Jurors have important duty

(Continued from page 4)

Suffice it to say it involved a fatal accident between a bike rider and a large vehicle. The cause of the ride was using the driver's.

For how much, you ask? I was more than a little surprised when we in the jury were never told how much the plaintiffs were seeking. "Compensation for the loss of the rider's reasonably expected lifetime net salary and the loss of companionship and aid of the ride," that was our only guideline.

At first, it seemed like I was the only one who wanted to be there. We did listen to all of the evidence very carefully, but in our own room we couldn't help but make jokes. We made jokes about Twelve Angry Men. We made jokes about our "field trip" out to see the site of the accident, jokes about the cafeteria, and jokes about the judge's manner of speaking to the lawyers.

We especially made jokes about the lawyer who didn't understand radius of curvature and repeatedly asked the expert witness (an MIT alum) which point on the curve was the center of curvature.

But as the trial went on, it became harder to make jokes. Several weeks on the stand, assessing the entire force of law and deciding what the just resolution should be. It sounds strange to say now, but in that jury room we were the law of the United States of America. You remember the bit about "the Judicial Branch interprets the law"? Well that wasn't the Supreme Court, or some wise old judge. We were the Judicial Branch. Just twelve ordinary people who had been selected by random chance to come into the Courthouse early Monday morning.

The foreman of the jury summed it up best: "I have learned more about civics these four days than I ever learned in any classroom." Or anywhere else, for that matter.

Michael J. Garrison, a graduate student in the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics, is a senior editor of The Tech.

Keep in touch with the ’Tute...

Send me home.

US Mail Subscription Rates
1st Class: □ 2 years $86 □ 1 year $44
3rd Class: □ 2 years $32 □ 1 year $17

Foreign Subscription Rates
Canada/Mexico (air mail): □ 1 year $49
Overseas (surface mail): □ 1 year $49

Prepayment Required □ New □ Renewal

Name: __________________________
Address: _______________________

The Tech
P.O. Box 29
M.I.T Branch
Cambridge, MA 02139

Zeta Psi Fraternity
The Shakespeare Ensemble
at MIT
welcomes the
Class of 1992
and extends an open invitation to drop by our booth at the Activities Midway

Friday night Rush activities
Traditional Steak and Lobster dinner followed by our 1st Annual Car Bash

The Tech