Vapor cloud causes evacuation

By Stephanie Pollack

The release of poisonous vapors from a train carrying phosphorous trichloride yesterday morning forced the temporary evacuation of over 17,000 people in Somerville and part of Cambridge in an area coming within blocks of the MIT campus.

In addition, precautions were taken on the east side of campus, according to Safety Office Director John Fresina. Windows were closed and air circulation systems were shut down in Eastgate, the Sloan School and other east campus buildings, and residents of East Campus and Senior House were asked to close their windows. Fresina noted that these steps were only precautions, because in the event of trouble "it would have helped if obvious things were done."

The train was struck by a yard engine in the Somerville yard on Washington Street at about 9 a.m. The phosphorous trichloride, which forms hydrochloric acid when combined with water, spilled out an emergency valve in the tank car. The first evacuation involved people in a 3/4 mile area about 10 times more than the area of one of the boundaries being Main Street in Cambridge, near Kendall Square.

According to MIT Vice President Constantine B. Simonides, MIT officials found out about the vapor cloud at about 11 a.m. and monitored the situation all day. Simonides viewed the event from the start as a "potential hazard" and expected it to remain a "serious" and "hazardous" situation all day. Simonides agreed that "the most difficult period was right at first." Alberty, who is Chairman of the Health and Safety, felt that "by twelve it was evident that it was not going to be a crisis." Monitoring of the situation by both the Safety Office and the Campus Patrol continued throughout the day, however.

Early in the day it was rumored that MIT might have to be evacuated. Simonides said that this possibility was quickly ruled out. The Cambridge Police were contacted, and it was agreed that it would not be wise in light of the many problems it would cause.

Word of the toxic gas was spread on the MIT Cable System and Snow Hotline. A recorded message put on the Snow Hotline shortly after 11 a.m. stated that "it is not expected that the cloud will be a hazard to the campus." All of the academic departments were informed through the Emergency Communications Group, and plans were made to inform dormitory residents, if necessary. The School of Science, the School of Engineering, and the Campus Patrol were considering allowing the evacuees to return to their homes.

By Richard Salt

Acting on a complaint by Undergraduate Association President (UAP) Jon Hakala '81 the General Assembly (GA) went into emergency session last night to discuss election procedures. They then passed a resolution giving all candidates until 4 p.m. Monday to turn in the missing statements or resume.

Arnold Contraras '83 chaired the GA meeting and the emergency session following his white-ballot election as GA Floor Leader. Under the new GA by-laws, any new business not appearing on the agenda may only be discussed at an emergency session. The GA must approve by a two-thirds majority to go into emergency session.

Speaking from the floor, Hakala "banged" the GA to go into emergency session. He said that his picture were not to appear, "it would probably destroy my visibility as a UAP candidate."

Floor Leader chairs the GA for four weeks prior to UAP/UAVP elections, and may not run for either office.

Four candidates had not turned in their statements by Wednesday's 4 p.m. deadline. GA Secretary General and election commissioner Steve Forman '80 contacted each of the candidates and informed them they had half an hour to turn in the missing material. After additional discussion, Hakala was given an extension to go to Harvard Square and retrieve his statement from a printer.

The statement of Hakala and David Lingebach '83 was received by Forman after right.

Forman then ruled that their statement and picture would not appear at the voting booth.

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The GA also passed a resolution opposing the doctoral shift being considered by the administration. The resolution stated that the GA will "fight within reason" any attempt to move dormitory residents without their knowledge or approval.

The GA also passed a resolution putting on the general election ballot as a referendum.

Contactors urged the Steering Committee members, as members of the various standing committees of the GA, to in turn use their influence and committees to fight the shift however possible. Short before, John Alam '82, Kenneth Hall '81, and Doug Klender '81 were elected as the GA large Steering Committe members.

By Steven Goldberg

The Coop will offer students and faculty an alternative gown and cap in addition to the one traditionally purchased from the Coop and Leonard Co., according to Coop General Manager James Argeros.

Coop and Leonard is the target of a nationwide boycott being organized by the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in support of union workers who have been on strike there since August. The firm also faces charges of unfair labor prac- tices before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Argeros and gowns manufactured by Mcmillan- Ward were being offered in response to the requests on the part of the people we serve. Groups of students, faculty and others have expressed an interest in something other than Coop and Leonard gowns.

The McMillan gowns will cost about 130 more than the Coop and Leonard product and will need to be ordered by students and faculty by mid-April. The order for Coop and Leonard gowns is due near the end of April.

Argeros said "McMillan has assured us that they can handle our needs. Time will tell. The ordering dates are very important to allow McMillan to perform." He added that the Coop called several companies on the list of alternate suppliers provided by the ILGWU and "some just do not exist and were not satisfied" with the McMillan gowns.

Coop is also offering students and faculty an alternative gown and cap manufactured by the ILGWU.

Tony Harden, vice-president and general manager of Coop and Leonard, said that he would "not like to comment" on the Coop's action. Referring to the case before the NLRB, he declared, "We categorically deny any and all charges... we are a big union after a small operation. We have shielded us from the various news media." The Coop and Leonard case comes before the NLRB on May 27.

Michael Winston, ILGWU Educational Director, said the Union was "not satisfied" with the Coop's action. "We feel it is important for any students and faculty to wear a cap and gown manufactured by such labor," he said.

Winston added that the Coop would continue cam- paigning for a total boycott through student and faculty con- tacts. He left open the possibility that the ILGWU would organize "informational picket lines" at MIT and Harvard's commencements.