Use better reasoning before you call someone else an idiot

To the Editor:

I do not applaud the tendency of the American media to oversimplify and portray individuals as representatives of a larger group. The fact that some air time was devoted to the piety of an unalike child is not entirely inappropriate. Not all news concerns economic and global affairs. The story of a small town that tied together to save a single human life is one of aspiration and redemption. No, the economic status of the country does not depend upon the fate of Baby Jesus—but perhaps the ethical concerns of the American people were strengthened through an awareness of the incident. A more appropriate subject for Sherer’s attack would be the extensive media coverage of the Tommy Fay and James Baker scandals or the Joan Collins divorce settlement. This column provides yet another example of the cheapshot, attention-getting techniques used to market a product. How can Sherer be so smart and yet so historically naive?

Joanne DellaMorte

halted the Supreme Court’s order approving the expansion of MIT’s nuclear research structure. At the same time, the City Council approved the expansion of MIT’s site. Although MIT could have forced the homeless people to leave, they chose not to because they knew the trespass was not severe.

On the morning after the SSC protest, SSC members again went to the site. Several homeless people decided to stay. It was at this point that MIT no longer considered the trespassers “not severe.” Indeed, representatives of the Institute immediately stated that the homeless could not and would not be allowed to stay on the site indefinitely. And it was at this point that the Cambridge City Council began acting with the residents of Tent City.

The members of Tent City said that they just wanted a place to live. There were shelters for them to live in, but the shelters weren’t good enough because people who lived in them were treated “like kids.” They wanted food to eat, but the free meal kitchens weren’t good enough because they had to wait in line in order to get their food. Since the shelters and kitchens weren’t good enough, these industries, inextensive, and extremely creative homeless people decided to take over a piece of land that did not belong to them and to put forth the declaration that they deserved all that they wanted because, as citizens of the United States, they were guaranteed “life, liberty, and property.” These homeless people seem to have forgotten two very important and obvious things. First of all, “life, liberty, and property” is John Locke’s “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” And it is the United States Declaration of Independence, which, incidentally, has no legal weight in current law in the United States. Secondly, even accepting the phrase “life, liberty, and property,” the Tent City residents are entitled to ensure their own property, not to take (and abuse) the property of others.

The Cambridge City Council, too, seems to have forgotten something very important. The Council seems to have conveniently forgotten that the action of the Tent City residents was completely and unobtrusively legal. It is the task of the Cambridge City Council to enforce the laws and regulations of the City of Cambridge, and it is therefore not their job to support groups of people who break these laws as a means to achieve some ends.

If the homeless people of Tent City wish to protest the over-expansion of MIT they can picket the Institute, call themselves, or write to their Congressmen. They cannot, however, break the laws to which they are bound because the citizens of a country in whose rights they would like to share. If the homeless people of Tent City wish to go to the root of the over-expansion problem perhaps they should start with the Cambridge City Council, which has the power to enforce the laws of the land over the years. MIT has not acted innately in this situation, nor has it failed to take into consideration the claims of the homeless. MIT has, instead, merely been protecting itself and enforcing the laws of Cambridge which the Cambridge City Council itself has the power to enforce. The homeless of Tent City are not at a loss for places to go, and therefore, MIT’s actions were neither cruel nor wrong.

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