Oh, things make Joe so mad

To the Editor:

Annoyed!!!

Now that he's got that out of his system, maybe he can calm down enough so he can read this letter. Good, he gets so mad!

I am talking about The Tech's most exasperatingly uncultured columnist, Joe Shipman (stretch). Last Tuesday he wrote a column about hostile bus drivers, confused ticket clerks, incompetent benzeneasts. He must have seen all this, because then he's been really upset about it.

Or maybe he simply likes to get worked up.

What got my mind racing today was a relatively minor piece of complaining, but it was so characteristically paranoid that I couldn't take anymore and came over here to vent my spleen.

I wanted to see what was happening at the Union. I picked up the brand-new Tech where my eyes directed me to Joe Shipman's column. He wanted to take the #71 bus from Harvard Square; the bus was scheduled to leave at 2:20. At 2:23 he heard a rumble from the loudspeaker and made out the words "up the ramp." He went up to find that the #71 had just left from the upper ramp. The next one was scheduled for 50 minutes later.

There were no signs posted downtown or at the doors saying that the place of departure had been changed, and the (unintelligible) announcement was not made until the bus had already left. None of the employees at the station seemed having anything to do with the foul-up, nor could they provide the name of anyone responsible.

Well, Joe's plight almost gave me an ulcer when I remembered — nobody is responsible for anything, or anybody who is. The Universe has no complaint department, and all of the agencies listed in the phone book are just numbers without addresses. Whenever one of the numbers is called, it is answered by a machine, or, even worse, someone on charge.

People in charge might as well be finite-state machines themselves. They are not only incapable of handling a complaint or any standard request to make the world better but are also incapable of sufficiently improving your outlook so you can deal with it. At least an answering machine therapeutically takes down everything you have to say.

As I said before, nobody is responsible for your contents nor needs a Society to provide good excuses. Only accepting pressure will make you find those excuses. But what can be done?

One solution is to take people who are worked up and put them on a bench in Harvard Square, where they can forget about responsibilities and watch the passerby. Unfortunately it would be difficult to convince these individuals they can take off time to do this.

If the society were all powerful, we could blame its requirements for all our troubles. This remedy, though, might not lead to real improvements, since it wouldn't allow us to guide ourselves into a happy lifestyle.

Unfortunately, our only recourse is to become individuals. To make the most of this, we should concentrate enough heat on a single official (ourselves) that will be forced to do something — diffuse the illusion that we are required to follow rules.

So, are you tired of rude bus drivers? Do you get mad when there is no token clerk in a subway station late at night, and the revolving gate is busted, so you can't get in to take the train (but it eats your token anyway)? Have you had enough announced 20-minute delays getting to class, although there is no Penalty for being late?

Are you fed up with having the anxiety going by in your head while you wait half an hour for your subway, resulting in your getting exasperated and pouting a problem set?

Are you disgusted with a society where responsibilities are not only regularly imposed, but regularly (and in truth always) only accepted, forcing you to get needlessly uptight (if it's the last straw, to take it out on others)?

Then do something about it.

Hang out with a good book and listen to the wind for a while; or just read a copy of this letter.

Jeff Thompson '87

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