

Battle of the Nickname: Beavers vs. Engineers

By Glenn Brownstein

Why are certain MIT athletic teams known as Engineers, some as Beavers, some as Techmen (which used to be the worst possible insult to an MIT student), some as nothing particular at all? In the past few years it has been the fashion to refer to all teams but baseball as the Engineers, simply because the outside world thinks of MIT as an engineering school and nothing else, probably.

However, we still get class rings called "Brass Rats" with a seedy, toothy, beaver pictured building his next dam. Beavers are the most engineer-like animal, we are told. Of course, recent events indicate that beaver dams have at least as much chance of weathering a storm as man-made ones. So why not change back to Beavers for all teams?



Baseball has remained the Beavers because in the past MIT squads were referred to as the Bonnie Beavers. During the spring of 1973 *The Tech* ran a series of Bonnie Beaver baseball cards, just like the bubble gum variety in every way, except for our cheaper paper stock.

As far as I'm concerned, we should either adopt one uniform name, Engineers or Beavers, or change it entirely.

Our school colors, cardinal and silver, lend themselves to a number of names — there's no reason to put equipment manager John Murphy through hell just for consistency. For example, how about the Silver Foxes or the Cardinals? Cardinals has one distinct advantage: it has none of the possible negative connotations that Foxes, Beavers, or Engineers have, and it necessitates no change of color. Some may argue that a class ring tradition will be shattered — imagine a "Brass Bird" — but if we continue to call MIT teams "Engineers," where's the little nurd punching his HP-45 on the ring face? One way to solve the problem: change our nickname to the Monkeys — it'd give our ring a new name and connotation.

We don't have to change our ring or our colors, but we need to be consistent. At the present time, the water polo, swimming, baseball, hockey, basketball, and lacrosse teams have decided that they want to be Beavers. Many of the women's teams do not want to be Engineers. Most of the other teams haven't been polled, and so they stay the Engineers. At least we don't have a perceived moral problem, like Stanford or Dartmouth.

Stanford used to be the Indians, but the depiction of a savage on football helmets and other game uniforms upset a sizable portion of the campus, so the California school switched to Cardinals, a name that is both innocent and preserves the school colors of cardinal and white. Dartmouth also had the name Indians (or "Big Green") until recently, but last year switched to "Woodsmen" as less offensive and still preserving the Northern New England mountain heritage.

To clear up this madness, I have a suggestion. As of today, *The Tech* will refer to the aforementioned teams as Beavers and welcome a response from other squads as to what they desire to be called. We'd like an answer from everyone, if possible: it's easier to write and read copy that employs more than one name for a team. The high school I attended used to refer to teams by their coaches' names: examples here would be Chasseymen, O'Brienmen, or Alessimen. My impression is to forget about a method like that as quickly as possible.

No we need one nickname, one that everyone likes. I personally like Beavers (or maybe Cardinals); a dancing beaver at courtside in the Cage might be a fun idea, but an eleven-foot-high programmable calculator just doesn't make the grade. Engineers only helps preserve the "Tech Tool" stereotype, and I think we should get rid of it — it hasn't been our official nickname for decades.

"e to the x du dx" is outdated: "slipstick, sliderule" has to be changed. So does Engineers. Teams and coaches, give us your verdict: should it be Beavers, Engineers, or something else?

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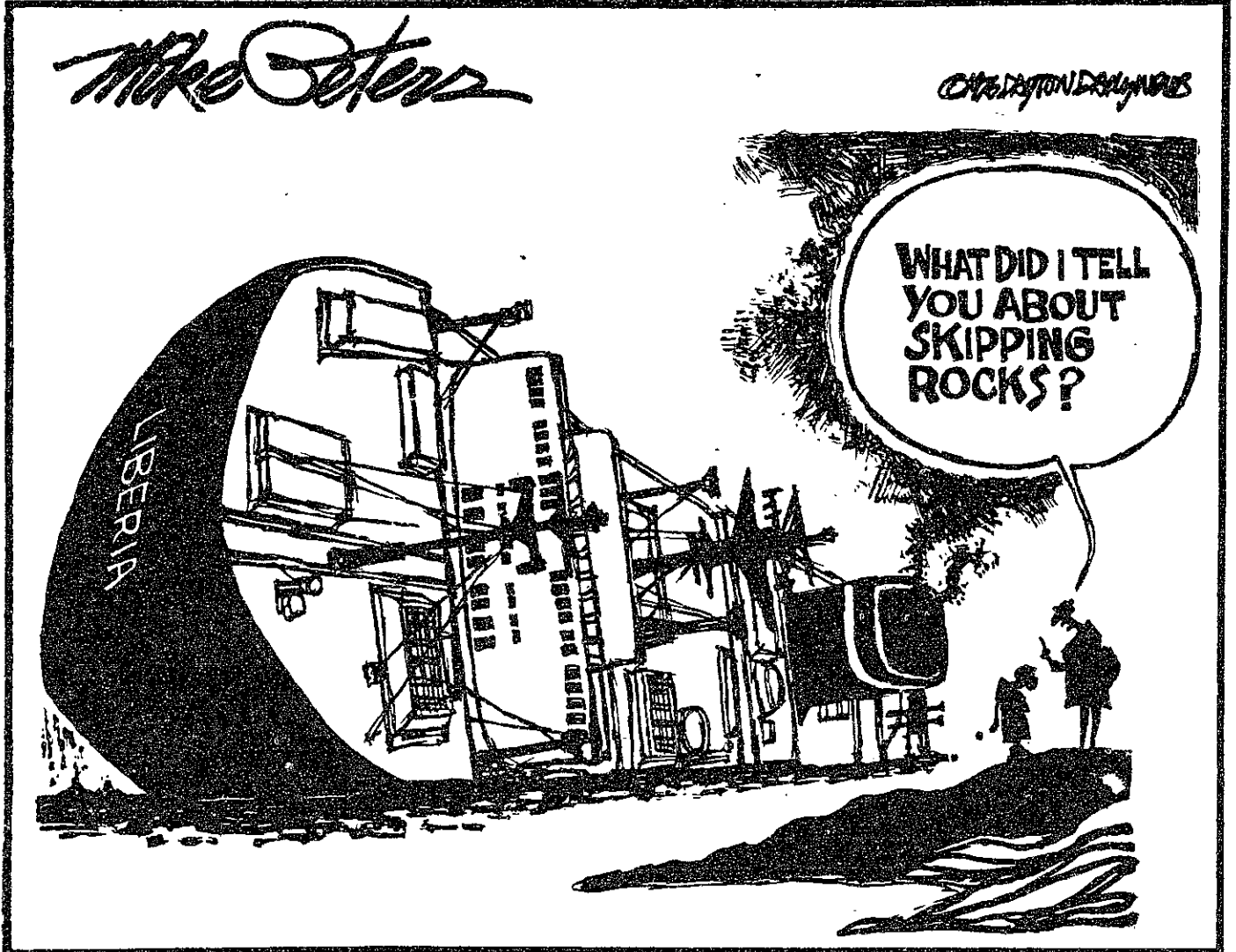
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Commentary

Inaugurations: clear optimism

By William Lasser

The new president is administered the oath of office, and immediately addresses his countrymen. He calls for "equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations..." The date is March 4, 1801, the speaker Thomas Jefferson.

More than 130 years later another newly-elected president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, boldly tells the American people that

Address is perhaps one of the most remembered. "With malice towards none," he said proudly, "with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds... to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." President Carter might well consider those words. Lincoln added, undoubtedly thinking about the bitter civil war which was still in progress, "The Almighty has His

There is nothing quite resembling a first inaugural address. The President is making his first official address to the nation; his words are no longer the rhetoric of the campaign, but rather Presidential statements of policy and philosophy. It will be interesting to see how Carter faces up to the challenge — whether his words reflect those of the campaign or whether they signal a new approach to the country's problems.

It is not necessary that Carter's speech contain material which will someday find its way into Bartlett's Familiar Quotations. Andrew Jackson, who in 1829 was the main attraction at the first "people's inaugural," said very little in taking office. The men and women attending the ceremonies — the "mob," as the Jeffersonians considered them — spoke for him by their mere presence. Jackson showed immediately that he was the first "president of the people."

President Carter's speech on Thursday may not differ significantly from the hundreds of stump speeches he made throughout the campaign. Even so, whatever he says now takes on a new meaning. His words are now entitled to rank not with those of candidates, but with those of Presidents.

The inauguration of an unknown Georgia peanut farmer speaks volumes about the nation, the South and the American political system as a whole. Perhaps, like Andrew Jackson, Carter will not spoil his moment in the sun with meaningless oratory.

political spectrum

"the only thing we have to fear is fear itself" and pledges to dedicate the nation "to the policy of being a good neighbor."

For nearly 200 years, American presidents have spoken to the people on their first day in office. Their speeches often set the tone of their administrations and of the nation. Presidents have addressed the nation in glorious times and in bleak ones, during war and peace, after winning landslide victories and after winning preciously narrow ones.

But always the message is one of hope and commitment. Inaugural addresses reflect the mood of the country; they show how we have grown and changed, but also how we have remained the same. In his first Inaugural Address, Jefferson warned of "entangling alliances"; in his fourth, Roosevelt asserted that "We have learned that we cannot live alone at peace... We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community." Nevertheless, throughout both speeches we can see the same vision of America, the same clear optimism.

"We are not enemies, but friends," said Abraham Lincoln in 1861, and his observation is well applied on Inauguration Day when Democrats and Republicans unite behind the man who will set the political, economic and emotional pulse of the nation for four years. "We are all Republicans — we are all Federalists," declared Jefferson, and, though the names and philosophies of the parties have changed, he is essentially still correct.

Lincoln's second Inaugural

own purposes."

President Kennedy observed that his election to the highest office in the land was "not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom, symbolizing an end as well as a beginning, signifying renewal as well as change." Kennedy was correct — the inauguration of a new President is a striking symbol that America's unique quadrennial political convulsion is over, and has worked. He concluded: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

Lyndon Baines Johnson, taking office during the trauma which fell upon the nation after Kennedy's assassination, told the Congress and the people that "All I have I would have given gladly not to be standing here today." Johnson's words summed up the national feeling of loss and despair. He asked the American people humbly for "your help, and God's."

feedback

A philistine art view

To The Editor:

For those just tuning in, Steven Shladover and I are locked in an altercation which, viewed in a larger context, is central to modern art criticism. It began with Mr. Shladover, who blasted Tech derogators of *Transparent Horizons* and *Reclining Figure* for their "ignorant" attitude, and who proceeded to indicate in two places that we local sculpture scorers were demonstrating a lack of understanding. Enter

myself. Like a poker player sensing a bluff, I asked Mr. Shladover if he would perform a public service and enlighten us philistines about the positive aspects of either TH or RF of which we were ignorant.

Mr. Shladover has now responded. Sort of. After attacking me for failure to spell out my antipathy for the sculptures (as though I should have furnished this information before it was

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