges were reported to have said on the evening news Wednesday. While most of the comedians' acts were deadpan and demure, Goldman screamed and grunted into the microphone, imitated male masturbation on stage, and told the audience that the reason she'd become a stand-up comic was because it was the only occupation in which you hold a phallus up to your mouth for five minutes.

I didn't particularly like Goldman's act. I didn't really know what to make of it. I laughed a lot, but it was in response to the nervous energy she created and the strange mixture of shock and pity which her act inspired. She talked about her obesity, her lack of a sex life, her poor relationship with her grandmother. Her speech was peppered with curses and accompanied by obscene gestures.

As another arts writer, Leslie Barnett '92, put it, "She played on her weight and the fact that she was a woman and could man-bash." I enjoyed the man-bashing and as a woman, I was glad to see a female comedian receive recognition, though I thought there were several other contestants who were far superior.

Most of the comedians had their especially humorous moments. I thought I'd heard all the Jeffrey Dahmer jokes possible, but the contestant from Tufts University managed to come up with a new one: "Jeffery Dahmer just came out with a new book, a cookbook. It's called *Cooking With Friends*." The Harvard University contestant also discussed new book releases: "The Time-Life Do-It-Yourself Books came out with a new series, *Do-It-Yourself Surgery*."

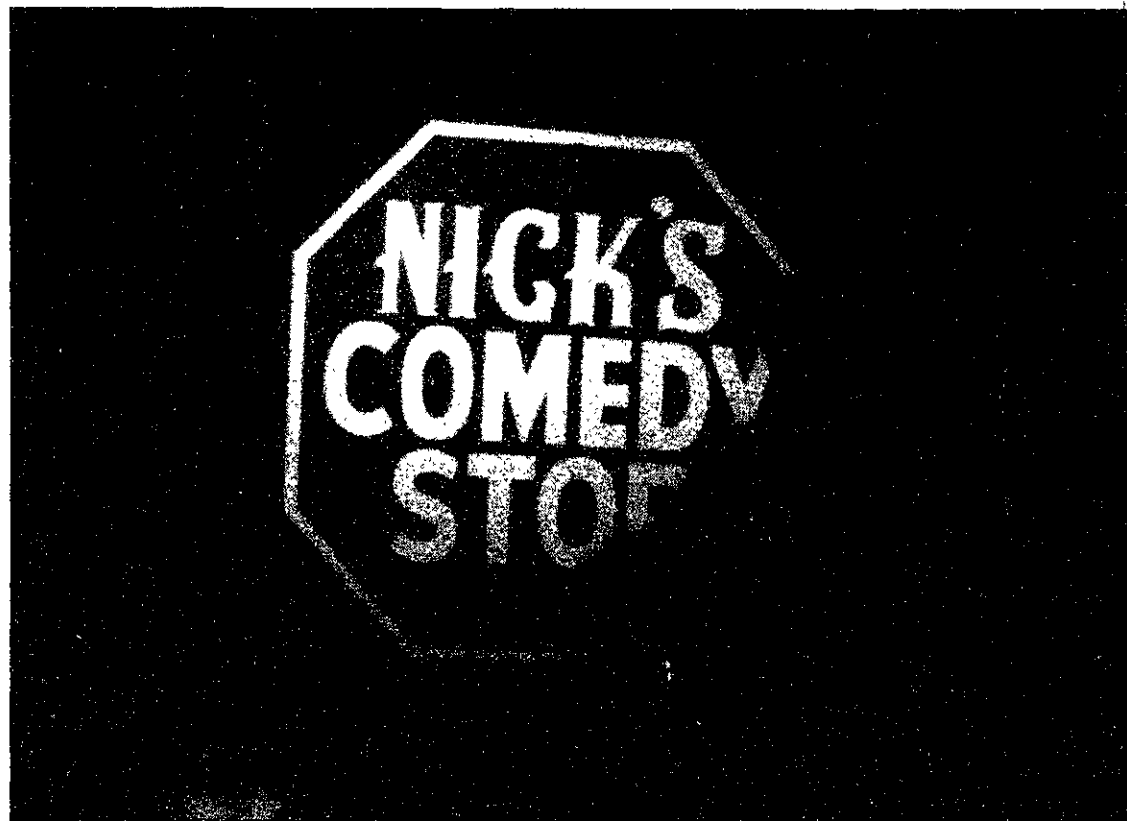
The Northeastern candidate played on a

common experience of his audience. "When you go back home, people say, 'Oh, you go to college in Boston, you must go to Cheers all the time.' Yeah, we do, and when we fall down drunk there, they rush us over to St. Elsewhere for treatment."

The evening's featured guest stars, stand-up comedians Caito & Moran, performed during the judges' deliberation. The team capitalized on the college audience theme, singing songs that were dear to the collective memory of the audience, such as "Conjunction-Junction, What's Your Function?" and the theme from The Monkees' television show. After the sing-along ended, Caito expressed doubt that MIT students' childhoods were similar to those of their peers, saying, "All the


MIT students are saying what the \$#@&?" As the winner was about to be revealed, Caito and Moran brought their act to a climatic close with a rap version of "The Brady Bunch" theme song.

MIT may not have won the competition, but we are all indebted to Weinstein for raising the image of MIT students in the minds of others. Waiting for the T after the show, one unidentified audience member could be heard saying, "She shouldn't have won, that guy from MIT should have won." Imagine that! A student from another school deigning to admit that we at MIT aren't only smart, hard working, and ultimately successful (all taken as commonly acknowledged truth), but that some of us even have a sense of humor.



Glenn Weinstein '92 performs at Nick's Comedy Stop.

STAFF PHOTO BY JOANNA E. STONE




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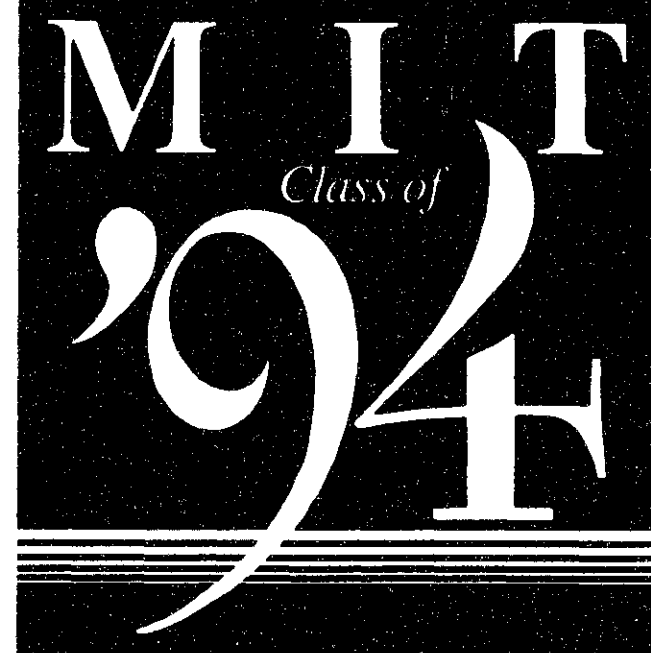
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# Balfour

# Bush Policy Lifts Biotech Restrictions; May Help MIT

Biotech, from Page 1

But she said companies might license more MIT patents, which garners revenue for the Institute. MIT researchers earn between 15 and 20 biotechnology-related patents each year, Nelsen estimated.

Professor of Biology Robert A. Weinberg '64, who is involved in cancer research, said the effects at MIT will probably be minimal. "There could be a trickle-down effect if the biotech industry became much more profitable and as a consequence were able to support basic

research," he said.

### Biggest impact for agriculture

The new policy asserts that "although the new biotechnology processes can be used to produce risky organisms, so can traditional techniques; ... Indeed, the new technologies of molecular modification may increase the potential for safe, planned introduction" of genetically-altered organisms into the environment.

The policy change is likely to have the biggest effect on genetically-altered plant and agricultural

products, since they will no longer be subject to stricter regulations than their parent organisms.

"The biggest impact will be in plant biology," Sharp said. "Release of genetically engineered organisms and plants into the environment will not be viewed as releasing a potentially dangerous plant, but as another product, a genetic variant," he said.

Nelsen agreed, saying, "I think you're going to see an effect not so much in the pharmaceutical area, but in the agricultural and environmental areas, where those regulato-

ry barriers loom larger in proportion to the potential reward."

Some Bush critics have complained that the new policy is too lenient and does not contain sufficient measures to ensure that genetically engineered products are safe for release into the environment. Without any natural enemies, they argue, such novel organisms might reproduce unchecked and disturb the delicate balance of nature.

Supporters say these concerns are unfounded, and that this shift in thinking was long overdue.

"The singling out of biotechnol-

ogy products was no longer justifiable in light of their proven record over the past years as being safe," said Weinberg.

Sharp called the change "a responsible move" in "an appropriate direction." He said, "I think the environmental safety issue has been dramatically overplayed by a number of people.

"It's not a correction in which no regulation is left in place — a significant amount is still there," Sharp continued.

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## UAC Debates Proposal to Shift Control of Activities Fee to UA

UA Council, from Page 1

MIT likes to compare itself with, and MIT ranked 17th" in the amount of money per person that the administration allows students to allocate to student groups, a UA study states.

"I don't see where the student control is" if every student is required to pay for these services if voted upon, said David J. Kessler '94.

It is "a dangerous argument" to

pay only for the services that are used, said David W. Hogg '92. "I think it's much better for there to be a pool of resources," he said.

Kathleen Mahoney '92 thought that the general student body was relatively uneducated about financial issues. She said she would rather have FinBoard choose for the students.

Part of the plan is to provide every undergraduate with access to athletic facilities without having to deal with the current athletic card system. Approximately 70 percent

of undergraduates have purchased an athletic card this year and about 90 percent use athletic facilities outside of the physical education classes, Kirby said.

This plan would prevent the unfairness that arises from students borrowing other students' cards, thereby avoiding paying for those services, Kirby added. Additionally, he said the plan would eliminate the bureaucracy of having to check if a student had an athletic card and the office personnel needed to process such information.

The athletic department is "giving serious consideration" to this plan, Kirby said. "This would give them the opportunity" not to raise the price of an athletic card, or even to lower the price, because the costs would be spread over all undergraduates, and some of the administrative costs would also be eliminated, he added.

Students would not have to pay for athletic cards out of their own pockets, Kirby said. The cost could be incorporated as part of the financial aid package, he added.

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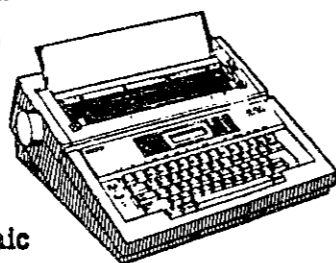
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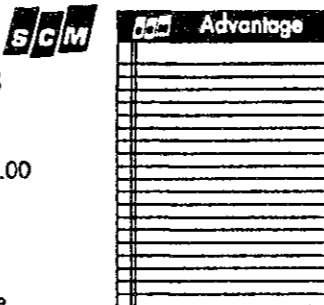
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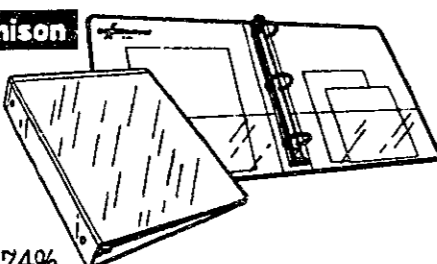
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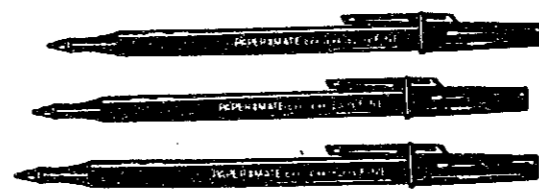
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# New Class of 1994 Ring Features the Natural Beaver

simple," said ring committee member Hea Kyung Chung '94.

The large 1994 on the class side of the ring is displayed on the pages of an open book. "The idea behind the book was to commemorate [former Dean for Undergraduate Education Margaret L.A.] MacVicar's death, who founded the UROP program here. The ribbon-bookmark in the pages of the UROP program on it, also," said Chung. A frontal view of the Great Dome was chosen over the side view, which was used last year, so that "the trees that line Killian Court could be included," Chung added.

For the traditional seal side, "we chose a straight 'MIT' instead of a curved 'MIT,' because we thought it looked better aesthetically. This, however, was a close vote," said committee member Ann Chen '94. "MENS ET MANUS," which is our school motto, is written on a scroll whose ends roll into a nine and a four, and below that is the Phoenix, which symbolizes knowledge and experience gained from being at MIT," she said. Chen finished her description by saying that the lamp of knowledge's flames, which flicker in the shape of the numeral 127 — since the Class of 1994 is MIT's 127th graduating class, sits between the two traditional men on the seal.

The ideas for the new design were taken from surveys and suggestion sheets the committee put out in Lobby 7 last fall. The committee then voted upon the new design elements. "We required a 60% majority for an idea to pass, but most decisions for the design ended up being unanimous," said Babiec. The

design of the traditional ring was finalized by the committee on December 12.

### Balfour gets account

Balfour was chosen over Jostens to handle the Class of 1994's account because it offered a better package deal. "If you compare the cheapest Jostens graduate ring, which costs \$375, you can see that Balfour, whose most expensive ring is \$390, is the better deal," Babiec said. He also mentioned that the account is not particularly lucrative for Balfour, but is highly sought after by many ring companies because it is considered "a prestige account."

Past years have shown that the traditional ring is far more popular than the dinner or women's fashion ring. "No more than 60 people a year have bought the dinner ring, and those that did usually also bought a traditional ring," Babiec said.

### Most will buy

Student opinion on the ring was mixed. M. Lily Datta '94 was pleased with the committee's design. "I think they did a really good job with it — the detailing makes our class really unique. I especially like the hidden MIT in the beaver's fur," she commented.

Peter K. Verprauskus '94 agreed with Datta. "The design is great — especially the reference to MIT through the fire hose. All things considered, I'm really impressed with the job that the ring committee did," he said.

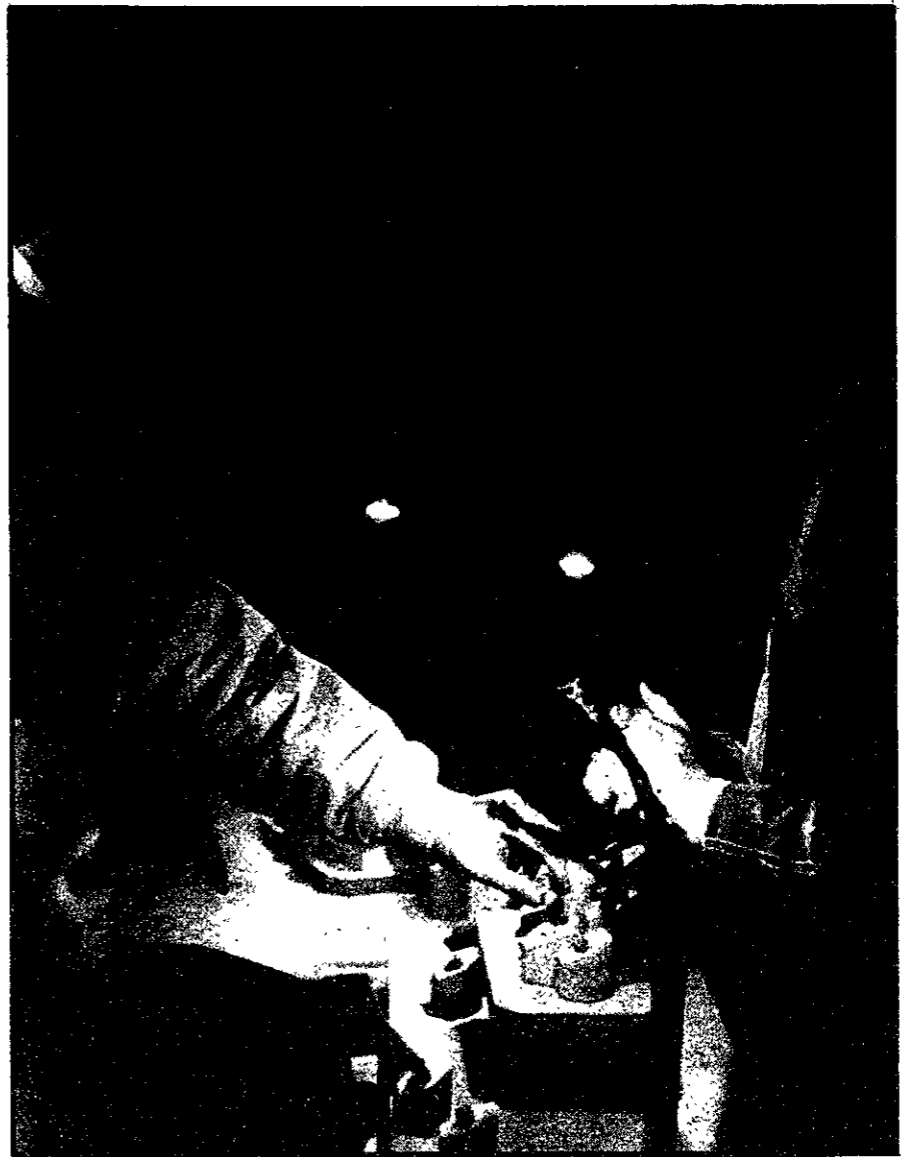
"It's okay. It's a beaver ... I'm going to buy one because it's one of those things you've just got to have," said Phillip S. Cho '94.

Some students, like Frank C. Popp '94, were unhappy with this year's ring. "This year's beaver looks wimpy. It has MIT carved into its posterior, and it is staring blankly into space. Last year's beaver was bad-ass; I'm very disappointed with this year's," he said.

Another complaint was the price of the ring. "I'm not going to buy a ring ... it's too expensive. I'd rather buy 30 CDs," commented Mohammed A. Hendawi '94.

Despite these mixed feelings, the class ring is expected to sell well. "Usually less than 50% of the class shows up for the ring premiere. This year, well over 50% — more than 700 people — stopped by," said Chen.

"By graduation, 90 percent of the Class of 1994 will have purchased a class ring. Seventy to 75 percent will buy within the next two weeks," Babiec said.



STAFF PHOTO BY HUGH MORGENBESSER  
A member of the class of '94 examines the newly unveiled rings Tuesday night.

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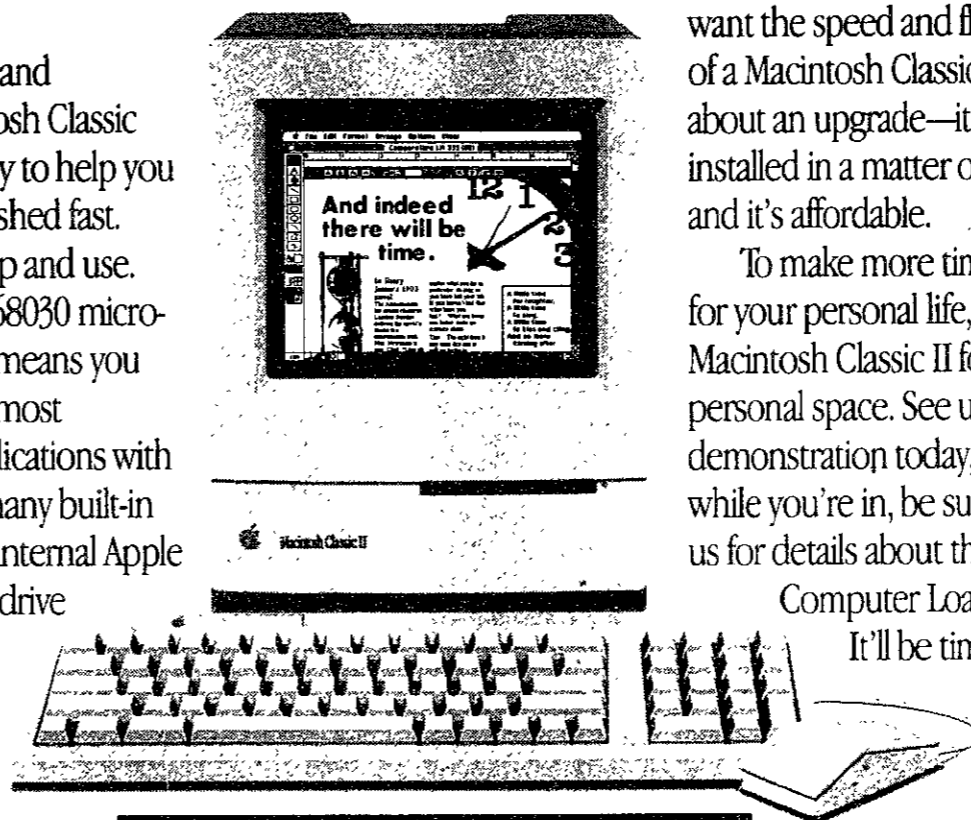
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