

## Dorms Dealing with Crowding; Rush Numbers Still Uncertain

### Low pledge numbers, heavily subscribed dorms leave several freshmen still in limbo

### Houses are mixed about generally weaker rush

By Frank Dabek  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

This year's rush continues to defy classification even as it winds down — important indicators point to a slow rush while many houses say that rush has gone well.

As of 11 p.m. yesterday night, 322 freshmen had pledged fraternities, sororities and independent living groups, according to Neal H. Dorow, associate dean for residence life and student life programs and adviser to FSILGs.

The overall number of pledges as of 2 p.m. yesterday was 268, said Phillip M. Bernard, program director for residence life. That low figure resulted in heavy crowding in the dormitory system when the lottery was run yesterday afternoon.

Bids are outstanding, however, and, so the number of pledges is likely to rise further in the coming days. Bernard said that last year about 70 additional freshmen

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Dorm	# First* Choice	Total Assigned	Ranks of those assigned					Num. of Groups
			1st	2nd	3rd	4th	>4th	
Baker	120	68	65	2	0	0	0	1
MacGregor	125	77	63	4	0	0	0	10
Bexley	31	21	13	6	0	0	0	2
McCormick	81	74	65	1	0	0	1	7
Next	98	95	65	14	0	0	0	16
Random	27	32	17	10	1	4	0	0
Senior	21	36	19	4	0	2	10	1
EC	59	112	55	31	13	4	0	9
Burton	50	101	38	52	1	1	0	9
New	28	61	24	28	0	0	0	9

Of the students that did not receive a housing assignment, their first choice dorms are as listed: Next House, 9; Baker House, 6; Burton-Conner, 1; East Campus, 1; MacGregor, 4; McCormick, 1; New House, 3.

Dormitories are ranked from most to least subscribed on a percentage basis. Language houses operate under a separate selection system. These figures do not include those assigned for medical or religious reasons.

\* For roommate groups, only one individual in the group is counted.

SOURCE: OFFICE OF RESIDENCE LIFE AND STUDENT LIFE PROGRAMS

By Frank Dabek  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Twenty-five freshmen received no housing assignments in yesterday's dormitory lottery due to heavy crowding at MIT this year.

Phillip M. Bernard, program director of residence life, said there were about "40 fewer pledges than we need to run the lottery efficiently."

Those students who did not receive assignments will be assigned to housing sometime today after additional pledging creates additional spaces, he said.

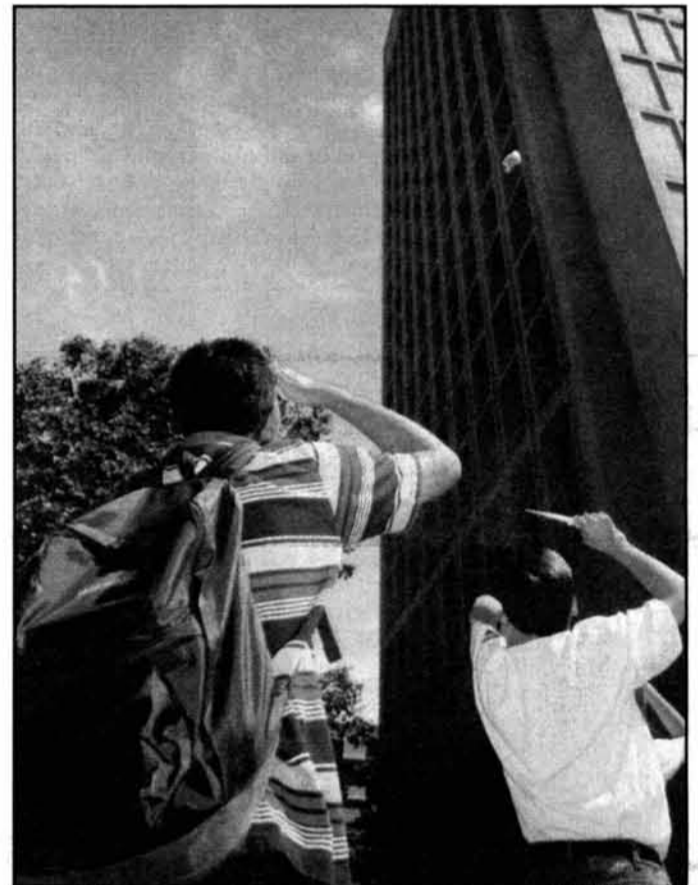
As of 2 p.m., when the lottery was run, 268 freshmen had pledged fraternities, sororities or independent living groups, Bernard said.

That number is expected to rise over the coming days as freshmen continue to accept bids.

The low number of pledges combined with a large number of upperclassmen living in the dormitory system also led to 11 students receiving assignments in a dormitory that they ranked fifth choice or lower. Last year, only 10 students received their third choice, and no student received lower than that.

Bernard said that the low number of pledges at the time of the lottery could have resulted from changes to Orientation which moved the time the freshmen

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SEPHIR HAMILTON

Integrated Studies Program students Ankur Mehta and Thomas Lin fight yesterday's mid-day sun to watch the annual Egg Drop off the Green Building.

## Orientation Begins for Grad Students

By Naveen Sunkavally  
NEWS EDITOR

As undergraduate orientation draws to a close this week and freshmen are settling into their new living groups, about 1500 graduate students are just beginning their introduction to the Institute.

Unlike undergraduate orientation, graduate orientation is more department-oriented; a large portion of the activities occur within a student's department. However, the Graduate Student Council "has spent about \$35,000," organizing and sponsoring several high-profile activities designed to give graduate students the chance to meet students outside their department, said GSC President Luis A. Ortiz G.

These events include a welcome speech today at 12:30 p.m. by Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Amar G. Bose; a camera safari from 2:30-6:00 p.m. today; a Boston trolley tour Friday; a hiking trip Saturday; a Boston harbor cruise Sunday; and a Boston Red Sox game on Saturday, Sept. 18. Yesterday, students had the opportunity to purchase tickets for a whale watch as well.

Tickets for the hiking trip, set in New Hampshire's White Mountains, "sold out the first day," said Atul Dalmia, co-chair of the GSC orientation committee.

The welcome speech and the camera safari are new additions to this year's orientation. As a "student, faculty member, and entrepreneur," Bose can give new graduate students a unique perspective, Ortiz said.

"We expect 1,200 students" to come to the welcome speech and lunch shortly afterwards, said Dalmia.

In the camera safari students will go sightseeing in Boston and Cambridge, and they can win prizes for taking the most outrageous prizes.

For the first time, "students will also be receiving free T-shirts," sponsored by the GSC and the MIT Coop, said Yogish V. Joshi, also co-chair for the orientation committee.

### Sloan runs own orientation

Graduate students in the Sloan School of Management have another separate orientation planned at the same time as the general orientation, said Ortiz. As a result, students in Sloan won't be able to participate in general orientation activities to the extent that other graduate students might. Ortiz said that he expects about half of Sloan's students, who in previous years have attended the food events well, to attend the general orientation activities.

Of the 1,500 new graduate students, about "600 are international students," said Dalmia. For comparison, international students comprise eight percent of the new undergraduate freshman class.



KARLENE ROSERA—THE TECH

Bonny M. Lee '03 became Alpha Chi Omega's 20th new member yesterday.

Eric Plosky discusses the ethics of journalism in relation to the death of Richard Guy '99.



Comics

Today is *The Tech's* last daily issue. Starting next Friday, Sept. 10, *The Tech* will resume its normal Tuesday/Friday publication. Also starting Sept. 11, *The Tech's* normal distribution route, covering the entire Institute, will resume.

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# WORLD & NATION

## New Panamanian President Pledges to Improve State of Poorer Citizens

LOS ANGELES TIMES

PANAMA CITY

Mireya Moscoso, a secretary who married a three-time president, became president herself on Wednesday, four months before the United States is to turn over the Panama Canal to her nation.

Elected on a promise of change, Moscoso emphasized how different she is from her aristocratic predecessor, Ernesto Perez Balladares, by shunning the formality of a ceremony in the National Assembly auditorium and taking the oath of office in Panama's new 20,000-seat baseball stadium.

Accompanied by her 7-year-old adopted son, Ricardo, Moscoso was greeted by a cheering crowd waving Panamanian flags. "I promise today that together we will wipe out poverty in our Panama," she said as she began her five-year term. "I know quite well that it will not be easy ... but we also know that we have the Panamanian people on our side."

Her inauguration recalled the style of her late husband, Arnulfo Arias Madrid, who was sworn in at the old national stadium. Panama's first female president has ably played up both her husband's populist legacy and the contrast with Perez Balladares, whose free-market economic reforms and attempts to cling to power left him tremendously unpopular.

Moscoso, 53, proved herself a relentless campaigner in two runs for the presidency, walking the neighborhoods of every province to ask for votes.

## Podesta Blasts GOP Move to Cut Research and Technology Funding

LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON

The White House said Wednesday that efforts in Congress to reduce federal spending on high technology and other advanced research not only threaten future scientific breakthroughs but jeopardize economic progress in America.

In a sharply honed and unusually public complaint, White House Chief of Staff John Podesta, more often a behind-the-scenes player, said the Republican-led Congress has produced "a 19th century budget for a 21st century economy."

"One has to wonder whether the people designing these budgets spent too much time watching Fred Flintstone and not enough time watching the Jetsons," Podesta said to the National Press Club.

Podesta's remarks were aimed at building pressure on Congress by drawing the attention of both the scientific community and the public to what it views as the negative impact of spending reductions in seemingly esoteric research programs. The House and Senate return next week from their August recess to complete work on the fiscal 2000 budget, which takes effect Oct. 1.

Overall, proposed cuts under consideration in the House would total \$1.8 billion, or 8 percent to 10 percent of the amount President Clinton has requested for civilian research and development programs, which exclude military projects.

Specifically, according to the White House, this would result in the elimination of federal funding for 14,000 jobs in research and in science and mathematics teaching at the college level.

## Researchers Create Smarter Mice

LOS ANGELES TIMES

By adding a single gene to fertilized eggs, Princeton University researchers have been able to create smarter mice, a feat that could lead to the development of more intelligent animals and that hints at the feasibility of producing so-called designer babies with enhanced intelligence.

The accomplishment demonstrates for the first time that a complex trait such as intelligence can be genetically manipulated in mammals. It also reveals a common biochemical mechanism at the root of all learning, a discovery that could eventually be translated into new drugs and treatments for the prevention of memory loss in the elderly, researchers said.

The added gene enabled the otherwise ordinary mice to learn new tasks more quickly and to remember them longer, a team from Princeton, MIT and Washington University in St. Louis reports in Thursday's edition of *Nature*.

It also made the brains of older mice perform more like those of juveniles, which are generally better at grasping large amounts of new information.

## WEATHER

### Dennis ... sinned?

By Veronique Bugnion

STAFF METEOROLOGIST

Thanks to the high pressure system which seems to have adopted New England as its home, we can expect more of the same weather over the next few days. Patches of high clouds may obscure the sun now and then, but expect generally clear skies, pleasantly warm temperatures and very light winds. The humidity will continue to creep up during the next few days, allowing for the possibility of early morning fog on Friday.

For the record books, the Blue Hills observatory reports that the summer of 1999 was the second warmest of the past 100 years.

Off of the Carolinas' coast, there is a chance that the now tropical storm Dennis will begin to retrace the trajectory it took over the past few days, but in reverse. It is however not expected to regain hurricane strength.

**Today:** Sunny, high of 81°F (26°C)

**Tonight:** Clear, low of 62°F (17°C)

**Friday:** High of 83°F (27°C)

**Saturday Outlook:** Sunny and warm, more humid.

## Israel, Palestine Talks Stall Over Dispute Over Prisoners

By Ann LoLordo

THE BALTIMORE SUN

JERUSALEM

Israelis and Palestinians broke off talks Wednesday, leaving an apparent deadlock in negotiations over a new deal to revive the stalled Middle East peace process.

Although a draft settlement agreement had been typed and titled, the discussions were stalled over a dispute on the number of Palestinian political prisoners Israel was willing to release as part of the deal and a new timetable for a final round of talks to conclude the historic experience in peace-making.

The dispute threatened to scuttle plans to sign a new addendum to the Wye River peace agreement at a special ceremony in Cairo, Egypt, late Thursday, presided over by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, King Abdullah II of Jordan and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright. Albright, who was to arrive in Cairo Thursday, planned her Mideast trip to coincide with the resumption of the U.S.-brokered Wye peace deal.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat left the Netherlands early Wednesday to return to the Middle East. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's security cabinet met late Wednesday night to discuss the status of the talks.

Without a new agreement, Barak said he would implement the Wye deal as written. That would mean any changes and improvements negotiated in the past month would be forfeited, according to a member of the Israeli negotiating team who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "We start almost everything from

zero," he said.

The negotiator complained that the Palestinians had taken "an impossible deadlock position." Barak wants the deal finished before both sides meet Albright, rather than getting her engaged in the last-minute negotiations. He has said previously that he wants Washington to play a lesser role in the peace talks.

The Wye agreement signed last fall requires Israel to give up all or part of its control over more West Bank land, release 650 Palestinian prisoners, approve the construction of a Gaza port and permit Palestinians to travel between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank — commitments first outlined in the 1993 Oslo peace accords.

The Palestinian obligations included fighting terrorism, reducing the size of its police force and confiscating illegal weapons.

Shortly after Barak took office, he proposed a new timetable for the resumption of final status talks to an improved Wye agreement — coming closer to the Palestinian definition of the types of prisoners who would be released and possibly giving up more land. The two sides have said for days that they were on the verge of signing a deal.

They worked into the early morning hours Wednesday to resolve their differences on two issues — the release of the Palestinian security prisoners and the timetable for the final status talks that will settle the thorniest problems — such as the future boundaries of a Palestinian-controlled territory, the return of refugees and the status of

Jerusalem.

But late Wednesday Israel said it had gone as far as it could go, saying it had not received "satisfactory answers" from the Palestinians on the outstanding issues, the Israeli participant in the talks said.

The prime minister's office issued this statement shortly before 3 p.m.

"From the Israeli government's perspective, the negotiations have concluded. If it is not announced otherwise by this evening's Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister and Defense Minister Ehud Barak will conclude that the Palestinians are interested in implementing the Wye Agreement as written, and will act accordingly."

Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat, speaking to reporters at the King David Hotel, said he put forth proposals to bridge the gaps.

"We have shown determination, both of us, to pursue a line to solve (all the issues) through the civilized mechanics of negotiation," Erekat said.

Despite Wednesday's snag, the atmosphere surrounding the negotiations was much improved over those conducted during the Netanyahu '76 years. Both sides said the talks were conducted in a spirit of cooperation and respect, a marked difference from the tension that prevailed during Netanyahu's administration.

"I think it's quite clear that this government's agenda politically is different from the previous one and some of the decisions taken by the previous government were not satisfactory in the eyes of this government," said the Israeli participant.

## Reno Seeks Waco Probe Leader From Outside Dept of Justice

By Edward Walsh and Roberto Suro

THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON

Attorney General Janet Reno has determined that someone from outside the Justice Department and the FBI should lead a new investigation into the circumstances surrounding the fatal fire that ended the 51-day siege of the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas, in 1993, government officials said Wednesday.

The officials said that an informal list of about six names to head the investigation is circulating in the Justice Department and that some candidates have been contacted. None of those being considered is an employee of the Justice Department or the FBI, they said.

In addition, officials said, it is likely that FBI agents will not play a role in the new investigation. Instead, the Justice Department is developing a plan for the field work to be done by a team of investigators from agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Postal Service, the Secret Service and the U.S. Marshals Service.

Reno is under pressure to act quickly in the case, which she said has tarnished her credibility. She vowed last week to launch a new investigation after the FBI, reversing six years of denials, disclosed that its agents fired "a very limited number" of potentially incendiary tear gas cartridges during the final assault on the Branch Davidian compound, where 76 people died.

The move to place the investigation in the hands of someone outside the Justice Department and the FBI

came amid indications that some officials in those agencies may have known as long ago as 1996 that incendiary devices were used on the last day of the siege. A law enforcement source confirmed that the FBI has an internal memo dated Feb. 15, 1996, that discusses the use of military tear gas weapons on the day of the final assault. But it is not clear whether officials at the time realized that such tear gas cartridges are pyrotechnic devices.

In addition to investigating the use and effect of the incendiary cartridges, officials said the new investigation will focus on who knew about their use and why this was not disclosed until last week. Based on what she described as repeated assurances by the FBI, Reno testified before Congress in 1995 that no pyrotechnic devices were used during the April 19, 1993, assault on the compound.

The FBI still maintains that its agents did not cause the final conflagration. According to the bureau, the potentially incendiary tear gas cartridges were fired hours before the fire started and were not aimed at the main wooden compound.

On Tuesday, officials said that FBI Director Louis J. Freeh suggested that an outsider conduct the investigation because of a perception that the bureau and the Justice Department were incapable of conducting an impartial probe of their actions during the Waco siege. One measure of how badly the case has shaken the FBI and the Justice Department is that officials Wednesday said they could not recall any instance in which such an investigation was turned over entire-

ly to outsiders.

White House Chief of Staff John D. Podesta has spoken with Reno about the possibility of an independent Waco inquiry. White House officials refused to offer details of that conversation, but indicated they supported an outside investigation.

"The attorney general has made clear that she's going to find out all the facts that are relevant and make them available to the American public and to Congress," said White House press secretary Joe Lockhart. "She, with the FBI director, is working currently on how they'll do that."

Reno was on a visit to Panama Wednesday and is not due to return to Washington until Wednesday night.

Meanwhile, as members of Congress prepared to return to Washington next week, at least two House committee chairmen moved forward Wednesday with their own plans to investigate the assault on the Branch Davidian compound.

A spokesman said House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde, R-Ill., "has all but decided" to introduce legislation creating a five-member commission to do the job.

The House Government Reform Committee is planning a separate investigation and earlier this week issued subpoenas for Waco-related material to the Texas Rangers and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Waco. Mark Caralo, a committee spokesman, said the panel planned to issue new subpoenas today to the Justice and Defense departments, the White House and the FBI.

# World Bank Alleges Timorese Governor of Campaign Fraud

By Colum Lynch  
THE WASHINGTON POST

UNITED NATIONS

The governor of East Timor tried to siphon more than \$700,000 of public funds into a campaign against the province's independence from Indonesia, according to World Bank officials and Indonesian government documents.

United Nations officials described the alleged attempt by Gov. Abilio Jose Osorio Soares as a clear violation of a U.N.-brokered agreement on the independence referendum held Monday in East Timor, a former Portuguese colony seized by Indonesia in 1975.

But World Bank officials said that their own inquiry and an Indonesian investigation found no evidence that the governor succeeded in diverting either World Bank loans or Indonesian public funds. Soares declined to take phone calls

seeking comment.

The World Bank provided about \$1.5 billion to Indonesia last year. In May, its executive board approved an additional \$600 million loan to help shore up Indonesia's foreign currency reserves.

In exchange for the latest loan, Indonesia promised to carry out a "social safety net" program, providing rice, health care and education to the country's poorest people. On May 21, Soares requested more than \$700,000 from that program to finance a pro-autonomy political campaign and to fund anti-independence militias in the districts of Lautem and Ambeno, according to a copy of the governor's proposed budget.

About 20 percent of the money was targeted for "socialization programs," a euphemism for the campaign supporting Indonesia's offer of autonomy, but not full indepen-

dence, for East Timor. Another five percent was to be disbursed to Pamswakarsa, the civil defense organizations, or militias, frequently denounced by the United Nations as instigators of violence in East Timor.

Bank officials said they began the inquiry after an English translation of Soares' proposed budget was circulated on the Internet along with a letter falsely implying that the World Bank had approved the governor's planned use of the money.

"There has been no evidence presented to date linking our money to the militias, just allegations," said Peter Stephens, a spokesman for the World Bank.

"We have structured lending to ensure that it does not pass through too many hands," Stephens said. "Is it all leak-proof? Clearly it isn't. But is it better to stay away and hope for purity?"

# Russian Officials Say U.S. Media Exaggerate Corruption Scandal

By Maura Reynolds  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

MOSCOW

Top Russian officials acknowledged Wednesday that Russia has serious problems with corruption and other financial crimes but accused U.S. media of exaggerating the problem as part of an anti-Russia smear campaign.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin and Foreign Minister Igor S. Ivanov — the first high-ranking officials to respond to recent allegations of widespread money laundering — accused U.S. journalists and politicians of rushing to judgment on the basis of unproven allegations.

"Everything connected with money laundering, everything connected with the criminal side of this kind of activity, all this is in the field of vision of our law enforce-

ment agencies," Putin told reporters. Russian investigators "are constantly in touch" with the FBI and other U.S. authorities, he said.

"If someone moved by political considerations wants to blow some topics out of proportion, let them do it," Putin said. "It will neither hasten or hamper the work of our law enforcement bodies."

In recent weeks, news reports suggesting that billions of dollars originating in Russia were funneled through U.S. banks, including the Bank of New York, have spurred suspicions of money laundering.

While no one has been charged, some observers and politicians in the United States have called for an end to financial aid to Russia, especially assistance provided by the International Monetary Fund.

A separate scandal over whether

Kremlin officials and members of President Boris N. Yeltsin's family accepted kickbacks from a Swiss engineering company also have cast a shadow of suspicion over the Russian government.

Ivanov accused some U.S. publications of using unproven allegations against individuals and companies to condemn Russia as a whole.

"Yes, (corruption) exists, and it exists not only in Russia. Yes, this problem must be tackled, and the corresponding bodies in Russia are doing it," Ivanov said.

"But the way it is being done by some mass media in the West, under the pretext of still unconfirmed facts — they are trying to besmirch our country, to besmirch our society, to besmirch our business community and our entrepreneurs," Ivanov said.

# Hillary Clinton Is Beginning To Speak Out Like a Candidate

LOS ANGELES TIMES

SKANEATELES, N.Y.

No longer confining herself to a "listening tour" around the Empire State as she contemplates a bid to succeed Democratic Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Hillary Clinton is taking her quest to a new level. On issues local and national, she is beginning to speak out, although offering few specifics.

As she explained at a private fund-raiser in remarks overheard by reporters: "What I'm hearing (New Yorkers) tell me ... is, the issues I care about are the issues voters care about."

And with gaggles of admirers clamoring for her attention, even in an area where Republicans outnumber Democrats 3-1, she is pressing the flesh with the elan of a veteran office-seeker.

Clinton has been showing off her stump style from the very moment Air Force One landed in nearby Syracuse on Monday. Beaming with delight, the first lady schmoozed for nearly an hour with 2,300 well-wishers at the Hancock International Airport.

With husband and daughter in tow, she then went straight to the New York State Fair, where she cuddled babies, gulped down two glasses of chocolate milk, posed for snapshots, signed autographs, yucked it up with well-wishers, then left with a container of home-grown chicken and apples.

On Wednesday, en route from their borrowed lakeside house to visit historic sites in the area, the First Couple stopped in the picturesque village of Skaneateles for tea and coffee, and again mingled with well-wishers before moving on. Thursday, Clinton is scheduled to attend two more fund-raisers.

Although Clinton's quest seems to be generating generally positive reviews, it remains to be seen whether the initial shows of support will translate into votes in 2000, should she run.

A spokesman for Clinton's exploratory committee said she may not announce a formal decision until early next year.

# Surveys Show Decline in Sexual Activity Among Teens

LOS ANGELES TIMES

As the age gap between puberty and marriage has grown over the years, most sex educators have come to see sexual activity among young people as inevitable. Recent surveys, however, report that previously unprecedented rates of sexual activity among teen-agers have started to drop. Now, less than half of all high school students have had sex. In 1998, the average age of first intercourse was 16.3, up from 15.8 in 1997, according to the Durex Global Survey. Teen pregnancies, abortions and births also have declined. On the other hand, 3 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases are diagnosed among teen-agers each year, and half of all new HIV cases occur among those under age 25.

"In general," says sex educator Lynda Madaras, "kids today who have it together, have it a lot more together. But a lot more kids are slipping through the cracks than ever before."

Contrary to popular images, teen sex is rarely sexy, Madaras says. Some have sex to be popular, to achieve status, or to prove they're not gay. "For most kids," Madaras says, "having sex is like holding their nose and jumping into an ice cold pool."



The MIT Graduate Student Council

office: Walker Memorial, 50-220 (above the Muddy)  
phone: 253-2195  
website: www.mit.edu/activities/gsc  
email: gsc-request@mit.edu

## \*\*\*\*\*GSC Orientation\*\*\*\*\*

Info. booth

Aug. 31 - Sept. 3  
10am - 4pm

Sept. 1, 1pm,  
Lobby 13

Info. Fair

Orientation Social & Night on the Town  
50-220 Sept. 3  
5:30pm

September 2, Thursday

12:30pm: Guest Speaker

Prof. Amar Bose  
Kresge Theater

1:30pm: Lunch  
Kresge Oval

2:30pm: Camera Safari

6pm: Dinner & Games  
Killian Ct.

## September

- 1 academic, research, and careers committee meeting \*
- 8 general council meeting \* #
- 30 career fair

\* @ 5:30 in 50-220 (above the muddy)  
All graduate students are welcome. Food is provided. #

Boston Trolley Tour  
Sept. 3,  
77 Mass. Ave.

HIKING TRIP Sept. 4

BOSTON HARBOR CRUISE  
Sept. 5

WHALE WATCH Sept. 11

Boston Red Sox vs. Detroit Tigers. Sept. 18

# OPINION

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**"This hurricane BETTER hit us after all the money we've spent getting ready."**

## 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.

**Dissents** are the opinions of the signed members of the editorial board choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial.

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

**Letters to the editor** are welcome. Electronic submissions are encouraged and may be sent to [letters@the-tech.mit.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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>.

# Keeping a Level Head

## Don't Rush to Conclusions in Tragedy's Aftermath

Eric J. Plosky

Whenever tragedy strikes, there's a tremendous urge to jump to conclusions.

Early Tuesday morning, Richard Guy '99 was found dead in his room at East Campus. It has since been established by the Cambridge Medical Examiner that Guy suffocated while inhaling nitrous oxide (laughing gas); the MIT Campus Police presume the death was accidental.

*The Tech* broke the story but didn't mention Guy by name, since issues hit the stands by 10:45 a.m. on Tuesday, fifteen minutes before Guy's parents had been notified. Local media quickly descended on East Campus and the rest of MIT, and on Tuesday night the Guy story appeared on Fox News at 10:00 p.m., as well as on all three of the 11:00 p.m. network news broadcasts. Yesterday the *Boston Globe*, *Boston Herald*, and *The Tech* each printed additional stories. Many press outlets have already rushed to connect the Guy incident with the drinking death, two years ago, of Scott S. Krueger '01, and have produced additional stories on trends in nitrous use in the Boston area.

Most students who knew Guy — and most residents of East Campus — have been quick to vilify the press. In many respects, the backlash has been understandable. Sensationalists, according to some reports, called some of Guy's neighbors, searching for a photograph of him, before his death was officially announced. *The Tech* has been lambasted for rushing to press. And local media have been harshly criticized for drawing connections between Guy and Krueger, before and even after the facts in the Guy case were confirmed.

There is no reason, at least at this point, to draw parallels between Krueger and Guy. To say that both deaths are indicative of a trend, that MIT is a pressure cooker that drives its students to the point of fatal irresponsibility, is to paint campus with such a broad brush as to obscure the facts specific to each incident. We do not yet know the exact circumstances surrounding Guy's death; we may never know. It is reckless to state or to assume otherwise.

If this situation is to be properly presented and to remain under control, levelheadedness must prevail. Journalists covering the Guy story should do themselves a service by conducting themselves tactfully and gathering the facts and opinions in as unbiased a manner as possible; students must temper their inspired hatred of the media if they have any desire to set the story straight.

Needless to say, too, the media shouldn't rush to a snap judgment, shouldn't interpret the Guy incident as conclusive evidence, along with Krueger, that MIT pressures its students to death.

Yellow journalism has long proved an effective means of selling newspapers; screaming headlines and tawdry copy persist to this day. Civilized, responsible members of the modern media, however, should remember that their mission is to report the facts, not to pursue a story in such a zeal to sell papers as to exacerbate an already traumatic situation. There is a fine line involved, and issues of ethical journalism must be considered — what to print, when to print it, what to state explicitly and what to imply. Surely the media have not, on the whole,

*Levelheadedness must prevail.*

*Journalists covering Guy's death should conduct themselves tactfully and in an unbiased manner. Students must temper their inspired hatred of the media if they wish to set the story straight.*

distinguished themselves by tactful behavior in the Guy case. To a certain extent, journalists must be deferential; deference has so far remained absent.

Since Guy's death, students aghast at the media's brazenness have repeatedly refused to entertain reporters' questions — an understandable position at first. Withholding commentary is an effective means of expressing disgust with the media; besides, especially before all the facts were in, there was no reason to add to a confused, emotional situation by injecting random speculation or personal opinions.

But it is now time for students involved — Guy's friends and East Campus neighbors — to speak up if they want anything beneficial to result from his death. To remain silent is to invite comments from the completely uninformed; this is why the quotes from MIT students in a wire story yesterday were along the lines of "Maybe [MIT students] think they're too smart to suffer the consequences [of their actions]." Surely there is a middle

ground between such useless statements and continuing denial — a productive middle ground that might make possible some useful long-term outcome. Other students provided reporters with opposing, extreme descriptions. One said that she saw the deaths of Krueger and Guy as isolated incidents; another described Guy's death as "unfortunate but not entirely surprising." Again, surely the correct description lies somewhere in the middle.

Only those who require neatly packaged explanations for everything are foolish enough to point to the deaths of Guy and Krueger and identify both as part of the same trend. Such a presumption is, as yet, unwarranted. Yes, MIT can stress some students out, but it is a running jump of logic to then conclude that MIT is an inherently stressful place that drives its students to "blow off steam" in sometimes-fatal ways.

The media like to portray MIT so; observers often point to hacks and unusual MIT traditions as evidence that students need ways to express their frustrated creativity. Even if you accept that account — I don't; I think hacks are a celebration of MIT culture, not a necessary safety-valve of expression — nobody can say with certainty that Guy was looking for a way to vent stress and pent-up creative energy when he set about inhaling nitrous oxide. Maybe there was another reason. Maybe there was no reason in particular. If we don't know, it's unjustifiable to attribute his death to some sort of overarching campus phenomenon.

Today, the *Globe* is set to print a follow-up story on Richard Guy for which this columnist was interviewed. The twenty-minute conversation I had yesterday with the *Globe* reporter may, as conversations sometimes are, have been misconstrued, and the words you read in today's *Globe* may be out of context, despite what I believe were good intentions on the part of the reporter. I explained myself as clearly as I could, and took pains to verify my statements, but accidental misinterpretation is always a possibility.

For the sake of clarity, so I am sure to be understood, what I told the *Globe* reporter is what I say again here: Don't rush to judgment. Yes, Richard Guy is the latest in a series of tragic deaths at MIT, but that doesn't automatically mean his story has anything to do with anyone else's, and it is at the very least premature to connect the dots of Guy and Scott Krueger and others in an attempt to identify a trend, especially for the sake of identifying a trend. As in all tragic situations, reason and levelheadedness must be the order of the day if we are to determine the truth.

# Straight From the Heart

*International Orientation a Welcoming Time for Foreign Students*

Guest Column

Vishwanath Venugopalan

It was the great mingling of the hordes. Killian Kickoff was hanging in the air and everyone was wondering why it took so long to begin. We stood under the trees on the side sipping lemonade, not knowing what to talk about — every one of us was uncertain and excited about how rush would be for us. We were international students in a new country and a new phase of our lives. In a feeble attempt to keep up polite conversation, I asked the group, "How has Orientation been so far?" And bang came the reply straight from the heart, "International Orientation was any day better than regular Orientation."

I was talking to a few upperclassmen about their experiences of Orientation. Sure enough, they too mirrored these feelings. I reflected upon this and found that I too had enjoyed international orientation much more than regular orientation. But why? And why did many people feel the same way? The answer to this probably lies in the unique experience of international students at MIT.

Every year international students constitute no more than eight percent of the entering class. They arrive and meet each other at least three days before the rest of the class arrives. This crucial time is the origin of many lasting friendships. Their incredibly small presence allows them to bond intimately with international students of their class as well as upper classes. To most international students, the United States is a completely new country, notwithstanding the images that the media and entertainment industry throw at them. They

share similar concerns about the way of life they are about to begin. All this ultimately leads to a well-cemented and special relationship among international students even before the rest of the class arrives.

Earlier in the summer, many international students were part of an electronic mailing list. The forum was quite active — with discussions ranging from hobbies to ethnic and regional bias. This generated a rich firmament

*Each year international students arrive and meet each other at least three days before the rest of the class arrives. This crucial time is the origin of many lasting friendships. Their small presence allows them to bond with each other and with upperclassmen.*

of ideas on which we could base our friendships. We were also in touch with our international mentors and hence, quite in tune with one another as a community. No wonder then, that it was just a question of seeing (as opposed to meeting) each other when we arrived. A lot of credit goes to the upperclass mentors for striking an immediate rapport with us and making our transition into MIT life a pleasant and memorable one. With gen-

tle guidance and true empathy, they put to rest many of my apprehensions. International Orientation to me seemed comfortable, sincere and straight from the heart.

When the rest of the class arrived, I found myself slightly overwhelmed at the number of national students. I had been used to an environment where I would know everyone in my class. Now, I knew only one face in thirteen! The realization can be crushing. Naturally enough, I turned to people I had met and gauged in the past few days. Often enough, I found that they too were in the same predicament, which only served to deepen empathy and camaraderie.

All this is not to say that international students tend to clump into groups removed from a majority of freshmen. On the contrary, they have come here to be part of the unique social, cultural and educational experience that is MIT. As classes start and extracurricular activities pick up, there will be many more opportunities for people to form interpersonal relationships. Neither is it to say that mainstream orientation was a damp squib. In fact, it was a splendidly organized event and will stay in my memory. It was during mainstream orientation that I met many more people, learned more and felt more adjusted. However, those nascent and magical bondings I formed during International Orientation with people adjusting to circumstances like mine will remain long cherished. International Orientation may only appear as a tiny two-day appendage to the Orientation Schedule. However, the Hitchhiker's Guide of my heart begins and ends with it.

*Vishwanath Venugopalan is a member of the Class of 2003.*

# Swarms of Bees and Teenagers

Veena Thomas

I can't tell teenagers apart anymore.

Maybe I'm far too young to make such a comment; after all, I'm eighteen, a teenager, going on nineteen, still a teenager.

But two weeks ago, my best friend and I went to the mall for a few hours. Neither of us really had any purpose in shopping; we simply went to hang out. This is rare for me. When I was younger, I would go to the mall with my mom and gawk at all the older kids in big groups, strolling around. My mom never approved of this, which became imprinted in my consciousness, leading to a strange aversion to hanging out in malls.

But my aversion suddenly became clear to me as I watched the swarms of teenagers at the mall. Yes, I mean swarms.

I recently saw an exhibit on bees and how they live. A colony of bees and their honeycomb was kept between panes of clear plastic so visitors could observe the bees. Bee colonies consist of the male drones, the female workers, and the queen bee, in charge and worshiped by the rest. Pictures demonstrated how all the drones were identical, as were the workers, and only the queen bee stood out, being slightly larger than the rest. Of course, it's very hard for a tourist to spot one slightly larger bee out of hundreds, so the museum had conveniently marked the queen with a small yellow dot on her back.

None of the teenagers at the mall were marked with a yellow dot, but everything else corresponded. (Actually, among bees, the male drones are referred to as the "lazy bees," but I have no interest in starting a gender-difference war, so I'm going to leave that comparison untouched.)

Most swarms consisted of both males and females. Each guy in the swarms had on a T-shirt with an unbuttoned shirt over it, or they were wearing a shirt with a prominent chest stripe, and many sported a trendy necklace.

The girls were even harder to tell apart. Each girl, whether she was twelve or nineteen, wore a tank top and short shorts, and accessorized with a shopping bag from one of the trendy stores at the mall. Most had their hair pulled up into a casually messy bun.

To the casual observer, the members of each swarm might look to be on the same footing. But a trained people-watcher could observe someone in each clique standing a little taller than the rest, walking with a bit more confidence. These were the leaders of each group. Slap yellow dots on them and call them queen bees.

This wasn't the first time I've noticed the similarities. A few weeks ago, I sat with two friends on a bench outside a movie theatre and people-watched. For twenty minutes, literally every girl who appeared to be between the ages of twelve and twenty, who entered the theatre, was wearing a tight camisole and flared jeans. Every girl. It was rather frightening: a whole army of teenage girls in uniform, taking over the nine o'clock showing of *The Runaway Bride*.

I never seem to match; at the theatre, I was wearing a black T-shirt and shorts. As I stood in the middle of the mall, teenagers swarming around me, I felt slightly out of place in my black long-sleeve velour shirt and non-flared jeans. But quite frankly, I liked it that way. I'm no slave to fashion. I wear what I like, and it doesn't usually correspond to what's trendy at the moment. I don't like being a walking advertisement for any store. I pride myself in being true to myself, and fiercely independent, so why would I want to hide that by dressing exactly like every other teenager at the mall? If I don't like it, I'm not going to wear it.

I suppose there's safety in numbers, comfort in knowing you look the same as everyone else, no better, no worse. Few will tease you for wearing exactly what everyone else is wearing. You'll be congratulated by your peers, all wearing the same thing, for having good taste, like the song "Summer Girls," which says "I like girls who wear Abercrombie and Fitch." Sure they do; they're probably wearing the same thing. And so a swarm forms.

I'm content on my own. I may be eighteen, and therefore a teenager, but I'm old for my age. I don't need a swarm; I'd rather be free to fly my own path. I can't be a queen bee without a swarm, and I certainly don't stand taller than the rest, but I'll be the one in the mall that you can distinguish from the rest, walking with confidence, my head held high, and fire in my eyes. I don't need a swarm to give me that.

## Down with Science

by Jennifer DiMase

OKAY. SO APPARENTLY MANY OF YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD OF THIS GAME 'MASH' THAT I WAS PLAYING THE OTHER DAY.

ACCORDINGLY, I WILL TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN IT TO THOSE WHO ARE CONFUSED.

THOSE OF YOU WHO WERE NOT CONFUSED CAN REDIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE OTHER STRIPS.

DRAW SQUARE. WRITE MASH (MANSION APARTMENT SPACE HOUSE) AT TOP AND FOUR POTENTIAL SPOUSES AT LEFT AND FOUR POTENTIAL NUMBERS OF CHILDREN ACQUIRED WITH SAID SPOUSES AT BOTTOM AND FOUR POTENTIAL CARS TO OWN AT RIGHT.

EX: 

jeff	MASH	snob	900
ken	6	people	van
keith		friends	
brad		859	mustang

HAVE FRIEND DRAW SPIRAL IN SQUARE. COUNT NUMBER OF RINGS IN SPIRAL AFTER TELLING FRIEND TO STOP DRAWING SPIRAL. START WITH FIRST POTENTIAL SPOUSE. COUNT AROUND THE SQUARE. STOP AT SAID NUMBER. CROSS OUT ENTRY. CONTINUE UNTIL ONE ENTRY REMAINS IN EACH CATEGORY. THIS IS YOUR FUTURE.

DUCK@MIT.EDU WEB.MIT.EDU/JENSD/DUCK  
9/2  
JENNIFER DIMASE

## the crass rat

HI... MY SON GOT IN TO MIT!

MY SON GOT IN TO MIT!

EH?

MY SON GOT IN TO MIT!

MIT PARENT ORIENTATION

MOM - EVERYONE'S KID GOT IN TO MIT...

SO?!

9-2 KIRKHAM

## FoxTrot

by Bill Amend

OH, PETER - ON YOUR WAY, WOULD YOU MIND RETURNING THESE BOOKS TO THE LIBRARY?

YOU JUST CHECKED THESE OUT TWO DAYS AGO. YOU'RE GIVING UP THAT QUICKLY?

NO, NO - I FINISHED THEM ALL.

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WHY COULDN'T THE SCHOOL ASSIGN MY SUMMER READING LIST TO HER??

YOU GOT THROUGH ANOTHER PAGE LAST NIGHT, I NOTICED.

## Dilbert

by Scott Adams

EVERY EMPLOYEE GETS A LOVELY MUG WITH OUR NEW MOTTO, "I MADE A DIFFERENCE."

QUESTION: MAY I HAVE THE CASH EQUIVALENT OF THE MUG INSTEAD?

NO.

MAY I HAVE A MUG THAT SAYS, "I DIDN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE"?

www.dilbert.com scottadams@aol.com  
9/2/99 © 1999 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

# TechCalendar

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.

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

## Thursday's Events

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. - **Christian Fellowship Lounge**. Come to the Christian Fellowship Lounge! Find out more about Christian life at MIT and in the Boston area. Drop by to meet friendly people, to snack on some food, or to play some games. downstairs of w11. Sponsor: Cross Products.

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. - **Graduate Student Council (GSC) Information Booth**. Come obtain information on the GSC and MIT in general. Obtains tickets for the various graduate student orientation events. Lobby 10. Sponsor: Graduate Student Council.

12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. - **Graduate Student Official MIT Welcome**. Professor Amar Bose CEO of the BOSE company will talk about how to get the most out of MIT. MIT key people welcome incoming graduate students. Then have free lunch at Kresge Oval. Kresge Auditorium+Oval. Sponsor: Graduate Student Council.

2:30 - 6:00 p.m. - **Camera Safari**. Go around a tour of Boston with a group of fellow graduate students and have an afternoon full of fun. Take a lot of cool pictures on your way and win a prize for the most funny/imaginative photograph! Kresge Oval. Sponsor: Graduate Student Council.

6:00 p.m. - **Graduate Student Dinner**. Dinner, Music, Sports. Killian Court. Sponsor: Graduate Student Council.

## Friday's Events

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. - **Christian Fellowship Lounge**. Come to the Christian Fellowship Lounge! Find out more about Christian life at MIT and in the Boston area. Drop by to meet friendly people, to snack on some food, or to play some games. downstairs of w11. Sponsor: Cross Products.

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - **Graduate Student Council (GSC) Information Booth**. Come obtain information on the GSC and MIT in general. Obtains tickets for the various graduate student orientation events. Lobby 10. Sponsor: Graduate Student Council.

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. - **Graduate Student Trolley Tour**. Trolley Tours of Boston. Admission 10. Depart from 77 Mass Ave. Sponsor: Graduate Student Council.

5:30 - 7:30 p.m. - **GSC Social**. All graduate students are welcome and we especially encourage new graduate students to join us. Free food and beverages will be provided. 50-220 Walker Memorial. Sponsor: Graduate Student Council.

7:00 p.m. - 12:30 a.m. - **MIT Anime Club Showing**. 7:00 Escaflowne 1-2 (subtitled) 7:50 Tenchi Muyo 1-2 (subtitled) 8:45 Whisper of the Heart (subtitled) 10:45 Blue Seed 1-2 (subtitled) 11:30 Card Capturer Sakura 1-2 (subtitled). Free! Come anytime. E51-335. Sponsor: Anime Club.

7:30 - 12:00 p.m. - **Graduate Student Night on the Town**. All new and current graduate students are welcome to join us. Some people will go to bars and others to clubs. Start in 50-220. Sponsor: Graduate Student Council.

8:00 p.m. - **Little Shop of Horrors**. Book and lyrics by Howard Ashman; music by Alan Menken. \$9; \$8 MIT faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students; \$6 MIT/Wellesley students; \$3 MIT freshmen. Kresge Little Theater.

## Saturday's Events

7:00 - 10:00 a.m. - **Graduate Student Hiking Trip**. For new graduate students. Leave from Ashdown House. Sponsor: Graduate Student Council.

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. - **Christian Fellowship Lounge**. Come to the Christian Fellowship Lounge! Find out more about Christian life at MIT and in the Boston area. Drop by to meet friendly people, to snack on some food, or to play some games. downstairs of w11. Sponsor: Cross Products.

8:00 p.m. - **Little Shop of Horrors**. Book and lyrics by Howard Ashman; music by Alan Menken. \$9; \$8 MIT faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students; \$6 MIT/Wellesley students; \$3 MIT freshmen. Kresge Little Theater.

## Sunday's Events

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. - **Christian Fellowship Lounge**. Come to the Christian Fellowship Lounge! Find out more about Christian life at MIT and in the Boston area. Drop by to meet friendly people, to snack on some food, or to play some games. downstairs of w11. Sponsor: Cross Products.

10 a.m. - **Learn to Sail, Weekend Classes** - Bring a change of shoes and a lunch. Sailing Pavilion, 51.

7:00 p.m. - 10:30 a.m. - **Graduate Student Harbour Cruise**. Cruise along Boston Harbour. Admission 10. Long Wharf. Sponsor: Graduate Student Council.

8:00 p.m. - **Little Shop of Horrors**. Book and lyrics by Howard Ashman; music by Alan Menken. \$9; \$8 MIT faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students; \$6 MIT/Wellesley students; \$3 MIT freshmen. Kresge Little Theater.

MIT/Wellesley students; \$3 MIT freshmen. Kresge Little Theater.

## Monday's Events

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - **Book Exchange**. Come buy and sell books at the APO Book Exchange. W20-West Lounge (2nd Flr). Sponsor: Alpha Phi Omega.

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. - **Christian Fellowship Lounge**. Come to the Christian Fellowship Lounge! Find out more about Christian life at MIT and in the Boston area. Drop by to meet friendly people, to snack on some food, or to play some games. downstairs of w11. Sponsor: Cross Products.

12:00 - 2:00 p.m. - **United Christian Orientation BBQ**. Free Food!!! You've probably had a lot of it in the past week, but here's one more. Come eat some good burgers, listen to some acappella music, and hang out with some Christians from MIT. Johnson BBQ Pits. Sponsor: Cross Products.

2:00 p.m. - **Little Shop of Horrors**. Book and lyrics by Howard Ashman; music by Alan Menken. \$9; \$8 MIT faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students; \$6 MIT/Wellesley students; \$3 MIT freshmen. Kresge Little Theater.

## Tuesday's Events

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - **Book Exchange**. Come buy and sell books at the APO Book Exchange. W20-West Lounge (2nd Flr). Sponsor: Alpha Phi Omega.

4:00 p.m. - **Boat Club BBQ - Crew Kickoff**. The MIT Boat Club will be hosting a BBQ for everyone interested in rowing this year. The event will also be a chance to meet coaches and other rowers and learn about practice schedules. H.W.Pierce Boathouse (W8). Sponsor: MIT Boat Club.

7:00 - 9:00 p.m. - **Reg Day Service**. Anxious about the first day of classes? Instead of worrying, come Praise the Lord! Join us for singing, prayer, and a speaker session. La Sala de Puerto Rico. Sponsor: Cross Products.

8:00 p.m. - **Little Shop of Horrors**. Book and lyrics by Howard Ashman; music by Alan Menken. \$9; \$8 MIT faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students; \$6 MIT/Wellesley students; \$3 MIT freshmen. Kresge Little Theater.

9:00 - 11:00 p.m. - **Christian Fellowship Lounge**. Come to the Christian Fellowship Lounge! Find out more about Christian life at MIT and in the Boston area. Drop by to meet friendly people, to snack on some food, or to play some games. downstairs of w11. Sponsor: Cross Products.

## Wednesday's Events

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - **Book Exchange**. Come buy and sell books at the APO Book Exchange. W20-West Lounge (2nd Flr). Sponsor: Alpha Phi Omega.

12:10 p.m. - **Generation of strong mesoscale eddies from weak meridional flows**. Michael Spall, WHOI. Room 54-915. Sponsor: Physical Oceanography.

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. - **James Randi: Skepticism.001**. James Randi, magician, skeptic, entertainer, and TV personality, is amaster paranormal claims debunker who will entertain and educate you by showing how easy it is to be fooled. Tune up your B.S. detector! Free Admission. 26-100. Sponsor: Atheists, Agnostics, and Humanists, MIT.

## Thursday's Events

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - **Book Exchange**. Come buy and sell books at the APO Book Exchange. W20-West Lounge (2nd Flr). Sponsor: Alpha Phi Omega.

3:00 p.m. - **Experiences in Interactive Expression**. Tod Machover, Associate Professor of Music and Media, MIT Media Lab. Experiences in Interactive Expression. 2 hours. Visiting artists who use digital media and interactivity or audience participation in their work, will focus in depth on one piece, with a quick overview of his/her work, followed by discussion. MIT Museum Bldg, Room 390.

8:00 - 11:00 p.m. - **Learn to Square Dance**. Learn to square dance MIT-style! No partner or experience needed. Free intro night, refreshments will be served. Lobdell.

9:00 p.m. - **Rule of Nines. 9/9/99**. Start the semester on the right foot—or on the left. The MIT Dance Mix Coalition presents a stellar mixed night of dance music starting from the old school, taking it to the new. See Web for details.

## Next Friday's Events

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - **Book Exchange**. Come buy and sell books at the APO Book Exchange. Admission 0. W20-West Lounge (2nd Flr). Sponsor: Alpha Phi Omega.

5:00 - 8:00 p.m. - **European Club Welcome BBQ**. Join new and current members of the European Club for food, drinks, and stimulating conversation. Kresge BBQ pits. Sponsor: European Club.

# It's All In Your Head.

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# THE ARTS

## FILM REVIEW

### Mystery Men

Blade Runner meets Naked Gun

By Vladimir Zelevinsky

ARTS EDITOR

Directed by Kinka Usher

Written by Neil Cuthbert, based on the comic book by Bob Burden

With Ben Stiller, William H. Macy, Geoffrey Rush, Janeane Garofalo, Paul Reubens, Greg Kinnear

**M**ovies that both parody a certain genre and attempt to simultaneously belong to it cannot work; there must be some kind of a universal law to that effect. It's entirely to the credit of *Mystery Men* that it almost succeeds despite this.

Part *Batman*, part *Blade Runner*, part *Naked Gun*, part something entirely new and original, *Mystery Men* is both a spoof of the over-directed, over-produced, and over-merchandised superhero genre and an attempt to genuinely thrill and wow the audience. Give this baby a touch more inventive script and a touch more cohesive look, and, oh boy, we would have a genuine rarity: a movie with special effects, real characters, fun, and excitement. The fact that three out of these four work is already remarkable, and almost compensates for the fact that the screenplay, inventive as it is in details and circumstances, is somewhat by-the-book and lacking when true excitement it concerned.

In the huge metropolis of Champion City, there's no crime. Any petty crook that dares to rear his head is immediately defeated by dashing Captain Amazing (Greg Kinnear). As a result, CA (as citizens affectionately address him), doesn't have much to do, and his corporate sponsorship deals start to disintegrate. So he arranges for his archenemy, the evil and demented Cassanova Frankenstein (Geoffrey Rush), to be released from confinement. Frankenstein, however, spent the last twenty years hatching (of course!) a diabolical scheme of his own. Soon, the only hope for Champion City is the superhero-wannabes. These include Mr. Furious (Ben Stiller), whose amazing

superpower is that he gets really, really angry; Shoveler (William H. Macy), who likes to hit his opponents with a shovel; and Blue Rajah (Hank Azaria, the one who does about half a dozen voices on "The Simpsons"), who throws forks and spoons.

This is the summary of the first ten minutes or so; *Mystery Men* delights in creating all sorts of absurd characters and situations. Some of the best character actors in the business have a chance to sink their creative teeth in some of the weirdest characters around — and still make them impressively human. Hank Azaria and Janeane Garofalo (who joins the ragtag team

later on) are most impressive; and Greg Kinnear, in a rather small part, is — and I'm not using this word lightly — perfect.

All the insane proceedings are orchestrated by first-time director Kinka Usher, who clearly has a gift for visuals. Beyond obvious influences, his *Champion City* also owes a debt to such demented visual stylists as Marc Caro and Jean-Pierre Jeunet (*The City of Lost Children*). It's the storytelling that somewhat lags.

The problem is that both the screenplay and the direction are done on a very moment-to-moment basis (not incidentally, this is also a major fault of the movies this one is trying to spoof). There's such a wealth of imagination in every shot and every wild plot and character detail, that the through-lines — like character and plot arcs — are short-charged. These are present, to be sure, and in this aspect *Mystery Men* is already better than most Hollywood output; but they are largely simplistic.

For all of its running length, this film is

enjoyable, funny, rather sweet, and very inventive, but, the thing is, it's rarely exciting. There's a great scene when the superhero-wannabes ambush Frankenstein's limousine in an underground garage, and there's also a great moment or two in the extended action finale. Otherwise, the screenplay is methodic, too much so. In the end, every one of its misfit band of heroes finds self-worth and uses his or her powers to save the day. What's depressing is that most of them, indeed, have special powers. I cared more about these people when they were just plain ordinary folks with delusions of importance.

There are comic gems sprinkled aplenty throughout (Garofalo even manages to make a plea in favor of independent movies during the finale), and *Mystery Men* is constantly an eye-full. I just wish the filmmakers paid a bit more attention to the genre they are spoofing. They clearly understand everything that doesn't work in it — they should also have taken care to note what does work in it.

## MUSIC REVIEW

### Eartha Kitt

She's still here

By Zaminæ Ansari

STAFF WRITER

**E**artha Kitt, legendary vocalist, played at the Scullers Jazz Club in Boston from August 18th to 21st. Around fifteen years ago, my cousins and I saw a video of her singing "I Chew My Fingers to the Bone." Her expression was intense, her eyes piercing, her voice growlingly husky, almost witch-like, the lyrics incomprehensible, even scary: the youngest of us hid away in fear.

Later, when I became reacquainted with Ms. Kitt, I thought her intensely sexy, her voice bewitching. I could laugh out loud at the often humorous, ambiguously, and even unambiguously risqué lyrics. I was moved by her ballads. She sounded as if she sang with every inch of her body. On Thursday, August 19th, I finally saw her perform live when, dressed in a sexy black gown showing off her well-kept figure, Ms. Kitt sashayed on to the stage and began with an enthusiastic, determinedly strong rendition of "I'm Still Here."

She has been "still here" for over half a century: the audience was astonished to hear that on January 17th she had turned 72. Originally from South Carolina, Eartha Kitt was trained as a dancer and gained fame in post-war Paris, before her film debut in 1948's *Casbah*. Her most famous and definitive character remains that of the grrrrrowwwling Catwoman in the 60's television series "Batman."

Politically outspoken, she was a target of a government smear campaign from late 60's to the 70's. She earned a Tony nomination for the 1978 Broadway production of *Timbuktu*. While one of her most popular songs is "I Want to be Evil," her community service attests she's anything but. The reason why the intimidating image stuck is because of her dramatic and completely convincing theatrical style. She can flirt with a sweet innocent voice and then drop to the voice of a street-smart, witty, intelligent *femme fatale*.

The second song actually gave her age away more than her still fabulous looks or voice. It really made me realize what a different era I belong to, since this song was decidedly politically incorrect. Now, "politically correct" and "proper" are not words that you would usually associate with a performance by Eartha Kitt, yet this particular song made my friends and me uncomfortable, and even

now I don't know what to make of it. Having traveled all over the world, Ms. Kitt came across Japanese singers mimicking herself and Rosemary Clooney — and this song was supposed to mimic those singers. I wondered if we have been so tainted by political correctness that I was unable to really enjoy this particular performance, brilliant as it might have been, with Ms. Kitt batting her eyelashes in time with the music.

She followed this with an Arabic song and then a French one. Her long-running engagements at venues such as the Café Carlyle in New York have perfected her talent of playing the audience as she performs for them. During a repartee with a member of the audience, she asked him how old he was. At his reply she dismissed him saying, "Thirty-one? What a ridiculous age to be in! Don't you know no one is 31 any more? Not even my daughter is 31 any more!"

From the wonderfully atmospheric "I Don't Remember You" to the lusty "I Will Survive" to her cheerful standard "C'est Si Bon," she wooed the audience to the very end with a poignant rendition of "Here's to Life." Still every inch the glamorous Cat-Woman of the sixties, the 72-year-old started the show with a bang and ended it with an even bigger one.

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## BOOK REVIEW

# The Pledge

## Kean's debut falls flat

By Rebecca Loh

ARTS EDITOR

Written by Rob Kean

Warner Books, August 1999

514 pp., \$24.95

Rob Kean's first novel, *The Pledge*, is perhaps the worst book I've ever read. Flat, stereotypical characters, an annoying writing style, and an unbelievable plot make for a disappointing reading experience. The book's only redeeming quality is its pace. Getting right into it from the opening line, the novel's pace flows smoothly from beginning to end, so even though it constantly annoyed me, it kept me engaged enough to finish it up rather quickly.

*The Pledge* opens with a death on Simsbury campus. Chad Ewing, freshman pledge to the Sigma Delta Phi fraternity, naked, beaten, and sick from numerous toxins he was forced to ingest, plunges head first from the second floor balcony of the Sigma house. What ensues are Sigma's wide-range efforts of covering up the signs of a hazing, and the attempts of two Simsbury students to uncover the truth and bring the house to justice.

Some aspects of the book sound oddly familiar. Simsbury College is a top-ranked New England college dealing with the bad press of a possible fraternity hazing. What's different, though, is that the Sigma Delta Phi fraternity is more than just a frat; its alums are part of a rich and powerful conspiracy that uses any tactic necessary to keep its secrets secret. The reader soon learns that the Sigmas, led by a mysterious man who goes by the name T-Bone, are not above bribery, blackmail, rape, and murder to get what they want.

As outlandish as this plot is, the characters are even worse. The two protagonists, Simsbury seniors Mark Jessy and Shawn Jakes, are perfect in every way — even in their faults. Jessy is handsome, smart, and one of the best lacrosse players in the country. He is successful in Simsbury, despite being essentially orphaned at age nine and charged with attempted rape his sophomore year (we later learn the charges were false). Shawn Jakes is blond and beautiful, a well-respected scholar with several All-America skiing honors under her belt. Her

biggest 'fault' is that she doesn't hesitate to speak her mind. The problem with these protagonists is that they're so unbelievable the reader can't sympathize with them, or even care about the predicaments they find themselves in.

Dean Anson Templeton plays the typical villain. Corrupted by money and power, this man appears to have been born without morals. Templeton married his wife for the money, is easily bribed, and engages in sex with his students and professors in exchange for favors from the Dean's Office.

Along with stereotyping his protagonists and antagonist, the author relies on several other stereotypes of college campuses. Kean will have his readers believe that all fraternities consist of handsome jocks who drink themselves stupid at least three nights a week and play games like Boot Tag, "a collegiate contest that requires loving brothers to vomit on one another." He will also have his readers believe that all feminists are androgynous, fat girls with bad haircuts and even worse attitudes. Fraternity hazing includes such festivities as beating pledges with baseball bats, forcing them to ingest urine, vomit, and feces, and penetrating them with vegetables.

The one good aspect of *The Pledge* is its pace. From the start, the book moves steadily forward, with never a slow moment. Kean throws out a few surprises and secrets along the way to keep things interesting. If nothing else, I kept reading merely to find out what really led to Chad Ewing's death, and what really happened the night Mark Jessy supposedly tried to rape a local girl.

Unfortunately, the story is marred by corny phrases and bad dialogue, which remind the reader that this is not some great mystery thriller, but a young writer's attempt at witty writing. Apparently, Kean thinks descriptions like, "his smile produced two of the greatest dimples this side of brown eyes" makes for good writing. One character describes Sigma as "a ladder of human rungs that marches an evolutionary path to the highest levels of white-collar power this country has ever seen." I've never met anyone who talks this way; I'm not even sure what he's saying.

Rob Kean's debut novel *The Pledge* is an example of bad writing. While he has a good sense of pace, Kean's characters fall flat, as do his attempts to be witty. The plot, while certainly creative, is simply too unbelievable. Perhaps this author's sophomore attempt will be less disappointing, though I'm so discouraged by this book I probably won't bother picking up his next one.

## RADIO REVIEW

# 90.9 FM

## Ode to WBUR

By Zaminah Ansari

STAFF WRITER

In the fall of 1995, my class was the first to use the architecture department's spanking new Studio of the Future near the Dome Cafe, and there was one thing my friends and I relied on to keep us awake in our regular all-nighters. It was also the one thing that added life and intelligent dialogue to an otherwise sterile environment. And no, it was not the coffee. It was WBUR 90.9 FM.

WBUR is Boston's National Public Radio (NPR) news station. To my pleasant surprise, it had better, more extensive world news coverage than local newspapers. WBUR also carried BBC — and, therefore, cricket news. Slowly, as no one bothered to turn off the welcome chatter of the radio, and a disheartening string of thefts made keeping CDs in the studio risky, the radio became a staple to go along with the endless all-nighters.

Before long, I was hooked. Not only hooked to up-to-the-minute world and national news coverage by BBC and NPR, but to the other programs as well. Weekends had "Car Talk," with the Magliozzi brothers: hilarious chatter and baffling brainteasers that could turn up in a job interview. Weekdays had "Fresh Air with Terry Gross": even *Vogue* magazine did a story about this interview show. There were also "Talk of the Nation" with Ray Suarez and "Here and Now" with the always engaging Bruce Gellerman and Toni Randall talking about local stuff.

And I became a true fan of "The Connection" and Christopher Lydon, the host of the program. From 10 a.m. to noon every day I was not to be disturbed as I worked with my headphones or the radio on, busy opening my mind to the world as Chris Lydon brought it to me. Those two hour-long programs were always too short.

I could easily strike up a friendship with anyone who listened to "The Connection." Friends and I would furiously email back and forth our views about a topic recently discussed on the program. We talked about topics as varied as Quick Recipes, the Koran, Teletubbies,

the Impeachment, and, more recently, about Kosovo, Tales from Arabian Nights, Duke Ellington, Nabokov, and Hemmingway.

At some point in time I knew I was one of the family: I pledged during their on-air fund drive and one day even gathered the courage to call in. Most of my calls were to "The Connection." During a discussion with John Williams I called to tell him that the *Star Wars* theme was my childhood favorite. During a program about astronomy I called to ask if the fascinating story about the pyramids and their relation to the constellation Orion was true. It wasn't (to my great disappointment) — or rather, it is unproven, so I choose to keep believing it.

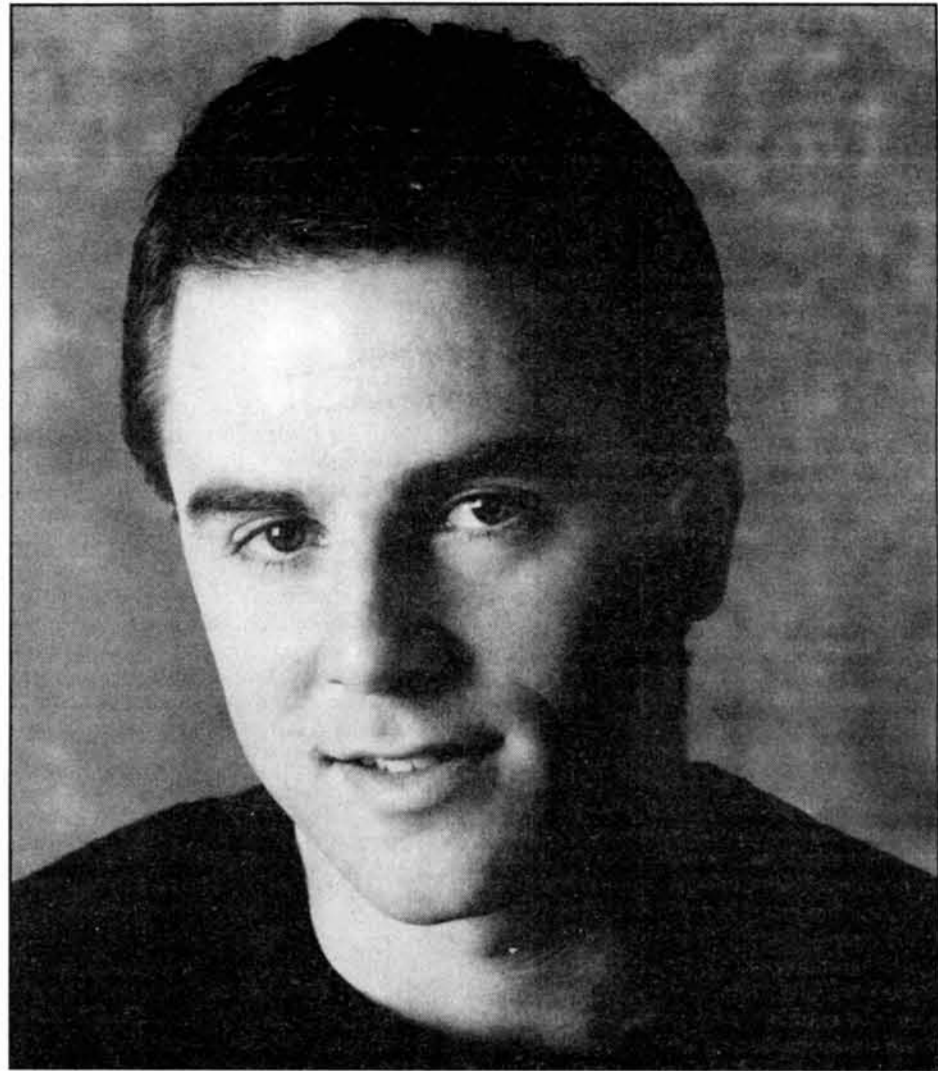
Then there was a program about the 50th birthday of independent India (August 15th, 1997). Pakistan, too, was 50 years old. I called in to say that I was fascinated, as usual, by the program but was surprised that Pakistan, the creation of which is such an inextricable part of the independence of India, had not even been mentioned. Ironically, the program was airing on the 14th: Pakistan's Independence Day. It was after that call that I actually found out how many acquaintances of mine listen to the show. There were messages on my answering machine from friends when I got home.

I even owe one of my life's most exciting moments to WBUR. On "Talk of the Nation," Salman Rushdie was discussing his book *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, which I was reading, so I called. I actually spoke with my favorite author. I am still overwhelmed.

Recently, I realized that "The Connection" fan club wasn't a cult when the *Improper Bostonian* ran a feature about Christopher Lydon. And then MIT announced that this year's commencement speakers were Click and Clack from "Car Talk."

I still have mixed feelings about this. On the one hand I feel vindicated, my interest validated, my credibility with friends to whom I have been recommending WBUR restored. On the other hand, now everyone is in on the show. I fear it is no longer the one topic that brings like minds together. WBUR was something I had in common with a perfect stranger. It was a delicious secret we shared.

I almost wish I graduated this year, with Click and Clack delivering the commencement address. It would have been the perfect ending of a journey, an experience that had WBUR as an opinion-forming and informative soundtrack.

Rob Kean, author of *The Pledge*

CAROLYN ROSS

# The Essential Vegetarian

## A vegetarian's adventures in Europe

By Katie Jeffreys

FEATURES EDITOR

Welcome to another year of the *Essential Vegetarian*. For those of you who are not familiar with the column, it appears weekly, presenting restaurant reviews, recipes, facts and tips relevant to the vegetarian lifestyle. If you ever have any comments on the columns, issues you would like addressed here, etc., I can be reached at [veggie@the-tech.mit.edu](mailto:veggie@the-tech.mit.edu).

I spent this summer in Europe, primarily working in Venice, Italy. I found that people there generally have a more difficult time understanding vegetarianism than Americans. Twice I met people who showed great excitement when I said I was a vegetarian, because they claimed to be also. I quickly found out that one of them meant he ate very little red meat and would eat all other kinds of meat, and the other frequently ate fish. They didn't understand what the standard American definition of vegetarian meant (not consuming any meat: beef, poultry, pork, fish, etc.). This was not a function of the language barrier, but simply the rarity of true vegetarians in Europe.

Consumption of meat in Europe extends beyond American standards as well, including horse meat as a moderately common dish. I found one entertaining example of the European attitude towards meat in a magazine advertisement. At first glance the image was of a field filled with pink and white flowers. Upon closer inspection I realized that the flowers were in fact made of the thinly sliced ham rimmed in white fat which is served with many meals. This juxtaposition of a field of wildflowers and the processed meat it was composed of struck me as both amusing and insulting.

One of my first chores in Venice was to establish myself as a vegetarian with the lunch ladies in the cafeteria I ate at. I thought I would be able to explain myself to them, but was once served a dish containing tuna, having verified that there was no 'carne' in it. I later learned this word, meaning 'meat' (which to me would include fish) implies beef, and sometimes pork, only. I quickly learned the Italian words for both meat and vegetable products so as not to be surprised by little fish or meat sauce in my pasta.

When I chose to avoid the Venetian restaurants, I was able to create wonderful vegetarian meals, which took advantage of the fresh produce markets throughout the city, as well as the large kitchen in my apartment. I personally felt that the mixed vegetable pastas, hearty veggie lasagna, bruschetta, and garlic mashed potatoes which I served rivaled those found in many of Boston's (admittedly mediocre) Italian restaurants.

Next week's topic: Cheese. (Europe's vegetarian friend) Until then, I will leave you with my 'recipe' for veggie lasagna. I was surprised with the simplicity of this dish — don't be afraid to experiment with the fillings. The amounts of the ingredients are approximate (I converted from kilograms) so use your judgement.

**Vegetable Lasagna**

Lasagna noodles (one box or the equivalent of fresh noodles)  
 1 lb fresh spinach  
 1 lb ricotta cheese  
 1 egg  
 2-3 cloves of garlic, diced  
 1 jar of tomato (pasta) sauce  
 Assorted fresh vegetables (zucchini, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, onion, etc.) cut up into small pieces  
 2-3 balls of fresh mozzarella (about 12 oz, cut into slices)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. If the lasagna noodles are dried (hard), prepare them as directed. In a 9"x12" casserole dish spread enough tomato sauce to cover the bottom. Heat olive oil in a large frying pan, and brown the garlic in it. Add the chopped vegetables, and saute until tender, then add the remaining sauce. Simmer the sauce while preparing the ricotta mixture.

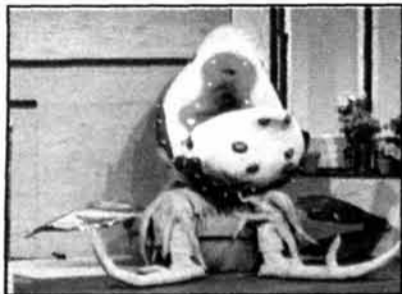
Wash the spinach, removing the stems. Chop the spinach in a food processor and fold it into the ricotta, adding the egg as you do so.

Spread some of the noodles in the casserole dish, covering the bottom completely. Then layer alternatively ricotta, sauce, noodles, and mozzarella, ending with a layer of sauce and mozzarella. Create the layers so that all the fillings are used up. Bake until the cheese on the top becomes brown and the noodles around the edges become crispy. Allow the dish to 'set' for about ten minutes before serving.

## THEATER REVIEW

# Little Shop of Horrors

Quite appetizing



By Vladimir Zelevinsky

ARTS EDITOR

Presented by MIT Musical Theatre Guild

Libretto by Howard Ashman

Music by Alan Menken

Directed by Christopher Lyon

Orchestra directed by Robert Rucinski

Voices directed by Jeff Flaster

Produced by Allison Clayton

With Welkin Pope '00, Steve Niemczyk G, Jamez Kirtley '94, and others

In *Little Kresge*, September 3-6, 16-18

**L**ittle Shop of Horrors is yet another show in the recent succession of highly enjoyable MIT Musical Theatre Guild productions: it's appealing, competent, and entertaining. MTG should also be credited by picking a show on the manageable scale (unlike, say, something as daunting as *Fiddler on the Roof*), and selecting an impressive cast and staff.

*Little Shop* is written by the team of lyricist/librettist Howard Ashman and composer Alan Menken, who later worked on a good deal of Disney animated films (like *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Aladdin*). There are obvious parallels between the duo's work for the stage and the screen: Ashman is famous for creating beautiful, easily flowing lyrics out of plain boring everyday words, and Menken is every bit his match in inspired musical stylizations. There are even some direct similarities, such as the close resemblance between *Little Shop*'s "Somewhere That's Green" and *Little Mermaid*'s "Part of Your World." But *Little Shop* is also markedly different from anything that Ashman and Menken did for the Mouse House: it's a twisted black musical comedy.

I'll bypass the customary plot summary; if you know the story you won't need it, and if you don't (I managed to see the show knowing virtually nothing about it), you'll have the enjoyment of following the plot. The important thing about *Little Shop* is that it is a perfect show for MTG: it is rapidly paced, has only a few characters and no chorus, has a distinct and very hummable but not too complicated songs, and, above all, is a lot of fun — both for the performers and the audience.

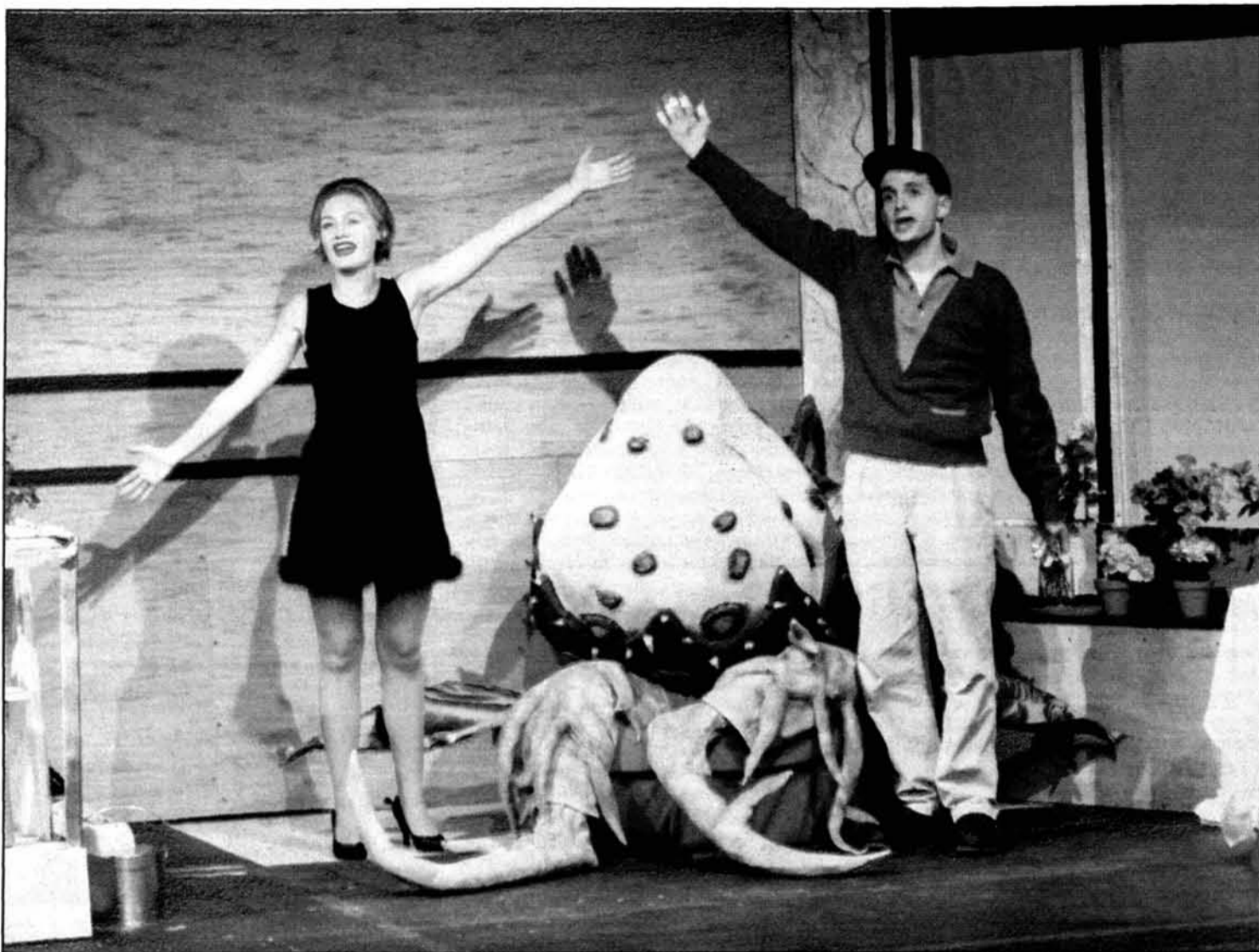
Most of this fun translates well. The first thing that works is an exceptional orchestra (Robert L. Rucinski '99, conducts, and plays the piano): from the overture until the finale the music is played with verve and clarity; this very well might be the best orchestra I've heard at MTG shows. Staging is clear, pleasantly stylized, yet it doesn't look artificial. Lighting design is complex, yet it is never (well, almost never) more interesting than the action.

Acting is adequate, with the exception of the leads, who are very good. Seymour (Steve Niemczyk G), the protagonist, is a bundle of nervous energy, and it's his moral choice in Act 2 which provides this show with most of its subtext. Jamez Kirtley '94 plays something like half a dozen supporting characters; there's little if any difference between any of them, but the *Little Shop* instantly gets a major jolt of energy when Kirtley is onstage.

Most remarkable is the MTG regular Welkin H. Pope '00, who finally gets a long-deserved lead part. Playing Audrey, the flower-shop clerk, Pope manages to create a character which is simultaneously highly stylized and completely recognizable and human. She also has the highlight of the show, the "Somewhere That's Green" song, where every single aspect of the show — acting, singing, music, staging, lighting — combine for several mesmerizing minutes.

The rest of the show goes along as usual, with most things working, and some obstinately refusing to work. Act one's finale makes just about no sense, and there's not much chemistry between Seymour and Audrey (although that's probably because the libretto gives them all of one and a half scenes together). The admittedly nifty-looking set piece of little shop's exterior is quite superfluous as well: the only thing it adds is several long (and loud) pauses while it's dragged on and off the stage.

The only problem which is of some magnitude, though, is poor sound work: one of the characters is voiced from off-stage, and it's very hard to make out the words. It's somewhat mitigated by the fact that Jake Yara '93, who is doing the voicing, does very impressive emoting, so even when the words aren't clear, the meaning behind them usually is; but



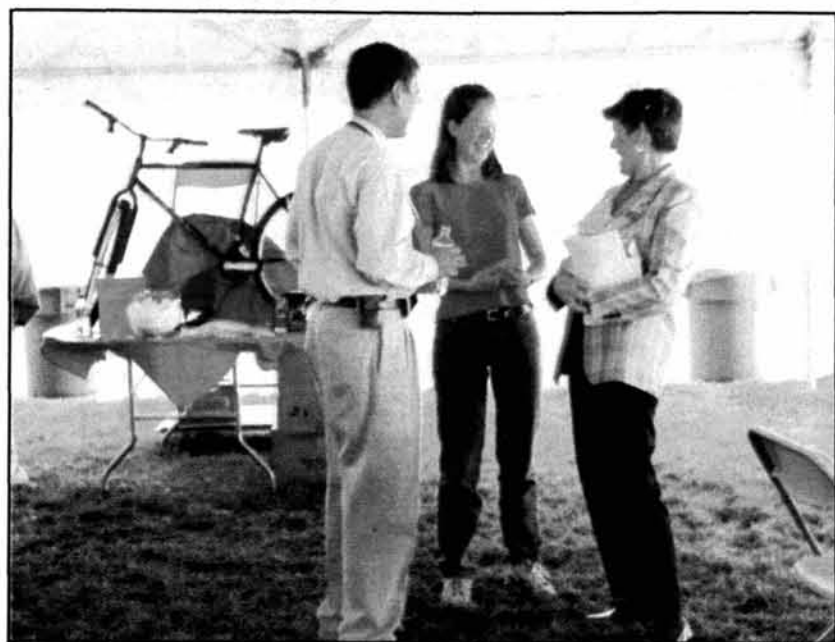
it's still a shame.

So, most things work and some don't. Still, there's one important difference between *Little Shop* and most of previous MTG productions. While I usually got an impression that the shows weren't as much directed as they were organized, with

most care and attention lavished on particular scenes, moments, and aspects of the show, sometimes to the detriment of the overall production, *Little Shop* is the exception, because it truly feels directed. The things that don't work about this production are all details; things that work include pacing, characters, and story. This is a most welcome change, and I'm looking forward to seeing what MTG will do next.

Photos by Annie S. Choi






Tilke Judd '03 enjoys an afternoon with Judy DeGraun, Student Health Insurance Coordinator, and Howard Heller, MD, at the MIT Medical ice cream party.

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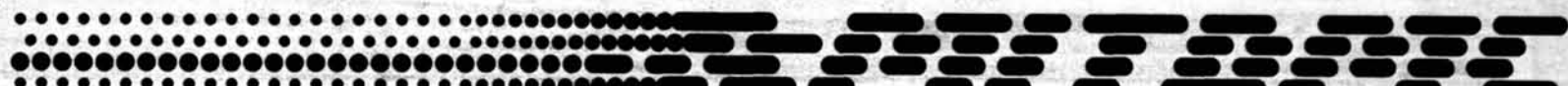


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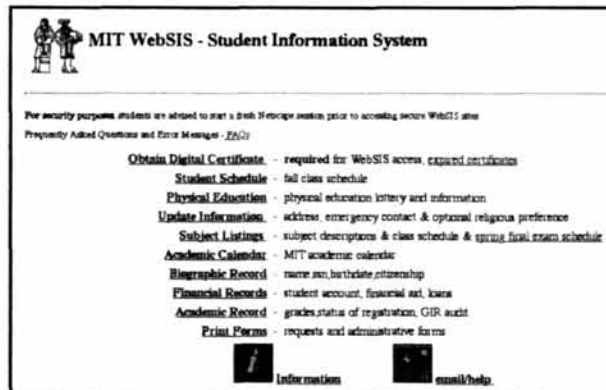
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## Using MIT's Athena Computing System

Naveen Sunkavally  
and Gabriel Daleson

STAFF REPORTERS

This is the fifth article in The Tech's series aimed at helping freshmen adjust to life at the Institute.

Athena, MIT's academic computing system initiated in 1982, may pose a challenge to freshmen. Accustomed to the passive click-drag-and-pull Windows operating system in the mass market, and surrounded by upperclassmen practicing all sorts of dumb UNIX tricks, not only may you find Athena non-intuitive but also frustrating. It's alright. Take it easy. *Step away from the keyboard.* Here we present some of the basic and common uses of Athena to get you rolling.

First, if you need help, you can always use the *man [command name]* command to see a description of the command syntax and what it does.

### Forget AOL instant messenger, say hello to zephyr

Zephyr is MIT's instant messaging system. Most freshmen understand the *zwcg -itmode* and the *punt zwcg* command to enable and disable the zephyr service on the dialups (*zwcg* runs by default on cluster machines). Most freshman usually grasp the *zwrite* and *zlocate* commands, used to compose zephyrs and find out if someone is online.

In Zephyr, there are classes, instances, and recipients. A user is a recipient, but classes and instances are multiple users — the analog of a mailing list. To use these, you subscribe, using the commands *zctl add [classname] \\* \\**, *zctl add message instance \\**, for classes and instances respectively.

A common class, for example, is "help," which is used to ask questions about Athena. Thus, to subscribe to the "help" class, a user types *zctl add help \\* \\**. To send a message to the help class, type the command *zwrite -c help*.

A rather popular zephyr instance is "white-magic," a sort of zephyr society where a great deal of subjects are discussed. To subscribe to the instance, users type *zctl add message white-magic \\**. To write to it, type *zwrite -i white-magic*.

Another common use of Zephyr is to notify you automatically when your mail arrives by sending you a zephyr. The command for zephyr notification of new mail is *zctl add mail pop* or *zctl add mail popret*. The first sends a zephyr to users when new mail is received so that it can be incorporated. The second is similar — in addition to the first command, it also informs a user of the subject, sender, and recipient.

Another staple of MIT life is a user's *.anyone* file. Using *emacs*, create and save a *.anyone* file with a list of the usernames of your friends. Whenever a user whose username matches one of those in your *.anyone* file, you will be notified via Zephyr. Typing the command *znol* after creating a *.anyone* file will show you a list of those on your *.anyone* file who are currently logged in.

Another useful tool is the *.away* file, which works in conjunction with the *zaway* command. The *zaway* command is used if you are away from the computer and wish to offer those zephyring you (and wondering where you've gone) some sort of explanation. First create a *.away* file using *Emacs* and specify the text of the message. Then, when you are about to leave, type the *zaway* command. When other users zephyr you while you are gone, they will receive an automatic zephyr from you with the text in your *.away* file.

### Improving e-mail

Like Zephyr, Athena mail offers several neat user customizations.

One of the most common mail customizations is creating a signature, a simple footer which appears at the bottom of every mail you send out. To do this, create a *components* file using *Emacs* in your *Mail* directory. Then type in the signature that you want to appear at the bottom of the file after the common *to:*, *subject:* and *cc:* headers that you will probably still want to include at the top of your mail.

Another staple of MIT is mailing lists. A simple, menu-driven way to use them is the command *mailmaint*. A command-line based alternative is *blanche*, but it is less easy to use. Simply, *blanche list -i* gets information on the list, and *blanche list -a myusername* adds you to the list, though there are many other options.

### Inessential guide to tracking other users

Whether we'd like to admit it or not, most of us are interested in what other users are doing on-line. And, even we don't, it's always helpful to know what other users may be doing to inspect your Athena activities.

If you type the command *add consult* and type *lastlog [username]*, you can find out when a user last logged in. Be warned that the results of *lastlog* are somewhat unreliable since it does not record the actual last login, but accesses to the user's home directory.

If you type the command *add [username]*, and then do *ls /mit/[username]* you can view the top-level contents of *username's* directory unless they have disabled public listing access.

Another interesting command is *znol -l*, which allows you to perform the normal *znol* function but also works when you have punted *zwcg*. This command allows you to view other users online without being visible over zephyr yourself.

The *w* command gives useful information about other users on the machine you are using. Try *w | grep username* to see the entry for *username* or just *w* to see who you are sharing a dialup with.

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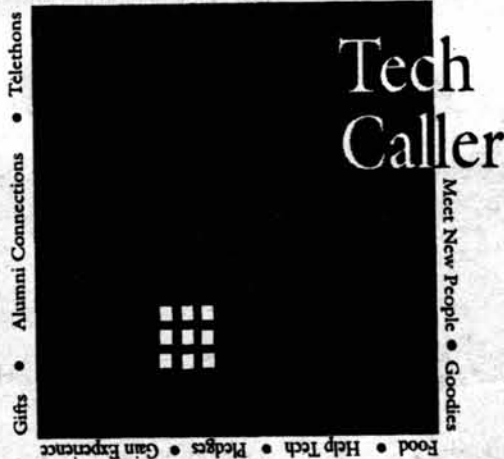
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## Second Lottery May Be Needed

Dorms, from Page 1

allowed to accept bids nearer to the time of the lottery. "Instead of getting three days of information, we get two days," he said.

However, Bernard also said that in general "pledging is down... compared to what it was two years ago."

### Crowding heavy this year

The results of the lottery led to heavy crowding. One indicator: even Bexley Hall will be crowded this year.

MacGregor House was the second most popular dormitory this year. Several of MacGregor's

lounges were crowded last year, and the dorm could see even heavier crowding this year. Although only eight of MacGregor's lounges have currently been crowded, "if we're not able to get pledges or place [students] anywhere else... [we'll have to] talk to MacGregor about using more lounges," Bernard said.

Despite renovations which made it more difficult to rush, Baker was the most popular dormitory this year, and Bexley shot up the charts to become the third-most popular dorm.

### Second lottery not unprecedented

In the past, an additional lottery has been necessary for students who

did not receive a housing assignment, in the hopes that more students would pledge to off-campus living groups over the course of the week.

In 1993, approximately 100 students were told to wait for a second round of the housing lottery, and more than half of those students were put through a third lottery. The lottery difficulties were in part related to original efforts to reduce crowding; 60 less spaces were available than in the previous year. At least 80 percent of freshmen were crowded in 1992, "the highest percentage of crowds in recent memory" according to an article in *The Tech* at the time.

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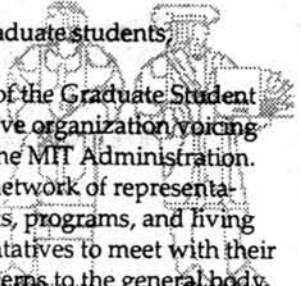
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OUR MISSION



Dear new and returning graduate students,

This year we have a vision of the Graduate Student Council (GSC) as a responsive organization voicing graduate student needs to the MIT Administration. Supporting this vision is a network of representatives from most departments, programs, and living groups. We expect representatives to meet with their constituents, voice any concerns to the general body, and be involved in the running of our GSC. The GSC will continue to work on the issues of conducting a diversity study, communicating with graduate students through the *Graduate Student News (GSN)*, pursuing graduate housing options that meet our needs, and funding as many graduate student organizations as possible.

The GSC is composed of six committees, which work to address student needs in a variety of areas. Each committee meets approximately once per month. All graduate students are invited and encouraged to attend both the GSC general council meetings and the various committee meetings. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held in the GSC lounge (Walker Memorial 50-220) at 5:30 pm and last about an hour. Dinner is provided.

We hope to see you at one of our meetings (schedules are listed in each Tuesday's *Tech* on page 3). Welcome and welcome back!

- \* Luis Ortiz, *President*
- \* Sanith Wijesinghe, *Vice President*
- \* Sumit Gautam, *Treasurer*
- \* Ying Li, *Secretary*

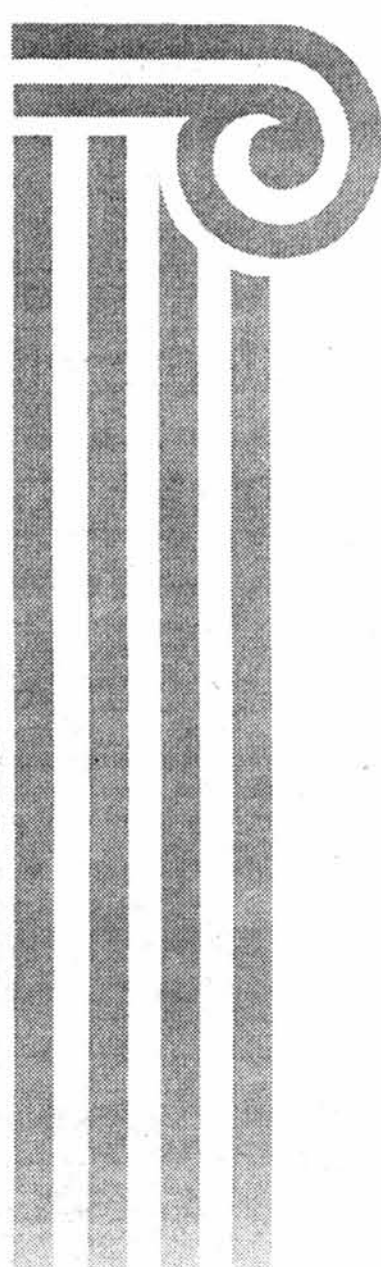
Graduate Student Council	
📍	Walker Memorial, 50-220
🕒	M - F 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
☎	253-2195
✉	gsc-request@mit.edu
🌐	http://www.mit.edu/activities/gsc

PEOPLE IN THE GSC

If you need information about a particular committee or board or about the GSC in general, please contact one of the committee chairs or officers listed below.

Officers	
Luis Ortiz	gsc-president@mit.edu
Sanith Wijesinghe	gsc-vice-president@mit.edu
Ying Li	gsc-secretary@mit.edu
Sumit Gautam	gsc-treasurer@mit.edu
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Housing and Community Affairs	
Rebecca Saltzer	rsaltzer@mit.edu
Orientation	
Dimitrios Konstantakos	konstand@mit.edu
Yogesh Joshi	yogesh@mit.edu
Atul Dalmia	atul@mit.edu
Publications and Publicity Board	
Laurent Levy	levy@mit.edu
Funding Board	
Sumit Gautam	gsc-treasurer@mit.edu
Muddy Charles Pub	
David Chichester	chichest@mit.edu
Webmaster	
Babar Bhatti	babar@mit.edu
Administration	
Maria Raposo	gsc-admin@mit.edu

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INFORMATION FOR 1999-2000

# Graduate Student Council

COMMITTEES

The committees of the Graduate Student Council work to address student needs in a variety of areas. Each committee is chaired by two people and meets approximately once per month. All graduate students are invited and encouraged to attend the monthly GSC general and committee meetings. Unless noted, all meetings are held in the GSC lounge at 5:30 pm and last about an hour. Dinner is provided.

**Publications and Publicity Board**

The Publications and Publicity Board produces the Graduate Student News publication to inform all graduate students about recent issues that affect them in addition to relevant goings-on within the Institute. It is a valuable resource for getting in touch with many people in order to collect their opinions and positions on issues that the GSC is involved in. The GSN also includes sections on student and group funding, fellowships and scholarships, GSC events, department news, local events, and how to best make use of the Institute's resources.

**Activities**

The Activities Committee has the important responsibility of providing graduate students with the opportunity to have fun. We organize events such as...

- Hiking and Skiing trips
- Nights at the Ballet, BSO and Broadway.
- Trips to the Beach and Whitewater Rafting
- Parties and Socials
- The MIT Graduate and Alumni Ball

All these events are provided for graduate students and their guests at a discounted price. We know it is tough sometimes to find fun, affordable things to do, so we are always planning something to get people out of the lab and keep them sane. All graduates are welcome at our meetings, and we're always looking for new ideas. Come by and help us prevent MIT from getting in the way of enjoying yourself in this great city.

**Housing and Community Affairs**

The Housing and Community Affairs Committee is concerned with issues such as housing, safety, health services, parking, athletics, and related matters. In recent years, HCA was the driving force behind the installation of the ResNet computer network in all graduate residences; supported the establishment of SafeRide (and this year, extensions to the routes); initiated the Grocery Shuttle; worked to keep Ashdown as a graduate residence and to make sure graduate students have input on new residences; and negotiated discounts on MBTA subway and bus passes and on graduate student class rings.

This past year, HCA worked to ensure that the administration heard the students' position on the issues such as the residential parking fee, privacy concerns about the MIT card, and licensing fees on class rings. We continue to investigate the rates charged by ACUS, the long-distance carrier for on-campus residences; and we are always on the lookout for other benefits for students in the community.

**Orientation**

The GSC Orientation committee convenes twice per year to plan events designed to welcome new graduate students to MIT at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters.

The Fall Orientation committee is the larger of the two, with an extensive program consisting of approximately 20 events. These include perennial favorites, such as the Harbour cruise, Red Sox game, and picnic; as well as new events such as Camera Safari, the Trolley Tour, and Whale Watch. Work for the fall orientation begins late in the spring semester and continues until mid-September.

Starting in late Fall planning begins for the Spring Orientation, geared for students entering during the Spring term. Although smaller, this segment of orientation is important for those who would otherwise "slip between the cracks".

**Academics, Research, and Careers**

The Academics, Research, and Careers Committee deals with all academic issues pertinent to graduate students at MIT. These include graduate research and teaching, as well as postgraduate employment.

The Committee fosters excellence in teaching by encouraging workshops for new teaching assistants and new faculty members. Each year the Committee presents awards for outstanding teaching of graduate courses; nomination of award winners is based on extensive student participation.

The Academics, Research, and Careers Committee also handles subjects related to the broader graduate curriculum. It discusses research group matters and graduate student advising, and organizes an annual advisor-advisee relationship forum. Other activities include leadership workshops open to all MIT students, and exit surveys for graduating students.

The Committee not only involves itself with improving graduate classes and research, but also aims at facilitating the transition from academic life to industry. Its annual career fair draws students and companies together to discuss future career options and job opportunities.

**Muddy Charles Pub**

The Muddy Charles Pub is located in the east corner of the ground floor of the Walker Memorial Building, directly below the Graduate Student Council offices. Run independently from the GSC and staffed by students, the Muddy is a popular watering hole for stressed out graduate students and MIT staff.

So if your advisor is on your case, the legs have fallen off your robot, or your laser has become misaligned and burned a hole in your lab note book, why not grab a few friends and take half an hour or so to wind down and chill out over a few cold ones at the Muddy...


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**FESTIVAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE, Fred Harris, Director**

 Auditions: by appointment (sign up in 14N-207): Tues., Sept. 7, 5-10pm. **Audition Requirements:** Solo piece of your choice.

**CONCERT BAND, Fred Harris, Director**

 Auditions: by appointment (sign up in 14N-207): Fl., Ob., Clar., Bsn., Sax: Wed., Sept. 8, 5-10pm; Perc., make-ups and other: Thurs., Sept. 9, 5-10pm, Tr., Tbn, Hrn., Euph., Tba: Fri., Sept. 10, 5-10pm. **Audition Requirements:** Solo piece of your choice.

**WIND ENSEMBLE, Fred Harris, Director**

 Auditions: by appointment (sign up in 14N-207): Fl., Ob., Clar., Bsn., Sax: Wed., Sept. 8, 5-10pm; Perc., make-ups and other: Thurs., Sept. 9, 5-10pm, Tr., Tbn, Hrn., Euph., Tba: Fri., Sept. 10, 5-10pm. **Audition Requirements:** Solo piece of your choice and assigned excerpt.

**CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY, Marcus Thompson, Director**

 Auditions: Tues., Sept. 7, 7pm, Killian Hall (14W-111). **Audition Requirements:** Two solo pieces of contrasting styles and sight-reading.

**CHAMBER CHORUS, William Cutter, Director**

 Auditions: Thurs., Sept. 9, 10-11:30 am, Killian Hall (14W-111). **Audition Requirements:** One solo piece of your choice and sight-reading.

**CONCERT CHOIR, William Cutter, Director**

 Auditions: Thurs., Sept. 9, 6-8:30pm, Rm. 2-190. **Audition Format:** Octet auditions of music just rehearsed.

**GAMELAN GALAKTIKA, Evan Ziporyn, Director**

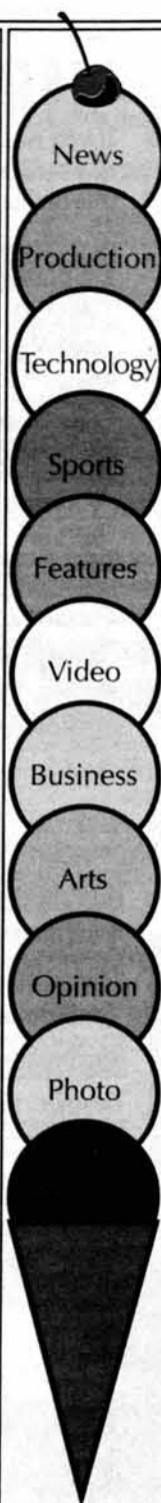
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- Make appointment to speak with Prof. Linn Hobbs, rm. 13-4065, ext. 3-6835

Contact the Graduate Students Office (ext. 3-1940) for information on other foreign scholarships.

# Opinions On Rush Varied

Rush, from Page 1

pledged after the lottery.

## Houses positive on rush

Despite the low overall numbers, houses surveyed yesterday seemed pleased with rush.

Phi Kappa Sigma member Trusahar J. Patel '01 said that rush "went really well for us." The fraternity expects a "larger pledge class than we've seen in a while." The house had received 11 bids and was still open as of yesterday afternoon.

Theta Xi Assistant Rush Chair Andrew D. Berkheimer '01 said that the house had seen a "higher than usual turnout." Theta Xi collected seven pledges and expected more to "come in slowly" over the coming days.

Some houses were less positive on this year's rush. Matthew B. Karau '01, rush chair for Theta Chi, said that rush was "kind of slow." TC expects a "smaller than normal pledge class," he said. The house is expecting to receive six bids. "Everyone is waiting for the dorms," Karau said.

Daniel R. Feller '00, Sigma Nu rush chair, said that his house is also expecting a number of pledges in the coming days. The house currently has three pledges and is expecting a total of 10 to 15, he said.

If many students are, in fact, waiting for the dorms, as Karau proposes, rush may be in better straits than early figures suggest.

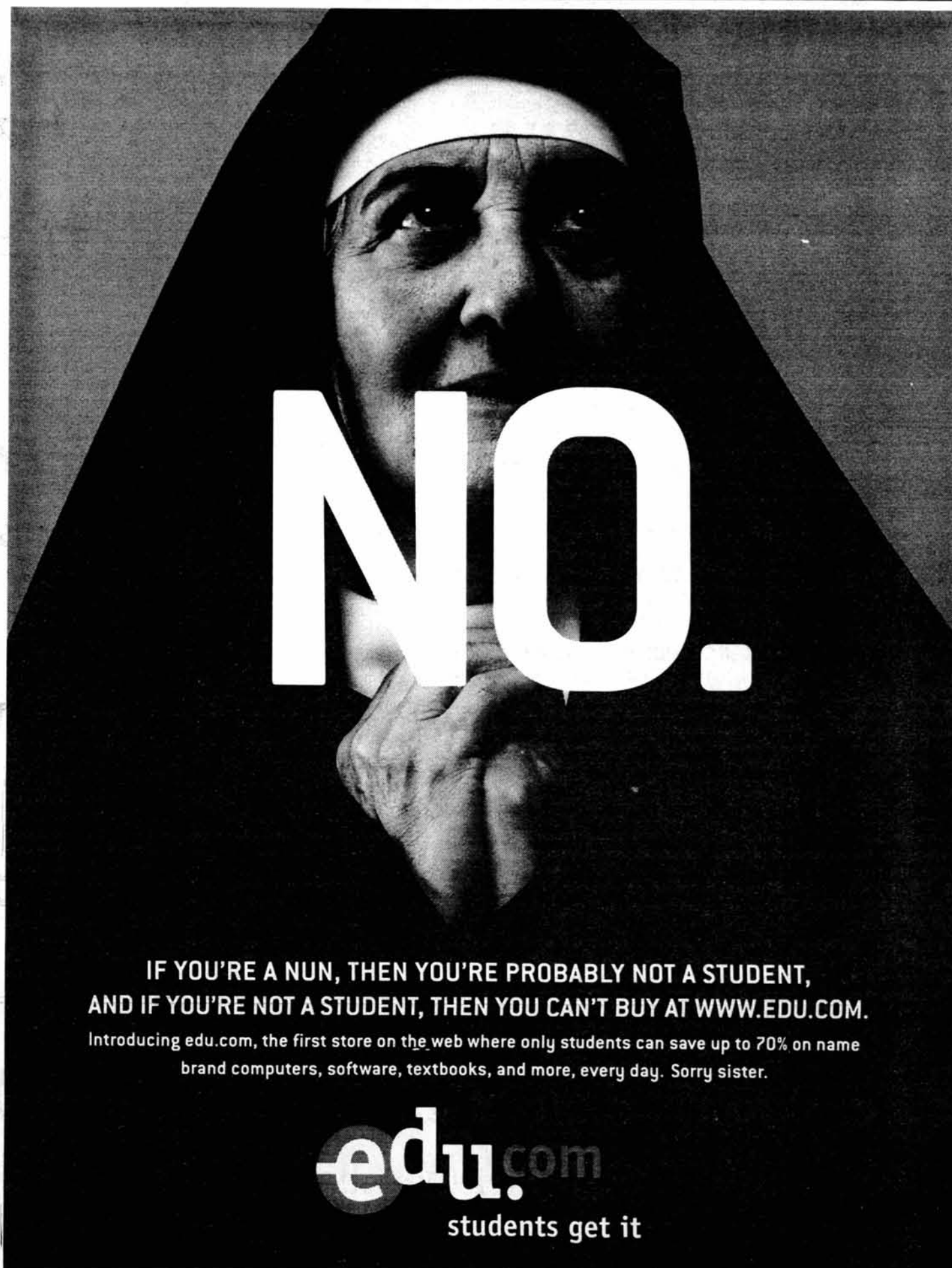
Lambda Chi Alpha, on the other hand, had already received 13 pledges out of 14 bids by yesterday afternoon, Rush Chair Mitchell Y. Huang '01 said.

Independent living groups also appeared pleased with rush. Members of Student House said that the house had reached their goal. Fenway house has received four pledges so far.

Sororities received 107 pledges so far this year, said Dorow.

Panhel Rush Chair Jenny C. Jaung '00 said that in total sororities had extended 140 bids to freshmen.

Michael Hall contributed to the reporting of this article.



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success.**



## ROSH HASHANA

### REFORM SERVICES

MIT Chapel

Friday, Sept. 10, 6:30 pm  
Saturday, Sept. 11, 10:30 am

### CONSERVATIVE SERVICES

Kresge Little Theatre

Friday, Sept. 10, 6:30 pm  
Saturday, Sept. 11, 8:45 am & 5:45 pm  
Sunday, Sept. 12, 8:45 a.m.

◆ ROSH HASHANA MEALS will be served at Hillel. Prepayment by Sept. 8 with meal card or cash.

◆ YOM KIPPUR is Sept. 19-20. Tickets are required for all Sept. 19 KOL NIDRE SERVICES and are available for students and members of the MIT community. Ticket pickup at MIT Hillel through Sept. 17 and in Lobby 10 on Sept. 8, 9, 15, 16.

◆ MIT HILLEL, Building W11 lower level, 253-2982

לשנה טובה



**UNLIKE YOUR MAJOR,  
ONCE YOU DECIDE ON A COMPUTER,  
YOU'RE STUCK WITH IT.**

**UNLESS, OF COURSE, SOMEONE  
GIVES YOU A NEW ONE.**

## CNET: COMPUTER-A-DAY SWEEPSTAKES

Getting a college education isn't cheap. So you really can't afford to make a mistake when buying a computer. The CNET Buying Guide can help you decide what to buy, where to buy it and what to pay for it. And to kick off the new school year, we're giving away new computers and other prizes during our Computer-A-Day Giveaway Sweepstakes. The Sweepstakes is running from August 11, 1999, through September 12, 1999. Enter to win each day. That gives you 33 chances to avoid plunging further into debt.



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