Making serious choices: a primer for living at MIT

By Glenn Brownstein

The summer issue of The Tech is usually considered to be the Freshman Issue, and it is the traditional responsibility of the current Editor-in-Chief to give a so-called “pep talk” to the incoming class. Many of these editorials tell us little that is not readily apparent about the important issues on-campus and instead resort to generalities like how exciting the college experience will be. In this position, I would like to give an account of what I think MIT — not simply of the diversity of the university experience, which will be fascinating to many, but also of the kinds of issues and problems you’ll need to face very quickly.

The Boston that was shown to millions on national TV on July 4 was not the view of New England’s smallest and least conflicted city. The spirit and patriotic fervor of the crowds gathered in the city, the raucously Maosupping of 400,000 people gathered together to listen to one of America’s greatest conductors, Arthur Fiedler, leading the remarkable uplifting and emotional “Taps” for the veterans in the city this month after a few years of racial tension and strife, of school bus shootings, of racial intolerance and civil rights issues in the past 20 years.

The picture that, of the racially-torn city, was hidden from view on July 4, not by any conscious effort of government, but by a decision to put it aside and enjoy the celebration. Yet the demonstrations by anti-busing groups continue (one inflammatory act was repeated the “Blue Jays” procession with an anti-busing, anti-black sign) with the divisiveness so natural to a city that is in fact about twelve culturally and ethnically distinct towns thrown together by a single political rule.

One of the things an incoming MIT freshman will find is that no two dorms will be the same. One can walk through Southie, the North End, or Back Bay, and feel that one has visited a different city that lived again this month after a few years of racial tension.

I know, for example, that only 20 members of the R/O Center will be permitted to return early to MIT this year. According to one spokesman, “The only change we’ll be making is to forget” anyone’s name. This should make the administrative staff feel more comfortable, and it might help to ease the burden of processing the thousands of freshmen who will be arriving during R/O Week. The FAC expects, however, that many freshmen will be permitted to return early, and that for fifty or so years the MIT ad-
ranging up plans to handle the expected dorm overcrowding during R/O Week, the FAC anticipates that only 20 members of the R/O Committee will be permitted to return early.

To achieve this goal, the following year is expected to be the worst, however. Only ten members of the R/O Committee will always address a freshman by his full name. This should make the R/O Week experience much more personal.

The following year is expected to be the same, however. Only the R/O coordinator himself will be permitted back early. Each dorm will have tape recorders in their lounges playing back “normal sounds for the suite.” This will permit freshmen to get an intense feel for the flavor of each dorm, since there won’t be time for room appearances while the freshmen are making living group decisions.

The R/O Center itself will be completely computerized. Development of the system’s program has already begun. It is expected that eventually the system will “forget” only a small handful of freshmen each day. Other benefits will accrue from the state-of-the-art R/O Center. According to one spokesman, “Because the system cannot ‘forget’ a freshman’s name, it will always address a freshman by his full name. This should make the R/O Week experience much more personal.”

Commentary
Crowding out R/O week

By Mark Muckeys

Only 45 apperceptions can return early this fall to work dur-
ing R/O Week, the MIT admin-
istration initially thought after this
spring.

The limit had to be imposed because of the expected dorm overcrowding during R/O Week. An acquaintance visiting to ar-
rive before the end of R/O Week must be screened by an R/O “Watchdog” committee to deter-
mine if a need exists for the up-
perclassmen’s early return. In previous years the number per-
mitted to return early has not been so limited.

However, more severe overcrowding is expected in future years. The Freshman Ad-
mnnistration had to reluctantly draw up plans to handle the anticipated problems.

For example, during the 1977 R/O Week, the FAC anticipates the attendance of 3,500 freshmen. To accommodate this many freshmen, the FAC anticipates an “ignition” Outreach Program personnel permitted to return early will be drastically cut. The FAC expects, however, that this will have little effect on most incoming freshmen. According to a spokesman of one, “The only change will be that freshmen will now have to wash their own dishes after the picnic in the Great Court.”

R/O Week the following year should be worse. Overcrowding may be so severe that only ten members of the R/O Committee will be allowed back early. Many “traditional” R/O activities will be toned down.

Instead of the usual foreign stu-
dent orientation program, one re-
quoting much less manpower will be
being planned. In place of the gala picnic “get-togethers” the R/O Committee will have originally hoped for, sugar doughnuts will be stuffed into foreign students’ R/O information packets.

The lack of personnel will also slow check-in procedures to a crawl. Accordingly, all freshmen will be expected to arrive with a sleeping bag, and will be housed in the Student Center Library until temporary dorm housing is ar-
ranged.

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Warring with weather

To the Editor:
On July 12th, the New York Times published an article discussing the climatological theories of Dr. Deen Browning by which he accounts for weather anomalies — droughts or storms that are unheard of in any other part of the world, new particularly in England, the Soviet Union, and France, and in our western states. Dr. Browning explains these events by saying that we are now returning to cooling conditions that are normal, and that for fifty or so years out of the last 800 we have been blessed with unusually pleated weather.

The recent CIRA report on the impact of climate changes on political economic condition around the world (obtainable through the office of Congress-
man Fred Rhodeim) presents a view similar to this. According to the Times Dr. Browning’s creden-
tials are as follows:

* He worked on development of the atom bomb.
* He is a fast cut inventor with 65 license patents.
* He is half degree in physics, mathematics and zoology, and has worked as a wind tunnel engineer for many secret government projects at Sandia Laboratories in Albuquerque.

“Studying the climate has been his hobby for 50 years.”

The following day, July 13th, an article by correspondent Mar-
quis Childs appeared in the Washington Post in which Mr. Childs explained getting a different explanation for the weather anomalies around the world. The article is entitled “Making War With the Weather” and discusses the efforts of Senator Pell of Rhode Island to

* (*Please turn to page 7)