What makes this issue of Tool and Die worth reading are the cartoons by E. Bill ("Space Epic") Spitzak: This man is so obviously warped he need not try to be funny. His "Drug Dose Guide" is destined to become MIT's most popular tape-it-on-your-door material since "Bloom County" began appearing in The Boston Globe. It's nice to have something besides Ergo on campus to laugh at. Enough funny things happen on campus to provide Tool and Die with material to last many issues — let us hope they're clever enough to find them.

Tool and Die, MIT's Humor Magazine, volume one, number one.

"Once upon a time MIT had a lot of funny people. They put out a funny magazine called VooDoo for years and years. Other students did funny things like putting cows on the Big Dome, lining the Great Court with barber poles, and measuring the Harvard Bridge in Smoots."

Now it's 1983, and MIT has its first humor magazine since the death of the ill-fated Thursday/VooDoo merger in April 1979. Unlike its predecessors, however, such as the classic Whole Ground Catalog or the V/O Guide, the humor in Tool and Die is pedestrian to the extreme, and much of it is plagiarized, to boot.

A reading of the VooDoo archives will reveal that "Addendum: New Student Activities" has appeared before, in VooDoo's 1975 R/O Guide parody. A subtle plagiarist — if such a being exists — alters his material, but not the folks at Tool and Die, who choose, in their own words, to "copy material out of back issues of National Lampoon (and VooDoo) and pass it off as new material."

The blatant rip-offs only detract from the magazine's few genuinely witty pieces. The "MIT Purity Test," a parody of the Baker Purity Test, is both obvious and subtle; it should have been written years ago. A satire of Consumer Reports remains remarkably true to the tenor of the original publication, but therein lies its problem — dry magazines lead to forced parody.

New mag, old gag

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