Four years in retrospect

Class of 1978: it's all history now

By David R. Kuretz

It began with an indoor freshman picnic almost 10 years ago, and it's ending with what may be MIT's last indoor Commencement.

In the 45 months between, the class of 1978 grew up at a time when more exciting events happened on campus than at any time since the beginning of the decade. These years have been called the "Conceived Seventies," and the class of 1978 has been better prepared for the world than possibly any other class in the Institute's history.

At the end of August, 1974, some 1,033 freshmen arrived on campus eager to have our eyes opened and perspectives broadened. Now on our way to becoming men and women of the world, we have learned much about such faraway places as Iran, Taiwan and South Africa.

Closer to home, we have been MIT's Physical Plant, putting in 13-hour days to get buildings of MIT for an event that has set up equipment in the carpenters' department Shop, the Paint Shop, and other parts of campus. Men from the Shade Planetary's Frank Press and Lincoln Lab's Gerald Dineen (but not Nuclear Engineering's Wiesner, by tradition), will present the names of the Class of 1978.

The first three students will receive degrees in the Institute's efforts to cut expenditures and balance its budget. TEV could not survive a lack of interest that set in shortly after the recession of 1970.

All has not been said, though. This year's seniors were around today for the opening of new homes for Draper Labs and the Chemical Engineering Department, a new dormitory (New House), another dormitory (Random Hall), a new old dormitory (Ball House), and new offices for the opening of new homes for the Service Employees International Union. (SEIU) went on strike against MIT; they were from MIT too, hoping to get some sympathy or a higher price.

Beware of the real world!

By Steven Kirsch

For many of you, this graduation marks a significant turning point in your life. Today you will say goodbye to academia, to flexible work hours, to being woken up at 8am by your neighbor's stereo, to waterfights, to IM sports, to sailing on the Charles, to the big glower, and more.

For today is the day you start looking for a job to pay back all your debts. Today you enter the real world. It's not a bad life out there. Unlike here, many people do survive the real world experience. Some survive better than others. Their secret? They're careful.

The used car rip-off

Two summers ago while on Co-op assignment at Bell Labs, I thought I was being careful when I purchased a used car from an MIT alumni for $800. He had a car, you see, and was in the market for a job. I saw the car, I noticed a brass rat on the door, and he said, "That rat's my mascot." I pointed out that we had bought a car a few years earlier, and it came with a brass rat on it.

"There's nothing like a brass rat," he said, "to keep the car running." I said I would be happy to buy the car, but I wanted to check it over before I bought it. He said he would be happy to let me look over the car. I thought I was being careful, but I was ripped off. I paid $800 for a car that was worth $500.

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