Spring is when...

Boston is not the place to attend college in the spring. Sometimes I think MIT should be relocated to a place more conducive to study — Alaska, perhaps. Whenever spring arrives, my appetite for work and I'd rather do anything but study. Boston has so many other attractions.

Harvard Square has changed since it fell into the clutches of the MBTA. The walk from MIT to Harvard hasn't, though. There are, of course, more Chinese restaurants, but then again, I always notice Chinese restaurants. Also, the derelicts seem to be more innocuous. Maybe that's because I recognize most of them.

The Esplanade reminds me of Charlie Chaplin movies. For most other people, it suggests images of Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops. I, however, remember a concert several years ago when I stood in front of a woman decorated by a Mee West hairstyle, pancake makeup, and pink pedal pushers. I saw her and wanted to laugh, but didn't because I was afraid I'd be arrested for disturbing the peace. The Esplanade is my favorite biking place, but bicyclists don't remind me of Charlie Chaplin. Pancake makeup does.

The line reappears in front of Steve's Ice Cream in the spring. During the winter, I never seem to make it past Toscanini's; they never opened last year, but maybe they'll get their own line this spring. But I still prefer Steve's. I think I like the mix of kids, or maybe it's the larger portions. Toscanini's has been operating under the same management for years. I particularlyhard hit by the economic and political storms ravaging higher education in this country.

The Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation has set an undergraduate tuition at $3700, a 17.6 percent increase. In addition, housing and food costs will rise by about 13 percent next year. Acquiring these whopping price hikes will be an even steeper increase in MIT's equity level, from $3400 to $4000. (The equity level, a self-help threshold that does not include expected summer earnings and parental support, must be provided by the student; though loans, term-time earnings, or other means.)

Unfortunately these figures tell only part of the story. The Reagent Administration's proposed 1983 budget cuts would further worsen the plight of the MIT student. If President Reagan had his way, aid to higher education would be slashed by $36 million dollars next year. His cuts would equal an important source of Federal aid to graduate students for the 1983-84 academic year. (GSL). Reagan proposes to make them ineligible for Guaranteed Student Loans (GSL). Such changes may not make much better — funding for grants would be reduced by about 75 percent, and eligibility requirements for the GSL program would be significantly decreased. The facts and figures may appear cold and distant, but they will dramatically affect students at the Institute, because MIT does not have resources to replace these Federal funds.

The skyrocketing cost of an MIT education and the Reagan Administration's budget cuts will combine to deliver a devastating double-barreled assault on the financial resources of the MIT student. All of us will be affected by these realities; the question is: will we stand by and watch our futures be destroyed in a crossfire of rising costs and decreasing financial aid? I hope not. Fortunately, as concerned students, we can have a major impact on the policies of both MIT and the Federal government.

The MIT General Assembly (GA) has initiated a letter-writing campaign to oppose the Reagan Administration's proposed cuts in funding for higher education. This kind of input is important to legislators — the New York Times quoted one Congressman as saying that it is easier to back the cause of students than of welfare recipients because the students "are speaking out, they are writing letters, they are coming to Washington." Concerned students should follow the GA's lead and write their Congressmen — it is well worth the effort.

Closer to home, the MIT Administration welcomes feedback on its policies. In the absence of student protest, it assumes that its decisions are gladly accepted. Many students gripe about Institute policies, but few take the time to voice their concerns to MIT. A letter written to Paul Gray or the Financial Aid Office would let MIT officials know how you really feel.

If the prospects of shrinking financial aid and runaway tuition, housing, and food costs do not bother you, you may be arguing in favor of the GSA's proposals. Ira and Shiva and Ayyadurai...