

## Essay Exam Pass Rate Plummet; Math Rate Rises

By David D. Hsu  
NEWS EDITOR

Only 17 percent of freshmen passed the Freshman Essay Evaluation this year, down from 48 percent last year.

The Committee on the Writing Requirement decided to raise the passing score, resulting in the pass rate drop, said Coordinator for the Writing Requirement Leslie C. Perelman.

However, 58 percent of fresh-

men passed their Pre-Calculus Mathematics Diagnostic, up from 49 percent last year. Additionally, students on average finished the math exam in one-third the time as last year.

### Reaction mixed

It is "very awkward to have only 17 percent passing the test," said Ronald S. Demon '99, who did not pass the essay evaluation. The passing rate gives the impression that

"this class is not as strong as previous classes," he said.

The Institute "should have a consistent grading system from year to year," Demon said.

Because the exams come after a summer away from school, freshmen may not be fully prepared, said Cheryl M. Howell '99. "It took me a while to remember what to do," Howell said. "When you're thrust back into it, you don't know what to do."

In general, the exams were pretty straightforward, Howell said.

The math diagnostic was "a bit more difficult than the practice exam," said Demon, who passed the test. But, "it was pretty fair," he said.

### Stricter cutoff for essays

In terms of how students did on the essay evaluation and the quality of the essays, "it was the same as other years," Perelman said.

However, only 173 students taking the essay test passed the stricter standards, Perelman said. Seventy-three percent received "not acceptable" scores, and 9.5 percent received "not acceptable — subject recommended" scores, he said.

Last year, 48 percent received satisfactory scores, up 9 percent from 2 years ago.

Another 53 students passed with

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Katin L. Shields '99 and Amy B. Laverdiere '99 carried clothes from a car into McCormick Hall yesterday. Freshmen received their housing assignments Wednesday night and moved to their new dormitories yesterday.

TIFFANY LIN—THE TECH

## Freshmen Can Take Combined Calculus

### 18.01A, 18.02A run through IAP or spring

By Christopher Falling  
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

Freshmen will be able to take a combined Calculus I and II this year as part of changes to the core curriculum.

New, shorter versions of Calculus I (18.01) and Calculus II (18.02) have been added, while Introduction to Solid State Chemistry (3.091) has undergone a substantial revision.

### New calculus classes

The introduction of the new Calculus I (18.01A) along with its counterpart, Calculus II (18.02A) will allow freshmen to complete a six week version of 18.01. The remaining eight weeks cover the first portion of 18.02, said Joanne E. Jonsson, academic administrator for Department of Mathematics. The remainder of 18.02 can be completed during either Independent Activities Period or the spring semester.

The purpose of 18.01A is to provide a quick review of 18.01 for students who have taken a full year of calculus in high school, said Professor of Mathematics Arthur P. Mattuck, the instructor for the first six weeks.

"18.01A/18.02A will be good for a lot of students with advanced placement but feel their background is a bit rusty and could benefit from a six week review of calculus," Mattuck said.

Mathematics Instructor Karen E. Smith will teach the class for the last eight weeks of the fall. The instructor for 18.02A during IAP or the first six weeks in the spring is not yet known.

Mattuck said that it would be "very unreasonable" for a student to be enrolled in both 18.01A/18.02A

and 8.01L but said he assumed 8.01L will not be held at the same time in IAP.

### 3.091 revised significantly

In order to give freshmen the freedom to choose a chemistry course without concerns about potential majors, 3.091 has been broadened to include certain topics while maintaining a focus on the solid state, said Professor of Materials Science and Engineering Donald R. Sadoway.

A unit on liquids and solutions has been added, Sadoway said, which includes acid-base equilibria and solubility rules.

"These topics have been added to give the student a complete kernel [of knowledge] about basic chemistry," Sadoway said.

To parallel the new topics, "there has been a major initiative to bring forth examples from environmentally related topics," Sadoway said.

### Hope to change requirements

The issue of reorganizing recommendations and requirements that revolve around 3.091 and Principles of Chemical Science (5.11) has not yet been addressed because it would be premature, Sadoway said.

Traditionally, students taking 3.091 choose an engineering major, except for those who plan to be chemical engineers, Sadoway said.

Sadoway said that he expects that within MIT, subjects that have always required 5.11 will begin to also accept 3.091 as progress is made with the new course, Sadoway said. "I am hoping that medical schools will recognize 3.091 as an acceptable alternative to 5.11," he added.

## City Days Activities Promote Outreach

By Orli G. Bahcall

Today at Kresge Oval, MIT students will lead 400 fourth through sixth graders from 14 Cambridge public schools in the fourth annual City Days, said Tracy F. Purinton, the event's coordinator.

The Public Service Center began the City Days program three years ago in order to encourage new community outreach programs, Purinton said.

Forty groups, including fraternities, sororities, independent living groups, and nine dor-

mitories, have volunteered to run activities for the visiting Cambridge students, Purinton said.

City Days offers educational events along with sports and crafts, Purinton said. The educational activities focus on the fun that elementary students can have applying what they learn in school, she said.

In one activity, participants will try to package an egg so it will not break after being dropped, Purinton said. Children will also learn how to build the most aerodynamically sound paper airplane, she said.

Guest speakers include Public Service Cen-

ter Steering Committee Co-Chair John G. Kasakian '65, Assistant for Community Relations in the President's Office Paul Parravano, and a representative of the City of Cambridge, Purinton said. Cambridge Mayor Kenneth Reeves, who is chair of the Cambridge school committee, may also attend City Days, Parravano said.

City Days is a "tremendous collaborative effort between MIT and schools of Cambridge," Parravano said. The program is a "terrific way for the MIT community to show its

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## INSIDE

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# WORLD & NATION

## Indian Minister Killed in Bombing

LOS ANGELES TIMES

NEW DELHI, INDIA

In India's highest-level political assassination in four years, Beant Singh, chief minister of Punjab, was killed Thursday when a powerful bomb exploded as he climbed into his limousine. Twelve others died in the blast, for which a Sikh separatist group claimed responsibility.

The explosion occurred after Singh, 73, left his second-floor office in the civil secretariat in Chandigarh, the city that serves as Punjab's administrative capital. As the chief minister got into his car at about 5:07 p.m., it blew up.

Singh's automobile and two escort vehicles were torn to pieces. At least three commandos attached to the chief minister's security detail were killed.

The bomb was so strong it shattered windows up to the sixth floor of the 10-story government building and blew away part of the porch in front of the VIP entrance.

The elderly official of the ruling Congress (I) party had been Punjab's chief minister since February 1992, and, though a Sikh himself, had overseen an effective if ruthless, controversial crackdown on armed Sikh militancy in the state.

The ability of Singh's killers to breach extraordinarily tight security and strike at their target with devastating might made officials in other parts of India jittery about the possibility of coordinated attacks.

## Feds Indict Leaders of Chicago Gang

LOS ANGELES TIMES

CHICAGO

Federal authorities moved Thursday to dismantle the leadership of one of the United States' most highly structured street gangs, Chicago's Gangster Disciples — a narcotics powerhouse that allegedly financed a political action committee that has sponsored huge downtown rallies and at least two city council candidacies.

Armed with indictments from a federal grand jury, police and federal agents made arrests throughout the South Side and suburbs, as well as within the state prison system. The indictments allege that the gang, using two boards of directors (one inside prison and one outside), laundered money from its enormous crack, cocaine, heroin and marijuana empire through 21st Century for Voices of Total Empowerment.

The PAC has lobbied to get Gangster Disciples leader Larry Hoover, who was convicted in 1977 of ordering a drug dealer's murder, paroled from prison, enlisting prominent Chicagoans such as former mayor Eugene Sawyer in the effort. Hoover, 44, has been saying in recent years that he is a changed man, devoted to ending violence among black youth.

A 50-count indictment accuses him of masterminding the Gangster Disciples' operations over the telephone from his prison cell. He was flown early in the day from Dixon, Ill. to Meigs Field here for a transfer to federal custody.

The indictments, which seek the forfeiture of \$10 million in profits, reel off a quarter-century's worth of crimes.

## Noriega Seeks New Drug Trial

THE WASHINGTON POST

MIAMI

Attorneys for convicted drug trafficker Manuel Antonio Noriega filed a motion for a new trial Thursday, asserting the U.S. government entered into a secret agreement with the Cali drug cartel to secure testimony against the former Panamanian strongman.

A former U.S. attorney who prosecuted Noriega called the new allegations of complex dirty dealing "hogwash."

Noriega's attorneys maintain this was the bargain: The government in 1991 agreed to recommend a reduced sentence for Luis Santacruz Echeverri, the brother of the head of the Cali cartel, who was already serving a 23-year sentence unrelated to the Noriega case. In exchange, the Cali organization would persuade Ricardo Bilonick to testify against Noriega in Noriega's 1992 trial.

The motion for a new trial is based on newly unearthed written in 1991 by a Miami attorney for the Cali cartel to government attorneys, suggesting some deal-making between Santacruz and federal prosecutors.

Noriega was convicted of aiding the Medellin cartel by allowing deceased Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar to fly cocaine through Panama, and letting Bilonick and others fly it to the United States.

## WEATHER

### Set Fair for Labor Day

By Gerard Roe

STAFF METEOROLOGIST

A chance of rain continues into early Friday morning ahead of the cold front trundling towards the coast. The front will pass overhead mid-morning, bringing cooler and drier air in behind it, and the blustery wind will shift to northwesterly. The lower humidity of the colder air mass will save us from rain as a small low pressure trough zips through behind the front. It will, however, muster some clouds, keeping temperatures suppressed during the day. Friday night will see the sky clearing and temperatures drop into the 50s (10-16°C). On into the Labor Day weekend a large high pressure ridge building over most of the country sets a fine backdrop for the last weekend of summer. The main spoilers to a clear weather pattern across the country are the possibilities of a few afternoon thunderstorms in the west and the remnants of tropical storm Jerry in southwestern Florida. Showers are also predicted for the Pacific northwest.

**Today:** Chance of showers early, then partly sunny. Brisk winds of 20 mph (32 kph) from the southwest early then changing to northwesterly. High 80°F (27°C).

**Tonight:** Partly cloudy. Winds diminishing. Low 57°F (14°C).

**Saturday:** Mostly sunny. North wind. High 74°F (23°C). Low 54°F (12°C).

**Sunday:** Sunny. High 73°F (23°C). Low 54°F (12°C).

# New Drug Kills 'Immortal' Cancer Cells in Lab Test

By Boyce Rensberger

THE WASHINGTON POST

The first test of a possible new approach to treating cancer has caused malignant cells that had been growing for decades in a laboratory dish to lose their "immortality" and to die within weeks.

Many hurdles must be overcome to show whether the process can be turned into a treatment for patients. But the experiments, reported in Friday's issue of the journal *Science*, provide what the researchers call "proof of principle."

The principle was proposed last year when scientists announced that they had discovered how cancer cells escape a normal process believed to cause most cells in the body to grow old and die. Their research suggested that if cancer cells could be deprived of their escape route, they would die.

This is what has been achieved in the latest experiments.

"We're making progress," said Calvin B. Harley, leader of the scientific group at Geron Corp., a Menlo Park, Calif. biomedical research firm where the studies were done. "We're on track."

Harley cautioned, however, that the particular way in which the cancer cells were deprived of their immortalizing ability in the experiments — dosing them with laboratory-made genes — is not likely to become a useful form of therapy in the near future.

Instead, he said, Geron and Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York have received a grant from the National Cancer Institute jointly to develop a drug that accomplishes the same goal.

"We have candidates (drugs) that we are testing, but they are not ready for trial in human beings," Harley said.

"I think this is a big deal," said Robert A. Weinberg, a cancer researcher at the Whitehead Institute and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "This is a significant advance in one of the two most exciting areas of research in cancer therapy." Weinberg, who was not involved with the research, said the other area was angiogenesis, the

phenomenon by which cancer cells induce blood vessels to grow into a tumor, nourishing it. Researchers are looking for ways to block that process.

Whether a drug to block the anti-aging mechanism of cancer cells could be both effective and safe is unknown. A key question, according to Carol W. Greider of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory on Long Island, N.Y., is whether the process used by cancer cells is also important in normal cells. If so, blocking it with a drug could harm normal parts of the body. Greider said there is evidence that blood-forming cells also use the mechanism.

Greider and colleagues report in the same issue of *Science* that they are studying the process in mice so they can learn how it functions normally and can test a possible drug treatment on the animals.

At the center of all the research is a natural phenomenon that occurs every time cells prepare to divide — which most cells in the human body do many times during a person's life.

When the cell duplicates its chromosomes so that each of the two daughter cells can have one complete set, parts of the tips of DNA strands are lost, simply because of the way the DNA-copying machinery works. The newly made chromosomes are thus a little shorter than the ones from which they were copied.

This usually causes no problem because the chromosomes of newly fertilized embryos have long stretches of what might be called dummy DNA at the tips. These are sequences of several thousand DNA subunits (or bases) that encode nothing. The dummy DNA is there simply to be lost, a snippet at a time, with every round of cell division.

The dummy DNA is called a telomere. These also act as caps, stabilizing the ends of the chromosomes — much as bands of metal or plastic keep the tips of shoelaces from fraying. Without telomeres, chromosomes lose their stability and may link together or break into segments that rejoin in abnormal com-

binations. These alterations are detrimental to the cell and, eventually, cause the bodily changes of aging.

In most normal cells of the body, bits of telomere DNA are lost each time a cell divides. When the last of the protective sequences is gone, subsequent cycles of cell division fail to duplicate genes needed by the cell. The daughter cells become badly deranged and may die. The chief exception are cells of the gonads, which must remain able to divide indefinitely from generation to generation without alteration.

They avoid aging by making and using a molecular machine called telomerase. After chromosomes are replicated, this compound guides the manufacture of new telomere sequences, replacing those just lost. Telomerase consists of a protein plus a strand of RNA, a molecule similar to DNA, that serves as a template to guide the process.

Before cancer cells have lost the last of their telomeres, they somehow regain telomerase activity and never again lose the protective DNA end caps. This way, cancer cells can go on dividing endlessly — making new tumors and spreading — without suffering the aging process that dooms normal cells.

Harley and colleagues did their new experiments on a widely used strain of cancer cells, called HeLa, that have been dividing repeatedly in laboratory dishes for decades. To disable the HeLa telomerase, the scientists synthesized a gene that would cause the cancer cells to make a segment of RNA with a genetic sequence exactly opposite to that of the RNA portion of telomerase. When the researchers put the synthetic gene in HeLa cells, the cells began to die after 23 to 26 more division cycles.

Harley said that the same method theoretically should work in cancer patients. But there is no known way to place the synthetic gene in all the cells of a tumor in a body. Instead, he said, the hope is to find or create a conventional molecule that will somehow jam telomerase's ability to function.

# U.S. Hopes Airstrikes Will Hasten Bosnia Peace Talks

By Tracy Wilkinson

LOS ANGELES TIMES

ZAGREB, CROATIA

American diplomats are hoping the NATO air war over Bosnia-Herzegovina will translate into success at the negotiating table, despite risks that hardened Serb defiance could spoil what many regard as the best chance to end Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II.

"Of course they (air raids) strengthen our hand," Richard Holbrooke, the chief U.S. negotiator and assistant secretary of state, said Thursday.

Although Holbrooke sought to emphasize that the military campaign was independent of diplomatic efforts, it clearly has transformed the dynamics of the peace process. Until this week, attempts to win concessions from the Serbs had never been backed with significant force.

Fears that regional power broker Slobodan Milosevic, the president of Serbia, would boycott talks in the wake of the air raids have not materialized. Instead, Milosevic made a point of having a leisurely lunch and

long meetings with Holbrooke Wednesday, even as NATO dropped tons of explosives on Milosevic's Bosnian Serb brothers.

There have been other signs of Serb flexibility in the last 48 hours, including vaguely conciliatory statements by some Bosnian Serb leaders and an agreement to permit Milosevic to negotiate on behalf of all Serbs.

The Serb accord, contained in a document released in Belgrade, was reached on the eve of the air strikes and described as a "breakthrough" by U.S. officials.

In Washington, State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns hailed the pledge by Milosevic to organize a joint Serb negotiating team as "an important procedural breakthrough for peace."

"But," Burns quickly added, "let there be no mistake: The road to peace will be long and difficult. ..."

Here in Zagreb, Holbrooke assessed the Serb accord this way: "Up until that piece of paper, we couldn't sit and talk about the map (of Bosnian territory) or the future. Now we can."

Attacking the Serbs has often

backfired by causing them to dig in. In their view, the international community has taken the side of their Muslim enemies, eliminating any authority the United Nations or NATO might have.

"At last we have shown our resolve," said a European diplomat. "But it can go too far. The use of force is not to defeat a people but to get them to the negotiating table. What we need now is a pause to let the Serbs contemplate their future."

The U.S. peace initiative stands a better chance now for some of the same reasons the allies finally decided they could take decisive action now: The reality on the Balkans battlefield, and in the region's politics, has changed substantially in just the last several weeks.

"If I were Milosevic, with the problems I'd had with (Bosnian Serb leaders), I would be privately rubbing my hands in glee over the air strikes," said a European diplomat. "But the flip side is that each attack on Serbs makes Milosevic's own domestic position more difficult. Politically, he has his own back to watch."

# Gas Additive Reduces Pollution But Fumes Might Cause Illness

By Daniel P. Jones  
THE HARTFORD COURANT

When environmental officials recently began requiring oil companies to add a sizable concentration of a chemical to gasoline, most clean-air advocates welcomed the additive as way to reduce harmful pollution.

A small group of scientists, though, began sounding a warning that the chemical — methyl tertiary butyl ether, or MTBE — was itself causing people to get sick, mostly when they breathed fumes while pumping gas.

At first, health authorities who backed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's mandate to use MTBE were quick to dismiss such claims, pointing to several studies that did not show a problem. But lately, as the health complaints persist, many of the authorities are grudgingly taking a harder look at whether the chemical is poisoning people.

A few scientists — some of whom attribute their own health problems to MTBE — go so far as to claim that the use of the chemical in

gasoline might be responsible for a sharp rise in recent years in the number of asthma sufferers nationwide.

"Thousands of people are being affected, and neither they nor their doctors realize it," said Peter M. Joseph, a professor of radiologic physics at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center in Philadelphia.

Oxy-Busters of Connecticut, a newly formed chapter of a citizens' group opposing the use of MTBE in nearly 20 states, attributes a variety of ailments to the additive, including nausea, sore throats, skin rashes, eye irritations, neurological problems and lethargy.

MTBE, which is made by combining derivatives of natural gas and crude oil, was added to premium-grade gasolines without any fanfare as an anti-knock ingredient beginning in 1982. But the concentration of MTBE in the fuel was only about 3 percent.

Then in 1988, in the first of what would be many well-publicized cleaner-fuels programs, the city of

Denver required its use in higher concentrations to increase oxygen content and make gasoline burn more completely, thus reducing carbon monoxide emissions from autos. There were complaints there, but nothing like the overwhelming reaction from motorists in Alaska and Missoula, Mont., where MTBE was introduced in 1992 under a federal Clean Air Act mandate. So many complaints were registered that the substance was banned in those places.

Soon after the clean-air programs began, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study in Stamford, Conn., where there had been no publicly expressed concerns about MTBE, found a statistically significant association between people with seven transitory health complaints, such as nausea, headaches, dizziness and burning eyes, and a higher MTBE blood level.

But that study was not conclusive because other factors that might have brought about the health complaints could not be ruled out.

# Libert University Sues NCAA Over Right to End Zone Prayer

By J.A. Adande  
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON

In essence, it's about life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness — and whether a prayer uttered on the football field is grounds for a 15-yard penalty.

Liberty University, the Christian school founded by Rev. Jerry Falwell, filed a lawsuit against the National Collegiate Athletic Association Thursday, challenging the enforcement of sportsmanship rules that include kneeling in prayer in the end zone among acts that constitute unsportsmanlike conduct. Liberty cited the 1964 Civil Rights Act and freedom of religion among the grounds for its suit.

"It could (set a precedent), depending upon the outcome," Liberty Athletic Director Chuck Burch said. "We're hopeful that the whole thing will bring enough attention to the whole situation that it could be re-evaluated and we can avoid a long drawn-out legal process and it can be to the betterment of football."

The suit was filed by Liberty Coach Sam Rutigliano and four of his players. Liberty has requested a temporary restraining order against

the regulation, and U.S. District Court Judge James Turk said he would issue a ruling Friday. The Division I-AA Flames start their season Saturday against West Virginia Tech in Lynchburg.

The NCAA — a bureaucratic institution whose voluminous and exhaustive rules govern nearly every aspect of the athletic programs of more than 800 schools — has been taken to court on numerous occasions, but a spokeswoman said this is believed to be the first time a game-related regulation has been challenged.

The NCAA Football Rules Committee recently decided to increase enforcement of a three-year-old rule that addresses unsportsmanlike conduct. That rule came in response to the growing trend of players removing helmets to mug for the TV cameras, taunting and baiting opponents and practicing elaborate dance steps after scoring touchdowns.

But the committee didn't want to remove all of the enthusiasm from the game, so it sought a way to differentiate between what is spontaneous celebration and what is "any delayed, excessive or prolonged act by which a player attempts to focus attention on upon himself," which

would be unsportsmanlike conduct and a 15-yard penalty (a second unsportsmanlike conduct call on the same player results in ejection). They came up with a videotape that had 150 examples of violations, which included kneeling on the ground to pray after a touchdown.

"There was quite a bit of discussion about that, obviously, as it being a form of religious expression and perhaps prayer," said Vince Dooley, the chairman of the rules committee. "We decided in the final analysis that that would fall under any delayed action. If that were the case and we were to allow that to happen, then in the interest of fairness that would have to extend to other forms of religious expressions. Players could contend that other forms and displays — even dancing — could be a form of religious expression."

Burch said the prayers are neither prolonged nor self-congratulatory.

"We're taking about something that's a very short number of seconds," he said. "Somebody drops to the knee, gives thanks to the Lord and he's going to the sidelines. It's not something that disrupts the flow of the game."

# Feds Move to Indict Top Leaders Of Politically Strong Chicago Gang

By Judy Pasternak  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

CHICAGO

Federal authorities moved Thursday to dismantle the leadership of one of the United States' most highly structured street gangs, Chicago's Gangster Disciples — a narcotics powerhouse that allegedly financed a political action committee that has sponsored huge downtown rallies and at least two city council candidacies.

Armed with indictments from a federal grand jury, police and federal agents made arrests throughout the South Side and suburbs, as well as within the state prison system. The indictments allege that the gang, using two boards of directors (one inside prison and one outside), laundered money from its enormous crack, cocaine, heroin and marijuana empire through 21st Century V.O.T.E. (for Voices of Total Empowerment).

The PAC has lobbied to get Gangster Disciples leader Larry Hoover, who was convicted in 1977

of ordering a drug dealer's murder, paroled from prison, enlisting prominent Chicagoans such as former mayor Eugene Sawyer in the effort. Hoover, 44, has been saying in recent years that he is a changed man, devoted to ending violence among black youth.

A 50-count indictment accuses him of masterminding the Gangster Disciples' operations over the telephone from his prison cell. He was flown early in the day from Dixon, Ill. to Meigs Field here for a transfer to federal custody.

The indictments, which seek the forfeiture of \$10 million in profits, reel off a quarter-century's worth of crimes. In addition to Hoover, 38 others with nicknames such as "Khadafi," "Trouble" and "Governor Fool" are charged. One of the alleged co-conspirators, Sonia Irwin, is a Chicago police officer. Those indicted range in age from 21 to 48.

At a Thursday media conference about the relationship between the Gangster Disciples and 21st Century

V.O.T.E., U.S. Attorney James B. Burns said: "They run it."

Representatives of the three-year-old PAC have been consulted by a mayoral candidate, civil rights groups and even President Clinton. Two men who had risen to prominent rank within the Gangster Disciples made it to run-off elections last spring for Chicago's board of aldermen. Their showing surprised the city's power structure, although each was eventually defeated.

Another local community outreach group, Save the Children Inc., was also named in the indictment. The Gangster Disciples forced members and nonmembers alike "under threats of violence" to buy tickets to a concert that Save the Children promoted, the document says. Save the Children is run by Hoover's wife, who was not indicted.

The investigation, begun in 1989, is continuing, Burns said. Federal prosecutors, narcotics, tax and firearms agents, corrections officials and police joined forces for the probe

# New FDA Reports Says MSG Additive Is Safe to Eat

LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON

Pass the mu shu pork, please. A new Food and Drug Administration report released Thursday concluded that MSG — the controversial flavor-enhancer often added to Chinese food — is safe to eat, finding that it causes a mild reaction in only a tiny portion of the population.

The report, prepared by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, said that there is no scientific evidence that any "free glutamate," the chemical family to which MSG belongs, causes or aggravates severe disease. However, the report cautioned that MSG, or monosodium glutamate, could exacerbate problems for people with severe asthma.

In connection with the favorable MSG report, the FDA announced Thursday that it will only require foods that contain "significant amounts" of the product to be relabeled as such. It did not give any details on which foods will fall under the new MSG guidelines.

Currently, foods must be specifically labeled as containing MSG only when the chemical itself is added to the product and not when a glutamate is naturally found in foods or in other ingredients contained in the product. MSG — a sodium salt of the amino acid glutamic acid used for building proteins — is found naturally in tomatoes, mushrooms and Parmesan cheese.

# Judge Kills Extradition Law

THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON

A federal judge Thursday struck down a 150-year-old extradition law that has allowed Americans accused of committing crimes abroad to be sent to foreign countries to face punishment.

U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth said the law is unconstitutional because it violates the separation of powers principle by allowing the secretary of state to review legal decisions by judges.

The judge said the law also improperly allows the secretary of state to hide the true motives for extradition decisions — such as politics or foreign policy considerations — by blaming judges and the law when it suits the secretary's purposes.

"Under the present statute, the secretary may simply claim that his 'hands were tied' because the law did not permit him to perform the requested extradition," the judge wrote in a 32-page opinion.

The ruling was made in a case involving two off-duty Chicago police officers accused of kidnapping by Canadian authorities. The two officers allegedly agreed to help another man, Anthony DeSilva, bring his mentally and physically impaired wife Tammy back to the United States to prepare for a lawsuit they had filed. The officers, and others, went to Winnipeg to get her. Canadian authorities, however, stopped them at the border and refused to allow them to take her to the United States after her parents alleged that she had been kidnapped.

# Shuttle Aide Faults NASA's Turnover Plan

NEWSDAY

WASHINGTON

A NASA plan to turn space shuttle operations over to a private contractor will eliminate vital safety checks and could pose "the biggest threat to the safety of the shuttle and its crew since the Challenger disaster," a veteran NASA operations manager has charged in a letter to President Clinton.

Jose Garcia, technical assistant to the chief of one of the shuttle engineering divisions at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, wrote the letter last week, and it was posted by a colleague this week on the Internet computer network.

Garcia said he was concerned that the current system of prelaunch cross checks between space agency and contract engineers will be drastically changed under a plan by NASA that may "privatize" the shuttle.

"We're not talking about privatizing the cafeteria," Garcia said. "The way we'll find that we screwed up is when we kill somebody." Garcia added, "My biggest concern is that, in essence, you are dismantling the best launch team in the world. We've got a process that works."

NASA officials have said safety will not be compromised as the shuttle management is restructured. The agency announced plans last week to replace 85 shuttle contracts — involving 56 different contractors — with a single agreement to be administered by a prime contractor. The contractor probably would be selected in about a year, beginning a process that eventually could lead to turning the shuttle over to private industry.

# New York Rushes to Prepare As Death Penalty Takes Effect

NEWSDAY

ALBANY, N.Y.

Sometime after midnight Thursday, when New York's death penalty goes into effect, a fax should slip out of a machine identifying the first candidate to die by lethal injection in the state in nearly two decades.

With no way to predict where that first case will come from, or when an execution will ultimately take place, the entire criminal justice system has rushed to prepare for implementation of the death penalty.

Prosecutors statewide have set up special units. Attorney General Dennis Vacco has assembled a capital crimes team. A Capital Defender Office was created for New York's poor. And the prison system has established procedures for carrying out the actual execution — selecting Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, N.Y., near the Canadian border, as the site for death row for men, and Green Haven Correctional Facility in Stormville, Dutchess County, for the death house.

As promised, Gov. George Pataki brought the death penalty back to New York. It was one of the key issues that helped unseat three-term Gov. Mario Cuomo and propel the little-known state senator from Peekskill into the job of chief executive. For 18 years, Cuomo and his predecessor, Hugh Carey, vetoed death-penalty legislation, fueling a debate over capital punishment that raged in every corner of the state's political arena.

# OPINION



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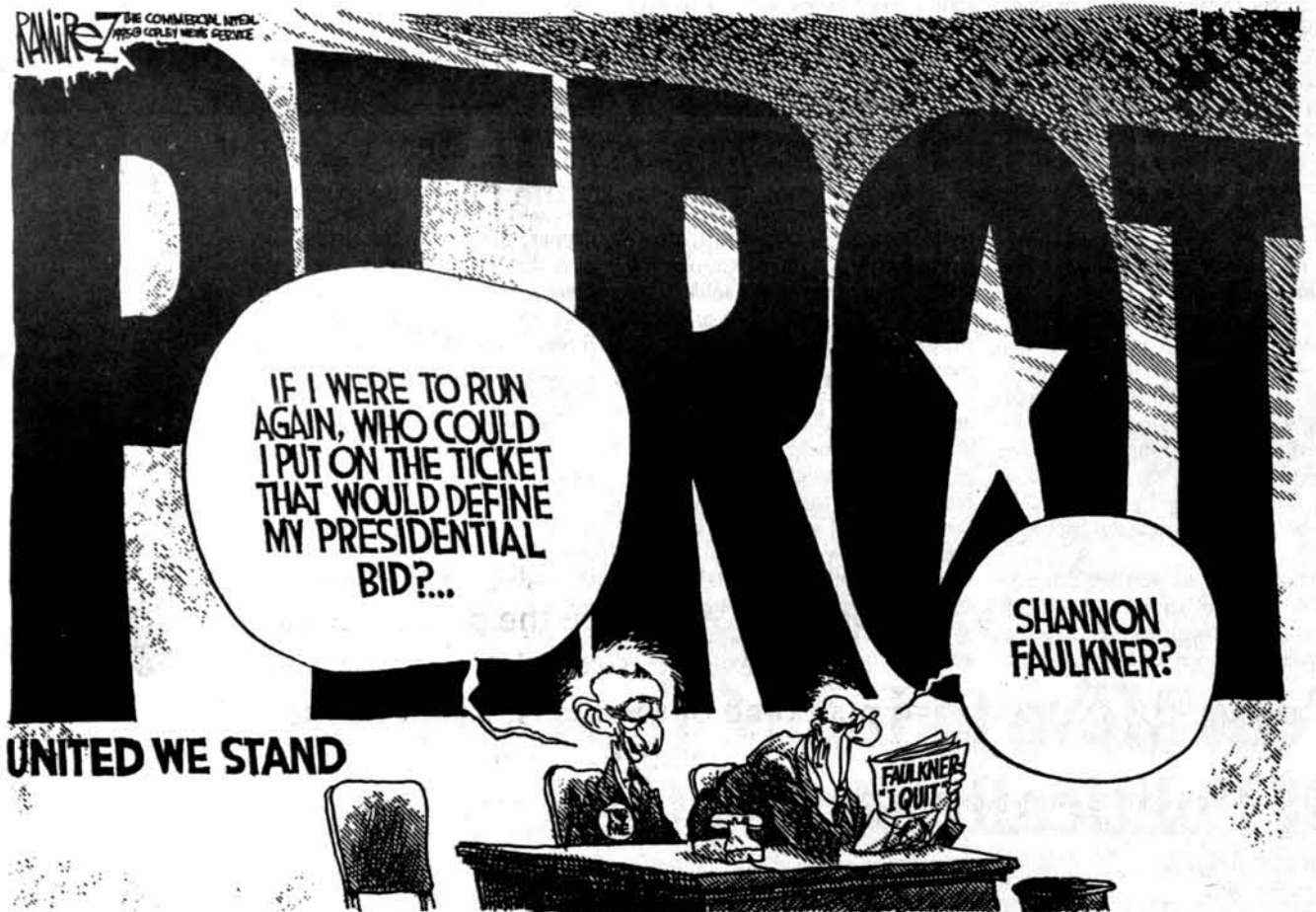
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**Dissents**, marked as such and printed in a distinctive format, are the opinions of the signed members of the editorial board choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial.

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**Letters to the editor** are welcome. They must be typed, double-spaced and addressed to *The Tech*, P.O. Box 397029, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-7029, or by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. Electronic submissions in plain text format may be mailed to letters@the-tech.mit.edu. All submissions are due by 4:30 p.m. two days before the date of publication.

**Letters and cartoons** must bear the author's signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. No letter or cartoon will be printed anonymously without the express prior approval of *The Tech*. *The Tech* reserves the right to edit or condense letters; shorter letters will be given higher priority. Once submitted, all letters become property of *The Tech*, and will not be returned. We regret we cannot publish all of the letters we receive.

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# Welcome to The Tech!

*The Tech's* World-Wide Web staff is looking for new members.

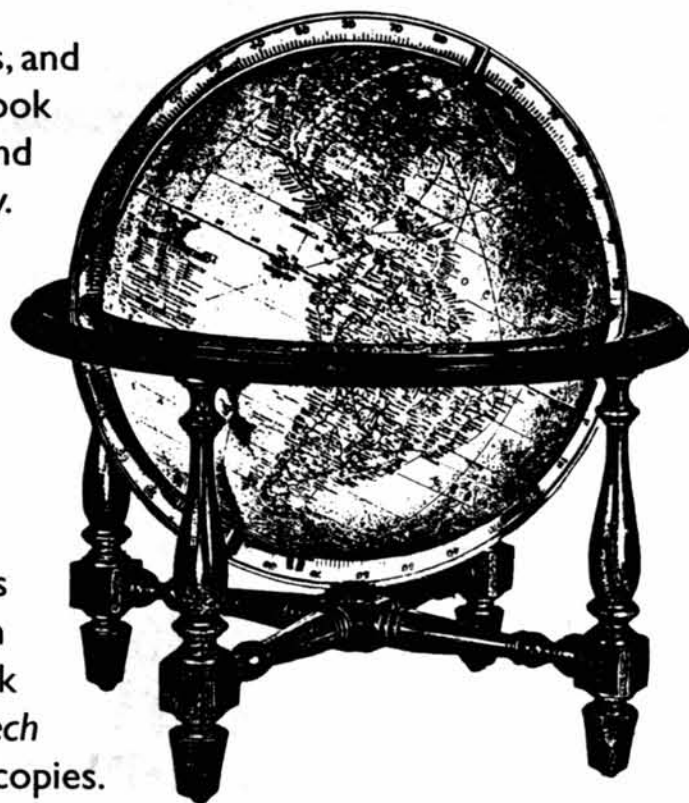
**M**ay 1993 marked a new era in the 115-year history of *The Tech*: We started operating a World-Wide Web server, one of the first 100 in the world. Since then, *The Tech* Archive Team has been breaking new ground in the way newspapers are presented on the Web. And we've made a difference — people around the world are using our tools and our designs.

We're looking for qualified individuals to help us continue to make a difference in three key areas.

**Content developers** are the reporters, editors, and designers of our Web server. They will look for better ways to present news and information to the MIT community.

**Web programmers** create and maintain the tools that keep our online services running smoothly.

**Archivists** concentrate on bringing current issues online, even before the printed edition comes out. Archivists will also work to put some of the oldest issues of *The Tech* online by scanning microfilm copies.



**J**oining the Archive Team is a great way to gain Web experience and expand your career opportunities. We presented a paper at the first WWW conference in Geneva, and members of the team have helped produce commercial Web sites for companies like Time Warner. Team members have also created their own Web sites, including a Shakespeare server that is a 1995 Best of the Net nominee, an online guide to Kai's Power Tips, and a collection of classical Greek and Roman texts.

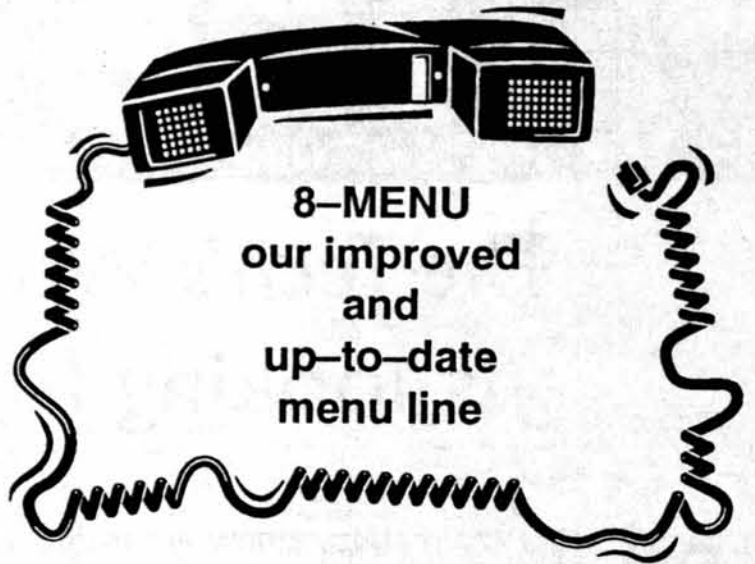
If you want to become part of the Archive Team, send electronic mail to [archive@the-tech.mit.edu](mailto:archive@the-tech.mit.edu), or stop by our offices on the 4th floor of the Student Center and talk to Dan Stevenson or Jeremy Hylton.

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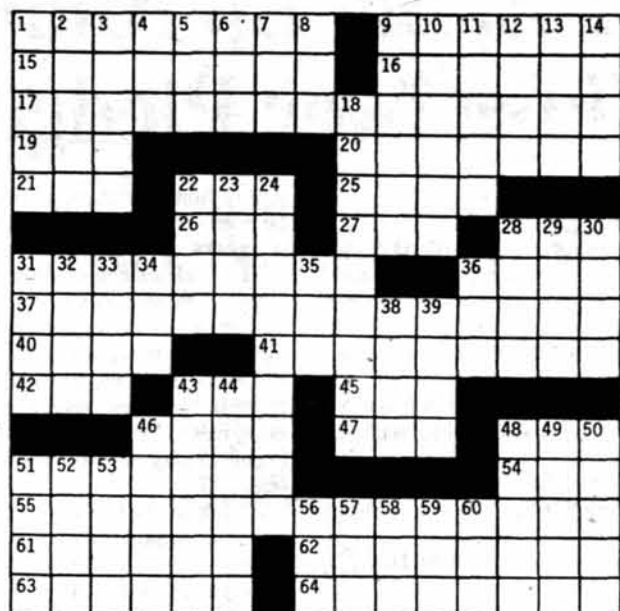
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  - 20 Great lake
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  - 27 Certain batsmen, for short
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  - 31 Debate material (2 wds.)
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  - 37 Contemporary music maker (2 wds.)
  - 40 "I — fool"
  - 41 Vital territory
  - 42 Us: Sp.
  - 43 Either you —
  - 45 Singer Zadora
  - 46 "Jacques — is Alive and Well..."
  - 47 Official language of Zambia (abbr.)
  - 48 Organization for Mr. Chips
- DOWN**
- 1 Media coverage
  - 2 Irked
  - 3 "Waiting for Lefty" playwright
  - 4 Photo, for short
  - 5 Calendar abbreviation
  - 6 California's Big —
  - 7 Hebrew judge
  - 8 — room
  - 9 Missile site activity
  - 10 Bunker and Head
  - 11 " — a Stranger"
  - 12 Sandarac tree
  - 13 Prefix for meter or scope
  - 14 He: It.
  - 18 Fitness condition (2 wds.)
  - 22 Addie of baseball fame
  - 23 Word with chair or street
  - 24 Frankish queen of long ago
  - 28 "Eyeless in —"
  - 29 Draft animals
  - 30 Golf accomplishment, for short
  - 31 Treasury worker
  - 32 — sapiens
  - 33 Epochs
  - 34 1938 song, "When — a-Dreamin'"
  - 35 Paris when it sizzles
  - 36 One one-thousandth of an inch
  - 38 — go brag
  - 39 Unaccompanied
  - 43 California county
  - 44 Was a tenant
  - 46 Feel sorrow
  - 48 Word in Jane Austen book title
  - 49 To have: Sp.
  - 50 States positively
  - 51 Old Irish script
  - 52 Mr. Guthrie
  - 53 1949 A.L. batting champ
  - 56 "L'etat c'est —"
  - 57 Hairstyle
  - 58 Mel of baseball
  - 59 Actress Mary —
  - 60 Offshore apparatus

Solutions on Page 11

# MIT Music Group Auditions

## MIT Brass Ensemble

Rehearsals: Tuesday, Thursday, 5-7pm, Killian Hall. Auditions: Thursday, September 7, 5pm. Bring prepared solo.

## MIT Chamber Music Society

First meeting & auditions: Tuesday, September 5, 7pm, Killian Hall. Solo piece required of new members.

## MIT Concert Band

Rehearsals: Monday & Wednesday 8-10pm, Kresge. First Meeting and Auditions: Wednesday, September 6, 8pm. Bring prepared solo.

## MIT Concert Choir

Rehearsals: Monday, Thursday, 6-8:30pm, Room 2-190. Auditions: Thursday, September 7, 6pm. Group auditions, no solo required.

## MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble

Rehearsals: Sunday, 7-11; Wednesday 5:30-7:30pm, Kresge. Auditions & audition sign-up: Wednesday, September 6, 5:30pm. Improvisation preferred, sight-reading from jazz book required.

## MIT Symphony Orchestra

Rehearsals: Tuesday, Thursday, 7:30-10pm, Kresge. First meeting: Thursday, September 7 at 7:30pm. Reading through symphonic literature and audition sign up.

## MIT Gamelan Galak Tika

Rehearsals: Sunday, 4:30pm-6:30pm, Wednesday, 7pm-10pm. First meeting: Wednesday, September 10, Reh. Room A, Kresge Auditorium, 7pm.

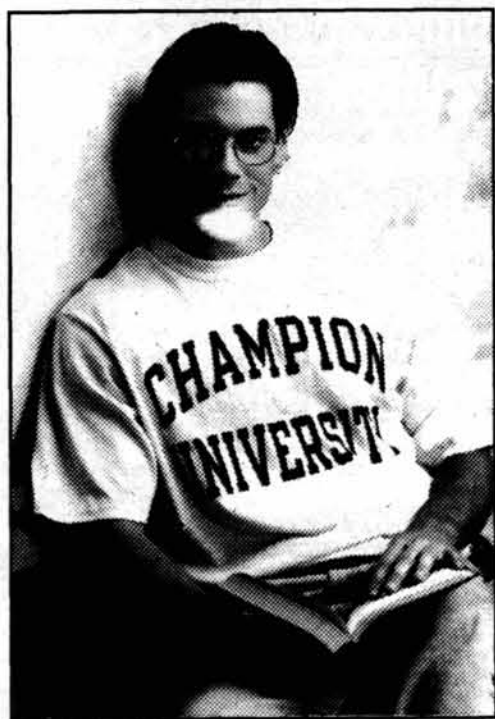
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## SAE, Sig Ep Alums Clash over Pledge

By Stacey E. Blau  
NEWS EDITOR

A Sigma Alpha Epsilon alumnus and Sigma Phi Epsilon alumnus were involved in an altercation over a new Sig Ep pledge in front of the SAE house late Monday night, said SAE President Jason Prest '96.

A fight ensued but was quickly ended by both sides, with no injuries.

Neal P. Karchem '99, who had a bid from Sig Ep "decided to pledge in front of the SAE house," according to Sig Ep President David J. Penner '96.

"We came out in front [of the SAE house] and started making noise," Penner said.

An SAE member came outside and asked Sig Ep members to quiet down, Prest said. Sig Ep members "pushed around and grabbed him," and an SAE alumni "came out and stepped in," Prest said.

"One of their alumni got into a scuffle with one of our alumni," Penner said.

SAE and Sig Ep members quickly separated the two alumni involved in the fight, Penner said. The fighting lasted "less than 15 seconds before it was broken up," he said.

Neither of the alumni had to be taken to the hospital, and no one was arrested, Penner said.

### Tradition goes awry

Traditionally, "a freshman with a bid from a fraternity can call the fra-

ternity from anywhere and say that he wants to pledge," and fraternity members will meet the freshman there to celebrate with cheering and clapping, Penner said.

"There is a custom of not pledging at other fraternities," said Neal H. Dorow, assistant dean and adviser to fraternities, sororities, and independent living groups. "But the freshman may not have known," he said.

Karchem "had been flushed from SAE," Prest said. "We referred him over to Sig Ep," he said "He pre-froshed in our house, but we thought he would be more comfortable [at Sig Ep]," Prest said.

"I think he was a little bitter at it," Prest said. "I don't think it was completely random that he decided to pledge in front of our house. I think he did it for a reason," he said.

Penner said that he does not believe that Karchem decided to pledge in front of the SAE house for any particular reason.

On Wednesday, Dorow met with the presidents and pledge educators of both SAE and Sig Ep.

"We got together with SAE officers and talked it through," Penner said. "We equally share the blame," he said.

"We're not anticipating any punishment" of either fraternities, Dorow said. The "main combatants" were not MIT students, so it would be difficult to punish anyone anyway, he said.



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• Friday, September 8 Algebra Exponentials, Logs & Complex Numbers	4-149 2-102
• Sunday, September 10 Geometry and Analytic Geometry Trigonometry	4-149 2-102
• Monday, September 11- Pre-Calculus Open Workshop All Topics: Tutors and Self-tests available	2-102

Want to go but can't get to the workshops? Pick up self-paced Study Guides from the  
UAA, (Room 7-104), Room 7-133 or the Undergraduate Math Office, Room 2-108.

Questions? Call the UAA at x3-9419 or x3-3561.

# Jim's Journal

by Jim

I was reorganizing some books on my bookshelf today.



5-15

I made stacks on the floor and tried to put books on the shelf in some kind of order.



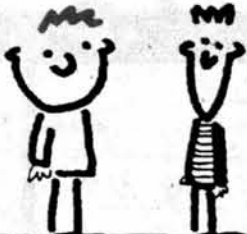
Mr. Peterson was sitting on the tallest stack, watching me.



It took me a long time because I kept stopping to read things.



Today I was over at Steve's place.



He showed me some 3-D glasses he still had from when he saw a 3-D movie a long time ago.



5-16

"I like 'em," he said. "Sometimes I wish I could just wear them like sunglasses."



But he said he wouldn't do that because people would think he was really weird.



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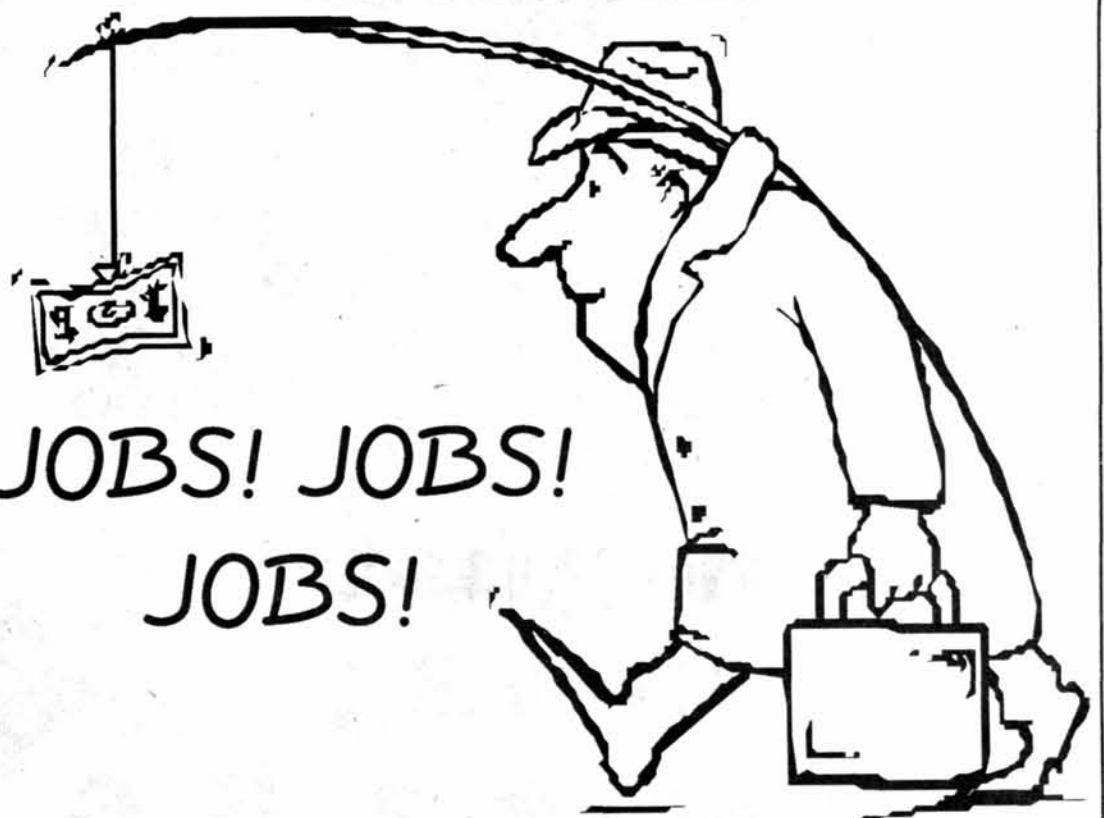
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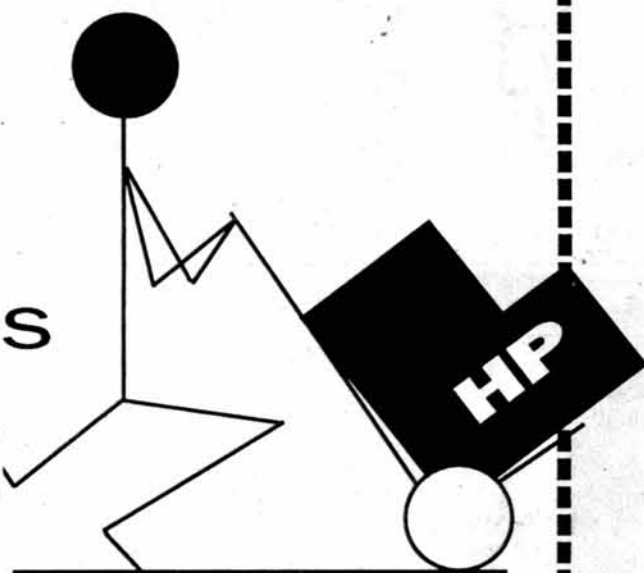
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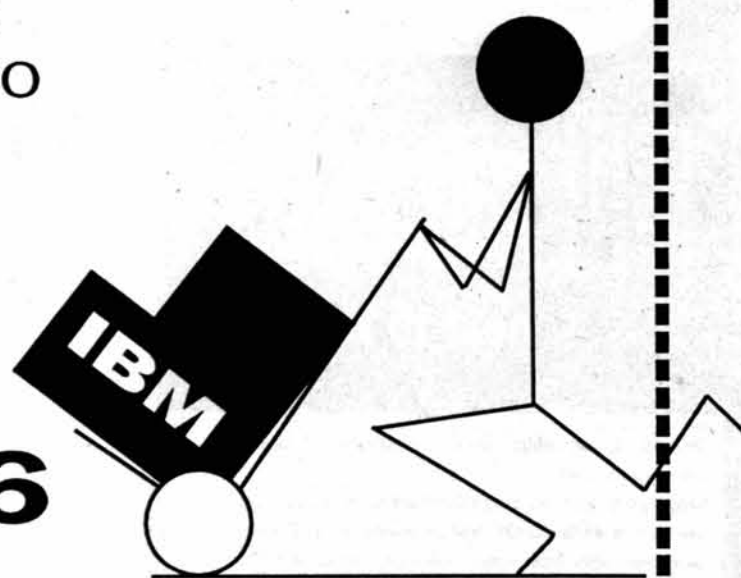
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# Talk Explores Sex, Women

## Performances focus on better communication in relationships

By Ramy Amaoui  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Bandstander Norman Nawrocki gave a Kresge Auditorium crowd a good time and something to think about last night at his comic-serious one-man show, "I Don't Understand Women."

The performance was sponsored by the Interfraternity Council as a Residence and Orientation Week event for its members, although it was open to the entire MIT community.

Nearly 700 freshmen and upperclassmen — about half of them women — were on hand to meet Ricky, his girlfriend Nancy, and about a dozen other of Nawrocki's characters. In a series of humorous five-minute sketches, these characters offered men advice on and explored many different aspects of male/female relationships, including understanding women's feelings, how to treat women, and rape.

Communication — the importance of listening to what women say about love and sex — was a ubiquitous theme. In "Nightmare on the Couch" — or, "When the Girlfriend Gets Serious" — a woman scared her boyfriend into conniptions by an out-of-the-blue conversation about responsibility, commitment, their future, and —



Norman Nawrocki

dread of male dreads — her period.

### Skits delve into sex, rape

As advertised, the sketches were always lively, and sometimes mildly shocking. In one skit, Nawrocki — a.k.a. a Doctor Ruth-esque Mrs. Robinson — gave a front-row male freshman an interactive lesson in how to excite a woman to orgasm.

But other skits were deadly serious. At one point, two characters had to come to terms with the rape or abuse of their sisters.

"I think the part about the rape was done pretty well," said Julie K. Hsieh '97. Nawrocki "was pretty serious about that, and that was

good," she said. "It's important to realize that every girl could be someone's sister." That device made the performance more real, she said.

### Performance received positively

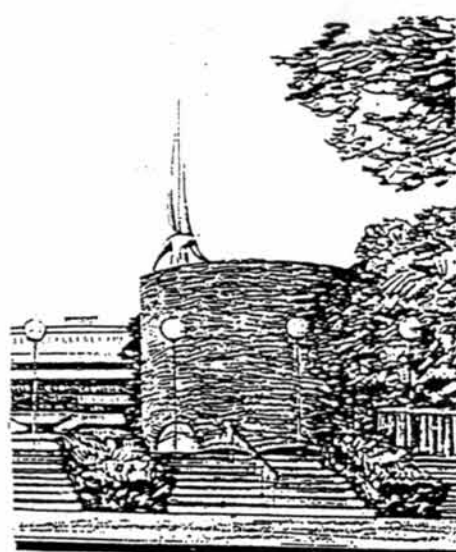
"I thought it was a pretty decent production, for being a one-person production," said Grant I. Ho '97. "It raised some issues that men do encounter in society" — like homosexuality, rape, and sex. "It gave a good example of what men should be aware of," he said.

"I thought it was good that he covered a lot of issues, but I thought it was bad that he made having sex sound like the norm," Hsieh said. "He was trying to make fun of stereotypes, but it sounded like at the same time, he was perpetuating them."

After the performance, Nawrocki, who makes a living playing in the rock band Rhythm Activism, explained his motivation for giving the performance.

"It's tough sometimes to address questions about" love, sex, rape, and commitment, Nawrocki said. The three-year-old show — which he has presented at almost every major university and college campus in Canada — gives people a chance to "deal with men's issues we normally don't while we're too busy being men," he said.

The  
Lutheran  
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## Ministry at MIT

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Mondays at 12 Noon—Services are held in the MIT Chapel  
<http://web.mit.edu/lem/www/home.html>

# City Days Promotes Public Service

City Days, from Page 1

concern and willingness to be helpful in increasing educational opportunities for the children of Cambridge," he said.

City Days is particularly important for freshman, Purinton said. "The earlier they realize the importance of community service, the more likely they are to get involved," she said.

Purinton said that many neighboring public school students see MIT as an "untouchable thing," as a place "where they build bombs." City Days allows these students to visit MIT for a day and see what the college really has to offer, she said.

Parravano said that since MIT is so strong in education, City Days provides "an opportunity to share the riches MIT has in its talented student body and faculty with teachers and school children."

The Public Service Center planned today's City Days program as a kickoff event for its yearly programs, Purinton said. Many of the center's programs, are geared towards education, she said.

Interested students are invited to continue the connection with the Cambridge students throughout the year, she said.

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Puzzle on Page 7

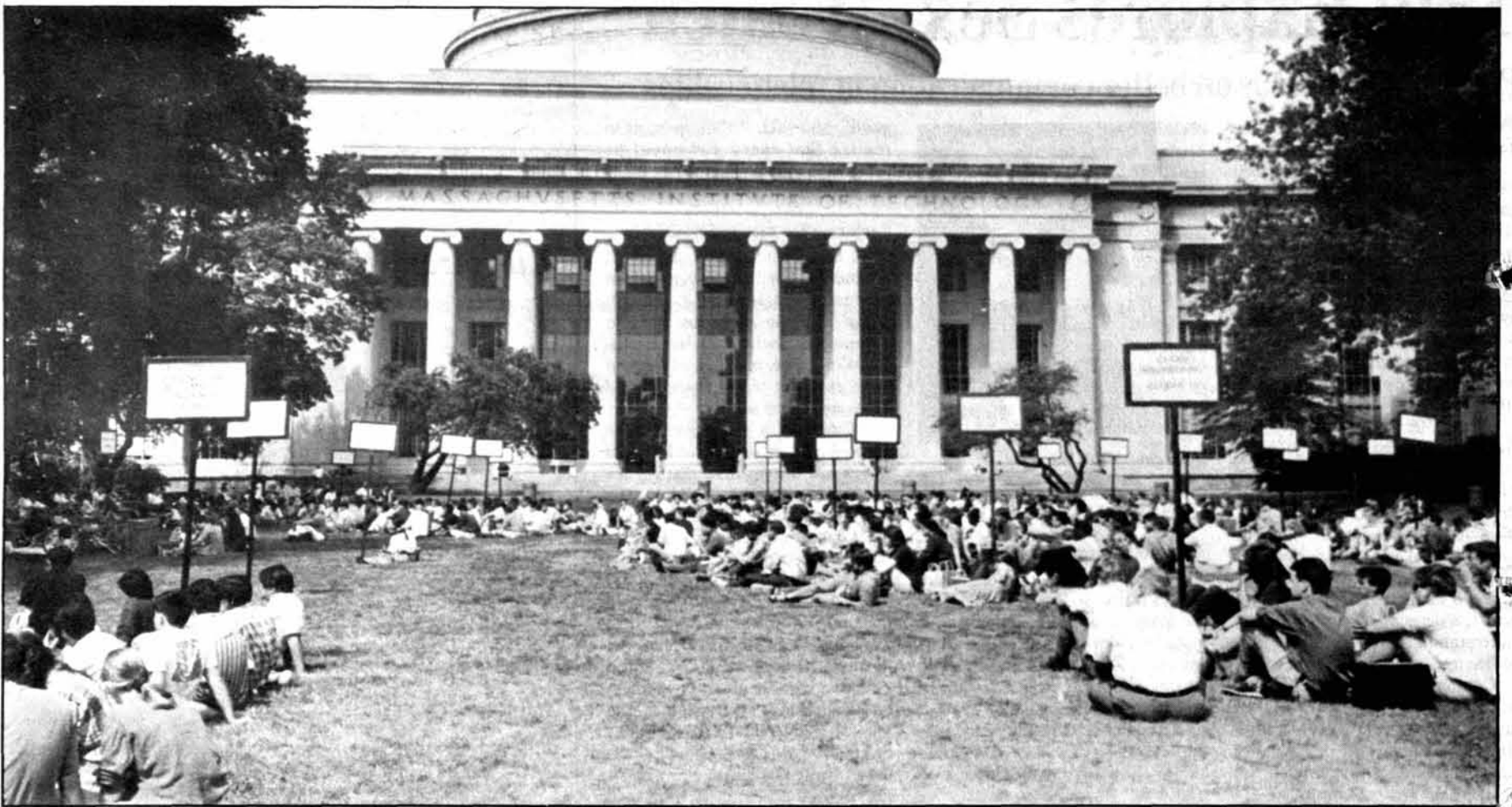


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EVA MOY—THE TECH

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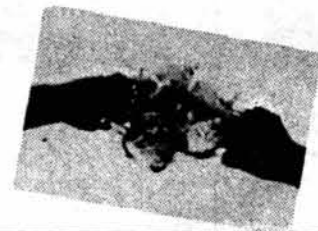
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# Noisemaking Devices, Self-Defense Best for Safety

By Eva Moy  
STAFF REPORTER

From mace and pepper spray to electric prodders, there is a plethora of personal safety devices on the market. But out of all of these, the Campus Police generally recommend noise-making devices and self-defense training.

Many chemical devices and weapons are either illegal — either on the MIT campus or in Massachusetts — or require licensing and training, said Anne P. Glavin, chief of Campus Police.

Some of the weapons and chemi-

cal sprays are dangerous to the user or poorly made. In addition, weapons can be easily taken away and used against the victim, Glavin said.

"No device is going to substitute for good common sense, a sense of awareness," and preparation for dealing with urban life, Glavin said.

Assailants attack people who look vulnerable and are, for example, walking around with headphones on and their head in a book, said Sergeant Cheryl deJong Vossmer of the Crime Prevention and

Sensitive Crimes Unit.

"We want people to avoid those encounters to start with," Glavin said.

"If you know what types of situations to avoid... there is a very good chance of not having to encounter a situation like that," Glavin said.

### Self-defense classes

The beginning of classes is the busiest time of year for the Crime Prevention Unit, Glavin said. The unit mainly passes out information and conducts workshops for MIT

groups that invite them.

In addition, the Campus Police offer a Rape Aggression Defense class which "teaches practical defensive techniques that require no special skills," according to a RAD brochure.

"RAD also offers the opportunity to test these learned skills on a real person during a simulated attack," according to the brochure.

RAD classes are limited to women, but special classes that include men or are designed for a specific group on campus can be conducted upon request, Glavin

said.

"We focus heavily on rape because that's what women fear most," Glavin said.

The classes, held over a two-month period, cost \$20, and any subsequent classes are free. Practicing the skills learned is very important, Vossmer said.

The Physical Education Department also offers a separate self-defense class which is free and open to both men and women.

Both classes can be used toward physical education credit.

# Frosh Essay Passing Rate Nosedives; Math Scores Rise

Exams, from Page 1

credit from placement exams, Perelman said. Students must satisfy Phase I of the Institute's writing requirement through placement exams or the essay evaluation, or they can opt to take an appropriate writing subject.

Freshman wrote an argumentative and narrative essay for the exam, Perelman said. In the narrative, students had to relate a story about conformity or describe how they learned to do something, he said. The argumentative topic asked students to improve one of the transportation systems that brought them to MIT, he said.

The topic was "a rather technical question" and should have been broader, Demon said.

Each essay was read by two scorers, Perelman said. The average

scores were added together and normalized to a mean of 70 and a standard deviation of 10, he said. The "acceptable" cutoff point this year was moved to 79, up 7 points from last year, he said.

Unlike the previous three years, there was no "conditional" pass, Perelman said. The score of "conditional pass" was meant to be a three-year experiment.

Under a conditional pass, students had to attend a two-hour workshop to review the minor flaws in their essays. The committee "decided it was not worth the effort," he said.

### Students do well in math test

The Pre-Calculus Diagnostic covered algebra, geometry and analytic geometry, trigonometry, logarithms, exponents, and complex numbers, said Associate Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs

Margaret S. Enders.

Of the 1,115 students taking the test, 652 received adequate scores, Enders said. Thirteen percent, or 149 freshmen, showed weakness in one area, and 28 percent, or 314 students, had weaknesses in two areas or scored below a 70, she said.

The average score was 78, and students finished the exam in an average time of 56 minutes, 31 minutes fewer than last year's average time, Enders said.

"On the whole, students did well," Enders said. "The general sense [among mathematics professors] was that they were happy because a lot of students did well," she said.

One reason for the large improvement from last year was that the test was fairer and "not as complicated as last year," Enders said.

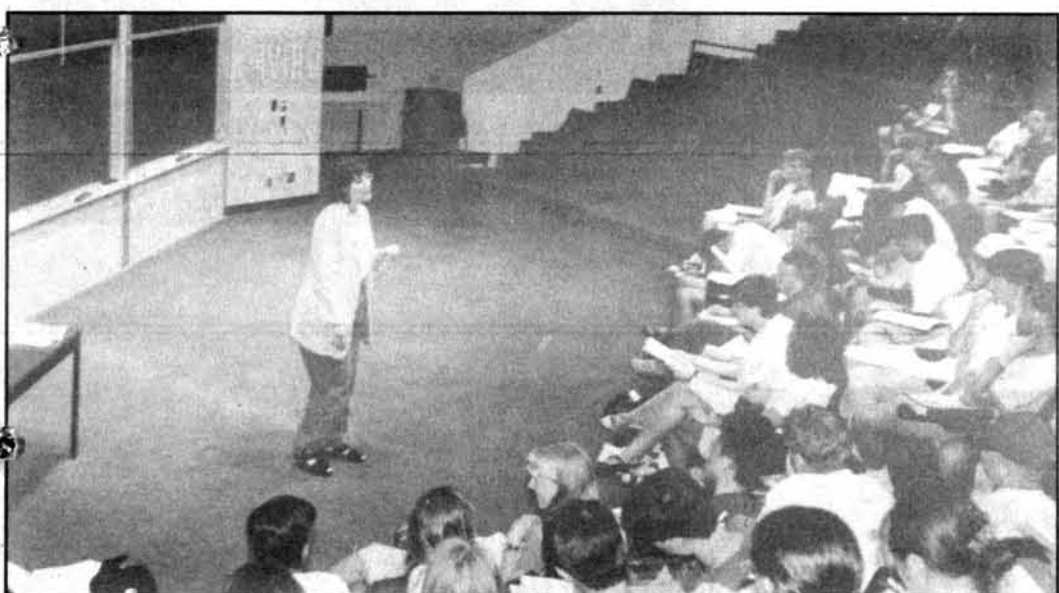
A low score on the diagnostic

"doesn't mean that students are going to do badly," Enders said. "MIT students are smart," she said.

However, students who receive a low score on the exam should be more deliberate in selecting a physics class, Enders said. The physics department recommends that students with scores lower than a 50 should take the version of

Physics I (8.01L) that extends through the Independent Activities Period, she said.

The trigonometry section in particular "is the area where there is an indicator of performance later," Enders said. "We have seen a tendency that a really low score on the math diagnostic increases chances of failing physics," she said.



ADRIANE CHAPMAN—THE TECH

Freshmen interested in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program listen to a lecturer in 34-101 as part of yesterday's Freshmen Explorations.

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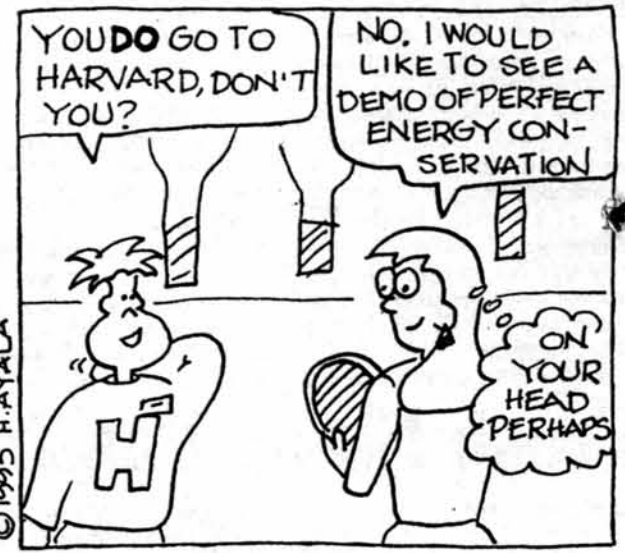
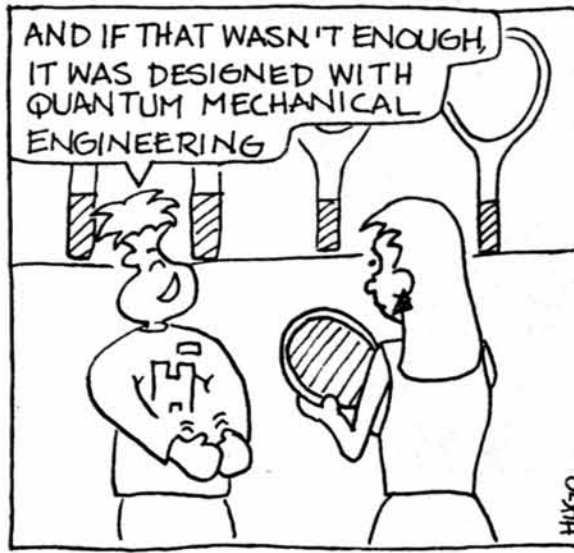
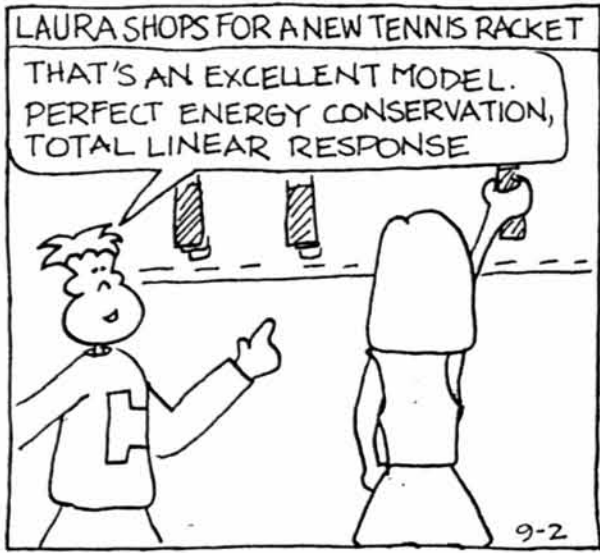
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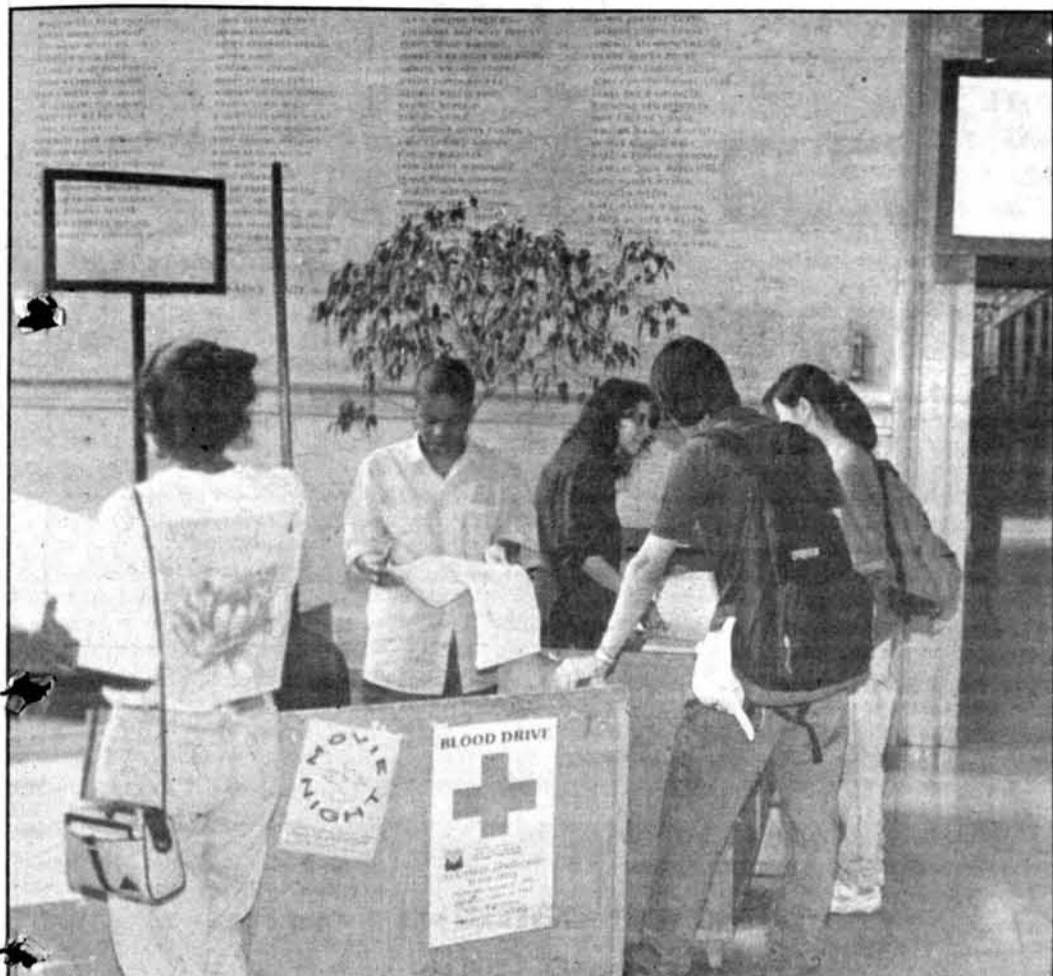
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ADRIANE CHAPMAN—THE TECH

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# THE ARTS

## Rodriguez' *Desperado* a flashy sequel to *El Mariachi*

### DESPERADO

Written and directed by Robert Rodriguez. Starring Antonio Banderas, Joaquim de Almeida, and Salma Hayek. Sony Cheri.

By Scott Deskin  
CHAIRMAN

If you haven't yet heard of Robert Rodriguez, you should take note of his film *Desperado*. Ostensibly a sequel to, but reputedly a flashier version of, his debut feature *El Mariachi*, *Desperado* has plenty of style and wit to complement the numerous (and bloody) action sequences. Also worth mentioning is that Rodriguez has major studio support this time, with a budget roughly one thousand times greater than *El Mariachi*'s \$7,000: In Hollywood terms, though, *Desperado* is still a hell of a bargain.

It's also a hell of a ride. Told in a loose, comic-book fashion, *Desperado* is the story of a guitarist turned gunslinger, known only as

El Mariachi (Antonio Banderas), who seeks revenge on the drug dealers who killed his woman and maimed his hand in the first film. His story has taken on a mythical quality in the years that have passed: In an introductory segment, a stranger (played by *Reservoir Dogs*' Steve Buscemi) wanders into a bar and describes the carnage that El Mariachi has wrought on a bunch of hostile bar patrons in a neighboring town. The gunslinger's ultimate quarry is the crimelord Bucho (Joaquim de Almeida), the man behind the gang from the first film.

It turns out that Buscemi's character is a friend of El Mariachi, and is helping his cause by trying to inflate his persona. When the gunslinger heads into the next town, the boys in the bar are waiting for him. "We just want to see what's in the guitar case," says the bartender (Cheech Marin, perfectly cast). In no time, the bullets start flying and Rodriguez's quick-cutting camera shots add to the excitement. Our hero escapes to the street, but not

without being tagged in the shoulder, and he's rescued by the beautiful Carolina (Salma Hayek), a bookstore owner and amateur surgeon. While he faces innumerable enemies on the outside, he takes some comfort with his newfound love interest.

Tongue-in-cheek humor abounds, but other than the spectacular action scenes, the plot is pretty weak. The most philosophical statement in the film is when El Mariachi says to Carolina, "It's easier to pull a trigger than play guitar; it's easier to destroy than to create." It's probably wise that Rodriguez didn't try to infuse too much solemnity to the gunslinger's character, although he does seem remorseful for the killer that he has become. More often, he gets caught up in the thrill of the moment, like taunting bad guys in the blood-soaked bar ("You missed me!") or throwing grenades at unsuspecting bad guys in an alley below while making a swift getaway on rooftops.

It looks as though Banderas has finally

"arrived" at the threshold of mainstream box-office stardom: After supporting roles in *The Mambo Kings* and *Philadelphia*, he proves his worth as a leading man and full-blooded Latin sex symbol. The supporting players are superb, especially Buscemi and Marin: even the master of neo-noir blood and guts himself, Quentin Tarantino, has a bit part as a drug pickup man who tells a joke that befits characters from Tarantino's other films. Not that all the dialogue is incisive or falling-down hilarious, but you'll enjoy most of it nonetheless.

The major flaw in this film is the ending, which seemed to have been tacked on in haste after Rodriguez's special effects budget ran out. However, Rodriguez possesses such an undeniable flair for action scenes and comic pacing that it's tough to hold it against his sophomore effort that much. The violence isn't for the faint of heart, but it's cut with enough humor (like Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*) that you'll find yourself smiling most of the time anyway.

# ON THE SCREEN

— BY THE TECH ARTS STAFF —

- ★★★★: Excellent
- ★★★: Good
- ★★: Average
- ★: Poor

### ★★★ Babe

*Babe* is about a talking pig. The pig can't talk to humans, mind you: The story is told primarily from the perspective of farm animals who converse in English. The pig is named Babe, and once he begins life on a rural farm, he finds he must overcome human and animal prejudice with his charm and resourcefulness, lest he end up the main course for Christmas dinner. It's a familiar fable, one whose moral could be "Don't judge a book by its cover." The best thing about the film is the impressive use of animatronics for the talking animals: Moreover, the film wins points by recapitulating social themes like communication and prejudice with a facile touch that never gets heavy-handed. Although adults will enjoy the film, *Babe* is more of a kids' movie. —Scott Deskin. *Sony Copley Place*.

### ★★★★ Kids

*Kids* is a blunt, ugly horror film whose most frightening feature is that it is entirely believable. The film is not about Hollywood, or even Beverly Hills 90210; instead it is about unspectacular New York City youths who show less than marginal respect for their parents and want nothing more than to be left to wander the streets and hang out with their friends. Events in *Kids* do not take place behind screens or under blankets; rather, the camera is placed so close to the actors that it literally invades their personal space. And the viewer winds up squirming in his or her own chair, unwilling to watch the evils perpetrated

against innocents, yet driven to watch in the blind hope that somehow the horror will be mitigated. —Teresa Esser. *Sony Nick-elodeon*.

### ★★★ 1/2 Outbreak

Dustin Hoffman and Rene Russo are government doctors trying to find the antibody for a highly infectious, absolutely fatal disease. Donald Sutherland and Morgan Freeman round out the leads as Army officers working from their own agenda. Their objectives and mutual interactions form the plot to this entertaining suspense-action film. It's mostly a plot movie, but what a plot! If you accept the opening premise, then everything that follows is plausible. As a suspense film, there are lots of crucial moments where Hoffman must "do the right thing." Sutherland, as the bad guy, pulls off his role quite well. —Kamal Swamidoss. *LSC Tuesday*.

### ★★ 1/2 Something to talk about

Julia Roberts has come to a turning point in her career. Roberts' latest film, *Something*



Kevin Spacey, Dustin Hoffman, Rene Russo, and Cuba Gooding, Jr. in a medical thriller, "Outbreak."

to *Talk About*, is change of pace for the 29-year-old actress. She goes out on a limb as Grace, a frazzled thirty-ish wife and mother who leads a fairly dull and unhappy life. Director Lasse Hallstrom handles the subject matter with delicacy and poignancy, not letting the characters' actions overwhelm the characters themselves and Roberts carries the film with the charm and earnestness she gives her role. Despite a shaky start and a slick finish, the movie's positive attributes outweigh its negative ones. It's certainly not the best movie to deal with such subject matter, but it offers a new, fresh perspective on who actually gets hurt in relationships. And Julia Roberts may have expanded her cinematic range at long last: Hopefully she won't have to return to any more obnoxious thrillers to revive her career. —Scott Deskin. *Sony Cheri*.

### ★★ 1/2 True Lies

This Arnold Schwarzenegger action-adventure-

comedy casts him as Harry Tasker, a top-secret government agent who hides his real identity from his wife, Helen (Jamie Lee Curtis), who thinks he is a computer salesman. That premise is no less believable than any of the other plot twists, which primarily involve the efforts of Middle Eastern terrorist of the "Crimson Jihad" (Art Malik) to hold America hostage with some nuclear warheads. The special effects are pretty impressive, considering the seamlessness of the final product — including some nifty scenes with Harrier jets and exploding bridges — which seems to be direct counterpoint to the exotic morphing effects of director James Cameron's last effort, *Terminator 2*. But most of the movie drags between its main action sequences, especially some dumb plot involving an affair between Helen and Simon (Bill Paxton), a man pretending to be a spy. The film is partially redeemed by the easygoing performance of Tom Arnold as Harry's sidekick, but most of the performances seem forced. —SD. *LSC Friday*.

### ★★ Waterworld

For films with overblown budgets more impressive than their special effects, *Waterworld* is an unqualified success. Nevertheless, if one looks past all the hype and egos surrounding the project, *Waterworld* isn't so bad. Essentially an alternate version of the post-apocalyptic world in George Miller's epic *The Road Warrior*, *Waterworld* generates a fair amount of rough-and-tumble excitement when it gets going. *Waterworld* looks like a well-made but expensive flop. Although the special effects look nice on the big screen, the film probably doesn't lose much of its grandeur on video. —Scott Deskin. *Sony Cheri*.



Arnold Schwarzenegger is Harry Tasker and Jamie Lee Curtis is Helen Tasker in "True Lies."