

Counterpoint Writer Cleared in Libel Suit

By Zareena Hussain
NEWS EDITOR

The libel case filed three years ago against a former staff member of the joint MIT-Wellesley publication *Counterpoint* ended with a finding for the defendant and against the Africana Studies professor at Wellesley who brought the suit.

Anthony Martin, professor of Africana studies at Wellesley, filed suit against Avik Roy '96 in response to an article written by Roy in the fall of 1993 about the controversy surrounding Martin. Specifically, Martin took issue with the statement in the article saying that he "gained tenure within the Africana Studies department only after successfully suing the college for racial discrimination, providing a possible explanation as to Martin's outspoken racial views as well as the administration's reluctance to openly censure him."

While Martin had filed suit

against Wellesley in 1987 alleging racial discrimination over a merit increase, he had already gained tenure in 1975.

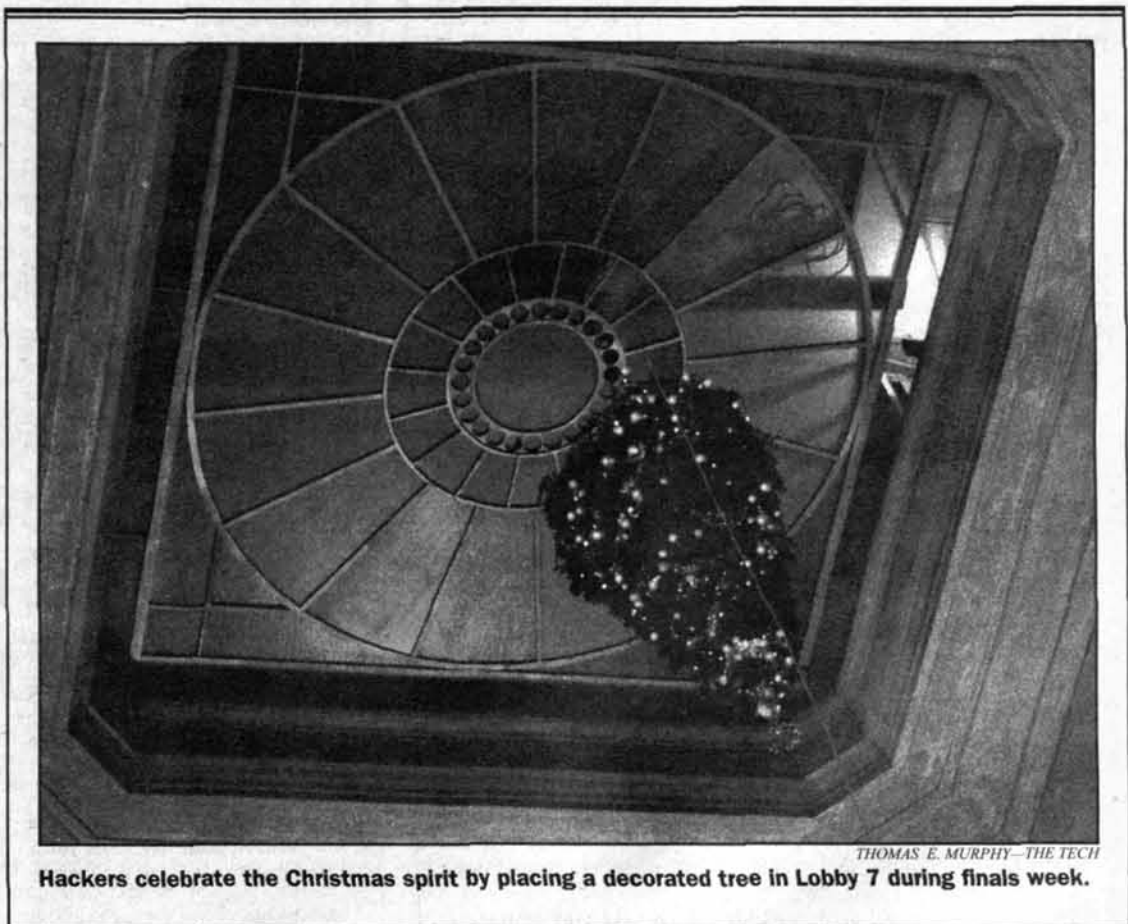
Despite this, Massachusetts Superior Court Judge Judith Fabricant found that the statement in question was "partly false, but substantially true."

"What is inaccurate in the statement is the implication of timing and causation," Fabricant wrote. "The suit occurred well after his tenure, and thus could not have caused it."

However, she added that the conclusion drawn from the statement, that fear of litigation would cause Wellesley to exercise "particular restraint" when dealing with Martin, "follows at least as strongly from the actual facts as it would from the erroneous version."

In the end, Fabricant ruled that Martin had failed to meet his

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Hackers celebrate the Christmas spirit by placing a decorated tree in Lobby 7 during finals week.

Architect Steven Holl Chosen For Design of New Undergrad Dorm

By Susan Buchman
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

One of the final steps in the planning of the new undergraduate residence hall was completed recently with the selection of architect Steven Holl.

Holl, principle architect for Steven Holl Architects in New York, is a professor of architecture at Columbia University.

The architect selection committee "wanted an architect of the first rank, somebody who had experience with housing and experience on university campuses

— someone who could relate well to MIT and someone who would work well with our students and our faculty," said Chancellor Lawrence Bacow '75, a member of the committee.

The committee started with a list of approximately 100 different architecture firms "of the caliber that we associate with MIT," Bacow said.

The committee used these criteria to eventually narrow the list to five firms. Those firms were invited to campus for presentations and interviews. Holl was the first choice of the committee.

"[Holl] is really an exceptional individual and I think that he's going to produce an exceptional building for us," Bacow said.

"It was quite extraordinary how well he understands space from the largest context to the smallest detail," said Dean for Undergraduate Education Rosalind H. Williams.

Holl highly distinguished

Holl has received many awards for his designs, including the 1998

Architect, Page 16

Early Applications Rise While Acceptances Fall

By Frank Dabek
NEWS EDITOR

The college search could be over sooner than expected for 510 high school seniors who were admitted by early action to MIT to form part of the class of 2003.

The other 1,678 members of the 2,188 member applicant pool will continue the college admissions process after being deferred to regular action, said Associate Director of Admissions Elizabeth S. Johnson.

In a change this year, all of the admitted students will be invited to the Campus Preview Weekend in April, pending administration approval, Johnson said. The weekend had previously been restricted to women and underrepresented minority students.

Johnson said that the change came about because many of MIT's peer institutions offer similar programs.

The admissions office "didn't want to lose the specialness [of CPW] for underrepresented minorities and women," however, Johnson said. As a result, women and minority students may be invited to the event a day earlier than other students.

Early acceptance rate down

The 23 percent acceptance rate is lower than in previous years as the number of applicants rose by 104 this year and the number of admitted students declined slightly, Johnson said.

Those students who were accepted may choose to come to MIT but are not required to do so, and can apply to other institutions. Other schools offer early decision

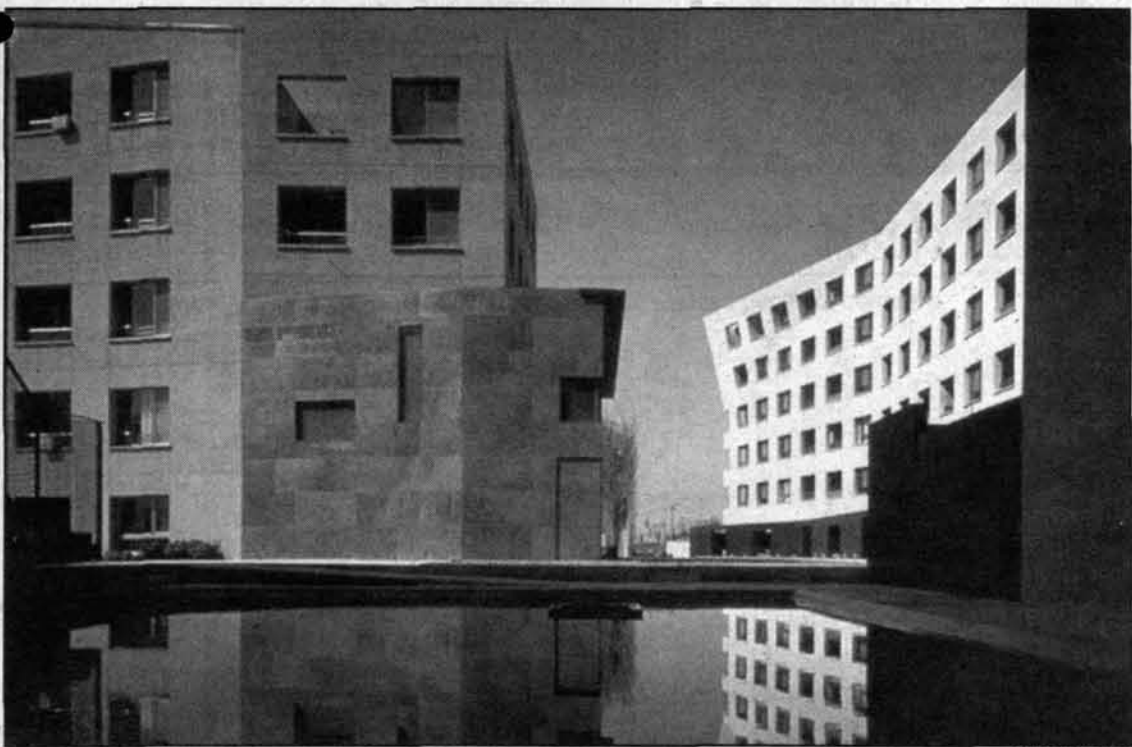
programs that require freshmen to enroll upon being accepted. Johnson said that such programs are "not something that we won't think about" but said that she was "reluctant" to move to such a system.

Historically, around 70 percent of students offered early admission choose to enroll at MIT, according to Johnson. She said further that the office is always conservative in offering early admission to students but this year the office was "even more conservative." A similarly high yield among the group of students who apply for early action but are admitted with the regular admissions (also around 70 percent) makes this policy possible since few candidates are lost when deferred at the time of early action.

The past several years have seen an increase in the number of students choosing to apply early. The number of applications is up to 2,188 from just 1,669 in 1995. Johnson said that "a lot of students feel that they want to apply early... [and are] encouraged to apply early" by guidance counselors.

Underrepresented minorities represent 14 percent of the early acceptances, a figure on par with previous years. Johnson said that the minority section of this pool was "as strong as it normally is."

The deadline for regular admission has recently passed. The admissions office has not processed most of the applications but Johnson said that initial indications are that the number of applications is up slightly although the numbers "don't seem dramatically different."



PAUL WARCHOL

Steven Holl, who will design the new undergraduate dormitory, has also designed several other major residence projects, including the Makuhari Housing, which is located on a fill in Toyko Bay.

The MIT Women's Forum discusses the use of gender in computer games as it presents an IAP talk by Justine Cassell.

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Comics

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THE ARTS

DreamWorks' *The Prince of Egypt* shows that animated film doesn't need animal sidekicks or comic relief.

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WORLD & NATION

Iranian Agents Are Implicated in Dissidents' Deaths

LOS ANGELES TIMES

CAIRO, EGYPT

In a startling admission of wrongdoing by security forces, Iran announced Tuesday that a network of "deviant" intelligence agents has been rounded up in the mysterious slayings of five dissidents late last year.

A statement from the Intelligence Ministry said a group of its agents, acting on their own, had carried out "horrendous" crimes that had "to a very great extent tarnished the credibility" of the Islamic Republic.

The statement, distributed by the official Islamic Republic News Agency, gave no clue as to how many agents may have been involved in the killings or how high their ranks. It suggested that the killings had taken place at the instigation of foreign agents but gave no details to support that claim.

The ministry emphasized its condemnation of the deaths and pledged to get to the bottom of the "complicated" case by uprooting "all the bandits, gangsters and alien agents both within and outside the country" who were involved.

Angola Factions Won't Aid Search for Missing Planes

LOS ANGELES TIMES

UNITED NATIONS

For 10 days, U.N. staff members have waited with anger and frustration to find out the fate of 10 colleagues aboard a plane that crashed in Angola. Both sides in the African nation's civil war have refused to stop fighting long enough for rescuers to reach the crash site.

Over the weekend, a second aircraft with more U.N. personnel apparently was shot down, and their fate also remains uncertain.

Despite urgent pleas, neither the government nor rebels from the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) have made efforts to cooperate with search teams.

At the United Nations, diplomats and staff members voiced rage and despair Monday.

"The secretary-general expressed his outrage and said all threats to U.N. personnel must stop immediately," said Kofi Annan's spokesman, Fred Eckhard. "What we are looking for is cooperation from both sides. Until both sides cease fire and allow our search-and-rescue missions to go in, nothing can be accomplished."

Freeze Will Likely Boost Citrus Prices

WASHINGTON POST

LOS ANGELES

Joseph Vejar of the Los Angeles-based Valley Fruit and Produce Co., a major Southern California wholesaler, said high prices for citrus products are expected "well into the summer." Similar predictions were issued by other wholesalers in central and northern California.

The price predictions came as farmers cautiously reassess damage from a four-day freeze that wiped out much of the central valley's navel orange crop, the nation's largest. The state originally estimated crop losses at \$591 million. That was revised Monday to \$540 million, with about \$440 million of the losses in oranges, said Bob Krauter, spokesman for the California Farm Bureau Federation.

The heaviest losses were in the heart of the central valley in Tulare and Kern counties, where many packing houses have shut down and at least 12,000 farm workers and packing shed workers have been thrown out of work. Because temperatures rose slowly after the freeze, a few growers have been able to salvage some navel oranges and may save still more of the unpicked crop.

Clinton's Attorneys Prepare for Trial Despite Uncertainty

By Peter Baker and Helen Dewar
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON

President Clinton's defense team has decided to mount a more concentrated attack on the evidence against him during his Senate trial after concluding that it allowed Republicans to define the facts of the case during House proceedings that led to his impeachment last month.

The White House would prefer to avoid a trial altogether and is preparing to file a motion in the Senate seeking to have the case dismissed entirely. But Clinton advisers have resigned themselves to the likelihood of at least an abbreviated Senate trial and are assembling a defense to present with or without witnesses.

As the president's lawyers met again Monday to plot their approach, though, they remained hampered by uncertainty about the format and timing of the proceedings against Clinton. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., appears to be having increasing trouble mustering GOP support for a bipartisan plan that calls for a brief preliminary hearing next week

followed by a test vote that would end the trial unless two-thirds of the Senate opts for a full proceeding.

Although most Democrats have embraced the idea, many Republicans are balking at cutting short the process. Lott, who has not endorsed the plan even as he has been gauging support for it, does not plan to introduce it if he cannot count on the backing of a majority of his fellow Republicans, according to colleagues.

The fluid situation has made planning difficult for all sides as the new Congress prepares to convene Wednesday. Senate Republicans scheduled meetings for the next two days to hammer out a procedure, leaving House prosecutors and White House lawyers to prepare for various contingencies, including the prospect of a trial starting Monday.

"The articles (of impeachment) are constitutionally deficient, legally defective and factually without foundation," said White House special counsel Gregory B. Craig. "We would welcome, we do not fear, a fair trial before a fair-minded jury."

The president's defense in the Senate, still a work in progress, will focus more directly on refuting the charges of perjury and obstruction

of justice lodged against Clinton. During the House debate, Clinton's defenders argued that the allegations were not serious enough to justify his removal from office, even if true. But many Republican lawmakers concluded that Clinton was not contesting the factual case assembled by independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr and instead was merely disputing its importance.

Without dropping their constitutional arguments, Clinton's advisers have resolved to more vigorously challenge the premise of the charges in the Senate, even at the risk of reigniting complaints that his defense relies on legalistic hair-splitting. When Starr first submitted his report to Congress in September, the president's aides picked at the prosecutor's case, only to spur bipartisan criticism about their narrowly focused points.

In examining the House case over the last two weeks, Clinton lawyers have identified what they consider the holes in each of the specific allegations cited to support the perjury and obstruction charges. In each of those instances, they plan to argue that innocent explanations undercut the assertion of corrupt motives by the president.

Miami's Cuban-Americans Are Wary of Eased Cuban Policies

By Sue Anne Pressley
THE WASHINGTON POST

MIAMI

For the many Cuban-Americans here who view any easing of U.S. restraints against Cuba as a triumph for President Fidel Castro, the Clinton administration's announcement Tuesday to allow more U.S. travel and cash into Cuba was a reason to breathe easier: At least, they said, President Clinton stopped short of naming a formal commission to review overall policy toward the communist government.

Hard-liners had feared that such a commission would threaten strict trade embargoes the United States has had in place against Cuba for 36 years. For that reason, they fought hard to discourage the administration from embarking on any reeval-

uation, despite support for the idea from 24 senators from both parties and some Cuban-Americans outside the generally conservative Miami exile organizations.

"The hard-liners have been able to shoot the commission out of the water," said Max Castro, a senior research associate at the North-South Center at the University of Miami, who is no relation to the Cuban leader. "The commission symbolized the prospect of big, big changes."

Hard-liners still fear that any additional money flowing into the island will only benefit Castro and his government. But as always, reactions here in the nation's largest, most active and vociferous Cuban-American community were suspicious, divided and hotly debat-

ed as residents tried to decipher what the changes really mean and who in the homeland will benefit the most.

"I think this is a little bit for everybody, a carrot for everybody," said Jaime Suchlicki, a professor of international relations at the University of Miami.

"For the hard-liners, it means no commission and more money for TV Marti and Radio Marti," the U.S.-funded stations beaming to Cuba, he said. "For the Cuban-Americans, it means more travel to Cuba and more money to Cuba. It may encourage more independence for economic groups. But it's not going to bring about any political changes, because Castro is not willing to provide any political changes."

WEATHER

Not Your Average New England Winter

By Greg Lawson
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

Welcome back to Boston. If you stayed here through break, then you know that our record-breaking mild streak ended with the arrival of winter and yet we still have not yet had a full inch of snow accumulate. It looks like this should continue to hold for us, at least through the weekend. Others have not been so lucky of late, especially the upper Mid-West and western Upstate New York, all of who were recently pounded with more than a foot of snow.

As the huge high pressure center which had been giving almost the entire east coast cool and clear weather pushes out to sea today, we will soon meet a weak low which formed early this morning out over the Great Lakes. This low will hit us sometime late tonight, bringing us some of the light snow to our west referred to earlier. Its cold front will pass over us early tomorrow afternoon, but luckily, due to the curvature of the wave the low center is riding, the temperatures won't really drop — we'll continue to ride things through with temps in the low 30s. However, there will be an increase in cloudiness associated with the front passing. The clouds should dissipate slowly over the course of the next day or so as another high pressure system settles into the Northeast and cools things down slightly. It appears that more light precipitation, most likely snow, could be arriving this weekend, though it is still too early to say for sure.

Wednesday: Chilly. Cloudiness increasing with approaching low. Southwesterly winds gusting to 20 mph. Temperatures remain below freezing. High 31°F (-1°C).

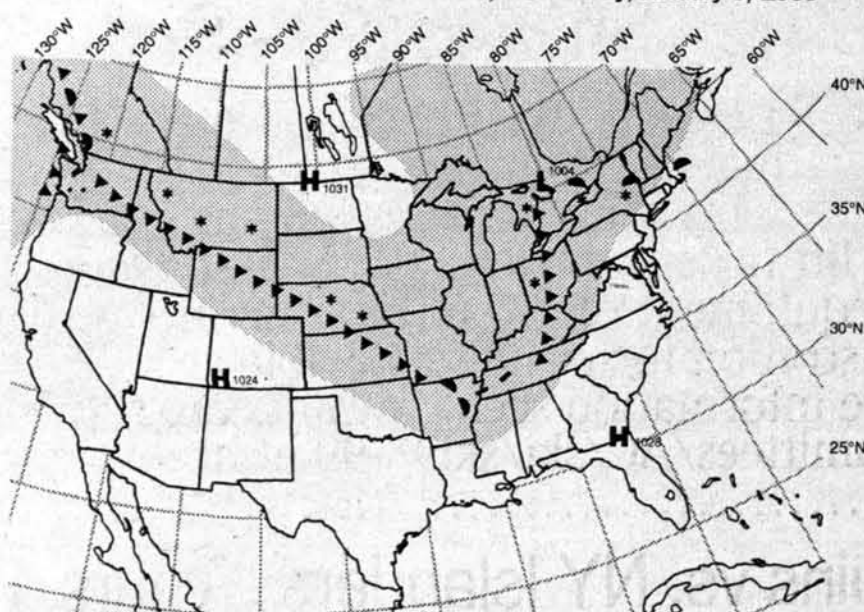
Wednesday Night: Light snow likely. Overcast. Winds will pick up slightly. Low 28°F (-2°C).

Thursday: Windy. Mostly cloudy skies breaking up through the day. High 34°F (1°C). Low 27°F (-3°C).

Friday: Clear becoming cloudy. Light northerly winds. High in the low 30s (-1 to 1°C). Low in the mid 20s (-5 to -3°C).

Weekend Outlook: Possible precipitation on its way.

Situation for Noon Eastern Standard Time, Wednesday, January 6, 1999



Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols	Other Symbols
H High Pressure	--- Trough	Snow	Fog
L Low Pressure	— Warm Front	Shows	Thunderstorm
S Hurricane	▲ Cold Front	Light	Haze
	▲ Occluded Front	Moderate	
		Heavy	

Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and The Tech

Iraqi Warplanes, U.S. Fighter Jets Clash Over "No-Fly" Zone

By Robin Wright
LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON

Escalating its challenge to the United States' new policy of "containment-plus," Iraq sent more than a dozen warplanes Tuesday into the skies over its southern "no-fly" zone, where they tangled with patrolling U.S. jets.

Four U.S. fighter jets twice responded with missiles in the first air-to-air confrontations in six years over one of Iraq's two no-fly zones, the Pentagon reported. But the missiles failed to hit any of the Iraqi warplanes.

In the wake of the third clash between the United States and Iraq in nine days, Clinton administration officials are now predicting that confrontations with Iraq are likely to become a more regular and troublesome challenge to U.S. foreign policy in 1999 as both sides try to

force the other's hand.

Iraq's immediate goal in the latest violations apparently was to lure U.S. planes patrolling the zones into missile traps. All U.S. aircraft, however, returned safely to their bases. But one Iraqi warplane crashed, possibly because it ran out of fuel, according to Pentagon officials. Iraq limits fuel for its air force planes to prevent defections.

As many as 15 Iraqi planes may have been engaged in Tuesday's eight violations, which all involved crossing over the 33rd parallel that demarcates the southern no-fly zone, Pentagon spokesman Kenneth M. Bacon said. The zones, in the north and south, were set up after the 1991 Persian Gulf War to protect ethnic minorities.

The two air-to-air altercations Tuesday, which pitted U.S. F-14s and F-15s against Iraq's Russian-made MIG-25s, were 15 minutes

apart. The American planes fired a total of six missiles.

The confrontations were the first in the air over Iraq's Shiite-dominated south since Dec. 27, 1992, when a U.S. F-16 shot down an Iraqi MIG-25.

The regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had a different version of the incident. "The hawks of our brave air force confronted and clashed with the aggressive American and British planes, and the enemy planes withdrew. ... All the planes of our air force returned to their bases safely," said a military spokesman quoted by the official Iraqi News Agency.

But Iraq's intentions were reflected in a speech by Hussein, who escalated the war of words Tuesday by calling the zone illegal and pledging that Iraq would challenge intrusions of its airspace "with all its courage and bravery."

House GOP Nominates Hastert For Speaker of 106th Congress

By Juliet Eilperin
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON

House Republicans unanimously nominated Rep. J. Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., as their leader Tuesday, thereby ensuring he will become the speaker of the 106th Congress when it convenes Wednesday.

The message of the day was clear: Hastert will bring unity and civility back to the House. In a closed session on the House floor Tuesday night, GOP lawmakers praised Hastert for his ability to forge consensus and promote the passage of meaningful legislation, according to members who attended.

"He can unify the House of Representatives," declared Republican Conference Chairman J.C. Watts of Oklahoma at a news

conference after the vote, where more than 100 lawmakers gathered behind Hastert to applaud him. "He's the right man at the right time."

Hastert, who received standing ovations, reminded his colleagues during the private session of President Abraham Lincoln's famed admonition that "a house divided against itself cannot stand."

The lawmakers who spoke on Hastert's behalf noted his skills as a coach and that he agreed to take on the leadership post only after being pressed to do so.

"Let's just make sure we don't try to change Denny," Rep. Thomas W. Ewing, R-Ill., said.

Lawmakers described Hastert as a dramatic departure from predecessor Newt Gingrich of Georgia. "We're moving away from the

Newt era, which was a very centralized speakership," Ewing said in an interview.

Gone, too, was Gingrich's revolutionary rhetoric. Appearing before the cameras with wife Jean, Hastert pledged to find a "middle ground" with Democrats in an effort to restore the public's faith in Congress. "I'm going to meet the Democratic leadership and the Democratic Caucus halfway," he said.

Even Majority Whip Tom DeLay of Texas, a fierce Clinton critic, said that "nothing's non-negotiable" with the White House and praised Hastert for planning to meet regularly with top Democrats. "He's already figuring out how to be speaker of the whole House, not just Republican speaker, which is why we need him right now," DeLay said.

USDA Settlement With Black Farmers Is Tentatively Approved

THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON

A federal judge tentatively approved Tuesday a historic agreement requiring the Department of Agriculture to pay hundreds of millions of dollars to black farmers who say they were denied government loans and other assistance because of their race.

The agreement settles a class-action lawsuit filed in 1997 by more than 1,000 black farmers and marks the first time the government has agreed to compensate them as a group for racial bias that has been documented by various federal officials for years. Discrimination by USDA officials has been cited by civil rights advocates and others as a major reason the ranks of black farmers has dropped at three times the rate of white farmers. Blacks now account for less than 1 percent of the nation's farmers.

The deal is one of the largest racial discrimination settlements in federal history and puts to rest an issue that has long been a major embarrassment for USDA. The vast agency is derisively referred to as the "last plantation" by many black farmers and by many of the department's own minority employees who see it as a bastion of racial prejudice.

In the end, the agreement could cost the federal government \$400 million or more, depending on the number of farmers who step forward with claims. Plaintiff attorneys said that as many as 4,000 claimants — roughly one in four of the nation's black farmers — could end up taking part in the deal, although that figure is disputed by USDA officials.

Lauryn Hill Leads Surge Of Women in Grammy Nominations

THE WASHINGTON POST

LOS ANGELES

Hip-hop singer Lauryn Hill's decision to pursue a solo career apart from the Fugees paid off Tuesday when she earned a stunning 10 Grammy nominations for her solo debut, "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill." The critically acclaimed album, which has sold close to 3 million copies, was nominated in such leading categories as album of the year and best R&B album, while Hill was nominated for best new artist and best producer, an award that has never been won by a woman.

As they have in recent years, women dominated the nominations for the recording industry's highest honors. Canadian pop-country singer Shania Twain and bluesy rocker Sheryl Crow each scored six nominations, pop veteran Madonna earned five, and French Canadian diva Celine Dion and young R&B star Brandy had four apiece.

Among male artists, only gospel star Kirk Franklin and country singer Vince Gill earned four nominations each. Twain's husband, Robert John "Mutt" Lange, who produced and co-wrote much of her material, had five nominations, tying with recording engineer Jeff Balding for the most among men.

The 41st annual Grammy Awards, sponsored by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, will be televised Feb. 24 by CBS from the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.



Graduate Student Council

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EMAIL: gsc-request@mit.edu

WEBSITE: www.mit.edu/activities/gsc

Spring Welcome Social - Feb. 4

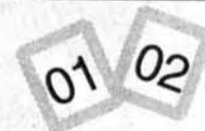
5 - 7 PM IN 50-220. Come meet other graduate students and enjoy free food and drink. Proper ID is required.

Ski Trip - Fri, Jan. 29 - Sun, Jan. 31

We will be going to Smuggler's Notch. Price is \$140 for graduate students and post-docs and \$150 for guests. This price includes lodging, transportation, and lift tickets for three days. Discount packages for equipment rental and lessons are available. Registration forms now available at 50-220. For more information see: www.mit.edu/activities/gsc/Committees/AC/ski/ski98-99.html.

Bruins vs. NY Islanders - Thurs, Feb. 4

The GSC has 30 tickets reserved in the mid-balcony section. The price is \$25 for graduate students, post-docs, and guests. This price includes a coupon for a hot dog and soda at the concession stand.



Calendar

JANUARY

- 05 - Activities committee meeting *
- 06 - Publicity committee meeting*
- 19 - Housing & Community Affairs committee meeting*
- 29 - 31 - Smuggler's Notch Ski Trip

FEBRUARY

- 03 - General Council Meeting *
- 04 - Spring Welcome Social, 5-7 PM, 50-220
- Bruins vs. Islanders Game, meet in 50-220

* = at 5:30pm in Room 50-220. All graduate students are welcome. Food is provided.

OPINION

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Football And Civic Pride

Michael J. Ring '01 was mostly on the mark with his analysis in *The Tech* of the Patriots' departure ["Political Football," Dec. 8]. Low-income jobs, minimal tax revenue, and civic pride never justify public stadium funding. As Ring says, Connecticut's stadium deal is egregious corporate welfare. Despite his well-written and well-argued points, Ring makes statements which indicate he does not understand the importance of football.

Ring, who admits growing up near Foxboro, writes, "A professional sports

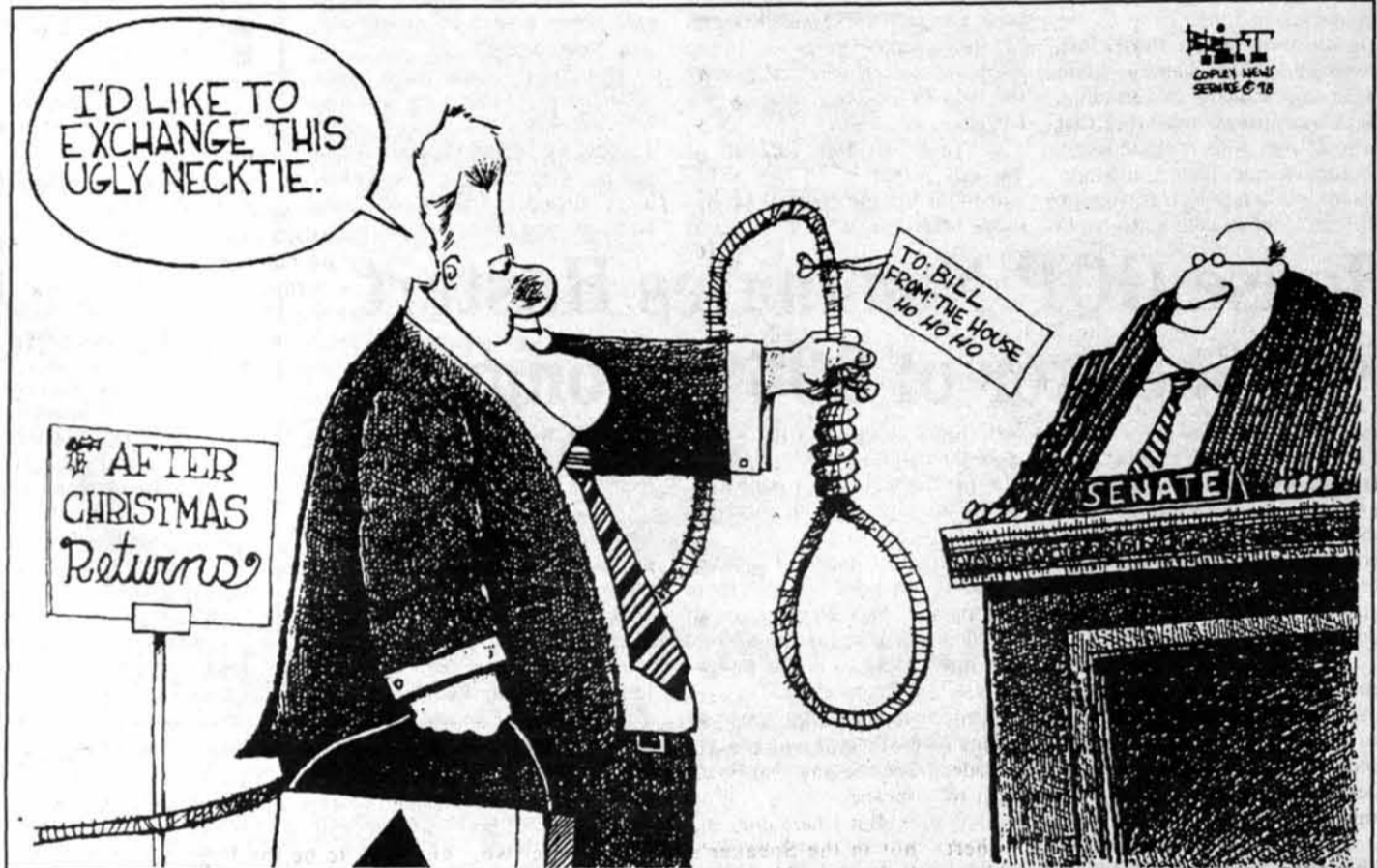
franchise has only a fraction of the value of world-class cultural and educational institutions." This statement reveals that, to no fault of their own, he and other residents of this fair-weather, no-account football town could not possibly understand the inspirational and motivational value of hard-fought football unconditionally supported by die-hard, loud-mouthed, beer-drinking partisans.

Having spent countless hours sleeping in museums on school field trips and having the privilege to attend one of the world's finest academic institutions, I am happy to say that these experiences were not a fraction as fulfilling as receiving Washington Redskins'

season tickets for which my father had waited 26 years.

Perhaps the time and money invested in my weekly excursions to the Sports Depot to cheer on a 6-10 team could be better spent appreciating the arts, acquiring social grace, or improving my grade point average. Certainly Massachusetts may have greater concerns than the spiritual well-being of football hooligans. Nevertheless, as a fan of a football team in an honest-to-God football town with die-hard fans and a great fight song, I am skeptical about Ring's statement, "Life goes on without a football team." I doubt it.

Philip D. Sarin '99



Opinion Policy

Editorials are the official opinion of *The Tech*. They are written by the editorial board, which consists of the chairman, editor in chief, managing editor, news editors, and opinion editors.

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Letters to the editor are welcome. Electronic submissions are encouraged and may be sent to letters@the-tech.mit.edu. Hard copy submissions may be addressed to *The Tech*, P.O. Box 397029, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-7029, or sent by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. All submissions are due by 4:30 p.m. two days before the date of publication.

Letters and cartoons must bear the authors' signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. No letter or cartoon will be printed anonymously without 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. *The Tech* makes no commitment to publish all the letters received.

To Reach Us

The Tech's telephone number is (617) 253-1541. E-mail is the easiest way to reach any member of our staff. If you are unsure who to contact, send mail to general@the-tech.mit.edu, and it will be directed to the appropriate person. *The Tech* can be found on the World-Wide Web at <http://the-tech.mit.edu>.

Getting the House in Order

Hastert Must Assert Himself Quickly or DeLay Will be the Puppetmaster

Michael J. Ring

American politicians have not always been the wisest, the most benevolent, or the most caring lot, but the 105th Congress set new lows in idiocy and spitefulness.



As that sorry body expires this week and the 106th Congress convenes in Washington, Americans can only hope that the leadership of this Congress will be more sensible and tolerant than the extremists of the last. As House Republicans hold a majority of only six, the need for conciliation and cooperation is high and the potential for gridlock frighteningly real.

Unfortunately, the Speaker's chair is surrounded by a power vacuum, a vortex which in the past two months alone has destroyed a speaker and a would-be speaker. The House is left in chaos, and a review of the circumstances surrounding the ousters of Newt Gingrich and Robert Livingston offer little hope that a bipartisan resolution will be reached quickly.

After masterminding the Republican Revolution of 1994, Gingrich proved his skill at winning elections. But he was a better campaigner than governor, and his tenure was marred by partisan rancor and turmoil. The Georgia Republican took the fall for the Democratic congressional gains in the midterm election.

Interestingly, Gingrich's resignation was not prompted by the complaints of Democrats or moderate Republicans. It was a revolt among the Bible-thumping firebrands of the extreme right that sealed Gingrich's fate. Immediately after an election in which the American people told conservatives they were banging their drum too loudly, the right sought to up the volume. The American people had tired of the conservative crusade, yet the extremists in Congress sought to knight a new leader.

Emerging from the dust was Robert Livingston, an affable Louisiana Republican

with a conservative voting record but without Gingrich's acerbic personality. Livingston appeared to be a candidate who could unite the House after the tumultuous Gingrich tenure.

Last month, Livingston admitted to an affair. At the time of admission, he still intended to seek the speaker's post. On the morning of Clinton's impeachment, however, Livingston withdrew from the speaker's race and announced he would resign his seat in Congress.

Livingston's resignation was denounced by politicians left and right, who called for an end to "the politics of personal destruction." But Livingston resigned for a reason, and word in Washington is he wished to spare himself embarrassment from having other

The real power is not in the Office of the Speaker or the Majority Leader, but with Majority Whip Tom DeLay of Texas.

sexual misdeeds revealed. And despite all the criticism of Larry Flynt for threatening to embarrass Republicans for such conduct, the head of Livingston is not his trophy. Rather, whispers in the capital say it is again the extremist backbenchers who toppled Livingston. Unwilling to be led by a man who admitted to sexual indiscretion, the Republican right torpedoed an able candidate who could not pass their strict test of sexual purity.

So as Congress convenes this week, the man inheriting the gavel from Gingrich will be Illinois Republican Dennis Hastert. Like Livingston, Hastert has a conservative voting record but a willingness to work with both sides of the aisle. If he is able to acquire any real power, he will be an able speaker.

But where does the real power lie? It is not in the Speaker's office, where two bodies have been buried in as many months.

Nor is it in the office of Majority Leader Richard Armey of Texas, who faced a bruising challenge to retain his post. The only Republican leader to emerge strengthened from this whole debacle is the archconservative Majority Whip, Tom DeLay of Texas.

DeLay has been the puppetmaster running the House since Gingrich's resignation. The power behind the partisan impeachment battle, the Texan has filled the vacuum created by Gingrich's departure. Dubbed "The Hammer" by many in the press, DeLay is ruthless in cajoling wavering Republicans to adhere to the party line.

DeLay's voting record is hypocritical and dangerous. At the same time he finds censorship of speech in campaign-finance reform efforts, he has sought to censor the Internet by supporting the Communications Decency Act, and has rallied Republicans behind the elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Texas Republican has also been a leading voice in forcing prayer into public schools and denying employment protection to homosexuals, all in the name of "family values." The majority whip has openly welcomed the support of the religious right, and is probably the most vocal and ardent supporter of the movement among the House Republican leadership.

The events of the past few months are not the first time DeLay has tried to dictate the speaker's office from behind the scenes. He was a leader in the failed coup against Gingrich in the wake of the Speaker's ethics problems. DeLay has spent a good portion of his tenure meddling in the Speaker's office, and his fingerprints are all over the events which have recently transpired.

One hopes the sensible, affable Hastert will leash DeLay and work to restore a sense of bipartisan cooperation to a badly divided House. Unfortunately, the reverse is more likely the case. DeLay is crafty, cunning, persuasive, and revered as a hero of the extremist right. Unless Hastert can muster enough courage and power to challenge this firebrand, the Majority Whip will probably continue to be the Puppetmaster of the House.

In Praise Of Graffiti

Elaine Wan

Art is an expression of our feelings, thoughts, and experiences through different media. Although most art forms are admired and cherished by society, graffiti has been condemned as vandalism. Artists stubborn in practicing such work have been punished by laws and fined by courts. However, you may have noticed the graffiti in the restrooms at MIT or the painted slogans on the Harvard Bridge. Although the removal of graffiti costs us a lot of money, graffiti has also contributed to the history of this Institute.

The highest concentration of graffiti lurks within the wooden cubicles and on the surface of the pegleg chairs of our silent sanctuary in the Student Center, the reading room. There have been many times when my boredom of studying certain subjects was driven away by those colorful messages engraved on the wooden panels on the desks.

"Sleep awaits you," is deeply carved onto a panel top and stained with blue ink. Overlaying this message is the capitalized inscription, "LIFE=HELL." Responding to these two messages is a neatly written sentence, "Have you considered Harvard?" The author was quickly rebutted by another who wrote, "Yes, but Harvard did not consider me. I'm too smart and I'm ugly, not to mention especially maladapted."

Among a sea of etches and doodled drawings, more poetic statements can be found on the same panel, like "My life is a

We often turn to doodling on furniture to take our minds off a profound postulate or essay. Reading the expressed thoughts of others there is also amusing and relieving. It lets us know we are not alone.

tragedy that hurts like a bad comedy." Some fellow student confesses in faint black ink, "I am deeply moved." Amongst the edges of some desks, abstract scientific formulas, like $E=mc^2$, can be found.

The serious atmosphere and chilling temperatures of the reading room make it the place to study or work before finals and deadlines. It is not unusual to turn to doodling on furniture to take our minds off a profound postulate or a mentally grueling essay question. Reading the expressed thoughts of others is also amusing and relieving. The words of others insure that you may not be the only one with heaps of work that causes unusual desires. One student writes on the back panel, "I need a sensual blow job to continue my problem set."

The engravings in the reading room are as much a part of our history as the bright red Smoot measurements on the Harvard Bridge. Some couples have etched their initials in remembrance of the beginning of their relationship. Greek letters symbolic of various fraternities and sororities, along with their members' graduation dates, can also be seen on certain pieces of furniture.

Although such graffiti can be enlightening at times, it also damages the condition of the furniture. This means that new immaculate furniture may be needed to replace those currently still used in the reading room. It would be a pity if the furniture with all these marks from students who have graduated would not be enjoyed by future students of MIT. The ideas and voices which have been part of the MIT culture all these years are engraved along with those words you now find on the desks and chairs of the reading room.

If someday the furniture in the reading room will no longer be fit for use, I hope that the wooden panels with those inscriptions will be dismantled and displayed on the walls of the reading room so that all those who visit the reading room can get a sense of what it was like to be a MIT student studying there.

Now I'll take the advice some wise colleague wrote in bright red ink, "Stop reading this graffiti and get back to work."

Dissecting Faith Through Reason

Guest Column
Kris Schnee

In his recent essay *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason), Pope John Paul II attempts to settle the long-standing conflict between two rival methods for gaining knowledge – the reliance on God to reveal hidden truths and the search for information by observation and deduction. John Paul shows genuine concern for humanity by addressing a problem absolutely central to all social issues, but he does not present a convincing case for the importance of faith in human thought.

The Pope begins with an assumption – he is "sure of [the Church's] competence as the bearer of the Revelation of Jesus Christ," and states that "underlying all the Church's thinking is the awareness that she is the bearer of a message which has its origin in God himself."

From the principle that the Church has knowledge of the nature of God and the afterlife, it follows that this knowledge should be considered by everyone alongside the knowledge produced by science. But is this assumption valid? To support this claim, he offers several Bible verses which imply that the Bible is the "Word of God". No other evidence is given.

So the argument begins. How do we know that the Church has special knowledge? Because the Bible says so. How do we know the Bible is correct? Because it says so. And how do we know we can trust that? Because it says so, ad infinitum. This is circular reasoning, and it is a logical flaw. Unfortunately, because the foundation of the entire essay is unsound, everything built on it collapses.

But let's follow the argument further, despite the invalid premise. John Paul states that "at the First Vatican Council, the Fathers had stressed the supernatural character of God's Revelation" and that the Council forcefully argued "there exists a knowledge which is peculiar to faith, surpassing the knowledge proper to human reason, which nevertheless by its nature can discover the Creator." Faith is the way in which humans learn things "which, unless they are divinely

revealed, cannot be known," and is not based on "sense perception and experience."

How, except again by circular reasoning, do we know that real knowledge can be gained by faith? As evidence that there exists a kind of learning outside of reason, some cite the "visions" or "revelations" which many people have experienced, in which people believe that they are being contacted by God, saints, or angels, and become convinced there is a God.

These visions persuade the recipients to join a particular religion or bolster their faith in what they already believe. Does the persistence of visions truly indicate that someone is contacting humanity?

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all mutually exclusive religions: if the basic teachings of one are true, then the other two must be wrong. All three seem to claim that God is honest, that he would never deceive anyone. So, for example, if Christianity is the "one true religion," God would not grant visions convincing people to be Jews or Muslims, or he would be tricking them. If Christians are really receiving visions from God confirming their Christian faith, then no one would receive visions confirming their faith in any other religion.

But apparently people experience "revelations" which lead them to follow several different religions. Some people claim to have been inspired by God to become or stay Christians, while others claim to be inspired by God to be Muslims or Jews. They cannot all be right. Therefore, at least some of the "divine" visions which humans experience are actually not messages from God.

Members of each religion who experience revelations obviously feel that the visions are real, that they are not being misinterpreted as divine visitations. If they did not believe the visions real, they would not use the visions as proof of their faith. So, people are not able to tell the difference between "true" and "false" visions. If Jews and Christians alike have revelations, and they cannot both be true, then at least one group must be mistakenly interpreting them as divine in origin.

Visions can probably not be conclusively tested and confirmed; we must rely on the receiver's testimony. If they do not know

whether the visions are figments of their imagination, and we have no other evidence, then we have no proof at all that anyone, anywhere, has ever received a message from any sort of God. If there is no other evidence for the claim, then we do not know that there is a kind of knowledge which cannot be attained through reason.

What would be convincing evidence that visions really do come from a source outside people's own minds? If we could follow around a large group of people who claim frequent divine visions, we could ask each person, after each vision, what information they received. If these people consistently gained information that they could not otherwise have possibly known – the contents of a sealed box kept out of view, for instance – then that would indicate some sort of superhuman insight gained without reason or observation. But some might argue we cannot tell who will have visions when, and visions reveal truths about the afterlife, not this world. The response is that divine visions, then, cannot be proved. They can only be accepted on faith. But people who do accept them should acknowledge that they could be wrong no matter how convincing the visions seem, and that they have no way of knowing it.

Pope John Paul II fails to show that anyone should temper their reason with faith, because he does not show that faith conveys any greater understanding of the truth. The Catholic Church might be completely right – people really might be able to hear important messages from God simply by trusting in him to provide that insight – but we have no way of knowing whether that is true.

Perhaps the problem with the Pope's argument is that it is based in reason at all. Rather than trying logically to prove what cannot be proven, he might have declared that we need no evidence, that people should have faith, whether or not they have any reason to think it will help them, and adopt a mode of thinking which leaves them never sure whether they are deluding themselves. But such an argument might not have been as convincing as borrowing the trappings of logic to say that logic is not everything.

Kris Schnee is a member of the Class of 2002.

THE ARTS

MOVIE REVIEW

The Prince of Egypt

Biblical passages rendered as special effects

By Vladimir Zelevinsky
STAFF REPORTER

Directed by Brenda Chapman, Steve Hickner, Simon Wells. Written by Philip LaZebnik. With the voices of Val Kilmer, Ralph Fiennes, Michelle Pfeiffer, Sandra Bullock, Jeff Goldblum, Patrick Stewart, Steve Martin, Martin Short.

This story, about a young prince who is exiled after a tragic incident, tries to rebuild his life away from home, and then triumphantly returns, reborn as a true leader, is not made by Disney, and should not be called *The Zion King*. Seriously speaking, and ignoring for the moment all the Disney/DreamWorks rivalry

(*Prince* is a brainchild of ex-mousekeeter Jeffrey Katzenberg, who became the head cheese at DreamWorks), this film declares its intentions from the opening screen with the disclaimer about faithfulness to the spirit — rather than the letter — of the Biblical source. There's also its PG rating, total absence of talking animal sidekicks, and nary a moment of comic relief in sight. After all, what we have here is the story of Exodus, and Charlton Heston is nowhere to be seen or even heard.

Ultimately, however, the differences don't matter, since *The Prince of Egypt* works best when it's the simplest — when it is merely a tale of two brothers (here, foster brothers), pharaoh-to-be Rameses (voiced by Ralph

Fiennes) and prophet-to-be Moses (Val Kilmer). When the screenplay tries to stick to the original material (first fourteen chapters of Exodus, second book of the Old Testament), it quickly loses a good deal of its appeal.

First half wavers from merely good to truly excellent, with latter in abundance. Both the opening musical number (an operatic chorus entitled "Deliver Us") and the accompanying animation are both complex and memorable; the main achievement of this sequence (and, to lesser extent, the subsequent half an hour) is that it transports the viewers to the different time and land. The ambience of ancient Egypt, its towering sphinxes, majestic pyramids, and the golden glow of the immense sandy expanse, look both utterly realistic and artfully stylish. Characters are as good, if not better — nifty designs, superb voice work, and perhaps some of the best acting in animation — the range and subtlety of Moses' facial expressions rival that pinnacle of animation, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. The film hits

its high point early on in a nightmarish sequence with hieroglyphs coming to life in a dazzling two-and-a-half-dimensional pantomime. It's truly a triumph of animation, boldly expanding the very possibilities of the genre.

The trouble starts soon after that, around the time the Burning Bush appears. The film stops being a fine character drama and turns into a religious epic, awash in suffocating reverence. From here on, just about every single choice made by the filmmakers is wrong, from Kilmer's bland second part as God's voice, to utterly forgettable songs, to actions which don't work with the previously established characters. This is, of course, caused by a doomed attempt to shoehorn the characters into the story which, to put it mildly, is not very strong in the aspect of character development.

The biggest problem, of course, is the clash between the story (which is, essentially, one long standoff between Moses and Rameses) and the medium. This contradiction is nowhere more obvious than in a sequence which displays staggeringly poor taste: the Plagues, with thousands of people suffering and dying, is realized a musical number and a special effects showcase. In addition, we have just about the laziest dialogue in recent memory. A choice line: the leader of Hebrews meets the pharaoh, the most powerful man in the empire — and what does Moses say? Harken to these immortal words: "Listen, we need to talk."

There is another well-done sequence in the second half (passage through the Red Sea), but by that moment, my emotional involvement was just about zero, sapped by the lack of any kind of dramatic coherency. I question both the choice of the material and the manner it was realized; one of two might have worked, but they utterly fail to co-exist together (I don't think *Schindler's List* would have been better if it were filmed as action-filled special-effects showcase).

On the other hand, if we take the story and the medium as given, I think the result is as good as one can reasonably expect; and whether this is a praise or a reproach, I don't know. In any case, that hieroglyph sequence alone is worth the price of admission.

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- Non-Traditional Careers for Science Majors - Panel Discussion
- Finding an Internship as an Undergraduate
- Undergraduate Study Abroad
- Developing Positive Coping Skills through Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques
- Smart Resumes & Cover Letters
- Graduate Students: Resumes, CV's and Cover Letters
- Mock Interviewing Workshops
- Understanding Competencies in The Consulting, Engineering and Science Workplace
- How to Build Core Competencies and Understand Why They are So Valued in the Workplace
- How to Evaluate and Negotiate Job Offers
- Personal Statement Workshop for Premed and Prelaw Students

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Technique is seeking submissions of all kinds for inclusion in the 1999 yearbook.

Photography Have you taken any pictures that capture some part of life at MIT? We'd like to see them! *Technique* is trying to tell the story of life at MIT from as many perspectives as possible, but we need your help. If you have any negatives that may be appropriate, bring them by our office or contact technique@mit.edu.

Writing Would you like to write an article, essay, or poem about your MIT experience? Make it last — say it in *Technique*! All writing styles will be considered, though items with appeal to a large part of the MIT community are preferred. Bring submissions to our office or send them to technique@mit.edu.

Our office will be open every day during IAP between noon and 6:00 (approximately).

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damned for life
by Jessica



TechCalendar

Visit and add events to TechCalendar online at <http://tech-calendar.mit.edu>

TechCalendar appears in each issue of *The Tech* and features events for members of the MIT community. *The Tech* makes no guarantees as to the accuracy of this information, and *The Tech* shall not be held liable for any losses, including, but not limited to, damages resulting from attendance of an event. Contact information for all events is available from the TechCalendar web page.

Wednesday's Events

5:10 p.m. - **Weekly LEM Service and Supper.** Eucharist, followed by a free fellowship supper and discussion. Chapel and W11. Sponsor: Lutheran-Episcopal Ministry.

Friday's Events

7:00 p.m. - **Army of Darkness.** Bruce Campbell returns for a third "Evil Dead" round as the square-jawed, none-too-bright hero Ash in this comic book extravaganza. He finds himself in 14th century through the powers of an evil book. 1 hour 30 minutes. Admission \$2.50. Room 26-100. Sponsor: LSC.

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Saturday's Events

7:00 p.m. - **The Omen.** An American diplomat's family adopts a young boy who always seems to be around when bizarre and inexplicable deaths occur. The child is the son of Satan. 1 hour 51 minutes. Admission \$2.50. Room 26-100. Sponsor: LSC.

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Monday's Events

10:00 a.m. - **Web Application Design.** Philip Greenspun, LCS. Exploiting the power of the Internet for collaboration. Choosing tools, techniques, and people for site development. 6 hours. Room 34-101. Sponsor: Lab for Computer Science

7:00 p.m. - **Rashomon (1950).** Rashomon is a Japanese crime drama, produced with both philosophical and psychological overtones. Directed by Akira Kurosawa. Preceded by a brief lecture by Gerald Peary. 1 hour 28 minutes. Admission \$2.50. Room 10-250. Sponsor: LSC.

Tuesday's Events

7:30 p.m. - **MIX.002 Cued Cuts and Eventronics.** Philip Tan. Just what makes a DJ? If you spin for parties, go clubbing, or just like dance music this series is for you. Part of Course MIX lecture series. 1 hour. Room 6-120. Sponsor: MIT Dance Mix Coalition

Next Wednesday's Events

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - **Internet2: The Next High Performance Network for Higher Education.** A one day seminar on the technology behind Internet2, its history, and its future. Room 10-250. Sponsor: Academic Computing.

1:00 p.m. - **National Academy of Sciences Public Symposium.**

Catherine Dulac: "Molecular Biology of Pheromone Detection in Mammals," Wolfgang Ketterle: "Bose-Einstein Condensates - New Physics at Nanokelvin Temperatures," Steven Pinker: "Words and Rules: The Ingredients of Language." Building E51, Wong Auditorium. Sponsor: National Academy of Sciences.

5:10 p.m. - **Weekly LEM Service and Supper.** Eucharist, followed by a free fellowship supper and discussion. Chapel and W11. Sponsor: Lutheran-Episcopal Ministry.

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Dilbert®

by Scott Adams

I'M CHATTING WITH A SUPERMODEL WHO HAS TROUBLE FINDING DATES.

SHE SAYS MEN ARE INTIMIDATED BY HER BEAUTY AND HER COMPUTER SKILLS.

DANG! THE SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR IS MAKING A MOVE ON HER.

TYPE FASTER!

I SET UP A DATE WITH THE SUPERMODEL I MET ON THE INTERNET.

SUPERMODELS DON'T LOOK GOOD IN PERSON. THAT'S SILLY.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE A VASE. DO YOU MIND IF I THROW THOSE IN THE TRASH?

DATING A SUPERMODEL

I HEAR THE CAMERA ADDS... UM... EIGHTY POUNDS?

YES. AND IF YOU USE BLACK AND WHITE FILM, THE CAMERA ADDS MAKEUP TOO.

DOES THE CAMERA ADD HAIR?

WHY WOULD IT NEED TO?

I'LL HAVE THE JUMBO SPAGHETTI MEAL WITH A LOAF OF GARLIC BREAD.

I'LL ABSORB MOISTURE FROM THE AIR AND SNIFF THE MINTS ON THE WAY OUT.

IS IT FUN TO BE A SUPERMODEL?

IT WAS UNTIL NOW.

I REALIZE WE'RE FROM DIFFERENT WORLDS, BONITA.

YOU'RE A FAMOUS SUPERMODEL AND I'M JUST A SEXY ENGINEER...

BUT WHEN I GAZE INTO YOUR... UM... EYE SOCKETS...

GOOD NIGHT.

WE MUST MAINTAIN A SENSE OF URGENCY. SPEED IS THE KEY. WE MUST BE FASTER THAN THE COMPETITION.

DOES THAT MEAN YOU'LL SIGN THE STUFF THAT'S BEEN ON YOUR DESK FOR A MONTH?

LOGICAL QUESTIONS DON'T MIX WITH MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGES.

EVERY WORK GROUP HAS ONE SADISTIC NUT WHO MAKES THE JOB UNBEARABLE FOR EVERYONE ELSE.

THAT'S WHY I HIRED DENNIS.

HE ALREADY SEEMS INDISPENSABLE.

YOU'LL ALL DIE IN YOUR OWN VOMIT!

THE SADISTIC NUT

ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?

WHY DOES YOUR BODY LOTION SMELL LIKE THE ROTTING FLESH OF A THOUSAND DEAD CAMELS?

I ASSUME HE HAS VALUABLE SKILLS.

NO, YOU'RE THINKING OF A PRIMA DONNA.

THE SADISTIC NUT

HEY, IT'S A LITTLE INTERN!

PLEASE SPARE ME, MISTER NUT.

I'M NOT CRUEL. I'M HONEST!

NO-O-O-O

LET ME TELL YOU WHY YOU'LL NEVER BE MARRIED.

YOU HAVE TO ADMIT, IT'S FUN TO WATCH.

NO-O-O!

CATBERT: H.R. DIRECTOR

WALLY, I'M SENDING YOU HOME. SHORTS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE DRESS.

THESE ARE NOT SHORTS!!

TOMORROW I'LL ACCUSE HIM OF BEING A SKINHEAD.

PURR PURR

FOR THE TENTH YEAR IN A ROW, THE EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEY SAYS MORALE IS LOW.

MANAGERS' BONUSES ARE LINKED TO THESE RESULTS. YOU CAN BE SURE WE'LL MAKE BIG CHANGES...

... TO THE SURVEY.

THE COMPANY WILL NO LONGER PAY FOR NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTIONS.

I PAY FOR THIS MYSELF. THE NEWS IS HIGHLY RELEVANT TO MY JOB.

IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO MAKE IT LESS ENJOYABLE?

JUST KEEP JABBERING.

CATBERT: H.R. DIRECTOR

YOUR CO-WORKERS SAY YOU'RE A SADISTIC NUT.

GIMME FIVE, YOU BIG NUT! AND KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

HEY, I'M HAVING A PARTY ON SATURDAY. CAN YOU MAKE IT?

SURE! I'LL BRING MY SPINACH DIP.

DON'T USE THE SHREDDER TODAY.

I RIGGED IT TO KILL OUR NEW SADISTIC NUT CO-WORKER.

WHOA! WHOA!

DOESN'T THAT VOID THE WARRANTY?

I'LL SWITCH SHREDDERS WITH MARKETING TOMORROW.

FROM NOW ON, WE WILL CELEBRATE OUR SERVICE REPS WHO GIVE EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE.

QUESTION: WHY WOULD WE CELEBRATE EMPLOYEES WHO DO EXTRA WORK WITHOUT GETTING EXTRA PAY?

IT WILL MAKE THEM HAPPY.

CAN WE CELEBRATE THE SMART EMPLOYEES SOME DAY?

Is this enough Dilbert for you?

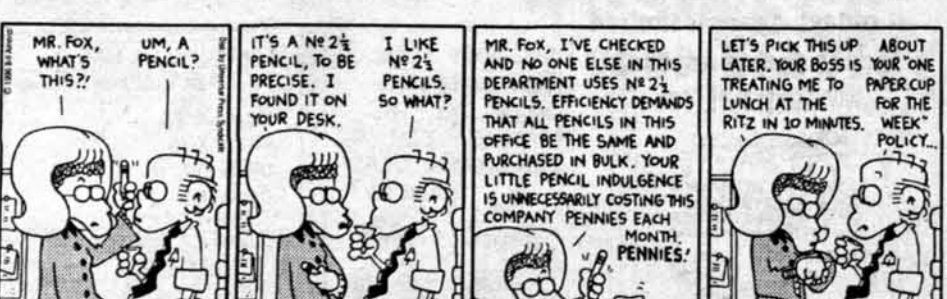
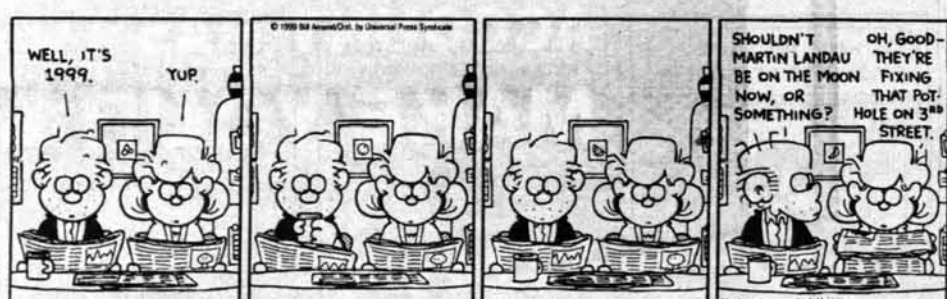
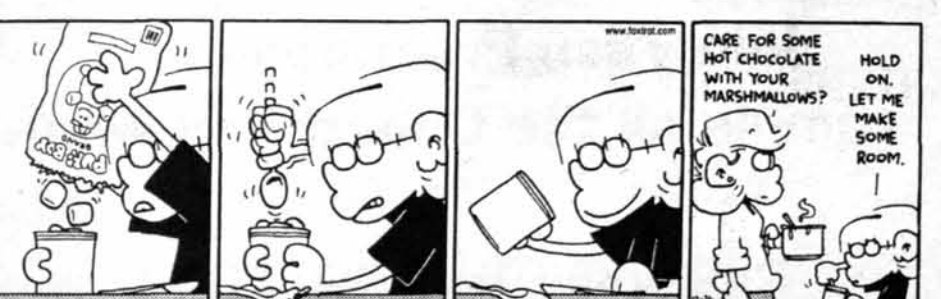
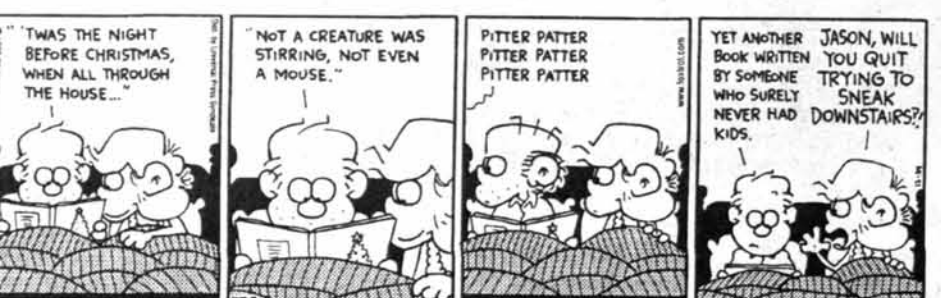
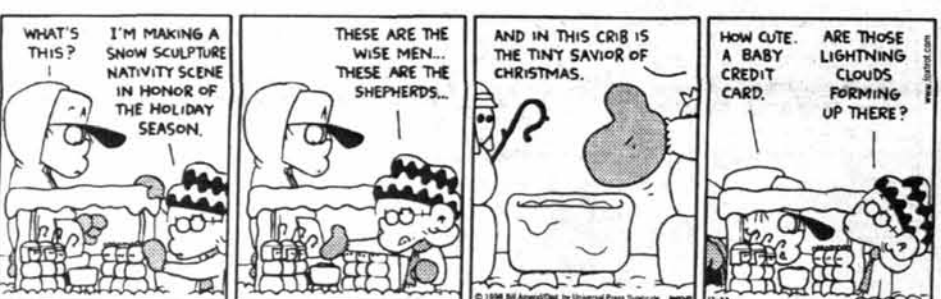
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FoxTrot

by Bill Amend



Cassell Discusses Traditional Sex Roles in Computer Games

By Susan Buchman
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

On Monday, 25 members of the MIT and Cambridge communities took advantage of the relaxed pace of Independent Activities Period to attend a reading of works from the female perspective.

Entitled "From Barbie to Mortal Combat and Other Works," the event was presented by the MIT Women's Forum "to bring us into 1999 with the spirit of women."

The first speaker of the program was Professor Justine Cassell, an assistant professor in Media Arts and Sciences.

Cassell read three excerpts from the book *From Barbie to Mortal Combat: Gender and Computer Games*, which she co-edited with Professor of Literature Henry Jenkins. The book analyzes the assumptions and gender stereotypes that are used in the design and marketing of computer games.

Cassell began by reading from a chapter which describes a skit on "Saturday Night Live" called "Chess for Girls." The mock commercial begins with a girl who says "Chess is no fun!" The skit

then describes chess for girls, featuring doll-like pieces and showing the girl brushing the hair of the queens.

Cassell was interested in learning why although the premise behind such a skit seems ridiculous, gender-targeting in computer games is perfectly acceptable.

"Why is chess for girls absurd while computer games for women is okay?" asked Cassell.

The motivation from the book came from Cassell's experiences interviewing MIT students for an Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program position. The difference between the attitudes of the male and female students "led me to wonder what it is about technology that excludes being a girl."

The ideal computer game would be one which, rather than enforcing traditional gender roles, allows "children to use computers to try out identities."

To illustrate the role that feminism has played in the development of computer technology, Cassell told the audience that user-friendly interfaces were developed by "two

staunch feminists" who wanted to transfer power over the technological experience from the software designer to the user.

After Cassell finished reading, the floor was opened up to the audience. Five women read original works and Elena Ruehr, a composer and lecturer in the Music department, explained the motivations behind one of her pieces.

Women's Forum expands focus

The reading was the first program with a focus on the arts that the MIT Women's Forum has ever organized.

"Justine Cassell has gotten quite a lot of press with her book and we seized that as an opportunity to hold a unique IAP event," said Kathleen Sullivan, senior secretary at the Sloan School of Management and a member of the steering committee of the forum.

The forum formed 27 years ago to address the concerns of the female support staff at MIT. Over the years, the focus of the groups changed to include faculty and students.

"Our aim, ultimately, is to draw women from faculty, students, and support staff," Sullivan said.

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McCormick dining hall

january 24-28
teams develop system design proposals

january 29
team proposals are presented to the residence system steering committee

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1 pm

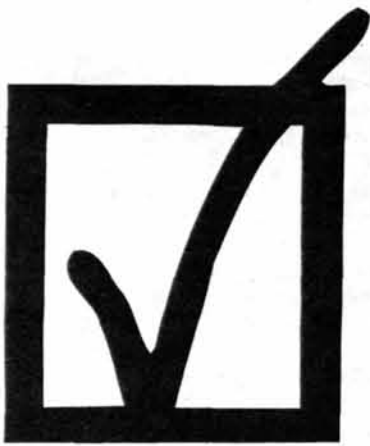
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POLICE LOG

The following incidents were reported to the Campus Police between Nov. 19 and Dec. 23. Information is compiled from the Campus Police's weekly crime summary and from dispatcher logs.

The report does not include alarms, general service calls, or incidents not reported to the dispatcher.

Nov. 19: East Campus, report of suspicious person, individual is a student; New House, report of harassing phone calls; Walker, report of person leaving area with a case of juice, unable to locate suspect; Bldg. 7, report of two suspicious persons at vending machine, same identified as Coke employees; Bldg. E17, report of threatening phone call; East Garage, 1) '84 Jeep broken into spare tire stolen, \$150; 2) '99 Jeep broken into, spare tire and vehicle registration stolen, \$150.

Nov. 20: Bldg. 7, homeless person issued a trespass warning; Bldg. E19, four two-way radios and chargers stolen, \$1,200; East Garage, '97 Dodge Caravan broken into and two children's car seats stolen, \$75; Hayden Library, wallet stolen, \$20; Bldg. 2, report of suspicious activity occurring in mens' room; pika, report from Cambridge Fire Department regarding trash and debris left around building; Bldg. W31, report of wallet stolen, individual later reports locating same, misplaced, not stolen; Bldg. N52, notebook computer stolen, unknown value; MacGregor, CD player and suitcase stolen, \$500; Albany Garage, section of cement fell on vehicle causing damage.

Nov. 21: Albany and Cross St. report of suspicious person, same issued trespass warning; Ashdown, noise complaint; Delta Psi, female arrested for domestic aggravated assault; Bldg. 8, computer and printer stolen, \$6,500; Rear of Bldg. W89, three males taken into custody on outstanding warrants; Delta Psi, report of suspicious person and attempted larceny; Bldg. 2, CD player stolen, \$100.

Nov. 22: Burton-Conner, report of possible electrical fire, Cambridge Fire and MIT Facilities responded, repaired and reset same.

Nov. 23: Baker House, report of annoying phone calls; Bldg. N52, report of suspicious activity. Vassar St., assist Cambridge Police with threats regarding parking space; Walker, report of suspicious activity.

Nov. 24: Burton Conner, wallet stolen, \$130; Bldg. 56, laptop stolen, \$3,300; Bldg. 7, hack; Bldg. E19, report of male in womens' restroom, unable to locate.

Nov. 25: Amherst Alley, malicious damage to construction site; Ice Rink, report of unknown individuals using rink, same checked out okay; Bldg. E52, canvas bag and contents stolen, \$60, same later recovered; Alumni Pool, bike stolen, unknown value; Main Lot, vehicle damaged by construction equipment; Bldg. E25, telephone stolen, \$100; Bldg. E52, microphone and cable stolen, \$90; Harvard Bridge, assist State Police with person driving erratically.

Nov. 26: Bldg. 4, report of suspicious activity; Memorial Dr., assist State Police with a traffic situation.

Nov. 27: Bldg. 13, backpack and telephone stolen, \$210; Amherst Alley, saw stolen, \$1,000; Next House, cash stolen, \$123; Main Street by Kendall T, two males stopped for suspicious activity.

Nov. 28: Bldg. E53, security problem; Bldg. 66, report of suspicious persons, same gone upon arrival.

Nov. 29: Bldg. 14, vending machine broken into; Bldg. E25, report of suspicious person, same checks out okay.

Nov. 30: Bexley, two reports of annoying phone calls; East Garage, '98 Honda Accord, broken window; Bldg. E23, food stolen; Bldg. 1, report of homeless person; Bldg. Bldg. 36, graffiti; Bldg. 56, laptop and backpack stolen, \$3,225; Bldg. E25, cash stolen, \$89; Bldg. E60, computers stolen, unknown value; Bldg. 7 report of suspicious person, unable to locate; Bexley, report of homeless person.

Dec. 1: Bldg. E19, vending machine broken into; New House, annoying phone calls; Bldg. 1, report of homeless person; Bldg. E19, report of construction staging collapsed; Bldg. NW14, report of intoxicated homeless person; Bldg. E52, person stuck in elevator.

Dec. 2: East Campus, student problem; Bldg. E60, fax machine stolen, \$100; Bldg. 14, vending machine, food stolen from; Bldg. E19, vending machine broken into; Bldg. 13, damage to lock; Bexley, report of homeless person.

Dec. 3: Bldg. E55, attempted credit card scam; Hayward lot, homeless person; Bldg. E52, suspicious activity; Bldg. W11, bags stolen; Bldg. W16, buffer stolen; Bldg. W31, harassing e-mail; Bldg. W20, Christmas wreaths stolen; Westgate, report of suspicious persons, unable to locate; Burton, report of suspicious activity; Bldg. NW13, homeless people; Boylston St. Boston, Saferide van involved in vehicle accident.

Dec. 4: Kresge, several items stolen, \$538; Vassar St. report of person asleep in car; Bldg. 68, report of skateboarders; Bldg. 33, bicycle stolen, \$130; N10 parking lot, hit and run damage to vehicle; East Campus, safety hazard; Amherst St. report of persons sleeping in vehicle.

Dec. 5: Bldg. 2, tools stolen, \$770; Amherst St. vehicle stopped for erratic operation; Bldg. 10, computer keyboard stolen, \$80; Baker, backpack with camera and cash stolen, \$210; Kresge, several items stolen, \$160; two unrelated incidents, 1) 21 year old intoxicated student, had purchased alcohol herself, transported to medical. 2) 22 year-old intoxicated student, purchased alcohol herself, transported to medical, no citations issued; Bldg. 3

student problem, student on roof of building.

Dec. 6: Bldg. 1, report of suspicious activity in mens' room.

Dec. 7: East Garage, report of two suspicious persons, gone on arrival; Bldg. 14, vandalism to bulletin board; Bldg. E15, laptop stolen, \$3,000; Bldg. N42, disorderly person, taken into custody on outstanding warrant.

Dec. 8: Bldg. 7, student problem; 77 Mass. Ave., assist Cambridge Police, vehicle with a ruptured fuel line; Bldg. W31, report of a past sexual assault; East Lot, report of person breaking into vehicle, person locked out, CPs assist; Mass. Ave. and Amherst, assist Cambridge Police with motor vehicle accident; 33 Mass. Ave., assist Cambridge Police with motor vehicle accident and operators involved in an altercation; Bldg. 11, report of suspicious activity; Bldg. 36, report of suspicious activity; 33 Mass. Ave., bike stolen, \$110; Student Ctr., bike stolen, \$250; Bldg. E53, report of barking dog; Student Ctr., two individuals issued trespass warnings.

Dec. 9: Student Ctr., 1) male arrested for trespassing; 2) annoying phone calls; Bldg. E18, radio stolen, unknown value.

Dec. 10: Ashdown House, suspicious activity, persons on roof; New House, suspicious activity, unwanted phone calls; Bldg. N52, suspicious activity, tampering with door lock; Albany Garage, suspicious activity, forged parking sticker; Sloan Lot, Assist to other PD, assist with arrest of shoplifter from MIT Coop; Bldg. 26, soliciting, student reports possible laptop scam; E52, Larceny, backpack and contents, \$295; Amherst Alley, suspicious activity, possible forged parking permit; Hermann Garage, malicious destruction to motor vehicle.

Dec. 11: Bldg. 66, larceny of Christmas tree; Bldg. 7, hack, star placed on dome; Mass Ave. and Amherst Alley, assist to other PD, traffic complaint; Baker House, malicious destruction, damage to dorm during unauthorized party; Hermann Garage, suspicious activity, possible bicycle theft; Bldg. 34, accident with property damage, parked bicycle frame bent; Bldg. 13, larceny of bicycle, \$100; Mass Ave and Memorial Drive, motor vehicle accident, student struck while walking bicycle.

Dec. 12: Bldg. W20, malicious destruction, tampon machine; Bldg. E23, unknown odor, burning smell, Cambridge Fire responds, electrical problem; Bldg. E52, routine check, workers found in Faculty Club after hours; Next House, report of smoke, Cambridge Fire responds, self cleaning oven.

Dec. 13: MacGregor House, student problem, loud argument; Bldg. E52, alarm, student in alarmed area studying.

Dec. 14: Student Center, 1) larceny, purse and contents, \$30; 2) larceny, credit card; Eastgate, fire alarm, Cambridge Fire responds, burnt food; New House, fire alarm, Cambridge Fire responds, overloaded laundry machine.

Dec. 15: Bldg. 7, hack, Christmas tree hung from top of lobby; Bldg. W59, arrest, default warrant; West Garage, malicious destruction, parking gate broken off; Memorial Drive, assist to other PD, motor vehicle accident.

Dec. 16: Bldg. 10, suspicious activity, people on dome staging; E53, suspicious activity, office door unlocked; Bldg. W34, larceny of wallet and contents, \$33; Student Center, larceny of bicycle, \$450.

Dec. 17: Phi Beta Epsilon, notified student to call home; Bldg. 54, report of fireworks; Amherst Alley, bottles thrown at students; Bldg. NE43, briefcase containing a laptop stolen \$800; Bldg. W31, flimflam involving sale of vitamins, \$100; Burton, report of suspicious activity; Baker, report of loud noise.

Dec. 18: Student Center, camera stolen \$700; Bldg. 5, report of persons on roof, individuals identified as Department of Facilities workers; Bldg. N10, report of suspicious activity, person removing chairs from building, same checked out okay.

Dec. 19: New House, student problem; Student Center, report of graffiti; Kenmore Square, MIT student was the victim of an attempted robbery; Bldg. 3, report of high pressure water pipe breaking causing damage from basement to 3rd floor; Boston, Sigma Nu, malicious damage to lock.

Dec. 20: MIT Boathouse, report of suspicious activity, employee had problem with lock; MIT Police notify Cambridge Police of suspicious activity at Salvation Army Thrift store; Bldgs. 5 and N10, report of homeless person, same sent to shelter; Bldg., 13, report of skateboarders, same sent on way; Boston, Sigma Nu, attempted break into building; Cambridge Police, reports of 911 hangup calls from 131 Mass. Ave.; Bldg. E15, report of suspicious person, individual located and taken into custody on an outstanding warrant; Bldg. E23, wallet stolen, same later recovered by victim; duPont gym, report of unauthorized use.

Dec. 21: Zeta Psi, computer stolen, \$3,000; West Garage, malicious damage to vehicle; Kappa Sigma, report of a past assault; New House, noise complaint; Student Center, suspicious activity; Bldg. E19, suspicious activity.

Dec. 22: Kappa Sigma, report of suspicious person, later discovered leather jacket missing, \$250; N10 lot, malicious damage to vehicle; Bldg. E19, suspicious activity; Bldg. E53, zip drive stolen, \$200; Bldg. 1, MIT Card stolen; Boston, Pi Lambda Phi, breaking and entering;

Dec. 23: Bldg. 66, suspicious person given trespass warning; Bldg. E40, report of unauthorized use of an office; Bldg. 10, report of person on roof, same checked out okay, contractor; Bldg. E19, power tool stolen, \$125; Bldg. W31, report of contractor working at MIT under an outstanding warrant.

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Case Centered on Tenure, Previous Suit

Lawsuit, from Page 1

burden of proof on four of the five necessary components for proving libel. According to the 23-page ruling handed down by Fabricant, Martin failed to prove that the statement by Roy was either false or defamatory, that Roy's actions were malicious, or that the statement caused damage to his reputation.

"This result demonstrates that the same First Amendment protections that allow professional journalists to write freely about President Clinton and Independent

Counsel Kenneth Starr also provide journalists the latitude to do investigative reporting into public figures on campus," said Robert A. Bertsche, attorney for Roy, in a press release.

Martin could not be reached for comment. He told *The New York Times* that he would consult a lawyer as to whether he will file an appeal. He has 30 days to do so.

Incident in 1991 prompts article

Roy was prompted to write the article in dispute, a sort of retrospective chronicling the controversy surrounding Martin

since his arrival as associate professor in 1973, as a result of heightened controversy resulting from the reporting of an altercation between Martin and a student that took place in October 1991 in another Wellesley publication.

In the spring, before the article appeared in *Counterpoint*, *The Gallenstone* broke the story publishing interviews with both Martin and the student, who gave differing accounts of the incident. The student, Michelle Plantec, said that when she saw Martin unescorted in a dorm, in violation of a rule requiring male guests to be escorted, she inquired who was his escort. According to Plantec, Martin responded using profanity, accused her of racism and bigotry, and positioned himself so as to physically intimidate her.

Martin denied the claim that he used profanity and alleged that Plantec and a group of women "accosted him rudely, despite circumstances that in his view made the legitimacy of his presence obvious," according to court papers.

Roy concluded in the article that the Wellesley administration would be likely to try to cover up the incident because of fear of litigation by Martin.

According to Roy, he was chosen to write the article, which was published after he left MIT and had begun studies at Yale Medical school, because the sense among the staff at *Counterpoint* was he would be less biased since he was an MIT student.

"I did not have it out for Tony Martin in the least," Roy said.

Martin focus of controversy

Roy's article was one of many articles written both at Wellesley and nationwide about the controversial Martin.

The source of this controversy began in 1992 when Martin assigned to students *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, a book published by the Nation of Islam that centers on the role Jews played in the slave trade.

In a speech by Martin in 1993 to Wellesley's Academic Council, he said the book was a "scholarly monograph" and that the book "suggests that... Jews has a higher per capita slave ownership than for the white population as a whole" and that "abolitionism was

distinguished by a relative scarcity of Jewish voices," according to court papers.

The book was denounced by scholars and groups such as the Jewish Anti-Defamation League.

The controversy on Wellesley's campus was soon covered by national media groups such as National Public Radio, *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, and the Associated Press.

Roy defends article's accuracy

Roy still contends, however, that the disputed statement in the case was not inaccurate, saying that the existence of the suit in 1987, nor his own inability to find documented proof of any case filed by Martin against Wellesley before then, did not preclude the possibility that Martin had threatened Wellesley with a lawsuit in the course of tenure decisions.

Roy said that Martin "could have very easily" brought forward members of the Wellesley administration to testify on his behalf that he did not sue or threaten to sue in 1975.

"That actually leads me to be more skeptical about his contention," Roy said.

The paragraph in dispute came from a confidential source who had also learned from an administrative official that the college had tried to "cover-up the incident threatening student journalists with withholding recommendations if they printed information about the incident."

Roy said he corroborated the other information provided by the source with other sources but not with members of the Wellesley administration. Roy also failed to contact Martin in the course of writing his article.

The source was another staff member at *Counterpoint* who had helped with reporting the story but was not listed as a collaborator for fear of reprisal by Wellesley College, Roy said.

Martin did not dispute other facts in the article.

"My speculation is he fixated on that because he can't contest anything else written in the article," Roy said.

Roy said further that the paragraph which angered Martin is "not a very major part of the story."

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Holl Also Designed For Other Colleges

Architect, from Page 1

Alvar Aalto Medal from the Finnish Association of Architects for Kiasma, a museum of contemporary art in Helsinki. This award is notable given the predominance of Finnish architecture on the MIT campus — Aalto designed Baker House.

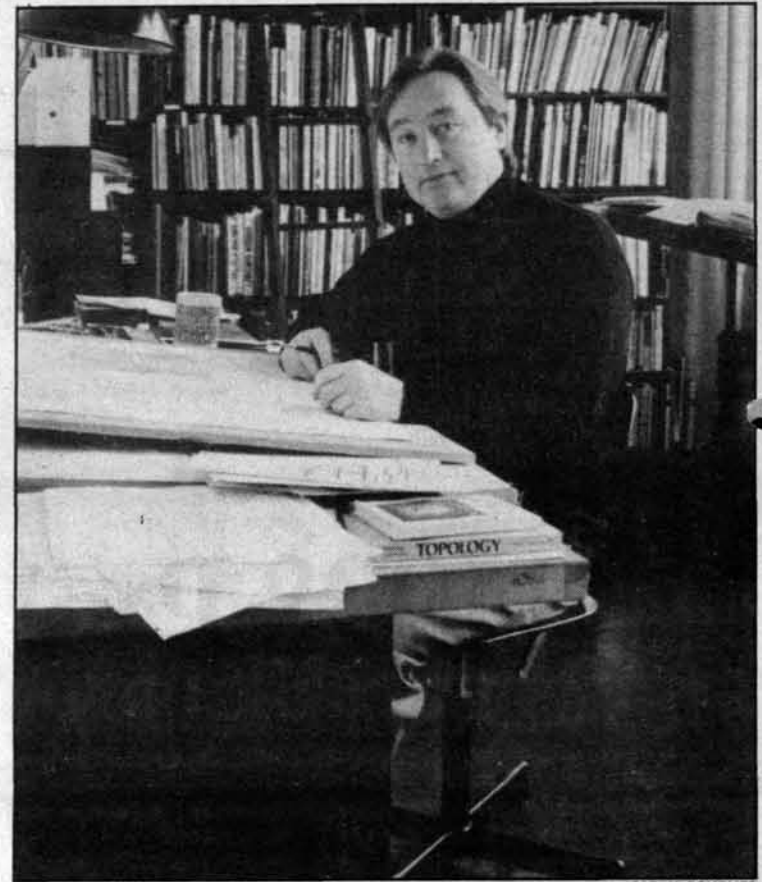
"[Kiasma] was just breathtaking; it really holds its own against the Aalto tradition and in choosing the architect we had the Aalto tradition in mind," Williams said.

"We are asking him to design in a tradition of [Finnish architects Alvar] Aalto and [Eero] Saarinen," Bacow said. Saarinen designed

Kresge Auditorium and the MIT Chapel.

Holl has extensive experience with educational institutions, including rebuilding a wing of the Pratt Institute, an architecture school in New York; an addition to the University of Minnesota's School of Architecture; and master planning for University of California, Mission Bay Campus.

The selection committee included Bacow, Williams, William Mitchell, dean of the School of Architecture and Planning, Robert Simha, director of the Planning Office, and Victoria Sirianni, director of the Department of Facilities.



Steven Holl

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