

News analysis

# Meals tax to be reconsidered

By Tim Buehrer

Ever since the decision by the Commissioner of Corporations and Taxations that the Massachusetts meals tax was applicable to college meal contracts, students and university administrators from across the state have brought pressure on the General Court to exempt such contracts from the tax.

Last year, such a bill was killed by the House leadership through an unprecedented change in the rules. This year, six such bills have been introduced into the

legislature, and, despite indications that the rules problems of last year will be avoided, chances for passage do not look bright.

The meals tax on students represents an income of \$8 million to the state, and with the new budget for this year breaking \$4 billion, the legislature will be reluctant to do anything which will reduce income.

The only chance students have to gain relief from this situation is to make themselves felt. On March 8, next Tuesday, there will be a hearing before the Com-

mittee on Taxation on the student-meals tax exemption bills for this session. A strong show of student and school administration support for this legislation would be the first step in what would have to be a concerted effort to lobby the legislature on this issue. It will require the development of strong and compelling arguments on the part of the students and the administration to counteract the economic reasons that the opponents of the bill will be wielding.

The question of equity, especially to persons living in fraternities, who pay all the taxes a normal resident pays, is the strongest argument at present. For the rest of the economy, food eaten in one's own home is not taxed because it is considered a necessity; students have this necessity taxed anyway. Armed with this and a strong show of unrest in the college community over the issue, something might be pushed through this session.

# Alumni will aid students

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family as an informal source of support or council. "Our target," said Brenner, "is to provide an alumni family for every freshman that would like one." The program initially included only transfer students, but was subsequently revised to include all freshmen.

"We wound up with a surplus of families," Brenner explained, attributing that surplus "possibly to inadequate publicity." Nancy Wheatley of the Alumni Association staff at MIT noted, "Actually, some freshmen had families

unbeknownst to anyone but themselves. We would like to publicize it."

Brenner and Hieken also emphasized the need for publicity, pointing to the enthusiasm of the alumni. "We want to involve as many alumni as we possibly can," said Brenner, "not merely the same old activists."

Hieken concluded, "we really like to work with students. We remember the days when we were students. We think it is important for students to know that they really become part of the alumni as soon as they enter MIT."

Very, very good, handsome, funny, and surprisingly touching.



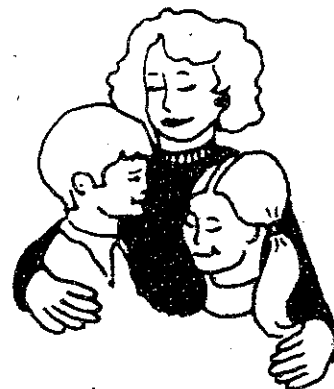
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