Boone calls penal system 'outdated'

By David Ziggelheim

Former Massachusetts Corrections Commissioner John Boone was the speaker at a dinner meeting of the Beacon Hill Public Safety Campaign. In his speech, Boone touched on a variety of topics dealing with justice in America.

Boone faulted fault with the corrections system in Massachusetts. He stated that it was “one of the most archaic in the country.” During his 18 months as Corrections Commissioner Boone tried to institute a variety of reforms in the system.

Among the reforms Boone initiated was a furlough system for inmates. Under this system, prisoners would be allowed a 14-day vacation each year. Boone had been very disturbed because this system, which he considered an essential step in making prisons more humane, had been under attack in the press following the failure of a prisoner to return from a furlough.

Boone also felt that the state’s political leaders were partially to blame for the attempted escape of a prisoner. Florida said that even if it had been put to a public referendum, the bill would have failed, but if it had been put to a public referendum, it would have passed by an even greater majority.

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Boone was the Massachusetts Commissioner of Corrections for 18 months before being asked to step down by Governor Sargent. During those 18 months he had decreased the prison population in Massachusetts from 3,500 to 1,700; those months were marked by murders and attempted murders in the prisons.

John Boone

Photo by Richard Feld

Contest encourages innovation

By Jules Mollere

The MIT Innovation Center, founded earlier this year to further “the development and invention of new products” is now sponsoring a student innovation contest with $1,000 in prize money to be awarded.

Robert Collpy, Vice President of the Kappa Nu (EKN) which is organizing this contest for the innovation center, stated that its purpose was to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the MIT community.

“We hope to encourage students to take advantage of the resources available to them at MIT, to create new products, but so far it seems to be one of the most successful.”

Dr. Bernard Gifford, deputy chancellor of the New York City School System and former president of the RAND Institute, spoke in S-150 last Monday, as part of the Innovative Resource Planning Project. His topic was “The Urban Analyst in the Eye of the Hurricane: A View from the Bridge.”