opinion

Guest Column/Harry A. Atwater

Are you a Yippie or a Yuppie?

This Sunday I heard a radio debate between Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin called "Are You a Yippie or a Yuppie?" Ruben said: If the acronym IRA makes you think of the Irish Republican Army, you're a yip- py. But if you think that IRA stands for Individual Retirement Accounts, then you're a yuppie. Why does a discussion of val- ues have relevance to this fresh- man? Because, as a graduate, he or she will have enormous eco- nomic power. But graduating stu- dents' goals are often more con- servative than those of freshmen, in part I think because MIT is a somewhat sobering experience. Virtually everyone who comes here there was a star in high school. Suddenly, many find themselves academically average for the first time.

Yet how many of us have thought of a career doing exactly what we want? How many of us have thought of creating our own jobs, which satisfy both our pro- fessional goals and our social concerns? How many of us have considered putting our technical expertise to work to address soci- ial problems in the government or non-profit organisations?

Many have thought of learning the elements of some- thing that's personally important, and using this knowledge as a consultant? Many of us have briefly considered one of these alter- natives, but have always found them incompatible with available opportuni- ties.

Finding the opportunities to do exactly what you want to do may be difficult but not impossible. It may require a little looking in different places. It will definitely require the belief that it can be done.

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Ruben countered that Rubin's "world is as narrow as his tie." He lamented that today's college campuses have become "boredom of social rest."

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