Alarms fail to warn of fire

By Barb Moore

If almost any building at MIT caught fire, most people in it would not evacuate. Several years ago, this could have been attributed to the fact that many alarm systems worked inconsistently, if at all. Recently, though, most dorms and Institute buildings have new or remodeled fire alarms installed.

Previously, the dormitory fire alarm could be set off or broken by impact, smoke, or moisture in the systems. In 1966-'67, the fire alarms in Baker House did not sound when tested, which spurred an overall remodeling of the dorm alarm system. The new systems are not affected by stray hockey pucks, and incompetent uncyclists, as were the last ones.

Mrs. Lutman-Johnson, house manager of Francis Hall, stated that, in the past, she has not been awakened by the alarms. She fears that in a fire situation, many residents would sleep through the alarm. She "would like to see something done" to improve this situation.

Testing of these so-called "dead spots" is now being conducted in Bursan Houses. When remodeled last summer, a totally new system was installed there. As in any sizable building, there are spots which are inadequately covered by the alarms. Through the recent testing these spots will hopefully be found and alarm volumes adjusted.

Many people, even if the alarm was not considered fake, would not evacuate. The student officer manager, Mr. Connor Moran, agreed with the possibility that the alarms would not be recognized as fire alarms, if sounded in the student center. Last spring, when an alarm was activated in the center, members of The Tech staff could not distinguish it as a fire alarm, backing this theory. Fire drills are not conducted in the student center, which could help alert people to the fire system. These drills and testing of remodeled "dead spots" in the center would be beneficial, noted Moran.

Another problem common to MIT is false alarms. Professor Jim Bruce, house-master of Burton House, stated that there have been three false alarms in Burton since the beginning of the term. Also, the alarms were once activated by a fault in the system. The causes of these alarms were water in the pipes. McConvick Hall has not had any problems this year, and generally the false alarm situation has improved. False alarms costs the Cambridge Fire Department approximately $500.

The implications are that testing of the systems is needed, to determine potency covered areas, and that fire drills would help the awareness of the MIT community of this problem. One proposed reason for the general discontent in fire alarms is that the residents believe that the dorms are well fire-proofed or do not consider the possibility of a real fire. With continued concern and attention, effective alarms and reactions to alarms can be achieved.

Bust recovered from locker

The following poem led Campus Patrol to the recovery of a statue of Francis Walker (pictured below) which disappeared from Walker Memorial a week ago last Friday. When the bust disappeared, a poem was handed in to the Campus Patrol. The Campus Patrol then went to Logan Airport with the key and found the bust there in a locker. The poem states: If you wish a Walker bust, Go to a place where visitors fly. And where family fares are not so high. A vaulted wall soon must you find. For Walker'll be lost in one day's time. A new life he leads, one of shine and gleam. Ready to face the harsh and extreme. Across the world he is known as a Brother. For we shall claim him and no other. Our friend's duties, be not your nerves. He's in good hands; namely, Ambassador Service. Therefore, Render unto him your Keepers of Order, For they will serve well as his stately porter, To return him home from his locker. And assure a Memorial to Mr. Walker.

Admissions suggests student school visits

By Storm Kaufman

The admissions office is encouraging MIT students to return to their high schools over Christmas vacation and promote interest in the Institute. College Registrar John "Tom" Assistant Director of Admissions, told The Tech that the office is reorganizing, and it is hoped that the student visits can become an important part of the admissions process. The new system assigns a permanent representative responsibility to each officer. The individual is then expected to become familiar with the school in his or her area. Blooomquist said that becoming acquainted with MIT students from each area could also add much to the admissions office.

The old system was somewhat haphazard, officers handling cases as they came in. Now, they should be able to deal on a level of familiarity with schools in their personal areas.

The student role in this process would be a visit to their high school sometime during the Christmas vacation or IAP. The idea is to return to the school and talk informally about MIT, trying to maintain a more sincere picture than do the college guides.

For students who are unsure of what they should do or unable about discussing MIT, the admissions office staff has reserved from 2-4 pm on Thursday of the week before IAP, the staff will try to talk out any concerns the students may have.

The office will provide introductory admissions material if the students wish to have their schools to their schools. If any student is asked a question which totally stump him, he can always take the name and address of the inquirer and refer the question to an admissions officer when he returns from vacation.

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