Statewatch

Sunday T closings are a possibility

By Kenneth Stow

Financial problems continued to plague the MBTA as 1981 started off. In an effort to stave off another crisis, the management is cutting back on a number of services, Sunday service among them.

The Advisory Board, representing the 79 municipalities in the MBTA district, approved the reduced budget saying they know this will cause service cuts but these should be slight. The final vote on the budget was 76.96 to 24, due to the Board's weighted voting system based on the amount of use the transit system receives from a particular municipality.

Shortly after the budget was approved, Governor Edward J. King announced at a press conference that "there will have to be significant service cuts wherever possible."

The most noticeable cutback is the elimination of all bus, train, and trolley service on Sundays starting January 25, and the closing of Bowdoin and Symphony stations permanently as of last Saturday. Other cuts include:
1. Eliminating the jobs of 51 patrolmen on Red and Blue line trains, leaving one guard for every four cars. There was one guard on every other car prior to this. This has been temporarily delayed by a court injunction requested by the MBTA union.
2. Eliminating daily bus trips past Bowdoin and Symphony stations.
3. Terminating self-generation power at the South Boston power plant on Dec. 31, 1981, with the exception of a gas turbine that will operate for four hours a day.
4. Opening the Barlow Street automotive garage on March 2 to save on bus maintenance, efficiency, and fuel.

Loosie said, "While we are trying to develop mass transportation for 1981, and be responsive to the needs of the public, our option is in response to the unrealistic budget authorized by the Advisory Board that requires that we operate within a sum of $337 million."

One of the top priorities of the five-year plan, a wheelchair lift at the Massachusetts Avenue entrance to building 1, was completed last November. The lift provides the first wheelchair access to MIT from Mass. Ave.

A new wheelchair lift installed in Building 1 allows better access for the handicapped. (Photo by Steve Cohen)

Handicapped access improved

By Steven Scharb

A new wheelchair lift and a revised map giving accessibility to the handicapped are two of the newest elements in MIT's handicapped accessibility project.

According to Jim Cronberg of MIT's Planning Office, MIT is about two years into a five-year plan to make the campus more accessible to people in wheelchairs and people with other disabilities.

Cronberg said the plan included installation of toilets, ramps, and "as money permits." These improvements are a response to the realistic budget authorized by the Advisory Board that requires that we operate within a sum of $337 million.

Another source of Minsky's discontent was the children's toy industry, which produces non-educational toys that children cannot use. He commented, "if kids can't take their toys apart, they can't learn how they work. Consequently, people grow up unable to fix things."

Minsky expressed displeasure with people who believe that astrology works. When asked what his sign was, he replied, "Minos, in this case."

"We have so many good ideas that few of them are actually being tried out. People are getting used to the abundance of ideas and this tolerance is not a good thing." Minsky pointed out that the problem was tolerance, using the example of space exploration as an example. He wondered how various religions could exist in harmony, especially when one considers that each religion claims to be the only true faith.

Minsky explained that all the things he saw wrong were expressions of a trend toward self-centeredness in people. He said that "research in artificial intelligence would be a help in understanding ourselves, since we would be able to construct a system in which we could see what a 'normal' behavior is like."

Minsky concluded his talk by answering questions from the audience.

Committee to offer Gray speaker list

By Richard Saltz

"MIT's commencement is very much a family event," observed Langley Keys, chairman of the Commencement Committee.

Keys, a Professor in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, commented on the type of person he would like to see as the outside speaker for this year's commencement. "The speaker should have something to contribute to this spirit. He should be able to say something relevant to MIT graduates."

Acting on the Committee's 7-6 decision in favor of having an outside speaker, on December 4 the Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation authorized the invitation of an outside speaker this year, breaking a seventeen-year-old tradition.

The Commencement Committee then formed a sub-committee to screen the names presented to them, forming a list of between three and 10 names, according to Keys. The sub-committee will present this list to President Paul Gray. Gray will then pick a speaker from the list and invite the invitation. The list will have no rotating and will not be made public.

Keys pointed out that because of scheduling and other possible problems, Gray may not be able to invite anyone on the list recommended by the committee. In this case, Gray would pick a speaker in another group in the list according to Langley. Another committee member asking not to be identified pointed out that Gray had the opportunity to check back with the committee, but that it was "all very informal."

The decision to have an outside speaker at this year's commencement exercises is the result of a four-month effort by members of the senior class, spearheaded by the class's Executive Committee.

"I'd like the speaker to be someone with good speaking ability, and be someone that the students and parent could relate to," said Mitchell Brook '81, Senior Class President and member of the speaker selection sub-committee. Brook had said he had no particular interest in the speakers present. Neither he nor Keys had any idea how many names they would be considering.

Walter L. Milne, assistant to the chairman of the Corporation and the president, has no idea of what type of speaker he would like to see. "I'm keeping an open mind," Milne said. The sub-committee will use the opportunity to offer an ideological lecture instead of the interests of the attendees. "He's got to be relevant," Brook observed.

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Minsky: AI as a cure-all

By David Shaw

Professor Marvin Minsky opened his Tuesday evening lecture by saying, "I'm going to talk about why the world is getting worse, and what artificial intelligence can do to help."

The LSC-sponsored lecture, titled "Artificial Intelligence and Common Sense," took the form of a monologue in which Minsky commented on what he thought were harmful social trends. He shocked the capacity crowd in 26-100 when he blamed science fiction for worse conditions: "I'd like the speaker to be someone with good speaking ability, and be someone that the students and parent could relate to," said Mitchell Brook '81, Senior Class President and member of the speaker selection sub-committee. Brook had said he had no particular interest in the speakers present. Neither he nor Keys had any idea how many names they would be considering.

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