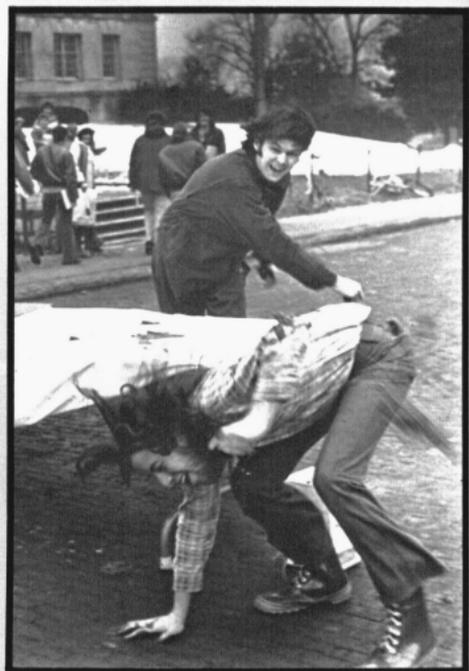




After the campaign, it was down to business for Garth Bare and Bob Seigel (right). Here they meet with Dave Roloff on student activities.

Murray Goodish/Maneater

For the
Birthday Boys
 The Party's Over



Murray Goodish/Maneater
 When the Birthday Party challenged its opponents to a genuine "mud slinging," opponent Dale Fannin came ready to debate with Seigel.

GARTH BARE WILL BE ON DISCIPLINARY PROBATION until February. Trying to spruce up a dormitory room that features a man-made, dangling naked light bulb ("It's really classy looking.") and recently added paneling ("Nobody told me I couldn't."), Bare converted his shower into a swimming pool.

"It broke," he says wistfully — more chagrined about the lost pool than the probation.

These days, Bare's getting attention from more people than just his dorm's head resident and student affairs' personnel. There's much of the student body, too. Running almost simultaneously with that probation is Bare's term as Missouri Students Association president.

Just as California's Proposition 13 sent ripples of anxiety through the political establishment, Mizzou students turned out in record numbers last February to reject more conventional candidates in favor of Bare and Bob Seigel, his vice presidential running mate.

They were Mizzou's Birthday Party, zany campaigners on a "joke slate" that turned to serious issues only in the race's waning days. "I decided that if I was going to be a candidate," Bare recalls, "I couldn't go straight. I had no experience. No one knew me.

"So I ran on the qualification I did have: total ignorance. A lot of people have a profound ignorance of MSA. I did strike a responsive chord."

Taking a cue from a similar University of Wisconsin episode, Bare and Seigel banded both platform and presentation to set the Campus on its ear. Bare dressed as Mr. Clown for his maiden speech to the MSA Senate. An innocuous-looking, 20-year-old chemical engineering major, he spoke to Campus groups in a straitjacket.

Seigel, a hirsute 22-year-old sociology major, often accompanied Bare in a three-piece suit, jabbing fun at the "junior politicians" who dominated MSA's landscape.

Endorsed by Cleveland's embattled Mayor Dennis Kucinich, the duo advocated renaming the University of Missouri-Columbia as the University of Rhode Island. "We wanted to give students a chance to attend a prestigious Eastern school for the price of in-state 'incidental fees,'" Bare says.

Faurot Field would be flooded to stage mock naval battles. The Birthday Party proposed knocking all the books in Ellis Library into the middle of the floor, Bare says, "so they'd be easier to find." The ticket wanted Chancellor Barbara Uehling to move into a trailer, so students could use her office as a party room.

EVENTUALLY TURNING SERIOUS, they proposed a reorganization of student health services and a greater role for black students on Campus.

Despite "too few preconceived answers" from the Birthday Party, the *Maneater* endorsed the team "after enduring years of bureaucracy and junior politics" in MSA.

The mood on Campus was clear, and MSA regulars were

relieved as the February 21 election approached — disbelieving as the returns came in that night. "They saw Armageddon coming," says Austin Ruse, MSA vice president for the past year.

"Garth and Bob were the two horsemen of the Apocalypse." MSA veterans "saw the Birthday Party as their antithesis. They said it would destroy student government, and student government would destroy it."

Granted, the victors wanted to shake up the establishment. The MSA "bureaucracy . . . was bad because it intimidates a lot of students," Bare says. "MSA was seen as a clique unto itself. That's the way I felt."

Seigel contends MSA veterans "don't realize it's MSA. The president and vice president are not the president and vice president of the United States. It's not the most important thing in the world."

Ruse "frankly got a kick" out of Birthday Party's irreverence. "Nobody takes us as seriously as we do," he says.

Of 7,549 students voting, 47.4 percent agreed, giving Bare and Seigel an overwhelming victory over two rival slates. The turnout almost doubled usual voting in MSA presidential elections.

Sundry reasons, other than shaking up the MSA establishment, spawned the Birthday Party candidacy just before the deadline for filing nominating petitions. Encouraging the voter turnout. Getting more women.

Bare glibly suggests he ran because "it looks good on my resume. I'm told that I'll get a higher paying job if I go into management." He could be serious, considering he settled on a chemical engineering career because of the purported pay scale.

Bare initially recruited a female running mate, but dropped her because as a freshman she was ineligible.

He finally settled on Seigel, who lived in the same dormitory. "Our Johns had always connected. We were friends,

Seigel and Bare met their opponents and addressed the issues at campaign's kick off, the Arts and Science Candidate Forum. The Birthday Party was escorted by its own "not-so-secret service."



Murray Koodsh/Maneater

I guess, but we never did anything together," Bare says.

Seigel, who "didn't know what I was getting into," brought no political credentials to the ticket and didn't care. "I'm in this more from the counseling, social aspect than the political aspect. When the day comes when I think I'm selling out, I'll quit."

What binds the two are a native intelligence and disarming frankness apparent to even the casual observer. "There are no pretensions," says Shaila Aery, Chancellor Uehling's special assistant who meets regularly with the MSA execs.

"It's refreshing in a way. When they don't know something or understand something, they just say so. It's not the way it was with Doug Liljegen, the former MSA president who brought years of student government work to the job.

"Dealing with Doug sometimes was like dealing with another Jesse Hall administrator."

Looks are deceiving with the new MSA officers. Says the relatively close-clipped Bare: "Bob is the straight half. He just looks wild, like a drug addict. I'm the alcoholic." In fact, as Bare tells it, his background is suited better for the erstwhile swimming-pool builder than president of a 23,000-member student body.

"In high school, I was always getting sent to the principal. It was not really disciplinary stuff. I just raised hell."

Like when he nailed a chicken over rival Raytown South High School's cardinal mascot at a football stadium. Or when he covered the top two floors of his Raytown High School building with a 16-by-40 foot, wooden sign that said, "No vacancy, Class of '77."

Despite stretches of droll humor, Bare's less given to works than action, as his pranks attest. Adds Seigel: "When Garth does say something, it's like E.F. Hutton: everybody listens. Now radical ideas, that's my alley. I'm not afraid to make waves or butt heads with people."

He recalls one incident in which he pointedly disagreed with Uehling as administrators around the room sucked in their collective breath. "Everybody's so afraid of her. I'm not afraid to tell her that her idea's wrong and why."

THE SPONTANEOUS AND EFFUSIVE SEIGEL, in fact, has a history of going his own way, even at Parkway North High School in St. Louis. "I had very few friends — I guess I still do. I had long hair and a 4.0 grade average "and I didn't do drugs. The freaks hated me. If you had long hair there, you'd better flunk."

"And I got along well with teachers — students resented that — except for the basketball coach. But he said I had to cut my hair. I wouldn't, and I got kicked off the team."

Seigel has one regret: passing up a full-time guitar-playing job on a now well-known jazz group and coming to Mizzou. "I decided education came first. I wish like hell I hadn't. I just feel I'm wasting my time in college."

Not that Seigel's anti-intellectual. He's writing a kind

of "counter-textbook" on institutional structures and "life philosophies."

But those projects were put on the backburner during the first month Seigel and Bare spent in office. MSA is now a half-million-dollar annual business, and by cruel design or cruel fate, budget setting comes immediately after the elections.

Buoyed by six years around accounting and statistics, Seigel took special interest in the budget. He's none too pleased with what the senate finally approved. Next year, MSA's budget expands because of a student fee hike, but Seigel says the senate got carried away in "a giving mood."

FOR THE FIRST TIME several Campus organizations coaxed funding from the senate this spring.

"Sure we've got \$55,000 more next year," Seigel says, "but our fixed costs are up \$16,000. We've really got only \$23,000 more for outside organizations."

He ticks off the new groups getting money — the soccer club (including \$540 for soccer balls), the rodeo club, the women's law caucus

Sounding more like the hard-nosed administrator, Seigel comments: "Sure, a lot of them had legitimate needs and concerns. But next year, 60 to 70 percent of these organizations cannot be funded. We've got a shrinking enrollment and inflation is piling up costs for our regular programs."

Budget sessions were the first extended contact of Bare and Seigel with the "junior politicians" they so soundly scolded during the campaign.

After the first month in office, the *Maneater* was not impressed. "To date they have not justified their election," said the lead editorial. "They have repeated the tasks of previous executives and brought forth nothing new, nothing to recapture the spark and flair of the campaign. But the paper also noted, "Their failure to date stems not from lack of good intent or depletion of sincerity. Rather, Bare and Seigel have discovered the reality of MSA: a million forms to complete and countless minor headaches."

Bare says the tensions have eased. "I didn't know how much support I would get out of Read Hall," MSA's headquarters. "But most of the people up here have given me a chance. They see I'm putting in a lot of time."

Like Bare, Seigel sees light at the end of the tunnel in their reception among MSA standbys. He notes that several senate proposals that would have curbed the MSA executive powers were defeated.

Both Bare and Seigel plan to spend the summer in Columbia "catching up We'll be hiring a legal educator," said Bare, who also plans to be on the search committee for other executive posts. But the pair have not forgotten that they were elected as the Birthday Party.

Bare has been working on renting a passenger balloon, and Seigel said he planned to attach an executive rope to his second floor window in Read Hall for "fast getaways." □