

Members of the "Department of Bran & Cognizant Sciences" and the Alumni Association's own Robert Dimmick, AKA Louis XIV, were among some 500 members of the MIT community whose imaginative attire contributed to the 1993 Ig Nobel prize ceremony.

of three firms: Management Decisions, Management Science for Health, and John Snow, Inc., (the latter two specialize in health and family planning). Recently, Urban founded Marketing Technology Interface, a company using multimedia computing to support new-product design. His academic papers have won him numerous awards, including two O'Dells, which are given for the best papers published in marketing research.

MIT President Charles Vest commented that the Sloan School's "combination of discovery of management principles and teaching of business leadership skills is on target at this time of international economic and technological change. Glen Urban is the right person to be at the helm." Early into his tenure in the dean's office, Urban explained that his focus will be an international one, stressing entrepreneurship, product design, and the creation of stronger bridges between business and engineering activities.

Following a year's sabbatical, outgoing dean Lester Thurow, a high-profile author and commentator on international management and economics, will return to teaching and research at Sloan. □

## From the Sublime to the Ridiculous

The campus experienced the full range of scientific "honors" in October, all the way from a Nobel Prize to the opposite end of the spectrum. In a crowd-pleasing ceremony that filled Kresge Auditorium, the coveted 1993 Ig Nobel Prize for "Visionary Technology" was awarded to Jay Schiffman of Farmington Hills, Mich., for his invention of AutoVision, a revolutionary image-projection device that makes it possible to drive a car and watch television at the same time. The device consists of a two-inch mirror attached to the

windshield in front of the driver's face and a hidden television set, and opens up new possibilities for high-speed distance learning, as well as a new generation of ultra-realistic video games.

The prize was one of 11 presented at the Third First Annual Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony, sponsored by the pseudo-scientific *Journal of Irreproducible Results* and the MIT Museum (levity department.) The prizes seek to honor "individuals whose achievements cannot or should not be reproduced."

Schiffman shared his prize with the Michigan State Legislature, whose House Bill 4530, Public Act #55, legalizing the use of AutoVision in the state, was signed into law by the governor on June 6, 1991. The inventor turned down an invitation to accept the award in person. "I'm not coming to your ceremony," Schiffman reportedly told Ig

Nobel officials, with a flash of insight. "I don't see how this would help my company."

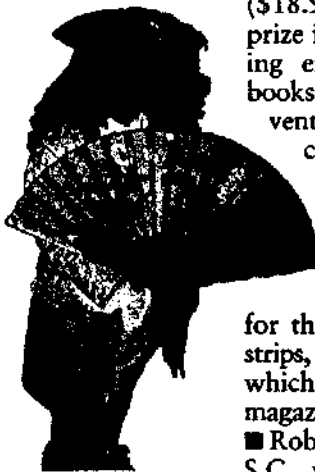
Others receiving the ignominious prizes include:

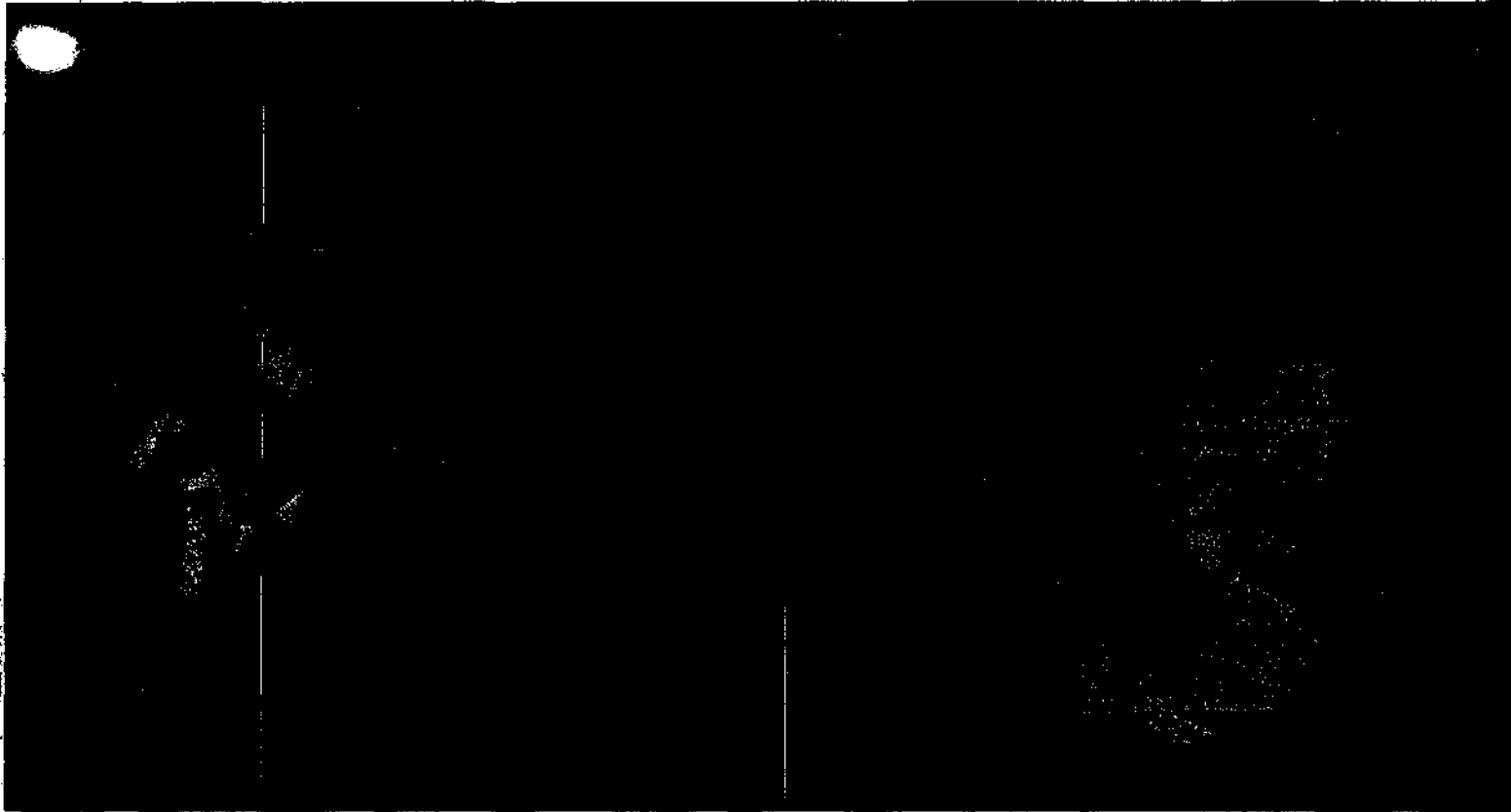
■ Ravi Batra of Southern Methodist University, best-selling author of *The Great Depression of 1990* (\$17.95) and *Surviving the Great Depression of 1990*

(\$18.95), who received the prize in economics "for selling enough copies of his books to single-handedly prevent worldwide economic collapse."

■ James Campbell and Gaines Campbell of Lookout Mountain, Tenn., who received the prize in chemistry for their invention of scent strips, "the odious method by which perfume is applied to magazine pages."

■ Robert Faid of Greenville, S.C., who won the prize in





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mathematics for his ground-breaking work "calculating the exact odds that Mikhail Gorbachev is the Antichrist (8,606,091,751,882:1)." (Faid's complete calculation is contained in the book *Gorbachev! Has the Real Antichrist Come?* published by Victory House, Tulsa, Okla.)

The occasion, which had the distinct atmosphere of a Halloween pageant, was graced by the presence of the King and Queen of Swedish Meatballs, Russell Johnson (professor emeritus, Gilligan's Island), and three genuine Nobel Laureates drawn from the ranks of Harvard University. (The Nobel laureates on MIT's faculty were invited, but all had other commitments.)

"Over the years, many people have asked me, if I was smart enough to make a radio out of a coconut, how come I wasn't smart enough to get us off the

island," remarked Johnson, (AKA "the professor"), who gave one of seven 30-second Heisenberg Certainty Lectures. "Well, as you know, one of my degrees was from this institution [MIT], which explains why I was smart enough to make a radio out of a coconut, but wasn't smart enough to get us off the island."

The festivities were marred by protests from the Proton Liberation Organization, who believed that the proposed Superconducting Super Collider would have resulted in the murder of millions of innocent subatomic particles, and MADWWIT (Mothers Against Driving While Watching Television), who painted a terrifying picture of irresponsible motorists barreling down on pedestrians at 60 miles per hour while watching Beavis and Butt-head. □

—Simson L. Garfinkel, '87



*In the July issue of Technology Review, we blundered: in writing the caption for a photo including Louisa Ho, '81, SM '82 (civil engineering and transportation studies, respectively) and her husband, Carl Van Dyke, SM '81, which accompanied an article on a gathering of transportation professionals (page MIT 4), we omitted Louisa's MIT degrees. We also neglected to mention that she is the director of operations, eastern region, for New Jersey Transit Bus Operations. We're very sorry.*