A brand-new column; sports and the news

By Glenn Brownstein

With this issue The Tech begins a new volume with a different board and a somewhat different look. The opinion page takes on a new look as well, and an agreement that the "world" makes such a debut today.

Believe it or not, this column will have very little to do with MIT (if anything at all), but instead will attempt to give our loyal readership an idea of what's going on in the greater Boston area (especially Boston and Cambridge) and numerous miscellaneous "real world" items.

You might find out how 6011 is graded, or why the building numbering system is based on a polar coordinate map of Cambridge. Not just random, off the top of my head stuff about the area around us that many students here know very little about (except maybe the subway system, Boston Garden, and the Harvard-Dudley bridge).

The title of the column comes from the division most MIT students make in their own minds and the rest of the earth, between dear old MIT and the real world.

For what it's worth, I've moved up from Sports Editor to Editor-in-Chief, and so you're probably seen one or more of my "Food Shots" columns appearing in the Tech.

Since most of my experience here has come in the form of sports reporting, a number of these forthcoming columns will understandably be about sports, which brings me to my first topic, namely the relationship of sports to the real world. More basically, does sports have any place at all in a troubled society like ours?

Sometimes those of us who write about the sports world get second thoughts about its relative importance compared with the wars, depressions, and other crises which affect us seemingly every day. Speaking personally, I'm told very often that I should consider myself a privileged member of society, writing about sports is a waste of time and that the general public has a need to know many other much more important things.

What we often forget is that sports is primarily a diversion, an entertainment that allows us to put aside our problems for a few hours. It's a distraction for us to think about the world beyond the 55-foot rims of Marques Haynes or Curley Neal, the four-year-old footage of the riots, and the prison's past history that made many of us forget about the civil strife and racial tensions present in our area. The World Series didn't ameliorate the problem, by any means, but at least it eased the tensions for a little while and gave Bostonians some small common bond to work with.

Last weekend, the own medium Broadcasting Company presented a "Wide World of Sports" segment entitled "The Harlem Globetrotters at Attica," which featured the world-famous basketball wizards presenting their act at Attica Correctional Institution in upstate New York.

Attica brings to mind riots, uprisings, embattled inmates and guards, in short, the 1971 crisis. The Trotters, Tom "Sweet Georgia Brown," the antics of Meadowlark Lemon, the impersonating dribbling talents of Happy Harris, and Curley Neal, the 55-foot half court shots and the famous intricate Globetrotter passing weave.

The combination of the two is intriguing, and ABC, given a rare chance to take a serious social issue and make it into a sports program, did so convincingly. Those wishing to see an excellent basketball show were not disappointed, as the Globetrotters performed as superbly as ever. Those wishing to just take a look lost out, though, as ABC presented four-year-old footage of the riots, and the prison's past history of violence and the many Bostonians who never escaped the viewer. In all, though, it was a very moving, impressive broadcast.

While one's opinion of Howard Cosell, he was at his most effective in interviewing inmates, guards, officials, and players, at capturing the strongly mixed emotions present at Attica on that day. Granted, at times the questions were banal and trite, the program stilted, but at least the program was attempting to establish a permanent national home for Jews in Palestine. (Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary; p. 2003 (1965)). Does this right to a homeland override the fact of using the word "Jews" in every other paragraph portrays this emotionalism and establishes an atmosphere of hostility far from that of a rational discussion.

Our purpose in writing this short note is not to provide a point-by-point refutation to this display of spurious arguments. To engage in a purely polemical debate will never lead to a constructive exchange. We shall only address ourselves here to what we feel is the fundamental issue of the Middle East problem.

One of our criticisms mentioned the "right to a homeland" for the "Jewish people." Of course, we cannot deny any people a home. In the specific case of what is called Zionism, however, there are other considerations.

Since we are also playing dictionary games, "Zionism is a modern colonization movement which aims to establish a permanent national home for Jews" (Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary; p. 2003 (1965)). Does this right to a homeland override the rights of others, namely the Palestinians, who have always lived there and whose land the land actually is? And further, why don't those of us who are all Americans, regardless of whether we are Arabs or American citizens, demand a home for "Christians" and call that a liberation movement-- and maybe choose Palestine as a "home" since Christianity was born in Jerusalem? Clearly an absurd proposition.

True, there is a national community of Israelis in Palestine today which is distinct from that of the Palestinian Arabs.

But let us make clear that this Israeli national community has nothing to do with a "Jewish Nation" all over the world. Further, this recognition can in no way obliterate the existence of the Palestinian national community which preceded the creation of Israel. And our proposal to all democratically-minded people is precisely a democratic Palestine that will allow for the coexistence of these two communities.

More on 'Horizons'

To the Editor:

Mark Throp's letter about "Transparent Horizons" in the December 10 Tech might be a parody, but I fear not. First he establishes himself as categorical and authoritarian with "MIT is the best school in the country," it represents the highest achievements of mankind in many fields from science to art." Then he criticizes recent MIT art acquisitions: "it shouldn't look like a three-year-old did it... Good pieces of art have as appeal to everyone... They show idealized man, man reaching his highest goals." The point is well made, Mr.

Throp phrases his criticisms of the MIT Committee on the Visual Arts in terms of what he considers whether the artist is ripping off and whether "in twenty or thirty years MIT art will be looked on as beautiful as worthless pieces of garbage." His body of work is, I'm afraid, precisely right. He is insensitive to radical disagreement, which is precisely the purpose of the Tech.

One virtue of MIT mixed with innovation. I personally prefer chatting after someone exploring new ideas I don't yet understand to embracing comfortable former colleagues.

Unlisted

To the Editor:

In regard to the article announcing the discontinuance by the Information Service of providing phone numbers of MIT students due in part to a large increase in the number of such calls, while I wish to inform the Tech that the Information Service might possibly connect the increase with the fact that the student directory contains the phone numbers (as well as the addresses) of the students in the New West Campus Houses.

Eric Black '77

January 10, 1976

The Tech

NEWS

Editor: Gerald Radlack '77

News Staff: David Thompson '78, Lynn Yamada '78, Rebecca Waring '78

Photo Editors: Tom Klimowicz '77, David Schaller '78

Sports Editor: Dave Dobbs '77

Editorial Director: Robert A. (Al) Ouster '77

Managing Editor: Joel Mandelbaum '77

Managing Editor: David Schaller '77

Business Manager: John M. Sallay '78

Volume 96 Number 1

Tuesday, February 3, 1976

Third Class Postage paid at Boston, MA. The Tech is published twice a week during the academic year (except during MIT vacations) and once a week during the summer. Periodicals postage paid at Boston, MA 02115. Business office: 50 - MIT BCH, Cambridge, MA 02139. Offices at Room W20-483, 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA. Telephone: (617) 253-1541. Subscription rates available on request.