A last look at the ‘Tute

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mal piece this was. Then I heard this “beep, beep” in back of me. Turning around and expecting to see the roadrunner, I was jerked back to reality by the sight of a short person running the center on a skateboard. He was garbed in grisy jeans and a torn shirt. On his head was a beanie adorned by a propeller. He was precariously balanced on his board by a stack of books in one arm and a huge calculator affixed to his belt. So MIT does have its anomalies, we all know that, but the fact is that most of us realize that our calculator is not a security blanket and we do not need ten digit accuracy in the everyday world.

We find anomalies everywhere; though, I can recall a hot summer day when I was playing frisbee in the Great Court. The frisbee landed close to the Moore sculpture, and as I went to retrieve it, I noticed a group of tourists photographing the sculpture. There was a pannicky middle-aged gentleman who was dressed in a flowered shirt, shorts, straw hat, black socks and sandals. He knelt in front of the sculpture, but before the picture could be taken, he had a brilliant idea. He reached into his lunch bag, grabbed a huge pickle, and stuck it in his ear. Then his wife interrupted, grabbed another pickle and stuck it in her ear. She posed with her chin on his head (both were still armed with pickles). A number of strange acts followed, but these people made the anomalies at MIT seem like the pay next door.

Indeed, we do not fear our own anomalies, we go our own way and let people go their own way. Like the incident in Electromagnetism II last semester. In the middle of a lecture, this fellow walks in wearing a pair of orange antlers. He sits down, then pulls out a two foot pencil and begins to make notes. About five minutes later he drops the pencil in disgust and takes his ball point pen out of his pocket. The lecturer did not miss a syllable. In general, people are serious here and there is no reason to ridicule someone for working on a computer until 5am when you know you will have to do it the following night. I guess all this has become part of us and in a short time will be over.

In a few weeks, Walker will sit empty and finals will be but a memory. For the first time in four years, the seniors will be caught up and we won’t even have another semester to think about. Each of us has made MIT as much of a college or an institution as we wanted. We leave with mixed feelings, but beneath it all is the subtle realization that we have worked hard and we have completed four years at one of the finest scientific and technical institutions in the world.