Ron Newman

thursday tragedy

Editor's note: Ron Newman was a news writer for Thursday from January 1977 to May 1978.

The MIT community lost an institution last week when the Undergraduate Associate Finance Board (FinBoard) announced the official liquidation and foreclosure of The Tech's principal competitor, Thursday VooDoo.

The official reason given was financial; Thursday VooDoo owed over $7,000 to MIT and seemed unable to pay any of it back. But, as an early editor of Thursday observed in the popular foreword of an even earlier edition of MIT's humor magazine VooDoo, "it should be kept in mind that if the magazine was to go out of business, the Institute, FinBoard, would be responsible for its debts anyway.

What was really in question was whether or not FinBoard would VooDoo to continue."

From the freshman's viewpoint, very little seems to have been lost. Since the "merger" of Thursday with a revived VooDoo last September (a merger that was between two publications had nearly identical technical staff and facilities), little of lasting interest has appeared in the pages of the "combined" publication. Especially in its few weeks, it has consisted largely of (1) exhortations to the student body to consume mind-altering drugs, and (2) boring, overflowing descriptions of events in and around Bucky Hall. The two topics have not always been clearly distinguishable.

But a newspaper is not often to fall from grace at once, and Thursday has not always been at its present low level of quality. Indeed, when Thursday was founded in April of 1969, it prided itself on being "professional journalism" to MIT, Thursday, according to its first editor, Jim Smith, was to be a paper whose journalists avoided "en-tangling the personal and professional life of the student body in its representational duties to the student government, a paper whose "editors should decide to be politicians or jour-noists, but not to be both simultaneously."

In the turbulent political climate of 1969, Thursday was proud to maintain such standards of disinterestedness, but Thursday continued for almost five years to present well-written, arguable editorials. The paper's staff, no longer channeled into effective political positions, was met with derision. It was no wonder that some Thursday staff members were turned against the student body itself in columns written by a few周四's name-in-print, and offending as many other people as possible.

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