Cooking without a stove

By Pat Thompson

Even from a grilled cheese sandwich? Do you find that fits of cooking force you to miss our fine Dining Services food? Terry Fisher, a first year graduate student in the Department of Nutrition and Food Science, may have written the book for you. Her book, The International Students' Guide to Cooking (Micheal Coghill, Ashley Books, $4.95), details methods for cooking in many dorms throughout the country which allow few tools more than an iron, a hotpot, and some pots and pans. Often, no hot plates or broiler ovens are permitted in college housing.

The guide includes such procedures as open sandwiches and steaks wrapped in foil, cooking bread by steaming it on top of a hot pot, and using a thermos to store food.

Idea for the book grew while Fisher was an undergraduate at the University in Charlottesville. She explains, in the introduction, how she came to write the book.

"Our dorms had very strict cooking rules. We were allowed to have hot plates, toasters, or portable broiler ovens. We were allowed to have hot pots (which held water) but we could only use them for coffee or tea. (Later we were allowed popcorn poppers, but only for popcorn.) Of course, most of us stretched that rule and we boiled water for instant oatmeal, Cup-a-Soup, and boiled eggs. Quite soon, I became tired of these meals (Who wouldn't?), but since I was trying to save money, I refused to spend it eating out."

College credit also motivated her. She told The Tech, "I graduated in three years and my credits were getting kind of light. So I wanted to get everything I could. I heard that you could write up a proposal for an independent project and get credit for it, so I decided to do it up and see how I could do...I did that and gave it to my [project advisor] and he looked at it and he said it doesn't look like it's going to be good enough."

"I took it back home, rewrote the whole proposal and said I tried to get it published and added all this stuff to make it sound good."

Then, he said, 'Well, all right,' but he was really not very pleased about it.

"I wrote it and I didn't [mechanistically] get it published. I didn't expect to — I never expected to get it published — it was just kind of freaky."

For the project Fisher received the from the University of Virginia the equivalent of six MIT units.

At the Institute, where kitchen facilities are readily accessible in many dorms and hot plates and toaster ovens allowed in all others, the book will have dubious reception.

However, Cambridge health inspection enforces a ban on cooking in MIT dormitories (see story, p. 7). Fisher's tips may come in handy.

Fisher plans to complete her graduate work and study to become a family practitioner, perhaps pursuing a PhD in Nutrition and Food Science much later.