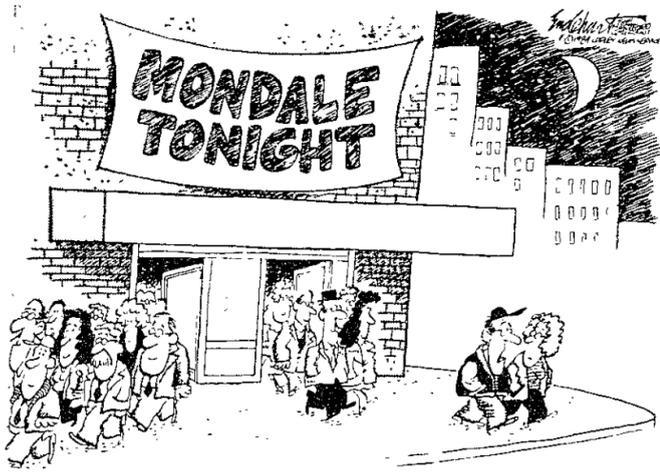


opinion

"I DON'T KNOW...
HE SEEMS SO
VICE PRESIDENTIAL"



feedback

Should MIT be exempt from law?

To the Editor:

MIT's recent request for an exemption from the state right-to-know law raises the issue of safety at MIT. MIT Student Pugwash, an organization concerned with the socially responsible applications of science and technology, hopes to promote discussion of safety at the Institute in an open forum to be held in the near future.

The right-to-know law, which became effective on September 26, gives employees the right to obtain information from their employer on the potential hazards posed by chemicals in the workplace. In the request for an exemption, MIT claims that the Institute safety practices and standards already exceed the protection offered by the right-to-know law. Thus, according to MIT officials, an exemption would relieve the Institute of the onerous bookkeeping required by the law, without sacrificing safety.

Student Pugwash would like to hear what the Institute community thinks about safety at MIT. Pugwash is concerned that MIT's request for exemption may not address certain potential safety problems. We would like to raise two issues for the MIT community to consider: the role of advisors in informing lab members of potential risks and insuring adequate safety education, and the significance of the hazards posed by chemicals which may have chronic or long term effects.

Safety information and advice is available at MIT from several offices, including the safety office and the environmental medical service. These offices do not have any "policing" function. The responsibility for informing lab workers and students of potential hazards in the lab, and for monitoring their procedures, falls predominately upon faculty advisors or principal investigators.

Do advisors take an active role in informing their students of potential hazards? Many advisors are seldom in the lab, and may therefore be unaware of their students' practices. Furthermore, if students have not received guidance from their advisors, or have disagreed with them on safety issues, they may be reluctant to air those problems, fearing that it could damage the student/advisor relationship.

One justification for the exemption is MIT's apparently excellent safety record. According to John M. Fresina, Director of the Safety Office, there have been only twelve serious accidents requiring student hospitalization in the last twenty years. Although this is certainly commendable, one might ask how many less serious accidents go unreported.

Also, there could be many instances where students or staff are exposed to hazardous levels of chemicals or radiation, knowingly or unknowingly, but do not require hospitalization. Such cases may go unreported because

the potential effects are uncertain or long term. This last issue raises the question of whether accident statistics are a meaningful measure of safety.

Student Pugwash would like to
(Please turn to page 9)

Likes pornography

(Continued from page 4)
to heighten their sexual awareness by seeing new and different sexual acts, situations, and roles and to analyze them from an objective point of view. I have seen pornographic movies with large and small groups of friends (both male and female), girlfriends, and alone, and all agree the experience was educational.

Pornographic films relieve me of suppressed sexual anxieties and free my mind for activities such as school work.

I feel that pornographic films are educational, enlightening, and enjoyable. I'm not asking anyone to adopt my opinion, nor am I saying that I am right and you are wrong. All I ask is for you to understand that I am right and you are wrong. All I ask is for you to understand and accept my opinion. I am not a criminal, nor a violent person. I have many friends who trust me, and have been told I am a fairly competent boyfriend by past girlfriends. As far as pornographic viewers at MIT are concerned, I am the rule, not the exception. I dare anyone in this community to tell me that I am any less moral than

they. Nobody has the right to dictate what is right or wrong as far as pornography goes. It is all opinion. It is a violation of my First Amendment rights to attempt to hinder my enjoyment of these movies. I respect and understand other persons' opinions and beliefs and I request only the same courtesy.

I believe the demand for pornographic films is quite high here, judging by the lines that precede them, and I believe that MIT should remain objective and allow students to choose their own entertainment. I thank the Lecture Series Committee for treating the students as mature adults, rather than as children at a summer camp, bringing mature themes to the screen and sparing me the risk of walking through the Combat Zone at night.

If you don't like porn films then don't go see them. Surely there must be some other activity you could think of during the one or two nights a term they are shown. Again, I feel very strongly on this issue and welcome the opportunity to confront opposing opinions.

Warren Jay Katz '86

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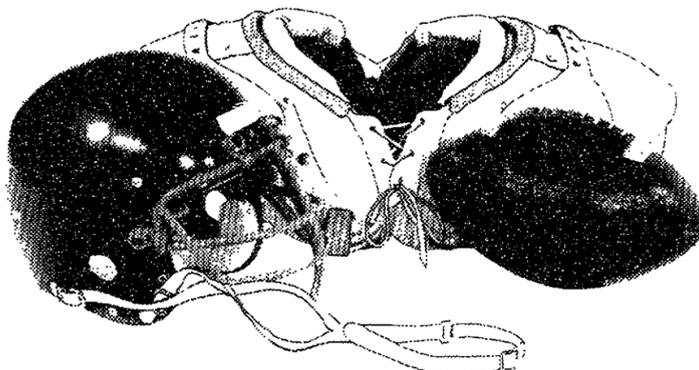
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