It's no fun to be a senior applying to grad school
By Glenn Brownstein

This being the first issue of IAP, and since so few of us are around on campus (I'm certainly not), I'm going to dedicate this column to a special group - the seniors. Those of us who have suffered through seven terms or more at MIT deserve special consideration anyway; we're all going to graduate, after all. Anyway, what I plan to discuss is exactly what I've spent the last month or so doing - applying to graduate school.

All of us went through the same torturous procedure to get into this place - autobiographical essays, letters of recommendation from high school teachers - that I'm sure you, making sure your transcript went to the right college (don't laugh) - I know someone who went to Colgate instead of Cornell because of such a mixup, SATs, achievements, interviews, etc.

Now to get cut, some of us (exempting the lucky souls who will enter right after graduation) have to do the whole thing over again - for most of us the last pre-law, pre-med, or pre-vet, but these days going into graduate school is just about as important, though somewhat easier (not much). Some of the forms are identical, so naturally the essays are as well, although it's usually not a good idea to mail out 23 duplicate copies.

The whole thing has become a lot harder. GREs aren't anything special, transcripts usually go where you send them, and interviews are the same no matter what they've been for, but everything has a lot more importance attached.

Application essays are more important than ever on the average graduate school application. It's in this area that I feel most threatened - pre-meds don't necessarily have to be brilliantly prolix, but sure do try. The worst part of applying to grad school is getting those elusive letters of recommendation. In high school, we were of course busy working our way through college, but there was just a matter of giving all of them a chance to do a couple each. If you get to choose, you may as well make them count. The above-mentioned requirements are recommended for all applicants. Ask only those professions who know you well, in these letters will form an integral part of your evaluation, and you've felt the need. Since everyone sent a letter or two.

Offhand, I can't think of too many friends who know three professors well enough to get good recommendations without submitting lots of supplementary material. And if the letters are for a medical or law school, three is too few, unless, of course, you have no objections to asking them to write 35 letters each.

Most seniors I know know one or two professors well enough to have seen them just what might be written in a recommendation, but what if number three is a killer, or at least not much of a help. Often it's a choice between asking the guy you got an 'A' from last term, and the freshman advisor you haven't spoken to in two years (or three). It's not necessarily what little they know about you that'll hurt, it's what they don't have to say.

"Sen is quaint and unassuming to the expense, but becomes a brutally ambitious maniac when aroused." Great, huh?

But when you pile all the material together, seal up that envelope, and mail it in, it's a feeling matched only by feeling that envelope, and mail it in, it's a feeling matched only by total full assortment of letterheads the night before the morning after. Unfortunately, that's not all that's said to the story ends in. I'm going to hope that you'll at least try your best and send them a reminder, and so forth.

Around April 1 or so, you'll hear the good or bad news: acceptance, rejection, or wait list (agh!). Or maybe nothing at all. What do you do to your worst enemy: one month after he sends out his grad application, nothing, rejection, or waiting list (sigh!). Or maybe nothing. What to do to a brutally ambitious maniac when aroused. "Great, huh?"

by William Lasser

Exactly one year ago Jimmy Carter was a relatively unknown Georgia governor about to embark on the primary road in New Hampshire to seek the impossible: the presidency of the United States.

Thirty-three state primaries, the primary campaign, and the general election, Carter traveled around the nation, reaching out to millions of disillusioned Americans with a unique approach to Presidential politics - love, faith, compassion and openmindedness.

But most of all, Carter promised honesty, "I will never lie to you," he would say, and many believed. They trusted him because they wanted someone to trust, someone to make them forget Watergate and Vietnam, someone to heal the wounds of the last fifteen years.

Less than two weeks, Jimmy Carter will "solemnly swear to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." He will be the President, and it will be time for him to begin to deliver on the many promises he made in the heat of electoral battle.

He pledged to significantly reduce both unemployment and inflation. He called for sweeping reform of the federal bureaucracy and for national health insurance. He promised to balance the federal budget by the end of fiscal year 1978.

Based on his appointments to high government positions, there is little reason to think that Carter will keep his promises. He has selected a Cabinet not of youthful newcomers, but of holdovers from the Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford years. His top economic advisors are strikingly conservative. His designation of Griffin W. Bell as attorney general is not surprising.

Carter is not entirely at fault in his Cabinet selection. For, while he spoke at length during the campaign of being a political independent, beholden to no man, he has found that his success as President will depend on his relations with men of power and influence in the private sector.

He cannot eliminate ALEC-CIO President George Meany by appointment, or the Secretary of Labor, nor could he run the risk of allying himself with the liberal Secretary of the Treasury. Furthermore, Carter's choices were hampered by the necessity of paying back supporters for their help in the campaign, on both personal and group levels. Women and blacks, who voted in large numbers for the Democratic candidate, expected and deserved to be represented, and some early Carter advocates, such as Georgia Congressman Andrew Young, were rewarded with choice positions.

There is really nothing improper or objectionable in any of this, although the charges of "cronyism" have been made with respect to the appointments of Bell bring back terrible memories both sides. The Democrat and Watergate, Carter's method of Cabinet selection is not unusual; these are the ways of American politics. What is disturbing is that the President-elect told us that he would not play this traditional game.

Carter takes office in difficult times. The economic recovery has slowed, and openly action is called for. There are several potential problems that could arise from the presidency. The new President's ability to handle these crises will depend on the success of his efforts to finally scores of interests, his margin of victory was phenomenally narrow, and his current middle of the road approach to the nation's problems may be the only way for him to consolidate his support.

But these are all things which