The winning design and...

2.70 Contest 1978
photo essay by Gordon R. Haff

It was about one o’clock last Thursday. The overflowing 26-100 crowd was on its feet. In front of the room, two contestants readied their machines for the final runoff—was using a catapult, the other a crawler. The area around the track bristled with photographers and officials dressed in referees’ uniforms.

Finally, the moment of truth arrived. Professor Woodie Flowers pressed the power switch and a green light ignited above the track. The catapult flew out and the crawler was unable to pull it back. John Dieken had won the 1978 2.70 contest.

The contest is the climax of the mechanical engineering department’s introduction to design course. This year nearly 175 students battled each other (or a beaver shaped placebo in the event an opponent didn’t show) on the 26-100 stage.

The 2.70 contest, both on stage and in the living groups where the “things” are assembled, is a show that few events can match. For days before the runoffs, many of the contestants sleep in short spurts while they ready their devices for the show. One student in an attempt to speed up his “five-minute” epoxy, placed his device in the oven on broil. When he opened the oven door a little later, the “thing” spontaneously burst into flames.

On stage, the audience was treated to last minute repairs in which the contestant attempted to dry glue with a lighter (in the semi-finals yet) and some rather spectacular failures. In short, it was a spectacular show.

The MIT Musical Theater Guild Presents
ZORBA
Fri. & Sat. Nov. 3, 4 10,11 8:00
Tickets $4.00/2.50 with MIT id
Sun. Nov. 5 3:00 Thurs. Nov. 9 8:00
Tickets $3.50/2.00 with MIT id
Kresge Auditorium 253-6294

Four inches over the line.